

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.

This response was submitted using the online facility:

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QUESTIONS ANSWERED:

1. Background: the use of animals in research

ANSWER:

All animals are sentient beings and we should respect their dignity. Life can be cruel enough without visiting deliberate suffering to any animal large or small. The only acceptable animal research is non-intrusive e.g. observation. I am sure that in some circumstances close liaison with vets would have potential research benefits without deliberately hurting animals, with the added bonus that illnesses and injury are natural and not artificially imposed. Working with vets in this way would potentially benefit animals as well !

2. Genetically modified animals

ANSWER:

I do not have specific objections to this type of research as long as there is little, preferably no chance of the resulting animal suffering.

3. Alternatives

ANSWER:

If animal testing was totally banned, then the companies/persons who lose money would soon find alternative methods. Subsequently they would fund research into alternatives. However any "Partial" ban they would soon find ways around the ban as they have with the "Whaling" ban.

4. Ethical issues

ANSWER:

I am convinced that all animals experience pain and suffering similar to humans, as however in the case of humans with long term illnesses, animals accept pain as a natural process though that does not mean that they have to like it. It does not mean that we should regard their acceptance of pain as an excuse to inflict pain in pursuit of human health. I am not a vegetarian and providing an animal is treated well and is caused no suffering in its slaughter I have no problems with eating meat.

5. The regulations

ANSWER:

I'm afraid that I believe that any limiting regulations will be circumvented by the unscrupulous. I am sad to say that the only regulation that stands a chance of working is a total ban. However I do not believe that substances that have been in use for a prolonged period, chemicals/medicines etc should be banned since they were originally tested on animals, this seems to me to mock the original animals suffering. Only new testing or re-testing should be banned.

6: Providing information to the public

ANSWER:

As I have made clear in my previous responses the only acceptable information is a total ban !