

# *Animal Source*

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## PSU Animal Resource Program

Volume 2, Issue 3

Summer 2004

*Visit the ARP  
website at  
[www.research.psu.  
edu/arp](http://www.research.psu.edu/arp)  
for answers to your  
animal use questions*

## Threats from within: Screening potential employees to guard against animal extremism.

In 2001-2002, an undercover PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) operative was unknowingly employed by the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill in one of their research animal facilities. This employee secretly videotaped investigators, staff and students working with animals, primarily rodents, in the facility. In April 2002, PETA publicly accused UNC of animal cruelty and filed a formal complaint with the Office for Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW, the regulatory arm of the National Institutes of Health). By the time the OLAW investigation ended in 2004, PETA revealed that it had planted another spy in the UNC animal facilities and was filing a second complaint against the university with OLAW.

In 2003, PETA disclosed that they had performed a similar undercover operation against a private contract research laboratory in Missouri. Once again, a newly hired employee secretly videotaped research personnel while they worked. The result of this operation was a formal complaint against the laboratory to the United States Department of Agriculture and the loss of millions of dollars in revenue, numerous business contracts and employee positions at this research facility.

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## Laboratory Animal Care at PSU

The University Park campus has the capability to house many different species of animals used in research and teaching. Eight laboratory animal facilities are located on campus with a barrier facility scheduled to open next year. Approximately 30,000 square feet of animal care and use space is currently available for PSU investigators. The animal facilities house approximately 11,000 rodents. The Animal Resource Program (ARP) provides care for all animals within the ARP facilities 365 days a year, including weekends and holidays.

Eleven full time ARP animal care technicians observe all animals daily, and provide routine watering and feeding, cage and bedding changing, and clean the animal rooms. Environmental conditions for each species are maintained as recommended by the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (National

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## Congenic Strains

### *What are they?*

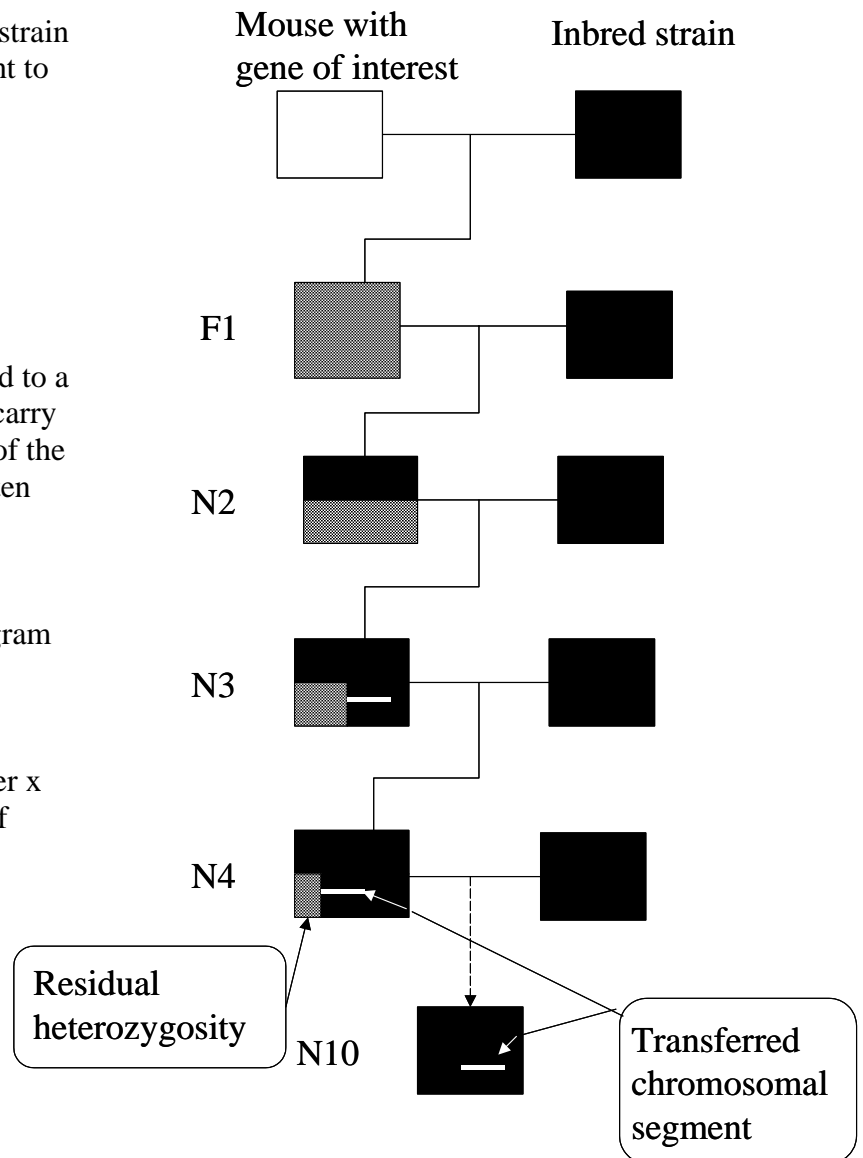
A congenic strain is a population of mice genetically identical to an existing inbred strain except for one gene and a few loci adjacent to it.

