MEETINGS

2015

17 December
Reproductive surgery course
The Netherlands
Email: secr@harlan.com

2016

27–29 January
Systems Toxicology 2016
Les Diablerets, Switzerland
www.systox2016.ch/

12 February
Invertebrates as Alternative Models in Biomedical Research Centre hospitalier universitaire vaudois (CHUV)
Lausanne, Switzerland
www.fondazioneguidobernardini.org/en/training_initiatives/event_detail.aspx?IDEvent=91&IDEventType=5&IDEventSection=1&year=2016

8–11 March
IAT Congress 2016
Northern England
www.iat.org.uk/congress

16–18 March
Organizing and Operating Activities in a Laboratory Animal Facility
Italy
www.fondazioneguidobernardini.org/en/training_initiatives/event_detail.aspx?IDEvent=86&IDEventType=3

20–23 March
13th Transgenic Technology Meeting
Prague, Czech Republicwww.transtechsociety.org/tt2016/

21–22 April
Zebrafish: Husbandry, Care and Welfare
University College of London, UK
www.fondazioneguidobernardini.org/en/training_initiatives/event_detail.aspx?IDEvent=90&IDEventType=5

12–13 May
Health Monitoring of Rodents: Traditional and Innovative Approaches
Italy
www.fondazioneguidobernardini.org/en/training_initiatives/event_detail.aspx?IDEvent=87&IDEventType=3&IDEventSection=1&year=2016

13–16 June
13th FELASA Congress
Brussels, Belgium
www.felasa2016.eu/

13–14 September
SGV Annual Meeting
Basel, Switzerland
www.naturalsciences.ch/organisations/sgv/meetings

6–7 October
The Management of Genetically Modified Rodent Colonies
Italy
www.fondazioneguidobernardini.org/en/training_initiatives/event_detail.aspx?IDEvent=88&IDEventType=3&IDEventSection=1&year=2016

22–24 October
AISAL Annual Meeting
Naples, Italy
www.aisal.org/convegni-e-simposi/xxii-simposio-aisal-innovazione-nella-scienza-degli-animali-da-laboratorio-rappresentare-il-futuro-oggi-3/

16–18 November
Managing Resources in the Modern Animal Facilities
Italy
www.fondazioneguidobernardini.org/en/training_initiatives/event_detail.aspx?IDEvent=89&IDEventType=3&IDEventSection=1&year=2016

To feature your event in this calendar please email the details to info@labanimaleurope.eu

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

Shared Ageing Research Models (ShARM)
www.sharmuk.org

The Shared Ageing Research Models (ShARM) website is the public face of a biorepository project funded by the Wellcome Trust. The project aims to facilitate the sharing of resources—specifically, aged murine tissue and mouse models of ageing—among researchers who study the ageing process.

This project is incorporated as a not-for-profit organisation. It is supported by a collaboration that includes the Universities of Sheffield and Newcastle, both of which excel in research in the field of ageing, and the Medical Research Council (MRC) Harwell. The Principal Investigator of the ShARM project is Ilaria Bellantuono of the University of Sheffield, who is in charge of the university's Skeletal Analysis Laboratories. Anyone who works with aged murine models is invited to become a member of the ShARM community. Membership is free and on the website members can order murine tissues and participate in discussion forums. The ShARM project began in 2012 and addresses several goals. One goal is to reduce the use of mice in ageing research. ShARM can remove 20 different tissue samples from one mouse that a lab has already used for one purpose and then save those samples in a biorepository. ShARM can then make that tissue available to other researchers at a relatively low expense and without profit. The second goal is to stimulate research in ageing by making such samples available affordably, bypassing the need to purchase and raise mice for as long as 24 months. An informative video explains that purchasing a mouse costs £300 (approximately €420) plus the cost of maintaining it in an animal facility. ShARM sells tissue from aged mice for £35 (approximately €49) and from young control mice for £30 (approximately €42) per sample plus shipping and VAT. The homepage has ample material describing what ShARM does and its value to the research community. There is a link to an informative video on ShARM's role in providing tissue for ageing research and another link to a recent blog post on the website for the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement & Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs). The blog post features a perspective from Tom Kirkwood of Newcastle University, a researcher and expert on ageing. Kirkwood, who is a co-applicant on the Wellcome Trust grant to ShARM and a member of its management board, explains how having access to a murine tissue repository like ShARM compares to working on ageing mouse tissue 20 years ago.

ShARM allows researchers to select tissue samples or contact a lab that maintains a colony of mice appropriate for their work. Tissue samples are either frozen in liquid nitrogen and shipped on dry ice or fixed in formalin and embedded in paraffin. ShARM's live ageing colonies page gives details on available colonies from which samples can be obtained directly. Here, ShARM serves only as an intermediary, arranging the tissue exchange and physically aiding or training the lab's staff in appropriate methods of tissue removal and preservation. A 'FAQs' page describes ShARM's Materials Transfer Agreement between it and any organisation that obtains tissue from ShARM. It describes costs, fixation methods, necessary information about the mouse husbandry, the anonymity of those sharing the bioresources, the process of tissue contribution and access to live ageing colonies. Still, the overall function of the site is to share resources for research. The 'Get Aged Mice' tab at the top of the page leads to two buttons to choose from, reading "Do you need live aged mice?" and "Do you need tissues from aged mice?" We began with the latter question, which led to a page titled, 'Get Aged Tissues' with the subheading 'Become a ShARM ambassador and earn free tissues'. This page describes a deal whereby if you introduce three colleagues to ShARM and they purchase mouse tissue, you will be eligible to obtain tissue from five aged and five young mice for free. Below this offer, there is a search box for tissue type. Entering the search term 'muscle' led to a nine-page list providing information for 86 different muscle tissue samples. Some samples were from transgenic animals and others were from selected strains; one sample was listed as zero months of age, and a hind quarter was available from a 20-month-old male Mongolian gerbil. Information about the animal's derivation and husbandry can be found by clicking on the hyperlinked mouse strain in the table of search results. You can order tissue by clicking on an 'Order' button in the table, or you can complete the short form at the bottom of the page to order all samples listed in the table.

Ratings:	Basic to Excellent
Ease of Use	
Content	
Up to Date	
Visual Impact	
Overall Score	

Back in the page titled 'Get Aged Mice', the button for live aged mice leads to information about colonies that are currently available, including several at the University of Michigan in the US. There are also links to the commercial suppliers Charles River, Harlan and Janvier Labs. The site also features pages on 'Welfare', which are available to members once they have logged in.

This website is an excellent idea, although for now the project is relatively small. As time goes on, however, and people learn about the project, more preserved specimens and live animals will likely become available.