



Annual Activity Report for year 2020

The year 2020 has been a tough and challenging year forcing most of the people around the world to get used to concepts such as “lockdowns,” “mask mandates” and “social distancing” that were previously unknown to most of us. Today, they are part of our everyday language as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact all aspects of our personal and working lives.

In this situation of travel and gathering restrictions as measures imposed to control the spread of COVID-19, the challenge that FGB had to face was how to adapt its traditional educational methods and to develop online teaching tools.

At first, our team was a bit sceptical about moving from face-to-face lessons to distance education.

Based on a decade of experiences we assumed that in-class training facilitated interaction which stimulate students to be engaged and focused on contents during the session.

On the other hand, we were aware that, in times of Covid-19, switching to e-learning was the only option that would have allowed students to get their training, with the added benefit of being able to do it when and where they wanted, not to mention the consequent reduction of transport and accommodation costs, saving precious hours of work and, last but not least, reducing pollution and protecting the environment.

FGB has been able to not only adapt but thrive on change. In these times of emergency, online education has become the only viable system that has helped us continue to provide our services, while maintaining the high standards of quality for which the Fondazione has earned the respectability and recognition in the Laboratory Animal Science Community around the world.

This was possible also thanks to the involvement and prompt activation of the members of FGB Scientific Committee (SC) who were almost all familiar with distance learning. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that Rafael Frias is a new member of the SC since January 2020. Rafael is the Head of Education and Director of LAS Education and Training Unit at the Comparative Medicine at Karolinska Institute. His great competence and experience in online training was particularly supportive and helpful in the design and management of the first FGB e-learning courses.

Resources had been put on a new web platform (Cisco-webex) based on annual licence, in order to have an adequate tool for events/webinars (accessible, with a good cost/performance ratio, safe and confidential for participants and users, less exposed to future banning by Institutions/Companies/Academies). First steps had been moved using Cisco, in 2021 a specific training will be provided for secretary and SC if needed by members.

We hope that in 2021 the Covid-19 emergency will be over and we will all be able to return to our previous lives and habits, without restrictions and containment measures. However, we must take advantage of the lessons learned in this circumstance. FGB will continue on the path it has taken by implementing online training, though it will not abandon, when



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feasible, the face-to-face courses that have allowed FGB to achieve, over the years, a well-respected status as provider of education and training in Laboratory Animal Science, primarily in Europe but also in other regions of the world.

As in the past, also in 2020 FGB on-line courses awarded continuing professional development (CPD) credits by the Institute of Animal Technology (IAT) and the Swiss Veterinary Association. The Webinar on Covid-19 pandemic and Laboratory Animal Science received 3,6 ECM credits from the Italian Health Ministry (applicable only for Italy).

FGB is an AALAS affiliate member and member of the Royal Society of Biology.

TRAINING COURSES

Though during 2020 FGB was forced to cancel most of face to face courses, we were able to organize the following courses:

- **“Herpetology”**
(3 days): 8 October, 4-5 November, Utrecht University, NL. 14 PE (Professional Education) points. This course was the result of the new collaboration with Utrecht University, the Netherlands. 25 participants attended the course. The first day focused on the zoological aspects of herpetology: diversity, anatomy and physiology of several organ systems and evolutionary and developmental topics were discussed. The aim was to provide an overview of amphibian and reptile biology. During the second and third day, herpetology experts illustrated topics such as: care and husbandry practices, anaesthesia and chemical restraint as well as pain management. We are pleased and honoured of this new collaboration with the University of Utrecht, an organization that is recognized and appreciated all over the world for having been a precursor in Laboratory Animal Sciences and for its courses offered since 1986. We are particularly grateful for such collaboration to Daniela Salvatori, formerly from LUMC (Leiden University Medical Centre) and recently appointed as Director Continuing Education at Utrecht University.
- **Online course "What should you know about your rodent facility?"**
(2 days): 14-15 July and 29-30 September. 10 CPD points by IAT, 15 CPD credits by Royal Society of Biology and 1.5 days continuing education for person carrying out procedures on animals and person designing procedures and projects by the Swiss Veterinarian. 12 participants attended the session in July and 18 the September one. The latter was performed again to accommodate all the people who could not attend the previous course due to the numerical limit (maximum 12 participants), instead, this course allowed the registration of up to a maximum of 18 participants.
- **Online course " Fondamenti di gestione di un moderno stabulario per roditori"**
(2 days): 10-11 November and 15-16 December. The course awarded 1.5 days continuing education for person carrying out procedures on animals and person designing procedures and projects by the Swiss Veterinarian. 18 participants attended each session of the course.



SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

- **Workshop: “Establishing score sheets and defining endpoints in fish experiments”**
(1 day) 28 January, Bergen University, Norway. This course was the result of a FGB collaboration with the University of Bergen. 37 participants attended the workshop. The aims of the workshop were: to reach better harmonization on severity assessment of fish experiments and to identify targets for improvement including the use of humane endpoints. We are very grateful to the University of Bergen which is increasingly active in proposing interesting new collaborative initiatives to FGB.
- **Webinar: “COVID-19 pandemic & laboratory animal science: management of facilities, ethics and welfare. Good practice and lessons for the future”**
(1 day) July 7. The webinar was the result of a collaboration with the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale di Teramo. It attracted 262 participants. The high level of the speakers and their clear and practical approach raised interesting discussions and interactions with the audience. The Italian participants received 3,6 CPD (ECM by the Italian Health Ministry).
- **Webinar: “Assessing and alleviating pain and distress in laboratory animals”;**
(2 days) 16-17 November, Karolinska Institute, Sweden. 25 participants. The course was organized as a collaboration with the prestigious Swedish Institute. It provided advanced training in the recognition, prevention and alleviation of pain and distress in laboratory animal species. The main purpose of the course was to enable participants to apply and assess the value of improvements to methods used in projects with live animals, as key element in Refining animal research.

PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

- FGB was pleased to sponsor the "3R ADVANCES CONFERENCE", University of Hyderabad, India. This is the first step towards what we hope will be a long-term collaboration with the Indian colleagues. Marcel Gyger, member of FGB SC, as head of this project represented the Fondazione with an online presentation of the activities and mission of FGB.
- FGB leaflets or advertisement pages were included in some laboratory animal science international journals.
- Lab Animal Europe (LAE). Half page advertisement was published on Buyers' Guide.
- Information were regularly distributed by internet to FGB mailing list and published on relevant associations' web sites.
- FGB Mailing list was further expanded, by a collaboration with other Institutions and a videoclip on FGB new on-line programs was realized and posted on the website.
- FGB website (www.fondazioneguidobernardini.org) was constantly updated to better



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respond to the need of an efficient and timely spread of information.

FUTURE INITIATIVES

Three training courses and a scientific event have been scheduled for 2021:

- **Online course "What should you know about your rodent facility?"**. 2-3 February.
- **Online course "Introduction to microbiological monitoring in rodents' facilities"**. 2 March.
- **Online course " Fondamenti di gestione di un moderno stabulario per roditori"**. 20-21 April.

- **Webinars "Italian Zebrafish 2021-2022"**, February 4th and 11th. The webinars are addressed to young and senior scientists of the Italian and International Zebrafish community; they will have the opportunity to share their experience and to learn about the latest and cutting-edge research and technologies.

Courses with other Institutions/Societies: preliminary discussion on mutual interests and feasibility for Courses/educational events began at the end of the year (Utrecht University NL, CLAST College of laboratory animal science and technology UK) and is still ongoing.