RESOLUTION #7—2015  
Regular Annual Session  

Submitted by  
Board of Directors  

Revised Policy on Use of Random-Source Dogs and Cats for Research, Testing, and Education  

RESOLVED, that the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) adopt the revised policy on Use of Random-Source Dogs and Cats for Research, Testing, and Education as noted below.  

Use of Random-Source Dogs and Cats for Research, Testing, and Education  
The carefully controlled use of random-source dogs and cats can contribute greatly to improving the health and welfare of both animals and human beings, and is consistent with the principles embodied in the 3Rs tenet of Russell and Burch. The Institute for Laboratory Animal Research (ILAR) of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) issued a report on the Scientific and Humane Issues in the Use of Random Source Dogs and Cats in Research (2009) that makes recommendations on the use of random-source dogs and cats, as well as class B dealers. The AVMA believes there is ample justification for prudent and humane use of random-source dogs and cats in research, testing, and education, provided that:  
• The institution conducting such research, testing, or education has met all legal requirements and guidelines pertaining to the acquisition, care, and use of dogs and cats for these purposes;  
• The investigators have thoughtfully examined the need for such dogs and cats, which and have appropriately selected the species and type are most appropriate, and carefully determined the number required to meet the needs of the protocol have been carefully determined;  
• Adequate safeguards are used to ensure that only appropriately screened dogs and cats are obtained legally; and preventive measures are taken to optimize the health and welfare of dogs and cats used in research, testing, and education.  
• Class B dealers are used to obtain random-source dogs and cats only when viable alternatives do not exist; and  
• Alternative sources are explored and supported that will ultimately eliminate the need for Class B dealers as a source for random-source dogs and cats used in research, testing, and education.  

a Reduction, refinement, replacement  
b Class B dealers acquire dogs from random sources, such as individual owners, small hobby breeders, and animal pounds and shelters. Often these are mature, large, socialized dogs of mixed breeds.  
c Legal alternatives for dogs and cats from Class B dealers include Class A dealers, privately owned colonies (often established by donations from breeders or owners because of genetic defects), client-owned animals (e.g., animals participating in carefully controlled and monitored veterinary clinical trials), donor programs, and non-animal models. Donor programs encourage the voluntary provision of tissue samples obtained during the course of an animal’s diagnosis and treatment in veterinary hospitals or the bodies of animals euthanized for other reasons (including veterinary client and shelter/animal control donations).  

Statement about the Resolution  
Regarding the scientific, ethical and practical implications of the use of random-source dogs and cats for research, testing and education, as well as the activities of class B dealers who supply these animals (both live and as cadavers or tissue sources), it is recognized that:  
• random-source dogs and cats often exhibit characteristics that may not be readily available in purpose-bred animals (e.g., larger, older, genetically diverse) making them
potentially important models for research on naturally occurring diseases (e.g., cancer, infectious diseases, age-related diseases);

- scientific need and public expectations for the use of these animals are changing;
- alternative sources for these animals and their tissues are emerging (e.g., purposeful breeding, donor programs);
- the number of class B dealers has fallen precipitously (i.e., only 4 remain [a 50% reduction from 2010 when the policy was last revised]); and

The use of random-source dogs and cats in research, testing and education is contentious, and discomfort with their use has been augmented by highly publicized concerns about their origins (e.g., the perception and—sometimes—the reality that not all of these animals have been legitimately acquired). In addition, as valuable as their diversity of genetics and type can be to research, because they come from random sources, they also are more likely to be associated with undesirable traits, such as infectious disease, occupational health (zoonotic, behavioral) hazards, and inconsistent health and welfare. Such characteristics can limit their value for research purposes, place additional burdens on institutions, and equalize costs with purpose-bred animals because increased health and welfare surveillance may be required.

Donor programs (which may include animals from known owners as well as shelter/animal control operations), privately owned colonies, purpose-bred programs that breed genetically diverse animals, and non-animal models appear to present increasingly viable alternatives that can reduce some of these risks. While progress in developing these alternatives is encouraging, they may not be able to fully meet random-source needs quite yet. The policy has been revised to indicate the direction users of these animals should be moving, without removing necessary and well-regulated options during the transition.

The American Society of Laboratory Animal Practitioners (ASLAP) was an active participant in discussions regarding the revisions.

Overall, the proposed revised policy represents a carefully deliberated, consensus effort on a highly emotive topic. The revised policy emphasizes the importance of ensuring the good welfare of random-source dogs and cats used for research, testing and education; clearly acknowledges that scientific justification is required to support their use; and encourages options for acquisition beyond Class B dealers. While the use of footnotes adds complexity to the policy, it is intended to help those using the policy understand its ethical and scientific basis.

**Financial Impact:** NONE

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