

Accreditation of farm animal care and use programs: common issues and solutions

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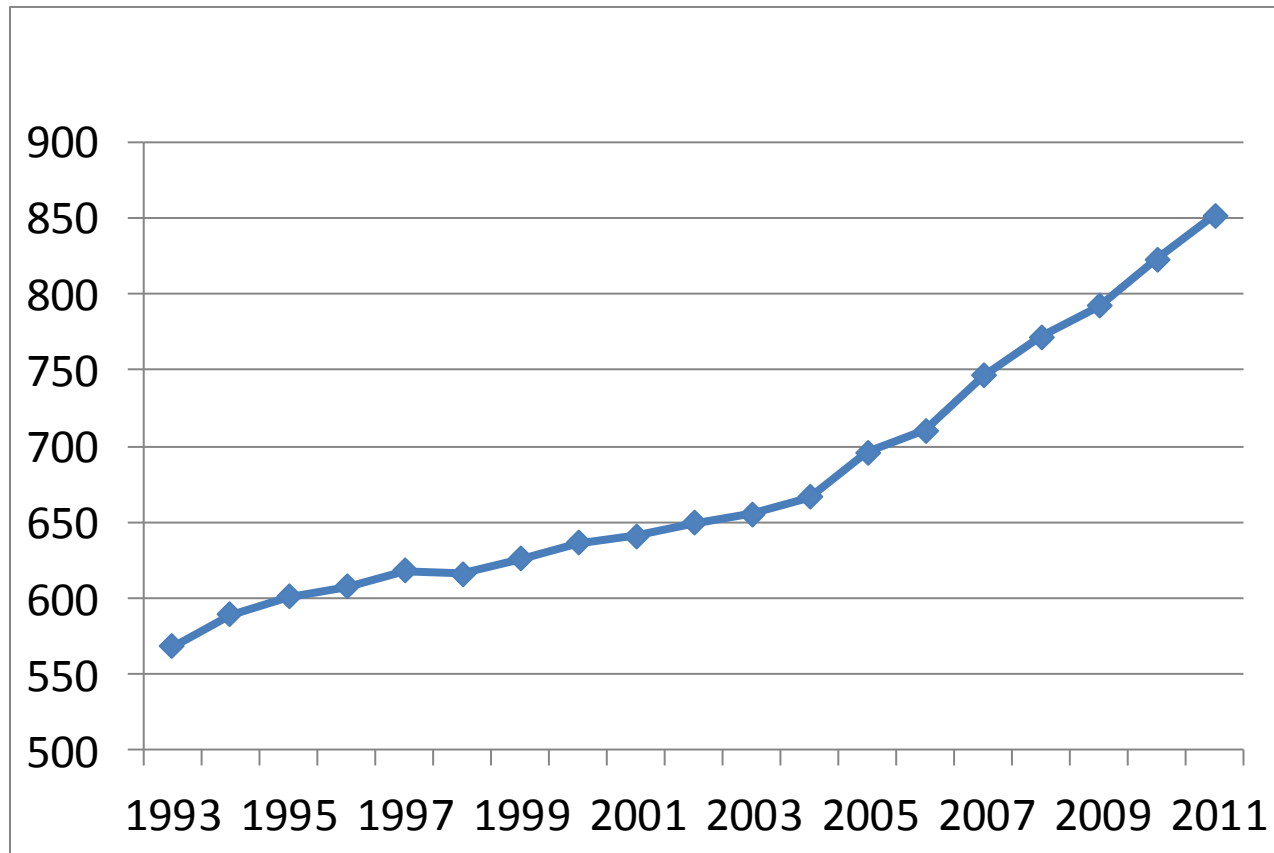
Topics

- ▶ AAALAC Demographics
- ▶ Accreditation Process
- ▶ Performance standards
- ▶ Trend data – challenges of Ag programs
- ▶ What are site visitors looking for
- ▶ Correction / Prevention of problems

AAALAC International

- Board of Trustees
 - 66 Member Organizations
 - scientific, professional, patient advocacy organizations
- Council on Accreditation (56)
 - scientists, veterinarians, program administrators
- Ad Hoc Consultants / Specialists (> 300)
 - from 36 countries and 36 of the 50 states
- Executive Office Staff
 - Frederick, Maryland
 - Pamplona, Spain
 - Bangkok, Thailand

Number of Accredited Programs



Accredited Institutions in 36 Geographic Locations



Why become accredited?

