

ANIMAL RESEARCH NEWS & ANALYSIS

THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES



Second Exposé at UNC



Based on a follow-up undercover investigation at the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has filed a second formal complaint against the university, charging that it has failed to comply with the Public Health Service (PHS) *Policy on Humane Care & Use of Lab Animals*. According to the complaint, research animals are severely overcrowded, not provided with proper veterinary care, and not euthanized humanely. PETA is calling on the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which oversees compliance with the PHS Policy, to take stronger action against UNC for this new round of alleged deficiencies, including withdrawal of NIH funding from UNC's research programs and suspension of UNC's federal authorization to conduct animal research. In response, NIH's deputy director for extramural research explained that the NIH's Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) has the right to terminate research at universities that violate animal welfare policy, but that OLAW usually "doesn't work in a punitive fashion," opting instead to work with an institution to correct the problems.

The NIH conducted its own investigation of UNC's research facilities following PETA's 2002 undercover investigation at UNC. The NIH's report, released in 2004, concluded that UNC was not in compliance with the humane care guidelines in several instances. Violations included failure to follow proper procedures on minimizing pain and distress, to implement timely treatment, to document feeding and watering of some animals, and to follow recommendations on cage size to prevent overcrowding. The NIH then issued recommendations to UNC regarding animal welfare

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Noteworthy...

The National Institutes of Health is considering the need to update the laboratory animal welfare standards of the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* and is collecting new information, methods or practices, published data, or advances in humane care and use of lab animals. The deadline for submission in February

compliance.

A UNC spokesperson stated that the University is investigating PETA's latest claims but defended UNC's animal care and use standards. "I do not believe we have problems coming anywhere close to requiring the loss of NIH accreditation."

Source: [Washington Post](#); [PETA](#); [The Daily Tarheel](#)



12-Year High in Animal Procedures in Britain

The number of "animal procedures" conducted in Britain rose to 2.85 million in 2004, a 12 year high, fueled largely by an increasing use of genetically modified (GM) mice, according to a new report by the British government. Mice, rats, and other rodents constituted approximately 85% of the animal experiments, with GM mice alone accounting for 32% of the experiments, a statistic that has doubled since 1995.

In the British statistics, an "animal procedure" is "any experimental or other scientific procedure applied to a protected animal which may have the effect of causing that animal pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm." GM animals used in breeding, but otherwise not used in research, are counted in the statistics.

British animal protection groups have decried the recent trends in animal usage. Animal Aid called the general rise in animal research a "betrayal of the public as well as animals," and expressed alarm at the growing use of GM animals. Adolfo Sansolini of British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV) criticized the government for concentrating more on violence of animal rights extremists, which he says diverted the public's attention from the 4-year increase in British animal experimentation.

Source: [Report of the Animals Procedure](#)

28, 2006. For more information see www.nih.gov.

The Dialogue Forum on the Use of Animals in Medical Research has been created to facilitate discussion among diverse stakeholders on animal research issues in the United States. The Dialogue Forum seeks to increase understanding of issues and varying viewpoints, invite debates, create constructive relationships and find common ground between groups of different positions. To learn more about the Dialogue Forum, see [Dialogue Forum](#).





USDA Fines and Investigates University Animal Research Centers

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has fined the University of California (UC), Davis for the August 2004 death of seven cynomolgus monkeys housed in the UC Davis Center for Laboratory Science. The deaths stemmed from a faulty thermostat that allowed a room to overheat. UC Davis reported the incident to USDA immediately, as required under the Animal Welfare Act. Following an investigation, the USDA fined the university \$4815, citing the poor condition of the lab's thermostat. Stan Nosek, vice chancellor of UC Davis administration, said that the university accepted the fine without contest, and deeply regrets the incident. The monkey deaths prompted the university to evaluate the environmental monitoring systems throughout its animal housing; the evaluation is expected to be completed by 2006. The surviving monkeys have been housed at the California National Primate Research Center, on campus.

In other USDA matters, the agency is currently investigating the University of Lafayette (Louisiana) for alleged Animal Welfare Act violations at its primate center. The investigation is related to a lawsuit brought against the University by Narriman Fakier, a former laboratory worker at the university's New Iberia Research Center. She has accused the University of wrongful termination, retaliatory discharge, and violation of whistleblower statutes. Fakier claims the university forced her to resign after she reported animal abuse at the research center. Fakier alleged that the Center allowed monkeys to die from cold exposure and committed animal abuse. The University denies the allegations. The case went to trial in December. Because cases involving animal welfare violations are normally settled out of court, the trial is a rare public airing of such animal research-related disputes.

Source: [The California Aggie](#); [The Advocate](#); [KLFY.com](#)



Toxicity Testing At a Crossroads

Toxicity testing is at a crossroads, according to a new report issued by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (NAS). Many of the standard tests for chemical toxicity are decades old, expensive, time-consuming, and controversial for their reliance on animals. At the same time, regulators are increasing their demands for testing by adding new endpoints (e.g., endocrine disruption) and broadening chemical coverage (e.g., existing chemicals considered to have been inadequately assessed). The report, *Toxicity Testing for Assessment of Environmental Agents: Interim Report*, recognizes the sometimes conflicting demands among four drivers: (1) breadth and (2) depth of chemical coverage, (3) animal welfare concerns, and (4) cost and related practical issues. The report profiles new technologies and approaches that might help to reconcile the tensions among these considerations and help transform regulatory toxicity testing so that it better addresses current and future demands on chemical testing. A second report from the NAS will present a long range vision for the future of toxicity testing.

The current report, sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency, provides some encouragement for those interested in alternative methods, also known as the Three Rs of replacement, reduction, and refinement. The report includes a discussion of the Three Rs, the need for validation of new methods (an important step towards regulatory acceptance of alternative methods), the emerging regulatory acceptance of non-animal methods, the new technologies that hold promise for the Three Rs, the limitations of the current reliance on animal models, and the importance of strategic design of testing strategies (in lieu of checklists of animal-based tests). According to The HSUS' Martin Stephens, who serves on the NAS committee working on the reports, "the current report lays the foundation for a far-reaching transformation of regulatory toxicology, moving such testing away from its current heavy reliance on animals as black boxes towards a more sophisticated and humane approach."

Source: [The National Academies Press](#)



Research Facility to Become Sanctuary

The New York Blood Center (NYBC) has announced that it has terminated all experiments at its chimpanzee research facility in Liberia and seeks to convert the facility, known as Vilab II, into a sanctuary for the animals. The NYBC explained that Vilab II currently employs a highly experienced staff of chimpanzee caregivers "who are strongly dedicated to the welfare of the animals." The NYBC is looking to expand the Vilab II staff to include a sanctuary director with the sponsorship of an institution or foundation. An endowment will be established by NYBC to fund the sanctuary and provide for the lifetime care of the chimps.

Chimps coming off research protocols will join other chimps currently living at the facility.

The animals are being relocated to six 10-30 acre islands located in a nearby river, where the chimps could roam freely. To facilitate re-socialization of the animals, the NYBC has built a structure with five large inter-connected cages that open up to a 30 foot high climbing play area. Thirty three chimps are already living on the islands, with an additional 15 to be released this month and two more groups scheduled to join them after their release in April and November of 2006, for a total of 80 sanctuary residents. A decision on the controversial issue of whether to allow breeding has yet to be made.

Source: New York Blood Center Announcement, November 18, 2005

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