

Animal Research Activism

Update and Recommendations to Promote Communication,
Transparency, and Public Outreach About Animal Research



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Introduction

Biomedical research with animals remains critical for continued scientific and medical advancements, from basic science discoveries to pharmaceutical drug developments. However, animal research is a divisive topic for many individuals, particularly nonscientists. A [Pew Research Center poll](#) conducted in 2018 revealed that 52 percent of U.S. adults oppose the use of animals in scientific research, up from 50 percent in 2014 and from 43 percent in 2009 ([poll data](#)). Importantly, the polls showed distinct educational differences, with those having low science knowledge more likely to oppose research with animals. However, context is paramount when interpreting poll data. Responses to animal research-related poll questions vary depending on how the question is phrased and presented to respondents. This issue is further explored in [Chapter 6: Public Polls and Opinion on Animal Research](#).

As demonstrated by public polling, the growing opposition to biomedical research with animals over the last decade coincides with rising pressures campaigns and expanded lobbying efforts by animal rights groups. While some organizations continue to employ extreme tactics, many animal rights groups have predominantly shifted their strategies over the last decade. They are increasingly using policy, legislative, regulatory, and public relations maneuvers to achieve their goals and thwart life-saving animal research. These actions represent a significant burden for the scientific community that could jeopardize biomedical progress as well as human and animal health.

Purpose

In 2012, the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) convened a symposium with key stakeholders to exchange experiences and information on animal rights activism. This meeting occurred during a decisive time in history when animal rights groups shifted from exclusively targeting academic institutions (1990–1999) to individual scientists and supply chain vendors. Beginning in the late 2000s, animal rights groups more commonly used extreme, illegal measures to intimidate and harm members of the biomedical research community through personal threats and intimidation, home invasions, theft of animals, and fire-bombing. Key findings from the meeting and opportunities to promote public outreach were highlighted in a 2014 report, “The Threat of Extremism to Medical Research.”

To build on the themes in the 2014 report and account for the more modern, nonviolent approaches currently used by animal rights groups, this report seeks to educate the animal research community about the growing threat of animal rights activism and provide broad recommendations to mitigate their legislative, policy, and grassroots campaigns.

The information and guidance contained in this report is organized into three main categories:

1. Examination of tactics used by animal rights groups
2. Suggested proactive strategies to minimize targeted action
3. Recommendations to promote communication, openness, and public outreach about animal research

We hope this document serves as a framework for organizations, researchers, and animal care and use program staff to adapt and develop individual policies and best practices. We encourage broad dissemination of these recommendations, provided they are not edited in any way without written permission from Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), which serves as the custodian of the document.



Chapter 1: Targets of Animal Rights Groups

Animal rights groups target the full range of the animal research enterprise—from individual investigators to academic institutions to supply chain vendors, research animal breeders, and their business partners.

Individual Investigators

Animal rights groups frequently target individual investigators in two primary ways: (1) via in-person protests and harassment and (2) via social media and email campaigns. The latter reflects a significant shift in strategy by animal rights groups to quickly gain attention (and subsequent emotional responses) from their supporters. While extremist incidents involving investigators' homes and/or personal property are less common nowadays compared to the early and late 2000s, the distortion of scientific facts and distribution of these claims via traditional and social media have exacerbated misinformation campaigns. In turn, these activities have contributed to the growing opposition to animal research. In many cases, social media campaigns prompt individual persons opposed to animal research to send threatening messages to the investigators named in these activist communications. Media relations at animal activist organizations often send press releases and news tips to local and national news outlets encouraging them to investigate alleged animal welfare violations.

Consequently, the targeting and public pressuring of individual investigators to cease research efforts both threatens ongoing biomedical progress and discourages the next generation of scientists from pursuing a career in scientific research.

Academic Institutions, Government Facilities, and Research Organizations

Scientists at academic institutions, government facilities, and organizations that breed and distribute research animals are also at risk of targeting by animal rights groups. Methods range from protests to email/social media campaigns to records requests and negative news coverage (see [Chapter 2: Tactics Used by Animal Rights Groups](#)). These actions aim to disrupt research activities and publicly discredit the institution and/or organization.

Unfortunately, the public pressure imposed by animal rights groups frequently discourages academic and organizational leadership from speaking out about the importance of animal research for fear of retaliation. A lack of public outreach undermines research efforts and prevents current and future scientists/animal care staff from feeling supported, reducing workforce morale and retention.

Supply Chain Vendors

In addition to individual scientists and institutions that conduct animal research, animal rights groups frequently target the services and/or groups that indirectly support research with animals. The scope of these activities ranges from animal transportation services (e.g., airlines, plane chartering services, trucking companies, etc.) to charity organizations that financially support researchers or institutions and animal breeders. These vendors play a critical role in ensuring that scientists and facilities conducting animal research have the resources necessary to complete their work. Thus, by targeting these services and raising the personal, financial, and public opinion costs to support research with animals, animal rights groups seek to dissuade companies from continuing to provide services.

Supply Chain Business Partners

In some cases, animal rights groups target other business partners (banks, drug stores, etc.) associated with supply chain vendors to further intimidate vendors from maintaining relationships with entities conducting animal research. It is worth noting that these business partners are frequently unaware of ongoing efforts by animal rights groups to harass or threaten scientists and institutions, which demonstrates both the extensive breadth of the animal research enterprise, and the various strategies animal rights groups use to terminate life-saving studies that require animals.

1.1: The Evolution of Animal Rights Activism

Over the last several decades, animal rights groups have adopted numerous strategies to achieve their ultimate goal of discrediting scientists and discouraging public support for animal research. Figure 1.1 summarizes the evolving nature of these tactics. Today, animal rights groups use a combination of each of the strategies listed below, though groups increasingly invest significant time and resources towards enacting legislative and policy change along with traditional and social media campaigns.

Strategies Employed by Animal Rights Groups (1990–Present)

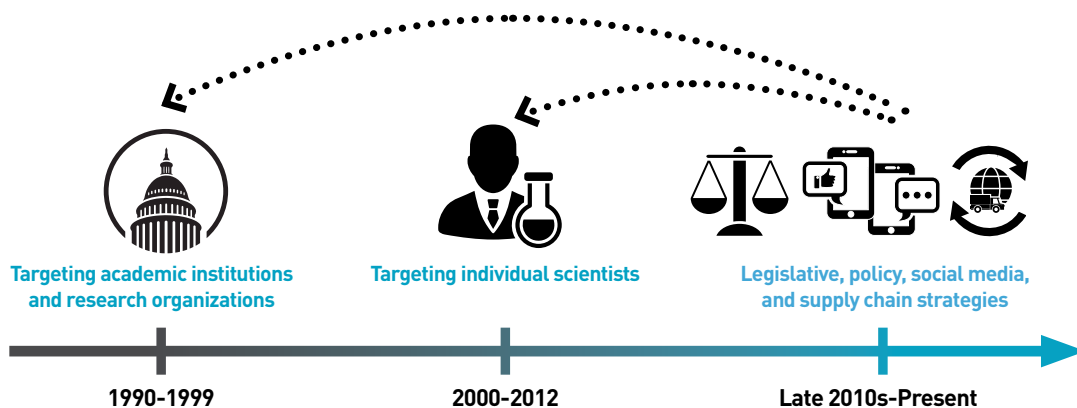


Figure 1.1: A diagram depicting the evolution of animal rights activism from the 1990s to present day



Chapter 2: Tactics Used by Animal Rights Groups

Animal rights groups use a variety of tactics to discourage public support for animal research, intimidate scientists, and prevent federal investments in scientific research with animals. The tables below outline these strategies, which range from nonviolent and legal to illegal and extremist. The first table highlights the recent—and frequently more popular—tactics of choice as of the late 2010s. Additional information on many of these tactics is provided later in this section.



Figure 2.1: Three examples of how animal rights groups seek to discourage public support for animal research, including vandalism, home protests, and blockades.

Please note: This list is continuously evolving as animal rights groups constantly develop new tactics to achieve their goals.

Most Common Tactics	Description
Conflating “safety testing” and “animal research”	Aggregating two terms that mean separate things in the biomedical research field to gain greater support from the public and policymakers.
Email campaigns and petitions	Email blasts to supporters, congressional staff, and others that include a specific ask.
Falsely portraying animal research as “outdated”	Misrepresenting and overstating the accuracy and applicability of nonanimal models such as <i>in-silico</i> (e.g., computer simulations), <i>in-chemico</i> , cell culture, organs-on-a-chip, etc. The terms “Microphysiological Systems (MPS),” “alternatives,” and “New Approach Methodologies (NAMs)” are frequently used to classify these models.
Grassroots/local state efforts	State-specific campaigns that concentrate on ways to limit animal research through state legislatures or city councils. Notable examples include breeding and regional transportation laws and cosmetic testing restrictions.
Increased regulatory burden/“red tape”	Efforts to make research more difficult for investigators and animal care staff through more paperwork and redundant requirements already covered in federal and state laws/policies.
Legislative and appropriations pressure	Language in annual budget bills to restrict the use of animals or create additional burden for institutions and researchers.
Mandatory adoption laws	Petitions to require institutions/federal agencies to adopt out all animals after research or retire animals in sanctuaries, despite existing local policies and potential safety/welfare issues.
Misinformation campaigns	Consistent efforts to selectively choose elements of research projects and distort or embellish this work to garner outrage.
Policy directives	Pressure campaigns directed toward funding agencies to establish agency-wide policies that limit or eliminate animal research.
Records requests/FOIA requests	Submissions to institutions and federal agencies for detailed information on animal research projects that can be used to target scientists and negatively portray ongoing work.
Social media	Engagement on social media platforms to spread misinformation or target individual investigators or institutions; sometimes including death threats.
Traditional media	Sending story tips to local and national news outlets and encouraging them to investigate alleged animal welfare violations.

Other Tactics

While the previous table outlines several of the tactics currently used, the following list includes longstanding strategies that remain a key part of advocacy campaigns for animal rights groups.

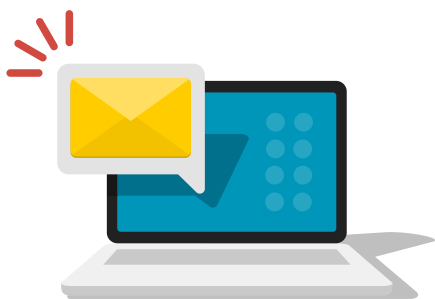
Other Tactics	Description
Business Disruption	Bomb threats, cyber-attacks (denial of service, email bombardment), high volume records requests.
Demonstrations and protests	Range from peaceful and lawful to violent and illegal, including trespassing, facility blockades, etc.
Direct contact and engagement	Personal confrontations, threats, or spreading defamatory information to the target's neighbors, business associates, or other close contacts.
Home harassment	Range from silent vigils to loud and disruptive neighborhood demonstrations.
Infiltrations	Undercover individuals that seek employment in a facility to obtain information through photos or video for propaganda.
Physical violence	Examples include improvised explosive devices and other incendiary devices that threaten researchers' lives.
Property violence	Destruction, vandalism, and theft of personal or organizational property.
Trespassing and break-ins	Confrontational forced entry into a facility with the aim of disrupting research. Forced entry involves evading or overwhelming security with mass numbers.

