



The Humane Society of the United States' Animal Research News & Analysis

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1. University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Passes Student Choice Policy

May 6 - Following a vote by its Education Policy Committee, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) has adopted a policy that gives students the choice, at least in some courses, to opt out of animal-based dissections for ethical and/or religious reasons. In the past, dissection alternatives were offered only at the discretion of the instructor. The new policy marks a successful end to a two-year campaign by the university's campus animal advocacy group, Students Improving the Lives of Animals (SILA).

Beginning in the fall semester of 2003, UIUC instructors of general education courses involving dissections are required to provide students with alternatives. The new policy does not apply to upper-level courses, but students who do not want to participate in dissections will have the opportunity to appeal to the department if alternatives are not offered.

Sources: Students Improving the Lives of Animals, The Daily Illini Online, April 29 and May 6, 2003; The HSUS (<http://www.hsus.org/ace/19105>)

2. Government Investigating Northwestern University

May 6 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), in conjunction with National Institutes of Health, is investigating possible violations of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) at Northwestern University, which has research facilities at its Chicago and Evanston, IL campuses. According to USDA inspection reports, the university has experienced problems with the "tracking and handling" of animals ranging from failure to determine which animals will be used in a particular study to an apparent failure to prevent a monkey from dying of dehydration. Additionally, USDA officials have voiced concerns

regarding the skill level of university personnel after learning of the death of a monkey following surgery that lasted over 9 hours. An agency official stated: "The procedure completed is similar to procedures that other investigators at this institution complete in approximately one half the time...The ACUC [Animal Care and Use Committee] is to review this protocol and all surgical procedures to determine whether all personnel are qualified and properly trained to perform their duties." If the university is found to have violated the AWA, it may be fined.

According to a Northwestern spokesperson, most of the problems can be attributed to the swift growth of research funding at the university, which has doubled over the past eight years. The spokesperson also noted: "There have been some personnel changes and [these] have an effect on the continuity and handoff from one person to another."

Source: The Chicago Tribune, May 6, 2003

3. Scottish Research Team Concludes that Fish Feel Pain

Researchers at the Roslin Institute and the University of Edinburgh have produced convincing evidence that fish can perceive pain. The study revealed that rainbow trout possess receptors (called *nociceptors*) that respond to damaging stimuli. Moreover, the receptors also respond to the application of short-acting noxious agents by undergoing significant physiological and behavioral changes that are comparable to those observed in mammals following exposure to painful stimuli.

The Scotland-based researchers used electrophysiological recordings to monitor anesthetized fish following the application of mechanical, chemical, and thermal stimuli to the head. Additionally, the researchers injected bee venom and acetic acid into the fishes' lips. "Anomalous behaviors were exhibited by trout subjected to bee venom and acetic acid", stated Dr. Lynne Sneddon, who led the research team. "Fish demonstrated 'rocking' motion, strikingly similar to the kind of motion seen in stressed higher vertebrates like mammals... Our research demonstrates nociception and suggests that noxious stimulation in the rainbow trout has adverse behavioral and physiological effects. This fulfills the criteria for animal pain."

Sources: Press Release by Roslin Institute-University of Edinburgh research team (Scotland); News in Science (<http://www.abc.net.au/science/news>)

4. European Union Releases its Third Report on Animal Use in Research

The European Commission has published its third report on the use of animals in research in the European Union (EU). The report contains statistics from 1999 on the number of animals used for research and other scientific purposes in EU member states.

The total number of animals used in EU research during 1999 was 9.8 million, down from 11.6 million in 1996 (the year covered in the preceding report). Rodents and rabbits totaled 87% of all utilized animals. Other species included (in descending order of use): cold-blooded animals (fish, amphibians, reptiles), birds, farm animals (pigs, cattle, sheep, etc.), carnivores (cats, dogs, ferrets, etc.), and primates. Three of the EU's five categories of experiments accounted for the bulk of animal use: the discovery, development or quality control of products or appliances for human and veterinary medicine (52%),

biological studies of a fundamental nature (30%), and toxicological or other safety evaluations (10%).

To view the full report, please visit: http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/rpt/2003/com2003_0019en01.pdf.

Source: Commission Communication to the Council and the Parliament (UK)

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## **5. Research Animal Use Declines in the Netherlands**

The latest statistics for animal research in the Netherlands reveal that 714,449 animals were used during 2001, a 4% decline from 2000. This reduction stemmed, in part, from a decline in the production of genetically modified animals, from 37,768 in 2000 to 26,042 in 2001. In 2001, animals were used for the following purposes (in decreasing order of use): studies of a fundamental nature (47%); discovery, development, and quality control (including safety evaluation of products or appliances for human and veterinary medicine) (43%); toxicology (8%); education and training (2%); and diagnosis (1%).

The Dutch statistics address animal discomfort, defined as: “a state including impairment of the animal’s health, or as appreciable pain, injury or other grave distress caused to the animal.” Discomfort levels are assessed after an experiment has been conducted. In 2001, 36% of the animals experienced moderate to very severe discomfort; the balance experienced discomfort that was either minor (40%) or minor/moderate (23%).

*Source: The Netherlands Centre Alternatives to Animal Use (<http://www.nca-nl.org>)*

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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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