

Animals

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procedures, although some repetition is necessary in order to verify results. Because of the cost of purchasing and maintaining lab animals, psychologists and biologists restrict repetition to a practical minimum.

After experimentation the animals are disposed of, usually involving decapitation or an overdose of an anaesthesia. York disposed of about 5,000 mice, 1,000 rats, and 30 rabbits after experimentation last year. These are, with the exception of the occasional pigeon or hamster, the only three lab animals used at York.

In one of its press releases MFA quotes a 1950 experiment performed

by Dr. Harry Harlow, which the group claims involved the "ejection of spikes" into infant Rhesus monkeys from artificial "monster mothers." The anonymous psychology professor has studied Harlow's work at length, and referred to the accusation as "ludicrous" and "absolutely false."

"The problem with such groups," he said, "is that they appeal to the emotions without any real sense of the facts. Most often their members are against science itself, not just animal research."

In this case, the professor said monkeys were simply deprived of their real mothers and issued surrogates, they were never subjected to any physical pain whatsoever. He said the experiment, which the MFA

labels as "trivial" and "repulsive," produced significant findings that linked certain psychological disorders to maternal deprivation.

Barry Loughton, a biology professor at York and acting chairman of the YACC, mirrored the psychologists' sentiments. "It is difficult at times for the lay person to fully understand the importance of an experiment, as they are not directly involved themselves. No scientist wants to cause animals discomfort if he doesn't need to."

In *The Guidelines for the use of Animals in Psychology*, published by the Canadian Psychology Association (which the MFA calls "vapid and meaningless"), the scientist is led to approach the use of lab animals as a "necessary evil." Before proceeding

with an experiment the scientist must make a "relative judgement, weighing the value of the research against the effect of the procedures on the animal."

In addition, the scientist must accept responsibility for his decision and be prepared to justify them to an "informed audience." According to similar guidelines published by the Canadian Animal Care Association, all experiments "must fulfill the premise of a reasonable expectation that such research will be immediate or eventual benefit to mankind."

MFA, which will hold its first Canadian organizing meeting this Saturday in Toronto's Leows-Westbury Hotel, also provides a list of what they see as reasonable alternatives to animal experimenta-

tion, including the use of tissue cultures and computer models.

Loughton said that most biology experiments are performed on tissue cultures, as they are infinitely cheaper and easier to control. He was quick to point out, however, that one must validate all tissue culture findings in the context of the organism, particularly when chemicals are introduced. Often an animal will metabolize a particular chemical, producing a result in the animal that is much different than those observed in tissue culture.

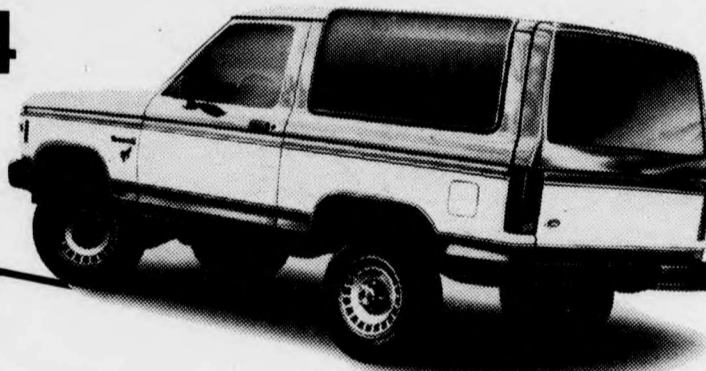
Computer models, Loughton adds, are of little value to most research as they "presuppose a knowledge that doesn't exist. If one knew enough to produce a computer model, then experimentation would not be necessary in the first place."



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