Popular Tactics: Additional Information and Recent Examples *(alphabetical order)*

2.1: Conflating Safety Testing and Animal Research

When discussing the use of animals in science and research with lawmakers and policy officials, animal rights groups frequently conflate the topics of "safety testing" with "animal research." The latter is a general term describing the vast array of foundational, field, and clinical work conducted in animals to understand biological/chemical/physiological processes and behavior. In contrast, "animal safety testing" describes a specific subset of animal research focused on assessing the safety of human and veterinary products after a compound is shown to be efficacious. Compared to biomedical research, safety testing has a narrower research focus, enabling scientists to more easily develop and use nonanimal methods to replace traditional animal models at a faster pace than biomedical research. By contrast, foundational and translational biology is far more complicated, and current nonanimal models cannot consistently and accurately recapitulate reproductive biology, biological development, complex diseases, etc.

Animal rights groups often rely on the fact that policymakers and members of Congress frequently do not have the scientific background to discern this critical difference. Therefore, it is important for the scientific community to clearly communicate in what instances animals must be used, for what purpose, and how this research enables positive advances in human and animal research.



2.2: Email Campaigns

Animal rights groups frequently employ automated email campaigns to target entire organizations or individual institutional leaders. Using prepopulated template emails, web forms, and email distribution software, major groups are rapidly able to instruct supporters to flood company or individual email accounts with thousands of messages per hour. This tactic can overwhelm email servers and prevent employees from accessing urgent, time-sensitive communications from colleagues or clients.

2.3: Falsely Portraying Animal Research as “Outdated”

To depict animal research as no longer necessary, animal rights groups frequently exaggerate the use of nonanimal models (also referred to as “alternatives,” “new approach methodologies” (NAMs), or “microphysiological systems”) in research. Nonanimal models involve experimental techniques that do not require live animals. Examples include cell-based (*in-vitro*) tests, organs on a chip, organoids, computer (*in-silico*) models, among others.

More recently (e.g., 2018 to present day), animal rights groups lobby key Congressional committees to prohibit funding for animal research by stating that nonanimal models are capable and sufficient, more accurate, and more relevant to human biology. Animal rights groups often frame this argument by declaring that scientists purposefully forgo these methods and use animals because they are unwilling to change and have little consideration for the well-being of animals.

Scientists routinely use nonanimal models when feasible. For example, cultured cells and computer models have long been used to expedite the screening of new drugs. However, these approaches alone do not address critical aspects of animal or human physiology and behavior. In many cases, nonanimal methods require further validation in animal models to ensure safety and efficacy. Therefore, the scientific consensus remains that for the foreseeable future, nonanimal models serve as adjunctive techniques—methods that can supplement, not replace ongoing biomedical work. Animal rights groups avoid mentioning these critical details.

2.4: Grassroots/Local and State Efforts

Following the passage of the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act in 2006, animal rights groups started focusing their efforts on passing anti-research legislation at the local and state levels in addition to existing national policy campaigns. Across the country, activists are slowly chipping away at pro-research legislation by focusing on small policy changes—such as language in state funding bills—instead of entire bans on animal research. This tactic has resulted in increased success over the years as states change laws to require mandatory adoption, breeding and transportation restrictions, and other anti-research policies. In some cases, animal rights activists successfully introduce stand-alone bills that seek to undermine the research process. Groups such as the Beagle Freedom Project have advocated for bills known as the “Beagle bills,” which have garnered widespread support by misinforming the public about the necessity for animal models in biomedical research. The biomedical research community must stay vigilant as these groups continue to engage with local and state governments and promote policies to end ethical and humane animal research.



2.5: Increased Regulatory Burden

Although the biomedical research industry is one of the most highly regulated industries in the country, we continue to see an increase in regulatory “red tape.” The continuation of regulatory burden goes directly against the intent of Congress. Pursuant to the passage of the 21st Century Cures Act, agencies are instructed to create regulations and guidance to [minimize administrative burden](#). Unfortunately, as administrations change and new leadership is confirmed, agencies fall behind in making revisions to regulations and guidelines.

Furthermore, animal rights groups attempt to influence regulations by holding protests at agencies, targeting agency leadership, and running negative communication campaigns. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is known to hold protests in front of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). These highly publicized protests use emotionally charged tactics to intimidate and influence agencies and their staff to stop conducting animal research, or create burdensome roadblocks. The biomedical research community must work to promote sound science while also educating the executive and legislative branches about the existing oversight and regulatory mechanisms that strictly govern research with animals.



2.6: Legislative and Appropriations Pressure

In addition to local and state efforts, animal rights groups continue to influence policy at the federal level by introducing stand-alone legislation. Each Congress, dozens of bills are introduced with the goal of hindering and ending biomedical research. While many of these bills expire in committee and never receive a floor vote, some bills make it into larger legislative packages and pass with little oversight.

Along with proposing stand-alone bills, these groups try to incorporate anti-research policy through the appropriations process. Each year, Congress considers the president’s budget and drafts 12 appropriations bills to fund the federal government for the fiscal year ending on September 30. These long and complex bills are accompanied by report language directing federal agencies how to spend the appropriated funds and to ensure accountability to Congress. The inclusion of anti-research language in these bills is unfortunately on the rise as animal rights groups blanket Capitol Hill and [lobby for these efforts](#). The biomedical research community must continue to engage with lawmakers and their staff to educate and promote pro-research policies as animal rights groups attempt to end animal research through legislative and appropriations pressure.

2.7: Mandatory Adoption Legislation

One relatively new animal rights tactic was inspired by the group Beagle Freedom Project. The group initiated a series of state bills requiring research facilities to make dogs and cats available for adoption after their involvement in biomedical research to benefit humans and other animals is completed. So far, the group has been successful in passing “Beagle Freedom” or “Right to Release” laws in California, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Washington. When initially introduced, these bills often appear reasonable to the general public. However, many contain significant flaws. For instance, in many cases, research facilities already have existing adoption programs for their research animals. As a result, the proposed legislation often misleads the public about the caring and compassionate treatment of research animals. These proposed bills also frequently threaten to disrupt ongoing research animal adoption programs. Thankfully, in many cases, research facilities have been able to address these issues with their state legislatures before these bills become law. Beagle

Freedom Project and other groups are also currently seeking federal “right to release” legislation. However, so far, they have been unsuccessful in these efforts.

2.8: Policy Directives

In addition to lobbying for specific legislative language, animal rights groups are steadily petitioning senior administrative officials at federal agencies. These efforts are increasingly bipartisan. The intended goal is to implement sweeping policy directives that significantly reduce and/or eliminate research with animals or create added barriers for investigators and institutions. Animal rights groups frequently justify the need for these new policies with misrepresented data or evidence that is taken out of context.



Figure 2.2: Press briefing hosted by EPA in 2019 announcing the agency’s decision to eliminate mammalian testing by 2035. EPA Administrator Wheeler is flanked on all sides by representatives from animal rights groups.

A recent example of this strategy occurred in September 2019 when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced efforts to significantly reduce research with mammals. In a [memo](#) outlining its priorities, the EPA committed to reducing mammalian research by 30 percent by 2025 and ultimately eliminate all research with mammals by 2035. Requests to conduct research with mammals following January 1, 2035, will require administrator approval on a case-by-case basis.

Animal rights groups were quick to declare victory for this announcement, having helped draft its language and openly advertising their cordial relationships with agency leadership. This fact was no more apparent than when EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler announced this directive and was accompanied by several animal rights groups representatives, including PETA, Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, and White Coat Waste Project.

2.9: Protests and Infiltrations

Two of the most common animal rights tactics that seek to generate news coverage and exert pressure on targeted institutions are in-person protests and facility infiltrations.

In-Person Protests

In-person protests can occur outside of facilities that conduct animal-based studies. At other times, activist groups organize protests at nearby, high-traffic locations (such as busy intersections, public parks, or other gathering spaces) in order to increase visibility.

The primary goals of these actions are to:

- Generate news coverage
- Recruit additional activists/supporters
- Create photos or brief videos that can be shared on various social media platforms and websites to gain attention/expand support
- Isolate the targeted organization and exert public pressure on employees and leadership



Figure 2.3: An example of an in-person protest organized by an animal rights group.

Facility Infiltrations

Another common activist strategy is for animal rights groups to infiltrate universities and companies that conduct animal studies. These infiltrators—persons working undercover on behalf of animal rights organizations—are instructed to gather information. This includes research and animal care details, photos, and videos. In most cases, when the infiltrator has ended their employment with a university or company, these materials are then handed over to an animal rights organization to be used as part of a campaign. The infiltrator, who maintains their anonymity, might then move on to another facility. Generally, infiltrators are lower-level animal care employees. However, it is possible that a junior lab staff member could serve as an infiltrator. See [Chapter 4: Dealing with Protests and Infiltrations](#) for additional information and recommendations.

2.10: Records Requests/Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests

Throughout the years, animal rights groups have increased the use of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to obtain information on institutions and researchers conducting animal research. While gathering this information is completely legal, these groups often skew the information they receive to create a misleading narrative that results in public institutions becoming targets of animal rights activists. Institutions targeted in this way can expect negative press releases, protests, and misinformation and/or harassment campaigns focused on individual researchers or institutional leadership. Over the years, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) repeatedly and effectively used this strategy to not only target research institutions but [federal agencies](#) as well. Institutions and agencies conducting animal research should be aware of these initiatives and have plans in place to respond fully, effectively, professionally, and legally.

2.11: Social Media

Social media postings are some of the most common methods for animal rights organizations to communicate with supporters. Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube are regularly used by animal rights groups for the immediate distribution of mistreatment claims, photos, and videos. Regional, on-site protests are regularly announced and organized on Facebook. In addition, animal rights groups frequently use these platforms to encourage supporters to bombard company or university social media platforms with negative messages aimed at causing disruption and reputational damage.

2.12: Traditional Media

Animal rights groups frequently pitch news stories to media outlets that are supportive of their mission. This is especially common if the topic holds an emotional appeal for viewers. Although local news outlets are more likely to air stories pitched by animal rights groups, in recent years several mainstream, late night talk/comedy shows have also discussed stories that are skewed to paint animal researchers in a negative light. Research with companion animals such as dogs and cats are commonly shown in a manner that is out of context.



Chapter 3: Recommendations to Mitigate Targeted Actions

Animal rights groups conduct targeted campaigns against entities performing animal studies to disrupt research progress and capabilities. As highlighted in the introduction, animal rights activism can cause severe setbacks to scientific research and represents a major threat to the biomedical research community.

All animal care and use programs must strive to ensure high standards of animal welfare at all times. The public trusts the research community to conduct studies in an ethical manner for the good of society. Therefore, it is critical to maintain a proactive and progressive animal welfare program that strictly adheres to the Animal Welfare Act, Public Health Service (PHS) Policy, and related animal care guidelines. While an excellent record of compliance cannot guarantee protection from animal rights groups, it may reduce the likelihood of being targeted. It may also limit animal rights groups' chances of success in portraying your facility in a negative light.

