

## CALAS 2018 – Meeting Report

Submitted by Marina Gertsenstein, 21 May 2018



The Canadian Association for Laboratory Animal Science (CALAS)/ L'Association Canadienne pour la science des animaux de laboratoire (ACSAL) <http://calas-acsal.org> 57th Symposium took place in Quebec City from May 5 to 8, 2018. The conference was held near the Old Quebec – well preserved walled city recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Site. The symposium was attended by 450 people. Generous sponsors of the symposium included: Charles River Laboratories, Lab Diet, Techiplast, World Courier, NuAire, Allentown, Steris, The Jackson Laboratory etc.

The theme of the symposium was "Learning to live together". Canadians live in the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest country in the world, populated by more than 35 million people who learned to live together and be enriched by our differences in a country where the respect of all, the freedom of expression and the education of the citizens are at the heart of our lives.

The Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) held one day national workshop in conjunction with 57th CALAS Symposium. Celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its extraordinary accomplishments CCAC presented the opening keynote address and scientific session "Working together to refine animal based research". Since 1968, CCAC has brought the high standards of animal ethics and care to science. These standards have been developed based on the expert peer advice and current interpretation of scientific evidence, which incorporate the values of Canadians, as well as strategies to reduce the numbers of, and the harm and distress to, animals in science. CCAC mandate includes assessment and certification of the institutions working with animals for scientific purposes to ensure that they meet CCAC standards promoting awareness, understanding, and sensitivity to animal ethics and care in Canadian science. Animal health technicians are at the heart of a respectful environment for animals increasing the quality of care provided and the comfort given to our laboratory animals.

A full day of French language education was available to the participants of several parallel track sessions. It included great presentation of ISTT member Jade Desjardins (McGill University) on the transgenic technologies and CRISPR/Cas9 revolution. Jade Desjardins and Nicolas Thiboutôt-Gagnon

(Université Laval) assisted with setting up ISTT booth in the exhibit hall that attracted interest from the local animal facilities previously not familiar with ISTT.

Here are few more highlights. Roundtable 'The Digital Vivarium' discussed the emerging technologies that help managing the animal care programs. Exhaust air dust PCR testing in IVC systems was presented as an alternative to traditional soiled bedding monitoring for routine surveillance of rodent pathogens. Reported data confirmed that this method improves the detection of most agents especially those that do not transfer efficiently to bedding sentinels. A systematic review evaluated the studies on rat tickling and concluded that it is very promising method human-animal interaction in the laboratory that decreased rats' anxiety and fear.

In addition to talks and workshops the conference had several social events, including Charles River reception in the iconic Fairmont Le Château Frontenac hotel with its breathtaking views of the St. Lawrence River and the architecture of the Old fortified City of Quebec.