



# The University of Michigan

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Dear Concerned Citizen:

Thank you for your concern about the use of animals in research and instruction. 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 laboratory animals make to biomedical progress, and describes its commitment to the responsible and humane use of animals in research and instruction.

The University of Michigan strongly supports the position that animal research has substantially improved the quality of life for both humans and animals. Many life-threatening diseases and infections that once struck fear into the hearts of our parents or grandparents are now reduced to no more than a trip to the family doctor for a vaccination or antibiotic. Hip replacement and arthritis treatments extend the quality of life for many of us as we age. Coronary bypass surgery and organ transplants offer new chances for survival to those of us facing the ultimate challenge. At the veterinary clinic, our animals benefit from these medical advances in much the same way that we do. Without the contributions of animals used in research and instruction, life as we know it today would not be possible.

But what about tomorrow? Current research endeavors involving animals show promise and offer hope to those waiting for cures and better treatments for debilitating afflictions such as cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, AIDS, and spinal cord injury. Eventually, someone we care about will be among those benefiting from the contributions that animals have made to the discovery of a treatment or cure, or the training of our doctor or veterinarian.

Because we are indebted to animals for their valuable contributions to our research and instructional endeavors, and because animal well-being is critical to good science, the University of Michigan ensures that animals are used in a responsible, respectful, and humane manner. Our animal care and use program

maintains full compliance with federal and state regulations and policies, as well as nationally accepted professional standards, and has maintained uninterrupted accreditation by the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care, International since originally accredited in 1971.

Every proposal to use vertebrate animals in a research or instructional project receives a rigorous review by the University Committee on Use and Care of Animals (UCUCA) before it is allowed to begin. Members of the UCUCA include representatives of the general public, non-scientists, and veterinarians, as well as experienced animal researchers. To obtain UCUCA approval, applicants must submit detailed information about the project and provide satisfactory responses to UCUCA reviewer questions. Applicants must also document their qualifications to use animals in terms of relevant experience and training, and seek any additional training required to ensure that the proposed animal use procedures are conducted in an appropriate and humane manner. This review process often takes more than four weeks to complete. Once approved and underway, an animal use project is subject to both routine and impromptu inspection by the UCUCA.

At the University of Michigan, animals are cared for every day by a staff of dedicated animal husbandry technicians, most of whom have invested time and effort away from work to become certified by the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science. Medical care is provided by a full staff of veterinarians and veterinary technicians who are specialized in laboratory animal medicine, and who are available around the clock, should the need arise. Our 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 professions because they care about animals and people, and would be among the first to object if an animal were used unnecessarily or inappropriately. 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 and instruction 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