Additionally, entities conducting animal research should develop a crisis management plan that includes strategies for addressing potential animal rights threats. Such strategies should include recommended actions, key contacts, and proactive steps that departments and laboratories can take to reduce risk.

This section provides recommendations on formulating an organizational crisis management plan as well as recommendations for minimizing the risk of animal rights action against organizations, institutions, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees (IACUCs), individual researchers, and others involved in animal care programs.

3.1: Recommendations for Organizations

There are several steps an organization can take to proactively prepare leaders and staff for animal rights-related issues. Making these preparations beforehand can often greatly reduce the negative impacts of a campaign or even negate them.

Forming an Animal Research Communications and Security Team

One of the most effective steps an organization can take to be better prepared for animal rights campaigns is the formation of an animal research security and communications team. These committees seek to proactively and reactively manage animal activism threats. For example, the group might convene:

- To prepare for an upcoming protest or animal rights week events
- To discuss security improvements aimed at protecting researchers' labs and homes
- To talk about the need for new or expanded communications materials and websites aimed at increasing public understanding about the role of animals in research

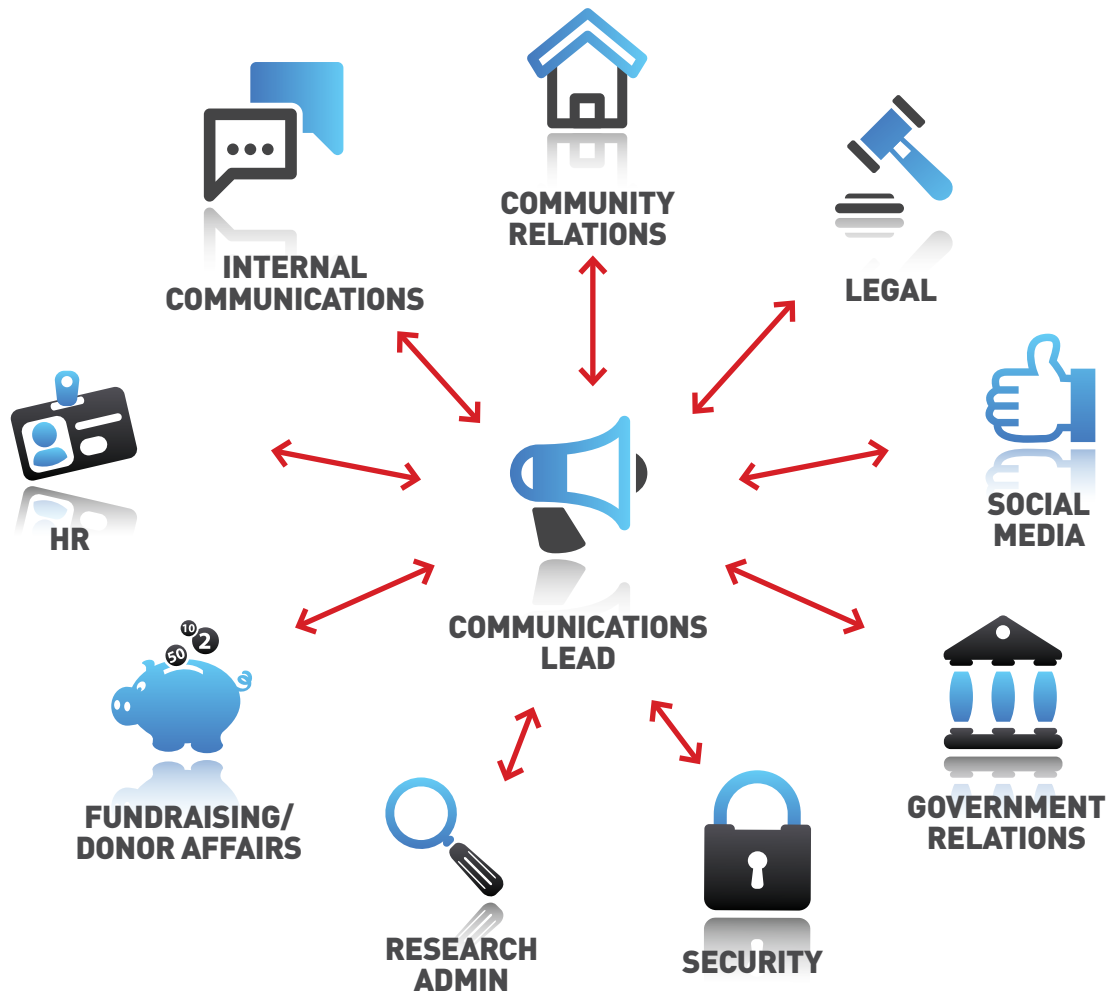


Figure 3.1: Example structure of a security and communications team to prepare for and respond to animal rights targeting.

Membership of these teams will likely vary depending on the type of institution they serve. Options might include security leadership, external communications, animal care, internal communications, government relations, community relations, risk management, human resources, legal, and research administration. Gathering these key players together allows for rapid communication, streamlined decision-making, and more effective long-term planning.

Consider Assigning a Senior Media Office Staffer to Manage Animal Research Communications

If your facility regularly receives animal rights attention or is at significant risk, consider assigning a communications staffer as a specialist in this area. Make sure they frequently connect with animal care and research leadership. They should regularly visit facility vivaria and be well informed about the kinds of research that take place at your facility. They should also be at the top of the call list if and when problems arise.

Make Certain Crisis Plans Include the Possibility of Animal-Related Issues

Review existing crisis plans to ensure research animal-related issues are included, from natural disasters to animal rights allegations. In larger facilities that already receive significant activist attention, it makes sense to have a dedicated communications plan for animal research operations that includes proactive plans for expanding public education and protocols and processes for managing communications crises as they arise.

Ensure Connections Between Key Audiences

Because animal research crises can develop rapidly and impact several departments within your institution, ensure connections exist beforehand. Your communications staffer assigned to animal research issues should regularly receive and share information from research administration, animal care leadership, research staff, security, and others.

Monitor FOIA and Other Records Requests

Records requests to public institutions often provide the first signs that an animal rights campaign is underway. Ensure the person tasked with fulfilling these requests flags inquiries from groups that will likely make negative claims. Proactively preparing for allegations can go a long way in limiting or even preventing reputational damage.

Bolster Internal Communications Efforts

Don't forget the importance of internal relationship building. Your own animal care and research staff might be able to proactively warn you of several impending crises including:

- Possible infiltrators
- Unexpected animal care issues
- False and damaging rumors
- Potentially controversial projects

Monitor for Emerging Threats

Because many animal rights campaigns are organized online, research organizations can greatly benefit from monitoring for emerging issues. These efforts might include:

- An awareness of local activist groups and any public facing webpages (including Facebook) that they run to organize protests that target companies and individuals
- An understanding of the national activist groups that are likely to target your facility and what they are already saying about your organization
- Partnerships with advocacy organizations such as Americans for Medical Progress and the Foundation for Biomedical Research can allow your group to obtain additional information about upcoming challenges

Proactively Consult with Advocacy Organizations

Partnering with medical research advocacy groups can also be helpful for:

- Identifying the level of risk faced by your organization related to the types of research being conducted
- Expanding public communications and education about the use of animals in research
- Locating weaknesses/problem areas that your organization should address in order to eliminate or diminish risk

Consider Adding/Expanding Information on Your Website About the Need for Animal Studies and the Care of Research Animals

Increasingly, biomedical research organizations are expanding their websites to include additional information about the use of animals in research and how research animals are cared for. There are several benefits to posting this information (see [Chapter 5.4](#) for additional information and specific examples). Doing so helps ensure:

- Internet searches related to your organization and animal research produce factual/balanced results
- Messaging created for websites can also be used in several other venues. For instance, the language used on your website may also be utilized in:
 - o Media messaging
 - o Government relations messaging/testimony
 - o Written correspondence with concerned citizens
 - o Social media feeds

Create Advocacy Materials: Factsheets, FAQs, Etc.

During a crisis situation, it is nearly impossible to rapidly create all the response materials needed. Therefore, it is critically important to have some items prepared beforehand. These might include:

- General factsheets
- FAQs
- Information about individual studies
- Information about the care of research animals at your facility, regulations, etc.
- Information about why certain higher profile species (such as monkeys or dogs) are studied

Note: When creating FAQs, be sure to consider questions or allegations that might be promoted by animal rights groups and proactively address those issues.



Make sure that all institutional personnel have access to all educational materials that are created as this may be beneficial in responding to public/legislative concerns.

3.2: Recommendations for Funding Agencies

Numerous federal agencies fund, strictly regulate, and provide administrative support for animal research throughout the U.S., including:

1. National Institutes of Health (NIH)
2. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
3. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
4. Department of Defense (DOD)
5. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

As research funders, federal agencies are uniquely positioned to serve as leaders in communicating the value of animal research and ensuring investigators, animal care staff, and other stakeholders are safe, particularly against outside forces that seek to end the use of animals in research. Existing federal efforts to do so are laudable steps towards building a secure and nimble research ecosystem, including:

- Maintaining the privacy of Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) members
- Clear, comprehensive communications about the continued need for animal research (see the VA Animal Research Program [website](#) as well as NIH's "[Animals in NIH Research](#)" landing page)
- Frequent webinars and workshops with investigators, IACUC staff, and other stakeholders about policy uncertainties (see NIH ICARE meetings)
- Clear, firm [statement](#) from NIH, "Deploring Terrorism Against Researchers" (issued in 2009)

To complement these efforts and enhance awareness about the value of animal research among policymakers, nonscientists, and other stakeholders, we urge federal agencies do the following:



NIH

Amend the instructions for the "Project Narrative" grant application section to include specific reasoning about how the proposed animal research (if applicable) will benefit humans, animals, and/or future scientific endeavors.

Applicants are required to provide a "Project Narrative" in grant applications that describes in plain language how the research would contribute to the fundamental knowledge of living systems, and/or the application of knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability (see grant guidelines [here](#)). If the grant is funded, this information is available on [NIH RePORTER](#) to promote awareness and accountability of NIH-funded research. Including specific, plain-language information about the value of animal research is a proactive way to challenge animal rights groups' efforts of misconstruing scientific studies. Furthermore, this suggestion is in line with [recent recommendations](#) provided by the NIH Advisory Committee to the Director Working Group on Enhancing Rigor, Transparency, and Translatability in Animal Research (see Recommendation 3.5) calling on NIH to take the strongest stance possible in educating the public about the importance of animal research.



NSF

Amend the instructions for the "Project Summary" section of grant applications to include considerations for how proposed animal research (if applicable) could advance understanding of applicants' scientific field and/or offer specific societal health benefits.

