

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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BUAV expresses disappointment at a lack of progress by government in reducing animal suffering

Government releases latest statistics for experiments carried out on animals

The BUAV welcomes any decrease in the numbers of animals used in experiments in the UK. However, we are extremely disappointed by the lack of a meaningful drop in the number of animals used in research in the UK during 2009, following the massive 14% increase during 2008. There were over 3.6 million experiments started on animals in 2009, a fall of only 1%. That is equivalent to 9,863 experiments every day (14,286 per working day), a totally unacceptable figure.

The numbers were announced today by the Home Office in the annual Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain 2009.

Key points:

- Number of tests on mice up 9% (2, 628,556), birds up 3% (126, 781,) sheep up 6% (38, 003) and cattle up 89% (4,358).
- Tests on guinea-pigs down 35% (19, 159), pigs down 45% (3,757), rats down 6% (333, 865), fish down 34% (398, 101) and amphibians down 37% (20, 715)
- There was a 10% increase in breeding procedures using genetically modified animals (GM) and animals with a harmful defect (HM).
- Despite overwhelming public opposition to the use of primates (1), the UK conducted 4, 263 tests on primates, our closest genetic relatives. Although a slight overall decrease in the overall use of primates, a 68% increase in the numbers of new world primates (such as marmosets). Shockingly 30% of experiments on primates in the EU take place in the UK
- Contrary to the UK being hailed as a nation of animal lovers, 199 horses, 11,643 rabbits, 19,049 guinea pigs, 4,129 dogs and 172 cats were subjected to distressing experiments.
- As many as 2.4 million experiments were carried out without any anaesthesia

- A 143% increase in the number of animals used in toxicological work to test food additives (901), an increase of 6% to test other food stuffs (8,030) and an increase of 11% to test agriculture products (18,966).
- Animals continue to be used in their thousands (438,046) for toxicity procedures such as skin irritation, eye toxicity and acute lethal toxicity.
- Animals continue to be used in disturbing tests inflicting thermal injury and physical trauma.

BUAV Chief Executive Michelle Thew states:

“The UK should be leading the way in reducing animal testing. Unfortunately, these latest statistics show there is a long way to go. Millions of animals continue to suffer and die in UK laboratories. We welcome the pledge from the new Coalition government to work to reduce the use of animals in scientific research and we look forward to working with it to make meaningful and lasting change.”

Notes to editors

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BUAV’s Scientific Consultant, Dr Jarrod Bailey is available for interview.

The **Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain 2008 can be found here:**

<http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/scientific1.html>.

1. The opinion poll was carried out by leading polling company YouGov in the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden and the Czech Republic The survey was carried out online. Total sample size was 7139 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 24th February - 4th March 2009.

Results from the opinion poll show:

- **81%** of people surveyed agree or strongly agree the new law should **prohibit all experiments causing pain or suffering to primates**
- **79%** of people agree or strongly agree the new law should **prohibit all experiments on animals which do not relate to serious or life-threatening human conditions**

- **84%** of people surveyed agree or strongly agree the new law should **prohibit all experiments causing severe pain or suffering to any animal**
- **80%** of people agree or strongly agree **all information about animal experiments should be publicly available**, except information which is confidential and information which would identify researchers or where they work
- **73%** of people **disagree or strongly disagree** that the new law should **permit experiments causing pain or suffering to cats**
- **77%** of people **disagree or strongly disagree** that the new law should **permit experiments causing pain or suffering to dogs**

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

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