

For Immediate Release:

August 7, 2007

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PETA TO FEDS ON ANIMAL TESTS: IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE

Group Sends Agency Chiefs Alarm Clocks to Remind Them That It's Time to Wake Up—and Catch Up—on Modern Non-Animal Testing Methods

Washington — PETA is giving the heads of the 15 federal agencies represented on the Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods (ICCVAM) a "wake-up" call to follow through on their mandate and start using modern alternatives to animal testing. PETA's request coincides with a landmark report by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) calling for the replacement of unpredictable animal tests with reliable non-animal methods. To sound the alarm on needless animal suffering, PETA has sent each agency chief a copy of the report and an alarm clock engraved with "Time for a Change. StopAnimalTests.com."

Contrary to its intended purpose, ICCVAM has become a major *obstacle* to the adoption of more accurate testing methods. ICCVAM's counterpart in the European Union has validated and put in place a number of non-animal methods, but ICCVAM has failed even to adopt those methods. In 2000, as a result of pressure from PETA, ICCVAM convened a workshop to discuss non-animal alternatives to lethal poisoning tests in which animals are forced to ingest or inhale toxic substances until a given number of them die. Even though the workshop reported that a non-animal method using cell cultures could replace the animal tests within three years, ICCVAM has done nothing to move this and other recommendations forward.

More than 15 million animals are used in gruesome toxicity tests every year. The NAS report is an indictment of U.S. government and industry testing: "[C]urrent toxicity-testing practices [using animals] are long established and deeply ingrained in some sectors," the report warns. "Thus, some resistance to the vision proposed by this committee is expected." The report also mentions the time and money that could be saved by using modern, non-animal methods.

"While time stands still for the animals who are poisoned and blinded in useless laboratory experiments, our government ignores advances in non-animal test methods and lets years and decades go by without making any changes," says PETA Director Jessica Sandler. "These agencies are violating their own mandates and playing fast and loose with the public's health and safety in the process."

In recent years, PETA has donated \$600,000 toward the development of alternatives to animal testing. A copy of PETA's letter is available upon request. For more information, please visit PETA's Web site **StopAnimalTests.com**.

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