

DRAFT

TO: CB/T. K. Mattingly

cc:

FROM: CB/W. E. Thornton

CB/J. W. Young

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SUBJECT: "Animal Health Protection Plan"

The best that I can do on the above subject is to give you a sort of blow by blow description of what has happened.

The attached memorandum was in response to the original FOD memo expressing concern at mixing a load of animals and humans without adequate control to prevent damage or disease to the humans by the animals. The problem was delegated to William Bush, an engineer in life sciences who is the manager of SMD III. He in turn appointed Dr. Hoffman, a veterinarian, who I believe has worked here only in radiobiology for the past four years, to head a committee to write the rules. Bush put various people on it including myself but no other medical doctors.

Numerous attempts to get a committee meeting held were not successful. Several months went by and Dr. Hoffman produced a health protection plan for animals. After seeing this document, unusually vigorous agitation finally produced a full committee meeting which was also attended by Dr. Sam Pool, Head of Clinical Medicine and by Dr. Reinartz, an infectious disease expert from the University of Texas. The document was considered unsuitable by everyone present, <sup>except</sup> ~~but~~ the author, Dr. Hoffman, and it was

*unanimously*

agreed that two steps would be immediately taken. The committee would pitch ~~in~~ to 1) prepare a top cover document which would generally outline the areas of concern and the approach to <sup>a</sup> solution of the entire animal problem and 2) to immediately generate the necessary details for only the five species of animals that we are dealing with in SMD III. Dr. Pool apparently appointed a microbiologist to rewrite the effort. Several of us attempted unsuccessfully to make inputs to this document.

The next thing that happened was that a meeting was held at LSD Directorate level and a new committee formed with Dr. Hoffman still heading it, Dr. Hordinsky from flight medicine replacing me, with a microbiologist and a bioengineer added. The original document now rewritten, I consider ~~totally inadequate, frequently~~ <sup>somewhat</sup> naive, and above all unresponsive to the problem at hand. ~~For example~~ <sup>It is worried about a few diseases on dogs & cats in the Seattle area.</sup>

At this time, there are serious deficiencies both in the approach and the documents generated to date including: 1) It is too late already, 2) It is aimed toward keeping the animals healthy and assumes that this will automatically insure the health of people; e.g., no concern at all is given as to what to do in the case of bites, scratches, etc. It could be assured that this ~~would in fact happen~~ <sup>approach would be taken</sup> when a veterinarian was made chairman of the committee, for the business of a veterinarian ~~was made~~ is the health of animals. Another basic error is that JSC which has had no animal experience, has now attempted to generate a document covering an area in which they have had zero experience <sup>so far</sup> ~~totally~~ ignoring the research

center whose major function has been animal handling. It seems to me that rather than JSC trying to get into the animal business we would be very well advised to have JSC physicians plus appropriate consultants interested in human health working with and monitoring the efforts of the animal people at Ames Research Center. In my opinion, the board should be made up ~~of the very least~~ of a chairman from JSC who is a current physician and possibly a co-chairman from Ames Research Center knowledgeable in animal work plus an infectious disease specialist, a microbiologist and a crewmember who will be involved in handling the animals. If other members such as bioengineers (which surprises me for I know of little that a bioengineer can contribute to this problem) are needed so ~~bit~~<sup>get</sup> it. They should immediately address themselves to the problem of SMD III and for the moment, forget trying to write documents that are going to cover every thing that will be flown during the Space Shuttle area.

We face very real problems here which include; Ames Research Center has recently lost its veterinarian who was head of and responsible for animal care. There is ~~not~~ one in this working job at the moment and Ames is depending upon the inertia of established procedures and practices plus the integrity of animal suppliers to provide and maintain healthy animals.

A certain amount of faith is required in such a process. More importantly, <sup>1</sup>so far excepting the m.s., but this is luck all crewmembers and lab people are being bitten, <sup>1</sup>urinated and defecated upon multiple times, by a variety of animals whose health care in some cases is none existent. For example, the frog experiment is currently using frogs that are being caught by peasants in Mexico and shipped directly into this

move <sup>1</sup> ~~to~~ here



country without any form of health stabilization and indeed the principle investigator was complaining because the supplier would not guarantee the health of the frogs and that they were dying regularly. Furthermore, in a matter of days to weeks JSC who has never handled animals is going to be responsible for the care and health maintenance of hundreds of rats, 8 or 10 monkeys, mice, ~~frogs~~ and so on, part of which we will work with and be locked up with. This issue ~~as usual~~ is being side stepped by hiring a supposedly competent contractor to suddenly start an entirely new facility ~~I have not seen~~ offsite in our area without, ~~any rules or regulations on the part of JSC.~~ The written plans that I have seen were totally inadequate in virtually every area to even insure the health of the animals.

It appears to be the same old story, a good deal of sound and fury has been generated in Life Sciences and I'm sure that they will say that the problem is well in hand. They are certainly performing their work to their own satisfaction and are being very careful to exclude any one from their decision making processes who might in any way be critical.

As for my response, I had decided that I would simply accept the risk of working with animals which I considered ~~all~~ marginally safe plus taking all possible precautions that I can to avoid the possibility of contamination in our procedures. For example, I insisted that they not use the human waste management center in the mid-deck <sup>for</sup> disposal of monkey and rat urine and feces. I certainly do not agree with ~~w~~ what has happened to date, but

assume that I can do nothing further about it (and come to think of it I will not be the first crewmember to have to acquiesce to Life Sciences procedures when they were against his better judgement). The fact that I supposedly have some knowldege of this area has only made the problem worse. ~~I will always have to reserve the right to not participate in~~  
~~procedures~~ *which seem clearly unsafe in my best judgement* We have enough other problems to get on with for there is no way in the short time remaining that an adequate program can be written and instituted. Hopefully, they will do better when you fly your zoo.

William Thornton ~~WTS~~

Mission Specialist SMD III