

US takes the offensive on animal research

- Scientists will be paid to oppose activists
- Controversial memo re-emerges

Washington

US HEALTH officials, facing an increasingly effective and sophisticated animal-rights movement, have begun an unprecedented, multi-million-dollar effort to promote the use of animals in research.

A new draft plan prepared by officials within the US Public Health Service (PHS) outlines a wide-ranging effort to fund 'outreach' and educational efforts to counter the anti-animal-research campaigns of groups such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).

"The use of animals in biomedical research is indisputably part of the fundamental philosophy of the [PHS] and we will articulate that and explain it to the public as we do everything else we do", says Frederick Goodwin, director of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA). "To sit back and ignore the [animal rights] movement, hoping that it will go away, would be the height of irresponsibility." The National Institutes of Health (NIH) and ADAMHA have already created a new joint Office of Animal Affairs that will coordinate some of the first efforts. Located on the NIH campus, the office will take its initial funding from the research-training and public-affairs budgets of the individual institutes within NIH and ADAMHA.

Goodwin says the two agencies will ask for funding "in the millions of dollars" in their 1992 budget for the programme. Matching funding from private organizations such as the Hughes Foundation is also being discussed, as is the involvement of groups such as American Medical Association and the National Association for Biomedical Research.

One of the new office's first actions will be to solicit grant applications from working researchers willing to take a sabbatical to speak to high-school and pre-high-school students about the importance of animal research. Goodwin says that he expects that 10-15 full or part-time awards will be made in the first year. Funding would be available to continue the scientists' research while they are gone. "The intent is to allow them to do this without having to shut down their labs", he says.

Although the efforts will be only one part of a major new PHS educational initiative to increase scientific literacy in pre-college students, the increasing number of attacks and break-ins by animal-rights extremists has created "a

need to take an advocacy position" and highlight animal research, according to the draft PHS report.

"The scientific community had allowed itself to slip into a reactive posture, in effect answering charges from the activists", says Goodwin. "I know of scientists who have taken time to enter their local high schools and encountered stunning ignorance and stunning prejudice because PETA had been there first. This is not an issue of what's right and where the truth is; it's an issue of how to convey the truth, and we're way behind." Many of the components of the programme have their origins in a controversial 1987 memorandum from Goodwin (then director of intramural research at the National Institute of Mental Health) to his superiors. Stressing that the "bunker strategy" was no longer an effective defence against animal-rights activism, Goodwin suggested "special fellowships in research advocacy". The Department of Education "should be contacted concerning infiltration of high schools by the animal rights people. PHS should sponsor counter-educational efforts", he wrote.

Although animal-activist groups widely quoted the memorandum as evidence of conspiratorial behaviour within the PHS, Goodwin still stands by the thrust of the document. "Fundamentally the department has come around to what I was saying in 1987", he says. "When I did that memo I was in no position to [do anything but] stimulate ideas in the people who were in a position to do something. Now I'm in a position to do something." He suggests that the PHS-funded research advocates mince no words in their characterization of the animal-rights community. "Unless we educate the public about what the agenda of the other side is, they will tend to take [animal-rights statements] at face value, particularly if the person saying it has a MD or a PhD", he says.

ADAMHA has distributed a set of Goodwin-prepared slides and 'talking points' to 700 people. The package "identifies the fundamental philosophical position [of the animal-rights movement] and takes it on", he says.

The package discusses the origins of the movement, including the "gradual take-over and radicalization of animal welfare organizations". It lists some common animal-rights arguments ("Modern alternatives [such as computers] can replace animals in research"). And it outlines some suggested responses ("Would you

JAPANESE SCIENCE

New science institute gets director

Kyoto & Tokyo

WITH effect from 1 April, Michio Okamoto, one of Japan's leading academics and a key advisor to the government, has been appointed director of the new International Institute of Advanced Studies (IIAS).

IIAS will form the 'brain centre' of the new Kansai academic city being established between Kyoto, Nara and Osaka. The science city is expected eventually to have a population of 400,000 people and will cost \$20,000-\$25,000 million to build (see *Nature* 338, 285; 1989).

IIAS was established as a foundation in 1984 with Azuma Okada, a former president of Kyoto University, as chairman of the institute's board of trustees. The institute, construction of which will begin in a few months with completion expected in spring of 1992, will be modelled on the Centre for Advanced Studies at Princeton in the United States, according to Saburo Fukui, chairman of the planning committee of IIAS. It will have a constantly changing population of about 40 senior academics from all over the world drawn from both the arts and the sciences supported by a small permanent staff at the institute. The researchers will be housed in a 'scholars' village' surrounded by landscaped gardens where they can contemplate the future of science and the world.

Okada, realizing that the Japanese government is heavily in debt, has turned to Japan's private sector and a few rich stockholders of major companies to fund the institute. Fifty million dollars has been raised so far and the government has provided support by making donations to the institute tax-deductible.

Okamoto was formerly chairman of the academic committee which mapped out plans for the international Human Frontier Science Program and he has also served on various government committees including the Council of Science and Technology, Japan's science policy-making body chaired by the prime minister.

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take a drug that had only been tested on a computer or in a tissue culture?").

Although there are no plans to make the package a formal part of the programme, most researchers who apply are likely already to have a copy, Goodwin says. Michele Applegate, director of the ADAMHA office of external affairs, says: "Our goal is to be blunt, forthright, and to counter specific arguments made by the opposing groups". Expected targets of the education initiative will be the public, educators, legislators, the biomedical community and professional societies, says Louis Sibal, director of the new animal research office.

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