



News

CHN: Focus on replacement at “Asia for Animals” conference

The first major presentation on replacement alternatives in China and the first InterNICHE visit to the country took place in June 2011. In its first venture into the topic of animal experimentation, the Asia for Animals (AfA) conference invited InterNICHE Co-ordinator Nick Jukes to give an extended presentation at the event held in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. Over 400 animal welfare and rights delegates from across Asia and beyond attended a very successful event in a very challenging country.

The animal experimentation session at AfA was co-chaired by Dr Andrew Rowan from the Humane Society International (HSI). Addressing alternatives in research and testing, with a special focus on toxicity studies, he described important progress towards humane science and improved consumer safety. Nick gave a 2-hour presentation about humane alternatives in education and training, and demonstrated a range of exemplary tools from across the disciplines.

The talk gave an overview of the field and aimed to empower the delegates to begin facilitating the process of replacement of animal experiments in education

and training. Many were not aware of the feasibility and potential of full replacement, nor familiar with the resources and experience available to help achieve it. Starting their involvement from a position of replacement will enhance the effectiveness of the movement for alternatives as it grows in China and across Asia. A new engagement in humane education will also lead to greater confidence in addressing alternatives in research and testing.

A small Multimedia Exhibition from InterNICHE, held throughout the event, gave the opportunity for more hands-on trials of alternatives, for distribution of literature, and to discuss and network widely. The extended Animals Asia network helped connect InterNICHE to new groups from across Asia who are keen to collaborate with new campaigns and to organize outreach and alternatives seminars. Levels of cruelty are high in the region: in a recent case in China, middle school students cut off the fins of live goldfish in order to observe changes in the balancing process.

A promising development is the interest in alternatives from the new China

Veterinary Medical Association. Members were at the AfA conference and attended the InterNICHE talk, and Nick travelled to Beijing to meet their Committee. The result was very positive: it was felt that replacement is possible, that training through alternatives can be superior to that through animal experiments, and that the development of alternatives can support economic development.

An even greater focus on replacement alternatives is scheduled for the next AfA conference, to be held in Singapore in early 2012. This will further establish animal experimentation as an important topic to be addressed in the region, and allow for the development of more collaborative projects between InterNICHE and national animal protection groups.

InterNICHE gratefully acknowledges the Anti-Vivisection Union (South Australia) and the International Association Against Painful Experiments on Animals (IAAPEA) for their support for the outreach.

Animals Asia can be reached at:
www.animalsasia.org
Nick Jukes, Interniche
<http://www.interniche.org/>

EU: SEURAT-1 publishes first report

The first annual report of the € 50 million research initiative Safety Evaluation Ultimately Replacing Animal Testing (SEURAT-1) has been published. The initiative, supported by the European Union’s Health Program and the European Cosmetics Association (Colipa), involves more than 70 European organizations. It aims to develop a long-term strategy for

research and development of novel alternative testing solutions in the field of repeated dose systemic toxicity testing of chemicals. The report, entitled *Towards the replacement of in vivo repeated dose systemic toxicity testing*, outlines the initiative’s research strategy within the context of REACH and CLP and related international research activities. It also

provides a detailed description of seven research projects that have begun under SEURAT-1, along with expected outcomes of the initiative.

The full report can be downloaded from:
<http://www.seurat-1.eu/pages/library/seurat-1-annual-report.php>

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GER: States consider introduction of animal protection class actions

The state parliaments of the five German federal states North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Baden-Württemberg, Saarland and Hessen are currently considering draft laws on the introduction of class actions on animal protection. These laws would give registered animal protection agencies the right to demand a legal assessment of the compliance of decisions made by authorities with animal protection law, e.g., regarding the establishment of new livestock fa-

cilities, slaughtering without anesthesia, debeaking of productive poultry, animal husbandry and also animal experiments. The legal representation of animal rights by registered animal protection agencies would represent a counterbalance to the legal rights of animal users.

Currently, only the state of Bremen since 2007 provides the right to file actions on animal protection issues. In all other states animal protection agencies can merely register complaints at the

public prosecutor's office. The public prosecutor can decide whether or not to pursue these complaints.

