News

AUT: Encyclopedia on animal ethics and animal welfare established

The European Encyclopedia of Animal Welfare (EEAW) is a multilingual, multi- and interdisciplinary open access project of the FEWD (Research Center of Ethics and Science in Dialogue) at the Institute of Philosophy of the University of Vienna. It investigates the topics of Animal Ethics and Animal Welfare in a political, ethical, and legal context on an international level, with the intention of expanding its research to cultural and social studies over the course of time. Fundamental topics from the natural sciences like the veterinary sciences or ethology are also covered.

Inspired by ambitious, academic open-access projects like the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, the aim of the EEAW is the publication of entries, edited and reviewed by top-ranking international experts of various fields, thereby reinforcing international and interdisciplinary discourse between the relevant disciplines. Furthermore the Encyclopedia serves as a means to distribute reliable information for a wider public.

Special emphasis will be placed on including analyses of selected countries all over the world. Scholars of various backgrounds will devote themselves to comprehensive investigations of their country of residence, according to a list of criteria, such as history, development and current *status quo* of animal welfare, animal ethics and animal rights. The collection of such continually revised and updated in-depth studies on an international level has never before been attempted in an academic context and will fill an important gap in the worldwide discourse, allowing for both a well-founded overview and international comparison of the current situation and the tracking of tendencies and developments. Furthermore, this would be an important contribution to anchoring the long-overdue field of "Comparative Animal Welfare Studies" in a variety of disciplines. Ultimately, the results of this research could secure the groundwork for an improvement of the situation of animals on a global level.

In this way the EEAW conceptually incorporates both practical and theoretical aspects and encompasses the pluralism of established theories, including the principles of the enlightenment and critical rationalism, which inevitably entails multi- and interdisciplinary co-operation.

The EEAW editors are also seeking to encourage contributions by young academics. All submissions will be subject to peer-review approval by the internationally acclaimed experts on our advisory board.

Further activities of the EEAW will be the organization of lectures, talks, and workshops on relevant topics, which are planned to take place at the University of Vienna.

For more information and how to collaborate please visit www.eeaw.at or write an e-mail to: contact@eeaw.at

EEAW.at - Team
Andrea Yehudit Richter
and Erwin Lengauer

CHN: China poised to accept first non-animal test method for cosmetics

Chinese officials are in the final stages of approving the use of the country's very first non-animal test method for cosmetics ingredients, thanks to guidance from scientists funded by PETA. The 3T3 Neutral Red Uptake Phototoxicity Assay, which tests chemicals for their potential toxicity when they come into contact with sunlight and is already in widespread use in the U.S. and the E.U., is scheduled to be accepted in China by late summer. Until now, China has required cosmetics companies to test ingredients and products only on animals.

PETA awarded a grant to scientists at the Institute for In Vitro Sciences (IIVS) late last year after learning that China was requiring cosmetics companies Avon, Estée Lauder, and Mary Kay – which had been on PETA's list of companies that do not test cosmetics on animals for decades – to pay for tests on animals in order to market their products in China. Scientists from IIVS traveled to China several times to offer their expertise and guidance.

Jessica Sandler
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)
Posted on AltTox.org
May 8, 2012

EU: Results of stakeholder questionnaire on QSAR models for REACH

In recent years the EU has funded research into developing computer-based methods for evaluating the toxicity of chemicals, called QSAR or "Quantitative structure-activity relationship" models. These computerized models potentially make it possible to evaluate large numbers of chemicals (as required to register them under EU REACH legislation) while also reducing the numbers of tests on animals. The ORCHESTRA project[1] aims to promote wider understanding, awareness, and appropriate use of QSAR methods. A survey was conducted among potential users (scientists, academics, consultants, regulators, and industry communities) to identify perceptions and needs in relation to the regulatory use of such "*in silico*" methods. Insight was gathered on these stakeholders' current sources of information, their range of tools and practice, and the perceived benefits or barriers to use of QSAR methods, as well as policy needs.

Two online questionnaires were disseminated[2] in Europe and beyond (QI, up to 8 questions; QII, 2-4 questions for a busier audience). In all 62 stakeholders responded and despite this modest number some trends or groupings were clearly identified.

The outputs showed that most of the respondents not only have used QSAR models but were also keen on taking opportunities to apply *in silico* methods. 28 models in use were identified; the most quoted being the OECD Toolbox, EPISuite, and CAESAR, all of which are free tools. However, results suggest that economic cost is not a barrier to application.

