FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FASS Responds to Animal Care Concerns

Champaign, Illinois – February 23, 2015 – In response to recent concerns raised about the care of farm animals in research at the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (US MARC), the Federation of Animal Science Societies (FASS) sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack on February 19, 2015. In this letter, FASS expressed its support for the use of resources, such as the FASS “Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching” (FASS Ag Guide), in promoting proper farm animal care in research using the latest scientific information. As leading experts in animal science, FASS and the members of its founding societies take seriously the responsibility to provide assistance at the top levels of government regarding animal research.

With the recently voiced public concerns over animal safety and welfare, some have called for legislative changes to expand the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) to include farm animals used in agricultural research at USDA and possibly other sites. Because the FASS Ag Guide provides current, science-based guidelines specifically relevant to farm animal care in research, it is the most applicable resource for scientists conducting research with farm animals. FASS does not believe an expansion of the AWA would improve animal care. FASS encourages the use of the Ag Guide, in tandem with peer review, to ensure responsible treatment of animals at research facilities.

Since 1988, FASS (then the Federation of American Societies of Food Animal Sciences, FASFAS, the predecessor to FASS) has published the FASS Ag Guide; in the years since, it has become the primary document used for governing farm animal research in the United States and abroad. The FASS Ag Guide is used by many institutions, including USDA inspectors and the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International, because of its detailed, science-based, and species-specific recommendations.

Since its inception, the stated mission of FASS has been to “strengthen the common interests and collective good of member societies through a unified science-based voice that supports animal agriculture, animal products, and food systems globally through effective and efficient management services.” To achieve this, FASS has consistently sought to foster the shared goals of its founding societies and assist policy makers in areas of animal science. With this in mind, FASS and its members stand ready to provide support to USDA and other government agencies regarding the best way forward for safety and welfare in animal research.

For more information or to learn more about FASS, please visit www.fass.org or contact the federation.

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