

**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**



Animal Research News & Analysis

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1. Univ. of Nevada, Reno Accused of Animal Abuse, Whistleblower Retaliation

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is conducting an investigation into allegations of animal abuse and neglect and whistleblower retaliation at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) College of Agriculture. Hussein S. Hussein, a UNR animal nutrition professor, filed a complaint with the USDA regarding possible violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act at UNR that occurred over the past three years. The allegations include the unexplained deaths of 38 pregnant ewes, illegal disposal of sheep used in research, the apparent malnourishment of a herd of cattle, and the provision of dead research animals to trappers for use as coyote lures. An earlier federal investigation at UNR centered on the treatment of eleven miniature pigs, who reportedly lacked access to water, had irritated skin that they continuously scratched, and were being kept in undersized stalls. Frustrated with what he perceived as UNR staff's lack of response to the pigs' condition and believing their health to be in jeopardy, Hussein brought in an independent veterinarian to examine the animals and eventually reported the situation to the USDA. The USDA found that "animals were suffering from an itchy condition ... since their arrival" and "no action has been taken." A UNR veterinarian disputed the findings.

Following the USDA inspection of the pigs' facility, UNR reportedly took steps to fire Hussein, charging him with interfering with another professor's research animals. He was banned from entering the pigs' facility without permission. In August 2004, Hussein filed suit against UNR officials for allegedly taking retaliatory actions against him that violated whistleblower protection statutes. Hussein remains on UNR's staff and the lawsuit is pending.

UNR officials have denied the allegations of animal abuse and neglect and retaliatory action. The USDA investigation will take several months to complete.

Sources and Further Information:

UNR College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources respond to animal abuse allegations; UNR website 12/31/04

<http://www.cabnr.unr.edu/cabnr/Newsletter/FullStory.asp?StoryID=316>

UNR gave trappers animal parts to lure coyotes; Reno Gazette 12/27/04

<http://www.rgj.com/news/stories/html/2004/12/27/88525.php>

Pigs allegedly neglected, deprived of water; Reno Gazette 12/26/04

<http://www.rgj.com/news/printstory.php?id=88428>

UNR faces allegations of abuse, neglect of its research animals; Reno Gazette 12/26/04

<http://www.rgj.com/news/stories/html/2004/12/26/88426.php>

Independent oversight called key to improving; Reno Gazette 12/29/04

<http://www.rgj.com/news/printstory.php?id=88593>

2. LABS of Virginia Sentenced for Illegal Macaque Imports

LABS of Virginia, a South Carolina firm that bred and sold monkeys to research facilities, was sentenced in December, 2004 to two years probation, \$500,000 in fines and \$64,675 in penalties for illegally importing *Cynomolgus* macaques from Indonesia in 1997. According to the 2002 indictment, the company imported four shipments of crab-eating monkeys between February and May of 1997 that allegedly were in violation of numerous federal and international wildlife protection laws and agreements. LABS of Virginia admitted to guilt regarding one of these shipments and was found guilty by U.S. District Court in Chicago of submitting false records, claiming the shipment contained only captive bred monkeys when, in fact, it also contained wild caught monkeys. In all, the four shipments contained 846 monkeys, 327 of which were wild caught.

The 2002 indictments involved LABS of Virginia itself as well as three company officers. The company and its former president were charged with a total of 12 counts including eight felony counts of submitting false records and import violations, one misdemeanor count of trafficking in wildlife in violation of another country's law and three misdemeanor counts of shipping unweaned animals and nursing mothers--a violation of U.S. law banning their import except in a medical emergency. However, because Indonesian officials admitted to approving the macaque exports, a plea agreement was reached with the prosecutors and the charges against two company officers were dismissed. The former president of LABS of Virginia was banned from obtaining any fish and wildlife license or associating with companies that work with wildlife. LABS of Virginia is now known as Alpha Genesis and is under new management. Although the employees involved in the case no longer work for the company, Alpha Genesis will pay the fines and penalties and serve the two year probation sentence.

