



WATCHDOG

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Hurt no living thing

Hurt no living thing;

Ladybird, nor butterfly,

Nor moth with dusty wing,

Nor cricket chirping cheerily,

Nor grasshopper so light of leap,

Nor dancing gnat, nor beetle fat,

Nor harmless worms that creep.

Christina Rossetti

CONGRATULATIONS to the
Director General JACKIE BALLARD
for appearing on TV to speak
out against the treatment
of living creatures on the
programme 'I'm a Celebrity.'

Apologies for a shorter than
usual newsletter. We had been
hoping to report on the outcome
of the first appeal against
refusal of branch membership under
the new rule but the matter is still in progress.

After 16 years of circulating the newsletter, we were surprised to
receive an objection from a branch chairman about the newsletter
being in a used envelope! We hope that our readers understand that
we want to save paper and the environment.

Quote of the month

'We owe other animals our compassion because, in the respects that
matter most, they are no different from ourselves.'

A belief in human supremacy is the only possible basis of animal
experimentation. It is time that we put this superstition behind us.'
John Gray Author of STRAW DOGS thoughts on humans and other animals.
The Guardian 2/03/04

Government committee alarmed by Italian report

James Melkie
Health correspondent

The government's advisers on BSE and its deadly human form, CJD, are to urgently reconsider whether BSE-like diseases in cattle may have links to more than one fatal brain condition.

And there may be more than one type of BSE: scientists in Italy have reported that a form of the disease discovered in some animals tested in their country has a signature resembling sporadic CJD in people.

They advise caution in linking diseases in two species but their report in the online edition of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science is bound to revive debate about whether eating cheap beef may be responsible for some cases of sporadic CJD as well as the less common variant CJD traditionally linked to eating infected cattle.

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This hypothesis was first suggested by a British scientist, John Collinge, 15 months ago when he said that injecting mice with BSE-infected material seemed to result in some having a signature which was the same as vCJD, but others a signature that was similar to one of three strains of sporadic CJD, a disease which affects older people than vCJD.

Professor Collinge's hypothesis was regarded as plausible by the government's spongiform encephalopathy advisory committee (Seac) but last year members of the committee believed his work did not provide strong enough evidence.

The new research will raise further questions about the risks to humans from food, contamination from medical procedures and other routes of infection. It also revives questions about the origins of BSE, perhaps indicating that there was a form of sporadic CJD in cattle before the cattle epidemics which were blamed on grinding up cows and sheep for feed.

Other scientists have preferred the theory that BSE was a deadly form of scrapie, a sheep disease apparently harmless to humans but turned into a killer when the agent responsible was eaten by cows.

The Italian research comes from a different angle from that of Prof Collinge. It suggests there are different types of BSE-like diseases in cows, adding to suspicions also emerging from work in France and Japan. The Italian team, led by Salvatore

Monaco, which is calling the new disease Base, will use laboratory mice to develop its work further.

This may even lead to the identification of at least three types of BSE-like diseases in cattle. The research seems to point to a different form of the deformed and deadly prion protein thought linked to BSE from those suggested by Prof Collinge. British scientists have never found different types of BSE, but scientists such as Prof Collinge say this is because the government has never looked.

"It has always been on the cards, but it has not been a terribly popular thing to suggest," he said last night. The Italian work "adds an extra dimension" even if "it is not good news".

He said: "One positive thing is that it challenges two dogmas — that there is only one form of BSE and that sporadic CJD is a uniform process that arises out of the blue and has nothing to do with the environment." His work used British BSE-infected cows. But Prof Collinge said it was difficult to answer whether these carried only one strain of the disease and it changed in some genetically-engineered mice or whether there were two strains in some cattle and the genetically-engineered mice selected from one of them.

Seac said the Italian paper was "very interesting" and would be considered by the committee next Wednesday.

guardian.co.uk/bse

The 'rights' stuff

For Richard Ingrams's information (Diary, last week), probably 100 per cent of campaigners against vivisection are vegetarian and most of these vegan. The

expression 'animal rights' has therefore much meaning for us. The exploitation of animals for food is inextricably linked to their use in research. It is the logical consequence of the concept that animals exist not for themselves, but for the use of humans.

