Laboratory Animals: perspectives from an animal welfare organization

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Protecting animals since 1875

The Danish Animal Welfare Society is Denmark’s oldest and largest animal welfare society
- All kinds of animals in Denmark
- Project abroad
- Campaigns and PR
- Customer driven animal welfare
- Political influence

The organization

- 75,000 members
- Approximately 1,000 volunteers
- 86 fulltime employees + 20 hourly workers
- 24/7 rescue service (hotline: 1812)
- 9 shelters for pets
- 11 shelters for wild animals
- A board with specialized committees
Laboratory Animals

- **Committee for Laboratory Animals**
  - Meeting 4 times per year
  - Visits to laboratory animal housing and experimental facilities
  - Member of the The Board of Animal Experiments, The Animal Experiments Inspectorate
    - The necessity and justification for animal use in research is always critically reviewed

- **Focus**
  - Enhancing the recognition of the 3R – principle: replacement, reduction and refinement
  - Establishing the 3R Center in co-operation with the government and industry
  - Replace and reduce the number of animals used for educational reasons
  - Reducing demand and use of products with ingredients tested on animals

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Laboratory Animals

- **Enhancing the recognition of the 3R – principle: Replacement, Reduction & Refinement**
  - The Word Day for Laboratory Animals (April 24th)
  - Scientific seminar
  - Inform, educate and share knowledge and best practices
  - Promote a debate on the use of animals in research and testing which is open and honest
Laboratory Animals

- Establishing The Danish 3R Center in co-operation with the government and industry
  - Promote the development of alternatives to animal testing
  - Minimise the use of laboratory animals in specific experiments
  - Improve conditions of laboratory animals
  - Collect and disseminate knowledge on alternatives to animal testing
  - Initiate and support research in laboratory animal studies and the development of alternatives

Laboratory Animals

- Replace and reduce the number of animals used for educational reasons
  - Financial support to alternative projects
  - Information and knowledge sharing
Laboratory Animals

- Reducing demand and use of products with ingredients tested on animals
  - REACH Directive
  - Customer driven animal welfare

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2X3vN8Jxtxw
Challenges

• NGO
  – Financial
    • Depending on donations
    • Laboratory animals are not high priority among donating members

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  – Idealism vs pragmatism
Challenges

- Our strength and weakness
  - Media and Social media
  - Laboratory Animals
    - Danes are in general realistic about the use of laboratory animals in research
    - Good relationship with the industry – collaborate when shared goal
    - Animal welfare is necessary for good science

Conclusion

- In relation to laboratory animals our mission is to work actively to replace experiments on live animals with alternative methods and to ensure the highest possible welfare for the animals used in the interim.
  - We acknowledge the importance of all 3Rs

- Constructive dialogue with people involved in the use of laboratory animal (government, industry, organizations)
  - Every possible step is taken to reduce the numbers of animals used, and to significantly improve animal welfare

Goal: A future where animals are no longer needed in research and testing