



February 23, 2022

William F. Tate IV  
President  
Louisiana State University

Via e-mail: [president@lsu.edu](mailto:president@lsu.edu)

Dear President Tate:

I hope this correspondence finds you well. I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals U.S.—PETA entities have more than 9 million members and supporters globally—to respectfully request that you take personal responsibility for addressing chronic and egregious animal welfare violations in Louisiana State University's (LSU) laboratories. We ask that you address the chronic neglect, incompetence, and disregard that characterize the treatment of vulnerable animals in the school's laboratories.

According to records obtained by PETA through the Freedom of Information Act, LSU reported 12 violations of federal animal welfare guidelines in its laboratories to the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare between May 2018 and October 2021.<sup>i</sup> One experimenter knowingly failed to provide animals used in painful and invasive procedures with postoperative pain relief. Other experimenters repeatedly violated standard operating procedures and deviated from approved protocols—sometimes due to inadequate training and other times due to negligence. Several experimented on animals not included in protocols that the university's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) had approved—suggesting systemic problems in the school's experimentation program. As you know, IACUCs serve as the last line of defense for animals held in laboratories and used in experiments that may cause pain, discomfort, and distress and that almost always end in the animals' deaths—and serious deviations from IACUC-approved protocols are subject to oversight by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.<sup>ii</sup>

LSU failed to provide animals in its laboratories with appropriate medication, including pain relief, as required by the protocol. A principal investigator (PI) purposely withheld all pain medication for mice before and after cutting into their skulls and affixing head caps, even though the approved protocol stipulated the use of extensive postoperative analgesics. According to the documents obtained by PETA, these procedures "had been going on for some time." The mice were found hunched and lethargic. We can only imagine the suffering they endured because of these painful, invasive experiments in which they did not receive any pain relief—before they were euthanized *three days later*.

<sup>i</sup>Documentation available upon request from PETA.

<sup>ii</sup> See, e.g., § 2.4.6, USDA Animal Welfare Inspection Guide, Nov. 2021, available at [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_welfare/downloads/Animal-Care-Inspection-Guide.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/downloads/Animal-Care-Inspection-Guide.pdf).

PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

Washington  
1536 16th St. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-483-PETA

Los Angeles  
2154 W. Sunset Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90026  
323-644-PETA

Norfolk  
501 Front St.  
Norfolk, VA 23510  
757-622-PETA

Info@peta.org  
PETA.org

Entities:

- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Switzerland
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

LSU experimenters also failed to follow approved euthanasia protocols in the school's laboratories. For example, an experimenter killed a mouse by cervical dislocation without using carbon dioxide anesthesia first, as required.

Employees failed to provide cats, parrots, reptiles, and rodents with care for at least two days over a weekend. Eighteen cats and 20 parrots did not have access to food or water, causing one cat to have stress-induced, bloody vomit.

A PI kept mice in his lab to conduct behavioral experiments without IACUC approval and in living conditions that were inappropriate for the animals.

Forty-one mice were used in experiments on two separate occasions without IACUC approval. In these incidents, two PIs violated protocol when they held the mice on expired protocols even though they had been informed that they were to go to expire. One PI indicated that he was aware of the potential overuse of the animals, and the other responded that he had forgotten about the mice. He also failed to ensure that all staff involved were enrolled in the university's Occupational Health & Safety Program—potentially risking the well-being of his staff.

In other incidents, a staff member used a dog in an ophthalmology teaching laboratory even though the protocol had expired, staff members drew blood from seven more goats than the protocol permitted, a PI used more animals than the number approved on the protocol, and an experimenter performed procedures on animals not included on the approved protocol and did not label cage cards and carcinogenic materials correctly.

Such problems will continue unless LSU implements a strong deterrent. The university must inform PIs that if they violate federal animal welfare regulations or guidelines in connection with its laboratories, the IACUC will withdraw approval for the protocol and revoke the investigator's animal experimentation privileges. Furthermore, there must be a zero-tolerance policy for investigators and their staff who fail to comply with directives from veterinary staff and for animal husbandry staff who fail to provide animals with food or water.

In addition to the federal animal welfare violations summarized above, we are also concerned about experiments carried out by LSU's Christine Lattin. As we have shared previously, Lattin captures wild birds—for a period, this was done in violation of Baton Rouge's bird-protection ordinance—and subjects them to distressing, painful, and medically irrelevant experiments. These are curiosity-driven experiments that, according to documents obtained by PETA from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, may have caused torment and death to as many as 1,090 birds from 2019 to 2020 alone. We take this opportunity to implore you to use your authority to end these cruel and pointless experiments and refocus LSU's resources on non-animal research methods.

Last year, LSU received more than \$17 million in taxpayer money from NIH during the time that these violations occurred. Funding agencies—and the public—expect that institutions will comply with minimal animal welfare regulations and guidelines with the provision of such funding. The university's failures represent an abject violation of the public's trust—and we ask that you make haste in addressing this serious matter.

I am available to discuss this issue with you and can be reached at 541-848-7465 or [AndreaK@peta.org](mailto:AndreaK@peta.org). Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Andrea Kuchy', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andréa Kuchy, Ph.D.  
Research Associate  
Laboratory Investigations  
PETA