THE QUEST FOR TRANSPARENCY
Why information on animal use is getting harder to obtain—and what NAVS is doing about it.
pg. 6

in this issue

9 ON THE ROAD WITH NAVS
Join us as we visit the resident sanctuary primates at Primates Incorporated.

10 HIGH SCHOOL HEROES
Meet the young recipients of this year’s NAVS Humane Science Award at Intel ISEF.
NAVS/IFER-Funded Scientist Making Strides in Alzheimer’s Research

Through our funding of the International Foundation for Ethical Research (IFER) Graduate Fellowship Program for Alternatives to the Use of Animals in Science, NAVS supports young investigators who are developing innovative, non-animal alternatives that have the potential to replace cruel and ineffective animal experiments.

This past spring, NAVS/IFER Science Advisors Pam Osenkowski and Sherry Ward had the opportunity to visit the laboratory of one of our fellowship recipients, Nicholas Brookhouser, who is completing his Ph.D. work at Arizona State University (ASU).

Nicholas, a recipient of IFER’s Graduate Fellowship for the past two years, is developing a cell-based model to better understand Alzheimer’s disease, the most common form of dementia.

“My project focuses on understanding the role of ApoE variants in the onset and progression of Alzheimer’s disease using human induced pluripotent stem cell-based approaches,” Nicholas said. “ApoE has been identified as one of the most prominent risk factors for late onset Alzheimer’s disease; however, the mechanism by which this risk is conferred has yet to be identified.”

Depending on the versions of the ApoE gene an individual has, their risk for Alzheimer’s disease varies. To better understand the effect of ApoE variants, Nicholas generates human-induced pluripotent stem cells that have different versions of the ApoE gene with no other changes to their genetic background. Then, he differentiates the cells into neurons to determine the influence of ApoE variants on different traits associated with Alzheimer’s disease.

“Overall, the use of pluripotent stem cells allows us to address many experimental questions that would otherwise require numerous animals to examine,” Nicholas noted. “Reliance on animal models in preclinical studies may contribute, in part, to the copious failed clinical trials related to Alzheimer’s therapy…Therefore, I believe a human disease model is necessary to uncover the subtleties of the disease mechanism that may be necessary for therapeutic design.”

During our visit, we had an opportunity to tour Nick’s cutting-edge lab at ASU and to learn more about these cell models. We are pleased with the progress he has been making on this project and the contributions his work is making to the Alzheimer’s disease field.

NAVS wishes Nicholas continued success as he wraps up his Ph.D. work, and we are thankful for his efforts to advance science without harming animals. We’re honored to count Nicholas among the growing number of IFER fellowship recipients who are leading the next generation of humane scientists.
JOIN THE CIRCLE OF COMPASSION
WITH YOUR MONTHLY GIFT TO NAVS.

The Circle Isn’t Complete Without You

What if there was a simple way for you to make a difference for animals all year long? What if you could take a single action that would resonate every month in the lives of animals all across the country?

When you become part of NAVS’ Circle of Compassion, you’ll join a special group of our most committed donors—individuals who understand that the need for our lifesaving programs doesn’t only happen at certain times of the year. Recurring gifts by Circle of Compassion members ensure that NAVS always has the regular, necessary funding we need to help animals...at any time.

And while joining the Circle of Compassion shows your deep commitment to animals, it doesn’t require deep pockets. A small gift of only $15, $10—or even $5—a month will have a HUGE impact.

Joining the Circle of Compassion is easy. You can use the envelope inside this issue of Animal Action, call us at 800-888-NAVS or join online at www.navs.org/circle. Thank you for your support—and for completing the Circle of Compassion.

NAVSO Goes to College

Educating the public on the use of animals for research, testing and education is a core tenet of NAVS’ mission. In April, Marcia Kramer, NAVS’ director of legal and legislative programs, was given the opportunity to do just that.

Responding to an invitation by the University of Chicago School of Law’s Student Animal Legal Defense Fund chapter, Marcia shared with a classroom of aspiring attorneys the progress that has been made in ensuring that testing for cosmetics safety becomes cruelty free. Focusing on Illinois Senate Bill 241, passed by the Illinois Assembly in May, Marcia updated the group on current legislation, as well as information on alternatives to using animals for ensuring the safety of cosmetics.

