



May 19, 2022

Joan T.A. Gabel
President
University of Minnesota

Via e-mail: upres@umn.edu

Dear President Gabel:

I am 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 that characterize the treatment of vulnerable animals in the University of Minnesota's (UMN) laboratories.

In our previous correspondence—dated March 8, 2022, and March 27, 2020—we shared serious concerns about UMN's chronic, documented violations of federal animal welfare guidelines. We cited documentation that hundreds of animals were used in painful, invasive procedures; denied pain relief; and subjected to starvation and dehydration. As a result of this treatment, numerous animals died, and some were found dead after being put through a high-temperature cage sterilizer. We urged you to take action to address UMN's alarming culture of disregard for basic animal welfare, but the problems persist and animals continue to suffer there. Since our most recent correspondence, PETA U.S. has obtained documents that reveal additional violations of federal animal welfare guidelines in UMN's laboratories.

On separate occasions, experimenters amputated the toes of 16 newborn mice in unapproved, invasive procedures. Mouse pups endure a stress response—which includes vocalization and an elevated heart rate and body temperature—for an extended period following toe amputations. Nervous system changes may occur following these surgeries and likely compromise scientific outcomes.¹

Experimenters amputated the tail of a mouse over 21 days of age without any required anesthetics or pain relief. Also against protocol, they did not ensure that the bleeding had stopped, and the mouse continued to bleed after being put back in a cage. The mouse likely experienced immense stress and pain, because the distal tail is completely ossified and innervated by 21 days of age.

The numerous deviations from protocol and the failure of UMN to meet minimal animal welfare standards—including veterinary care and humane handling—are alarming and must not continue. We urge you to bring the full scope of your authority to bear in addressing the alarming failures in UMN's laboratories.

¹Paluch L-R, Lieggi CC, Dumont M, Monette S, Riedel ER, Lipman NS. Developmental and behavioral effects of toe clipping on neonatal and preweanling mice with and without vapocoolant anesthesia. *J Am Assoc Lab Anim Sci*. 2014;53(2):132–140.

PEOPLE FOR
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Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. If you have any questions, please contact me at 541-848-7465 or AndreaK@peta.org.

Sincerely,

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

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