Maureen Best  
Health Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

As I begin my year as President of ABSA, I recognize that the past few months have marked an era of change for biosafety professionals. The publication of articles related to bioterrorism in this edition of the *Applied Biosafety* is very timely. Bioterrorism-related anthrax is a significant public health threat that has brought biosafety to the forefront and consumes much of our daily activities. A discussion on this topic immediately following our Member's Meeting at the New Orleans Biological Safety Conference provided an excellent forum for us to discuss the issue and exchange recent experiences. Many of you may have watched Debbie Hunt's on-camera interview regarding the potential application of irradiation in mail rooms. National media sources continue to seek ABSA's opinion on bioterrorism issues, including the applicability and use of primary containment devices to open “high-risk” suspicious mail, environmental sampling for anthrax, and the role of biosafety professionals in responding to bioterrorism.

As the current situation evolves, our ABSA members continue to develop recommendations and guidelines for their worksites where mail is handled or processed. They are collaborating with local first responders and public health and law enforcement agencies, responding to suspicious packages and bioterrorism threats, and decontaminating potentially contaminated sites and buildings. Fortunately, we are able to draw upon each other's expertise and exchange ideas. We have also posted bioterrorism-related information and links on our web site. This is consistent with ABSA's goal to provide a professional association for the continued and timely exchange of biosafety information.

Recent events have also emphasized the need to provide security for laboratories that handle or store biological or toxic agents that could be used as a terrorist weapon. Laboratory security, or "biosecurity," is different than biosafety in that it addresses the prevention of unauthorized removal and use of dangerous biological agents from the laboratory. Protocols on security practices (e.g., storage of pathogens, inventories, log books to record entry) and physical design security features (locks, restricted access) should be incorporated by every laboratory handling dangerous pathogens. A protocol for reporting and investigating security incidents (e.g., missing infectious substances, unauthorized entry) should also be addressed. ABSA's new Biosecurity Task Force will be working closely with security experts and our members to provide further information and solutions to the biosecurity issue. Stay tuned for more on this topic!

Finally, I would like to thank Joe Van Houten, the outgoing Chair of our Publications Committee. With the help of his committee, Joe's efforts have led to the successful redesign of our Journal and publication of the popular *Biosafety Anthology* series. Ira Salkin, in addition to his ongoing position as Co-Editor of *Applied Biosafety*, has accepted the duties of Chair of the Publications Committee. I look forward to working with Ira and his team.