



Professor David Main
Chair of the Animals in Science Committee
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By email: David.Main@rau.ac.uk

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Dear Professor Main,

Animals in Science Committee – Forward look commission for advice

Thank you for the recent work of the Committee. The Committee has continued to support the implementation of leading practice through the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body hub model and I have been grateful for the updates on current work in progress.

As we go through a period of necessary change in the way we develop policy and regulate in this area, I look forward to the Committee playing a strong and impactful role in informing Government policy, supporting effective regulation, and fostering a system-wide culture of good governance and continuous improvement in the use of animals in scientific procedures. The outcomes we seek are the facilitation of science, strong protections for animals and maintaining public confidence in our framework.

Advice to inform policy and regulation

In accordance with Section 20(1) of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA), I am writing to you, in your capacity as Chair of the Animals in Science Committee (ASC), to commission advice to be provided over the next 18 months to the end of 2023. The Committee's advice will inform the Government's policy and direction on the regulation of the use of animals in scientific procedures. I may commission further advice during this period as required.

The priority areas for which advice is requested are as follows. A detailed commission setting out the issue and questions for the Committee will be provided for each. In keeping with Section 20(2) of ASPA, in formulating its advice the Committee is asked to have regard both to the legitimate requirements of science and industry and to the protection of animals against avoidable suffering and unnecessary use in scientific procedures.

1. The extent to which non-human primates used in scientific procedures should be bred in captivity. The Committee is asked to consider the latest evidence on the impacts of restricting the use of non-human primates to those that are second generation captive bred or from self-sustaining colonies.

2. The implications of the recognition of decapods (e.g. shrimp, crabs, lobster) as sentient beings in the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022 for the regulation of the use of animals in scientific procedures. The use of decapods in scientific procedures is not currently regulated and I would like the Committee to look at the evidence and impacts to inform the future policy direction in this area.

3. The use of the forced swim test under ASPA. The committee is asked to review the evidence of alternative methods and appropriate justification for the use of the forced swim test, to inform good practice and regulation.

4. The use of animals in the development and production of antibodies under ASPA. The committee is asked to review the evidence of alternative methods and appropriate justification for the use of animals in the development and production of antibodies, to inform good practice and regulation.

Sharing of best practice

The Committee's role in sharing good practice, as per Section 20(3) of ASPA, is key to empowering a system where continuous improvement in governance and practice in the regulated community is the standard. I encourage the Committee to identify areas in which it can strengthen the curation and dissemination of leading practice, particularly in respect of the 3Rs, and my officials are willing to support that endeavour where required.

Other issues on which the Committee will be engaged

My officials will also engage the Committee, in addition to the wider stakeholder community, on issues relating to the regulation of the use of animals in scientific procedures, notably:

- transparency of information including the future publication of additional statistics;
- the protection of confidential information, including clarifying Section 24 of ASPA;
- the regulatory reform programme; and
- updating the operational guidance and Code of Practice.

I am confident that, through the Committee's work to provide expert advice and share best practice, the Government can deliver on the intent of ASPA – enabling the UK to be at the forefront of global science, with the benefits that brings for humans, animals, the environment and the economy; while ensuring animals are protected and, wherever possible, other forms of testing are used.



Baroness Williams of Trafford