

INFORMATION

REPORT

ANIMAL WELFARE INSTITUTE

730 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

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The Animal Welfare Institute has been established by a group of persons interested in the humane treatment of all animals. It is particularly interested at present in the welfare of animals used in laboratories. This is one aspect of humane work that has received little practical attention in the United States. Present standards for the use of these animals vary among individuals and institutions.

Believing that science and humanitarianism should complement one another, the Institute will act as a clearing house for information on the welfare of laboratory animals. It welcomes comment and suggestions from everyone interested in these animals.

VISITS TO LABORATORIES

Care and housing of laboratory animals, as distinct from experimental procedures, is one of the fields in which facts are being gathered by the Animal Welfare Institute. Some salient points based on our recent visits to a cross-section of laboratories are discussed here:

Commendation for good standards of sanitation, ventilation, temperature control, availability of water, adequacy of diet, reasonable freedom of movement, and interest of personnel responsible for animal care is deserved in reference to quarters for all experimental animals at Massachusetts General Hospital; for experimental dogs and cats at Sloan-Kettering Cancer Research Center; and for dogs used in hypertensive studies at Cornell Medical School.

In the effort to prevent spread of disease or parasites among laboratory animals, comfort of these animals may be reduced. However, it is desirable to maintain the highest possible standards in both disease prevention and comfort. In the case of dogs, outdoor exercise and wooden resting boards in cages add to their comfort. Improperly used or maintained, both have been conducive to the spread of disease and parasites, but at Sloan-Kettering, thorough sanitary scrubbing of wooden bunks has been found to prevent this problem. Because of an adequate isolation period, immunization, and treatment of incoming animals, it is possible for the dogs used in hypertensive studies at Cornell to exercise outside in groups. Careful supervision there prevents fighting.

Small animals at Massachusetts General Hospital are provided with clean bedding, water bottles, and fresh supplements to the dry diet. Rabbits particularly benefit from the water bottles. Well-designed drainage in built-in tile kennels makes dog quarters there easy to clean.

Following is a list of undesirable conditions most commonly encountered in laboratories. In some cases, improvements are already being planned:

1. *Small cages.* Some institutions keep dogs, cats, or rabbits in cages barely large enough to permit the animal to turn around. Sometimes animals are kept routinely in such cages for many years. Dogs in small cages, even when debarked, are noisier than dogs in reasonably large enclosures.

2. *Lack of sanitation.* The poor effects resulting from incompetent design of equipment and drainage are increased by the employment of inadequate, disinterested personnel in many institutions. The overpowering odor which is one of the results unfortunately creates a desire to leave the animal room as soon as possible.

3. *Infectious disease and parasites.* Numerous cases of illness are common in some laboratories, causing unnecessary suffering to animals and adversely affecting the accuracy of scientific findings.

4. *Wire-bottom cages without resting boards or bedding.* Animals of all kinds are confined, in some institutions, to cages of this type regardless of whether or not they are being used in metabolism studies.

5. *Lack of exercise.* Exercise wheels -- recommended by authorities on the care and breeding of laboratory rodents -- are conspicuous by their absence, as are individual runways for larger animals.

MEDICAL RESEARCH AND THE HUMANE MOVEMENT

Although much unnecessary suffering is inflicted on animals in the United States, it is rare to see an animal publicly abused by an ordinary citizen. This is the most conspicuous accomplishment of the humane movement, for, less than one hundred years ago, most people argued that ownership of an animal conferred the right to do with it what the owner would. The same attitude held true regarding children until Henry Bergh, founder of the ASPCA, was called to rescue a child from her cruel guardian. Because there was no law protecting children from cruelty, he brought her to court as an animal under the law which he had recently sponsored. The child was saved and this was the beginning of the child protective movement in the United States.

The humane movement, founded in New York City, has continued to grow. For the first time in its history it is under serious organized attack. Ironically, the attack comes from a profession whose goals are humanitarian and whose recognition of the importance of ethical principles is well known.

Insofar as both groups are concerned with the relief of suffering, the work of medical research and humane societies is in accord, but because one group is specifically trained to deal with human beings and the other to deal with animals, there is a radical difference in their evaluation of suffering and death. In the practice of human medicine, death is almost invariably considered to be worse than even the most terrible suffering. In the practice of animal protective work, animal suffering is considered to be worse than animal death.

