



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

June 5, 2020

Robert Barchi, Ph.D.
Office of the President
c/o Brian Ballentine, Ph.D., Chief of Staff
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Winants Hall
7 College Avenue, 2nd Floor
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Via e-mail: brian.ballentine@rutgers.edu

Dear President Barchi,

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. Given the COVID-19 pandemic that is influencing the shut-down of animal experiments around the world,^{1,2} we urge Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey 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.³

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

We understand that as part of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Rutgers suspended all "non-critical" research activities performed at its facilities⁴ and – according to minutes of the Rutgers Master Gardeners Association of NJ (RMGANJ) meeting held on April 9, 2020, and sent to PETA by a whistleblower – implemented a 5-stage plan that involves the euthanasia of animals confined and/or used in Rutgers laboratories.⁵

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

² https://www.chronicle.com/article/Colleges-Euthanized-Lab/248483?cid=wcontentlist_hp_latest

³ https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/The-Research-Modernization-Deal-Report-US_FINAL_2020_300.pdf

⁴ <http://rwjms.rutgers.edu/documents/COVID-19%20%28Coronavirus%29/033020%20RBHS%20Biomedical%20Research%20Policy%20Update%20as%20Related%20to%20COVID-19%20Pandemic%20Precautions.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Minutes-of-April-9-2020-RMGANJ-Meeting.pdf>

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This plan will likely lead to the destruction of many animals, and 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 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.⁶

We call on Rutgers to publicly release the following information:

- 1) An itemization of all experimental protocols that will continue as part of Rutgers' 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 Rutgers' 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shalin G. Gala". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "S".

Shalin G. Gala
Vice President, International Laboratory Methods
Laboratory Investigations Department

⁶ <https://www.bmj.com/content/348/bmj.g3387.long>