Similar to the Project Narrative required by NIH grant applicants, the NSF grant application includes a Project Summary section where potential awardees explain in one page or less the potential impact of the proposed research (See Part 1, Chapter II.D.2.b, [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide](#) (PAPPG)). Per NSF Guidelines, this summary should be separate from the proposal's abstract and framed in a manner that is informative not only for those working in the same or related scientific fields but also a broader audience. Importantly, NSF applications require specific consideration for the "broader impacts" of the proposal, a description of potentially societally relevant outcomes. Among the outcomes NSF particularly value include:

- Increased public scientific literacy and public engagement with science and technology
- Improved well-being of individuals in society
- Development of a diverse, globally competitive STEM workforce
- Improved national security and economic competitiveness of the U.S.
- Use of science and technology to inform public policy

While NSF specifies that these examples do not serve as prescriptive recommendations, we recommend including a specific consideration for the value of animal research in advancing broader scientific understanding to encourage applicants to be proactive in communicating the need for this important work. Moreover, prompting applicants to think about the critical role of animal research in basic science is consistent with NSF’s mission to promote the progress of science and advance the nation’s health, prosperity, and welfare.

Cross-Agency Recommendations



Create an interagency committee comprised of the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), NIH Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW), Department of VA, Department of Defense (DOD), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to align animal research education strategies and streamline existing and future resources for animal researchers.

To maximize the quality, integrity, and utility of federally funded animal research, funding agencies must work in concert to provide consistent support and guidance. An interagency committee could achieve these goals and serve as a key resource for researchers facing challenges from animal rights activists. The committee should meet on a routine basis to discuss and exchange information on areas related—but not limited—to the following:

- Federal communication efforts on the importance of animal research
- Best practices for addressing animal rights activism
- Development of resources to provide guidance for institutions, IACUCs, institutional officials, and investigators to prevent targeting by opposition groups

3.3: Recommendations for Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees (IACUCs)

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees (IACUCs) are centrally important in ensuring the humane care of animals in research, as required by the Animal Welfare Act and Public Health Service (PHS) Policy. These committees must include a nonscientist and unaffiliated member. An effective IACUC serves as a communication bridge between the veterinary staff and researchers, enabling all stakeholders to both navigate the complex regulatory environment and provide the best animal care. Unfortunately, for these and other reasons, IACUC members are occasional targets of animal rights groups.

To help mitigate against potential attacks from animal rights groups, IACUCs could consider implementing the following strategies:

Ensure IACUC minutes and semiannual reports do not include extraneous details to limit exposure from FOIA and/or state open-record release requests

It is paramount for researchers and IACUCs to comply with all federal regulations governing animal research. However, out of an abundance of caution, researchers and IACUCs frequently include extraneous information in paperwork submitted to USDA and OLAW. Through FOIA and state records request laws, animal rights groups use this information to pressure investigators and IACUC members. To minimize potential threats from animal rights groups through FOIA and open-record requests, consider the following recommendations:

- For IACUC minutes and noncompliance reports, ensure that only the required individuals are included. For example, OLAW requires the grant number and category of personnel involved (principal investigator, technician, student, etc.) be included but does not require names.
- Ensure purpose-bred rats (genus *Rattus*), mice (genus *Mus*), and birds are not included in USDA annual reports as these species are not covered by the Animal Welfare Act.
- Review your institution's PHS Assurance to determine the information required for reporting. Note that there are separate requirements for PHS vs. non-PHS-funded research.

Utilize the IACUC Chair, Attending Veterinarian, IACUC Administrator, and Institutional Official (IO) as the communicating link between investigators and animal care staff

Beyond their primary role in evaluating the care of all animals used in research and certifying compliance with federal and local laws, IACUCs should strive to serve as the nexus between investigators and animal care staff. By improving the lines of communication, each entity can better understand the others' needs and expectations, thereby enhancing compliance and reducing the risk of potential conflicts, including possible harassment from animal rights groups. As IACUCs work towards achieving a robust, effective, and bidirectional relationship between researchers, animal care staff, and administrators, consider the following recommendations:

- The **IACUC chair** should regularly communicate with investigators via email or one-one-one meetings to establish awareness and expectations of ongoing animal research projects. As the leader, the IACUC chair plays an important role in setting the tone for IACUC relationships.
- The **attending veterinarian** is responsible for the health and well being of the laboratory animals. Relying on their expertise can help enhance compliance and prevent potential attacks from animal rights groups who often claim researchers use "inhumane" practices and protocols. Additionally, the attending veterinarian can assist investigators in formulating future experimental designs and protocols.

- For medium and large institutions that provide the IACUC chair with an **IACUC administrator** or other support staff, these staff are critical in ensuring all federal and institutional regulations and policies are followed. Accordingly, the IACUC, animal care staff, and researchers should not only recognize IACUC administrators as important members of the research enterprise but also leverage their expertise to help researchers work through concerns and interpret regulations where necessary. Preventing noncompliance is an effective way to stave off attacks from animal rights groups.
- The **institutional official (IO)** is responsible for ensuring the institution's Animal Care and Use Program (ACUP) has the necessary resources and support to maintain compliance with all laws and regulations. As the representative that maintains records of correspondence with federal agencies and signs all Public Health Service Assurance statements, IACUCs should strive to involve the IO wherever possible to help cultivate a supportive and engaged institutional culture.

Utilize the resources, dialogues, and training sessions provided by the Interagency Collaborative Animal Research Education (ICARE) Project

The [Interagency Collaborative Animal Research Education](#) (ICARE) Project is comprised of federal agencies that conduct and are involved in animal research, including NIH, USDA, FDA, CDC, NSF, Department of VA, NASA, and BARDA. Specifically designed for institutions and their IACUCs, ICARE seeks to facilitate improved animal welfare and compliance with federal standards while ensuring administrative burden remains minimal. ICARE hosts a variety of active learning sessions for IACUC members, animal care, and administrative staff including "OLAW Conversations," "ICARE Dialogues," and "ICARE Academies" that allow those closely involved in animal research to submit questions, exchange best practices, and proactively consider a wide array of animal welfare scenarios. By actively participating in these sessions, IACUCs can better understand their responsibilities and feel prepared to respond to compliance complaints from animal rights groups.

3.4: Recommendations for Individuals

There are several ways individuals can proactively or reactively mitigate targeted actions by animal rights groups.

If you ARE NOT currently being targeted:



Conduct a Risk Analysis

Certain forms of research (studies in large animals, some types of behavioral research, etc.) are more likely to become targets of animal rights organizations. Conversely, some research studies work in rodents or zebrafish are less likely to become the focus of an opposition campaign. Try to determine your level of risk. Also, consider whether your organization has been the target of previous animal rights campaigns. Animal rights groups often choose to repeatedly criticize research facilities to build a narrative that damages organizational reputations. In doing so, they are constantly on the lookout for new research projects to add to their campaigns. If your institution has never been targeted in the past, this may place you at lower risk. Take heart in the fact that the vast majority of researchers are not criticized by animal rights groups.

If You Believe You Are at Risk, Proactively Contact Your Security and Communications Office

Any investigator who believes their lab is at risk of an animal research opposition campaign should contact onsite security immediately. Inquire as to whether they can conduct an onsite security analysis for your lab.

Inform Institutional and Departmental Leadership

Your departmental administration and crisis communication response team can serve as advocates. They can ensure threats or unusual events are taken seriously and properly investigated by the security office. Working with departmental and institutional leadership in concert with the crisis communication response team can also ensure other faculty or staff—who may also be targeted—are aware of increased security risks.

Ensure You Are Alerted About Incoming Records Requests

If you work at a public institution, make certain you are alerted to any and all records requests for data about your lab. Informing investigators of incoming requests is common practice at many institutions, but it never hurts to inquire. When requests arrive, work closely with your organization's records coordinator to ensure allowed security redactions are made and that unpublished data is protected whenever possible. At the same time, recognize that state and federal laws may significantly limit what information can be protected. If needed, consult with your organization's general counsel to ensure compliance with state open records legislation, as these laws vary greatly from state to state.

Revisit Your Lab Website

Look for statements or images that likely do not translate to public audiences and could lead to confusion, misinterpretation, or be purposefully used as misinformation. At the same time, one powerful strategy is to use your website to proactively educate the public. Consider adding a lay summary of your lab's ongoing research to your public-facing website. This information can be tremendously helpful if and when your studies receive attention from animal rights groups. Your onsite communications office and/or advocacy organizations, including FASEB, Americans for Medical Progress, and the Foundation for Biomedical Research, can assist you in expanding your site to bolster public understanding and appreciation.

If you ARE currently being targeted:

Report Any Unusual Events

Immediately report any unusual activities, emails, calls, texts, social media posts, and negative news coverage to onsite security, even when you are uncertain of the source. Many of these events are early signs that an animal rights organization or an individual activist has initiated a campaign against your work.

Work Closely with Security

Inquire about having a security officer assigned to your lab to serve as a contact point when unusual events occur. Ask for a security analysis for your lab and make adjustments as necessary. Ensure staff always wear badges. Make sure doors close and lock automatically and that they are never propped open. Make sure visitors are vetted, or display credentials, before they enter the lab.

Ensure Threat Monitoring is Taking Place

Make sure that your organization has systems in place to monitor the internet for mentions of your name and institution by those opposed to animal studies. This is important because many animal rights initiatives are organized on the web. Monitoring can help identify upcoming protests or event disruptions. It can also help communicators develop effective messaging for countering criticisms, particularly before the targeting gets out of hand.

Partner with Local and National Advocacy Organizations

Nonprofit advocacy organizations, specifically Americans for Medical Progress and the Foundation for Biomedical Research, have deep expertise and are available to provide information and advice to individuals and organizations targeted by animal rights activists. Furthermore, stay connected with your state biomedical research advocacy organizations to remain up to date on the latest local news.



Chapter 4: Dealing with Protests and Infiltrations

As noted in Chapter 2: Tactics Used by Animal Rights Groups, protests and infiltrations by animal rights groups are two of the most common ways animal rights groups seek to generate news coverage and pressure targeted institutions/ research facilities. These events not only disrupt critical research progress, but also distress researchers and animal care staff.

4.1: Protest Response Strategies

There are various strategies your organization can implement to respond to protests from animal rights groups:

- Ensure your organization's viewpoint is reflected in news coverage. One highly effective strategy is to get as much pro-research messaging into news coverage as possible. Provide a statement or an interview which highlights:
 - o Specific information about the research being conducted at your organization and who will benefit. If your studies will advance veterinary medicine, be certain to emphasize this.
 - o Examples of studies conducted at your facility, or within your area(s) of research, that were translated into useful therapies or valuable information.
 - o Your organization's commitment to outstanding animal care. Explain the numerous levels of oversight that exist. If your facility has an impressive USDA inspection history or longstanding AAALAC accreditation status, consider providing this information.

