



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

March 26, 2020

Claire E. Sterk, Ph.D.
Office of the President
Emory University
Office of the President
505 Kilgo Circle
Atlanta, GA 30322

Via e-mail: csterk@emory.edu

Dear President Sterk,

Thank you in advance for your time. I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide regarding an urgent matter. Based on the repeated and documented failure of Emory University to abide by the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA), and given the COVID-19 pandemic that is influencing the shut-down of animal experiments around the world,¹ we urge Emory to immediately: 1) prohibit approval of new animal protocols and experiments; 2) prohibit breeding and acquisition of new animals for laboratories; 3) finalize and end ongoing animal experiments; and, 4) prove that all of these animals and experiments are concretely advancing human health, and if they're not then switch to superior human-relevant, animal-free research methods.²

Emory's Culture of Noncompliance: Animal Welfare Act Violations

According to public records obtained by PETA from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Emory has been cited by the USDA on several occasions. The following are a few AWA violations that the agency's inspections have revealed: a vole died of dehydration after spending five days without access to water when staff failed to verify that the water bottle was properly placed in the animal's cage; a guinea pig escaped while being handled, was found three days later, and had to be euthanized; animals received expired medications; a vole died after surgery when staff failed to feed him/her; a primate was euthanized by mistake; a primate underwent a surgical procedure and a week later it was determined that the person performing the surgery had left a sponge inside the animal's abdomen; and a male macaque had to be euthanized

¹ <https://www.statnews.com/2020/03/14/coronavirus-pandemic-forces-research-labs-shut-down/>

² https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/The-Research-Modernization-Deal-Report-US_FINAL_2020_300.pdf

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a week after undergoing surgery when the staff performing the procedure left a gauze that obstructed his intestine.

COVID-19: Ending Animal Experiments Protects Animals, Staff, and Patients

As part of its COVID-19 contingency plan, Emory is urging experimenters “to conclude experiments, not start lengthy or complicated ones, and consider euthanasia of surplus animals,”³ which will likely lead to the killing of many animals. This begs the question why taxpayer dollars are being used on experiments that can easily be ended or delayed or that involve animals who, apparently, are considered by many universities to be extraneous to the testing in the first place. Equally troubling is that the experiments themselves are not critical to advancing human health, since more than 90 percent of highly promising basic science discoveries (most of which involve animal experiments) do not enter routine clinical use in humans.⁴

We call on Emory to publicly release the following information:

- 1) An itemization of all experimental protocols that will continue as part of Emory’s COVID-19 response plan (such that they may be categorized as critical, essential, necessary, and/or other similar terminology);
- 2) An itemization of all experimental protocols that will not continue as part of Emory’s COVID-19 response plan (such that they may be categorized as extraneous, non-critical, non-essential, ramped down, disposable, unnecessary and/or other similar terminology);
- 3) The number and species of animals who are in experimental protocols covered by item number 1 above (e.g., in a critical and/or similar terminology category), and the number and species of animals who are in experimental protocols covered by item number 2 above (e.g., not in a critical and/or similar terminology category); and,
- 4) The endpoint/disposition of animals used in experimental protocols covered by item number 2 above (e.g., not in a critical and/or similar terminology category), and notice of if, when, and how many of these animals have been and/or will be euthanized, culled, killed, destroyed, disposed or reduced in cage census.

You can contact me by e-mail at ShalinG@peta.org or by telephone at 757-962-8325. We look forward to your swift reply to this quickly developing and urgent matter. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,



Shalin G. Gala
Vice President, International Laboratory Methods
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³ <https://www.emory.edu/coronavirus/messages/index.html?m=message-all-managing-research-march-18>

⁴ <https://www.bmj.com/content/348/bmj.g3387.long>