

SABC Users' Committee Meeting
Wednesday 22nd February, 2006
11.00am, SABC Large Seminar Room 2.36

Minutes

Present: Mike Jones, Phil O'Brien, Frances Brigg, Dave Hodgson, Marie Scobie, Andrea Tongue, Scott McNeil, Zhaohui Wang, Linda McInnes.

Meeting opened at 11.00am

1. Apologies: Moira Desport

2. Acceptance of minutes

Minutes of the previous meeting of 22 October 2005 were accepted as an accurate record.

1. Matters Arising

- ◆ The Biomek 3000 and plate reader have arrived and been installed. A training course on the equipment has been completed by a number of researchers. (Three staff from the Department of Agriculture and Chris Florides of Saturn Biotech.) The new Biomek also has a demo mode which can be run to demonstrate how the machine operates for those people not familiar with its operation.
- ◆ Dave is waiting for a list of items from Josh to order replacement items that went missing from the protean equipment in the animal lab.
- ◆ A web page for ARWA updates has been set up if anyone is interested in keeping up to date with ARWA developments. Andrea will set up a link to it from the SABC web page
- ◆ AQIS certification for the SABC has been sent to Phil O'Brien, but has yet to be signed off by the PVC(R). The inspection is still to take place.
- ◆ OGTR visited the University. The containment glasshouse and SABC PC2 facilities were inspected and two DNIR projects were interviewed. The visit seemed to go well. Some virus strains had been located in inappropriate locations and have been brought back to the SABC for storage.
- ◆ New research must be approved by the IBC. It is now a requirement that safety courses run by DSE and BS&B must be undertaken by all staff. A database is going to be set up to capture this information. In the future safety courses will be web based, with an on-line assessment as part of Worksafe requirements. For projects a risk assessment document must be also be completed and a series of forms which identify hazards related to the project. This will go to HR reception with other sections sent to relevant committees.
- ◆ Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's). These are going to be put up on the web. For every single procedure there has to be an SOP and a risk assessment. CSIRO have offered to provide some SOP's and Risk Assessments for common procedures. Those not available from CSIRO, will have to be sourced elsewhere or developed as required. These need to be done as soon as possible.

4. Bench/office space

There has been some rearrangement in the animal lab. The SABC is once again very full. It is the responsibility of Divisions and not the SABC to provide office space for researchers and students. Supervisors should not assume that either laboratory or desk space will be available in the SABC as it is currently operating at capacity.

An induction for new researchers will take place once all are in place. Next year week 'O' will become the week when induction and safety courses take place.

5. ARWA and NCRIS

ARWA appears to be proceeding very slowly. Those involved are still trying to decide where to locate buildings. DAWA wants to have the Headquarters and the Biosecurity building separate. Also being considered are the Fiona Stanley hospital, Simon Malall's new building and a biomedical precinct.

NCRIS (National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Scheme). This is replacing the Major National Research Facilities program. There will be 16 facilitators, and a facilitator will be appointed to discuss and work with groups to general one proposal in each area to justify dispersal of funds.

APAF is investigating development of a Western Node to make their proposal national, Mike is working with Proteomics International and WAIMR on this. NCRIS may be one way to obtain a new mass spectrometer. Perth may also be a node for a metabolomics facility.

The proTOF is still top of the major equipment list, and it is intended to submit a LIEF application. The Maldi-TOF mass spectrometer is heavily used and when it breaks down there are major problems: it is also now quite old and may not be fully serviceable for much longer, and so there is an urgent need to replace and upgrade it.

6. OGTR

There has been an independent review of the OGTR Act which included consideration of State moratoria on growth of GM crops. It was noted that because of the State moratoria there has been a lack of funding and research for plant biotechnology. The general feeling now was that the moratorium on growth of GM crops in WA should be lifted. Ausbiotech is working very hard with people such as Ian Edwards to have the moratoria lifted in the Eastern States.

There has also been a review of regulations of the OGTR Act and the list of exempt hosts. Arabidopsis did not make the exempt list because no risk assessment had been done. An application to make Arabidopsis exempt could be made at any time.

7. A.O.B.

Dave Hodgson reported that mosquitos were a problem in the Department of Agriculture laboratory. The Office of Facilities Management have been quite slow to respond.

Linda McInnes reported that -20 walk in freezer is very full. There are boxes of items from persons long departed the SABC, she asked if shelves could be allocated to groups.

Dave advised that researchers are very loath to clean out the freezer room. Some projects have material stored and contained for future work. All items in the freezer should be named, labeled and dated as part of the OGTR requirements. Labelling should continue down to tube/box level. Dave will give one months notice for items to be claimed and labelled in the freezer. Anything else will be removed and destroyed.

Another idea discussed was that freezer space could be charged for, particularly for long term storage.

Finances for the SABC are going to be tight again this year as the Board of R&D is short of funds and is trying to squeeze the SABC to make up for some of its shortfall.

Suggestions for items of equipment for the equipment wishlist are always welcome. If anyone has any suggestions please forward full details of the item and a quote to Mike.

There was a recent email sent from Keith Brooker about non University staff using University vehicles. Mike has asked Keith Brooker to find out if it is possible for non university staff to use the vehicles provided they have their own insurance policy.

Lighthouse Laboratories is a new research company working in the SABC, their area of work is in Biomedical Research.

Meeting closed 12.00pm. Next meeting, Thursday 11th May 2006 at 11.00am.