The German Association *Menschen für Tierrechte* ("people for animal rights") and its associated members have been pursuing the right to file class actions since animal protection became a state aim in the German Constitution in 2002.

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GER: Donor animal program for education in biology and veterinary science

The German Association *Menschen für Tierrechte* ("people for animal rights") has established guidance for the donation of deceased companion animals for educational purposes. With this approach quality and content of practical anatomy courses in biology and veterinary science can be upheld without forcing students to work with animals that were killed for use in the course. It is

reported that animal owners are often somewhat consoled by donating their deceased animal to a good cause. Such programs are already successful in the US, the Netherlands, and Australia. First German institutes are already using this approach, acquiring deceased animals from veterinary practices or clinics. This approach saves costs while requiring only limited logistics.

The Association calls for help in advertising and implementing this approach.

All relevant information is posted on: www.satis-tierrechte.de/alternativen/; flyers can be downloaded for distribution in veterinary practices.

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GER: More animals used for scientific purposes in 2010

The number of experimental animals used in Germany in 2010 is 2.5% (about 70,000 animals) higher than in 2009. The total number of animals, which has risen for the seventh year in a row, is almost 2.86 million. Of these, 780,000 animals are killed before their tissues are used for scientific purposes.

The increase in the total is again mostly due to a strong increase in the use of genetically modified animals – by about 16% (about 115,000 animals). This number includes only animals actually used in animal experiments, not animals used for breeding purposes. 95% of the genetically modified animals used are mice.

While the use of amphibians and fish both increased by 30% (to a sum of 180,000), the use of dogs decreased by 28% to about 3,000.

35% of animal experiments are conducted in basic research; 19% for research and development in human, dental, and veterinary medicine; 9% for the production and quality control of products for human, dental, or veterinary medicine; and 6% for toxicological or other safety tests. Other purposes include diagnosis of disease, efficacy tests for pesticides, and education.

The number of animals used for toxicological or other safety tests sank by 4.6%;

however the number of non-human primates (cynomolgus macaques and rhesus monkeys) used for this purpose increased by about 500 animals to 1695 in comparison to 2009.

The full statistics published by the German Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection can be found at: http://www.bmelv.de/Shared-Docs/Downloads/Landwirtschaft/Tier/Tierschutz/2010-TierversuchszahlenGesamt.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

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GER: Award of research prize “Alternative and Complimentary Methods” 2011

On November 29, 2011 Minister for Food and Rural Areas Baden Württemberg Alexander Bonde awarded the Research Prize “Alternative and Complimentary Methods” 2011 worth € 25,000 jointly to Dr Martina Berger, Thorax-, Heart and Vessel Surgery at the University Hospital Tübingen, and to Martina Zimmermann and Prof. Dr Ulrich Lauer, Molecular Oncology at the University Hospital Tübingen.

Dr Berger has developed a real-time heart valve bioreactor as an alternative to studying the aging process and other aspects of allogeneic heart valves in

large animals, e.g., sheep. The bioreactor simulates blood flow, blood pressure, the pressure profile, heart frequency, temperature, and the viscosity of blood. Changes in the heart values are monitored with a high-speed camera system. The bioreactor can also be used with human blood, a further advantage over the animal experiment. One important application of the bioreactor is the simulation of high blood pressure. The respective animal experiment is a difficult and severe procedure. No animals are used in Dr Berger’s system; heart valves from pigs are obtained from the abattoir.

Ms Zimmermann and Prof. Lauer have developed a method to culture 200 μm slices of human tumor tissue to test novel therapeutics, termed “individualized viral therapy”. This approach was previously performed in animal experiments. The procedure also can be used to address further questions in oncology and individualized therapy.

The prize money was split between the two projects. The ceremony took place in Stuttgart.

Press release
November 29, 2011
Ministry of Food and Rural Areas
Baden Württemberg
Germany

GER: Animal Protection Research Prize awarded

On December 13, 2011, State Secretary Peter Bleser awarded the 30th Animal Protection Research Prize of the German Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection jointly to Dr Jörn-Hendrik Reuter, Head of Department at Beiersdorf and to Prof. Dr Claus-Michael Lehr, Dr Eva-Maria Collnot and Fransisca Leonard of the Helmholtz Institute for Pharmaceutical Research Saarland and Saarland University.