- High standard of quality
- Programs are –
 - Well managed
 - Well documented
 - Accountable



Why become accredited?

- Accredited programs undergo continuous improvement
 - Commitment to –
 - Ongoing self-assessment
 - Engagement in best practice:



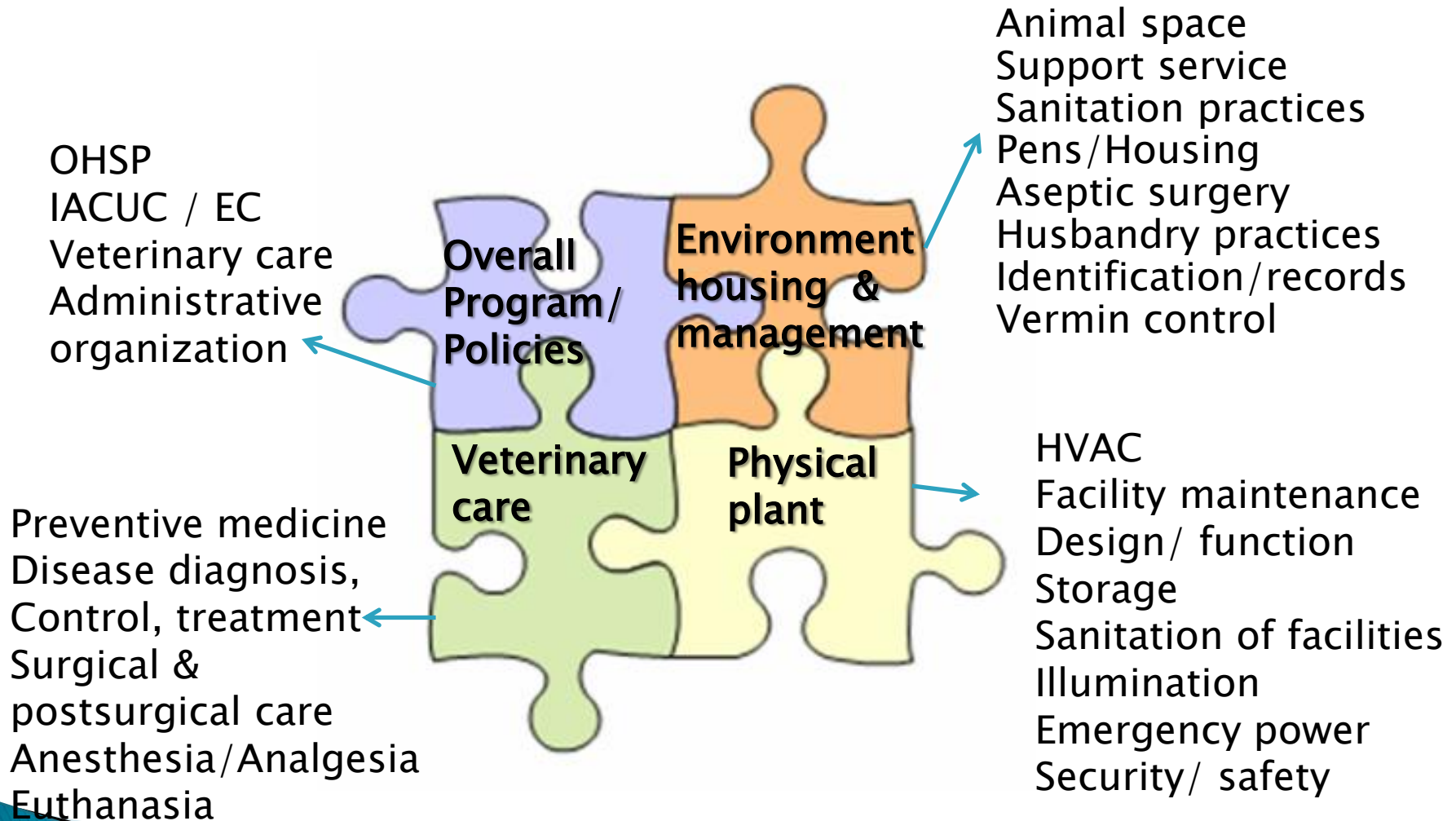
Why become accredited?