Although varying knowledge demands were expressed by the stakeholder segments, overall a considerable need was expressed for "more information or regulatory guidance" on using and applying these methods. This indeed might be the key to reinforcing QSAR model uptake.

Specifically, scientists and consultants are interested in both the technical and the scientific aspects of QSAR applications, their main concern being information that can help gauge the level of confidence to be placed in a model. Regulator – who are primary actors of the acceptance of QSAR models – seem slightly less concerned by the scientific validity of models, requiring instead a better grasp of which applications are appropriate in the context of REACH. They seek good understanding of software outputs: the results of the model and their meaning. Finally, industry stakeholders want reassurance that the scientific quality of a given tool will be considered acceptable by regulators, and pointers to the best available models.

As for fostering use, respondents ratified the case study approach, whose value is to consolidate experience with model use. All sectors found that demonstration by industry of successful actual applications will have a large impact on dissemination of *in silico* methods. "*An important factor in confidence building is for both industry and regulatory bodies to simply start using the tools, to see how they work*." Finally, the ORCHESTRA survey revealed agreement on the importance of involvement and networking in order to mutualise expertise and cooperation and to support industry in the application of the methods. A democratic, evidence-based demonstration, with expert quality assurance in the background, emerges as more likely to trigger greater use than would high-profile leadership or trademarking.

The findings suggest that more detailed attention by developers and consultants to the process requirements of REACH could be valuable. A good model and its suite of tools are not sufficient if the model is not described and if output components are not transparent.

Under these insights, ORCHESTRA and another EU-supported project, ANTARES (www.antares-life.eu), promoted a website called VEGA (www.vega-qsar.eu), providing a highly detailed explanation on the analysis of model results for a given substance.

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1 http://www.orchestra-qsar.eu. A fully detailed report of the questionnaire findings.

2 Both questionnaires can be viewed online at the project website. Questionnaire I and II yielded 33 and 29 responses respectively, 62 in total.

EU: ECVAM Search Guide as free pdf

The ECVAM Search Guide "Good search practice on animal alternatives" by Annett J. Roi and Barbara Grune is available as a free pdf in the online EU Book Shop (http://bookshop.europa.eu/).

The ECVAM Search Guide has been specifically developed to inform and support untrained database users to find high quality information on relevant alternative strategies and methods to animal experiments in an easy, yet systematic, efficient, and effective way

Direct link: http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/the-ecvam-search-guide-pbLBNA24391/?CatalogCategoryID=Gj0KABst5F4AAAEjsZAY4e5L

News on the DB-ALM
July 5, 2012

GER: Three awards for alternative methods open for application

The Felix-Wankel-Animal-Welfare-Research-Award is usually bestowed every two years by the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich for outstanding experimental and innovative scientific papers aiming at or resulting in the replacement or reduction of animal testing, the general fostering of the idea of animal protection, ensuring the health and the appropriate housing of laboratory animals, pets and livestock, or supporting core research for the purpose of enhancing animal protection. The Award is endowed with up to € 30,000.

The award may be divided among several prize winners. Utilization of the prize money is not subject to any conditions. Those entitled to nominate are scientists as well as members of scientific institutions, expert societies, authorities, etc., or representatives of the scientific media. The nominees can be persons or groups involved in research in Germany or abroad. The papers should be recent and contain the results of original research. They must be available in print. Papers which have already received an animal protection award will normally not be considered. Self-nomination is not permitted.

Deadline: September 30, 2012
More information: http://www.felix-wankel-forschungspreis.de

The Ministry for Environment, Forests and Consumer Protection Rhineland-Palatinate has published a call for applications for the Research Prize for Alternative and Complimentary Methods to Animal Experiments. The prize of € 20,000 is awarded biannually. Applicants may be research institutes, companies or scientists based in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate, though applications from outside of the state are not excluded. The projects must have a high probability of developing an animal-free method, significantly reducing the number of animals or significantly reducing the suffering and distress of experimental animals. The *Landesuntersuchungsamt Rheinland-Pfalz* and animal protection organizations may also suggest awardees.

Deadline: October 30, 2012
More information: http://www.mufv.rlp.de

The State of Berlin is offering a research prize of € 15,000 to support the development of alternatives to animal experiments in regulatory toxicology, diagnostics and biomedical research. Applicants may be research institutes, companies or scientists based in the states or Berlin or Brandenburg, Germany, who are planning or working on research projects aimed at developing or validating methods that replace, reduce or refine animal experiments. These include projects that further develop existing approaches toward practical application (prevalidation, validation). Completed projects that have attained at least one of these goals may also be submitted.

