

11th BfR Consumer Protection Forum

"Protection of Laboratory Animals – the Role of Refinement"

linked with the

Awarding of the 30th BMELV Animal Protection Research Prize

13-14 December 2011

The European Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes was adopted by the European Parliament in September 2010 and has to be implemented as national law until January 1, 2013. It strongly emphasises the reduction of pain, suffering and distress in laboratory animals. Accordingly, the severity of a procedure determined by the degree of pain, suffering or distress needs to be assessed in advance in future with the help of a newly developed severity classification catalogue, and verified in part through retrospective analysis. In addition to this, the decision as to whether animal experiments have to be subjected to a simplified or complete approval process will depend entirely on the expected severity classification. Animal experiments involving severe suffering or distress can now be banned completely for the very first time. This means that the demand for a continual scientifically based reduction of suffering and distress in animal experiments (referred to as 'refinement' in the 3R principle) will assume greater significance in the future.

It is expected that refinement research will provide scientists, animal welfare groups and governmental authorities with distinct and practicable tools to estimate the severity of suffering and distress on laboratory animals based on a sound scientific expertise. At least partially due to the increasingly complex experimental approaches that are being pursued today, there is still a great demand for research in this area, particularly in Germany. Refinement is also viewed very critically by animal welfare associations, mainly because of their tight focus on the replacement of animal experiments.

The European Directive for the protection of laboratory animals and the pending revision of the German Animal Welfare Law demands for more detailed discussion of the topic of refinement. For this reason, the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) is conducting a forum entitled "Protection of laboratory animals – what role does refinement play?" on 13 and 14 December 2011. Within the scope of this forum, national and international experts will present the latest status of research and requirements for future activities with a view towards reducing pain and distress in animal experiments. There will also be a focus on the housing of laboratory animals, and the estimation and assessment of the levels of pain, suffering and distress in animal experiments. Various interest groups will then outline their position on the role of refinement in scientific animal protection in Germany, as well as the actions which may be required in the future.

The presentations of international experts will take place along with the awarding of the Animal Protection Research Prize by our Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV) on 13 December, followed by the presentation and discussion of the various positions of representatives of the interest groups at the morning of the following day. **Simultaneous translation for German and English will be provided on both days. Participation on December 13 is recognized by ATF as Continuous Veterinary Medical Education.**