



## ***EUROPEAN SOCIETY OF LABORATORY ANIMAL VETERINARIANS (ESLAV)***

### **Statement on the undercover footage taken from inside an animal facility**

Friday, April 16, 2021

Undercover footage has been recently shared in the press and social media across Europe. The European Society of Laboratory Animal Veterinarians (ESLAV) would like to state the following:

- 1) The footage shows unacceptable standards of care applied to a variety of different species of laboratory animals, which clearly contravene with the requirements of the EU Directive 2010/63 on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes.
- 2) In addition to malpractice and disregard for the dignity of animals, it would appear as though some of the animals were in poor health, held in conditions without appropriate environmental enrichment and expressing abnormal behavior. ESLAV would encourage the investigation of the unedited video footage so that the true extent of these malpractices can be assessed.
- 3) For the benefit of animal welfare and ultimately the quality of science, it is of paramount importance to protect animals used in scientific procedures, to ensure that their care and use must always be aimed at improving and exceeding the minimum standards. This should be done according to good veterinary practice and veterinary advice, under regular supervision of the competent laboratory animal veterinarian(s).
- 4) Institutions must adhere to national legislation, but it is also expected that they will promote an outstanding “culture of care” towards the animals used.
- 5) ESLAV recognizes that the welfare of the animals used in procedures is highly dependent on the quality of the procedures and professional competence, including a respectful and empathetic attitude towards animals, of staff working with laboratory animals.
- 6) ESLAV believes that every effort should be made to promote training and continued professional development of all staff involved in the care and use of animals (including veterinarians), to constantly improve and refine the care and use of animals in scientific procedures.
- 7) Competent laboratory animal veterinarians play a vital role in animal laboratories to effectively contribute to refinement of procedures, and to professionally evaluate and provide the best care, as well as oversight of laboratory animals. The role of laboratory animal veterinarians in every establishment should be promoted and empowered.
- 8) ESLAV would also like to note that it finds it unacceptable that any malpractices, staff incompetence or incompliances with national legislations or regulations leading to poor health and welfare standards in any laboratory are not reported to the responsible authorities immediately, so that any unnecessary suffering of animals can be promptly stopped.