Following Marcia’s presentation, a representative of the University of Chicago’s undergraduate Animal Welfare Society issued an invitation for her to speak to that group in May. At their request, this presentation focused on the use of non-human primates for research and testing. With the increase in primate use, this is a matter of concern for all animal advocates.

The well-attended meeting ended with students writing Dr. Francis Collins, Director of the National Institutes of Health, asking that he establish guidelines for using non-human primates to reduce the use of these animals while new non-animal methods are developed.

Marcia Kramer and Mona Zahir, President of the University of Chicago Animal Welfare Society
Post-research adoption of dogs and cats

11 Number of states with laws giving dogs and cats used in research a second chance (CA, CT, DE, IL, MD, MN, NV, NY, OR, RI and WA)

2 Number of states from the list above that passed their laws in 2019 (OR, WA)

9 Number of states that introduced legislation in 2019 (IN, MA, MI, NJ, OR, PA, TX, VA, WA)

2 Number of federal bills pending (HR 2850—Humane Retirement Act and HR 2897—AFTER Act)

“I love this bill for two reasons. Bills that come out of kids proposing legislation are a real-life lesson in civics. The other reason is that I love beagles. I want to see if any beagles show up to testify. If they do, I warn you, you better listen to them.”

—Oregon Representative Mitch Greenlick at a public hearing on SB 638, to require facilities to offer for adoption healthy dogs and cats once used for research

“My bill to require research institutions to offer dogs and cats used for research purposes for adoption through a rescue organization has been garnering strong support. UW, WSU, and Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center are all in favor of the bill, and UW Medicine’s director of government relations, Ian Goodhew said they were happy with the thoughtful way we put the policy together. It’s the perfect example of a legislator reaching out to a stakeholder in the process. The UW student newspaper even called it ‘the best doggone research legislation!’”

—Washington Senator Guy Palumbo, sponsor of SB 5212, in his constituent e-news

“Consumers’ expectations are moving toward products that are not tested on animals, and big personal product brands are changing their practices. There are alternative testing methods that are good for business, safe for consumers, and certainly move us forward to a humane approach by eliminating the cruel practices of the past.”

—Illinois Senator Linda Holmes, in a news release following House approval of SB 241, to prohibit the sale of animal-tested cosmetics in Illinois.

Humane cosmetics

5 Number of states with laws banning use of animals for cosmetics safety testing and/or the sale of animal-tested cosmetics in the state (IL, NJ, NV, NY, VA)

2 Number of states from the list above that passed their laws in 2019 (IL and NV)

8 Number of additional states considering similar laws (CT, HI, MD, MA, NJ, NY, VT, VI)

1 Number of federal bills pending (S 726—Personal Care Products Safety Act)
“Animal welfare is becoming a bigger consideration for some members of the public and the link between animal research and human health appears weaker.”

“The proportion of the public who agree that the use of animals for medical research is important to human health has fallen significantly, from close to half in 2016 (46%) to four in ten this year (41%).”

“Interest in finding out more about work to find alternatives and improve the welfare of animals in research is high and has risen.”

“The primary characteristic the public attribute to animal research organisations remains “secrecy”.”

(Above quotes from the UK IPSOS survey on public attitudes to animal research)

51% Americans who view medical testing on animals as “morally acceptable,” down dramatically from 2001, when 65% of respondents held that belief.

44% Americans who view medical testing on animals as “morally wrong,” up from 26% of individuals who held that belief in 2001.

31% Americans who feel that animal cloning is “morally acceptable,” down from 40% of individuals who held that belief last year.
FOR TRANSPARENCY

Why information on animal use is getting harder to obtain—and what NAVS is doing about it.

On its face, the issue of “transparency” may not seem like the most pressing concern facing animal advocates. But the truth is, all that NAVS does—and every success on behalf of animals that our supporters make possible—is based on our having as much current and accurate information as possible.

Knowledge of how animals are used, for what purpose and with what results is important in advocating for change. Without, for example, knowing what species of animals are most often used and how, it’s difficult to prioritize which kinds of alternatives should be developed most quickly. And without knowing how many animals are used, it’s difficult to find out if we are coming closer to achieving our mission of ending animal testing and experimentation for good.

That information has always been challenging to obtain—some of it isn’t even being collected. And in recent years, access to the information that is collected has become increasingly difficult to access. The current lack of U.S. government transparency in reporting on animal use hinders NAVS ability to get crucial data. This in turn prevents us from being able to assess and develop strategies for ending animal testing and experimentation. When trying to get even basic information from the USDA, animal advocates like NAVS run into constant hurdles—from lengthy response times to receiving reports with information that is almost entirely blacked out with redactions.

