

Association for the Abolition of Animal Experiments

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Animal protection gone astray:

Alternatives to animal experiments



What many animal lovers don't know: Due to alternative methods such as animal cell and tissue cultures, animal experiments are repeated and perpetuated.

According to statistics, the number of laboratory animals used each year in Switzerland decreased by 40% between 1990 and 2008. The chemical-pharmaceutical industry, regulatory authorities and even certain animal protection organizations claim that this decrease is due to the use of alternative methods. Is this true?

▶ The decrease is mainly due to the **transfer** of a large number of animal experiments by the chemical-pharmaceutical industry to affiliates and partner companies abroad, particularly in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe and the United States, where animal «protection» legislation is either nonexistent or even more minimal than in Switzerland.

▶ The decrease is also due to the **recycling** of laboratory animals as a means of cost reduction. Because the breeding, feeding, care and disposal of laboratory animals are becoming increasingly expensive, one now uses one animal in several experiments instead of several animals in one experiment. For the industry and regulatory authorities, this recycling falls under the concept of «optimal experimental planning».

▶ The fact that alternative methods do not reduce the number of laboratory animals used is demonstrated by the university-canton of Zurich, where – contrary to the industry-canton of Basle – animal experiments cannot be transferred to affiliates and partner companies abroad: Thus, between 1990 and 2008, the number of laboratory animals used each year in Zurich did not decrease, but rather **increased by 90%**.

▶ The researchers who develop alternative methods consider animal experiments to be useful and necessary. As a consequence, they work for the most part with cells, tissues and organs obtained from animals killed in the laboratory or in the slaughterhouse, and they even **repeat** for years the very animal experiments their alternative methods are supposed to replace, in order to compare them to the alternative methods.

Animal experiments are therefore neither reduced nor replaced, but rather perpetuated by alternative methods. Although such methods are clearly detrimental to animal protection, they are promoted and financed by numerous animal protection organizations in Switzerland.