Marian Hussenbux
Wirral

THE OBSERVER

8/02/04

Some dates to Remember

1790 An american sect prohibited the wearing of clothes derived from animals and the eating of meat.

1802 Joseph Ritson wrote 'Abstinence from Animal Food as a moral duty.'

1809 William Cowherd in England made vegetarianism obligatory in his church in Manchester.

1812 Percy Bysshe Shelley advocated vegetarianism.

19th century slaughterhouses and slaughter houses began to be concealed from public view.

? 2004 RSPCA Council rules

'That no animals are to be eaten on RSPCA premises such as RSPCA HQ at Southwater or premises where RSPCA meetings are held.'

(from Animal Revolution by Richard Ryder)

'It is profoundly ironic that the human need to prove our dominance is the driving force which exhausts the environment. If we had accepted other animals as our equals, neither killing nor exploiting them

CONT.

cont

but, living in peace beside would the world's natural resources have been so depleted? (from The Heretic's Feast by Colin Spencer)

* In suggesting a Council ruling that no animals are to be eaten on RSPCA premises, we realise that such a ruling could not be forced on RSPCA employees.

We ask Council members to study very carefully the objects of the Society and then to read 'Sentenced to Death', a VIVA! report on the slaughter of farmed animals in the UK. Finally we ask Council members to set an example to staff, RSPCA members and the public **by not eating animals** at RSPCA Council and Regional meetings. This will not make the RSPCA a vegetarian or vegan society or mean that they cannot eat meat elsewhere. By continuing to promote Freedom Food (what freedom is there for food animals?) they are encouraging the public to eat meat with a clear conscience whilst condemning food animals to a cruel and painful death. Eventually commonsense will prevail and realisation will dawn proving that you cannot prevent cruelty and promote kindness to animals by eating them. The benefit of a vegetarian/vegan diet to human health **AND TO THE ENVIRONMENT** is indisputable.

Almost 900 million farmed animals are slaughtered for the dinner plate each year in the UK. The shift towards huge commercial enterprises means that less than 450 abattoirs are responsible for this vast killing operation. Every day, over two million living animals are unloaded from transporters, often after enduring lengthy journeys in cramped conditions. They are shunted through industrial buildings - often with electric goads - before meeting the slaughterman's knife.

Estimated numbers of animals regaining consciousness

- Each year, 1.8 million electrically stunned pigs regain consciousness before they die from loss of blood. 244,800 pigs a year are not stunned at all. Four million pigs a year are stunned with carbon dioxide gas. It takes pigs up to 30 seconds to lose consciousness and during that time they will squeal, hyperventilate and try to escape.
- Each year, five million electrically stunned sheep regain consciousness before they die from loss of blood. Scientific research shows that electrical stunning may not cause unconsciousness at all.
- Each year, up to 230,000 cattle are not correctly stunned with the captive bolt pistol. They will have to endure the pain of being shot in the head and will then have to be shot again or knifed whilst conscious.
- Each year, 62 million chickens, turkeys, ducks and geese regain consciousness before they die from loss of blood. 8.4 million are conscious when they enter the scalding tank.

David Adam
Science correspondent

A plan for a national centre to research and develop alternatives to using animals in medical experiments are to be unveiled by the government.

The science minister, Lord Sainsbury, said last night that proposals for a centre to develop non-animal testing would be announced "within a few days".

The move comes weeks after Cambridge University's decision, in the wake of violent animal rights protests, to scrap a planned primate research lab to investigate brain conditions.

A centre focusing on finding alternatives was first suggested by a House of Lords inquiry in 2002. It said it should be based on a facility at Johns Hopkins University in the US that coordinates research into the so-called three Rs: replacement, refinement and reduction of animals in research.

More than 2.7m live animals were used in scientific procedures in 2002, but there is little funding or direct research aimed at finding alternatives.

