

**Embargoed until 00.01 hours on Tuesday 10 December**

## **Independent investigation into animal research at Imperial College published**

### **Investigation finds considerable scope for improvement to animal research standards**

An expert committee has today published its findings following an independent investigation into animal research at Imperial College London.

Chaired by Professor Steve Brown, MRC Mammalian Genetics Unit, the committee was invited by Imperial College to assess their approaches to research using animals following allegations made against the college by the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV) in April 2013.

Although the committee commended the college's animal care staff and the standards of husbandry, its report states that Imperial College lacks adequate leadership, management, operational, training, supervisory and ethical review systems to support high standards in animal use and welfare.

As a leading institution, with a national and international reputation for research excellence, the report suggests that Imperial College should be aspiring to the highest standards of animal use and to lead in the development and application of new approaches to replace, reduce and refine the use of animals in research (the 3Rs). Thirty-three recommendations are made by the committee to introduce significant change to working practises at the college.

Commenting on the report, Professor Brown said:

“Our investigation identified a number of serious concerns on the conduct, management and oversight of animal research at Imperial College. The college now has an opportunity to take our findings and recommendations forward. Imperial College is internationally recognised as one of the world's best research institutes and it is important that this is matched by its standards of animal use and welfare.

“While our focus has been on Imperial College, the committee's recommendations should serve as a useful framework for other institutions to review their policies and practises.”

Among recommendations put forward to Imperial College is a complete reform of its internal processes for the ethical and scientific review of animal studies, increased staffing levels in the animal facilities, additional resources to support the training and competency assessment of those using animals and the creation of a new senior director role with overall responsibility for animal research and the 3Rs at the college. In addition to improvements in culture, the report also recommends utilising a more systematic approach to monitor animals during studies to enable better reporting and action when welfare concerns arise.

Members of the committee have expertise in laboratory animal sciences and welfare. As part of their investigation they interviewed staff, reviewed relevant documentation and visited an animal facility.

**ENDS**

**Note for Editors:**

1. Download the full report and the accompanying lay summary: *Independent Investigation into Animal Research at Imperial College* [www.brownreport.info](http://www.brownreport.info)
2. Membership of the committee:
  - Professor Steve Brown, Director, Medical Research Council Mammalian Genetics Unit, Harwell (Chair)
  - Professor Paul Flecknell, Director, Animal Research Facilities, Newcastle University
  - Professor Ian Jackson, Head of Medical and Developmental Genetics, Institute of Genetics and Molecular Medicine, University of Edinburgh
  - Dr Maggie Leggett, Head of the Centre for Public Engagement, University of Bristol
  - Dr Vicky Robinson, Chief Executive, National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research
  - Mr Neil Yates, Director, Biological Services Unit, University of Nottingham
3. For further information please contact 020 7611 2253 or [enquiries@nc3rs.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@nc3rs.org.uk). Please note the NC3Rs has agreed to provide press office support at the request of the Brown committee.