Welcome to our inaugural Newsletter. The purpose of our newsletter is to provide useful information to Committee Members and Liaison Officers. Please forward to researchers working with GMOs in your area. We aim to provide the newsletter at least twice a year. If you have any suggestions for future editions, please contact Yolanda at rdna.officer@anu.edu.au

Training
The OGTR Guidelines for Certification of PC2 facilities state that personnel undertaking dealings with GMOs in a certified PC2 facility must be trained in the Behavioural Requirements for the facility and that a signed and dated record of that training must be kept by the certification holder.

In 2008, The Australian National University (ANU) rDNA Monitoring Committee implemented a two-year phase-in, making training in Biological Safety and Gene Technology Practices compulsory for all ANU personnel working with GMOs in PC2 facilities by the end of 2010.

The on-line Gene Technology Practices course is run monthly by the OH&S Unit. The course has been updated and moved from Web CT to Wattle. Course assessment has changed to allow a choice of exam from three options: plant-oriented, animal-oriented and non-oriented. Participants only have to complete one of the three exams to pass the course. The new system will be monitored over the next few months. If you have any comments or questions about the course, please contact Yolanda @ rdna.officer@anu.edu.au

The Biological Safety course is an instructor led course run periodically by the OH&S Unit. As this course is only run a few times a year, the deadline to complete this requirement has been extended until mid-2011. The next course starts on 8 September and this is the last one for 2010. There are limited spaces, please advise personnel as soon as possible.

Further information about both courses can be accessed from the following link:

Updated NLRD Form on website
A new NLRD form has been uploaded on to the rDNA website. Changes to the form include:

- Conversion to a MS Word Form with check boxes and entry fields
- Project supervisor details amended
- Deletion of date of completion of project
- Addition of training details for all personnel working on the project

You can access the form from the following link:

ARIES
The rDNA Module in ARIES will likely be delivered sometime in the next few months. The system will require a period of testing and data migration. The only section that will be accessible to researchers will be the Annual Reports Tab and training will be provided for Liaison Officers and researchers later in the year. Please contact Yolanda if you are interested in testing the system before it goes live.
Unintentional Releases
Unintentional releases should be reported to the OGTR via the Secretary of the IBC and Liaison Officers should make sure this requirement is widely known in their local area. Local procedures for reporting unintentional releases (which include reporting to the Secretary of the IBC) should be included in facility manuals.

Annual Inspections of PC2 Facilities
This year’s inspections will take place in November. Inspectors will focus on training records in facility manuals to ensure they are up-to-date. This means researchers working in PC2 facilities, and their staff, should have completed the required training (see page 1).

If you haven’t contacted Yolanda already, please do so and let her know when you are available to be a PC2 inspector for facilities not in your area. We need this information urgently.

Copies of dealings in Facility Manuals
Copies of dealings should be in facility manuals so that inspectors and newcomers to the lab have access to the information. With DNIRs, a copy of the dealing is contained in the licence issued by the OGTR. A copy of the licence is required in the facility manual and staff working on the DNIR should sign a record indicating they have read and understood the conditions of the licence.

Annual Reports
Most of the 2009 Annual Reports have been returned to the Secretary of the IBC. In future, please ensure all personnel working on dealings and in facilities are listed so that the database can be updated to reflect the current situation.

Next year annual reports will not be sent out for exempt dealings and researchers will no longer have to submit a list of publications.

Backflow Prevention
A backflow prevention risk assessment needs to be in the facility manual regardless of whether there are any backflow prevention devices fitted to the building or the individual facility. Since the water comes out the same outlets regardless of whether there is a building backflow prevention device, a facility backflow prevention device or both, the one backflow prevention risk assessment is usually sufficient for each facility. However, in the case of superlabs or shared facilities backflow risk assessments should be handled on a group basis.

Renovations to Facilities
If you are planning on making any changes to a certified PC2 Facility, please make sure the Secretary to the Committee is advised well in advance.

The process involved might be as simple as suspending the approval of the certification, moving all GMOs out of the facility (in accordance with OGTR transport guidelines), renovating, and finally lifting the suspension. Or it could be more complex, requiring a series of variations (which can take up to four to six weeks for the OGTR to approve). Depending on the nature of the renovation or refurbishment, it may also be necessary to arrange for one or more inspections.

Next meeting of the Committee:
Wednesday 1 December.
12:30pm in the Mills Room,
Fourth Floor, Chancelery.