



Animal Protection Coalition Applauds International Adoption of Replacement for Cruel Rabbit Draize Test

New International Guideline Lauded as Global Standard for Skin Irritation Testing

PARIS, Aug. 2 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- After more than a decade of scientific research and lobbying by animal protection groups, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has approved a new, non-animal testing guideline for skin irritation. The guideline was adopted on July 22 and it is now available for use by companies and governments worldwide.

The OECD guideline allows for the use of three artificial human skin models engineered by SkinEthic in Nice, France, and MatTek of Ashland, USA, or other methods that meet the guideline's specifications.

These methods in all but a few circumstances will fully replace the 1940s-era Draize rabbit skin test, which has traditionally been conducted to assess skin irritation by applying chemicals to shaved, raw skin on the backs of rabbits.

These new methods, however, provide a humane--and more accurate--assessment of the potential damage a substance poses to human skin. Manufacturers use excess skin cells from surgical procedures to construct a three-dimensional layer of skin that closely mimics the properties of human skin. Substances are applied to the skin model to assess the potential for skin damage when used in industrial or consumer applications.

As OECD invited experts, the International Council for Animal Protection in OECD Programmes (ICAPO) provided scientific expertise that helped create the new guideline and ensure its acceptance. In addition, ICAPO members have individually lobbied for regional acceptance of in vitro skin irritation tests or provided direct financial support for the rigorous scientific trials that demonstrated the efficacy of one of the new methods.

"The science of safety testing has come a long way since the 1940s," says ICAPO representative Kristie Sullivan, M.P.H., a toxicologist. "Taking animals out of the equation will reap dividends for industry and consumers in the form of faster tests and safer products."

ICAPO comprises 11 animal protection groups from Europe, Asia, and North America for a combined representation of over 20 million citizens, and is dedicated to the replacement, reduction, and refinement of animals in OECD guidelines and other programs.

The OECD produces safety-testing guidelines for its 31 member nations, which represent many of the world's largest economies.

For more information, please visit www.ICAPO.org.

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