HOW THE USE OF ANIMALS IS CURRENTLY REPORTED, AND WHY NAVS FILED A PETITION TO CHANGE IT

Enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA)—the federal law that protects certain animals and regulates facilities that use them—falls under the purview of the United States Department of Agriculture, specifically the Animal Care unit of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, or APHIS. As the administrator of the AWA, APHIS is supposed to conduct thorough, unannounced inspections of facilities licensed or registered under the Act. These inspections are meant to assess these facilities and ensure that they are providing proper housing, nutrition and water, and any necessary veterinary care to their animals. These inspections are followed by a report issued by the USDA inspector.

After working with these inspection reports, NAVS uncovered serious flaws in the status quo—especially when it came to reports on inspections involving animal research facilities. These issues included both how the information is reported to the public and how the information is collected from these institutions covered by APHIS. Critical data regarding how animals are actually used for research, what type of research they are used for, and their disposition once research is completed could not be obtained through the reporting system.

In an effort to improve these significant deficiencies, in 2014 NAVS filed a petition for rulemaking with the USDA to amend the Animal Welfare Regulations’ Recordkeeping requirements to require the collection of more accurate and useful information. Modeled after the European Union’s system of recordkeeping, the petition requested the forms that research facilities use be revised to include elements that would aid in the collection of more information, and even offered an example form to replace the current one. In addition, NAVS requested the USDA use what would be the newly-collected data to inform the publishing of the Annual Report each year on the APHIS website. This would allow the new report to reflect the purpose of the research, origin of animal (purpose-bred, random source, etc.), whether it is genetically altered, and other highly important information that had been left out of previous reports.

The petition was officially filed on December 15, 2014. NAVS waited eagerly for a response.

TRANSPARENCY TAKES A HIT

While NAVS waited on a response to the official petition for rulemaking, things continued to get worse for transparency. In February 2017, the USDA suddenly removed online access to the APHIS inspection reports, called the Animal Care Search Tool. While, as the petition for rulemaking pointed out, these reports needed to include more data, removing this online database presented a huge blow to the ability to easily access the information that did exist in these reports. The removal affected more than just those advocating on behalf of animals used in research: Pet stores attempting to responsibly source their animals were no longer able...
to check the licenses for breeders to ensure they were not purchasing animals from known violators of the Animal Welfare Act.

NAVS sent thousands of letters to legislators on behalf of outraged advocates across the country demanding that the government make public records available that were required by law and essential for accurately informing the public about animal use and abuse. The response from the USDA told us that now, to get these reports, the public would need to submit Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to obtain information that was once instantly accessible online at no cost.

A very limited amount of information has since been restored to an online database, but FOIA requests are still the main recourse to get information. These requests have proven to be costly, as institutions fulfilling the FOIA requests can charge for the cost of searching for necessary records, reviewing and reproducing them. Additionally, many organizations—including federal government agencies—take the maximum amount of time to respond to our requests, and when the requested information is finally sent, the reports are often heavily redacted and nearly unusable.

**APHIS INSPECTIONS BECOME MORE LAX**

It doesn’t help that it has also recently come to light that the USDA and APHIS have made headlines for issuing drastically fewer citations to facilities that house animals protected by the AWA in the past few years. A recent *Washington Post* article points out that fewer than 1,800 citations were issued in 2018—a huge drop from the more than 4,000 citations issued the previous year.

While this may, at first, seem like a positive development, NAVS questions the cause of this significant drop in citations, as evidence points not to improved conditions for animals, but to weaker...
enforcement of federal law that allows more leniency for those who violate the AWA. New reporting policies that may be masking more violations, paired with an existing precedent of lax APHIS enforcement, suggest that these inspections and the subsequent reports are failing the animals these agencies are supposedly tasked with protecting.

**THE USDA RESPONDS TO OUR PETITION—MORE THAN FOUR YEARS LATER**

Just this past April, NAVS finally received a response to our petition for rulemaking filed in 2014.

In her response to NAVS, Bernadette Juarez, Deputy Administrator of Animal Care at APHIS acknowledged the overwhelming support of our petition, noting, “Those in favor expressed the need for transparency and more detail on the animal use so as to promote accountability. Several expressed the public had a right to know because taxpayer money is being used to fund research. Others made the point that greater detail can result in identifying alternatives to animal use.”

