THE A.T.A. MANUAL OF LABORATORY ANIMAL PRACTICE AND TECHNIQUES

THE ANIMAL TECHNICIANS ASSOCIATION

THE A.T.A. MANUAL OF LABORATORY ANIMAL PRACTICE AND TECHNIQUES

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Foreword

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Medical Research Council

It can be claimed with confidence that the very great majority of scientists who have engaged in animal experimentation in this country have done so in a humane manner and with full consciousness of the responsibility involved. The high standards observed by professionally qualified experimenters in their laboratories have not, however, always been matched in the past by equally high standards in the animal house. It is perhaps not surprising that this should be so, for a scientific worker engaged in fairly simple acute physiological or pharmacological experiments on animals might well be scrupulously careful in his work in the laboratory but less mindful of the treatment that the animal had received before it reached him.

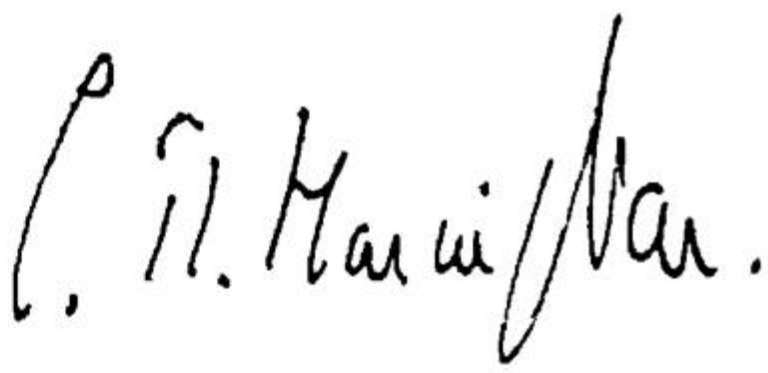
With the development of other types of biological work involving the use of animals, however, matters changed. In research on such subjects as nutrition, endocrinology, immunology, and genetics the experimenter found himself frequently involved in daily examination of the animals he was using over long periods. Experience of this kind inevitably brought to the workers concerned the realization of the essential importance of animal care in all its aspects to the success of their experiments, and hence put an end to the idea, which had been prevalent for too long, that the work of the animal technician was an unskilled occupation.

It is fortunate that by the time that professional biologists had come to this realization, there were available men and women engaged in the care of animals for experimental work, who by intelligent devotion to their task over long periods, had acquired the enthusiasm and the breadth of knowledge needed for the formation of an effective Animal Technicians Association. In the relatively short period of its existence, this Association has indeed brought about a truly remarkable improvement in the position of animal technicians, by systematic training to fit them for their duties and by organization to ensure that the importance of these duties is properly recognized. Largely as the result of the efforts of the Association, it has now become evident that the work of an animal technician can offer a satisfying career.

As in any other career, success will depend on adequacy of background knowledge as well as on the practical skills. Hence this manual which, edited as it is and for the most part written by men and women engaged in the practical care of animals, is planned to cover the field of knowledge required

by the skilled animal technician of the present day. The extent of this knowledge is self-evident from a glance at the list of contents, and the idea that a fully trained animal technician ought to have even a superficial acquaintance with some of the topics discussed would have seemed totally unrealistic twenty-five years ago.

Nevertheless the idea is certainly right and therefore, as one who has been concerned with biological research for more than forty years, I welcome this book for the influence that I am confident it will exert on present and coming generations of animal technicians, whose part in the development of biological work will certainly grow in importance as the years go on.



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