February 2026 Institutional Biosafety Committee Meeting Minutes

Element	
Institution	Auburn University
Meeting Date	Wednesday, February 04, 2026
Meeting Time	2:10PM – 2:50PM
Meeting Type	Hybrid (In Person and Zoom)
IBC Members Present	Present: Kevin Huggins, IBC Member, IBC Chair Catherine Situma, IBC Secretary Deepika Suresh, BSO E.N. Burson, IBC Member, Local Non-Affiliated Kassie Conner, IBC Member, Plant Expert Andrea Loewen, IBC Member, Institutional Policy Miranda Reed, IBC Member, Faculty Rep Pat Rynders, IBC Member, Veterinarian/Animal Expert David Acker, IBC Member, Alternate for Situma Not Present: Julio Garcia, IBC Member, Local Non-Affiliated Ruediger Hauck, IBC Member, Faculty Rep Zachary Noel, IBC Member, Plant Expert
Quorum	The IBC has 11 voting members, and 6 members are required to conduct business.
Other Individuals in Attendance	Valerie Riggins – IBC Administration Adrienne Booker – IBC Administration Nicholas May – Risk Management and Safety Michelle Gibbs – Faculty, Biological Sciences Mark Liles – Faculty, Biological Sciences Shollie Falkenberg – Faculty, Pathobiology
Call to Order	The IBC Chair called the meeting to order at 2:10 PM.
Conflicts of Interest, if Applicable	There were no conflicts of interest.
Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes	No previous meeting minutes were reviewed/approved.

BUA AMENDMENTS	
PI Name(s)	Shollie Falkenberg
BUA Number	Amendment to Registration – BUA #1097 – (rDNA Amendment)

Project Overview	This study aims to evaluate the immunogenicity of an inactivated high path avian influenza vaccine construct in cattle against HPAI with DIVA compatibility. These constructs are designed to serve both as vaccine candidates and DIVA (Differentiating Infected from Vaccinated Animals) platforms. The immunogenicity will be assessed through prime and potential booster vaccinations, and subsequent immune response analysis.
NIH Guidelines Section	Section III-D-4-b
Risk Assessment and Discussion	• The recombinant inactivated vaccine constructs will be received fully formulated from Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory, U.S. National Poultry Research Center, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, in a ready-to-use formulation. • There will be no manipulation other than being loaded into a syringe before administration. • It will be stored at -80°C until use. • It will be administered intramuscularly to cattle. • This is an experimental vaccine, but no label information was provided. • A letter from the AL State Veterinarian is also required to authorize any use of experimental vaccinations on animals.
Training	All lab personnel have completed the required Laboratory Safety, Biological Safety, Managing Regulated Waste and NIH Guidelines training. The PI will conduct any protocol specific training while handling the experimental vaccine.
Occupational Health Representative Review if Applicable	N/A
Biosafety Level Assignment	BL1-N
IBC Vote	A motion was made to defer the BUA amendment pending additional information from the PI. • Experimental Vaccine Use label from the sponsor has to be obtained. • An authorization letter mentioning the vaccine construct along with the location of the cattle has to be obtained from the AL State Veterinarian. • Votes for: 8 • Votes against: 0 • Abstain: 0

NEW IBC REGISTRATIONS	
PI Name(s)	Michelle Gibbs
BUA Number	New Registration - SPROTO202500000005
Project Overview	This is a teaching protocol for a class at AU. This course involves making GFP (green fluorescent protein) fusions with various uncharacterized genes in the budding yeast Saccharomyces cerevisiae.

NIH Guidelines Section	Section III-F-8-C-III
Risk Assessment and Discussion	• The course will involve undergraduate and graduate students involved in rDNA experiments. • During their labs they will work on GFP fusions on chromosome using a standard plasmid and PCR experiments for amplification. • Conduct some stress experiments such heat, metal toxicity on the GFP fusions. • Fluorescence micropsy on untreated and stress-treated cells to observe GFP fluorescence. • Followed by protein extraction and western blotting. • After the experiments, all the recombinant materials will be bagged and given to Risk Management and Safety for proper decontamination and disposal. Liquid recombinant materials will be bleached and disposed of. • No additional containment beyond standard BSL-1 laboratory safety procedures is required. Monitoring and periodic review will ensure continued compliance and safety.
Training	All lab personnel have completed the required Laboratory Safety, Biological Safety, Managing Regulated Waste and NIH Guidelines training. The PI will conduct any protocol specific biosafety training and containment training.
Occupational Health Representative Review if Applicable	N/A
Biosafety Level Assignment	BL1
IBC Vote	A motion was made to approve the registration. • Votes for: 8 • Votes against: 0 • Abstain: 0

