

An Industry Perspective – Meeting with Cosmetics, Toiletries and Perfumery Association (CTPA)

On 20th June 2007, John Ruane, (Director of Naturewatch) and Dawn Lewis (Compassionate Shopping Guide, Editor) met representatives of the Cosmetics, Toiletries and Perfumery Association (CTPA) at their London HQ. The CTPA is an association of manufacturers of cosmetic, toiletry and perfumery products, and is the public voice of the industry in the UK.

Dr Chris Flower (Director-General) and Debbie Hunter (Director of Commercial Affairs) represented the CTPA, and the key points for discussion included: how industry is responding to the European legislation that will introduce a phased ban on animal testing of cosmetic ingredients from 2009; as well as the challenges in meeting the 2013 deadline for a complete ban on animal testing of cosmetic ingredients.

Speaking for the UK industry, Chris noted there is a real drive to achieve an end to animal testing of cosmetic ingredients. "Industry as a whole is collectively working towards the deadline." The CTPA is a member of COLIPA, the European Cosmetics Trade Association, which in turn is a member of the European Partnership for Alternative Approaches to Animal Testing. EPAA is a partnership between several industries and the European Commission which promotes co-ordination and collaboration in the search for alternatives to animal testing for scientific purposes. Although EPAA looks for results for each of the '3Rs' (refinement, reduction, replacement), the cosmetics industry seeks the ultimate aim of replacement.

Since legislation was agreed by the European Commission in 2003, there's been an added impetus to find alternatives to replace animals in the testing of cosmetic ingredients. The CTPA explained a number of the challenges they face in turning this into a reality. Once an animal alternative is developed it has to undergo a validation process. This process is hugely complex, and once validated the alternative then has to undergo regulatory acceptance, only once the alternatives has been cleared can it be used as a replacement to animals.

To speed up progress, the CTPA is pushing for the two bodies that oversee the validation and regulatory acceptance (ECVAM and OECD) to validate alternatives where there is real practical interest/practical use, and to prioritise the methods on this basis.

Chris also identified the low numbers of researchers involved in efforts to develop alternatives as one of the main hurdles to finding alternatives to animals. It's a field that isn't seen as offering prestige or good prospects, so few scientists enter into it. In order to redress this, the European cosmetics industry, through COLIPA, is investing money to encourage scientists from outside into a career developing animal alternatives.

The question on everyone's lips is whether enough progress is being made to end animal testing of cosmetics / ingredients in non-EU countries? Chris noted that the CTPA has been involved in initiating discussions at an international level, through its European counterpart COLIPA, with national trade organizations from Australia, Canada, South Africa, South America and China. These discussions have been aimed at encouraging non-EU countries to adopt legislation in step with Europe, and so end animal testing of cosmetics.

The issue of China's re-testing of cosmetic products imported into the Chinese system was also touched on. The Chinese government requires animal testing on

cosmetics that companies are already certain are safe. The companies are not able to prevent this. There have been discussions at an international level on reciprocal acceptance of product safety, which are aimed at reducing or eliminating this testing.

In summing up, Naturewatch welcomes CTPA's involvement in the EPAA and the investment being made in the search for alternatives. We would encourage companies to sustain and, if at all possible, increase funding for the research into non-animal alternatives.