

## Mouse Cage Sanitation Frequency

While the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (Guide)*, NRC 2011 recommends solid bottom cages be sanitized at least once a week, it goes on to say that some types of cages might require less-frequent sanitation, which include individually ventilated cage (IVC) units. The *Guide* stresses the use of performance standards when making these determinations. As an example, scientific studies have looked at environmental conditions (1) and cage changing frequency (2) for IVC systems and determined that under normal circumstances, changing cages in these types of units once every two weeks provided for an acceptable environment for the mice. However, there are other factors to take into consideration. While this frequency of cage changing may be acceptable for many mice, it may not be acceptable for others (e.g., diabetic mice that exhibit increased urine output). The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee or comparable oversight body (IACUC/OB) should review current cage changing practices for IVC units based on current literature and other factors (phenotype of the mice, type of bedding, housing density, etc.). For an IVC cage change interval longer than 2 weeks, verification of microenvironmental conditions may include measurement of pollutants such as ammonia and CO<sub>2</sub>, microbiologic load, observation of the animals' behavior and appearance, and the condition of bedding and cage surfaces. Also, as with any performance standard, there should be a system in place to monitor the outcome and report back to the IACUC/OB.