- o The overall continued need for animal studies and underscore how animal research benefits human and animal health alike. Consider listing well-known, trusted organizations that advocate for biomedical research in animals including the American Medical Association, National Institutes of Health, Food and Drug Administration, and American Veterinary Medical Association.
- Ensure communications staff are familiar with the types of animal care studies conducted at your facility and are prepared to respond to any questions that may arise, including challenging questions, such as allegations related to past USDA inspection reports.
- Proactively communicate with staff about any on-site protests. Encourage them to avoid interactions with activists which may be used against them. Provide advice as to how employees can avoid confrontations or make schedule adjustments to reduce staff traffic at the protest site.
- Reach out to vendors who may have deliveries scheduled to take place at the time of the protest. Advise them to reschedule to avoid confrontations.
- Partner with advocacy organizations such as Americans for Medical Progress, the Foundation for Biomedical Research, and state advocacy groups to plan for upcoming protests and obtain resources that might be provided to news media.
- Monitor media coverage and social media posts following the protests. Analyze areas for possible improvement and adjust your strategies.
- Maintain regular contact with security personnel assigned to your institution, facility, or lab. During a protest or other instance of animal activism, alert the security personnel of any verbal or physical threats—no matter how small or minor you believe it may be.

4.2: Infiltration Prevention Strategies

Taking steps to prevent a potential infiltration by animal rights groups is a great way to protect your organization and ensure research activity (along with scientists and animal care staff morale) remain optimal. Consider implementing the following strategies:

- Work closely with your human resources department to develop plans aimed at identifying likely infiltrators. This might be accomplished through well-designed interview questions or background searches. Ensure interview questions align with state laws.
- Note unusual circumstances, such as a candidate for a lower level position who appears to have moved to the region specifically to work at your facility.
- Consider hiring a firm to conduct background searches on employees considered for work in sensitive areas.
- Be on the lookout for unusual behaviors by current employees, including staff members who prefer to work alone or frequently ask unusual questions. Take note when employees seek after-hours work or request access to large animal areas for no clear reason. Some of these behaviors may be natural. Other times they may signal the presence of an employee with ulterior motives.
- Recognize it's nearly impossible to prevent all infiltrations. Activist groups have become highly skilled in camouflaging the backgrounds of their investigators. Frequently, infiltrators have a very small online footprint, no social media presence, etc.

4.3: Infiltration Response Strategies

If your facility becomes the victim of an infiltration:

- Be prepared beforehand. All animal research facilities—especially those that work with large animals—should maintain a crisis plan to manage a variety of issues, including animal rights infiltrations.
- Respond immediately. The most damaging period of time following an infiltration are the hours after an animal rights group has announced their findings. If possible, provide a detailed statement and consider making key staff available—such as animal care leadership.
- Consider media access or providing company/university-provided videos to counter activist claims. At times, inviting a trusted reporter to your facilities or providing videos of your animals may effectively counter activist accusations. Videos, created beforehand for these types of situations, should be considered as part of an organization's crisis planning efforts.
- Determine whether op-eds or other communications strategies might be effective in setting the record straight.
- Consider proactive discussions with decision makers. Animal rights organizations that infiltrate research facilities often attempt to use the materials gathered to influence restrictions on research via new or amended laws. This is why it is often critical to maintain an open line of discussion with lawmakers at various levels.



Chapter 5: Recommendations for Promoting Communication and Effective Public Outreach

5.1: Importance of Public Education and Communication

One of the most effective strategies for ensuring continued medical progress while limiting the impacts of animal rights activism is to increase public education and communication about your institution's research program. Animal rights groups are most effective when they become the primary sources of information about the use of animals in research and how the involved animals are treated. In their ongoing attempts to become the leading voice for this issue over the past few decades, animal rights groups have:

- Repeatedly circulated highly misleading statistics about the benefits of and need for animal-based research
- Frequently misled the public about individual research projects by providing selective details or using inaccurate language that portrays scientists as cruel or uncaring
- Distributed extremely dated or highly misleading images from inside research facilities to paint biomedical research as cold, cruel, or uncaring



As activist groups have aggressively sought to control the narrative about animal research, many research organizations have severely limited their own communications and outreach on this subject due to public relations or security concerns. As a result, animal rights organizations have significantly shifted public opinion, resulting in a gradual but pronounced decline in overall support.

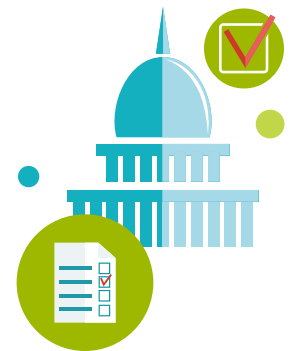
This section provides recommendations for enhancing communication and public outreach for different stakeholders using a variety of strategies:

1. Legislative Strategies: How to Communicate with Lawmakers about Animal Research
2. Policy Strategies: How to Establish Relationships with Funding Agencies and Use the Policymaking Process Effectively
3. How to Improve Public Communication with Nonscientists
4. Improving Coordination and Communication Between Organizations

5.2: Legislative Strategies

How to Communicate with Lawmakers about Animal Research

In the U.S. system of government, lawmakers are elected by citizens to represent their values and attend to their particular needs. This is true at the local, state, and federal levels. Understanding how to effectively communicate with policymakers is important for anyone willing to engage in government. These recommendations will help guide you through the process.



Understand the Issues

You must be prepared to explain and defend animal research to the lawmaker and/or their staff. To have a successful meeting, you or your colleagues need to be the subject matter expert on the issues you are discussing. Lawmakers and their staff enjoy hearing from their constituents who are doing the work on the ground in their state. Bringing researchers and veterinarians from the lawmaker's district or state is a helpful tool in facilitating a successful meeting surrounding animal research. No one knows the issue better than the people who live it day in and day out, and that is who decision makers need to hear from.

Know Your Audience

Try to find common ground with the member or staffer you are meeting with. The more closely you can relate your issue to the decision maker's life, the stronger connection you can make between the decision maker and your cause. For instance, when speaking with a member of the Congressional Cancer Caucus, tailor your examples and arguments to highlight the benefits of animal research in the creation of treatments and cures. Highlighting how research in your state provides jobs and enables economic growth is another valuable strategy with staffers you meet. Finally, national and statewide studies and statistics can be helpful, but local perspectives and examples tend to be more effective. All politics are local, so finding that connection is important in creating and maintaining beneficial relationships with lawmakers.

Be Organized and Prepared

As you plan for your meeting, it is important to have an organized and prepared argument in support of animal research. It is important to have an “ask” going into the meeting and a certain piece of legislation you would like them to support or oppose. Lawmakers and their staff have extremely busy schedules, and their time is a valuable commodity. You have a finite amount of time to convince them to support your cause and determine if they should act on your request. Bringing concise talking points, a one pager, statistics, as well as subject matter experts (e.g., veterinarians, scientists, animal care staff, patient advocates, etc.) can make these meetings beneficial for all parties. In the end, make sure you relay to the decision maker that you are willing to be a resource regarding future legislation surrounding animal research, advancing global human and animal health, treatments, vaccines, etc.

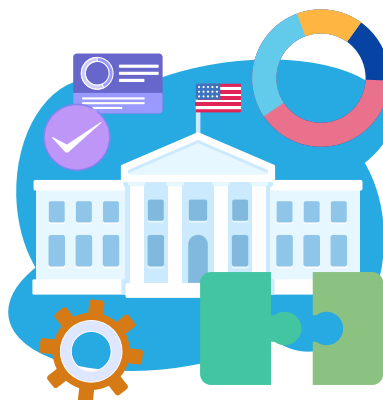
Always Follow Up

Always send a follow up email to the congressional staffers who were present at the meeting thanking them for taking the time to listen to your issue. Include any relevant information such as links to the legislation discussed and a one-pager on the bill. Include relevant talking points you discussed during the meeting and offer to be a resource moving forward. Remember, building strong professional relationships with lawmakers and their staff is crucial in effectively advocating for animal research issues.

5.3: Policy Strategies

How to Establish Relationships with Funding Agencies and Use the Policymaking Process Effectively

One of the best ways to enhance communication and public outreach about animal research is building strong relationships with the funding agencies responsible for enforcing the laws regulating animal research. This can help improve compliance, address misconceptions associated with animal studies, and build awareness about each party’s needs and concerns. Consider the following recommendations to cultivate strong, bidirectional relationships with funding agencies:



Understand the Agency’s Priorities and Challenges

Federal agencies (and affiliated offices) often delineate their strategic priorities and objectives in a formal “strategic plan” for a predetermined number of years (typically five). Outlining high-level goals and planned implementation strategies enables agencies to formulate multiyear initiatives and remain transparent with stakeholders. The biomedical research community, including those involved in animal research, should familiarize themselves with the strategic plans from offices and agencies relevant to research with animals (e.g., NIH, USDA APHIS, etc.) to enhance understanding of their goals and anticipated challenges. An additional strategy to consider is referring to the strategic plan in future comments and/or letters directed to the agency. For example, a letter with suggested policy recommendations or concerns—such as comments to a Request for Information—should state how potential changes may or may not be consistent with the agency’s overarching goals outlined in its strategic plan. This type of acknowledgment demonstrates full understanding of an agency’s priorities and thoughtful consideration of long-term policy changes.

Reach Out When Questions Arise (Researchers, IACUC Chairs, Institutional Officials)

A common difficulty among researchers who use animals is knowing when to consult and/or report a situation (and potential noncompliance) to their IACUC or NIH OLAW. For example, the PHS Policy—the policy overseeing all NIH animal research work and governed by NIH OLAW—enables the IACUC and relevant offices within the institution to self-evaluate based on existing OLAW guidance. However, policies and guidance are subject to different interpretations across institutions. Without clear communication, researchers may unintentionally fail to report a concern that could negatively impact animal welfare, thereby opening an opportunity for animal rights groups to target individual researchers and/or the institution.

It is important to not only leverage the IACUC during these situations (see Recommendations to Mitigate Targeted Action, Recommendations for IACUCs) but also remember that the OLAW and APHIS offices are available to answer questions. Existing guidance ([NOT-OD-05-034](#)) from OLAW states, “...consult with OLAW if in doubt. OLAW welcomes inquiries and discussion and provides guidance with regard to specific situations.”

To contact OLAW:

Phone: 301-496-7163

Email: olaw@mail.nih.gov

To contact USDA APHIS:

Phone: 1-844-820-2234

Organize Meetings to Introduce Yourself and Share Mutual Goals *(Professional Societies/Organizations)*

In addition to becoming familiar with a federal agency’s strategic plan, scientific professional societies and organizations should take steps toward building direct relationships with leadership members in federal animal welfare offices. Exchanging information about your organization’s key priorities—and how these goals align with the agency’s broader initiatives—can help funding agencies comprehend the issues directly impacting society members (e.g., individual researchers or institutions).

Moreover, informing funding agencies of issues salient to your organization increases the likelihood that agencies will proactively consider them when formulating new and/or amended policies.



One way to achieve strong relationships with funding agency offices occurs during leadership changeover. When a new senior staffer is announced (e.g., director, lead analyst or specialist, etc.), it may be advantageous to send a letter introducing your professional society/organization that outlines key accomplishments related to animal research over the last few years as well as longstanding priorities for the organization moving forward. The letter should emphasize the critical role funding agencies play in ensuring optimal animal care and welfare and the value of partnerships between all stakeholders to accomplish shared goals.

