



The Humane Society of the United States'
Animal Research News & Analysis
Inaugural Issue
March 1, 2002

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1. Set-back to Animal Welfare Act Coverage for Birds, Mice, and Rats

February 15, 2002 – The animal protection community suffered a major disappointment this week when the U.S. Senate adopted an amendment to the Farm Bill (S. 1731) that would deny protection under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) to birds, mice, and rats used in research. There is no such amendment in the House version of the Farm Bill. Consequently, before the bill can be signed into public law, it must first be approved by a Congressional conference committee that must reconcile the differences between the House and Senate versions of the legislation. Animal protectionists will seek to have exclusion amendment, sponsored by Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC), removed by the conference committee. Helms also had a second, less sweeping amendment added to the Senate Farm Bill; it calls for a study to assess the value of including birds, mice, and rats in the AWA regulations.

The AWA is the primary federal law governing the treatment of animals used in research. The passage of the Helms amendments is the latest development in a struggle for legal coverage of these species that dates back to 1970 -- the year when Congress extended the provisions of the AWA to include all warm-blooded vertebrates (i.e. mammals and birds). Following this Congressional amendment, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued new regulations that broadened the definition of "animal" but explicitly excluded birds and laboratory-bred mice and rats from coverage. Since this time, The HSUS and other animal protection organizations have worked to ensure that these species are included under the AWA regulations.

Sources: The HSUS, Herald Sun

2. EPA to Encourage Use of Non-Animal Test Methods in its HPV Program

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently announced that it will ask all companies participating in its High Production Volume (HPV) Chemical Challenge Program to use non-animal test methods as part of their testing for acute oral toxicity. The non-animal or “*in vitro*” methods are useful in estimating the most appropriate starting doses for acute toxicity tests in animals, a step that reduces the number of animals used. The EPA will also encourage chemical and pesticide manufacturers who use the *in vitro* test methods to submit information pertaining to the type of chemical tested as well as the results of the test. The EPA will then use this information to help determine how accurately the *in vitro* assays predict the LD50 value, i.e., the dose that is lethal to 50% of the animals. Experts in the field of *in vitro* methods believe that collecting such data will facilitate the long-term goal of completely replacing the use of animals in estimating lethal doses in acute toxicity tests. The Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods (ICCVAM) has produced guidance document (http://iccvam.niehs.nih.gov/methods/invidocs/guidance/iv_guide.pdf) on incorporating *in vitro* assays into acute oral toxicity testing. For more information on the HPV program, go to: <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/chemrtk/>.

Sources: Bureau of National Affairs' (BNA) Daily Environment Report No. 37, February 25, 2002; Putting Acute Oral Toxicity Testing Guidelines into Practice: A Training Workshop, February 19 – 21, 2002

3. ICCVAM's Annual Report Now Available

February - The Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods (ICCVAM) has released its annual progress report on its efforts at reducing animal use in regulatory testing. ICCVAM comprises representatives from 15 federal agencies whose principal objective is to evaluate the scientific validity of new and alternative testing methods. To view the report, visit ICCVAM's the website: <http://iccvam.niehs.nih.gov>. The report may also be obtained by contacting the National Toxicology Program Interagency Center for the Evaluation of Alternative Toxicological Methods (NICEATM) at: niceatm@niehs.nih.gov.

Source: NIEHS press release, February 11, 2002

4. Cambridge's Plans to Build a Primate Research Lab are Rejected

Fearing a backlash from animal protectionists, the South Cambridgeshire (UK) district council rejected Cambridge University's application to build a primate research facility “on public safety grounds”. The facility was intended to house and support research on macaques and marmosets to study various types of diseases that affect the brain. The planned site for the facility, however, was at the junction of several major roads, and the Council feared a potentially chaotic situation stemming from animal rights demonstrations outside the lab. The Council noted, however, that the issue was the location of the planned facility, and not the fact that it was intended for primate research. Although the Council's decision disappointed some in the scientific community, animal protectionists declared victory. Wendy Higgins, campaign director for the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection stated: “I think it was the right decision. It comes at a time when we are calling for the end of the use of all primates in research.”

Source: *The Guardian*, February 7, 2002

5. Charles River Shifts its Focus to Non-Animal Testing Methods

Charles River Laboratories, a long-time leader in the research animal supply business, is evolving with the times and has begun to sell various *in vitro* technologies to its clients in the pharmaceutical industry. Due to the increasing costs of drug development, manufacturers are looking for tests that are quicker and more cost-efficient than traditional animal tests. In the past five years, the research animal portion of Charles River's business has dropped from 80% to 40%. Dr. Melvin Balk, a veterinarian associated with the Massachusetts-based company, stated that the increasing use of non-animal testing methods for drug development "is driven by pure necessity and economics." Although this may indeed be true, animal protectionists are encouraged by the pharmaceutical industry's growing reliance on *in vitro* methods, which will reduce the use of animals in drug testing.

Source: *The Boston Globe*, February 27, 2002

Animal Research News & Analysis is an electronic newsletter that provides up-to-date news stories and interpretive analyses concerning the use of animals in research, testing, and education. The newsletter is produced by The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and is distributed periodically. It serves as a source for information and is not a discussion list, so please do not reply to this message. Any questions, comments or email address changes should be directed to ari@hsus.org. To unsubscribe, please send an e-mail request to ari@hsus.org with the words, "unsubscribe – Animal Research News" in the subject line; please specify your first and last name. The HSUS's collection of web-based animal research-related news stories can be viewed at: www.hsus.org/ace/712.

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