

October 8, 2020

Dr. Joseph A. Heppert
Vice President of Research
Texas Tech University
2500 Broadway
Lubbock, TX 79409
Via email: research.innovation@ttu.edu

Dear Dr. Heppert,

On behalf of Rise for Animals (Rise; formerly the New England Anti-Vivisection Society), including our membership in Texas, I am writing to relay our concern regarding troubling evidence of animal suffering taking place at Texas Tech University (Texas Tech) and to respectfully ask that you consider permanently revoking an unnamed Texas Tech experimenter's access to animals due to her long list of noncompliance.

Document We Reviewed

In formulating the recommendation below, Rise reviewed May 28, 2019 correspondence related to Animal Welfare Assurance A3629-01 [OLAW Case J], which was obtained by Rise through a Freedom of Information Act request.

Finding: Extensive Evidence of Noncompliance

The documentation we reviewed reveals that an unnamed experimenter at Texas Tech disregarded protocols for her experiment in a manner that led to unnecessary animal suffering. This experimenter:

- Failed to provide the required pre-operative pain medication to mice.
- Failed to properly sterilize the surgical instruments, used non-sterile gloves during surgery, and didn't shave the surgical area prior to surgery.
- Used unauthorized animals, which she allowed to be incorrectly bred during intruder tests.
- Ignored instruction to close the wounds she created in these animals with sutures and used glue instead.
- Took rectal temperatures of the mice with instruments that are not designed for that use in mice.
- Abandoned the grad students she was responsible for teaching. As a result, they learned incorrect animal welfare standards and received inadequate training.

- Failed to maintain proper records. When investigating the long list of wrongdoings by this experimenter, the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) was unable to find surgical records for *any* of her previous surgeries.
- Used an unapproved method of euthanasia.
- Forced mice to undergo stress tests just 45 minutes after the mice endured painful, unsterile surgery with inadequate pain management and using incorrect instruments. The IACUC pointed out that the mice should not have been part of any sort of stress test until at least one or two weeks after surgery.

Request: Permanently Revoke the Unnamed Experimenter's Access to Animals at Texas Tech

While this unnamed experimenter's protocols were suspended by the IACUC and she underwent a retraining process and six months of probation, we believe that a more effective form of discipline for her extreme disregard for following protocols, animal suffering, and the integrity of her research is permanent revocation of her access to animals. This total disregard for scientific standards may have been tolerated in the past at your institution, but the suffering inherent to this crude research warrants your intervention to immediately permanently revoke this experimenter's access to animals, and to enact a stronger policy against allowing any similar protocol disregard in the future.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Nathan Herschler
Executive Director