March 3, 2008

Dear Dr. [Name],

I am contacting you on behalf of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and our ten million supporters regarding our long-term goal of eliminating all pain and distress in animals used for research, testing, teaching, and training purposes. As you know, research animal pain and distress can have a profound impact on the welfare of animals used and the quality of the resulting science; thus these issues are of significant concern for both the public at large as well as the scientific community.

In an effort to further this goal, we have commenced a new initiative that seeks to prevent severe pain and distress in research animals at institutions of higher learning. The thrust of this initiative is to ask research institutions to adopt a pledge that they will ensure that no animals experience severe and unrelieved pain and/or distress during any aspect of their care and use within their institutions (sample packet enclosed). The supporting materials provided to these universities will include a cover letter that includes an explanation of what should be considered "severe pain and distress" for the purpose of this pledge, and information on how signing on to the pledge will benefit not only animal welfare and quality of science, but their university as well.

We are currently not requesting AAALAC to take any action with this pledge initiative, but are simply keeping you informed of this project as a courtesy. If you have any questions regarding this new project, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Conlee
Director of Program Management
Animal Research Issues
March 1, 2008

Dear XXX,

I am writing on behalf of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and our ten million supporters to invite your institution to join an effort that seeks to prevent severe pain and distress in research animals. Pain and distress can have a profound impact on research animals’ welfare and the quality of the resulting science; thus these issues are of significant concern for both the public at large as well as the scientific community.

The thrust of the HSUS’ initiative is to ask institutions of higher learning to adopt a pledge that they will ensure that no animals used for research, testing and/or education experience severe and unrelieved pain and/or distress during any aspect of their care and use within the institutions. This includes prompt use of adequate and appropriate intervention and endpoints to immediately end any severe pain and/or distress if prevention of such states was unexpectedly unsuccessful. (see Appendix A for details).

While comprehensive and credible statistics on animal pain and distress do not exist for US-based research, our approach is to prevent any severe pain and distress, no matter how uncommonly this occurs. We also see this initiative as encouraging greater attention to research animal pain and distress overall, regardless of its severity.

By adopting the pledge, institutions can demonstrate their commitment to go beyond the letter of the law in addressing research animal suffering. The HSUS is prepared to publicize an institution’s adoption of the pledge, if desired.

The HSUS is initially approaching a few select institutions—including yours. We welcome your feedback on this initiative and invite you to be among the first institutions to adopt the pledge.

The HSUS will be relying primarily on your institution’s good will in abiding by this pledge and addressing potentially contravening situations as they arise. We will also be contacting your institution annually to help ensure compliance. If a circumstance is called to our attention that is not in accordance with the pledge, we would discuss the situation with you, determine how to address it on a case by case basis, and further determine if it is necessary to remove your institution’s name from the list. (We will not publicize the removal of an institution from the pledge list.)

If you would like to explore the possibility of signing the pledge, please email us or call our colleague Kathleen Conlee at kconlee@hsus.org or 301-258-3043. If Ms. Conlee doesn’t hear from you within the next month or so, we will follow up with you. We look forward to speaking with you about this initiative. In the meantime, if you feel this issue is better directed to someone else at your institution, please let Ms. Conlee know to whom I should forward this letter.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Wayne Pacelle
President & CEO

Celebrating Animals, Confronting Cruelty

2100 L Street, NW Washington, DC 20037 t 202.452.1100 f 202.778.6132 humanesociety.org
Appendix A:
Details on the Pledge

The wording of the pledge is as follows:

*Our institution joins others that have pledged to ensure that no laboratory animals in our care experience severe and unrelieved pain and/or distress.*

Please note that the following features of the pledge:

- It applies to all vertebrate species, regardless of their Animal Welfare Act status.
- It is based on what the animals *actually experience*, regardless of steps taken to prevent or mitigate pain and distress. In other words, procedures that would otherwise lead to severe pain and distress would not fall into this category if interventions are taken that preclude severe pain and distress, including provision of adequate anesthetics, analgesics, or palliative care and/or use of humane endpoints (i.e. euthanasia prior to severe pain and distress).
- It applies to the animals' experience throughout their lives at the research institution, from arrival until death (or relocation).

The HSUS recognizes that there is not a clear distinction between what constitutes pain and/or distress that is moderate versus severe. It is also recognized that some research that is expected to cause moderate pain or distress, for example, may in fact cause severe pain or distress depending on the particulars. However, in making an assessment regarding whether severe pain and distress are *expected* to occur, institutions should follow the Animal Welfare Act and PHS Policy, which state that unless the contrary is established, procedures that cause pain or distress in humans should be expected to cause so in other animals.

