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**University scientist says
animals suffer little pain**

By Dave Berns
Of the Emerald

A quiet corner of the University campus is stuck in the center of a national controversy, which revolves around the use of laboratory animals for scientific research.

Opponents of the practice charge that researchers cold-bloodedly "torture and slaughter" laboratory animals, while placing human life above all other forms of life.

But proponents of animal experimentation counter that laboratory animals suffer little if any pain during experiments, and they say the experiments are needed to advance medical science.

Greg Stickrod, University director of laboratory and animal services, believes "humans are the most important form of life." As the result, "some animals have to be sacrificed to advance human life."

Vaccines for polio, small pox and rubella were all discovered with the aid of animal research, Stickrod says.

Yet, Sharon Nettles, a coordinator of the Eugene chapter of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, says, "Humans are not the top species." Nettles, who does not eat animal meat, opposes any use of animals for scientific research.

"It is a clear violation of their (animals') moral rights," Nettles says. "Animals are not a tool for human use."

There are alternatives to using animals for scientific research, she says. Among these she cites autopsies and voluntary experimentation on humans.

The issue of animal experimentation has received much national media attention in recent months.

Labs at the University of California at Riverside and at the University of Pennsylvania have been vandalized by opponents of animal research.

And the federal government has recently suspended support for brain-injury research on baboons at the University of Pennsylvania. The government's action was taken in response to charges that animal researchers at the school were needlessly performing painful experiments on the primates.

As the result of the negative publicity, Stickrod fears that local opponents of animal experimentation may vandalize the University's lab.

"Some schools can afford to repair \$1 million worth of damage to their labs," he says, "but this school can't."

Because of his fears, Stickrod has closed the University's lab to the public.

However, Nettles says, the Eugene chapter of PETA is not nearly as militant as other organizations that oppose animal research. Locally, PETA — with a core of five to 10 active members — is involved in peaceful protests and community education, she says.

The group organized a June protest against the University's research facility. About 15 picketers marched outside of Science III in opposition to research being done by two University psychology professors.

The professors, Richard Marrocco and Barbara Gordon-Lickey, perform research on monkeys and kittens in order to further understand the animals' brain processes.

"Our goal is to eliminate the use of animals in experimentation," Nettles says.

Aside from the issue of physical pain, it is painful for animals to be isolated from each

'It is a clear violation of their (animals') moral rights. Animals are not a tool for human use.'

— Sharon Nettles

other, she says. Yet, this is exactly what is done in the University's labs, she says.

But Stickrod argues that University researchers strictly follow U.S. Public Health Service guidelines that were developed to protect laboratory animals.

"I hate to see animals suffer pain," he says.

Stickrod fears that if all animal research were to end today, "human death and suffering would needlessly continue."

It would drastically hinder efforts to find a cure for AIDS, he says.

"The information we get from such research is key," he says.

Nevertheless, Nettles is convinced that animal research is wrong.

"It all comes down to a question of morality and your own moral values," she says.

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