



Dr. Christian Leuman  
University of Bern

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Via e-mail: [christian.leumann@rektorat.unibe.ch](mailto:christian.leumann@rektorat.unibe.ch)

Dear Rector Leuman,

Thank you in advance for your time. I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals Foundation (PETA) and our more than 1.3 million members and supporters worldwide regarding an urgent matter. Given the COVID-19 pandemic that is influencing the shut-down of animal experiments around the world,<sup>1,2</sup> we urge the University of Bern (UB) to immediately: 1) prohibit approval of new animal protocols and experiments; 2) prohibit breeding and acquisition of new animals for laboratories; 3) finalise and end ongoing animal experiments; and, 4) prove that all of these animals and experiments are concretely advancing human health, and if they're not then switch to superior human-relevant, animal-free research methods.<sup>3</sup>

### **COVID-19: Ending Animal Experiments Protects Animals, Staff, and Patients**

As part of its COVID-19 contingency plan, UB reduced the number of animals in laboratories "by stopping the importation of new animals, by reducing breeding to the essential minimum and by freezing new projects involving animal experiments [*translated from original in French*]."<sup>4</sup> These actions likely led to the destruction of many animals, and beg the question why resources are being used on experiments that can easily be ended or delayed or that involve animals who, apparently, are considered to be extraneous to the testing in the first place. Equally troubling is that the experiments themselves are not critical to advancing human health, since more than 90 percent of highly promising basic science discoveries (most of which involve animal experiments) do not enter routine clinical use in humans.<sup>5</sup>

We call on UB to publicly release the following information:

- 1) An itemisation of all experimental protocols that will continue as part of UB's COVID-19 response plan (such that they may be categorised as critical, essential, necessary, and/or other similar terminology);

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.statnews.com/2020/03/14/coronavirus-pandemic-forces-research-labs-shut-down/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.chronicle.com/article/Colleges-Euthanized-Lab/248483?cid=wcontentlist\\_hp\\_latest](https://www.chronicle.com/article/Colleges-Euthanized-Lab/248483?cid=wcontentlist_hp_latest)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/The-Research-Modernization-Deal-Report-US\\_FINAL\\_2020\\_300.pdf](https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/The-Research-Modernization-Deal-Report-US_FINAL_2020_300.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.letemps.ch/sciences/triste-sort-souris-laboratoire-temps-pandemie>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bmj.com/content/348/bmj.g3387.long>

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Registered in England and Wales  
as charity number 1056453,  
company number 3135903.

#### Affiliates

- PETA US
- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands

- 2) An itemisation of all experimental protocols that will not continue as part of UB's COVID-19 response plan (such that they may be categorised as extraneous, non-critical, non-essential, ramped down, disposable, unnecessary and/or other similar terminology);
- 3) The number and species of animals who are in experimental protocols covered by item number 1 above (e.g., in a critical and/or similar terminology category), and the number and species of animals who are in experimental protocols covered by item number 2 above (e.g., not in a critical and/or similar terminology category); and,
- 4) The endpoint/disposition of animals used in experimental protocols covered by item number 2 above (e.g., not in a critical and/or similar terminology category), and notice of if, when, and how many of these animals have been and/or will be euthanized, culled, killed, destroyed, disposed or reduced in cage census.

You can contact me by e-mail at [JuliaB@peta.org.uk](mailto:JuliaB@peta.org.uk) or by telephone at +44 (0)7731 878330 (U.K.). We look forward to your swift reply to this quickly developing and urgent matter. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,



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