The duration and intensity of an experimental procedure can influence how an animal experiences the procedure. Accordingly, for purposes of the pledge, a procedure that results in intense pain or distress but which lasts only for a few seconds would NOT be considered severe. On the other hand, a procedure that results in moderate pain or distress but which the animal experiences over the course of hours or days would be considered severe for the purposes of this pledge. Please see the figure below for further guidance.

Situations at the transition between moderate and severe pain or distress should be treated as severe for purposes of complying with the pledge.

Examples of experimental procedures that would typically cause severe and unalleviated pain and/or distress are listed in Appendix B.

**Figure.** How we view the combined impact of two variables on the animals' experience of severe pain and/or distress. These variables are the duration of a procedure or condition and its intensity (in terms of pain and/or distress). The shaded areas indicate experiences that would be regarded as severe pain or distress under the Pledge.

![Diagram showing intensity and duration of pain and distress](image-url)
Appendix B:

Examples of procedures that would typically cause severe and unalleviated pain or distress:

- LD50 tests
- Severe arthritis
- Severe burns
- Advanced infectious disease
- Use of paralytics
- Extensive irradiation
- Advanced metastatic cancer
- Advanced inflammatory conditions
- Recovery from major surgery without analgesics
- Marked social deprivation
- Prolonged restraint (lasting more than minutes)
- Noxious electric shock that is repetitive and/or is not immediately escapable
- Repetitive application of a noxious stimulus (such as loud noise) over an extended period of time in order to induce startle

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1 These examples all assume technical competence on the part of laboratory personnel. Moreover, most of the procedures in the cited examples would inevitably result in substantial pain or distress for minutes, hours, or days, regardless of the anesthetic or analgesic regime.

2 Paralytics cause severe distress when used without anesthesia.
Preventing research animals at your institution from experiencing severe pain and distress is a win-win goal for your university, improving both animal welfare and scientific quality. Of course, after the time and consideration you have put into this decision, you'll want to ensure that you effectively implement this new institutional policy.

Below are some suggested steps to take to ensure that the pledge to prevent severe animal pain and distress is being met.

**Preventing Severe Pain and Distress: A Role for Everyone**

- Look into the possibility of using non-animal alternatives, especially for research that is expected to cause severe pain and distress
- Consider all possible sources of pain and distress in advance and make plans to address them, including use of anesthetics, analgesics and other measures
- Don't forget about non-pharmacological methods to alleviate pain and distress
- Consider duration and intensity of stressors and the context in which they occur
- Tailor score sheets and other pain and distress observation tools and monitor the actual impact of the research on the animals
- Determine and adopt the most humane endpoint possible; continually assess these
- Use human experience as a guide to how animals might react to a given experimental situation, but do so with caution, as nonhuman animals may experience more pain and distress under some circumstances
- Be prepared for emergency situations
- Develop institutional best practices for everyone to use

For more detailed information and access to additional pain and distress resources, visit our website at [humanesociety.org/painanddistress](http://humanesociety.org/painanddistress)
WHY
...go Severe Pain & Distress Free?

Science, Animal Welfare, and Public Perception

DID YOU KNOW...?

Pain and distress (especially when severe) not only compromise the welfare of animals used in research, but can also be detrimental to the quality of science produced, which can ultimately undermine human health advances.

Uncontrolled, undetected, and unalleviated pain, physical distress, or psychological distress result in alterations in physiologic and behavioral states, and confound the outcome of scientific research (National Research Council, 1992).¹ The laws, regulations, and guidelines governing the conduct of animal research also emphasize the need to minimize pain and distress.

Public opposition to animal research increases as the level of pain and distress experienced by the animals increases.

A public survey conducted for The HSUS ² by an independent polling firm found that Americans’ opposition to animal research rises dramatically as the level of pain and distress increases from minor (33%) to moderate (60%) to severe (75%).

Students, parents, faculty, alumni, and others who contribute financially to a university/college want their school to have high standards of animal welfare.

Let those associated with your institution be proud of your efforts to limit the suffering of research animals. Your school’s name can be the next added to a growing list!


2. The poll conducted by The HSUS in 2001 is at: http://www.hsus.org/animals_in_research/pain_distress/opinion_poll_on_pain_and_distress_in_research.html
If you prefer, simply use this form to indicate your institution's adoption of the pledge.

XXX joins others that have pledged to ensure that no laboratory animals in our care experience severe and unrelieved pain and/or distress.

Printed name of school official: ________________________________

Title: _______________________________________________________

Signature: __________________________________________________

Address (if different from the one we used to contact you):
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Please provide at least one form of contact information from the list below:

Email address: ________________________________________________

Phone: _________________________________________________________

Fax: ________________________________________________________

Mail, email or fax to:

Kathleen Conlee
The Humane Society of the United States
2100 L. Street NW
Washington DC 20037
Fax: 301-258-7760
kconlee@humanesociety.org