



testing TIMES

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

ISSUE No. 4: July 2006

Welcome to the July edition of Testing Times.

Activity in Brussels slows down in the middle of this month for about six weeks as legislators take their summer break. However, they have much to look forward to upon their return in September!

REACH will undergo Second Reading in the European Parliament and Council in the autumn, the Commission is due to publish its draft proposal for the revision of the 91/414 pesticides directive, and the Seventh Framework programme will continue its passage through the political process.

Closer to home, I recently completed a 10km run raising money for the ECEAE and managed to raise over 500 Euros. If any of you would like to do something similar, we would be happy to support you!

I hope you find this issue of Testing Times useful, and please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have regarding the Coalition or animal experimentation issues.

Warm regards,

Sandra Hannen,
European Policy Director, ECEAE

This Issue

[Public Consultation Opens on the Revision of the 86/609 Directive](#)

[Independent Review Finds Fault with Animal Tests Primates Report Published](#)

[European Partnership Action Programme](#)

[Linz Congress on Alternatives](#)

[Seventh Framework Programme](#)

[Reach Common Position Formally Adopted by Council](#)

Public Consultation Opens on the Revision of the 86/609 Directive

On the 22nd June the Commission launched a nine-week public consultation on the review of the 86/609 directive on the Protection of Animals Used in Experiments. There are two questionnaires, one for members of the public and one for expert stakeholders. This is part of the impact assessment that started in January and is due to be completed in October 2006.

If you would like to participate in the consultation you can do so online here:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/ia_info_en.htm

Independent Review Finds Fault with Animal Tests

An independent review into the validity of animal tests commissioned by the National Health Service of the UK was finally published last week. Its purpose was to investigate the evidence that animal

experiments provide predictable information for human medicine. Their conclusions were damning to the animal testing industry: they noted a failure to predict human effects, the poor quality of studies and a failure to communicate with doctors conducting clinical trials on humans.

Nine independent researchers, including doctors and epidemiologists from around the world, reviewed six interventions for which there was clear evidence of a harmful or beneficial effect based on a review of human clinical trials. The interventions were drug treatments for brain injury, blood loss and two for stroke and two preventative treatments for lung damage in premature babies and osteoporosis in women.

The researchers searched for animal studies regarding these interventions and assessed statistically their agreement with the human studies. They reviewed in detail a total of 176 animal experiments involving more than 5619 animals, including rats, monkeys, baboons, sheep, rabbits and cows.

In all six cases the researchers heavily criticised the quality of the animal studies. Some of the studies were poorly controlled with a failure to comply with good clinical practices such as randomisation, blinding of treatment identity and poor reporting adherence to regulatory requirements. In four of the six interventions, the animal studies failed to correctly predict the human outcome. In two cases they actually predicted a beneficial effect when the treatment was ineffective and harmful to humans.

The researchers also often reported finding animal studies that had been conducted at the *same time* or even *after* the human studies had shown the treatment to be effective. Worryingly, they also noted that the results of animal studies were not effectively being incorporated into human research: “There seems to be little communication between those conducting animal experiments and those conducting clinical trials.”

The ECEAE welcomes this report. We have been asking for independent systematic reviews of the

usefulness of animal experiments for years. The Government and experimenters claim that animal experiments are well-regulated, strictly controlled and only performed to save human lives – but they make this claim without evidence. The results of this authoritative and objective scientific study are clear and contradict that view directly: animal experiments are unreliable, wasteful and ineffective.

Their full report can be found on

<http://www.pcpoh.bham.ac.uk/publichealth/nccrm/publications.htm>



10,362 primates were used in experiments in the EU in 2002

Primates Report Published

On 6th June the ECEAE, in collaboration with the BUAV, launched their new primates report written by Dr. Gill Langley PhD MIBiol CBIol.

Next of Kin: A report on the Use of Primates in Experiments explores the ethical criticisms of primate experiments, explains the latest knowledge about the significant capacities of non-human primates - capacities once thought to be unique to humans - and highlights how primate tests do not consistently predict drug metabolism and toxicity in humans.

This timely report provides a compelling case for a ban on the use of non-human primates in

experiments, one which could easily be incorporated into the upcoming revision of the 86/609 Directive on the protection of animals used for experiments.