Additional strategies include organizing meetings and/or phone calls with leadership members of federal agencies to introduce yourself, your organization’s mission, and how you envision potential partnerships. Building rapport with these offices is essential for bridging communication gaps and advancing animal welfare.

To further foster communication and public outreach, it is essential to leverage the policymaking process to ensure new and/or modified policies align with scientific evidence and the biomedical research community’s goals. A few ways to do this include:

Respond to Requests for Information

One of the most effective strategies for participating in and shaping the science policymaking process is providing comments to funding agencies. Per the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), federal agencies are required to notify the public when there are plans to issue, amend, or repeal rules and regulations. These notices are typically posted in the [Federal Register](#). More importantly, to ensure the public is informed of agency plans and procedures, the APA requires federal agencies to provide the public an opportunity to comment on a proposed version of a rule within a specified period (typically 30, 60, or 90 days). Professional societies such as FASEB and NABR closely monitor these notices of proposed rulemaking and help coordinate a response based on feedback from members of the animal research community. Animal research stakeholders interested in further engaging in this process should stay connected with these societies and serve on relevant Boards/Committees/Subcommittees where feasible to share insight and input as comments are developed.

When federal agencies seek information from the public about a specific topic, they issue a Request for Information (RFI) or Request for Comments (RFC). Topics of the request can vary and have spanned a broad range of issues related to animal research over the last several years, including rigor and reproducibility, grant-to-protocol congruency, and semiannual facility inspections. Responding to RFIs/RFCs is a terrific way for stakeholders to convey areas of concern (using evidence-based examples where possible) and offer feedback on ways agencies can improve. These opportunities are typically posted on agency websites, the [Federal Register](#), or in the case of NIH, on the [NIH Grants & Funding Guide](#) page (known as the “NIH Guide”).

Key agencies to monitor for potential RFIs/RFCs include;

- a. NIH Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW)
- b. NIH Office of the Director (OD)
- c. NIH Office of Research Infrastructure Programs (ORIP)
- d. USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
- e. Environmental Protection Agency
- f. Health and Human Services

Monitor Advisory Council Meetings, Workshops, Roundtables, etc.

A primary way for animal research stakeholders to stay informed of the latest policy developments is by monitoring federal advisory committee/council meetings, workshops, roundtables, and other related public sessions. Federal agencies such as NIH and NSF have various advisory committees comprised of outside members to advise leadership on policies and procedures affecting agency operations. According to the [Federal Advisory Committee Act](#), these committees and working groups must conduct their business transparently with the public. Oftentimes, these advisory committees are divided into different working groups or subcommittees that are tasked with assessing a specific topic or policy concern. For example, the NIH Advisory Committee to the Director (ACD)—a committee that meets twice a year and advises the NIH director on agency operations and priorities—established a [Working Group on Enhancing Rigor, Transparency, and Translatability in Animal Research](#). The working group was charged with assessing ways to improve animal research rigor, reproducibility, and translatability by developing recommendations to strengthen experimental design, enhance training, and optimize translational validity. In June 2021, the working group issued its [final recommendations](#) and NIH leadership is formulating an implementation plan (as of November 2022).

Professional societies such as FASEB and NABR closely follow federal committee/council meetings, public workshops, and roundtables hosted by funding agencies and/or the National Academies to ensure the scientific community remains aware of ongoing policy discussions.

Engage and Collaborate with Stakeholder Partners Where Feasible

Partnerships with other organizations, societies, and stakeholders can play an important role in fostering improved communication about animal research. These partnerships can be particularly effective during specific points in the policy and legislative process, such as the federal appropriations season when animal rights groups are fiercely engaged in inserting anti-animal research language in funding bills. By joining forces, leveraging each other's strengths, and presenting a unified voice, lawmakers and policy officials will better recognize the cross-cutting impact of the issues. To further maximize partnerships, consider proactive strategies wherever possible. While difficult to stay one step ahead in animal research policy, taking the initiative conveys to policy officials and lawmakers that animal research stakeholders are well-organized, attentive, and thoughtful of the policymaking process. Strategies to achieve this include, but are not limited to:

- a. Community sign-on letters
- b. E-action alerts
- c. Joint Capitol Hill and/or federal agency meetings

5.4: How to Improve Public Communication with Nonscientists

Universities, pharmaceutical companies, contract research organizations, and other institutions that conduct biomedical research with animal models can dispel misconceptions about animal research perpetuated by animal rights activist organizations through effective public communication and outreach initiatives. Strategies to consider adopting include:

Posting a Public Animal Research Statement on the Institution's Website

A public statement about the importance of animal research can facilitate institutional communication and outreach. Additionally, institutions should consider distributing this information to employees during onboarding to emphasize the institution's commitment to animal welfare in accordance with all local, state, and federal regulations and guidelines.

Where appropriate, these statements can also acknowledge the institution's AAALAC International, CCAC (Canada), or other voluntary accreditation for excellence in animal care, the type of animal research being conducted, and the connection between the institution's animal research work and the potential benefits for the public (e.g., disease areas being studied, notable basic research, therapeutic development breakthroughs, etc.). Stanford Medicine's [Why Animal Research?](#) webpage, the University of Michigan's [Position Statement on Animal Research](#), and the University of Wisconsin's [Why Animal Research Matters](#) are good examples.

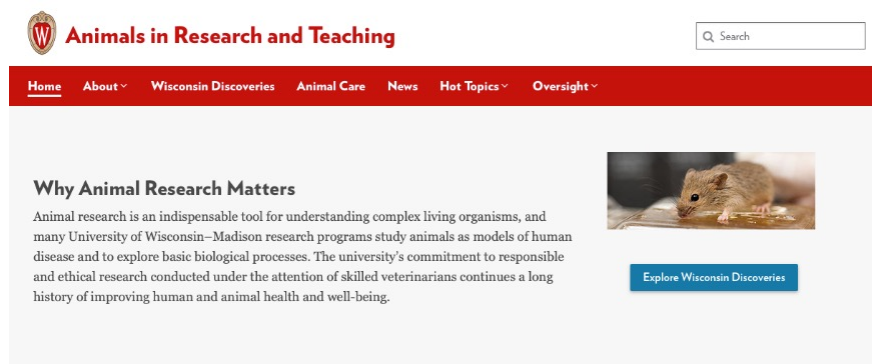


Figure 5.1. Example institutional website from the University of Wisconsin-Madison that openly shares the importance of animal research and its value to animal and human health.

Engage in Community Outreach and Education With Local Residents, K-12 Programs and Post-secondary Education Programs

Some research institutions have their own community outreach programs like Sanford Health System's [Promise](#) science education program and Boston University's [Center for Teaching STEM Resources](#). Regional trade show exhibits and presentations to local professional societies and schools are effective community education options for those institutions that do not have the resources needed to establish a community outreach program.

Partner With State, Local, and National Advocacy Groups—including FBR and AMP—on Public Awareness Campaigns

These organizations have shared educational resources, short videos, and infographics available to the media and the public that can be useful for your communication and outreach efforts. Additionally, consider organizing joint meetings with local, state, and federal policymakers to tell them firsthand about the importance of animal research and the success of the research institution's animal research program.

Organize Animal Facility Tours That Showcase the Extraordinary Care that Goes Into Maintaining Lab Animal Colonies, From Food and Water to Around-the-Clock Veterinary Care

Media can be invited on these tours paired with coordinated interview opportunities with veterinarians, animal care staff, researchers, and institutional leadership. Animal facility tours should be carefully planned to give participants a guided overview of the animal research facilities supplemented by photos, videos, and the opportunity to speak with veterinarians and researchers.

Conduct News Media Outreach to Vetted Journalists to Share Positive News about an Institution's or Facility's Animal Care and Research Program

Maintaining relationships with journalists who have previously reported about animal research in a favorable manner can help ensure an institution's work is shared accurately with members of the public. More importantly, positive news stories can bolster your institution's reputation while increasing the public's understanding of animal research.

5.5: How to Improve Coordination and Communication Between Organizations

One sound strategy for proactively preventing or significantly diminishing the impacts of animal rights campaigns is by forming new partnerships and collaborations. A few suggestions:

Coordinate with Local Law Enforcement

Encourage your institution's security leadership to establish strong connections with local and even federal law enforcement and immediately inform these partners of any significant security issues including any harassment of research or animal care staff. Forging these collaborations can be beneficial when a crisis surfaces as they establish trust and increase the chances of rapid response.

Create Systems to Share Information with Other Institutions in Your Region

Animal rights groups tend to repeatedly use the same tactics to target institutions. As a result, the research community can gain important insights and develop effective response strategies by broadly sharing information with other colleagues. Consider alerting other nearby institutions about:

- Security matters, including threats made by individuals who live in the region
- Significant increases in activism or unusual events
- Unique or extensive records requests for information about the use of animals in research

Some organizations have even created multi-institutional committees that meet every few months to share information about current and developing campaigns. They also share unique new strategies developed by institutions to manage those campaigns.

Share Information and Coordinate with Advocacy Organizations

One central mission of the animal research advocacy organizations (Americans for Medical Progress, the Foundation for Biomedical Research, and state/regional organizations) is to monitor threats to the biomedical research community and inform other institutions of emerging risks. These organizations always welcome communications about unusual or alarming events. A few of the issues they can assist with include:

- Records requests
- Incidents of home harassment
- Increases in activism activity
- Activist emails, calls, letters, or social media messages
- Social media campaigns where institution platforms are targeted repeatedly with the same message
- On-site protests
- Any other unique forms of protest
- Lawsuits
- Legislative issues

In short, never hesitate to contact these organizations to report anything unusual and to receive advice and assistance.



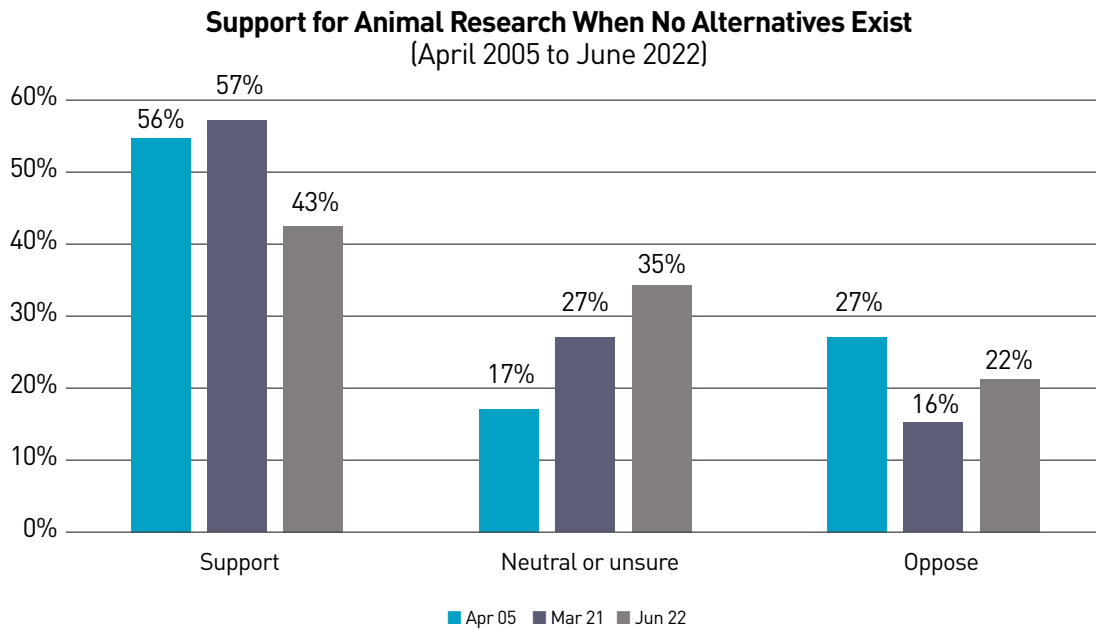
Chapter 6: Public Polls and Opinions on Animal Research

Public polling is an important tool that allows us to gauge the viewpoints of a population. However, as noted in the introduction, the amount of context that is provided and how the question is phrased can influence results. The Foundation for Biomedical Research (FBR) commissions a broad range of polls each year to measure the public's stance on animal research. Three examples are provided below.