Applications should contain a detailed description of the proposed or developed method and its potential use or detailed descriptions of the methodological development and applicability of existing approaches on not more than 15 pages. Completed projects should be recent (completed less than one year ago) and results should be published or submitted for publication.

Deadline: October 30, 2012
More information:
http://www.berlin.de/lageso/

GER: Animal protection organizations appeal for highest standard in new animal protection law

Six German animal protection organizations submitted an appeal to the Federal Council Committees (*Bundesratsausschüsse*) who discussed a proposal for the third amendment to the German Animal Protection Law on June 18-21, 2012.

According to the legal opinion submitted by *Deutscher Tierschutzbund, Bund gegen Missbrauch der Tiere, Deutsche Juristische Gesellschaft für Tierschutzrecht, Bundesverband Tierschutz, Ärzte gegen Tierversuche*, and *Menschen für Tierrechte*, compiled by Prof. Dr Anne Peters, professor of Public International Law at the University of Basle, Switzerland, a number of the proposed changes are not in accordance with EU Directive 2010/63/EU and others do not confer sufficient legal certainty or do not conform sufficiently with the German state goal of animal protection, which is anchored in the German Constitution (Art. 20a).

The criticisms specifically address the subject of prohibition of experiments that result in severe pain, suffering or distress, which is likely to be long-lasting; prohibition of experiments on Great Apes and other primates; the importance of animal protection in the ethical evaluation of proposals for animal experiments; and the competences relevant authorities need to deal with legal disputes with scientists.

On July 6, the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*) called for improvements of the proposed legislation, also in regard to the ban on experiments on Great Apes unless these aim to protect the species but demanded that freedom in science be curtailed as little as possible by the new law.

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IND: Alternatives session at medical students' forum

India today has about 260 medical colleges with a total of about 100,000 undergraduate students. It is estimated that these students use 1.5 to 2 million animals each year for laboratory exercises in physiology and pharmacology.

The Indian Medical Students' Association (IMSA) acts as a connecting link between the routine curriculum of medical education and the recent advances of medical science in India. This student-governed, national association acts as a common platform for all the medical students across the nation. IMSA conducted its annual conference entitled KARMIC-2012 (Kolkata Annual Research and Medical International Congress 2012) in Kolkata, on June 4 and 5, 2012. At the request of KARMIC-IMSA, PETA-India and the MGDC conducted a session on "Alternatives to animals in anatomy, physiology and pharmacology laboratory courses in medical and biomedical programs" on June 4.

Dr Chaitanya Koduri, Science Policy Advisor, PETA-India, spoke about the need to change to non-animal alternatives in medical/pharmacy/pharmacology education in the context of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act 1960 and Wild Life Protection Act 1972 of India. Also, recently, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has designed specific guidelines which prohibit the use of protected wild animal species in dissections and/or experiments and curtail use of other animals including laboratory-bred ones in physiology and pharmacology education. The UGC Guidelines must now also be implemented in all medical, pharmacy, and veterinary institutions. In addition, there is a need to modernize the pedagogy of teaching physiology and pharmacology courses by introducing the Computer-Aided Learning (CAL) tools such as CD-ROM, simulations, and non-interactive/interactive mannequins.

Prof. Mohammad A. Akbarsha, Director and Gandhi-Gruber-Doerenkamp Chair, DZF-sponsored Mahatma Gandhi-Doerenkamp Center (MGDC), India, sensitized the participants to Russell and Burch's 3Rs concept – Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement – with examples relevant to medical education and gave an overview of the global state of the art and level of acceptance of alternative methods.

The talks initiated a lively discussion and positive feedback from the participants.

Mohammad A. Akbarsha
MGDC, India

IND: Tenth *in vitro* toxicology workshop at MGDC

The Doerenkamp-Zbinden Foundation (DZF)-sponsored Mahatma Gandhi Doerenkamp Center (MGDC) for Alternatives to Use of Animals in Life Science Education, and Gandhi-Gruber-Doerenkamp Chair for Alternatives in Education and *in vitro* Toxicology, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, India, through their programs for faculties, scientists, and students, are constantly engaged in bringing about progressive changes in animal use in education, research, and risk assessment by sensitizing and motivating the stakeholders towards implementation of the 3Rs concept. Campaigning by MGDC in this direction, in collaboration with the NGO organizations (PfA, PeTA, and I-CARE) in India, and with the support of a few enlightened teachers, has resulted in the University Grants Commission designing specific guidelines for phasing out dissections from the life science curriculum in universities and colleges in India. Subsequently, the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, has also directed medical, veterinary, and pharmacy faculties to redesign their curriculum in such a way as to avoid unnecessary killing of animals.