### *How are they produced?*

The mouse with the gene of interest is bred to a mouse of an inbred strain. Offspring that carry the gene of interest are then bred to mice of the inbred strain. This is repeated for at least ten generations.

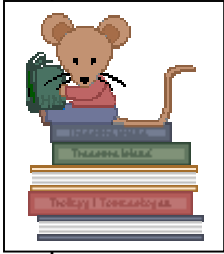
This breeding scheme is referred to as **backcrossing** and is illustrated in the diagram on the right.

After ten generations a congenic strain is obtained and may be maintained by brother x sister mating with selection for the gene of interest.



### *How are they used?*

Backcrossing to produce a congenic strain is used to transfer a gene of interest from one mouse strain to another. Transgenic mice are often maintained as congenic to an existing inbred (control) strain.



**The next Mouse Biomethodology Seminar will be held on September 10, 2004 from 1–4 pm in the Centralized Biological Laboratory. Please call 865-1495 to register to attend.**

*Threats from within, continued from page 1.*

While both UNC and the Missouri research laboratory admitted some legitimate problems with animal care in their facilities, much of the PETA “evidence” and allegations were unsupported and contrived. Neither facility had a history of USDA or OLAW violations. Several of PETA’s cruelty complaints against UNC consisted of rodent husbandry or veterinary issues (i.e., overcrowded cages) that many people working in animal research would not associate with improper care. Compliance with animal welfare regulations is no guarantee that your facility or research will not be targeted.

How can you be sure that the staff and students you hire are not animal rights extremists in disguise? Security consulting firms and those who have experienced animal activist infiltration offer some important tips to help screen out animal extremists among job applicants.

- Verify student/applicant schools, previous employers, home address and phone number.
- Check references extensively, and in addition, call other individuals who may know the applicant or know who to contact to find out if the person is legitimate.
- Thoroughly interview students/applicants and engage them in conversation. Ask them about their past employment and experiences with animals. Ask practical knowledge questions designed to reveal that they really have worked around animals. Ask them to describe in detail their experience with animal research and their thoughts on the ethics of the use of animals in research.
- Look for the student/applicant’s involvement in relevant organizations, clubs, societies or involvement in inappropriate causes.
- When appropriate use criminal background checks and/or self-disclosure questions on the employment application form to help identify criminal convictions.
- After an individual is hired make sure they have an appropriate probationary period where they are not allowed to work in animal rooms by themselves.
- Observe new personnel closely during this time for any unusual or suspicious activities. Potential things to look for include: wearing bulky clothing (for hiding camera or recording equipment); coming in early or staying late for work when it isn’t necessary; looking for excuses to spend time with the animals; asking strange questions or inciting conversations about animal care.

Reference: When Animal Extremists Attack! Prevention and Response. May 2004. Midwest Regional AALAS Symposium, Columbia MO.

## Animal Resource Program

101 Centralized Biological  
Laboratory  
Pennsylvania State University  
University Park, PA 16802

(814) 865-1495  
Fax: (814) 865-3685

### **Surgery in Research Veterinary Science 497B**

Fall semester, 2004  
5 weeks, 1 credit  
Classes start September 14.  
Openings are still available.  
Contact the ARP office (865-1495)  
for more information

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*The Animal Resource Program (ARP) is committed to providing PSU faculty, staff and students with high quality, cost-effective research animal resources. In addition to suitable housing facilities and animal husbandry services for animals used in biomedical research, ARP provides veterinary and diagnostic services, personnel training and expertise in laboratory animal technology and medicine. ARP veterinarians are also available to participate in collaborative research projects with PSU investigators. Areas of interest include animal behavior and welfare, infectious disease and pathology.*

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*Animal Care at PSU, continued from page 1*

Research Council, 1996). Alarms connected to each room's temperature and humidity controls notify university personnel whenever conditions deviate from recommended ranges.

Many of the rodents housed in PSU facilities require specialized care due to phenotypic characteristics or experimental treatments. Immunosuppression or other health issues may make these animals more susceptible to infectious disease and extremes in environmental conditions. To safeguard these and other rodents housed in our facilities the ARP uses isolator cage systems for most rodents (See *Animal Source*, 2 (2), Spring 2004 for more information on rodent isolator cage systems.). The ARP currently has twelve state of the art ventilated isolator cage systems that provide individual, active ventilation for each mouse cage. The purchase of more ventilated isolator systems is planned for the future.

Any University Park investigator with an IACUC-approved research protocol may house animals within the campus facilities. In addition to animal care the ARP provides veterinary care and health prevention programs, educational seminars and other instruction relevant to animal use, procedure rooms with inhalant anesthetic equipment and personnel protective equipment for investigator use to facilitate research at PSU.

For more information on using the ARP animal facilities go to [www.research.psu.edu/arp](http://www.research.psu.edu/arp) or contact the ARP office at 865-1495.

