



The University of Michigan

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Dear Concerned Citizen:

Thank you for your concern about the use of animals in research. At the University of Michigan, we share your interest in animal welfare and appreciate the time and effort you have spent to inquire about how animals at the University are used and cared for.

Below, I have included a copy of the University of Michigan Policy Statement on Animal Research, in which the University acknowledges the important contribution that research animals make to biomedical progress, and describes its commitment to the responsible and humane use of animals in research.

Some citizens express a particular concern about the use of unwanted animals from pounds and shelters for biomedical research. These are unclaimed, unadopted animals that were scheduled for euthanasia at a pound or shelter, but instead were held at a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) licensed facility for at least five additional days before being sold to a USDA-registered research institution, such as the University of Michigan. At the University, the animals receive humane and compassionate care, including appropriate anesthetics and analgesics, identical to that received by pets in veterinary clinics or humans in hospitals. The people working with these animals have chosen their profession because they care about animals. Each day, my co-workers and I come to work with a mission – to find the most responsible, humane, and respectful way to derive important information from our research animals for the ultimate betterment of both human and animal life.

I understand that opinions about the use of animals in research are widely diverse. However, until the day when complete alternatives to animal research are available, the University of Michigan animal research community ensures that all animals under our charge are used and cared for in the most responsible, humane, and compassionate manner.

Thank you again for your commitment to animal welfare.

Sincerely,

Howard G. Rush, DVM
Associate Professor and Director
Unit for Laboratory Animal Medicine

University of Michigan

Policy Statement on Animal Research

The University of Michigan recognizes that scientific and medical knowledge developed through animal research has saved countless lives, has improved human and animal health, and has alleviated pain and suffering. The University supports judicious use of animals in research, education, and testing in the interests of human and animal welfare. The University of Michigan insists on humane and ethical treatment of any animals used in research, education, and testing.

The University recognizes its legal and ethical responsibilities to ensure that animals are not used needlessly and are spared all unnecessary pain and distress. To this end, the University adheres to all applicable federal, state, local, and institutional laws or guidelines governing animal research, and has maintained since 1962 a University-wide Laboratory Animal Medicine Program directed by veterinarians specialized in laboratory animal medicine.

The University's Committee on Use and Care of Animals provides supervision, coordination, and review of every project proposed to include the use of animals. This Committee includes scientists, non-scientists, and public members to encourage representation of diverse viewpoints. This Committee has the responsibility to approve, to require modification of, or to prohibit a project's use of vertebrate animals. Well-established procedures, similar to those used to monitor human subject research, are used for reviewing and monitoring animal research, education, and testing projects conducted under University auspices. Project proposals are scrutinized carefully by the review Committee and by a veterinary staff member specialized in laboratory animal medicine to ensure that humane use guidelines are followed and that animals receive professional veterinary medical care.

The University continues to fulfill its obligation to ensure that professional and technical personnel or students who work with animals are qualified through training and experience to perform these tasks humanely and in a scientifically appropriate manner. The University provides training in humane techniques of animal care and use to accomplish these purposes.

University of Michigan Committee on Use and Care of Animals: Approved, January 1989; Reviewed and Approved, July 1999

President's Cabinet: Reviewed, February 1989; OVPR Approved, February 2000