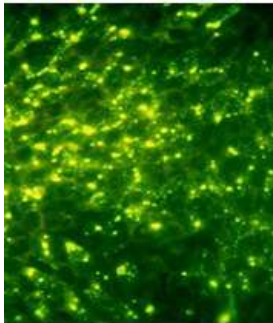


3Rs Approach to Potency Testing for Rabies Vaccines

The NCZR and Animal Health & Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA) jointly organised a workshop on the 'Three Rs Approach to Potency Testing for Rabies Vaccines' in Liverpool on 29th – 30th June 2011.



Rabies is a fatal encephalitis affecting all mammals. Vaccination is the only effective means for controlling rabies. A number of rabies veterinary vaccines exist for the pre-exposure immunisation of not only human beings, but companion animals and wildlife. The quality control processes involved in the release of a new batch of rabies vaccine are prescribed in various guidelines.

Vaccine manufacturers are required to check each batch of vaccine for safety, inactivation, pyrogenicity and potency. The procedures involved in such checks inevitably involve significantly large numbers of animals. The standard method for determining rabies vaccine potency is known as the NIH test, owing to its development at the National Institutes of Health in the USA. The test involves the vaccination and challenge of mice, and has been shown to be extremely variable. Several attempts have been made over a number of years to develop an in vitro replacement for the NIH.

The workshop aimed to:

- provide an overview of the current status of proposed alternatives (e.g. ELISAs, serological assay),
- facilitate an open and informal debate about the factors which have prevented acceptance of in vitro alternatives despite significant scientific efforts over several decades, and
- to establish recommendations for a future harmonised approach.

Participants represented European and US regulatory authorities, government agencies and academia. The recommendations arising from this workshop will be published in the near future.



**WORLD RABIES DAY
SEPTEMBER 28**