

STUDIES IN ANIMAL AGONY

by Cherie Colston

(Editor's note: The data for this article was obtained from United Action for Animals, Inc. by Mr. Colston.)

How many of you will still believe the old myth that veterinarians are men whose careers are devoted to the relief of animal suffering? Some are, but this doesn't seem to include research veterinarians whose emphasis is on animal experimentation rather than the health and well-being of animal (or human) patients. Some veterinary medical educators are becoming concerned about this trend away from animal care toward research. Veterinarians today are trained in "basic" science (which routinely entails the artificial production of disease or injury in animals) and don't have enough knowledge to provide proper health care for sick animals.

Since the establishments of competition for research grants was expanded to include veterinarians, we find them emulating researchers in medical schools, colleges, universities, and hospitals in the artificial production of disease and injury in what they call (somewhat cold-heartedly) "animal models." These veterinary experiments include the artificial production of heart injury in animals, forcing animals to smoke cigarettes, radiation - drug - chemical maimings and killings - indeed, the whole spectrum of animal abuse.

Most humanitarians don't know that the organized research veterinarians have aggressively fought legislation for the "human treatment" of laboratory animals, although not a single bill has ever been introduced that would prevent research veterinarians or other animal experimenters from doing whatever they wanted to do to laboratory animals. It is interesting to note that, when lobbying against humane treatment of laboratory animals in 1965, the American Veterinary Medical Association stated, "The decision made half a century ago was that animals should be used for scientific experimentation benefitting man and other animals." Is there any better way of saying that animal experimentation must go on simply because it has been conducted in the past?

Why, then, do ill-informed humanitarians, self-appointed as leaders in laboratory animal welfare work, assume that research veterinarians are the logical ones to "protect laboratory animals?" It is nonsense for them to believe that research veterinarians or anyone else can protect laboratory animals under experimentation, because the very purpose of an experiment is to perturb, to alter, living systems, to maim or kill in what can be appropriately called 'the death sciences.'

A former student of veterinary medicine and animal science wrote the following letter to the United Action for Animals, Inc.:

"My life-long dream and ambition to become a veterinarian dissipated following several traumatic experiences involving standard experimental procedures utilized by dispassionate instructors for the Pre-Vet school at my state university. They felt it was perfectly acceptable to experiment with and then terminate the lives of all the animals they utilized, which I found revoltingly unacceptable to my own moral code. After numerous confrontations with these heartless vivisectionists, I painfully decided to pursue a different career."

Here are a few examples of the "research" that denies human treatment to laboratory animals:

(1) Institution-Surgical Laboratory, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado. Paid for by-National Institute of General Medical Sciences. Category-Dogs killed in no-goal experimental surgery (NIH Fellowship, PHD dissertation).

What was done to the animals:

Two research veterinarians, one a professor of veterinary surgery, performed the following experimental surgery, admitting it was not intended for use in either veterinary or human surgery. Under light surgical anesthesia, they cut out a bone from the spinal columns of 12 dogs and substituted experimental plastic devices. Five suffered spinal collapse after surgery and were killed by the veterinarians. A sixth, paralyzed by "thermal (heat) spinal injury from photographic lights" for 30 days "dragged itself over and around barriers without damage to the prosthesis" before being killed. Two others were also killed after surgery, one because of damage to the spinal cord during the operation, and the other because the plastic bone was "poorly applied." Four dogs that survived longer than 30 days were considered "long-term survivors."

(2) Institution-Dept. of Anatomy, School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California at Davis. Paid for by-not cited, possibly used university's own funds. Category-Infant rats castrated; sexual behavior observed; spinal cords also severed. Conclusion - Castrates with severed spinal cords could not ejaculate even when stimulated by the experimenters because early castration had deprived them of the male hormone androgen.

(3) Institution-University of Oregon Medical School, Portland, Oregon. Paid for by-Louis W. and Maud Hill Family Foundation, Saint Paul, Minnesota. Category-Purebred dogs and pound dogs compared for ability to survive experiments (experimental heart surgery already tested and perfected on hundreds of other dogs by the same surgical team.)

Conclusion - Purebred dogs should be used in surgical experiments since "exemplary" breeding and research facilities would preclude public "allegations" concerning the origin and care of laboratory research animals.

There are many more examples, too numerous to mention here. The chief reason why laboratory animal work continues to remain stagnant is because major humane societies both in this country and abroad are closely allied, in one way or another, with research veterinarians. This relationship creates a conflict of interest so sinister that humane societies under the influence or domination of research veterinarians cannot, will not, or dare not speak out meaningfully on behalf of laboratory animals. The next time that humanitarians are told that research veterinarians are going to protect laboratory animals, we urge them to refer to the booklet, *The Death Sciences in Veterinary Research and Education*, from which this article was written. To receive your copy, write to:

United Action for Animals, Inc.
509 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10017.

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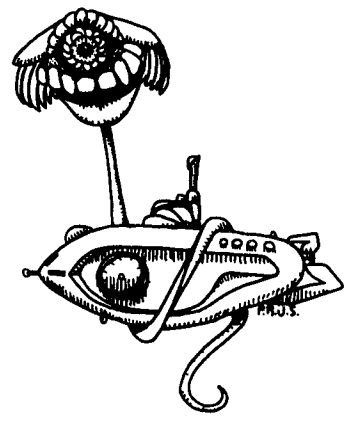
the AVMA was really being Rep. Flood's subcommittee was that public funds should be used to meet the needs of the commercial laboratory animal breeders.

Evidently the AVMA got all it wanted and more, because in 1973 it reported that it had given a "Plaque of Appreciation" to Sen. Warren Magnuson; a "Certificate of Appreciation" to Rep. Daniel J. Flood, and a "Plaque" to Rep. Paul Rogers, who is Chairman of the powerful House Subcommittee on Health and Environment.

The National Society for Medical Research, which exists to promote the procurement and use of laboratory animals, moved its headquarters to Washington some years ago. Although it is a tax exempt organization and not supposed to lobby, by its own admission the NSMR lobbies Congress intensively. To our knowledge, the NSMR hasn't given any "plaques" or "certificates" to key Congressmen, but it offers other rewards; it publishes the pictures of such powerful Congressmen as Representatives Rogers and Flood in its Bulletin.

The multi-billion-dollar Congressional research subsidy, with its resultant animal agony is a prime example of how government secrecy can be used to serve special interests with public funds without the knowledge of the public. People can't object to what they don't know. It's no wonder that now - in 1974 - we are reading such statements as "The Latest polls on public respect put Congress at the bottom of the list below garbage men and even secondhand car salesmen" and "Voter polls show voters approval of Congress as an institution at an all time low of 20% - lower than even the President's standing." We at UAA are not politicians, but we are convinced there would be great progress in our work for replacement if Congress were serving the public interest as well as it is serving the objectives of the AALAS, the AVMA and the NSMR.

We intend to continue working hard for REPLACEMENT, but at the same time we intend to keep on disclosing how Congress is gouging the American people out of untold billions of dollars for outworn, outdated, unspeakably cruel research by serving special interests with public funds. We will do this by showing that Congress is still subsidizing the same kind of incredibly cruel animal experiments that were being performed from 50 to 100 years or more ago.



Two points.

Environmentalists! Consumers!

You can't buy safety with animal agony.

