

ANIMAL RESEARCH NEWS & ANALYSIS

**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**



Court Blocks Chimpanzee Relocation

A Civil District Court dismissed a lawsuit filed against Primarily Primates, an animal sanctuary

located in Texas, over the fate of nine chimpanzees and three monkeys who had been transferred to the sanctuary from Ohio State University in March of this year. Legal action ensued when, within two months of the transfer, two chimpanzees died and one monkey escaped and was never recovered. The plaintiffs in the case included two of the chimpanzees' former caretakers and the remaining seven chimpanzees and two monkeys themselves. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) secured legal counsel for the plaintiffs. On September 8, the court dismissed the case, ruling that the plaintiffs' lacked standing. At stake was an earlier court-appointed evaluation that recommended relocating the chimpanzees. As the matter stands now, these animals will not be relocated.

During the controversy over the OSU primates, Primarily Primates' executive director and president, Wallace Swett, resigned, but he remains on the board of trustees. Swett denied that the OSU primates were receiving poor care.

In other chimpanzee news, the Primate Foundation of Arizona (PFA), a biomedical and behavioral research facility, announced that it would be shutting down by 2010. Ownership of the facility's approximately 70 chimpanzees has already been transferred to the federal government. The animals are slated to move over the next four years to the University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, a research facility that currently houses approximately 135 chimpanzees. The move reportedly will reduce overall animal care costs

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Noteworthy...

In November, the U.S. Public Broadcasting Service's *Nature* series will air a documentary about the lives of individual chimpanzees used in research and entertainment, and their retirement to sanctuary life.

Chimpanzees: An Unnatural History will feature the chimpanzees and caretakers at *Save the Chimps*, the *Fauna Foundation*, and the *Center for Great Apes*, all sanctuaries for former research and entertainment

and make the combined population more accessible to researchers.

Sources: [New York Times](#); [MySA.com](#); [Columbus Dispatch](#); [Laboratory Primate Newsletter](#)



Vanderbilt Whistleblower Prompts Investigation

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has accused a Vanderbilt University researcher of performing brain surgery on monkeys without using general anesthesia, and has called upon Vanderbilt to suspend the research pending an official review of the experiments. The controversy was prompted by a leaked memo from a Vanderbilt veterinarian that was originally sent as an internal email at Vanderbilt. "Until last month," the memo allegedly stated, the researcher in question "performed craniotomies on unanesthetized, fully awake primates (macaques)," and went on to warn that "monkeys subjected to invasive brain surgeries must be put under general anesthesia." PETA also claims that the researcher in question was responsible for some of the Animal Welfare Act citations that the university received in 2005.

The University has denied the allegations. In response to letters from concerned citizens, Vanderbilt Chancellor Gordan Gee has stated the university's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) reviewed records of primates who are currently under the care of the researcher in question, and interviewed primate facility staff members to determine if any animal care protocol violations occurred. The Chancellor stated that reviews and the interviews indicated that anesthesia was given prior to all surgeries. "I am satisfied that the allegation that [the researcher] has been performing craniotomy surgeries without anesthesia is false," said Gee.

The IACUC will be filing a formal report on its investigation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the National Institutes of Health, and the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care. PETA has asked the USDA to investigate the allegations.

chimpanzees. The documentary will premiere on November 5, 2006. For more information see [Press Release](#).

The UConn Animal Rights Collective (UCARC) has continued to raise questions about a series of experiments at the University of Connecticut Health Center (UCHC) that involve brain surgery on monkeys. Earlier complaints had resulted in several citations by U.S. Department of Agriculture, for, among other infractions, failure to limit pain and distress. The latest allegations center on a rhesus macaque named Cornelius, who allegedly had a months-long pattern of seizures and odd behavior leading up to his death. In a recent statement, the University affirmed its compliance with all applicable laws and guidelines. See [source](#) for more information.



Source: [PETA Press Release](#); [PETA](#); Letter from Vanderbilt Chancellor



Mouse Facilities to be Built for Breeding, Research

Plans have been announced for the construction of two new facilities that will each house hundreds of thousands of mice—tangible examples of the increasing prominence of these animals in the era of genetic engineering and molecular biology. The facilities, one in Toronto, Ontario and the other in Yonkers, New York, are slated to be built in 2007. The Yonkers facility will contain 80,000 cages of breeding mice, whose offspring will be used by research institutions in the New York City area. The State of New York donated \$10 million to build the facility.

The Toronto Center for Phenogenomics (TCP) will house the city's largest mouse colony, 200,000 mice, and will host around 300 researchers. Meant to be a "one stop shop" for mouse geneticists, the 56-million dollar facility will generate "mutant mice" to be used in identifying behavioral traits associated with different mutations, as well as for imaging pathology and preservation of frozen tissues. TCP's Imaging Center will have the capability of creating three-dimensional images of animals and their tissues, which over time can help lower the overall number of animals killed per experiment.

In the United States, there are no official estimates of total number of mice used in research. "As more and more mice are bred and used for research, the exclusion of these animals from the U.S. Animal Welfare Act will become increasingly untenable," according to Martin Stephens of The Humane Society of the United States.

Source: [Nature](#); [1010WINS](#); Associated Press-Thousands of Mice to be Bred, Housed in Yonkers 9/13/2006



New Tools for Assessing Animal Welfare

Assessing how animals interpret their world can provide insights into the well-being of animals in captive environments. Such assessments are more likely to be conducted in large-scale research facilities to the extent they are practical. Behavioral observations are particularly practical but care must be taken to avoid uncritical anthropomorphism.

A recent conference on these issues included presentations by several researchers who have devised promising behavioral tools for assessing animal well-being, potentially enabling caretakers to assess the appropriateness of housing, husbandry, and medical care.

An assessment method developed by Françoise Wemelsfelder of the Scottish Agricultural College involves observers selecting "emotional profile descriptors" of animals' body language in various test environments. Using this method, pigs were evaluated on commercial farms and found to be less content when housed in smaller, indoor pens. The method goes beyond rating animals as simply 'healthy' or 'unhealthy;' caretakers can assess the animals' well-being and enrichment.

Sara Wofensohn, the University of Oxford, developed a system that "assesses five parameters, such as the clinical status of the animal, and the extent to which injury hampers its behavior, and from this calculates an overall score of suffering...." The system can be used to gauge how animals suffer over time or to compare suffering experienced by different species of animals in different contexts.

The new behavioral methodologies should be explored for their applicability to laboratory animal welfare. This exploration would be particularly timely for the United States, where the Institute for Laboratory Animal Research is investigating ways to limit stress and distress in laboratory animals.

Source: [NewScientist](#)

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