

## 2012 Lush Training Prize Winner: The Institute for *In Vitro* Sciences (IIVS), USA

### 1. Could you describe who you are and what you do?

The Institute for *In Vitro* Sciences (IIVS) is a non-profit scientific institute wholly dedicated to the use and acceptance of non-animal (*in vitro*) methods for the toxicological testing of products and chemicals. The IIVS laboratory provides safety testing services for industries around the world, participates in validation studies, and conducts training courses in *in vitro* techniques. In the past two years, the demand for training from outside the USA has increased substantially. IIVS now has dedicated programmes to provide training in countries where their regulatory processes require testing on animals for pre- or post-market approval of cosmetics, personal care and household products, and chemical ingredients.

### 2. Why were you nominated for the Prize?

IIVS was nominated for the Prize because of its unique mission to advance the use and acceptance of non-animal tests worldwide through Science, Education and Outreach initiatives. IIVS staff are involved in the critical activities necessary to make a promising new non-animal test method available for industry use and regulatory applications. This lengthy process involves method optimisation, validation, participation in scientific reviews and implementation both at the corporate and OECD level. Once the reliability and relevance of a method have been shown, training programmes are essential to facilitate the routine use by industry toxicologists and acceptance by regulatory agencies. Since its inception, IIVS has trained industry toxicologists and contract testing facility staff and regulators in the proper laboratory techniques to successfully perform *in vitro* methods, as well as how to interpret the resulting data to make necessary safety assessments.

### 3. Why did you win the Prize?

We believe that we won the Lush Training Prize due to the broad scope and quality of our programme. We have provided training in many countries, including China, Brazil, Germany and Japan, and have hosted international



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groups from Russia and China in our US facility. In addition, our annual hands-on training course has been attended by scientists from India, Malaysia, Colombia and many European countries. The scientists who attend are from industry, NGOs, contract testing facilities and regulatory agencies. The programme combines lectures with hands-on laboratory instruction and analysis of case-studies to interpret data. At the conclusion of the training, participants are better able to utilise these methods in their own company or agency.

### 4. What difference has winning the Prize made to your contribution of the goal of *Replacement*?

It isn't enough to simply have a non-animal method validated for use. Many companies and regulatory agencies require education and technical assistance, before they can adopt these methods. Only after a toxicologist or reviewer understands the biological relevance of the method, has confidence in its predictability and understands how to interpret the resulting

data, will he/she begin to replace animal tests with non-animal methods. Going one step further, the technology must be readily available to the user. Often, the OECD test guidelines do not provide sufficient information for a novice to efficiently implement a new test. Our programme seeks to provide practical tools, such as protocols and SOPs, which accelerate the implementation of a new test.

**5. Could you outline how your work overlaps with current government ethical policy?**

Our training programme is in harmony with many government and regulatory policies around the world which call for the replacement of animal tests with valid alternative methods. We have found that many countries that currently require animal testing also have a desire to adopt non-animal methods, but have either technical or infrastructure obstacles standing in their

way. Our programme is designed to remove some of these obstacles, allowing a more-rapid adoption of the technology.

**6. What does winning the Prize mean to your organisation?**

Winning the Lush Training Prize provided recognition that our programme is successful and highly valued in the field of alternatives to animal testing. It gave our employees — many of whom travel internationally to deliver training in less than ideal conditions — acknowledgment that their efforts are appreciated and valued. It has also inspired us to expand the programme and continue to look for partnerships that will further our work. Finally, it provided financial support that allowed us to expand our efforts, and ensure that our programmes provide the participants with the most up-to-date learning experiences.