The practicing physician morally and conscientiously opposes the infliction of death on patients in his custody; the professional humanitarian opposes the infliction of suffering on animals in his custody. Yet there are persons who claim that there are cases in which it would be to the best interest of a human patient to be spared his last agonies and that there are cases, too, in which it would be to the best interest of an animal to be spared a premature death if, by going through an experimental procedure, he might gain several years of contented life after his laboratory stint. If human ethics and judgment had reached the level attained by human analytical ability, many a tradition might be abandoned without concern for the consequences. But a sound tradition cannot be abolished unless a better substitute has been found for it, one in which neither practical nor ethical considerations are substandard.

CONVENTIONS AND MEETINGS

The Animal Welfare Institute was represented at the 75th Annual Convention of the American Humane Association in Cleveland in October. The American Humane Association is a federation of humane societies and SPCA's throughout the nation. The Institute exhibit illustrated the ways in which animals work for us: 1) in laboratories, 2) as friends and companions, and 3) in business. It also portrayed the aims of the Animal Welfare Institute's work for animals: to reduce pain and fear inflicted on them and to promote their welfare. A diagram showed the floor plan of the Gaines Dog Research kennels at Kankakee, Illinois, which provides an efficient method of housing experimental dogs and includes individual outside runways. Its designers and builders are to be congratulated.

The center portion of our exhibit consisted of large anatomical drawings of a human being and a dog, showing the heart, brain, arterial and nervous systems of each. It illustrated that animals can feel pain too, just as humans can. And there was a quotation from Albert Schweitzer, noted philosopher, physician and clergyman, which summed up his basic philosophy regarding all animals: "I must interpret the life about me as I interpret the life that is my own. My life is full of meaning to me. The life around me must be full of significance to itself. If I am to expect others to respect my life, then I must respect the other life I see, however strange it may be to mine. And not only other human life, but all kinds of life; life above mine, if there be such life; life below mine, as I know to exist. Ethics in our western world has hitherto been largely limited to the relation of man to man. But that is a limited ethics. We need a boundless ethics which will include the animals also."

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The Animal Welfare Institute also had a representative present at the SPCA convention of the Province of Ontario, held at St. Catharines, Ontario, on October 26, and also at the meeting of the Animal Care Panel in Chicago, November 29-30. A booth exhibit is in preparation for the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, to be held in Philadelphia, December 27-30.

THE ETHICS OF EXPERIMENTS ON ANIMALS

Major C. W. Hume, Director of the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare of London, England, has written an interesting article on this topic which was published in the British *NATURE*, February 10, 1951. We quote the opening paragraph which expresses very well the attitude of the Animal Welfare Institute towards the problem:

"In considering this difficult subject, two principles may be taken for granted. First, the relief of suffering in medical and veterinary practice depends on the sciences of physiology, pathology and pharmacology, which in turn depend upon experiments on animals; experimentation is, therefore, in this respect, desirable. Secondly, although many experiments involve little or no suffering, others do involve various degrees of it, and the infliction of suffering is *per se* undesirable. There is thus a partial conflict between the two principles, and the problem of reconciling them when it is possible to do so and of deciding what compromise ought to be made when reconciliation is not possible, is a difficult one which deserves dispassionate study."

EDUCATION

"To prepare us for complete living is the function which education has to discharge." Herbert Spencer.

Conditions under which laboratory animals are currently harbored in some of the nation's leading institutions of high learning contradict such an ideal. Animals are used in universities for the acquisition and demonstration of facts. Their care, housing and treatment should provide the student with a suitable example of responsibility and consideration for others. It must, therefore, be of interest to those who form the policy of our universities.

Authoritative books on the care of laboratory animals are available: *The Care and Breeding of Laboratory Animals*, edited by E. J. Farris, and *The UFAW Handbook on the Care and Management of Laboratory Animals*. Leading biologists have contributed to both of these books. The philosophical emphasis in the prefaces differs somewhat. The former notes the maximum scientific attainment through the use of healthy animals. The latter includes historical and ethical statements of interest to all educators.

DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH METHODS WHEREBY

SUFFERING OF LABORATORY ANIMALS MAY BE MITIGATED

The Animal Welfare Institute invites correspondence with scientific research workers who are in a position to suggest possible methods whereby practical replacements might be made of higher mammals by lower forms of life or life in lower stages of embryonic development, or whereby properly conducted sacrifice experiments might replace some types of chronic experiments. Also of interest to the Institute are methods whereby greater economy of sampling may be effected, chemical and physical testing methods, and means whereby unnecessary repetition of painful experiments may be avoided. Please address such correspondence to Christine Stevens, President, Animal Welfare Institute, 730 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

ANIMAL WELFARE INSTITUTE

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