Dr Reuter was awarded the prize for his work on “Standardising the use of human

blood to predict the allergic and photoallergic potential of chemicals.” The method can replace animal experiments to detect chemicals with a potential to induce allergy. The work of Prof. Lehr, Dr Collnot and Ms Leonard on “Development and establishment of an *in vitro* model of the inflamed human intestinal mucosa” can replace animal experiments that are performed in biomedical and pharmaceutical research and development.

The prize money of € 15,000 was split between the two projects. The cer-

emony took place at the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment in Berlin, Germany. The prize is awarded every year to support methodological work aiming to reduce or replace animal experiments.

The call for application for the 2012 prize has been published with a deadline of March 31, 2012 (http://www.bmelv.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/Landwirtschaft/Tier/Tierschutz/31-Tierschutzforschung-spreis.pdf?__blob=publicationFile).

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UK: New InterNICHE website with Studies Database

InterNICHE has launched its new website on alternatives to animal experiments in medical, veterinary medical and biological science education and training. Available at <http://www.interniche.org>, the new site is a collaborative, content-rich and multi-language resource. It has been developed to meet the needs of teachers and trainers, students, ethics committees, alternatives producers, and campaigners internationally. The site comprises an evolving range of news, information,

database access, and downloads provided by InterNICHE. Functionality has been introduced that enables user-friendly upload of multi-language content from all parties, and which facilitates the process of translation.

This commitment to inclusivity will encourage participation from the diverse international community that is involved in curricular transformation. And with all content also requiring a summary in English, the twin processes of localization

and internationalization will optimize the site’s impact.

Users are invited to share news and information, and to contribute their skills, in order to build a powerful repository of resources and experience. A role-based access facility defines each user’s rights to view and publish data, reflecting their chosen degree of participation.

The website’s database resources include the InterNICHE Alternatives Database, which provides descriptions, speci-



fications, and links to producers for over 1000 alternatives, arranged by discipline and medium (<http://www.interniche.org/alternatives>). This valuable resource, available in several languages, comprises alternatives first collated and detailed in the InterNICHE book from Guinea Pig to Computer Mouse (2nd ed.). With further original research it has now doubled in size, with entries updated and illustrated with photographs.

Forthcoming content and functionality to be added to the site include new translations into Spanish, Arabic, Hindi and Chinese; new opportunities for users to upload content and to volunteer on site development; reviews, assessment and on-line access to alternatives; and facilities to support the global network of InterNICHE Alternative Loan Systems (libraries of humane learning tools). New content and functionality will be announced on the news page.

The InterNICHE Studies Database is a newly developed resource, providing references, abstracts and other details for over 750 published studies and books on humane education, alternatives and related themes (<http://www.interniche.org/studies>). It is searchable by discipline, author and keyword. Each study has been researched and included for its relevance to the pedagogical, ethical and economic issues presented by the use of animals,

alternatives and technology in education and training. The Studies Database has been published to facilitate free access to information that can support curricular transformation and replacement of animal experiments. A comments facility has been established to encourage critique and debate. The database can help identify specific alternative tools and approaches to enhance practical classes, and in parallel with the InterNICHE Alternatives Database can be linked into alternative search strategies for universities and training centers. Links from individual studies to the PubMed database allow users to identify related citations.

The contents of the Studies Database reflect major themes such as technological innovation, experience of implementation, assessment and comparative studies. The studies can provide valuable information on topics ranging from teaching objectives, the hidden curriculum and conscientious objection to alternative physiology classes, microsurgical training and haptic technology.

Studies about cutting edge technology and techniques in medical training, often developed to ensure effective training and to help guarantee patient safety, are included for the latter's impact in replacing animal experiments and consolidating the implementation of non-animal training techniques. As an example of its potential,

the Studies Database provides an opportunity to research the evolution and assessment of virtual and augmented reality for laparoscopic surgical skills training.

