



October 20, 2022

Martha E. Pollack
President
Cornell University

Via e-mail: president@cornell.edu

Dear Dr. Pollack:

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 ask that you take personal responsibility for addressing the chronic and egregious animal welfare violations that characterize the treatment of vulnerable animals in the laboratories of Cornell University.

According to records obtained by PETA through the Freedom of Information Act, Cornell reported [17 violations of federal animal welfare guidelines](#) in its laboratories to the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare between April 2018 and April 2022. Employees' negligence resulted in suffering and death for numerous animals.

For example, a sheep died after experimenters implanted an unsuccessful carotid artery graft that was allowed to cure for half of the time (36 hours) compared to the grafts applied to four other sheep in the study. The sheep underwent a second graft similar to the other sheep following the failed graft, but hemorrhaged and was euthanized. In three separate incidents, experimenters violated protocols when they repeatedly failed to provide mice with water, causing the mice to become dehydrated, hunched, and have poor body condition or ataxia. A mouse died after experimenters failed to ensure the drinking water had the correct dosage of a drug. After experimenters infected mice with a virus, they failed to observe the animals; seven mice died and 32 became lethargic. On two occasions, mice died following intraperitoneal injections; one report indicated that the staff had to be "retrained."

Experimenters deviated from approved protocols and conducted experiments on animals not included in protocols that the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) had approved—suggesting systemic problems in the school's experimentation program. In one incident, experimenters gave mice unapproved isoflurane anesthesia prior to administering injections. In a separate incident, experimenters gave three different types of expired drugs used for anesthesia, analgesia, and euthanasia to 910 mice. Twenty-four sheep undergoing orthopedic surgery did not receive the intra-articular local anesthetic pre-operatively or post-operatively, as per protocol. Instead, unapproved anesthetics were administered. On multiple occasions, experimenters in the school's laboratories were found to have used ineffective and unapproved methods and materials to sterilize equipment used in surgical procedures.

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Cornell's culture of disregard for basic animal welfare must not be allowed to stand. Such problems will continue unless the school implements a strong deterrent. The university must inform PIs that if they violate federal animal welfare regulations or guidelines, the IACUC will withdraw approval of their protocol, revoke the investigator's animal experimentation privileges, and permanently prohibit violators from accessing all animal laboratories.

In fiscal year 2021, Cornell received more than \$95,284,800 in taxpayer funds from NIH. 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 tarnish the reputation and brand that Cornell has built. We ask that you address this serious matter immediately and adopt PETA scientists' [Research Modernization Deal](#)—a strategy for replacing animal experiments with modern, human-relevant, animal-free research methods.

I'm available to discuss these issues with you and can be reached at 541-848-7465 or AndreaK@peta.org. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

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

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