

**Dear readers,**

the first edition of ALTEX, then called „Bulletin Alternativen zu Tierexperimenten“ was published 25 years ago, in December 1984. The journal was started by Christoph Reinhardt (then working with Prof. Zbinden at the Institute for Toxicology, ETH/University of Zurich) and Angelo Vedani (then Organic Chemistry, University of Zurich, now Stiftung Biografik Labor 3R in Basel). From the very beginning to the present day Irène Hagmann has worked as a lector for ALTEX. Poignant cartoons by Peter Kistler were unforgettable contributions to the Bulletin and to ALTEX until 1996. Initially ALTEX published only two issues per year. This changed with its affiliation with the Spektrum Akademischer Verlag in Heidelberg in 1993. This change was wrought by Franz P. Gruber, who gave up his permanent position at the University of Konstanz to become editor-in-chief of ALTEX and who has been at the helm of ALTEX ever since.

Since 1994 ALTEX has published four issues per year plus one or two supplements. This was enabled by the considerable financial support of Zurich Animal Protection bestowed on the former publisher FFVFF (now Animalfree Research, Zurich) for the editorial work. Soon special issues for important congresses were also printed, first for Linz, then for the World Congresses 2005 in Berlin and 2009 in Rome. These special issues always require sponsorship, as the costs are not covered by the subscription fees. We thank Animalfree Research for making the Linz Proceedings available to all ALTEX subscribers; a generous donation by CAAT/Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore enabled the provision of the Abstract Book for Rome 2009 to all ALTEX subscribers. The link to the Linz congresses was forged by Horst Spielmann, also part of the editorial team almost since the start of ALTEX, in his capacity as president of MEGAT (now EUSAAT).

One of the most important organisational improvements was made by the founding of the publishing association ALTEX Edition in 2007. This shares the financial risk among all its members instead of it formerly being carried almost exclusively by Animalfree Research. The editorial staff of ALTEX would like to express their thanks and appreciation to Animalfree Research for the great support over many years.

Apart from the anniversary, 2009 was also a special year for ALTEX because it was the first year of a separation of languages. The former mixture of German and English was not attractive outside of the German-speaking countries. Since 2009 four issues are printed entirely in English and a fifth issue, ALTEXethik is published in German. The number of subscribers has already increased substantially in this year, and we expect that ALTEXethik will attract a new sphere of readers to whom the “dry science” and the English language are not easily accessible.

The choice to publish in English also marked the start of a new era for ALTEX when, in conjunction with the establishment of the Chair for Evidence-based Toxicology at Johns Hopkins University, ALTEX became the official organ of

CAAT, the oldest academic centre for alternative methods worldwide. ALTEX sees this step not as a forced stretch but as a natural progression away from a national view to an internationally accepted understanding that animals cannot unquestioningly be exploited as instruments even for human safety or medical progress.

The establishment of a chair for alternative methods in India by the Doerenkamp-Zbinden Foundation has led to a formidable movement towards alternative methods in that country. ALTEX will also have its own printing and distribution organisation in India from 2010.

In this issue the Food for Thought article discusses the importance of teaching upcoming toxicologists to work by the most modern scientific standards (which animal experiments do not live up to). The (almost too long) story of the replacement of the pyrogen test by a human whole blood method is described by Stefanie Schindler et al. Peter Kamusella and co-authors demonstrate once again how organs from the abattoir can be put to scientific use. The results of a literature study financed by Animalfree Research on the replacement of animal experiments and on animal-free procedures in nanotechnology are presented by Ursula G. Sauer. Chantra Eskes and co-authors put forward a concept for a Brazilian validation centre (BRACVAM). It is encouraging to read in the news items that more such national validation centres are being founded worldwide.

Thomas Hartung and Costanza Rovida offer a solution with their comment on the press release of ECHA in response to their article in ALTEX 3/09. No one knows how REACH will really contribute to protecting the environment. But it is certain that the use of experimental animals will increase under REACH. We should not let protecting the environment and protecting animals become incompatible goals. Evidence-based toxicology is needed here more than ever before.

In this issue you will find meeting reports that demonstrate that the replacement of animal experiments is being driven forward on a global scale. The news items, as always, must be limited to only a few 3R relevant subjects. The most important: CAAT is now also in Europe, at the University of Konstanz. CAAT-EU was founded in December 2009, one of the most important events of the year 2009. The EU and the US will now no longer follow the NIH principle (not invented here); they will work together from the start on every development of alternative methods.

For the year 2010 we wish you good health and happiness

The ALTEX-Team

Sonja von Aulock, Franz P. Gruber, Irène Hagmann,
Hans Peter Hoesli, Carol Howard, Michael Hughes,
Goran Krummenacher, Petra Mayr, Betsy Nessen Merrill,
Carolin Rauter and Horst Spielmann