



testing TIMES

Monthly Update on Animal Experimentation Issues in the EU from the ECEAE

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Welcome to the November edition of Testing Times.

The REACH chemicals legislation is entering its final stages in a fraught confrontation between the Parliament, Council and Commission. The Plenary vote in Parliament has been put back to the week beginning 11th December as the trialogue underway between the three parties continues to expose differences. Although the main concerns are centred around the substitution of the most dangerous chemicals, animal testing issues are also being closely debated. The lives of many millions of animals will be decided by the outcome of this trialogue and therefore it is imperative that officials ensure all amendments contributing to a reduction in animal testing are taken up.

The ECEAE Annual General Meeting took place in October in Helsinki, continuing the tradition of following the Presidency of the European Union. Helsinki will also be the home of the European Chemicals Agency due to open next year. A highly successful meeting produced a number of exciting initiatives and lively discussion ensured a stimulating time was had by all.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Testing Times. If you have any questions regarding laboratory animal issues in the EU, please feel free to contact me.

Warm regards,

*Sandra Hannen,
European Policy Director, ECEAE*

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REACH update

The Environment Committee of the European Parliament voted on the Second Reading of the REACH legislation on October 10th.

The result was reasonably positive as far as animal issues were concerned, with some strong amendments passed. Those that passed include:

- The publication of test proposals for 90 days so that interested parties and ECVAM (the European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods) can suggest alternatives and check whether there is already data available
- The setting up of a Committee for Alternatives to Animal Experimentation in the new European Chemicals Agency to ensure that a strong alternatives ethic permeates the Agency's work
- The publishing of information about alternatives on the Agency website and making lists of alternatives available to companies.

However, other amendments that would have significantly reduced the numbers and suffering of animals failed, including:

- Companies being unable to register if they do not share data (with one incongruous exception)
- Having the Agency examine test proposals involving animals for chemicals imported in the 1-100 tonnage ranges

- The acceptance of equivalent data submissions for tests that have taken place in other OECD countries.
- Part of the registration fee being used for the promotion of alternatives
- Many of the specific test changes in the annexes designed to reduce animal use.

There was also a partial exemption granted for cosmetics substances. The dialogue currently underway between the Parliament, Council and Commission is discussing the amendments relating to animal testing (along with many others) and it is crucial that the fate of millions of animals do not get sacrificed in the jockeying for position. We are calling on all sides to ensure this does not happen. The Parliament Second Reading Plenary Vote is now scheduled for the week beginning the 11th December.

Nafovanny Undercover Investigation

The BUAV, a coalition member of the ECEAE, has found shocking evidence of the factory farming and wild-capture of monkeys for the international research industry. The investigation has reported from inside the world's largest breeding centre for primates – Nafovanny in Vietnam. The company boasts that it has capacity for over 30,000 primates at its two main farms, and is looking to expand further.

Nafovanny exports macaque monkeys for research across the world, and the UK Government for one claims that supply centres such as Nafovanny are closely monitored and abide by international guidelines. However the report and video reveals a catalogue of broken standards and terrible conditions at Nafovanny, repeatedly in breach of the bare minimum standards for housing and husbandry laid out by the International Primatological Society's (IPS) *International Guidelines for the Acquisition, Care and Breeding of Nonhuman Primates*.

The findings of the investigation include:

- Newborn primates kept in small barren cages that fail to provide any sort of natural surroundings
- Decrepit cages with little attempt at enrichment

- Cages that are old with rusted or broken metal work
- Infant monkeys weaned far earlier than the IPS guidelines recommend.



Primates packed in barren cages at Nafovanny.

It is not an exaggeration to describe Nafovanny as little more than a factory farm for primates, dedicated to producing as many monkeys as possible as efficiently as possible – hardly surprising, commented an independent primate expert, given that the farm “is designed with the quantity of output given priority over individual care and welfare”.

The investigation also serves as a timely reminder of the continuing impact of captive breeding upon wild populations. Alarming, our independent expert believed that the primates at a satellite supply farm that keeps Nafovanny fully stocked appeared to be wild-caught – an impression bolstered by the farm's location near an area where macaques are indigenous, and the lack of a single pregnant female in what is ostensibly a breeding farm. We are therefore deeply concerned about the enforcement of policy restrictions on the use of wild caught primates.

The ECEAE calls on Governments to both revoke Nafovanny's approval to import in countries where it is given and ban the importation of primates from any country where there is an indigenous population – this latter to ensure that no primate is ever taken from the wild in the name of research. Ultimately, however, we believe that the only way to stop these intelligent and sensitive animals suffering is to ban all experiments on primates. The report makes clear that farms such as Nafovanny

are merely the starting point for a life of confinement and exploitation for these animals – a life almost invariably ending as a premature, and we believe pointless, death inside the walls of a laboratory. Governments must push for a commitment to a ban on primate experiments as part of the current review of Directive 86/609.

You can view the footage here:
www.buav.org/monkeybusiness



Centre where chimpanzees from the BPRC will live.

Great Apes Moved to Refuge Centre

On September 25th the first six - of a total group of 28 infected - chimpanzees were moved from the notorious primate research center BPRC in Rijswijk, The Netherlands to an animal refuge center. This was the last European facility allowed to experiment on Great Apes and thus we believe there is now no Great Ape testing going on anywhere in Europe. Therefore a legal ban to enshrine this in law would be easy to arrange.

We are calling for this ban in the upcoming revision of Directive 86/609 (The 'animal testing' Directive) due to be published by the Commission early next year.

However more needs to be done. The BPRC alone still has 1300 primates and the number of experiments on primates in 2002 for the EU as a whole (the last year we have figures for) was over 10,000. We believe that there needs to be a ban on

all Primate experiments and now that the close relationship between humans and primates has been accepted by governments they must acknowledge that there is no justification for this continued suffering.

Study exposes failing animal tests

The value of animal studies has been questioned yet again by a damning new independent study which suggested that only one in ten successful animal trials might lead to an approved drug for humans.

Researchers from the University of Toronto reviewed 76 prestigious animal studies, each originally published in such journals as Science and cited by at least 500 other papers, to see if each had resulted in a human trial of the treatment in question. But despite all the animal studies being positive (that is, the treatment was effective) only 8 of the studies resulted in approved drugs for humans – **that's a mere 11%**.

Despite the prestigious journals in which they originally appeared, less than half of the 76 animal studies were rated as having a good methodological quality – although better quality studies were no more likely to be replicated in human studies. The authors warned that even the very limited success rate of 11% was likely to be an overestimate because they examined only highly-cited studies featured in very prominent journals. And they concluded that “patients and physicians should remain cautious about extrapolating the findings of prominent animal research to the care of human disease”.

The reference for the study is: Hackman, D.G. and Redelmeier, D.A. 2006. Translation of research evidence from animals to humans. Journal of the American Medical Association 296, 1731-2.

86/609 Commission Proposal Delayed

The Commission Proposal on the revision of Directive 86/609 has been delayed. It is now hoped to be ready for the end of March 2007.