

Marin County Secondary Science Fair March 5-8, 2012

Requirements and Rules for the Use of Animals

Marin County Office of Education follows the recommendations of the Scientific Review Committee (SRC) for the San Francisco Bay Area Science Fair (SFBASF). The SRC has concluded that research involving **nonhuman vertebrate animals** is generally not appropriate for projects submitted to the SFBASF.

The only projects that will be considered for grades 7-12 are those limited to the observation of vertebrate animals in their natural habitat, or in other environments not controlled or manipulated by the student (e.g., zoos). In all cases, the review committee must be satisfied that the project will not result in discomfort, pain, or other adverse effects on the animals' health or well being.

Project Proposal forms for the Marin County Secondary Science Fair are due no later than January 21, 2011 and must be approved before starting the project.

Requirements:

1. The basic aim of any project involving living animals should be to increase the knowledge or understanding of life processes. It should not include the demonstration or development of surgical techniques. All projects involving animals must therefore have a clearly defined objective, which requires the use of animals to demonstrate a biological principle or to answer a specific question, and which cannot be accomplished by employing techniques that do not involve the use of animals.
2. A lower form of life should be selected for the project, rather than a higher form, whenever possible. Students are strongly urged to select invertebrate animals, plants or tissue culture. Invertebrate animals are especially suitable because of their wide variety and availability in large numbers.
3. California humane laws specifically forbid the mistreatment or neglect of animals, including animals used in schools and school-sponsored activities. Students, teachers and supervisors must know and obey these laws. Copies can be obtained from the State Humane Association of California.
4. All projects involving living animals must be preplanned and conducted with respect for life and for the humane needs and rights of the animals involved. This consideration must extend to the disposition of the animals after the conclusion of the project.

Rules:

1. The comfort of all animals used in any project shall be a prime concern. Animals must be obtained from a reliable source and the following basic needs must be assured: appropriate, comfortable quarters, adequate food and water, cleanliness and humane treatment, exercise when required for the species of animal used. Students must make arrangements to provide these basic needs at all times, including weekends, vacations and holiday periods.

2. No vertebrate/invertebrate animal will be subjected to any procedure or condition, including nutritional deficiency experiments, which results, either by intention or negligence, in pain, distinct discomfort, abnormal behavior, injury or death (except terminal non-experimental, humane euthanasia). The term "vertebrate animal" includes vertebrate embryos and fetuses, and fowl embryos within three days of hatching.
3. No surgery, including biopsy, will be performed on any living vertebrate/invertebrate animal.
4. To assure the humane treatment of animals, a qualified supervisor must assume responsibility for the condition of all living animals used. For all projects, this supervisor must be trained on the college or professional level in the proper care and handling of laboratory animals. For projects involving vertebrate animals, the supervisor must also have earned a doctoral degree in science or medicine and must also be current in the techniques to be used. For projects involving invertebrates only, the sponsoring teacher may act as the supervisor if qualified in the care of laboratory animals as above. Parents may not act as supervisor of any project involving living animals.
5. When planning the project, the student must arrange for the humane disposition of all animals involved after the project is completed. This may be done by placing them in an environment where they are assured of continued humane care or by releasing undomesticated species into a suitable wildlife environment, or by arranging for their humane euthanasia by a qualified adult. Students may not perform euthanasia on vertebrate animals under any circumstances. A complete account of the final disposition of all animals used must be included on the Completion Certificate for all projects involving living animals.
6. Before the project begins, the student must complete the Project Proposal Form. This Project Proposal Form **MUST** be signed by the sponsoring teacher and must be approved and signed by the adult supervisor before the project is started, and submitted to the SFBASF SRC and the Marin County Science Fair Coordinator by the due date on the form.
7. After the project is completed, the adult supervisor must sign the Completion Certificate. This Completion Certificate, attested by the sponsoring teacher and the school principal, must be submitted with the Project Abstract by the due date on the forms.
8. No live animals or remains of any kind or cultures (bacteria, fungi, etc.) may be displayed at the Science Fair.
9. Any project not conducted in conformity with these Guidelines (both requirements and rules) and the humane laws of California will be eliminated from competition and display. If a project is eliminated because of animal suffering through mistreatment or neglect, appropriate authorities will be notified. When projects are submitted for competition, decisions of the Marin County Fair Committee are final.

For more information contact Robin Gerrity, Competitions Coordinator
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