



The Humane Society of the United States' Animal Research News & Analysis January 6, 2003

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1. NIH Declines to Fund a Study on the Regulation of Birds, Mice, and Rats in Research

It is well known that the 2002 Farm Bill, enacted in April, contained Senator Jesse Helms' controversial amendment to permanently deny birds, rats and mice legal protection under the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA). Less well-known was a second Helms' amendment directing the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to conduct a study of the implications of regulating these species under the AWA. However, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), one of the agencies responsible for funding the study, has decided not to comply with this amendment. In a September 13th letter to the NAS's Institute for Laboratory Animal Research (ILAR), Elias Zerhouni, director of the HHS's National Institutes of Health, stated that federal funding for the study was "imprudent" in light of the fact that coverage of these animals has been prohibited by law.

Following this announcement, ILAR director Joanne Zurlo stated: "We are ready, willing, and able to do the study [if funds are made available]. I just don't think it's going to happen." Zurlo predicted that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the other federal agency slated to participate in the study, is unlikely to provide the funding.

The HSUS is part of a working group that fought for the regulation of birds, mice, and rats under the AWA. "We believe the ILAR study would have shown that the logistics of regulating these species are manageable for both the USDA and the research community, and that finding would have justified revisiting the issue of regulatory coverage of birds, mice, and rats," stated Martin Stephens, HSUS' vice president for animal research issues.

Sources: *The Scientist*, November 6, 2002; *The HSUS*

2. APHIS's Animal Care Program Will Not Move to Homeland Security

November 25 – Animal Care, the component of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) that is responsible for the enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act, will not become part of the new Department of Homeland Security. According to Title IV, Subtitle C of the Homeland Security Act ("Directorate of Border and Transportation Security – Miscellaneous Provisions"), only the parts of APHIS pertaining to Border and Transportation Security – specifically functions related to agricultural import and entry inspection activities – will be transferred to the Secretary of the new Department. The animal protection community had been concerned that a transfer of APHIS/Animal Care to Homeland Security would marginalize the animal welfare programs in a department focused largely on homeland security.

To read the full text of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, please visit:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/deptofhomeland/bill/hsl-bill.pdf>.

Source: *THOMAS*; *The HSUS*

3. Controversy Over Proposed Cambridge Primate Research Facility Heats Up

The proposed construction of a primate laboratory facility at Cambridge University is at the center of a controversy between the British scientific and animal protection communities. At public hearings held from November 26 through December 6, scientists and animal protectionists, as well as university representatives, city council officials, and the police, provided testimony on the proposed facility. A government-appointed planning inspector will compile a post-hearing report and submit it to the Deputy Prime Minister. This is the third attempt by the University to win approval for the facility from the South Cambridgeshire District Council, which had previously rejected it owing to concerns pertaining to public safety. The facility would focus on studying ailments of the brain (e.g. Parkinson's Disease, Alzheimer's Disease, Ebola Virus).

Animal protectionists have warned that if the facility is indeed built, it will become a target for major protest. In addition to concerns regarding the care and use of the primates at the proposed facility, animal advocates are concerned about the threat that primate viruses, such as Ebola, pose to the surrounding community. In May of this year, the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV) released undercover video footage filmed by an investigator at one of Cambridge's existing primate research labs. The video depicts animals with bleeding head wounds, bruises, and various mental and physical disabilities; the animals are also shown vomiting and experiencing convulsions. For more information, visit: www.buav.org.

A final ruling on the proposed research facility is expected in early 2003.

Sources: *The Guardian (UK)*, *ABC News* (www.abcnews.com); *Cambridge News (UK)*; *Science Magazine*; *The HSUS*

4. Hopkins to Introduce Course on Enhancing Humane Science

The Johns Hopkins University's Center for Alternatives to Animal Testing (CAAT), along with the University's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, will introduce a course in early 2003 on the enhancement of humane science. This course will be offered to all faculty and graduate students in the life sciences as well as all laboratory technicians who work with animals in laboratories. The course will cover "proper experimental design (including statistics) and the role of pilot studies in minimizing animal use and refining experiments, as well as many refinement issues: humane endpoints, enrichment, post-surgical care, pain management, and the impact of stress on the quality of data."

To learn more about CAAT's work, visit: <http://caat.jhsph.edu>.

Source: CAAT (2003 Progress Report)

5. New Website Devoted to Research Animal Concerns

The Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), a Washington, DC-based animal protection organization, has announced a new website for reporting specific concerns related to the care and use of animals in research, testing, and education. *Labanimalissues.org* is a confidential and secure site for seeking assistance for animals in laboratories who may be suffering unnecessarily or who may simply need improved treatment and care. Individuals may report their concerns anonymously if they wish. Follow-up by AWI may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Inspecting the animal(s) involved
- Filing a complaint(s) with the appropriate oversight entity
- Notifying the media and/or Congress

To access the site, go to: www.labanimalissues.org.

Source: Animal Welfare Institute

6. Proceedings of Symposium on Regulatory Testing and Animal Welfare Now Available

The proceedings of the International Symposium on Regulatory Testing and Animal Welfare, held in June, 2001 in Quebec City, Canada, are now available. The symposium, sponsored by the International Council for Laboratory Animal Science and the Canadian Council on Animal Care, brought together over 160 experts from 22 countries from North and South America, Europe, and Asia. The experts included representatives from national research and regulatory agencies, universities, and corporations involved in the testing of chemicals, pesticides, and pharmaceuticals, as well as representatives of animal protection organizations. The goal of the Symposium was to promote improved welfare of animals used to safety and efficacy testing. The proceedings comprise 25 articles and have been published in the *ILAR Journal* (Volume 43 Supplement) and are available online at:

http://dels.nas.edu/ilar/jour_online.asp?id=jour_online. The articles are organized primarily under the following headings: current best scientific practices, future improvements and implementation within the regulatory environment, and recommendations for implementation of best scientific practices.

Source: CCAC

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