

Animal lab research needs strict controls

In the past few years, animal rights have become a hot political topic around the country, but perhaps it is nowhere more controversial than at the University.

In 1986, a group calling itself the Animal Liberation Front broke into two science laboratories, destroyed equipment and released many lab animals. The event seized national headlines and forced animal rights into the political arena.

That break-in, along with the Martha case last year and the science building protest in October, has deeply divided the University into two camps: animal rights activists vs. medical researchers. Attempts by school officials to reconcile the two sides has thus far proved ineffective.

The issue has once again resurfaced with recent news that Dr. Richard Marrocco, a University psychology professor, will be using monkeys in an upcoming scientific experiment. A colony of macaque monkeys will be used for cognitive neuroscience research.

Local animal rights people, including members of Students for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, are protesting the research program. Marrocco, they claim, has a "bad track record" when it comes to animal research. And after the Martha debacle, they don't want monkeys to be used in animal research.

The University's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee is supposed to oversee animal experiments. Both sides see the IACUC becoming a battleground for primate research.

Animal rights is one of those political issues, like so many today, that will never be fully resolved. There will never be total agreement between both sides. But there are ways of satisfying both sides, if not totally, at least partially.

Medical research is an important part of science, and animals still play a large part in that research. Important discoveries and breakthroughs in human health sciences can be attributed to animal research. If cures for cancer, leukemia, AIDS, and other diseases are found, they will most likely be discovered because of invasive animal research.

However, that does not mean researchers have carte blanche to do whatever animal experiments they want. There are limits to that kind of research. Whenever possible, other scientific techniques should be tried. Only when there is *no other way* should animals be used.

Wishful thinking, perhaps. But possible. Such a program would need a strong IACUC, which would seriously study every facet of an animal-use experiment. Strict guidelines, meeting both scientists' and animal rights activists' approval, must be set. If the IACUC feels those rules have been broken, it should have the right to close the experiments. Researchers should be forced to submit regular reports to the committee. Surprise inspections are a must.



Child care plan is risky but also innovative

The idea is a gamble, mainly because no one in the nation has tried it. But that reason alone shouldn't deter the plan.

Lane County and the federal government have reached a tentative agreement on a child care plan which may be the first such joint venture in the nation.

The county and two federal agencies, the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. General Services Agency, would go in together to pay for and operate a child care facility in the downtown area for their employees.

Under the agreement, expected to be finalized later this month, the county would pay for the buildings and their remodeling costs. The federal agencies would then lease the buildings for a 10-year period and would also pay for child care equipment, utilities, maintenance and janitorial costs.

An attractive aspect of the plan is that the GSA and the Forest Service would reimburse the county for half the cost of remodeling and for the interest on the original investment. Also, the county is expected to get back all of its initial investment after 15 years from rent money and revenues from the center.

The location of the center is another plus. Because of the proximity of many county and federal offices to the child care

site, many county and federal employees will be able to stop by to see their kids during lunch breaks.

The plan is not without a few detractors, however. Lane County Commissioner Steve Cornacchia voted against the plan, saying the county shouldn't spend the money now because of fears of a less healthy economy in the future. He also feels the county could face severe liability if a child is hurt at the center.

These concerns should not hinder the go-ahead for the center. Any business venture is going to have risk involved. When has the city's economy been so stable and promising that all investments are a sure thing?

As far as potential injury to the children, there is always that chance; anyone with a child is aware of that. But as long as the facility is operated professionally and with the children as top priority, the injury factor should be minimal. We also assume the center will be insured against such injury.

The plan is still in early development stages, and a lot of details have to be worked out, such as the amount of rent the federal agencies will agree to pay. But so far, the idea seems quite viable, and it should be beneficial to all involved.

Letters

Dialogue

In response to Dr. Richard Marrocco's statement (*ODE*, Feb. 14): "It's too bad there isn't some middle ground. It's too bad there can't be a dialogue between animal rights people and biomedical researchers."

I must infer that, as an animal rights activist, I have tried desperately to establish that dialogue with little (granted, some) help from the biomedical researchers.

I have been in to discuss the basic philosophy as well as current conflicts with Dr. Aaron Novik, with biology graduate student Deidre Brink (former member of Coalition for Animals and Animal Research), and I have tried to cultivate dialogue with Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee student representative Lisa Calavetta.

However, I am discovering that this gap is widening, not narrowing. Just two weeks ago,

I received a call from Calavetta (once again, the student representative) saying she could no longer discuss IACUC matters with me.

Contrary to the *Emerald* article — she did not say she couldn't talk to animal rights people, she just said she couldn't talk to me. I may be an animal rights "person," but I am also a student and a Eugene citizen.

So I feel we have made more attempts at constructive dialogue than "the other side." I

recall a particular CFAAR member calling us "baby killers," and Marrocco seems to be spending a lot of his free time in Washington D.C. slamming People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals instead of seeking out dialogue.

I am open to talk with anyone as long as it's constructive and as long as indoctrination is not the motivation.

Jill Freidberg
Co-director
Students for the Ethical
Treatment of Animals

Boycott support

In support of the boycott against the purchase of commercially-grown grapes, I address this letter to University President Myles Brand, the food service personnel and those who have yet to take a stand on this issue.

The pesticides being used on these grapes are deadly. Farmworkers have died within hours of working in fields that have been sprayed. Farmworkers' children have been born with severe birth defects, such as missing limbs and mental limitations. Cancer rates have increased in those communities which surround these grape fields, due to pesticide seepage and consequent water poisoning.

Pesticide companies are aware of the health hazards created by these chemicals and yet still use them. We cannot rely on their "good faith" to stop the use of these deadly chemicals in the "near future."

Only by hitting them where it hurts — their pocketbooks — will they listen and discontinue the pesticide use which results in the unnecessary mutilation and death of large numbers of people.

President Brand and fellow members of our community: I urge you to support this boycott. Support the health and well-being of not only the aforementioned people, but, consequently, of every person in this country.

The condoning of monetary gain on the death of others has to end. All of us, by not taking a stand on the detrimental use of inorganic pesticides, are unconsciously supporting and contributing to the genocide of innocent people.

Don't wait for someone else to take care of this problem for you. Tell these companies not that enough is enough!

Virginia Miller
Spanish

Letters Policy

The *Emerald* will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Comments must be factually accurate and refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.