Sensitization by MGDC is done along two different streams, one for the faculties and students towards familiarization and implementation of the 3Rs concept in education by the adoption of digital tools and other humane approaches, and the other for those engaged in research and testing with an appeal to avoid unnecessary killing of animals and instead adopt *in vitro* and *in silico* tools. Towards the latter mission, MGDC has organized a series of in vitro toxicology workshops. The 10th workshop, entitled "Techniques in Animal Cell Culture and In Vitro Toxicology," was conducted on June 1-10, 2012, at MGDC. The participants included faculty, students, and scientists from across the country.

Prof. Mohammed A. Akbarsha, Director and Chair, MGDC, Dr Perumana R. Sudhakaran, a Senior Scientist from the Interuniversity Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, Prof. Oommen V. Oommen, Emeritus Professor, University of Kerala, and Dr Arun Dharmarajan, Winthrop Professor, The University of Western Australia illustrated the history and successes of *in vitro* methods on global, national, and personal levels. The workshop was a blend of technical lectures, demonstrations and hands-on training on each of the exercises, starting with an introduction on basics of animal cell culture (thawing, passaging, enumeration, viability assays, and genotoxicity assays), through primary culture, to adoption of molecular techniques such as Western blotting, immunofluorescent assays, PCR, gene cloning, etc. The response from the participants was highly positive and endorsed the goals of the MGDC.

Mohammad A. Akbarsha,
Mohammed Zeeshan,
and Karukayil J. Meenakumari
MGDC, India

INT: www.humane-endpoints.info: free educational website open

The website on humane endpoints in animal experimentation (http://www.humane-endpoints.info) is an interactive website for education and training purposes. The site is meant for people professionally involved in biomedical research and can be used as a platform for professionals in the laboratory animal field.

The website has a public and secured part. The public section, already two years online, is freely accessible and contains general information on animal experiments, assessing the health status and the importance of use and types of humane endpoints. Recently also the secured part (with far more extended information and photo and video material) has been made available. Accessing the secure section requires a password, which can be obtained at request upon the submission of specific information.

Besides information on humane endpoints, the website also contains information on:

- normal behavior and physiology of mice and rats
- pain and distress
- clinical signs
- assessment of pain and distress
- pathology
- laws & legislation
- interactive training modules
- forum
- and an extensive visual (photographs and videos) database

The primary language of the website is English, but the site is also (partly) available in French (in cooperation with the French Association of Laboratory Animal Science (AFSTAL)) and Dutch.

More information:
http://www.humane-endpoints.info
Contact:
info@humane-endpoints.info

Coenraad Hendriksen
Utrecht University,
The Netherlands

SUI: ALTEX Award 2012 for Erwin van Vliet

The 2012 ALTEX Award has been bestowed upon Erwin van Vliet (CAAT, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA; currently Hospital Clinic – Universitat de Barcelona, Department of Maternal-Fetal Medicine, Fetal and Perinatal Medicine Research Group, Barcelona, Spain) for his 2011 article "Current standing and future prospects for the technologies proposed to transform toxicity testing in the 21st century" in *ALTEX 28*, 17-44.

In 2007 the National Research Council described a vision of and strategy toward introducing a paradigm shift in toxicity testing for the 21st century. Van Vliet examines the practicalities of implementing the vision of moving away from animal-based testing and harnessing the current state of the art methods – i.e., assays based on human cells, stem cells, or non-mammalian models, high throughput testing, omics approaches, systems biology, and computational modeling – to assess the safety of chemicals for humans. He comprehensively details the advantages, limitations, and developmental needs for each technology or method to be implemented in the respective aspects of safety testing.

The ALTEX editorial staff and the scientific advisory board annually choose the best main article of the previous year. The prize money is CHF 2,000.

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SUI: ALTEX impact factor steady at 4.4

Owing to a computational error, ALTEX was not listed in the Thomson Reuters Journal Citation Reports® for 2011, which was published at the end of June 2012. On July 7, ALTEX was informed by the Senior Editor of the JCR that ALTEX will be listed in the revised version of the JCR 2011 with an Impact Factor of 4.39 (the JCR 2010 Impact Factor was 4.429). A notice to this effect was posted on Journal Citation Reports® Notices. The final version of the Journal Citation Reports® 2011 will be uploaded in September 2012.

