

March 2008

USE OF ANIMALS IN RESEARCH

The responsible use of animals in research has improved human and animal welfare through the advancement of scientific knowledge and the development of safer and more effective medicines. However, animals should only be used in research when no non-animal alternative is available and the work is justified through independent ethical scrutiny.

The BVA supports the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, which introduced a rigorous system of controls on scientific work on living animals. The Act requires the licensing of any experiment or other scientific procedure carried out on living animals which may cause them pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm. Licences under the Act may only be issued after careful consideration and balancing of the potential benefits of undertaking the research against the likely adverse effects to the animals concerned. The care and welfare of the animals involved should be the prime consideration at all times.

The veterinary profession has a legal and ethical duty to care for animals used in research and the BVA endorses the requirements under the regulations for researchers to seek and act upon veterinary advice in the planning and conduct of procedures on animals; 'Named Veterinary Surgeons' operate in every research facility in the UK to ensure the highest possible standards of care and welfare for all animals used in research.

The BVA respects the intrinsic value and sentience of animals and continues to support the traditional principles of the "Three Rs". That

- living animals are **Replaced** with non-sentient alternatives whenever possible
- scientific procedures are **Refined** so as to reduce the pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm caused to the absolute minimum consistent with achieving the scientific objectives
- the number of animals used is **Reduced** to the minimum needed for scientific validity

For further advice please contact BVA