- Accreditation instills a sense of pride and teamwork
 - Team-building
 - Professionalism
 - Accomplishment
- Accreditation demonstrates
 - Public accountability and a commitment to humane and ethical care and use of animals

Who does AAALAC Accredite?

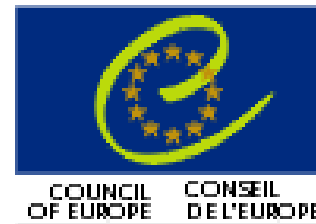
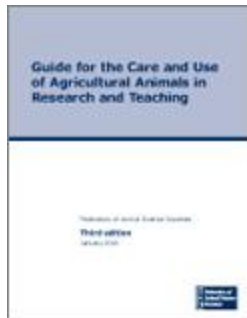
- ▶ Any public or private institution, organization, or agency maintaining, using, importing, or producing animals for purposes of scientific research, teaching, or testing may be accredited
- ▶ All components of the animal care program are included in the accreditation

The Animal Care and Use Program



Standards of Accreditation

- ▶ Three primary standards
- ▶ *Ag Guide*, *ILAR Guide*, ETS 123
- ▶ Applicable local legislation



Performance Standards

- ▶ From AAALAC's Position Statement about use of the Three Primary Standards:

AAALAC International recognizes that the biomedical or agricultural research, testing or teaching objectives as well as the health and welfare of the animals will dictate when application of the recommendations of the *Ag Guide*, *ILAR Guide*, or ETS 123 is most appropriate. **For animals in an agricultural setting, AAALAC International takes the position that, in accredited programs, the housing and care for farm animals should meet the standards that prevail on a high-quality, well-managed farm.** The collective professional judgment of the responsible oversight body (i.e., IACUC, Ethics Committee), principal investigator and veterinarian should determine which standard(s) applies best with regard to the care and welfare of agricultural animals, based on a performance approach in the context of the requirements of the study and the species used.* The rationale for making this determination should be documented.

Performance Standards

- ▶ Evaluation or Inspection?

“...the accreditation process is a communication-intensive program of evaluation and support, stressing application of **performance standards** and **professional judgment** rather than inspection and enforcement of engineering standards.”

AAALAC Evaluation of the Performance Standard Process

- ▶ Usually focus on performance standards deviating from recommendations of 3-Primary Standards
- ▶ Has IACUC/EC reviewed data supporting the deviations/exemptions?
- ▶ Has IACUC/EC used appropriate criteria to judge the data?
- ▶ Is professional judgment unbiased and sound?
- ▶ Are specific criteria in place?
- ▶ **Biggest question:** Is it effective?

Anatomy of a site visit

Pre-visit

- ▶ Write the Program Description
- ▶ Schedule the visit
 - IACUC / Ethics Committee chair, coordinator and members
 - Attending Veterinarian
 - Occupational health and safety personnel
 - Key husbandry personnel

Site visit team

- Council on Accreditation members
- Ad hoc consultants or specialist
 - Provide additional expertise
- For agricultural based site visits – AAALAC assembles teams with farm animal expertise



Anatomy of a site visit

The site visit

- ▶ Entrance briefing
- ▶ Review program description
- ▶ Tour facilities & holding areas / laboratories / study areas / pastures / barns, etc.
- ▶ Meet with the IACUC / EC
- ▶ Review protocols (files) / documents
- ▶ Executive session
- ▶ Exit briefing

Anatomy of a site visit

Post site visit activities

- ▶ Response letter from institution
- ▶ Site visit team writes the site visit report
- ▶ Report review by 4 Council members
- ▶ Council deliberations
- ▶ Accreditation status determined
- ▶ Letter sent to the institution

