



dierencoalitie  
Samenwerkende  
Dierenwelzijnsorganisaties  
Nederland



### ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Manifesto of animal protection organizations, compiled on the occasion of the civil consultation of the Netherlands National Committee for the protection of animals used in scientific research*

#### **Retirement procedures for former laboratory animals**

Animal experimentation is undeniably linked to impairment of animal welfare. Animals are sentient beings that may experience fear, pain and stress. Their intrinsic value is recognized by the Dutch law. From this perspective we want animal experiments to be replaced with alternatives. It will take time to make this transition. In the meantime, society must protect the laboratory animals to the maximum possible extent and bear the responsibility for their fate after the experiments. We welcome the new legal possibility to retire animals when their laboratory lives have ended. In the Dutch Laboratory Animals Act this is called *adoption*<sup>1</sup>.

As a first step, the discussion focusses on laboratory dogs, cats and non-human primates. In this context, we jointly advocate for the following:

1. Retirement for laboratory animals is a matter of social responsibility. Enabled by the law, the users ensure that ex-laboratory animals that do not have to be put down after the experimental procedures can continue their lives elsewhere. Civil society organizations facilitate this process. Retirement contributes positively to the moral standards of those involved in laboratory animal use and also to awareness of this issue in politics and society.
2. As a matter of principle, each individual laboratory animal is considered for retirement, unless specific arguments are in place for not doing so: the “yes, unless” principle.
3. The animal research establishment actively engages in proper housing conditions, care and handling in such a way that if the animal is retired, it experiences as few drawbacks as possible from its former life in the laboratory.
4. Every animal research establishment has a retirement plan in place. The establishment reports the number of reused, euthanized or retired animals annually.
5. With regard to retirement, the animal research establishment can enter into a partnership with a non-profit animal welfare organization which provides any or all of the following services: selection and training of final owners, temporary housing and (if necessary) behavioral rehabilitation.
6. When retirement decisions are made, the starting point is that the animal must experience good welfare in the new situation. Decisions must be based on objective animal welfare criteria, with assistance from independent experts with proven knowledge and experience in behavioral rehabilitation of the species concerned.

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<sup>1</sup> The European Directive 2010/63/EU uses the term ‘rehomeing’.

7. To ensure optimal animal welfare of former laboratory animals, quality requirements (like housing, knowledge and skills) are imposed on private owners or establishments providing final housing for the animal, as well as on possible mediating organizations.
8. The animal research establishment wherein animals were kept for experimental purposes, is responsible for covering the costs of retirement, up to the final destination of the animal. Here the principle `user pays` applies. After all: the establishment has benefited from the use of the animal in experimental procedures. Financial reservations should be included in the research budgets applications.
9. Retirement for former laboratory animals is an important addition to the 3Rs policy<sup>2</sup>. Even if some laboratory animals can be retired, the urgency of replacing methods using animals by animal-free alternatives remains unabatedly high, just as the urgency to reduce the total number of animals used in animal experimentation.

The Hague, November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Presented by Dierenbescherming, Dierencoalitie<sup>3</sup> and AAP Animal Advocacy and Protection, also on behalf of Koninklijke Hondenbescherming, Stichting Hulp en Herplaatsing Huisdieren, GAIA, Stichting Vier Voeters, EDEV, Sophia Vereeniging tot bescherming van dieren, IFAW and AnimalRights.

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<sup>2</sup> 3Rs policy of laboratory animal use refers to the *Reduction* (of the number of laboratory animals used), *Replacement* (with animal-free methods), and *Refinement* (of methods and procedures in order to alleviate the pain or stress that laboratory animals experience). Since the '60s, the 3Rs have been considered to be basic principles for responsible policy of laboratory animal use and are nowadays legally enshrined in both the Dutch Act on Animal Experimentation (Wet op Dierproeven) as the European Directive 2010/63/EU, on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes.

<sup>3</sup> A coalition of 16 Dutch animal protection organisations, namely: AAP Animal Advocacy and Protection, Bont voor Dieren, Comité Anti Stiergevechten, Compassion in World Farming Nederland, De Faunabescherming, IFAW, Sophia Vereeniging, Stichting Belangengroep 'Rechten voor al wat leeft', Stichting Comité Dierenhulp, Stichting Dier&Recht, Stichting Varkens in Nood, Stichting VierVoeters, Stichting Vissenbescherming, Stichting World Animal Net, World Animal Protection and Zeehondencreche Pieterburen.