

Association for the Abolition of Animal Experiments

President & Director: Christopher Anderegg, M.D., Ph.D.
Founded in 1979 under the name of CIVIS-Switzerland

Ostbühlstr. 32, 8038 Zurich
www.animalexperiments.ch

ch.anderegg@sunrise.ch
Postal account: 80-18876-5

Animal experimentation commissions

«As an animal protectionist in the cantonal animal experimentation commission, I am not generally opposed to animal experiments.»

In order to justify their research, animal experimenters claim that their experiments are rigorously controlled and authorized by the cantonal animal experimentation commissions, which also include animal protectionists. Is this true?

▶ The cantonal animal experimentation commissions review all animal experimentation applications and advise the cantonal veterinary offices to authorize or reject them. As a rule, the veterinary offices follow the recommendations of the commissions. These, however, are comprised mostly of animal experimenters and animal experimentation supporters from the pharmaceutical industry, universities and regulatory authorities. Because all members of the commissions are bound to secrecy, the public learns nothing about their activities.

▶ The few animal protectionists, whom the cantonal legislatures select for the commissions at the suggestion of the regional animal protection organizations, are not generally opposed to animal experiments and concern themselves only with the care and the «dignity» of the laboratory animals, with reducing the number used, and with the possible use of equivalent alternative methods. Those persons, however, who consider animal experiments to be useless and who would not approve any applications are excluded from the commissions.

▶ That under such circumstances more than 99% of animal experiments are authorized and the animal experimentation commissions and veterinary offices serve merely as a rubber-stamp, is demonstrated by the statistics: In 2016, 1068 animal experimentation projects were authorized in Switzerland and only 4 (0.4%) were rejected.

▶ The situation is even worse in the canton of Zurich, where a new animal protection law went into effect in 1992. In the eleven-member animal experimentation commission, the three animal protectionists have the right to appeal against authorization decisions made by the veterinary office. Between 1992 and 2016, however, 4884 animal experimentation projects were authorized in the canton of Zurich and only 14 (0.3%) were rejected. Obviously, the animal protectionists have hardly ever made use of their right to appeal.