At Charles River, we wanted to assure that the ethical care and use of animals remains at the heart of all the work we do. It is helpful for every institution or company to have a core value or position statement to anchor the animal care and use program. From this anchor, we implemented activities which enhance a culture of caring:

- **Specific training** about ethics, animal welfare, humane care and the 3Rs.
- **Continuous open communication** about the animal welfare topics.
- **Reinforcement** of the message.
- **Recognition** of excellence in the area of humane care.
- Establishment of appropriate programs for environmental enrichment and behavioral husbandry.
- Increased awareness of the 3Rs and the importance of implementation of the 3Rs.

A strong program starts with senior institutional officials and includes middle management, a group solely dedicated to animal welfare (The Animal Welfare and Training Department – AW&T) and, in the case of a global organization, a network of such individuals at every location (Animal Welfare Specialists). In our organization, these individuals have other duties and report to someone at the location but they formally serve as a liaison with AW&T and are appointed by the CEO.

**Training**

**Orientation** – Our orientation is seen by all employees, regardless of job description. It introduces the role animals play in biomedical research and our obligations to those animals, including mechanisms to report concerns. The concepts of the 3Rs are also introduced, and all employees sign a commitment pledge to humane care.

**Reinforcement Training** – In addition to duty specific training, employees with animal related responsibilities have additional, detailed training about animal welfare within the first 3 months of hire.

**Annual Animal Welfare Training** is mandatory for all employees who have animal related duties. Topics vary each year and have included such subjects as: the ethics, morals and values underlying our relationship with animals; the effect of handling on various research models; how EVERY member of the team can impact animal welfare; how animal research models are created and what they do for us; unique features of various species and how they impact welfare; the importance of environmental to animal welfare; how animal welfare events are reviewed; animal behavior as an indices of animal welfare; implementation of the 3Rs; and engaging in the conversation about the use of animals in research. After annual training, employees re-sign their commitment pledge to humane care. All training is archived and maintained on our intranet for later use.

**Communication**

Ongoing communication about the importance of animal welfare keeps the culture alive. In our company, there are **quarterly videos** from our CEO which never fail to mention animal welfare. In addition, at site and even room level, a regular item on the agenda is how we can enhance animal welfare. These are two way conversations where staff are encouraged to participate.

**Reinforcing the Message**

Activities used to reinforce animal welfare include:

- **Small Tokens of Appreciation**;
- **Posters** prominently displayed around our sites;

and a three tiered **Awards Program** that includes:

- Quarterly Promoting Animal Welfare and Safety (PAWS) Awards
- Annual Humane Care Value Awards
- An Annual President’s Award

**Environmental Enrichment & Behavioral Husbandry**

To facilitate ongoing enhancements in this area, we have a network of behaviorists /behavioral champions. A web-based team site, regular t-cons and collaboration on global guidelines fosters communication.

**The 3Rs**

The 3Rs are regularly highlighted on our intranet homepage. Our 3Rs Working Group (WG) maintains a page on the intranet featuring the latest 3Rs advances implemented at Charles River and beyond and meetings opportunities. The 3Rs WG created a set of 3Rs training modules, mandatory for our Study Directors.

**Summary**

There is no one formula for assuring animal welfare. The various facets of our program provides some activities we have found successful.