



The Humane Society of the United States' Animal Research News & Analysis October 12, 2004

In this Issue...

- 1. U.S. Army Wounding Goats**
- 2. UK Government Releases Animal Research Statistics and Announces Crackdown on “Animal Rights Extremists”**
- 3. Primate Shortages Alleged**
- 4. UC Davis Heater Glitch Kills Research Monkeys**
- 5. ARDF Grants Announced**

1. U.S. Army Wounding Goats

The U.S. Army Joint Special Operations Medical Training Team conducted a series of medic training exercises involving live goats in September and October at Fort Carson, Colorado. Approximately 150 healthy goats were wounded and injured, and then a medical team attempted to treat the injuries. The specifics of the wounding remain unclear. News of the goat wounding was leaked to The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), which sent a letter to the Secretary of Defense inquiring about the status of the exercises and recommending various alternative methods of training, some developed by the military itself. According to a response from the Army, the goats were to be anesthetized throughout the procedures and euthanized before they recovered.

The use of live animals in military medical training dates back several decades. In the 1980s, animal protectionists learned that dogs were being shot so they could be worked on by military medics. The Department of Defense responded to the ensuing public outcry by substituting farm animals for dogs. (Some special forces medics apparently shot the dogs themselves, and then attempted to restore them back to health, before ultimately euthanizing them.)

Source: The HSUS (<http://www.hsus.org/ace/21533>)

2. UK Government Releases Animal Research Statistics and Announces Crackdown on “Animal Rights Extremists”

According to recently released statistics from the United Kingdom, the number of animals used in experiments for the first time in 2003 was 2.72 million, a 2.5% increase from 2002. The most commonly used species were mice, rats and other rodents (85%), followed by fish (6%) and birds (4%). The number of experiments involving non-human primates increased 21% from the previous year (to 4,799).

The UK government also recently released details of a crackdown on “animal rights extremists.” The announced changes seek to curb protests at scientists’ homes and harassment of workers at company facilities. Government ministers are considering making it a crime to cause “economic damage to the suppliers of firms or research groups” engaged in lawful animal research. The government plans have drawn criticism from some civil libertarians, Members of Parliament, and animal protectionists.

Sources: Home Office, September 7, 2004

*(http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/n_story.asp?item_id=1064); Scotsman.com, July 30, 2004
(<http://news.scotsman.com/latest.cfm?id=3275784>)*

3. Primate Shortages Alleged

Scientists who conducted a comprehensive audit of primates used in experiments in 2001 concluded that there are currently not enough nonhuman primates being bred for scientific research, and that this shortage leads researchers to reuse the animals in subsequent procedures and may slow down medical advances. Also, the survey found that housing conditions, gender, age and weight of animals are often lacking from journal articles describing primate experiments. These details, the survey authors argued, can significantly affect the validity of research and the results of future experiments. The missing information can be blamed on researchers themselves, for failing to submit it, but also on journals’ editorial policies, which put a premium on journal space and often give little weight to issues perceived as secondary to the science of the experiments.

Many animal protectionists in Europe and the United States have been calling for reductions and phase-outs of primate use, and are sure to oppose any measures to increase primate usage through expanded breeding either in countries of origin or where they are used. They are also sure to oppose any measures to reuse primates in invasive experiments.

Source: NewScientist.com, August, 20, 2004

(<http://www.newscientist.com/news/news.jsp?id=ns99996296>)

4. UC Davis Heater Glitch Kills Research Monkeys

Seven female cynomologous monkeys died recently at the University of California (UC), Davis after a heater malfunctioned. A routine check on a Saturday morning revealed that hot air blowing into the monkeys’ room had increased the temperature to 115 degrees Fahrenheit.

This incident is one of a string of tragic, avoidable animal-related accidents at research facilities that have been reported in recent years at UC Davis or elsewhere around the country. In February 2003, a missing female rhesus macaque at UC Davis was believed to have died after

getting trapped in the drain system following escape. In July 2003, three monkeys at the University of Wisconsin-Madison research center were killed after being left in their cage that was being sanitized in a cage washer. Another incident occurred at the Pfizer Pharmaceutical Company in Kalamazoo, MI where a beagle was left in his cage as it was sent through the cage sanitizing system. One wonders how many other such incidents have not been reported to regulatory authorities or not covered by the media.

Sources: *Sacramento Bee*, August 23, 2004

(http://www.sacbee.com/content/community_news/yolo/story/10480830p-11400175c.html);

Wall Street Journal, March 30, 2004; *UC Davis*, October 12, 2004

(http://www.dateline.ucdavis.edu/dl_detail.lasso?id=6778)

5. ARDF Grants Announced

The Alternatives Research & Development Foundation (ARDF) recently announced the four recipients of its 2004 alternatives research grants, which totaled \$155,000. The winners and their projects were as follows: Dr. Luca Cucullo of The Cleveland Clinic Foundation for “A new Dynamic In Vitro Blood Brain Barrier Device For Extensive Pharmacological Study at the Blood Brain Barrier”; Dr. David T. Curiel of the University of Alabama at Birmingham for “Human Tissue Slices as an Alternative for Mouse Models in the Evaluation of Gene Therapy Vectors”; Dr. Richard Lee Gregory of Indiana University for “An Alternative In Vitro Biofilm for Dental Caries Study”; and Dr. Michael J. Rybak of Wayne State University for “Evaluation of an In Vitro Pharmacodynamic Model for Antibiotic Assessment: A Comparison and Potential Replacement of a Murine Model of Infection.”

The purpose of the ARDF annual grant program is to focus on the development of new techniques for biomedical research, testing, or education that do not use animal models. Previous grant winners have improved experiments that benefit human health while replacing or reducing the number of animals used. A total of \$1.25 million has been given for the development of non-animal alternative models.

Source: ARDF (<http://www.ardf-online.org>)

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[Return to top of page.](#)