

## NEWS RELEASE



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### **BUAV condemns government decision to end independent overview for the controversial use of animals in cruel warfare tests**

The BUAV, the UK's leading animal organisation campaigning to end animal experiments, has condemned the announcement by Mr Peter Luff, the Minister for Defence Equipment Support and Technology, that the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, has been immediately dissolved. The committee was set up to provide independent scientific advice on the care and welfare of animals used in military research at the top secret Porton Down military laboratory in Wiltshire.

Recent animal tests at Porton Down uncovered by the BUAV have caused a public outcry, in particular horrific experiments in which live pigs were blown up with explosives and subjected to massive mutilation and injury.

In 2009, it was reported that over 8,000 animals were used in tests by the MOD, including mice, nonhuman primates and pigs. Animals have been largely used in research into preventing and treating diseases used as weapons. Many of these experiments involved substantial suffering and resulted in the death of the animals. In some tests, there were no reports of treatment or pain relief given.

Examples of other animal tests include:

- 1) Research into inhalational tularaemia, a disease caused by a bacterium used as a biological weapon, ten monkeys were exposed to various doses of the bacterium in order to determine the LD50 (the dose causing 50% of the animals to die) while their heads were restrained in an exposure chamber. The animals suffered severe effects including fever, abnormal breathing and internal bleeding. Some died; all survivors were killed. None of the animals survived or were kept alive for longer than 13 days. <sup>(1)</sup>
- 2) In research into inhalational anthrax infection and to determine the LD50, twelve monkeys were exposed to an aerosol containing anthrax spores while their heads were restrained in an exposure chambers. The animals developed shortness of breath, partial paralysis,

disorientation and lethargy. Six animals died and those still alive after 10 days were killed. The infection has painful and debilitating effects and the monkeys must have suffered immensely before experiencing a painful death. There were no reports that pain relief or other supportive measures were provided. <sup>(2)</sup>

- 3) Guinea-pigs were poisoned with a nerve agent, exceeding the lethal dose by five times. Various combinations of therapy drugs were then injected into their muscles. The animals were observed for signs of nerve agent poisoning. These included incapacitation, abnormal body temperature, and intestinal intussusception (an extremely painful condition where part of the intestine telescopes on itself causing blockage of blood vessels . thus causing gangrene or internal bleeding). Animals in poor condition were killed 24 hours after the poisoning. As nerve agents cause damage to many vital organs resulting in convulsions, internal bleeding, breathing problems (and eventually inability to breathe), the animals would have suffered severely before they died or were killed. <sup>(3)</sup>

**BUAV's Chief Executive, Michelle Thew states: "It is unacceptable and inexplicable that at a time of growing public concern regarding the use of animals in these controversial warfare tests, that an advisory body providing an independent overview on the care and welfare of animals should be disbanded."**

For further information and a copy of the Minister's statement, please contact Fleur Dawes at [fleur.dawes@buav.org](mailto:fleur.dawes@buav.org) or telephone +44 (0) 20 7700 6978, out-of-hours +44 (0) 7850 510 955, or visit [www.buav.org](http://www.buav.org)

**NOTES:**

1. Establishment of lethal inhalational infection with *Francisella tularensis* (tularemia) in the common marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*); International Journal of Experimental Pathology (2009), 90: 109. 118
2. Experimental respiratory anthrax infection in the common marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*); International Journal of Experimental Pathology (2008), 89: 171. 179
3. Development of next generation medical countermeasures to nerve agent poisoning; Toxicology (2007) 233: 120. 127