



## Media release

For immediate release  
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# Annual government statistics show shocking 14% rise in animal experiments

The **(BUAV)** British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection has strongly condemned the biggest year on year increase since 1987 in animal testing numbers. The figure for the number of procedures conducted on animals is now set at 3,656,080 million which is the highest it has been since 1982. Figures released today by the Home Office reveal that an astonishing 3,583,223 animals were used in tests in 2008, an increase of 14% on the previous year.

## Reason for increase:

- The most significant increases have been an increase in procedures for the breeding of genetically altered animals (up 19%), pharmaceutical testing (up 20%) and fundamental research (research without a particular therapeutic application) (up 17%)

## Key points:

- A 7% increase in the number of primates used, to a shocking 3,354 animals
- An increase in acute lethal tests (i.e. where animals die as a result of being poisoned) of 11% to 96,518 procedures
- An increase in studies causing physical trauma, such as spinal damage of 159% to 12,851 procedures
- As many as 65% of procedures (2,377,791) were conducted with no general or local anaesthetic (this is a disturbing increase from 61% in 2007)
- Household Product Testing is still going on: 132 procedures specifically for household products were carried out (there was only 1 procedure in 2007), many thousands are still used for chemicals that may end up in household products.

## Public opinion:

Despite overwhelming public concern and growing pressure for an outright ban, the UK conducted tests on 3,354 primates, our closest genetic relatives. There was a dramatic increase in macaques to 3,092 animals (23%).

Furthermore, contrary to the UK being hailed as a nation of animal lovers, 252 horses, 11,916 rabbits, 29,250 guinea pigs, 4,271 dogs and 176 cats were subjected to distressing experiments.

This shocking increase comes at a time when the legislation governing animal experiments across Europe is being revised. The welfare of animals is a major point of concern amongst European citizens. Very large majorities of respondents to a recent opinion poll (carried out in six representative EU countries, including the UK, by YouGov) opposed *all* experiments causing pain or suffering to primates, cats and dogs *and* those that do not relate to serious or life-threatening human conditions (1). Other surveys show that very many oppose even these experiments. It is clear from the statistics that millions of animals are used in painful experiments which have little to do with finding the cure to life-threatening or serious human conditions.

**The Chief Executive of the BUAV, Michelle Thew**, said: "This shocking rise in the numbers of animals subjected to experiments is an outrage. This is the seventh year of consecutive rises in the number of animals used. There is clear public concern on this issue. The UK claims to have the tightest regulation on animal testing in the world but it is clear that this is empty rhetoric. We should be leading the way in reducing animal testing, not inflicting even more pain and suffering. Unfortunately, these latest statistics show there is a long way to go, The Government must start listening to the public and put a stop to all this appalling animal suffering."

## **ENDS**

### **Notes:**

For further information please contact the BUAV press office

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*BUAV's Scientific Co-ordinator, Dr Katy Taylor is available for interview.*

1. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 7139 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 24th February - 4th March 2009. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of the population sizes of the countries surveyed.

*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*