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**CEN Workshop**

In November 2007, I had the pleasure to be one of ABSA’s representatives to the final CEN workshop to develop an international laboratory standard for management of biological risks. CEN is the European Committee for Standardization. Although the CEN process was used, this is an international stakeholders’ agreement, not a European standard. Adherence is completely voluntary. The workshop was held in Brussels, with about 60 participants in attendance, and led by Drs. Stefan Wagener and Gary Burns. Countries represented included the United States, Canada, Argentina, Australia, United Kingdom, Ireland, Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Hungary, Kazakhstan, China, Japan, and Singapore. Participants represented academia, government, and private industry.

The purpose of this third workshop was to review and come to agreement on changes to the standards document that had been developed over the course of the two previous workshops and public comment period. As was required by CEN, the entire process had to be completed in one year. The participants carefully reviewed and discussed the 102 page document and 800 comments over a two-day period. The document was revised using a consensus process and accepted by all participants.

It will now be a CEN Workshop Agreement titled *Laboratory Bioshisk Management Standard*, and will be in effect for three years. At the end of that time, the participants will reconvene and decide on the future of the Agreement. One option for consideration is a future ISO standard. The next efforts (Phase II) will center on establishing an accreditation and certification system, which will include standards and qualifications for certifiers as well as certification protocols. This will not be a trivial task, but the stakeholders are determined to see it succeed.

We as ABSA members truly can be proud of this effort and the commitment and dedication by our past Council to see this finalized. In particular, my personal thanks go to Betsy Gilman Duane, Glenn Funk, Robert Hawley, and Patty Olinger for assisting and contributing to this great effort.

**IACET Accreditation and CEUs**

Earlier this month, ABSA received IACET accreditation, which means we can now offer Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for our courses. IACET is the internationally recognized organization for standards and authorization for continuing education and training. The CEU was created to: 1) provide a standard unit of measure; 2) quantify continuing adult education and training activities; and 3) serve the diversity of providers, activities, and purposes in adult education.

The ABSA Office submitted our application last spring. An IACET representative conducted a site visit at the office in early January, which LouAnn Burnett and Michelle McKinney attended. The site visit went very well, and ABSA was granted accreditation. This means you will receive CEUs for all ABSA courses you complete, which will aid all holders of the National Registry of Microbiologists (NRM) and other certifications in meeting their needs for recertification. Our thanks go to the ABSA Office staff, LouAnn, and Michelle for all their hard work and for representing our organization and educational offerings so well!

**Griffin Foundation Funds Available**

The Elizabeth R. Griffin Research Foundation, Inc. has generously provided funds to ABSA over the past few years. The Griffin Foundation is a nonprofit organization that promotes safe research practices and helps fund further research in the areas of zoonotic diseases. The funds are to be used for projects or activities which align with the goals of both organizations. Previous allocations of Griffin Foundation funds have been used to produce and distribute the Animal Biosafety DVD.

In 2008, ABSA has $20,000 of funding for activities which further our mutual goals. The precise type of activity(ies) is not prescribed by either organization; rather, we welcome a variety of requests. A Request for Proposal (RFP) form is on the ABSA web site. We know we have creative and knowledgeable members and strongly encourage everyone with ideas to apply for use of the Griffin Foundation funds. If you have an idea, please submit it!