DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

FOR US POSTAL SERVICE DELIVERY:
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
6700B Rockledge Drive, Suite 2500, MSC 6910
Bethesda, Maryland 20892-6910
Home Page: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/olaw.htm

FOR EXPRESS MAIL:
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
6700B Rockledge Drive, Suite 2500
Bethesda, Maryland 20817
Telephone: (301) 496-7163
Facsimile: (301) 480-3387

May 10, 2022

Re: Animal Welfare Assurance
A3413-01 [OLAW Case 3J]

Michael R. Blackburn, Ph.D.
Executive Vice President and
Chief Academic Officer
University of Texas Health Science Center-Houston
7000 Fannin St., UCT-1732
Houston, TX 77030

Dear Dr. Blackburn,

The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) acknowledges receipt of your April 27, 2022, letter reporting an adverse event at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, following up on an initial telephone notification on April 26, 2022. According to the information provided, OLAW understands that on April 7, 2022, an aquatics technician promptly removed the algal overgrowth that blocked the drain hole in the tank standpipe, resulting in the mechanical failure and subsequent overflowing of one tank in the recirculating frog system. Although there were no animal welfare issues observed on the day of the failure, two African clawed frogs died the following day, apparently from the physiological stress due to the near drowning experience. There were no animal welfare issues to report for the remaining ten frogs on the associated PHS funded activity.

The corrective actions consisted of performing monthly, instead of periodic, flushing of the standpipes in each tank of the recirculating frog system. The monthly flushing will be added to the list of scheduled tasks routinely performed by the aquatic technicians and the aquatic technician involved in this incident has been instructed to promptly inform the manager and veterinary personnel when tanks are found to be overflowing, so that affected frogs can be more closely monitored for health issues.

Based on the information provided, OLAW is satisfied that appropriate actions have been taken to investigate, correct and prevent recurrence of the noncompliance. We appreciate having been informed about this matter and find no cause for further action by this Office.

Sincerely,

Neera V. Gopee -S

Digitally signed by Neera V. Gopee -S
Date: 2022.05.10 12:55:33 -04'00'

Neera V. Gopee, DVM, PhD, DACLAM, DABT
Associate Director, Animal Welfare Policy
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
National Institutes of Health

cc: IACUC contact

A3413-3J

UTHealth Houston

Office of the Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer

Michael R. Blackburn, Ph.D.
Executive Vice President, Chief Academic Officer

April 27, 2022

Brent Morse, D.V.M., DACLAM
Director, Division of Compliance Oversight
Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare
Rockledge One, Suite 360, MSC 7982
6705 Rockledge Drive
Bethesda, MD 20892-7982

Re: Assurance A3413-01

Dear Dr. Morse,

The Animal Welfare Committee (AWC), the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee for the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) provides this report of a mechanical failure resulting in death to animals. In accordance with Assurance A3413-01 and PHS Policy IV.F.3.a., a preliminary report was made by the (b) (6) to you on April 26, 2022.

On April 18, 2022, the AWC received a report of a mechanical failure resulting in death to animals. On April 7, the aquatics husbandry technician found one tank of African clawed frogs on the recirculating frog system in the Center for Laboratory Animal Medicine and Care vivarium to be overflowing. The overflow was quickly determined to have resulted from algal overgrowth blocking the drain hole on the tank standpipe. The technician promptly flushed the standpipe to remove the blockage, and the water level in the tank returned to normal; no health problems were noted in any of the frogs at that time of the repair. However, on April 8, the technician discovered that two frogs had died and notified the veterinary and research staff. The physiological stress due to near-drowning may have contributed to the adverse event. All the other ten frogs in the tank appeared active at that time. No health problems were noted when the frogs were checked later that day.

Preventive actions include monthly rather than periodic flushing of the standpipes in each tank on the frog system. Monthly flushing of the standpipes in each tank on the frog system will be added to the list of scheduled tasks routinely performed by the aquatics technicians in the housing room. In addition, the aquatics technician has been instructed to promptly inform his manager and the veterinary staff when tanks with frogs are found to be overflowing so that the affected frogs can be more closely monitored for health problems.

The animals involved in this incident were supported by NIH funding (5R01DK115655-03). No significant costs associated with this event were identified. Funds will be returned if associated costs are identified.

713.500.3544 phone 713.500.3059 fax
7000 Fannin St., UCT-1732, Houston, TX 77030

The AWC Protocol Deviation Subcommittee has investigated the incident, evaluated the corrective action plan, and determined that the incident has been successfully resolved.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

(b) (6)

Michael R. Blackburn, Ph.D.
Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer

MRB/tsl

cc: Dr. Juan Herrera, IACUC Chair
(b) (6)
AWC Office

Wolff, Axel (NIH/OD) [E]

From: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Sent: Monday, May 2, 2022 7:17 AM
To: The Office of EVPCAO, GM
Cc: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD)
Subject: RE: OLAW Final Reports - Assurance A3413-01

Thank you for these reports, (b) (6) We will send responses soon.

Axel Wolff, M.S., D.V.M.
Deputy Director, OLAW

From: The Office of EVPCAO, GM <Office-EVPCAO@uth.tmc.edu>
Sent: Friday, April 29, 2022 1:38 PM
To: OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>; OLAW Division of Compliance Oversight (NIH/OD) <olawdco@od.nih.gov>
Cc: Blackburn, Michael R <Michael.R.Blackburn@uth.tmc.edu>; Herrera, Juan <Juan.Herrera@uth.tmc.edu>; (b) (6) (b) (6) Animal Welfare Committee, GM <awc@uth.tmc.edu>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] OLAW Final Reports - Assurance A3413-01

Sent on behalf of Michael R. Blackburn, Ph.D., EVP & Chief Academic Officer, UTHealth Houston –

Good afternoon, Dr. Morse.

I have attached two PDFs concerning the above-referenced. Please advise if you have any issues with receiving the attachments.

Thank you.

(b) (6)

A3413

Initial Report of Noncompliance

By: BCM

Date: **4/26/2022** Time: Voicemail

Name of Person reporting: (b) (6)
Telephone #: (b) (6)
Fax #:
Email:

Name of Institution: __Univ. of Texas Health (Houston)_____
Assurance number: ___A3413_____

Did incident involve PHS funded activity? __?____
Funding component: _____
Was funding component contacted (if necessary): _____

What happened?: Recirculating water system for African Clawed frogs plugged by algae and overflowed. Two frogs dead the next day. Other 10 frogs O.K.

Species involved: Xenopus
Personnel involved:
Dates and times: April 7, 2022
Animal deaths: yes

Projected plan and schedule for correction/prevention (if known): _____

Standpipes for all systems will be flushed monthly instead of every other month.

Projected submission to OLAW of final report from Institutional Official:

< 60 days

OFFICE USE ONLY
Case #_____