Despite this, APHIS indicated that it would not be making any changes to the way it collects and reports on animal use. The agency justified their decision to maintain its current data collection and reporting practices by claiming that it lacked the authority to make the changes that we requested. However, the changes we proposed to increase transparency regarding research animals are, in fact, within APHIS’ purview, and ones that could have been adopted by the agency, just as it made available new online reporting for licensees. Instead, APHIS just chose to deny our request.

**WHAT COMES NEXT?**

NAVS is preparing to respond to APHIS and plans to continue to fight on behalf of transparency.

There is good news: federal legislation is currently being considered that would help restore transparency to animal research reporting. The Agricultural, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and related agencies Appropriations Act of 2020, HR 3164, contains language that would direct APHIS to restore all publicly available animal welfare inspection reports that were available on the Animal Care Public Search Tool when it was taken down in 2017. The House Appropriations Committee’s report accompanying this bill recommended restoring—in full—the online searchable database, including all inspection reports, records of noncompliance and research facility annual reports, without redaction of their content except for signatures.

Additionally, the Federal Accountability in Chemical Testing (FACT) Act, HR 249, would require federal agencies to describe the progress they are making in developing, validating and utilizing alternative methods instead of using traditional animal tests. It would also require agencies to report on their animal use data by species, number and test type for toxicological testing being conducted.

These federal bills represent important steps in increasing the transparency required to gather the information that provides the foundation of NAVS’ work and can serve as complements to our other efforts to ensure we can get the crucial data we need. You can take action on these bills at our online Advocacy Center, and can support our ongoing campaigns to increase transparency at www.navs.org/give.
On the Road with NAVS: Primates Incorporated

This past May, NAVS was excited to visit Primates Incorporated in Westfield, Wisconsin. During the visit, NAVS Executive Director Kenneth Kandaras sat down with Primates Incorporated Executive Director Amy Kerwin to learn more about the sanctuary's origins, day-to-day workings and plans for the future. Kerwin spoke candidly about her past working in a primate laboratory, and how that inspired her decision to start Primates Incorporated to give these animals a second chance at a better life.

Finding a location for the sanctuary proved to be a struggle for Kerwin, who had multiple townships in the area reject her proposal to build a sanctuary for monkeys retired from research. Eventually, she found the current location and received approval from the local boards—only to have a neighbor yet again prove to be a hurdle. This opposition led to a meeting of citizens who wanted to learn more, giving Kerwin the chance to dispel the numerous myths and rumors that had been making their way through the area. The final vote was a testament to Kerwin's passion for the animals, as she convinced a majority of townspeople to support the sanctuary.

The first monkeys to call Primates Incorporated home were Mars, River and Izzle. These rhesus macaques were born in laboratories, where they spent their entire lives until they were retired from research and made their way to a new life at the sanctuary. They were soon joined by Timon and Batman, who were also retired from research. The newest resident, Bella, came to Primates Incorporated after starting her life as a pet. She's happy to now be able to socialize with other monkeys and get the specialized care she needs. Kerwin looks forward to being able to allow for the retirement of even more monkeys.

NAVS staff members talked with Kerwin about the role of animal sanctuaries in raising awareness of the plight of animals used and exploited in the name of science. Kerwin hopes that this increased awareness will lead to more support for the retirement of primates used in laboratories. This will, in turn, lead to increased need for more sanctuaries like Primates Incorporated, as well as for increased funding for the sanctuaries that are currently in existence. Kerwin also touched on an increasingly popular idea that NAVS also supports: ensuring that the laboratories themselves help to fund the retirement of the animals they use.

Primates Incorporated was designed with its current residents in mind, as well as how best to expand and take in more animals in the future. Geodesic domes, which are designed to control the temperature without additional air conditioning, will eventually serve as enclosures for the monkeys to gain enrichment and socialization in all types of weather. Kerwin wants the sanctuary to become an example to compassionate communities around the country that also want to provide homes for animals retired from research, regardless of the climate.

NAVS is proud to support organizations such as Primates Incorporated through donations made to the NAVS Sanctuary Fund. To learn more, and to find out how you can help, visit www.navs.org/sanctuary.
May, NAVS attended the world’s largest science competition for pre-college students, the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) in Phoenix, Arizona, where we once again had the pleasure of rewarding excellence in humane science.

