



WWF International

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Ms Ingrid Newkirk
President
People for Ethical Treatment of Animals
501 Front Street
Norfolk, Virginia 23510
USA

Gland, 4 October 2002

Dear Ms Newkirk,

We are writing in regard to PETA's misrepresentation of WWF's views on animal testing on your website and in action alerts to the public in Europe and the U.S. These materials do a disservice to PETA and WWF members and to the broader public concerned about the hazards chemicals pose to wildlife and humans.

PETA is attacking WWF for our association in the U.S. with a government programme to screen and test chemicals for their hormone disrupting properties. PETA's statements imply that WWF supports screens and tests whose value for detecting hazards has not been proven. To the contrary, the proposed screens and tests are being subjected to the most systematic validation effort ever devised. WWF serves on a government advisory panel whose participants include a PETA-funded researcher and a representative of the UK's Fund for the Replacement of Animals in Medical Experiments. The U.S. government will not require companies to conduct such screens and tests until their validation is complete. Both non-animal and animal screens and tests must be validated.

PETA also has stated that WWF supports any and all animal tests. This is untrue. WWF believes that non-animal methods of testing should be used whenever possible, and that the welfare of test animals must be a central concern of testing programs. We oppose all unnecessary animal testing and urge the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and EU national governments to seek out and use validated alternatives whenever possible. In the absence of effective, validated alternatives, WWF believes that limited animal testing is needed for the long-term protection of wildlife and people throughout the world.

In numerous public statements and in our cooperative advocacy on the European Union chemicals legislation with the Eurogroup for Animal Welfare, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, WWF has called for far greater effort and attention to be paid to finding alternatives to animal testing. We firmly subscribe to the principle that the use of animals should be reduced to the minimal level needed to obtain scientifically valid results and interpretations that will benefit people and wildlife.

President: HE Chief Emeka Anyaoku
Director General: Dr Claude Martin
President Emeritus:
HRH The Duke of Edinburgh

Registered as:
WWF-World Wide Fund For Nature
WWF-Fondo Mondiale per la Natura
WWF-Fondo Mundial para la Naturaleza
WWF-Fonds Mondial pour la Nature
WWF-Welt Natur Fonds
Also known as World Wildlife Fund





WWF has called for both the EU and the UK government to increase funding of research into alternative testing methods and has pressed the UK government to accelerate procedures for accepting alternative methods and harmonizing international chemical testing guidelines.

PETA's website is virtually silent on the hazards that chemicals can pose to humans and animals - some of which have already been clearly demonstrated. A recent study from the University of California has made a link between the use of pesticides and childhood leukaemia. Other studies have linked dietary intake of persistent contaminants to immune system abnormalities. A striking number of scientific studies have found endocrine disruption in birds (bald eagles, double-crested cormorants, herring gulls, California gulls), fish (salmon, trout, croaker, herring), shellfish (whelks) and mammals (otter, mink, seals, beluga whale, the California sea lion), in addition to alligators and turtles. At present, there is no way to evaluate fully chemicals for hormone disrupting effects without doing some testing in animals. WWF cannot accept that animals as well as humans remain at risk in an uncontrolled global chemical experiment in which they are exposed to untested chemicals with unknown health effects.

WWF's position has been consistent and clear. We expressed our views in meetings with PETA representatives more than two years ago in the U.S. and in a letter from WWF to you on 5 April 2001. In 2000, WWF and leading environmental, medical, and public health groups in the United States responded to PETA's earlier mischaracterization of the animal testing issue in a public letter.

Despite WWF having shared our views, PETA persists in its attacks based on false information and distortions. Such actions hurt PETA's credibility while also providing aid and comfort to those purveyors of chemicals who blithely assure the public that their chemicals are safe, when in fact very few health and safety data are available. I am very disappointed that PETA finds it necessary to misrepresent views of WWF and other respected conservation organizations - groups that are committed to protecting wildlife and people from the insidious threats from toxic chemicals.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Martin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small upward tick at the end.

Dr Claude Martin
Director General