

ALTEX

ALTERNATIVES TO ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION

Thomas Hartung and
Herman Koeter:

Food for thought
... on food safety testing
Vor- und Nachdenkliches
... zur Prüfung von
Nahrungsmitteln

Petra Mayr et al.:

Literaturbericht 07/08
Mensch und Mitgeschöpf
unter ethischem Aspekt

Kirsten Schmidt:

Würde oder Integrität
– Verlangt die gen-
technische Veränderung
von Tieren neue
tierethische Konzepte?

Norbert Walz:

Die metaphysische
Dimension der Tierethik

Cecilia Muratori:

Gegen die Pariasmoral.
Schopenhauer über die
Ethik des Tierversuchs



Deutsch zum 90sten:

Petra Mayr (Vorbemerkung):
Humanität als Solidarität
gegenüber Tieren

Heike Baranzke:

Tierschutz, Erbe der
Humanität

Gieri Bolliger:

Gotthard M. Teutschs
Archiv für Ethik im Tier-,
Natur- und
Umweltschutz (AET)

Erich Gräßer:

Albert Schweitzers Ethik
– ein ungenutztes Erbe

Beat Sitter-Liver:

Gerechtigkeit für alle
Lebewesen

News / Nachrichten

Comments / Meinungen

Tagungsbericht

Imprint



Dear reader,

in current times we are alternately confronted with euphoric hopes in but also the concrete possibilities of biomedicine. Despite all prognoses, it is often not possible to foretell what many of the current developments may achieve in the future. But one impact they certainly have is that they show us that old patterns of thought and ethical considerations are falling short and need to be reassessed. One such example from the area of animal experiments is the subject of the main article of biologist and philosopher Kirsten Schmidt entitled “Dignity or integrity – Does the genetic modification of animals require new concepts in animal ethics?” The debate on gene technology represents a gauge of animal ethics in general. Do we really only care about avoiding suffering, and is it enough to care only about suffering? If yes, genetic modifications of animals could even contribute to reducing their suffering; at least that is what some of the leading figures in gene technology suggest, who think they have elegantly solved the questions of animal protection by generating mice that are allegedly insensitive to pain. Or is that simply the culmination of the insufferable functionalisation of animals in gene technology? It seems we must fear it is the latter.

The idea that humans and animals share the same biological origins has recently regained popularity. In his main article “The metaphysical dimension of animal ethics” the philosopher Norbert Walz deduces that animals and humans also share a spiritual quality, a similarity that the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer also employs to argue against animal experiments. The topicality of Schopenhauer’s animal ethics is enunciated by philosopher Cecilia Muratori in her main article “Against *pariahmoral*. Schopenhauer on the ethics of vivisection.”

New and established theories and arguments regarding the treatment of animals can be found in the book reviews of our literature report. The relationship between humans and animals is continuously conquering new discussion platforms. This is good news, as it is a prerequisite for change. Our literature report also contains the book review of a harrowing experience report. The former state veterinary of Lower Saxony, Hermann Focke, documents the daily cruelties that characterise the treatment of animals. We look forward to a time when such books no longer need to be written.

The abyss between the legal stipulations of the law and the reality of animal experiments is still grotesquely wide. The revision of the Swiss animal protection law of the 1st of September 2008 aims to address this transnational problem. At last, the enforcement of the law shall also be improved. Read more about this development in the news section.

The establishment of a new chair for alternative methods in Geneva by the university’s medical faculty, the Egon-Naef Foundation and the Doerenkamp-Zbinden foundation represents another cornerstone for the animal protection of the fu-

ture. Further details are in the news section. The EU has presented a new draft of a directive to protect 12 million experimental animals. The retrospective evaluation of proposals to perform animal experiments shall make the scientific results more transparent. More information can be found in the news section.

Animal experimentation for our food safety is the subject of Thomas Hartung’s “Food for thought ...” column in this issue. Together with Herman Köeter he throws the spotlight on this area of animal experiments, which is hardly known to the public and is thus seldom the subject of public debate. Therefore, it offers surprising information, for example, the fact that almost ten percent of all toxicological animal experiments are performed for the safety assessment of herbicides and fungicides. The number of animal experiments performed for the safety of our food is thus almost as high as it used to be for testing industrial chemicals.

Gotthard M. Teutsch, a pioneer animal ethicist and animal protectionist, celebrated his ninetieth birthday on the 13th of December. Already in the times when animal protection had little formal footing, Teutsch was an advocate of a better treatment of animals. We convey our heartfelt congratulations with four essays.

ALTEX must continue to evolve; that is what the board and general assembly of the society *ALTEX* Edition decided. To enable a better recruitment of subscribers outside the German-speaking countries, four issues of *ALTEX* per year will be published in English, starting in 2009. A fifth issue, which will be published at the end of every year, entitled “*ALTEX*^{ethik}”, which will appear in German, will contain main articles dealing with all central aspects of the public discussion on the treatment of animals. A main feature will be the literature report: The book reports, which reflect the zeitgeist of the human-animal relationship, will be complemented by German summaries of all the scientific articles published during the year in the *ALTEX* issues 1-4. With *ALTEX*^{ethik} you can keep an eye on both the social and scientific developments in the field. As a philosopher, to whom the subject of animal ethics has been a central theme for many years, I am pleased to be assuming the office of editor of *ALTEX*^{ethik}. I wish you a good New Year and look forward to continuing to inform you of further developments and a more considerate treatment of animals in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Petra Mayr
Editorial office of *ALTEX*



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Giotto di Bondone (1266-1337): St. Francis
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Aims and scope

ALTEX, edited by the Swiss Society ALTEX Edition is the official journal of EUSAAT, the European Society for Alternatives to Animal Testing. ALTEX is devoted to the publication of research on the development and promotion of alternatives to animal experiments according to the 3R concept of Russell and Burch: Replace, Reduce, and Refine. ALTEX is publishing original articles, short communications, reviews as well as news and comments, meeting reports and book reviews in English and German. Animal experiments are defined by the editors as all experimental procedures using animals which may cause pain, suffering, and emotional harm to animals and which are conducted in testing, research and education or to obtain tissues, organs, and other animal derived products.

Besides covering the biomedical aspects of animal experimentation, ALTEX is also devoted to the bioethics of the complex relationship between man and animals. Articles published in ALTEX should express a basic concern about the dignity of living creatures. ALTEX is not only aimed at developing a new approach to recognise animals as partners but it also intends to introduce a scientific sight in the discussions on animal experiments. Articles devoted to the social and ethical aspects of this topic will, therefore, be judged according to stringent scientific standards. Manuscripts submitted to ALTEX are evaluated by two reviewers. The evaluation takes into account the scientific merit of a manuscript and the contribution to animal welfare and the 3R-principle.

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**The world is not a factory
and animals are not products
for our use (...)
Not mercy, but justice is what we
owe to the animals**

**Die Welt ist kein Machwerk
und die Tiere sind kein Fabrikat
zu unserem Gebrauch (...)
Nicht Erbarmen, sondern
Gerechtigkeit ist
man den Tieren schuldig**

Arthur Schopenhauer
(* 22. Februar 1788 in Danzig;
† 21. September 1860 in Frankfurt/Main)