

The response reproduced below was submitted to the consultation held by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics on the ethics of research involving animals during October-December 2003. The views expressed are solely those of the respondent(s) and not those of the Council.

Bromley Local Research Ethics Committee, UK

Members of Bromley Local Research Ethics Committee were pleased to have been given the opportunity to comment on this and discussed it at a recent meeting. The LREC members made the following comments in response to the consultation:

- Some research on animals is essential, mainly for the advance of human medicine, but also for animal welfare.
 - Human beings have responsibilities and rights, but animals as such have neither. However, we must respect the integrity of the animal as a separate independent creature.
 - The benefit of any research process (overall, but largely to humans) must outweigh the foreseen harm to the animal. The benefit must be obtainable in no other practical way. (This particularly applies to genetic modification to produce serious disease in an animal.)
 - Experiments which encroach on the integrity of the animal (i.e potentially or inevitably fatal measures) must be carefully controlled and supervised.
 - The extent of genetic modification must be limited to avoid 'inter-species' animals and the introduction of human genes into animals must be limited to a very small number at a time. In other words the properties of an animal may be modified by an extraneous (e.g. human) gene but not its characteristics.
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- The public should have more information (preferably from an independent source) of the care and conditions accorded to animals in research laboratories.
 - The general public cannot be expected to know and assess all the scientific and medical reasons why animals might be used in research, but should be able to rely upon a suitable body of specifically appointed people to take on this role on their behalf, and to represent their views.