Compared to other poll sources, FBR poll questions are phrased to inform the public about the role of animals in the development of lifesaving medicines and the fact that this research is conducted in a manner that ensures there is no unnecessary suffering for the animals. When provided this information, the public is more likely to indicate support for animal research, particularly for vaccine development such as COVID-19 (see Public Poll 3 on page 37). However, as time goes by, public opinion on this topic is gradually shifting in an unfavorable direction. As noted throughout this report, it is essential for the research community to strengthen its animal research communication and openness efforts to sustain biomedical progress and catalyze the next generation of lifesaving medicines.

Public Poll 1

The following poll asked American adults in April 2005, March 2021, and June 2022 whether they support animal research when no alternatives exist:



SOURCES:

FBR April 2005 Poll: This survey was commissioned by Peter D. Hart Research Associates and sampled 1,002 adults between April 15, 2005 and April 19, 2005. The margin of error is +/- 3.2 percentage points.

Which statement do you agree with more?

- 1. Animal research is inhumane and unnecessary. Many lab animals endure painful experiments in cramped/dirty conditions. Animal research can be replaced with modern alternatives such as computer simulations and it can be dangerous, as results in animals are not comparable to those in humans.**
- 2. The U.S. places strict regulations on treatment of research animals, the scientific community is working hard to develop alternatives to animal research and already uses some alternatives. However, the most reliable tests use animals because they most closely duplicate complex interactions that occur in humans.**
- 3. Some of both, or not sure**

FBR March 2021 Omnibus Survey: This survey was conducted by Echelon Insights and sampled 1,008 registered voters from a web panel between March 15, 2021 and March 21, 2021. The margin of error is +/- 6.0 percentage points.

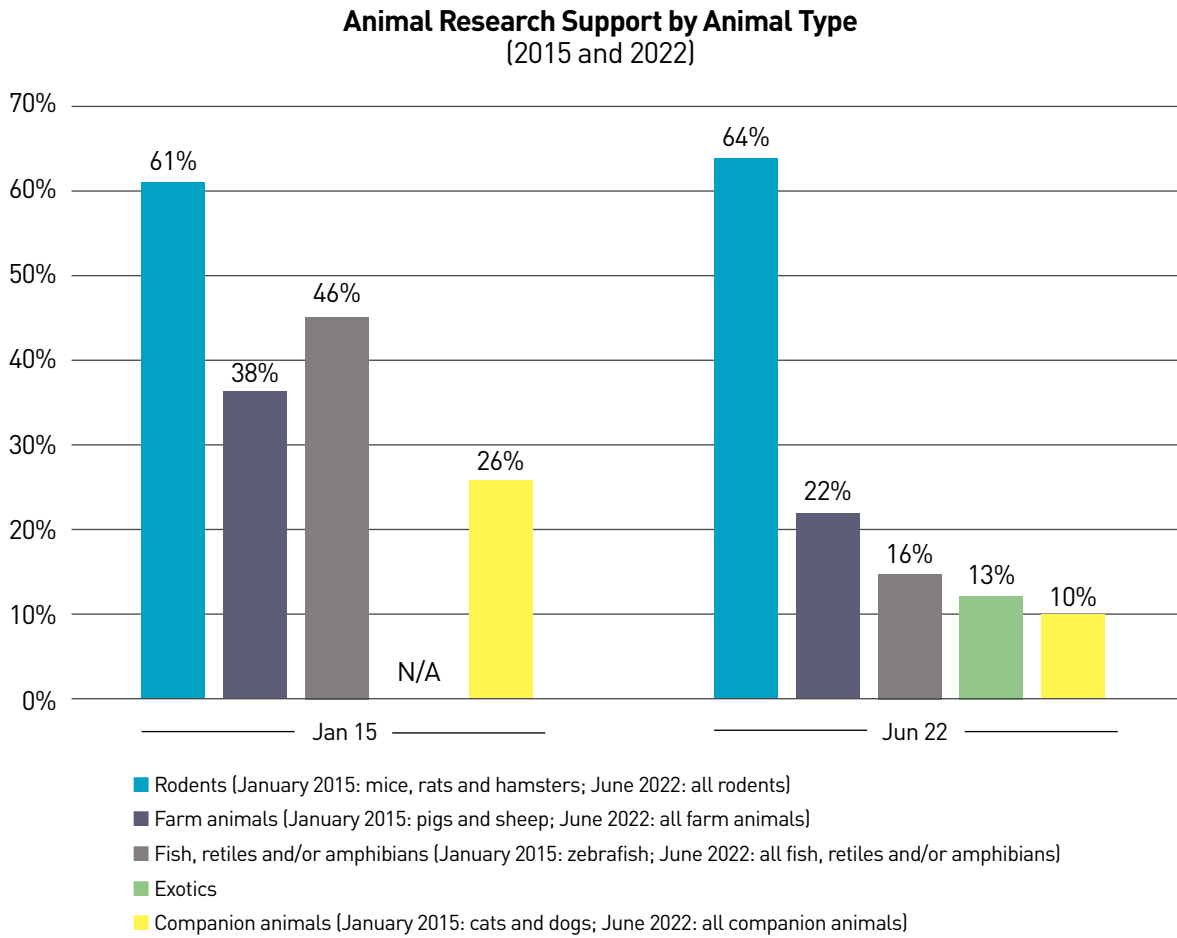
If there is no other effective way to do the research and there is no unnecessary suffering for the animals, please indicate whether you personally believe the humane use of animals in scientific research to develop lifesaving medicines for people and pets is morally acceptable or morally wrong.

FBR June 2022 Omnibus Survey: This survey was conducted by Echelon Insights and asked the following question to 1,030 registered voters between June 17, 2022 and June 20, 2022. The margin of error is +/- 3.7 percentage points.

When alternatives to live animal models in research (for example, cell cultures and computer simulations) are not an option, and there is not suffering for the animals, do you support or oppose the use of animals used in research?

Public Poll 2

The following poll asked American adults if they support animal research in certain species. The poll was conducted in 2015 and 2022.



SOURCES:

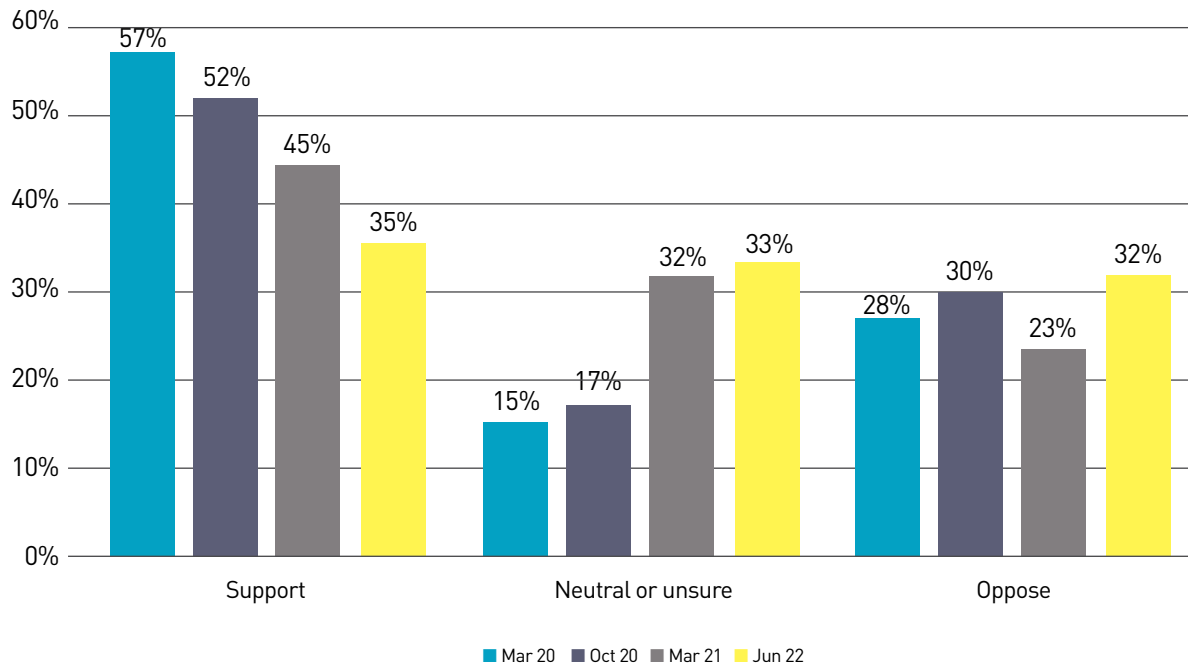
FBR January 2015 survey: This survey of 1,008 American adults was conducted by Zogby Analytics with a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points.

FBR-Johns Hopkins Medicine June 2022 Omnibus Survey: This survey was conducted by Echelon Insights of 1,030 registered voters between June 17, 2022 and June 20, 2022. The margin of error is +/- 3.7 percentage points.

Public Poll 3

The following poll asked American adults if they support or oppose the humane and ethical use of animals for the development of the COVID-19 vaccine. The poll was conducted in March 2020, October 2020, March 2021, and June 2022.

Public Support for Animal Research to Develop COVID-19 Vaccines
(March 2020 to June 2022)



SOURCES:

FBR March 2020 Omnibus Survey: This survey was conducted by Echelon Insights, which asked 1,000 registered voters between March 20, 2020 and March 24, 2020 the following question. The margin of error is +/- 4.0 percentage points.

Would you say you support or oppose the humane use of animals in biomedical research, education, and testing in cases where that research supports the development of a vaccine and treatments for the coronavirus?

FBR October 2020 Omnibus Survey: This survey was conducted by Echelon Insights, which asked 1,006 registered voters between October 16, 2020 and October 22, 2020 the following question. The margin of error is +/- 4.3 percentage points.

Would you say you support or oppose the humane use of animals in biomedical research, education, and testing in cases where that research supports the development of a vaccine and treatments for the coronavirus?