The report also describes:

- Recent findings of tool use by wild monkeys and gorillas
- What monkeys understand and deduce from others' behaviour
- Differences between the brains of monkeys and humans which raise questions about the value of earlier experiments
- Harm caused to primates in laboratories
- The latest developments in non-animal research techniques.

Additionally, the report reviews the kinds of research carried out on primates in Britain and Europe, the numbers involved, the major research areas that use primates, the limitation on the validity of these experiments, the problems of international trade in primates, the growing range of non-primate alternatives, and the continuing failure of legislation to control primate suffering. The report is currently being translated into various languages and will be available in the autumn.

To download the report in English, visit our [webpage](#).

European Partnership Action Programme

The European Partnership for Alternative Approaches to Animal Testing, an initiative between the European Commission and a number of companies and trade federations that was launched last November, released an Action Programme on June 21st setting out key activities that will be initiated over the next five years.

The five main themes of the Action Programme are:

- Mapping of past and current 3R activities to better inform the planning and prioritisation of subsequent actions

- Prioritisation, promotion and implementation of future research based on the application of the 3Rs
- Identification, dissemination and implementation of best practice in the use of the 3Rs
- Implementation of the 3Rs in regulation and decision making
- Validation and acceptance based on the 3Rs.

We welcome the recognition by industry and the Commission of the need to urgently address the issue of animal testing. The ECEAE believes that animal experimentation should be ended immediately on both ethical and scientific grounds.

Recognising that in the current climate this is unlikely to happen immediately, and understanding the difficulties of bringing various companies on board, we nevertheless feel that the Action Programme could have gone much further.

The activities set out were unambitious and general. Furthermore, there were no concrete steps laying out a path to eventually eliminating animal experimentation. Lastly there was no mention of ethical considerations.

We hope that this Action Programme is a genuine attempt by industry and politicians to make strong progress in replacing animals in testing and not a PR stunt with little substance.



Dogs kept isolated in cages with no enrichment

Linz Congress on Alternatives, 2-4th June

Representatives of the ECEAE recently attended the 13th Congress on Alternatives to Animal Testing in Linz, Austria. This was also the 10th Annual Meeting of the Middle European Society for Alternative Methods to Animal Testing (MEGAT) and was hosted by zet - the centre for Alternative and Complementary Methods to Animal Testing, which is based in Linz.

The event was a three-day series of short seminars on alternative technologies. This congress represents a key annual opportunity for scientists engaged in replacement methods to meet each other, exchange information and learn about progress in various fields. There were also talks on ethics (in particular, the right to life), progress on REACH and the amendment of the 86/609/EEC Directive.

Examples of exciting new technologies this year include the development of an in vitro artificial lining of the lung, which may one day replace inhalation studies and an artificial lymph node, which can be used to assess immunotoxicity. One particularly important development, which featured in a number of talks, was the use of liver cells (hepatocytes) to assess more long-term (chronic) toxicity of chemicals. Techniques now enable these cells to live longer in vitro so that the effects of toxins on cell death or mutation rate can be assessed for up to 30 days.

Some of the techniques were still not full replacements as they involved animal cells or were examples of intelligent testing strategies to minimise the number of animals used. Nonetheless, the conference was a good mix of new technologies (still a way off validation and wide-scale commercial use) and established technologies such as reconstituted skin (EpiDerm, EPISKIN, EST100) that are already being provided by companies. Progress is happening, but it seems to depend largely upon the entrepreneurial skills of a few individuals and forward thinking companies. A more ambitious EU-wide strategy and greater funding for replacement is still required.

Seventh Framework Programme

The European Parliament voted on the Seventh Framework Programme in plenary on 15th June. They adopted a variety of animal-friendly measures, including one “to develop and validate...other alternatives to animal testing...in particular to replace the use of non-human primates”. The ECEAE welcomes this and other vital amendments and urges them to be adopted by council.

REACH Common Position Formally Adopted by Council

Following political agreement back in December 2005, on the 27th June the Common Position was officially adopted by Council. This is a formality and it will now be forwarded to the Parliament for the Second Reading, which should take place in October. Click [here](#) for the official press release.