The Impact Factor for 2011 is calculated by dividing the total number of citations in 2011 to articles and reviews published in 2009 and 2010 by the number of articles and reviews published in 2009 and 2010.

The ALTEX staff and the board of ALTEX Edition are very pleased that ALTEX has been able to hold this high impact factor, which reflects that the excellent manuscripts published in the last years have received much attention.

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UK: LUSH prize for replacement of animal tests

The Lush Prize is a collaboration between Lush Fresh Handmade Cosmetics and Ethical Consumer. It consists of a £ 250,000 annual fund – the biggest prize in the non-animal testing sector. In any year in which there is a major breakthrough in 21st Century Toxicology, the full sum of £ 250,000 will be awarded as a "Black Box Prize" to the individual or team responsible. A major breakthrough worthy of this prize is defined as a "proof of concept toxicity pathway study" in which the successful applicant is able to illustrate the step-by-step link between chemical exposure to human toxicity (or an appropriate upstream biological event) and demonstrate the integrated use of emerging cellular and computational tools for making correct safety decisions (based on current knowledge) for a selection of data-rich substances. In other years prizes of £ 50,000 will reward the most effective projects and individuals who have been working towards the goal of replacing animal use in product safety testing across five strategic areas:

– Science
– Training
– Lobbying
– Public Awareness
– Young Researcher Award

The Prize is for projects focused on ending the use of animal testing or for research into alternative tests or for promoting the use of non-animal tests which fit into any of the five categories. The projects should have been running in the year preceding the prize award, or in the year of the award itself. For the 2012 Prize, this means projects running in 2011 or 2012. Nominations are accepted from anywhere in the world, for projects which have taken place anywhere in the world. Only the Young Researchers Prize aims to fund specific future research; the Science, Training and Young Researchers Prizes consider only work to replace animal experiments. Prize funds may not be awarded to organizations that also carry out animal testing.

Deadline: September 3, 2012
More information:
http://www.lushprize.org/

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UK: Call for NC3Rs studentships

The NC3Rs aims to attract and inspire the UK's top graduates, and provide excellent scientific training as well as a solid introduction to the 3Rs. Applications are now invited for the 2012 Studentship competition, for awards commencing in 2013.

Proposals relevant to any area of medical, biological, or veterinary research or safety testing are sought. A clear scientific rationale for the proposed work and description of how it will impact on the 3Rs are essential. Measures of the potential impact of the work on the 3Rs and how this has been arrived at should be provided, where possible. This should include, where appropriate, an estimation of the reduction in animal use in the applicant's laboratory/establishment/discipline and/or objective indicators of how animal welfare has improved.

If the proposal presents an alternative non-animal model, it is important to describe what scientific advantages it could have over *in vivo* methods. Proposals should outline plans for promoting the outcomes of the research to scientific peers, for example through publications and presentations at scientific conferences.

Studentship applications are for 3 years and funds are provided for a fixed amount of £ 30,000 per annum (£ 90,000). Applications are welcomed from leading UK researchers with a minimum of 5 years postdoctoral experience.

More information:
http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/downloaddoc.asp?id=889&page=1040&skin=0
Contact: studentships@nc3rs.org.uk

NC3Rs e-newsletter
May 31, 2012

USA: Reduction of animal numbers for potency test of tuberculin an option

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has adopted an alternative test procedure to 9 CFR 113.409(c) for potency testing serials of Tuberculin, PPD Bovis, Intradermic. The modified test procedure reduces the number of guinea pigs used for this assay from 43 to 15 by eliminating *M. avium* sensitized guinea pigs and sensitizing only to *M. bovis*, reducing the number of PPD dilutions for the test, and using 6 instead of 4 injections per guinea pig, which allows comparing the unknown with the reference within the same guinea pig. The Memorandum introducing the modified test procedure as BBPRO0002.03 states that it "demonstrated more reproducibility and ruggedness" than the codified procedure.

However, the agency's policy leaves it up to the testing laboratories to decide which of the two procedures they will use. In contrast to E.U. Directive 2010/63/EU, Article 4, current U.S. law does not require that the number of animals used is reduced to a minimum when the objectives of the project are not compromised.

More information:
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/vet_biologics/publications/memo_800_114.pdf of April 13, 2012

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