Access to the studies can help lift the level of the debate concerning curricular transformation. By including some studies in favor of harmful animal use, the database allows for dissection of their claims, and encourages further refinement of the arguments for full replacement. Studies with valid arguments in support of the use of animal cadavers, organs and tissue – but which do not question the killing of animals – are joined by those that explore ethical sourcing, thereby encouraging critical engagement. And discussions about the inclusion or exclusion of cadaver dissection in human medicine curricula can offer lessons in the potential relevance of dissection within veterinary medicine and zoology studies.

The database is scheduled to double in size to over 1500 studies during 2012. New functionality, including linking studies to relevant products listed in the Alternatives Database, the availability of full versions of selected papers, and inclusion of more non-English studies, will also be introduced.

Press release
InterNICHE
January 11, 2012

USA: EPA guidance for waiving or bridging of mammalian acute toxicity tests

EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs has posted on its website a guidance document for waiving or bridging mammalian acute toxicity data for testing pesticide technical active ingredients and pesticide end-use formulations.

The Guidance for Waiving or Bridging of Mammalian Acute Toxicity Tests for Pesticides and Pesticide Products integrates several existing EPA documents into one reference resource. The agency believes this streamlining of information

will reduce confusion for registrants seeking accurate and up-to-date guidance.

The guidance applies to acute toxicity waiver requests for the conduct of the mammalian (Series 870) acute oral, acute dermal, acute inhalation, primary eye irritation, primary dermal irritation, and dermal sensitization studies. It also includes information on waivers for granular pesticides.

The Guidance for Waiving or Bridging of Mammalian Acute Toxicity Tests

for Pesticides and Pesticide Products is available on our Policy and Guidance Web page at: <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/science/policies.htm>

Martin Stephens
Posted on AltTox.org
November 9, 2011



USA: EPA releases formerly confidential chemical information

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is making available to the public hundreds of studies on chemicals that had been treated as confidential business information (CBI). The move is part of EPA's plan to make public the chemicals that are not entitled to CBI status. Releasing the data will expand the public's access to critical health and safety information on chemicals that are manufactured and processed in the U.S. Newly available information can be found using EPA's Chemical Data Access Tool (http://java.epa.gov/oppt_chemical_search/).

Since 2009, 577 formerly confidential chemical identities are no longer confidential and more than 1,000 health and safety studies are now accessible to the

public that were previously unavailable or only available in limited circumstances. In 2010 EPA issued new guidance outlining the agency's plans to deny confidentiality claims for chemical identities in health and safety studies under the federal Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) that are determined to not be entitled to CBI status. EPA has been reviewing CBI claims in new and existing TSCA filings containing health and safety studies.

Consistent with the guidance, the agency will request that the submitter voluntarily relinquish the CBI claims and make the newly available studies available to the public. EPA also challenged the chemical industry to make available information that was previously classi-

fied as CBI. To date, more than 35 companies have agreed to review previously submitted filings containing health and safety studies and determine if any CBI claims may no longer be necessary. The newly available information can be found under a new "declassified tab" using the Chemical Data Access Tool, launched in December 2010 to assist the public in retrieving chemical health and safety information submitted to EPA under TSCA.

For additional information, please visit: <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/existingchemicals/pubs/transparency.html>

U.S. EPA
Weekly Digest Bulletin
November 28, 2011

USA: EPA, along with Tox21 partners, releases list of 10,000 chemicals being screened by robot system

A high-speed robotic screening system, aimed at protecting human health by improving how chemicals are tested in the United States, has begun to test 10,000 compounds for potential toxicity. The compounds cover a wide variety of classifications, and include consumer products, food additives, chemicals found in industrial processes, and human and veterinary drugs. A complete list of the compounds is publicly available at: www.epa.gov/ncct/dsstox

Testing this compound library begins a new phase of an ongoing collaboration between the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, referred to as Tox21. NIH partners include the National Toxicology Program (NTP), administered by

the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), and the NIH Chemical Genomics Center (NCGC), part of the NIH Center for Translational Therapeutics (NCTT), housed at the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI).

