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## PETA says no to testing

by Jessica Sandler

Doing the same thing again and again and expecting different results is the classic definition of insanity. It is therefore quite disheartening to hear the clamor by some environmental organizations for more and more animal testing at the EPA as the answer to our current chemical pollution mess.

In more than a decade, the EPA has not banned a single toxic industrial chemical using its authority under the Toxic Substances Control Act. This, despite killing hundreds of thousands of animals in crude and cruel toxicity tests. Chemicals such as benzene and trichloroethylene are tested and re-tested *ad infinitum* - the bureaucratic alternative to taking action on chemicals we already know are dangerous, reducing emissions and preventing exposures.

The chemical industry goes along with these endless animal tests as they serve to delay regulation, and the test results are always subject to interpretation and challenge in the courts. If chemicals - such as atrazine or phthalates - are shown to cause cancer or other harmful effects during animal testing, industry representatives claim the results aren't applicable to humans and successfully challenge any attempt to regulate them. Yet company officials happily display the results of EPA-required animal tests that suggest their chemicals are not harmful.

Non-animal tests are often faster, cheaper, and their results are less subject to manipulation, yet they are under-funded and ignored. It is not surprising that industry prefers the ambiguous results of animal tests, but it is astounding that the federal agency in charge of protecting the public health follows suit, aided and abetted by some environmental organizations.

Environmental Defense (ED), for example, fought (unsuccessfully, it turned out) our attempt to incorporate the non-animal genetic toxicity test into the EPA's high production volume (HPV) chemical-testing program, in which more than 500,000 animals are slated to die. (Astoundingly, ED even opposed asking companies to open their files and provide already existing health and safety data on the HPV chemicals so as to reduce the number of substances that would be re-tested on animals!)

The EPA's addiction to animal testing is so strong that even when evidence

from human epidemiological studies implicates a chemical, the results are ignored. For years, population studies showed that arsenic in drinking water causes cancer in humans. Yet the EPA dragged its feet for more than 20 years while thousands of animals were killed in tests that attempted to reproduce the effects already documented in humans.

Sadly, several environmental organizations have lobbied for other EPA animal-testing programs, and oppose efforts to reduce that agency's reliance on animal tests. They have actively resisted our efforts to ensure that animal tests meet the same scientific scrutiny that all non-animal tests must undergo prior to their use.

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is almost single-handedly responsible for the development of the largest animal-testing program in history - the EPA's endocrine disruptor screening program (EDSP) - which will kill 1.2 million animals for every 1,000 chemicals tested (with upwards of 80,000 chemicals being tested) even though scientists have denounced the animal tests.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) described proper validation efforts for animal tests as "time-consuming procedural and substantive roadblocks" when it intervened against us in a lawsuit PETA filed to force the EPA to incorporate non-animal tests into the EDSP. NRDC and WWF refuse to recognize that results from animal tests that have not been properly "validated" for their reliability and relevance to humans are useless as a basis upon which to regulate hazards.

Representatives of ED, WWF, and NRDC are clearly unconcerned with the suffering of dogs, rabbits, and mice poisoned in laboratories. But WWF and NRDC - organizations that purport to protect wildlife - endorse plans by the EPA to develop a new series of chemical-poisoning tests using wildlife! They ignore EPA's admission that it will never be able to establish the relevance of these tests to other wildlife species. If these tests go forward, they will mean painful deaths for tens of millions of wild animals in laboratory settings.

While animals are choking on chemicals in EPA-mandated tests, the EPA is choking on its own inertia and inaction. The campaign against the EPA's massive do-nothing animal-testing programs is as much an environmental issue as one of animal rights. There is simply no excuse for poisoning animals for data that will not protect the public or the environment. In the interests of ethics, good science, and the protection of our children, environmental groups must stop demanding more animal tests.

*Jessica Sandler, a former OSHA health and safety official, is the federal agency liaison for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. For more information, visit [www.MeanGreenies.com](http://www.MeanGreenies.com) and [www.StopAnimalTests.com](http://www.StopAnimalTests.com)*