

PETA: Killing of 'non-critical' animals in UW-Madison lab prompts PETA complaints to school, regulators

Posted on Wednesday, Mar 30, 2022

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Madison, Wis. — This morning, PETA [called on](#) University of Wisconsin–Madison Chancellor Rebecca Blank to reimburse more than \$1.1 million in taxpayer funds. The demand relates to an incident in which nearly two-thirds of a colony of 700 mice slated to be used by UW-Madison experimenter Laura Knoll were deemed “non-critical” and killed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. PETA, which uncovered the killings in records obtained from the university, points out that this non-essential use of animals should never have been approved in the first place. The deaths of these mice came after UW-Madison issued a directive near the start of the pandemic that deans and directors should “only approve essential research” and experimenters “should consider reduction or cessation of non-critical animal breeding.” PETA also filed a [complaint](#) with the National Institutes of Health urging an investigation into the apparent waste of taxpayer funds for experiments on animals at UW-Madison and elsewhere deemed non-essential, a [complaint](#) with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases—which bankrolled Knoll’s aborted experiments on mice—urging it to recover expended funds, and a [complaint](#) with the Wisconsin state auditor calling for an audit of UW-Madison’s animal testing because of apparent fiscal waste.

“UW-Madison’s killing of mice deemed ‘non-critical’ in response to the COVID-19 pandemic makes us question why such animals are bought, bred, and experimented on in the first place if they’re considered extraneous,” says PETA Vice President Shalin Gala. “PETA is calling on federal and state regulators to ensure that this university doesn’t get away with daylight robbery at the expense of vulnerable animals and American taxpayers.”

Knoll’s experiments involve infecting mice with toxoplasmosis, decimating their immune systems via full-body radiation, and injecting females with hormones so

they can “super ovulate,” after which they’re killed and their reproductive tracts are removed in attempts to understand the sexual cycle of the feline-specific parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*. As PETA’s [Research Modernization Deal](#) points out, more than 90% of basic scientific research—much of it involving animal testing—[fails to lead to treatments for humans](#) and 95% of new medications that are found to be safe and effective in animals [fail in human clinical trials](#).

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