This year marked the 18th year of NAVS presenting our Humane Science Award. This award recognizes projects for both their scientific excellence and their adherence to the principle of the award, namely a project that represents progress in research that advances science and does not harm animals. We are honored to be the only animal advocacy organization that presents an award at this prestigious event. By rewarding students who are pursuing innovative scientific endeavors that don’t harm animals, NAVS is making a critical investment in the future of scientific research by providing positive incentives that encourage the next generation of scientists to continue developing humane alternatives.

Judging for this year’s awards was conducted by NAVS Science Advisors Sherry Ward and Pam Osenkowski, along with NAVS’ Director of Legal and Legislative.
Programs Marcia Kramer. Nearly 1,850 students participated in the science fair this year. Our judges reviewed hundreds of their projects and narrowed the field down to 11 promising young scientists from whom we selected this year’s awardees.

We are pleased to announce the recipients of the 2019 Humane Science Award, each of whom received a cash prize for their outstanding work in the area of Cellular and Molecular Biology.

**Afiya Qurishi**, our first-place winner, investigated the roles of two proteins called transcription factors in human gastric development and disease. “I went into stomach work specifically because there is past history of different gastrointestinal diseases in my family,” she noted. Mentioning that animal models are “not the best option out there,” Afiya sought to create human-relevant, three-dimensional cell-based models called organoids using human induced pluripotent stem cells instead.

Afiya utilized genetic engineering tools to modify the amounts of the transcription factors that were produced in the cells to see their effect on gastric development. She was also able to create human organoids from glands isolated from the normal human stomach in her project. When asked what it meant to win NAVS’ Humane Science Award, Afiya said “I am so honored to receive this award. I am so glad I could help out.”

Second-place winner, **Ryan Onatzevitch**, chose to work on schizophrenia. When deciding how to pursue his research into the condition, Ryan chose to work with human induced pluripotent stem cells. He was interested in determining if there were differences in cells derived from patients with the condition compared to those without it.

Ryan used human-induced pluripotent stem cells from both sets of patients and differentiated them into neurons, and then compared the cells in many different tests. He was able to see differences between cells in these tests, which may explain some of the ways that schizophrenia causes changes in the brain. In addition to receiving the NAVS’ Humane Science Award, Ryan was also a recipient of fourth place prize in his category by the Intel Corporation. Ryan was very honored to receive an award from NAVS. “I’ve always been an animal lover,” he said. “I have four cats, a snake, and fish at home. If you can perform research without harming animals, it seems like the way to go.”

**Madhav Subramanian**, our third-place award recipient, studied the role of the ETM* protein in the process of metastasis by generating a cell-based cancer model. Madhav generated blood vessel cells in which the levels of the ETM* protein was genetically altered, and he tested the function of these cells in several different ways. While the kinds of tests Madhav performed could have been examined in animal models, he made a conscious effort to identify or develop ways to perform these functional tests in vitro.

Recognizing the ethical concerns of using animal models in his study, he noted, “I have always been fascinated with mimicking processes within our body in vitro. Advancements in 3-dimensional culture technology have made it possible to forego the use of animals for scientific research. In my project, I developed an in vitro 3-dimensional assay using established cell lines to mimic tumor angiogenesis. In the future, I hope to incorporate more components of the tumor microenvironment to make my 3-dimensional assay as accurate as possible and to hopefully avoid in vivo study.” For his work, Madhav also won the first prize in his category from Intel Corporation.

Congratulations to the three exceptional student recipients of the NAVS Humane Science Award—and to the Intel Grand Award Judges who also recognized that humane science is the best science.
Learn how research funded by NAVS through the International Foundation for Ethical Research is helping a promising young scientist develop a new animal-free model for studying Alzheimer’s disease.

Transparency is the key to every success on behalf of animals that NAVS and our supporters have achieved over the years. But information on animal use is getting harder to obtain, and that makes continued progress all the more challenging. Find out why—and learn what we’re doing about it.

Join NAVS as we visit Primates Incorporated, a sanctuary that has received support from the NAVS Sanctuary Fund and is giving primates retired from research a second chance to live their lives as nature intended.

Meet the winners of this year’s NAVS Humane Science Award—and discover how these critical investments in the future of scientific research are encouraging the next generation of humane scientists.