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Animal Defenders International and Advocates for Animals

New figures and report expose shocking reality of animal experiments in Scotland

To coincide with World Day for Laboratory Animals on 24 April, Advocates for Animals reveals, for the first time, detailed statistics showing the number and types of experiments on animals carried out in Scotland. The following figures relate to experiments using animals in Scotland in 2003 (the latest year for which figures are available). They reveal:

- Over 430,000 experiments (433,646, 15.6% of GB total of 2,791,781);
- 1,161 primates (24.2% of GB total), 1,269 dogs (17.8% of GB total), 2,821 horses and other equids (31.8% of GB total) and 6,973 rabbits (27.5% of GB total) were used;
- 560 project licences in force (18.8% of GB total); these authorise programmes of work that involve animal experiments;
- 35 licensed establishments (15% of GB total); these are premises on which animal experiments may be carried out;
- 125,527 animals with harmful genetic defects were used (45.0% of GB total);
- 24.4% of the experiments were performed by commercial concerns, 37% by universities and medical schools and 37.1% by other public bodies.

New Report into Inveresk laboratories, Edinburgh

These figures are released hot on the heels of a new report, Animal Experiments at Inveresk, produced by Animal Defenders International (ADI). Internal documents and photographs relating to experiments at Inveresk laboratories, near Edinburgh, were leaked to ADI and provide a chilling insight into the world of contract research, where laboratories are paid to conduct animal experiments on behalf of manufacturers of products such as drugs, chemicals, household and industrial substances.

Inveresk laboratories offers its clients dogs, monkeys, rats, mice, rabbits, pigs, guinea pigs, goats, cows, birds and fish for experimentation and claims to be responsible for approximately 1% of all experiments taking place in the UK - over 25,000 animals every year.

Details of experiments like these are rarely published so this report offers a unique insight into the world of commercial animal experimentation. ADI's Inveresk report provides detailed information about experiments on dogs, monkeys, rabbits and rats. It states that:

- Extreme animal suffering and side effects arose from experiments, such as:
 - dogs foaming at the mouth, vomiting and bleeding from the gums;
 - rats choking to death on paint;
 - monkeys subdued, hunched in their cages, with swollen penises and scrota.
- Miscalculations in dosing resulted in severe suffering, death and premature termination of studies;
- Researchers ran out of the test substance, half way through a study;

- A test substance passed its expiry date before the end of the experiment, whilst dosing of the animals continued;
- Animal tests were conducted when human studies were already underway;
- Animal results were ignored - human studies continued after adverse animal results;
- A drug was accidentally pumped into dogs' lungs instead of their stomachs.

ADI's Chief Executive, Jan Creamer, said: "UK and EU regulations require that animals should only be used when necessary; that non-animal methods be sought. And yet we see at Inveresk, experiments on animals when human clinical trials are being undertaken, blunders during experimental procedures which cause animals severe suffering, animals being choked to death with paint for unnecessary tests."

Advocates' Director, Ross Minett, said: "We are disturbed to find that over 430,000 experiments are conducted on animals in Scotland each year, with over 1,000 primates, 1,000 dogs, nearly 3,000 horses and almost 7,000 rabbits used. In addition to the moral concerns about experiments on animals, the scientific world is increasingly questioning the validity of animal research with many believing that such research is holding back modern science. We urge the Scottish Executive to work with the Home Office to give a higher priority to developing and implementing alternatives to using animals in experiments."