TRANSPARENCY IN ANIMAL RESEARCH

RESOLVED, to prevent repeated government citations and promote transparency in animal use, the Board should issue an annual report to shareholders disclosing procedures to ensure proper animal care, including measures to improve the living conditions of all animals used in-house and at contract laboratories.

Supporting Statement

Our Company has been repeatedly cited by the government for improper care of animals used in its laboratory experiments, including caging primates in isolation, issues relating to expired drugs and inadequate anesthesia, untrained personnel, inadequate housing of animals, and lack of proper veterinary care.

In the last three years, our Company used more than 41,000 animals in-house. This number includes almost 6,600 dogs and 13,500 primates. More than 16,000 of these animals were used in painful experiments and more than 2,000 were given no pain relief whatsoever. A number of animals died in their cages without being humanely euthanized.

These figures do not include animals used in Merck experiments in contract laboratories nor the vast numbers of animals who are most commonly used in experiments and, though not legally required to be counted, suffer as well.

Animals used in laboratory experiments experience pain, fear and stress. They spend their lives in unnatural settings—caged and deprived of companionship—and are subjected to painful experiments. This is reality for animals in laboratories.

What should not be the norm is outright cruelty towards defenseless animals.

Our Company’s animal welfare policy states that “Merck performs due diligence and monitors external laboratories performing in vivo [animal] studies on our behalf.” Yet documentation of sadistic treatment at a contract laboratory used by our Company, Professional Laboratory and Research Services (PLRS), resulted this year in 14 felony cruelty charges against its employees.

The government issued a report confirming the appalling conditions at the facility and PLRS is now out of business. The abuses included:

- Sick and injured animals—including dogs with ear and eye infections, diseased gums, facial lacerations, and inflamed feet—were routinely denied veterinary care;

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3 http://www.peta.org/features/professional-laboratory-and-research-services.aspx
• An untrained worker used pliers to pull a tooth from a struggling, under-sedated dog;
• Dogs and cats were slammed into cages, thrown, kicked and dragged;
• Dogs and cats were pressure-hosed with a bleach solution;
• A worker attempted to rip out a cat’s nails by forcing the cat to clutch a chain-link fence and then violently pulling her away.

Our Company has the ability and the obligation to ensure that no animal suffers from lack of veterinary care, poor housing, or outright mistreatment.

Given that 92% of drugs deemed safe and effective when tested on animals fail in human clinical trials, there is a also a clear scientific imperative for improving testing methods.\(^4\)

Shareholders cannot monitor what goes on behind the closed doors of animal testing laboratories, so our Company must. Our Company has an ethical and fiscal obligation to implement this socially important proposal.

We urge shareholders to vote FOR the proposal.