Sources and Further Information:

Breeder that shipped wild monkeys is fined; Chicago Tribune, December 16, 2004

Former Beaufort mayor guilty of illegally importing monkeys; The State, December 18, 2004

<http://www.thestate.com/mld/thestate/news/local/10448764.htm>

3. Update Report Released on EPA High Production Volume Challenge Program

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently released a report that provides an update on the agency's plan to have chemical manufacturers provide human health and environmental data on over 2,200 high production volume (HPV) chemicals. HPV chemical are those manufactured in or imported to the United States in amounts of at least one million pounds per year. The EPA Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics, responsible for compiling the report, plans to make the data from the program available to the public in a website database to be released in early 2005. The EPA report, entitled "Status and Future Directions of the High Production Volume (HPV) Challenge

Program,” also details the EPA’s efforts to gain information on at least 241 HPV “orphan chemicals” no longer in production but that the EPA believes to have a high rate of human exposure or environmental release. According to the EPA, the information collected by the program may also be used for possible future regulation and risk management actions regarding HPV chemicals.

The EPA HPV Challenge Program has been strongly criticized by animal protection organizations for triggering a massive amount of animal testing, failing to adhere to animal welfare guidelines established for the program, and yielding data of questionable value to human and environmental health. However, the EPA and some environmental organizations assert that the program will provide valuable “missing” data on chemical toxicology and that much of this data can be gleaned from company files and publications, without the need for animal testing.

Sources and Further Information:

Industry Support for HPV Program Detailed; Chemical Regulation Reporter Volume 28, Number 48; December 6, 2004

Additional information on the HPV program and full text of the report, Status and Future Directions of the High Production Volume (HPV) Challenge Program can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/chemrtk/q&a-page.htm>

4. 2005 World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences

The 5th World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences will be held August 21st thru 25th in Berlin, Germany. The World Congresses on Alternatives are the largest international conferences on alternatives to animal use in research, testing, and education. Held every three years, they bring together representatives of academia, industry, government, and animal protection to review progress and promote dialogue on alternative methods, which include the 3 R’s of replacement, reduction, and refinement.

The 5th World Congress will be centered on seven scientific themes: Education; Laboratory Animal Welfare & Refinement; Moral Issues of Animals, Alternatives & Public Policy; Information Systems & Databases; Regulatory Testing and Validation; Modeling-concepts & Examples for 3Rs; and Applying New Science & Technology. During the conference, The Humane Society of the United States will present the 2005 Russell and Burch award to a scientist who has made an outstanding contribution towards the advancement of alternative methods.

Sources and Further Information

5th World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences

<http://www.ctw-congress.de/act2005/themes.html>

World Congress Website

<http://www.worldcongress.net/>

Russell and Burch Award

http://www.hsus.org/animals_in_research/general_information_on_animal_research/the_russell_and_burch_award/

5. FDA Warns Novartis on Failure to Report Deramaxx-Related Animal Deaths

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has sent a warning letter to Novartis outlining the drug company’s deficient reporting of adverse drug experiences (ADE’s) for Deramaxx, which was approved in 2002 for the relief of arthritis and post-surgical pain in dogs. The health problems associated with Deramaxx occurred during the drug’s pre-clinical testing and its first year of

marketing. The FDA requires that such problems be reported to the agency within 15 working days. However, according to the FDA, Deramaxx studies resulting in the death of 14 cats and other serious problems were not reported until six months after the experiments were completed. Reports regarding the death of dogs given Deramaxx by prescription were not reported to the FDA for up to 10 months after Novartis was notified. Deramaxx, known generically as deracoxib, is similar to the FDA-approved human drugs Celebrex and Vioxx that have been linked to heart attacks and strokes. Vioxx was recently removed from sale due to the possible risks.

In its November 29, 2004 warning letter, the FDA requested that the agency be notified of the corrective actions Novartis plans to undertake regarding the deficiencies. According to the FDA, problem issues such as those at Novartis are usually corrected after receipt of a warning letter and further agency action is rarely necessary. However, failure to correct deficiencies may result in regulatory actions such as product seizures.

Sources and Further Information:

FDA Slams Novartis on Dog Painkiller; CNN Money December 28, 2004

FDA Warning Letter to Novartis; November 29, 2004

http://www.fda.gov/foi/warning_letters/g5108d.htm

Vioxx Hits Merck Where it Hurts; Health Talk January 25, 2005

http://www.healthtalk.ca/vioxx_lawsuits_012505_29291.php

Study Finds No Heart Risk Associated with Celebrex; Health Talk, February 1, 2005

http://www.healthtalk.ca/celebrex_risks_020105_37782.php

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**Animal Research News & Analysis** is an electronic newsletter that provides 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. Any questions, comments or email address changes should be directed to [ari@hsus.org](mailto:ari@hsus.org). To unsubscribe, please send an e-mail request to [ari@hsus.org](mailto: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: [http://www.hsus.org/animals\\_in\\_research/](http://www.hsus.org/animals_in_research/).

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