

9 July 2012

Lynne Featherstone, MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Home Office
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Ms Featherstone,

The Home Office will shortly be publishing its annual statistics for scientific procedures on living animals performed in 2011. In recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of animal procedures, with a forty-two percent increase over the last decade. If this trend continues, we are likely to see a further increase announced this month.

As scientists, we are mindful of the fact that reducing and replacing the use of animals in research is not simply a legal or ethical imperative. Other compelling drivers include the urgent need for more human-relevant research results to improve often disappointing clinical success rates for new medicines, innovation as an economic stimulus, and maintenance of a competitive position with global science and technology leaders such as the United States.

Today a host of powerful, human biology-based cellular, genomic and computational tools are available that can often better predict people's real-world reactions to drugs and chemicals than conventional animal tests. For many of the signatories to this letter, our pursuit of the Three Rs – Replacing, Reducing and Refining animal experiments – is driven by a desire to develop better approaches to researching human illness. Medical research innovation has the potential to bring about huge societal benefits by improving the speed, reliability and human-relevance of the tools we use to unlock answers to biomedical questions.

To its credit, Britain has in recent years increased its investment in non-animal research through the NC3Rs and otherwise; however, there is still much more that we could do in order to lead the world in this field. The forthcoming European Union 'Horizon 2020' framework programme for research and innovation funding provides an important opportunity for Britain to demonstrate that leadership. In particular, we urge the UK government to support substantial, dedicated funding to support emerging and future alternative technologies including such endeavours as the mapping of the 'human toxome'.

Whilst there remains much vibrant and vital debate within the scientific community about the efficacy of animal use in general or certain animal models in particular, there can be no doubt that we scientists will be better equipped to tackle the major human and environmental health challenges we face in the twenty-first century if there is increased funding and support available for the development of sophisticated, human-relevant research approaches.

May we please hear back from you on this important matter? Please direct correspondence to: Troy Seidle, Director of Research & Toxicology, Humane Society International/UK, 5 Underwood Street, London N1 7LY, UK.

Yours sincerely

- **Dr Kelly BeruBe** - Director of Lung & Particle Research Group, Cardiff University
- **Professor Michael Coleman** - School of Life and Health Sciences, Aston University
- **Dr Mark Cunningham** – School of Neurology, Neurobiology & Psychiatry, University of Newcastle Upon Tyne
- **Dr Amanda Ellison** - Cognitive Neuroscience Research Unit, Durham University
- **Dr Franco Falcone** - Associate Professor, Faculty of Science, University of Nottingham
- **Professor Paul L Furlong** – Clinical Neuroimaging; Director, Aston Brain Centre, Aston University
- **Professor Graeme Houston** - Clinical Radiology, University of Dundee
- **Professor C. Vyvyan Howard** - Centre for Molecular Bioscience, University of Ulster
- **Prof C.H Knowles** - Clinical Professor of Surgical Research, Centre for Digestive Diseases, Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry, Queen Mary University London.
- **Dr Lindsay Marshall** – School of Life & Health Sciences, Aston University
- **Dr George McKerr** – Biomedical Sciences Research Institute, University of Ulster
- **Dr Leslie R. Noble** – School of Biological Sciences, University of Aberdeen
- **Professor Barbara Pierscionek** - Associate Dean, Research and Enterprise, Kingston University London
- **Dr Andrew Rowan** – President, Humane Society International
- **Professor Gareth Sanger** – Neuropharmacology, Barts & The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, Queen Mary University of London
- **Dr Vasanta Subramanian** - Reader in Vertebrate Developmental Genetics and Stem Cell Biology, University of Bath