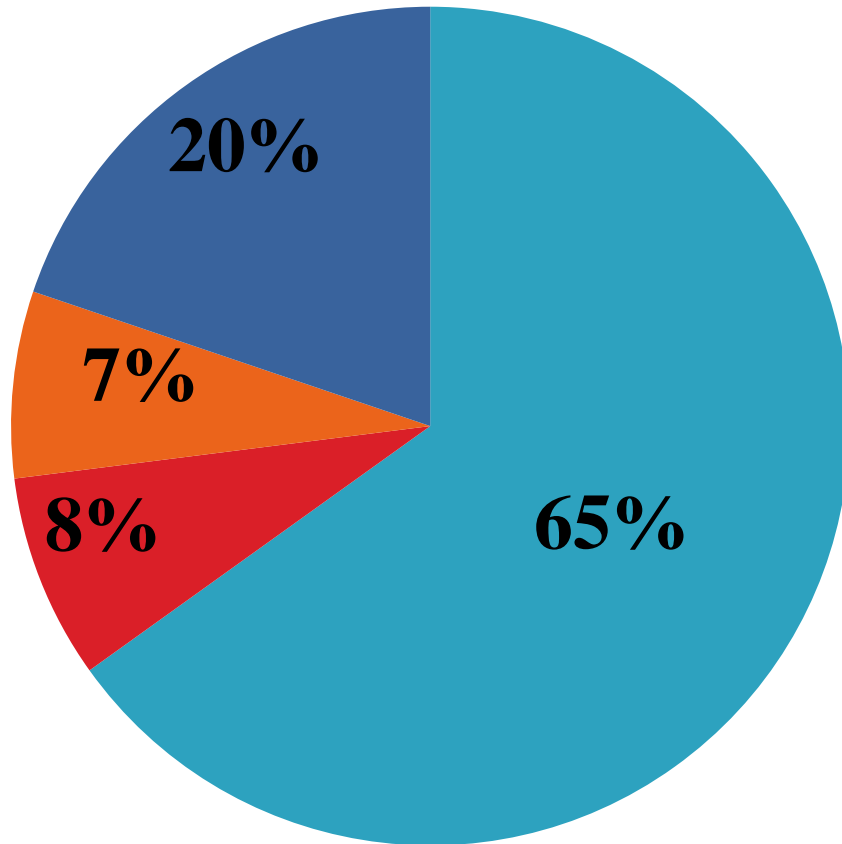
Items identified during site visits

- ▶ Site visit data analysis from Land Grant Institutions
- ▶ Identify common themes/ challenges
- ▶ **Mandatory Item** = a deficiency which must be corrected for Full Accreditation to be awarded or continued
- ▶ **Suggestion for Improvement (SFI)** = items which the Council feels are desirable to upgrade an already acceptable or even commendable program

Results of site visits

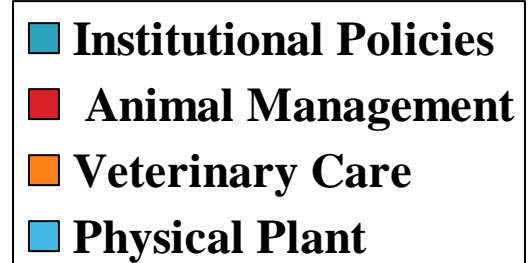
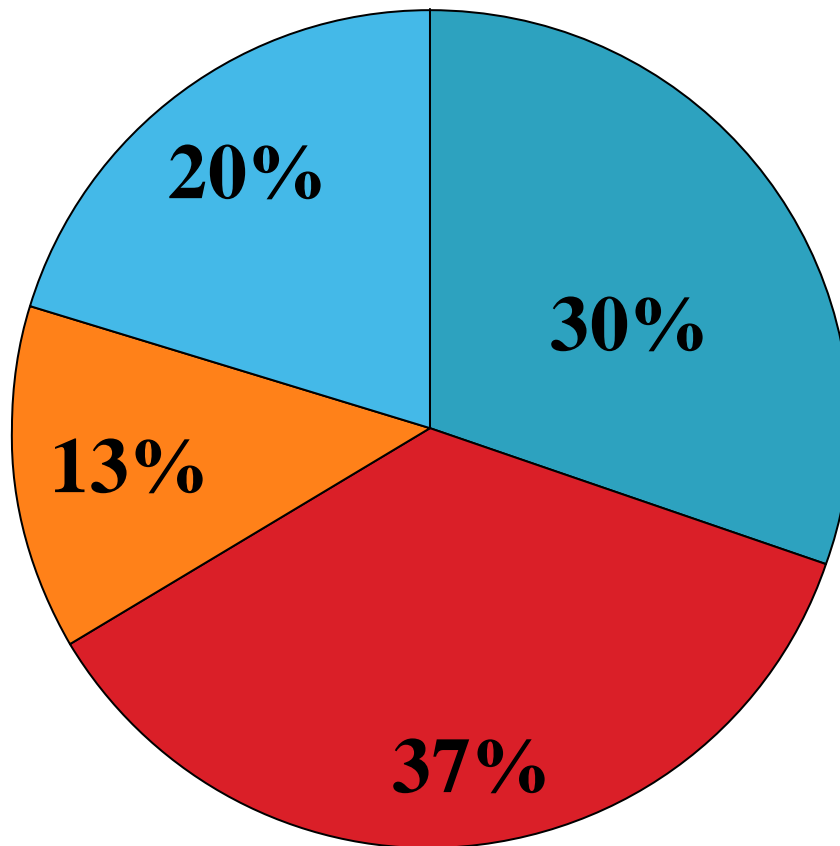
- ▶ At any given time, < 3% of accredited institutions have one or more mandatory items
- ▶ Many institutions have SFIs identified during their site visits
- ▶ Agricultural based institutions tend to experience the same level of findings as biomedical institutions.

