

9-22-06

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
1022 Longworth Building  
Washington DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Baldwin:

I write to you out of my concern over your recent comments supporting the reauthorization of the NIH, and more specifically, your unqualified claim of the importance of research occurring at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Some of the research occurring at UW-Madison might prove to be important, but much of the research occurring there is very unlikely to ever be beneficial. Given that much of the research occurring at UW-Madison is silly, cruel, and wasteful, **you should be seeking a reduction in NIH funding and demanding a more rigorous method of determining which studies merit taxpayer support.** The current system presents a deep trough of tax dollars to a gluttonous institution.

I am deeply alarmed by discoveries made by federal inspectors charged with assuring that the hundreds of thousands of animals used on the campus are treated humanely.

Reported by: Dawn Brookesdale, DVM, USDA, APHIS, Animal Care  
From: University of Wisconsin-Madison, APHIS Routine Inspection  
February 3, 2004; pg 3:

While some progress is being made (on paper) to address the issue of veterinary authority, it is apparent that it is being diminished by attitudes and tradition. Both USDA inspectors and an internal review committee have concluded that the attending veterinarian's authority is often based on his/her individual negotiating skills instead of animal welfare and the imperative for compliance. In one situation, a principal investigator stated that they do not have time to comply with the regulations, (use of unapproved drugs without veterinary input or IACUC approval), and in another, *the principal investigator stated that the IACUC was "crazy"* and must allow small changes without their prior approval.

Furthermore, animal care employees have been told not to share information with the Campus Clinical Veterinarian. Other animal care employees do not report potential incidents *for fear of retribution*. The institution is now fully aware of the issues surrounding authority in the animal care and use program and must move forward in a timely manner to address these serious matters.

Specific cases involving *researchers openly challenging the need to comply with the attending veterinarian or the IACUC's authority were found*. It is essential that all researchers using animals understand the importance of regulatory compliance and the role of the attending AV [attending veterinarian] [emphasis added throughout].

Many instances of ineptness and gross negligence could be cited from other USDA inspections such as Dr. Barksdale's April 26, 2005 report, pg 1, in which she writes:

In Building L, upon entering an animal room, this USDA inspector noted animal [redacted] appeared to have its arm stuck through the front of its enclosure. Upon further investigation, it was determined that the animal was unable to free its arm. A later review of the animal's medical records revealed that the right arm had been trapped outside the enclosure on at least 5 previous occasions. The animal has been treated for swelling and/or trauma to the right arm and/or hand since 8/21/04. Although the veterinary staff had been treating the animal, the attending veterinarian was unaware of the persistence of the problem and no plans had been discussed to address the problem.

Later in the same report Dr. Barksdale describes the fiasco that ensued as technicians struggled to free the animal's arm. Dr. Barksdale had to intervene and ask that the attending veterinarian be called.

Articles in the local newspapers have recounted many instances of negligence and animal suffering such as cows dying of starvation, dogs not receiving veterinary care, monkeys and rabbits dying in cage washers, and monkeys dying while left unattended during highly invasive brain experiments. Many examples could be cited.

**Just recently, the UW admitted that it had destroyed sixty boxes of video tapes of its experiments using monkeys after a local newspaper had requested copies of a video taken during a single experiment.**

This apparent blatant cover-up suggests that the university knows that the public would be alarmed if citizens could really understand what is happening to the animals under its control. The instances of neglect and the break down of the internal oversight process described by federal inspectors are not things that occur in a well run institution.

This negligence and ineptitude extends to the research being conducted by the university and the conclusions being drawn by the scientists there. A large proportion of the papers published report results that are patently meaningless. Did you know that a restrained brain damaged monkey can fall asleep more easily than a restrained "healthy" monkey?

The UW's NIH-funded research is out of control, oversight is weak and sporadic at best. It has not earned any increase in funding from American taxpayers; its funding should be severely slashed.

Sincerely,

Rick Bogle  
Madison, WI 53716