THE ROYAL SOCIETY

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Ref:

Policy on the funding of research involving animals and the publication of the results of such research

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1. The Royal Society supports research involving the use of animals only on the basis that researchers and those administering funding comply with legal provisions, any related codes of conduct or guidance issued by government departments, and the specific conditions of the licences and certificates. Support for any research project is on the condition that work done in the United Kingdom must have been licensed under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986[1] and that it will be terminated if any such licences and certificates are subsequently withdrawn. Work involving the use or production of transgenic animals will also require authorisation.[2] Work involving the introduction of non-native species into the environment will also require a licence.[3]

2. Papers describing experiments with animals will normally be accepted only if the procedures used are clearly described and conform to the Society's policy for research involving animals. Work done in the United Kingdom must have been licensed under the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

3. All individuals undertaking scientific (laboratory or field) work should seek, where possible, to avoid the use of animals, and the researcher must advance sound scientific reasons for their use, explaining in proposals for research support why no realistic alternative exists. Those doing laboratory work in the UK will meet this criterion, and the next one, by virtue of working under a project licence.

4. In proposing and assessing laboratory research or field studies involving manipulations potentially detrimental to the animals or to the population, evidence must be submitted to show that the following points will be complied with:

    - All studies must take full account of the welfare of the animals.
    - Research must be designed so that the objective is feasible and clearly defined.
    - Species with the most appropriate biology for the work should be used. Scientists should select the simplest organisms compatible with the objectives of the research.
    - When research involves the use of procedures that are likely to cause unavoidable pain or discomfort to the animal, and when alternative species can be used, the researcher should use the species which, in his or her opinion, is least likely to suffer.
    - The number of animals used in an experiment must be appropriate to create adequate statistical power to answer the question posed. Using too few animals can be as wasteful as using too many.

- The severity of the procedures performed upon animals must be kept to the minimum. The experiment must be as short as possible, and analgesia/anaesthesia used to minimise pain wherever required and possible.
- Researchers must also observe the requirement to minimise animal usage when working with materials derived from animal sources.
- Experiments involving the use of animals should be reviewed on a regular basis, to include consideration of how reduction, refinement and replacement are to be incorporated in the experimental matrix or strategy.
- Housing and care must be provided for the animals according to current best practice and care must be taken to ensure there is not unnecessary overproduction when breeding animals for research in the laboratory.

This policy should also apply to work involving transgenic[4] or cloned animals.

5. Fieldwork - observation of free-living animals in their natural habitats - may involve disruption, particularly if feeding, capture, or marking are involved. While field studies may further scientific knowledge and advance an awareness of human responsibility towards animal life, researchers should always weigh any potential gain in knowledge against the adverse consequences of disruption for the animals and also for other animals and plants in the ecosystem.

6. Endangered species - members of endangered or locally rare species should not be collected or manipulated in the wild except as part of a serious attempt at conservation.

February 1999

Footnotes

[1] See Home Office, Guidance on the Operation of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986

[2] Genetically Modified Organisms (Deliberate Release) Regulations 1992 (as amended 1995, 1997 and 1998) & Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) Regulations 1992 (as amended 1996 and 1998).

[3] Wildlife and Countryside Act - see DETR Guidance Note on Non-native Species

[4] See also ACGM/HSE Guidance Note 9 - guidelines on work with transgenic animals