Land Grant Institution Program Deficiencies

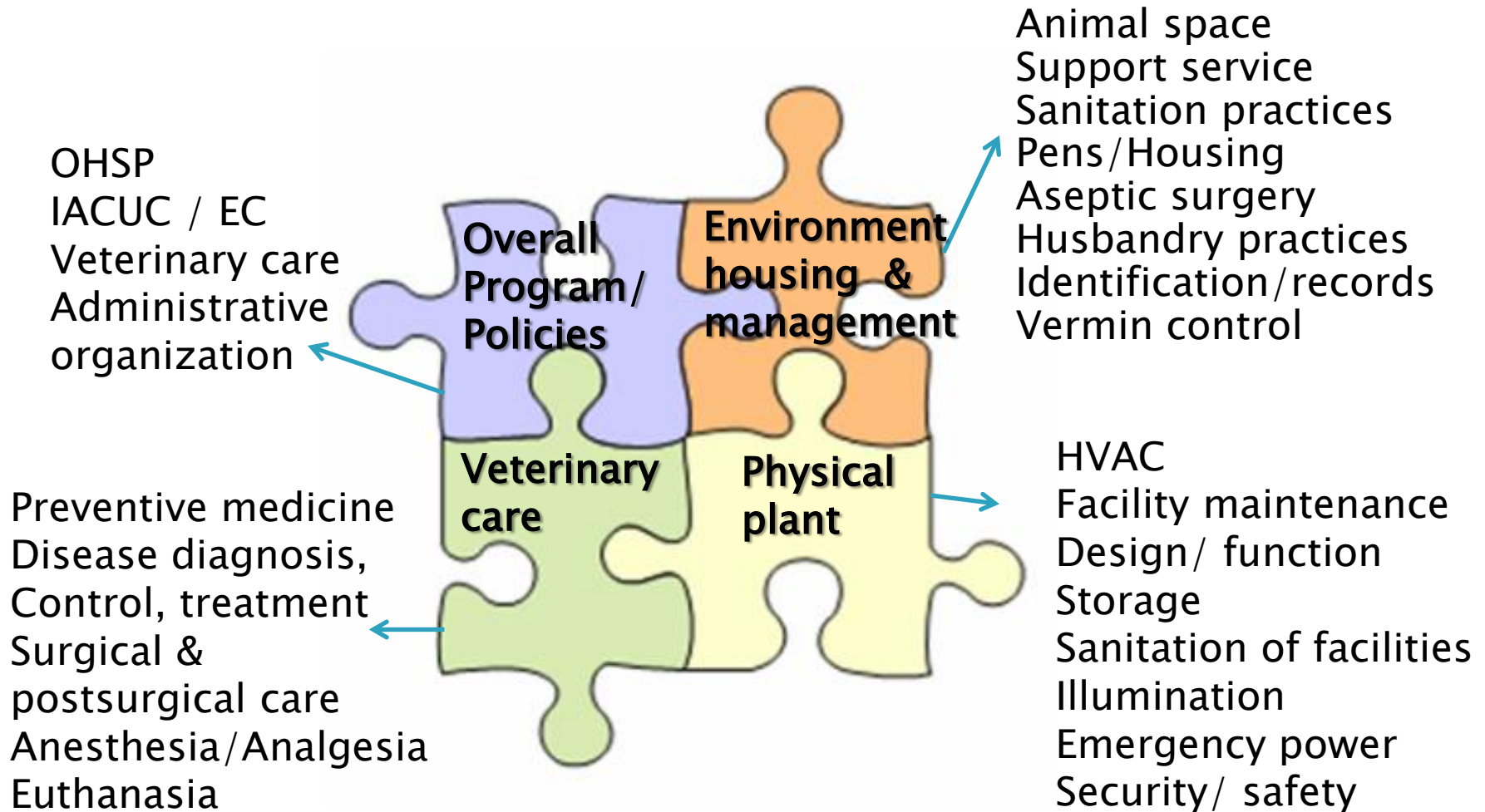


- Institutional Policies
- Animal Management
- Veterinary Care
- Physical Plant

LGIs – Suggestions for Improvement



The Animal Care and Use Program



Program Policies

- ▶ Occupational Health and Safety Program
- ▶ Ethics Committee / IACUC
- ▶ Veterinary Care Program
- ▶ Administrative organization



What are site visitors looking for?

▶ OHSP

- Fully implemented comprehensive program
- Risk assessment (job & personal)
- Opportunity for all at-risk personnel to enroll
- Medical evaluations (ongoing)
- Medical services
- Appropriate safety and containment practices
- Appropriate consideration hazards
- OHSP training

What are site visitors looking for?

▶ IACUC / EC

- Strong leadership and oversight of the program
- Policies/ procedures – foster welfare and science
- Thorough, careful, complete protocol review
- Appropriate oversight of all aspects of the program (vet care, animal environment, animal management/ husbandry, physical plant, animal use areas, OHSP)
- Records

What are site visitors looking for?

- ▶ **Program of Veterinary Care**
 - Procurement/ Transportation
 - Health surveillance
 - Provision of timely veterinary medical care
 - Recordkeeping
 - Surgical programs & training
 - Guidance (anesthetics, analgesics, post-procedural care, humane endpoints)

What are site visitors looking for?

▶ Administrative commitment

- Appropriate resources, staffing, training, facilities and support for the program
- Appropriate organizational structure and areas of responsibility
- Appropriate engagement among the IO, AV and IACUC

Animal environment, housing and management

- ▶ Animal space
- ▶ Support service
- ▶ Sanitation practices
- ▶ Pens/Housing
- ▶ Aseptic surgery
- ▶ Husbandry practices
- ▶ Identification/records
