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# The O·b·s·e·r·v·e·r

Friday, April 24, 1987

The student newspaper of Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio

Volume XVIII Number 28

Commentary

by Andrew Wheeler

## Animals are not guinea pigs

As future researchers, at a research-oriented university, it is important for us to ethically examine our scientific practices. An estimated 75 million animals a year are subjected to research in laboratories throughout the country, according to the Animal Protection Institute.

Is it right for humans to use animals in any manner they choose? Should people be allowed to inflict needless pain and suffering in the name of scientific research? While some animal research is necessary, much of it is needless or can be accomplished using alternatives.

Almost 1 million animals a year are used in the testing of cosmetics alone. Tests such as the Lethal Dose Fifty Percent and the Draize eye irritancy test are used regularly on mice, rats, guinea pigs, and rabbits. LD50

is a test which estimates the amount of a substance per body weight which will, in a single dose, kill half of the animals tested.

The crime comes in the needlessly repeated process which produces information used only by bureaucratic studies. The Draize eye test assesses the irritancy of substances in albino rabbits. Drops of tested substances are placed in the rabbits' eyes and examined for reactions.

The test was proven inconclusive by a 1971 government study, but continues to be used.

and injury. But only those studies which require animals in order to be effective. Much research could be done using alternatives such as computer simulated programs and cell culture methods, but more work needs to be done to improve alternatives.

Both Johns Hopkins and Rockefeller University have committed or spent almost \$2 million in developing alter-

natives to animal testing. To stop the inhumane treatment of ani-

mals reason, better ethical standards, and more stringent federal

checks are needed. Students in the scientific field will determine how animals are treated in the future. As a leading research institute, time must be spent

teaching the ethical treatment of animals. Animals must not suffer needlessly, especially in useless experiments; but legitimate research programs must continue. It is up to us to determine the future of animals.

*"While some animal research is necessary, much of it is needless..."*

In fact, the Food and Drug Administration lost a court case in 1974 because the results from tests on rabbits could not be extrapolated to humans. In a recent case involving Agent Orange, data using animals was dismissed by the judge as meaningless.

Some animal research is necessary, such as studies which explore the causes, effects and possible cures for human illness