



## **BUAV short statement on new EU animal experiment statistics**

November 8th 2007: For immediate release

BUAV Chief Executive Michelle Thew said:

Despite European Commission and member state's individual promises to reduce and replace the use of animals in experiments, the total animals used in experiments in 2005 rose to 12.1 million – representing a 3.2 per cent increase over and above the added numbers from the inclusion of 10 new member states in the 2005 report.

We are shocked and appalled to hear that the number of animals condemned to lives of suffering in EU laboratories has hit a ten year high. It is simply morally indefensible that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century some of the most advanced laboratories in the world are still pouring tens of millions of public money into cruel and unreliable animal research. For example, there was a 107 per cent increase in cosmetics testing on animals. We now as a society must insist that our politicians listen to the overwhelming voice of European citizens and act now to end the suffering. They have a unique opportunity under the current revision of the directive\* that governs animal testing to close the door on outdated practice, and move the EU forward into an era of modern, humane research.

### **Key Facts arising from the report:**

- The UK is the second largest user of animals in the EU after France. Germany is the third biggest user. The use of animals by these top three countries represents 50 per cent of all animal use in experiments in the EU. Germany's use, however, decreased by 12 per cent in 2005, while the use of animals by France and the UK both rose (5 per cent and 3 per cent respectively).
- The largest proportion of experiments using animals (33 per cent) were fundamental biological research – which are designed just to see what happens to an animal if you subject it to certain conditions. For example, researchers at various universities in the UK are legally allowed to implant electrodes into the brains of macaques for the purposes of understanding how their brain responds to things that they see. After the surgery, monkeys are restrained by their heads in chairs and made to watch tv screens whilst the researchers make recordings from the electrodes in their brains. There is no direct medical benefit to this research (J Neurosci Methods 2006)
- Over 24,000 dogs and 10,000 primates were used in experiments – the use of so-called 'new world' monkeys such as marmosets leapt by 31 per cent, despite overwhelming public and increasing scientific opposition to their use.
- The use of rabbits, ferrets and birds increased by hundreds of thousands.

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- There was a 107 per cent rise in the use of animals for cosmetics testing. 5,571 animals, including 900 guinea pigs and 600 rabbits were used despite regulatory approval and widespread availability of alternatives.
- 231,613 animals were poisoned to death in studies like the LD50 – including 841 dogs. The LD50 is a toxicity test where researchers test the amount of a substance it takes to kill fifty per cent of the animals.

## **Ends**

### **NOTES TO EDITOR**

The European Commission releases statistics on animal experimentation by member states every three years. They released the figures for 2005 today (November 8<sup>th</sup> 2007). To see the full report:

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab\\_animals/pdf/staff\\_work\\_doc\\_sec1455.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/pdf/staff_work_doc_sec1455.pdf)

\*Directive 86/609 that governs the use of animals in experiments is currently being reviewed by the European Commission.

The BUAV has been campaigning for over 100 years to achieve a world where nobody wants or believes we need to experiment on animals. We are committed to achieving our aims through reliable and reasoned evidence-based debate. We are proudly non-violent and respect the quality of life for all – animals and people.

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