

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.

Paula Dyer, UK

### **QUESTIONS ANSWERED:**

#### **1. Background: the use of animals in research**

##### **ANSWER:**

I do not think research on animals provides information unavailable by any other method. I think the results from animal experiments can be irrelevant to humans and the procedures are unacceptable in this day and age. No human desire for "progress" is an acceptable reason for the suffering caused to millions of animals each year. The stress, anguish, pain and confusion cannot be justified just because it may benefit the human race. We must learn to accept that other residents of this planet are not here to improve the lives of humans. No level of suffering is acceptable for the so called advancement of mankind.

#### **2. Genetically modified animals**

##### **ANSWER:**

Genetically modifying animals to be used in research holds dangers beyond our abilities of understanding. Knocking out a certain gene could cause harmful and dangerous mutations. There is the added danger of escape and cross breeding with wild animals, bringing about unthinkable imbalances to the chain of nature. Some animals are created purely to suffer chronic pain and illness, while others are never used at all due to unsuccessful embryo implants or other body parts. The animals have also become a source of income which always leads to putting financial gain before the welfare of the animals, animal slave trade in reality. We as humans should know better by now.

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#### **3. Alternatives**

##### **ANSWER:**

We have a responsibility to look into alternative methods of research such as computer models and cultures of cells and tissues in test tubes. Artificial skin cultures and human volunteers should be welcomed. The companies already experimenting should finance these ideas and share results with one another to end the duplication of experiments although they may find this financially threatening at first. Less invasive techniques such as ultrasound and comfortable living conditions with companionship is necessary immediately with a view to phasing out to alternative methods. Alternatives are the ONLY acceptable way forward.

#### **4. Ethical issues**

##### **ANSWER:**

Animals are not living on this planet to be of use to man. They are part of the eco system that we too belong to. We do not have the right to judge who or what is of higher or lower status. Thirty years ago many white skinned humans viewed black skinned people of less importance. Their ignorance has been proved repeatedly since. All animals communicate in their own language and many have natural tribal or family tendencies. These are denied when caged and seperated from one another. We as humans need to remove the fog of arrogance from our eyes and reassess the use of animals for our benefits and pleasure. We are the caretakers not the rulers. Our needs are not above the needs of other species. Just because we can overpower them does not mean that we should.

#### **5. The regulations**

##### **ANSWER:**

The licences issued under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 is based on "scientific" reasoning and not from the perspective of animal welfare. Animals are more than chromosomes and molecules and cannot be assessed in a purely scientific manor. The technicians are required to be trained in "animal testing" but this is entirely different to animal care. Welfare assessments need to be conducted before, throughout and after projects by an animal minded person rather than scientific. Regulations should be universal for all living creatures. I do have concerns regarding the many companies who are now going overseas for experiements. This needs to be looked into and alternatives found. The PRIMARY CONCERN must always be the welfare and living conditions before any other factor. Any results obtained should be published and shared so no experiements are repeated unnecessarily.

#### **6: Providing information to the public**

##### **ANSWER:**

I find the information available about animal research at times very misleading. I have bought products labelled as "this company does not test on animals", to find out that they have employed another company to do the testing for them. I would like all products to be labelled with information as to whether the product or any ingredient within has been tested on animals after a certain stated cut off date. Anything less is not acceptable and is misleading. I would only trust a charity based company to provide balanced information on animal research as they do not have a financial interest in the procedures. I would appreciate to know which of my medicines have been tested on animals and would like my rights to search for and purchase an alternative not tested on animals to be acknowledged. People need to be advised of the methods of experimentation on animals and to be made aware that it goes on every day and has been involved is the majority of the products they fill their shopping baskets with. People are not aware and have the right to know and then make an informed decision as to whether to purchase those products. The screen of secrecy must be lifted and the nation made aware. If the information shocks and sickens it is proof that it should not be happening in the first place.