Lord Trevor Smith, who led the House of Lords inquiry, said: "We proposed setting up a national centre for the 'three Rs' which would be accorded high status and encourage greater lateral thinking about alternatives within the scientific community. It would form a hub of expertise to foster research into alternatives to animal experimentation and to diffuse information on latest developments."

Proposals for a centre have split scientists. Supporters say it would raise the profile of alternatives research and help create much-needed momentum to develop breakthroughs in techniques such as computer modelling and tissue culture.

"I think it's a super idea," said Stephen Holgate, a professor of immunopharmacology at Southampton University. "A centre brings a focus, which is

excellent. You could make it a hotel if you want - somewhere where scientists could come and work who have got particular types of expertise."

Others say it could be a white elephant. "Whether there's a need for a centre would depend a lot on what it was going to be," said Robert Millar, the director of the Medical Research Council's human reproductive sciences unit in Edinburgh.

"I would be wary about creating centres that become huge bureaucratic things that are self-serving, which is always the danger."

Although the overall number of animals used in experiments has been rising steadily for several years, since the advent of GM technology, there have been significant successes in replacing them in fields such as pregnancy testing and vaccine production.

No further details of the plan were available, but in its response to the House of Lords report, the government suggested that the objectives of a new centre could simply be added to the existing Medical Research Council's centre for best practice for animals in research.

Lord Smith said: "My committee was envisaging a more independent, freestanding centre. It is highly desirable that the centre would be seen as independent."

The government move comes as two charities that focus on the first of the "three Rs", replacement, are poised to release their own proposals for a centre.

The Lord Dowding Fund and the Dr Hadwen Trust say more than 60 leading scientists have pledged support.

Wendy Higgins, of the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, said: "We fear that a national centre for the 'three Rs' risks being hijacked by an agenda focused more on refinement and reduction than on replacement."

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26/02/04

ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION

The beginning of the end?

Mark Matfield characterises Cambridge University's decision to drop plans for a primate research centre as a victory for violence and thugery over valuable medical research (A terrible day for patients, January 28). What a misrepresentation - the campaign against the centre has been peaceful, lawful and fought on scientific, as well as ethical, grounds.

The university's u-turn is a triumph for people as well as animals: valuable time, effort and money will not now be channelled into research that was doomed to fail from the start. The government inspector presiding over last year's public inquiry into the university's case for the proposed centre found that it had failed to show that the planned monkey experiments would benefit humankind, and categorically stated that the project should be refused permission.

Matfield states that primates are used in the development of vaccines but withholds some vital information. Albert Sabin, discoverer of the polio vaccine, has declared that ap-

plication of his discovery was delayed by more than 20 years because of misleading data from primates. More recently, the first Aids vaccine, Aidsvax, deemed a success in primates, was recently pronounced a failure in humans, having failed to protect the 8,000 volunteers in the trial from the HIV virus.

Medical progress will not grind to a halt without the use of animals. There are many non-animal methods of developing and testing new therapies.

Claudia Tarry
Animal Aid

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2/02/04



● Suffering to primates is caused not only by experiments, but also as a result of the way they are housed, cared for and transported. We are committed to ending the suffering of laboratory primates. Science, industry and regulators are too ready to take the view that primate use is unavoidable and therefore they invest in facilities that ensure it will continue. Replacing primates with humane alternatives should not be beyond the bounds of scientific endeavour in the 21st century.
Dr Mark Prescott
RSPCA

THE GUARDIAN
23/12/03

A Sheffield based animal rights group Uncaged achieved an historic legal victory in defeating an injunction imposed by Imutran and Novartis to suppress the release of documents referring to the transplantation of genetically modified pigs hearts and kidneys into monkeys.

Baboons were transported from the African savannahs to die in steel cages, They died in fits of vomiting and diarrhoea, They had violent spasms, bloody discharges, grinding teeth. Other animals retreated within themselves, lying still in their cages until put out of their misery. Others never even made it to HLS suffering painful deaths en route. How much longer must animals suffer at the hands of men?

THE WATCHDOGS