A subset of the NTP portion of the 10,000 compound library will focus on pilot testing several formulations or mixtures of compounds, a priority area for NIEHS/NTP. The library constituents were selected after a thorough analysis of existing scientific studies, more than 200 public chemical databases, and chemical nominations received from internal and external partners. Each test compound will undergo a thorough chemical analysis to verify its identity and determine its purity, concentration, and stability.

The goal of the testing is to provide results that will be useful for evaluating if these chemicals have the potential to disrupt processes in the human body to an extent that leads to adverse health effects.

All testing results will be available to the public through NIH and EPA chemical toxicity databases. In addition, NCTT has created a Tox21 chemical inventory browser freely available at <http://tripod.nih.gov/tox21chem> to provide researchers with additional information about the chemicals. For more information about Tox21, visit: http://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/assets/docs_p_z/ntp-tox21.pdf

Adapted from NIH News
December 7, 2011



SUI: Fondation Egon Naef mourns its founder

On December 16, 2011 Egon Naef passed away after a short and severe illness that he bore with great patience but little hope. His friends, whom he had invited personally to his memorial service by telephone, filled the small church of Jussy on December 22.

Egon Naef was born in 1928 in St. Gallen. After qualifying as a chemist he went on an adventurous world tour, which led him to India, Southeast Asia, Japan, and the United States. A 16 mm camera accompanied him and he proudly presented his films to a captivated post-war audience in the early 1950s.

Soon Egon Naef opened his first drug-store in Zurich; it was joined by branches in St. Gallen and Lucerne, and later by a health food store in Geneva. There he advised his clients on all their health concerns and had soon earned a reputation as a “natural healer,” which certainly did not amuse the medical doctors he dealt with. He continued his education in different approaches to diagnosis and therapy and had remarkable success with some patients whom academic medicine had already given up on. Helping people was clearly his calling.

Egon found his private happiness with Antoinette. They fell in love in 1959 and got married in the same year. Their marriage was blessed with three children.

Dogs, geese, ducks, squirrels, hedgehogs, crows and magpies were Egon

Naef’s pets and guests. Helping animals was important to him. After his retirement in 1992 he also worked as a keeper on a voluntary basis in his friend’s animal park.

Egon Naef made inquiries at various Swiss foundations on how he could invest part of his assets to further the development of alternatives to animal experiments. That is how we met in 1998. After some discussions Egon Naef decided to establish his own foundation, the “Fondation Egon Naef pour la recherche *in vitro*.” The foundation’s support of alternative methods started out with research prizes awarded to scientists and activists of the 3R scene. Nick Jukes and Ursula Zinko of InterNICHE received the first prize in 2000. They were followed by Paul Honegger (2001), Daniel Favre (2002), Thomas Quinn (2003), Pierre Cosson (2004), Ludovic Wieszniewski (2005), Andrew Hemphill (2006), Roberto Montesanto (2007), Eric Féraille, Valérie Leroy and Luca Fumagalli (2009), and Gilbert Greub (2010). Egon Naef was still able to award the latest prize on January 15, 2011 in Geneva.

In a next big step, the “Fondation Egon Naef pour la recherche *in vitro*” together with the Doerenkamp-Zbinden Foundation (DZF) established an academic chair for alternative methods at the Medical Faculty of the University of Geneva. The contract was signed in 2008 and Pierre

Cosson now holds the chair. Cosson works with unicellular organisms from soil to simulate mammal macrophages and their interactions with microorganisms. One of his projects, which is also supported by the DZF, deals with the establishment of *in vitro* antibody production methodology. He will be offering courses in this technique starting in 2012.

Egon Naef saw this academic chair as his crowning achievement. Calmly he ordered his affairs, ensured the future of the foundation (the foundation’s new president is his eldest son Marcel), and held final discussions with Pierre Cosson and myself. Egon Naef left this life in dignity but he left behind a bewildered family to whom we offer our heartfelt condolences.

“*Auf Wiedersehen, Franz*” were his last words to me. *Auf Wiedersehen, Egon*.

Franz P. Gruber, Küsnacht, Switzerland

In the name of the members of the Foundation Board and the Scientific Advisory Committee as well as the staff of the Doerenkamp-Zbinden Foundation