- ▶ Vermin control



What are site visitors looking for?

- ▶ **Animal Environment**



What are site visitors looking for?



- ▶ Microenvironment & Macroenvironment
- ▶ Housing
 - Primary enclosures
 - Sheltered or outdoor housing
 - Naturalistic environment
- ▶ Space
- ▶ Temperature & Humidity
- ▶ Ventilation
- ▶ Illumination
- ▶ Noise

Veterinary care



- ▶ Preventive medicine
- ▶ Disease diagnosis, control, treatment
- ▶ Surgical & postsurgical care
- ▶ Anesthesia/Analgesia
- ▶ Euthanasia

Physical Plant



- ▶ Functional areas
- ▶ Construction guidelines
 - Corridors
 - Animal room doors
 - Exterior windows
 - Floors, drainage, walls, ceilings
 - HVAC
 - Power and lighting, storage areas, noise control, facilities for sanitizing materials
- ▶ Facilities for aseptic surgery

What are site visitors looking for?



- ▶ In general, the building, room and pens or cages
- ▶ Animal handling/ transport equipment
- ▶ Environmental Enrichment
- ▶ Security
- ▶ Biosecurity
- ▶ The Physical Plant
 - Ch 5, *ILAR Guide*
 - Ch's 3-6 *Ag Guide*
 - Appendix A of ETS 123



What are site visitors looking for?



- ▶ Physical plant issues represented
 - 10% of all mandatory items
 - 15% of all suggestions for improvements



Physical Plant Problem Areas – What is not a major concern

- ▶ A farm setting
- ▶ Aged facilities
- ▶ Natural ventilation
- ▶ Non-controlled photoperiod (as in open barns)
- ▶ Lack of temperature control



Agricultural facility opportunities

- Don't assume farm facilities are not accreditable
- Establish clear lines of organization and authority
- Communication/ collaboration among stakeholders is key (IO, IACUC/EC, AV, PI's)
- Comprehensive OHSP
- Engaged, empowered, service-oriented IACUC/ EC (Ag representation/ expertise)

Questions?

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