

## Discoverer Article: Should Animals Be Used for Testing?

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### SIRS Discoverer ® on the Web

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# Should Animals Be Used for Testing?

• *Cosmetics, toiletries and household cleaning products are tested on animals. Do people think the tests are wrong?*

Most people agree that testing cosmetics and toiletries on animals is wrong. This is backed up by the ban by the UK government and the agreement by European countries to end testing.

For household products, an independent survey in 2007 showed that over 80 per cent of UK consumers would be concerned to know that they were tested on animals. The British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV) say that a number of politicians support the idea of banning these tests.

What do you think? Let us look at what is happening now and in the near future.

### **Cosmetics and toiletries**

The GOOD news is that testing cosmetics and toiletries on animals has been banned in the UK since 1998. Other countries in Europe have also agreed to ban tests in stages from 2009 to 2013.

There is also further good news: in Europe, even *selling* cosmetics or toiletries that have been tested on animals is being banned in the same stages from 2009 to 2013. No new items tested on animals will be allowed to be sold, after early March 2013. However, products tested before any ban date can still be sold, so you may see them in shops. Would you use a soap or a shampoo that has been tested on animals?

### **Vivisection and household cleaning products**

The story behind cleaning products continues to be bad news.

With household cleaning--which includes items such as laundry detergents, bleaches and air fresheners--vivisection and testing on animals are allowed throughout the world and products from all over the world are sold in the UK. BUAV thinks this is wrong and started a Clean-up Cruelty Campaign in 2008. They want the UK government to ban these tests. This is important when government statistics state that over 7,000 animals in the UK were used in such tests between the years 1997 and 2006.

### **Tests and alternative tests**

Rabbits, rats and other animals may be used depending on the test. A test may check for skin or eye reaction, which could involve putting a substance into an animal's eyes or on to its skin.

BUAV says there are alternative, non-animal tests that can be used. For example, using artificial skin, human skin preparations and a gel from a particular bean to mimic the eye's surface. They say there is a 'Robot test', which can be used to test poisonous substances without using animals.

### **Tested or not tested on animals?**

Even if a product shows 'not tested on animals' on its label, it might not tell the whole story. The individual ingredients may still have been tested by the manufacturer, or by an ingredient supplier.

To help customers know the truth, a group of animal protection societies from different countries got together in 1996. They started an international scheme so that customers would know for sure whether a

product--and its ingredients--has been tested on animals or not.

The standards that were set up operate in the UK, USA and much of Europe. In the UK, they are called the Humane Cosmetics Standard (HCS) and the Humane Household Products Standard (HHPS). The HCS is granted to a company where no vivisection is performed for its cosmetic and toiletry products. The company must neither perform such tests itself nor commission anyone else to do the tests on its behalf. It must also be open to independent checks to ensure it meets these standards.

The HHPS follows the same rules as the HCS, but it applies to household products--items such as washing-up liquid, cleaning fluids and powders.

## The Leaping Bunny

Where manufacturers have been approved under the HCS or HHPS, they are allowed to use the Leaping Bunny logo. Some companies use other bunny figures on their packaging, but the Leaping Bunny logo is the only one that guarantees the company has been approved under these standards. This tells people that what they are buying has not been tested on animals.

## What can you do?

If you are concerned about animal testing there are things you can do.

Go to [www.gocrueltyfree.org/b\\_shopcrueltyfree.php](http://www.gocrueltyfree.org/b_shopcrueltyfree.php). Here you can look at which companies are approved under the HCS and HHPS, and request a copy of BUAV's free *Little Book of Cruelty Free*.

You can even write to companies that you would like to see approved under the HCS or HHPS. Find a template letter to help you at [www.gocrueltyfree.org/d\\_getinvolved.php](http://www.gocrueltyfree.org/d_getinvolved.php)

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