Xenopus Model Welfare Organization White Paper

 **(Draft 1 March 13, 2024)**

The Xenopus Model Welfare Organization will be a community based collaborative organization. The organization will promote a custodial role for the Model Organism Xenopus that will guide the care, transport, and international rules for xenopus. It will promote the sustainability and hopefully the growth of the Model Organism Xenopus for the future. In order to achieve these objectives, the Xenopus Model Welfare Organization will broadly engage all users of xenopus and all stakeholders.

Xenopus “Model Welfare” requires a comprehensive and inclusive approach stakeholders agree on. This approach will begin to address the specific pressures on the model which include:

1. Oversight at the institutional level that lacks specific knowledge about xenopus.
2. Oversight that relies on protocols from other models.
3. Xenopus are a regulatory afterthought at the institutional and governmental levels.
4. Erroneous ideas about the care of xenopus have the potential to harm the model’s use and limit its wider adoption as an animal model for human disease.
5. Contradictory information that could negatively affect the models use:

(shipping, testing, feeding, housing, water, husbandry).

1. Wildly different rules and interpretations of OIE guidelines from country to country.

**Xenopus Model Welfare Organizations reason of existence is to promote community involvement in creating a wider understanding of the pressures on the Model and to act to reduce these pressures**

The Xenopus Model Welfare Organization will make recommendations on a website: [www.xenopuswelfare.org](http://www.xenopuswelfare.org)

Immediate attention should be given to making official statements on the Xenopus Model Welfare Organization Website concerning:

* Shipping of frogs and temperature thresholds-limit contradictory statements on websites - adoption of community recognized standards
* Types of packaging
* Food types
* The limits of PCR in characterization of a healthy colony
* The definition of a healthy colony
* Strategy for OIE species specific attention to frogs
* A set of guidelines and recommendations for publishing housing and husbandry related information
* How to make the information more valuable for grant writing, PI’s, attending veterinarians, animal care personnel.

**What more should the website do?**

1. **Provide a real time interactive “frog social” area and promote the Xencare program.**
2. Archive Xencare, provide follow-up, expert opinions, *editing* *and context*. Be used as a reference for institutional oversight entities.
3. Provide curated knowledge and content by community members, an expert panel, and veterinary advisory committee.

**Funding:** from worldwide sales of a sustainably sourced frog diet produced by the Xenopus Model Welfare Organization. More to come on this…