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Annual report, yet again, describes horrifying laboratory deaths

The 2016 annual report, published today, from the Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU), the regulator of animal experiments in the UK, makes truly disturbing reading. Amongst the dry statistics and idealistic photographs, the report highlights 45 cases of 'non-compliance' with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act or with conditions of licences granted under the Act.

Many of the non-compliance incidents involved the type of neglect which would, quite rightly, lead to prosecution if a member of the public acted in the same way. Sadly, the typical action taken against those in the animal experimentation community committing such terrible acts is a 'letter of admonition', retraining or perhaps having a licence revoked.

Animal Aid believes that part of the reason for such inadequate censures is that many of the victims are mice, incorrectly perceived by many animal researchers and policy makers as 'second class animals' – less important, or less capable of suffering, than dogs or monkeys.

Among the many horrifying examples which are outlined in the report, perhaps the most inexcusable examples which resulted in truly grisly consequences for the animals are:

- A failure to provide food to two mice. The failure was not detected despite three days of checks, nor was the deteriorating condition of the mice noted. One mouse was found dead and the other was killed to prevent further suffering.
- A primate was being imaged, under anaesthetic, by a licence holder, and was placed in a recovery incubator. The licensee forgot to return to monitor the monkey, who was left without access to food and water overnight, and was discovered the next day.
- Mice died from starvation due to overgrown teeth.

As well as being scientifically flawed, experiments on live animals are morally unjustifiable, and, when paired with the terrible examples of suffering outlined above, the horrors of life in a laboratory are clear for all to see. Pain, neglect, extreme suffering and death have no place in modern, cutting-edge science. Humane alternatives to outdated and unreliable animal research should be used instead of outdated animal 'models'.

Says Jessamy Korotoga, Animal Aid Campaign Manager:

'Animal Aid has been campaigning against cruel, unreliable and unscientific animal experiments for more than forty years. Over the past four decades we estimate that more than 120 million animals have been subjected to procedures involving poisoning, burning, surgery,

induced cancers and numerous other horrors, in laboratories in the UK. The 2016 ASRU annual report serves to highlight exactly how dark and dire life is for animals in laboratories in the present day. And we wouldn't be surprised if these terrible incidents were just the tip of the iceberg.'

Notes for Editors

- Read the full report <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animals-in-science-regulation-unit-annual-report-2016>
- See our Mice Matter campaign: www.micematter.org.uk
- Read the full statistics of scientific procedures on Living Animals here: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/627284/annual-statistics-scientific-procedures-living-animals-2016.pdf