FBR March 2021 Omnibus Survey: This survey was conducted by Echelon Insights, which asked 1,008 registered voters between March 15, 2021 and March 21, 2021 the following question. The margin of error is +/- 6.0 percentage points.

Please indicate whether you personally believe the humane use of animals in scientific research to develop COVID-19 vaccines is morally acceptable or morally wrong.

FBR June 2022 Omnibus Survey: This survey was conducted by Echelon Insights which asked 1,030 registered voters between June 17, 2022 and June 20, 2022 the following question. The margin of error is +/- 3.7 percentage points.

Do you support or oppose the humane use of animals in scientific research to develop COVID-19 vaccines?



Conclusion

Animals remain an essential component of the biomedical research process by facilitating the advancement of fundamental science and pharmaceutical breakthroughs. However, the growing influence of animal rights groups poses risks to investigators, institutions, federal agencies, and the research community at large.

The primary purpose of this report is to share the modern strategies animal rights groups use to shift public opinion, prohibit funding for animal studies, and impede research progress. Secondly, this report provides broad recommendations for federal agencies, institutions, and individual scientists to protect against the growing threat of animal rights campaigns. We encourage broad dissemination of this report and development of individual policies and best practices specific to each institution/organization's concerns and prevalent trends.

By increasing outreach, education, and advocacy for animal research, the biomedical research community can work on a collaborative basis to effectively counter animal rights groups' talking points and tactics.

Acknowledgments

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Additional Resources

The following resources are highlighted to aid individuals and organizations in formulating strategies, talking points, and outreach campaigns to communicate about animal research and mitigate animal rights activism.

FASEB

Website: <https://www.faseb.org/>

[Animal Research: Necessary for Scientific Progress](#) (Factsheet)

A factsheet that explains the limitations of nonanimal models in research and illustrates by examples how and why animal research is the standard for biomedical research.

[Biomedical Research Breakthroughs: 2010:2019](#) (Factsheet)

Factsheet examines many of the biomedical discoveries, innovations, and treatments that were made possible because of scientific animal research. It also highlights some common drugs that started with animal research and the process used to approve the drugs.

[Animal Research FAQ Factsheet](#) (Factsheet)

A factsheet that addresses common misconceptions associated with laboratory animal research.

Animal Research Saves Lives and Cures Diseases (Factsheet series)

A series of three factsheets that examines the use of animals in research and its effect on human and animal health:

[Part I: Canines, Rabbits, and Guinea Pigs](#)

[Part II: Felines, Pigs, and Goats](#)

[Part III: Nonhuman Primates, Sheep, and Llama](#)

[Humanized Mouse Models: Using Human Cells to Conquer Disease](#) (Factsheet)

A factsheet highlighting key breakthroughs for infectious disease research, serving as key preclinical tools for a wide variety of translational studies.

Subscribe to FASEB's biweekly [Washington Update](#) newsletter.

Americans for Medical Progress

Website: <https://www.amprogress.org/>

[AMP Facts About Research](#) (Fact Sheet)

A concisely written fact sheet to assist in communications with the public about the necessary role of animal studies in improving both human and animal medicine.

[Biomedical Research Awareness Day](#) (Program)

Biomedical Research Awareness Day (BRAD) is an initiative committed to educating students and the public on the importance of biomedical research and the humane use of animals. BRAD is held on the 3rd Thursday in April each year. Veterinary schools, medical schools, research institutions, and others around the world participate and celebrate BRAD at their respective institutions.

[Come See Our World \(Website\)](#)

Come See Our World is a website that shares true stories and images of real animals in lab settings. The site provides access to images of animals involved in biomedical research in actual research facilities. These materials can also be used by students, news reporters, teachers, and the general public to aid them in communicating factually about research that involves animals.

[Love, Care, Progress Videos](#)

These videos highlight the compassionate care provided for research animals that are essential for medical progress. The most recent video in this series provides viewers with an inside look at a nonhuman primate facility. The original Love, Care, Progress video focused on the important role of canines in health research which benefits humans and dogs alike.

National Association for Biomedical Research

Website: <https://www.nabr.org/>

[Oversight of Animal Research](#)

Public accountability is an essential component to the future of biomedical research that seeks to relieve human and animal suffering and save lives. Americans strongly support the U.S. investment in biomedical research and consider it to be among the nation's highest priorities. Americans also strongly desire for animals to receive proper care and be protected from harm. Therefore, given the public's interest in both scientific advancement and animal welfare, a comprehensive system of government oversight is in place to regulate the use of animals in the laboratory. NABR maintains a strong presence on Capitol Hill through congressional briefings and visits with Congressional leadership demonstrating the importance of regulated animal research.

[Importance of Animal Research](#)

Virtually every major medical advance of the last century has depended upon research with animals. Animals have served as surrogates in the investigation of human diseases and have yielded valuable data in the process of discovering new ways to treat, cure or prevent them. From immunizations to cancer therapy, our ability to manage the health of animals has also improved because of animal research and the application of medical breakthroughs in veterinary medicine. NABR advocates for federal and state legislation that supports responsible and humane animal research. NABR members can access legislative and regulatory resources on the members-only portal.

Foundation for Biomedical Research

Website: <https://fbresearch.org/>

[Love Animals? Support Animal Research \(brochure\)](#)

This brochure reviews in layman terms the reason why scientists use animal models in research that benefits humans as well as pets and wildlife. It can also be viewed as a digital flipbook.

[Perceptions vs Reality \(brochure\)](#)

Narrated by pediatric neuro-oncologist Henry Friedman, MD, chair of the Foundation's board of directors, this brochure presents the most common myths perpetuated by animal rights organizations about animal research and debunks them. It can also be viewed as a digital flipbook.

[FBR Polling Library](#)

Review national public opinion poll findings on animal research from 2013 to present by visiting our online polling library.

Speaking of Research

Website: <https://speakingofresearch.com/>

[FAQs About Animal Research](#)

A list of common questions scientists may receive about animal research, including alternative models and what happens to animals when studies have completed.

[Veterinary Benefits](#)

An explanation with examples of how research with animals has led to significant benefits for multiple other species. This resource also explains the One Health Initiative.

[Arguments for Animal Research](#)

A list of facts and examples about the importance of animal research and its role in enabling biomedical breakthroughs—all written and ready to share on social media.

Understanding Animal Research

Website: <https://www.understandinganimalresearch.org.uk/>

[Myths and Facts](#)

A list of 20 common misconceptions about animal research and supporting facts to assist in communicating with non-scientists.

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Answers to questions commonly asked by the public, including how animal research is regulated and why alternatives are not yet ready to fully replace animal studies.

[Concordat on Openness on Animal Research](#)

A summary of the UK initiative that aims to enhance animal research communication.

[Animal Rights Extremism](#)

A review of the laws and history related to animal rights activism and the laws protecting against illegal activity.

Appendix A: Abbreviations

Acronym	Definition	Description
3Rs	Replace, Refine, Reduce	Guiding principles for ethical, humane use of animals in research and testing
AAALAC	AAALAC International	Private, nonprofit organization that promotes the humane treatment of animals in research through voluntary accreditation and assessment (formerly stood for the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care)
ACD	Advisory Committee to the Director (NIH)	Advisory body that provides advice to the NIH director on matters related to NIH's mission, programs, and administrative policies
ACUP	Animal Care and Use Program (or Protocol)	Detailed description of the proposed use of animals set by the research for IACUC review and approval
APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service	Located within the U.S. Department of Agriculture; regulatory body responsible for enforcing and administering the Animal Welfare Act
AV	Attending Veterinarian	Individual responsible and delegated authority for animals at a facility involving animals subject to the Animal Welfare Act
AWA	Animal Welfare Act	The 1966 law that established the requirements for the humane care and treatment of animals in research, transportation, commercial sale, etc.
AWRs	Animal Welfare Regulations	Also known as the "Blue book," a resource offered by USDA that consolidates the associated regulations and standards related to the Animal Welfare Act.
BFP	Beagle Freedom Project	Animal rights group that is heavily involved in mandatory adoption laws, particularly at the state level.
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	Compilation of permanent rules published in the Federal Register that governs federal agency practices and procedures
DOT	Department of Transportation	Federal cabinet department that governs matters pertaining to national transportation
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency	Agency of U.S. federal government responsible for protecting human health and environment
FDA	Food and Drug Administration	Federal agency responsible for regulating certain food, drugs, cosmetics, and medical products
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act	Federal law that provides public access to all federal agency records upon formal request, except for protected information that falls under the nine exemptions
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	Cabinet-level agency responsible for administering essential public health services; parent agency of NIH
HSUS	Humane Society of the United States	Animal rights group; very involved in mandatory adoption and state activism
IACUC	Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee	Institutional body comprised of scientists and non-scientists that provides oversight and review of research, teaching, and testing with vertebrate animals; required by the Animal Welfare Act and Public Health Service Policy

Acronym	Definition	Description
ILAR	Institute for Laboratory Animal Research	Institute within NASEM Division on Earth and Life Studies responsible for evaluating and reporting on scientific, technological, and ethical issues related to use of animals in research, testing, and education
IO	Institutional Official	Individual that is legally authorized to act on behalf of the institution and ensure compliance with PHS Policy
MPS	Microphysiological Systems	In-vitro platforms that mimic the biochemical, electrical, and mechanical properties of organ or tissue function. Examples include tissues and organs on chips
NAMs	New Approach Methodologies	Term used to describe any nonanimal-based method used in research and testing to help assess safety and efficacy
NASEM	National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine	The collective scientific academy of the U.S. comprised of three member organizations: National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the National Academy of Medicine; scientists appointed to the Academies serve as advisers on science, engineering, and medicine
NHP	Nonhuman Primate	Any nonhuman member of the highest order of mammals including prosimians, monkeys, and apes
NIH	National Institutes of Health	Agency within HHS that serves as the largest biomedical research agency in the world; uses three funding mechanisms for extramural research: grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts
NPRC	National Primate Research Center	Network of seven research programs in the U.S. funded by NIH to conduct biomedical research on primates
OLAW	Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare	Office within NIH that oversees the care and use of research animals in biomedical and behavioral research, training, testing, etc.
OSP	Office of Science Policy (NIH)	Advises the NIH Director on matters important to agency management and research output
OSTP	Office of Science and Technology Policy	Office within the Executive Office of the President that advises the President on effects of science and technology in domestic and international affairs
PCRM	Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine	Animal rights group
PETA	People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals	Animal rights group
PHS	Public Health Service (Policy)	Set of standards administered by the NIH Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare that require institutions to establish and maintain appropriate practices that ensure the health and welfare of laboratory animals
VA	(Dept.) of Veterans Affairs	Cabinet-level executive branch department responsible for providing benefits and care to military Veterans; maintains robust animal research program
WCWP	White Coat Waste Project	Animal rights groups that focuses mostly on lobbying Congress for anti-animal research language



FASEB

Federation of American Societies
for Experimental Biology

AMP

AMERICANS FOR MEDICAL PROGRESS

nabr

National Association for
Biomedical Research



FOUNDATION FOR
BIOMEDICAL
RESEARCH