NEW IBC REGISTRATIONS	
PI Name(s)	Mark Liles
BUA Number	New Registration - SPROTO202600000006
Project Overview	The protocol aims to study the pathogenesis of fish pathogens by construction of targeted genetic deletions and evaluation of virulence in controlled fish disease challenges. The PI is involved in the construction and evaluation of genetic mutants in laboratory experiments, such as transcriptome and proteome studies. The lab is involved in developing other vaccine formulations to protect channel catfish (or other fish species) against disease, either using an oral delivery method or immersion method.
NIH Guidelines Section	Section III-D Section III-D-2

	Section III-D-4
Risk Assessment and Discussion	• Gene deletion occurs using recombineering or allelic exchange systems using standard plasmid vectors. • Conjugative transfer is conducted using a non-pathogenic *E. coli* helper strain. • The mutants are selected by double crossover homologous recombination events for the targeted deletion. • The attenuated strains are generated for vaccine development. • Subsequent inactivation using (formalin or heat) and the vaccine starins is applied to the feed or used as immersion. • The gene used for deletion pertains to the mucous barrier functions of the pathogens. • All manipulations will occur within the BSC. • Routine PPE will be worn at all times. Face shields will be worn while working with opportunistic fish pathogens. • Contained aquaria studies will be conducted by another PI. • No field or pond trials are conducted on this protocol. • All Bacterial cultures and recombinant materials will be autoclaved before disposal. • No additional containment beyond standard BSL-2 laboratory safety procedures is required. Monitoring and periodic review will ensure continued compliance and safety.
Training	All lab personnel have completed the required Laboratory Safety, Biological Safety, Managing Regulated Waste and NIH Guidelines training. The PI will conduct any protocol specific biosafety training and containment training.
Occupational Health Representative Review if Applicable	N/A
Biosafety Level Assignment	BL-2
IBC Vote	A motion was made to approve the registration pending the following changes or conditions are met. • Add information that was provided to the IBC and BSO regarding why CVB is required. At this time acknowledge this comment that the state vet exemption letter will be submitted once received for conducting field/pond trials. • Acknowledge that the USDA APHIS import permit will be submitted as an amendment once received. • Provide a list of Bacillus spp that are and will be used. • Mention that the secondary containment will have a biohazard container. • Specify how exactly the genetically modified strains are transported to the labs for animal study. • Select Pipetting. • If shaking incubator is used, add in other section. • Check Yes if agent(s) will be used in animals. • Add Bacillus spp to the table. • Add E. Coli that are used in rDNA experiments to the list. • Mention exactly what Vibrio spp will be used.

	• Categorize Edwardsiella as a BSL-2 pathogen. • Provide a list of strains to be used on this BUA. • Select eye protection; it is required when manipulating or handling Aeromonas and Vibrio. • Check the emergency equipment that is available in the lab, such as eyewash, spill kit, first aid kit, etc. • Section III-F (Exempt Experiments) does not apply in this section because the work involves a pathogenic bacterium. Select the appropriate group(s). • Clarify if the procedure description is for the vaccines. • Clarify if any strains will be tested in animals. • Clarify if there will be any consequences or exposure or release of agents specifically the mutants. • Votes for: 8 • Votes against: 0 • Abstain: 0

ADDITIONAL IBC TOPICS	
Review of Prior Business	None
New Business/Additional Topics	None
Review of Incidents if Applicable	Nothing To Report
Inspections/Ongoing Oversight	Not Discussed During This Meeting. This Will Be Discussed Quarterly.
IBC Training if Applicable	N/A
Public Comments if Applicable	There were no public comments.
Adjournment	The IBC Chair moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:50 PM. • Votes for: 8 • Votes against: 0 • Abstain: 0