

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Modern biotechnologies are applied to animals for research purposes or to produce genetically altered (GA) animals. They are also used to develop artificial reproduction techniques (such as cloning) for the breeding of farm animals.

BACKGROUND

An increasing number of GA mice and rats are used to assess the potential of substances such as chemicals and pharmaceuticals to cause cancer and other genetic disorders. The effects of these techniques on the welfare of animals have seldom been considered and are in most cases negative for health and welfare.

CURRENT SITUATION

With the creation and use of GA animals there has been an exponential rise in the number of animals used in scientific procedures each year in the EU. Success rates for the production of GA animals are low, with 95 to 98% of mortality. Apart from legislation on the protection of animals used in research, there are currently minimal rules covering animals used in biotechnological processes.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- Animals' genetic constitution should not be changed if doing so causes suffering to themselves or to future generations.
- All relevant regulations must be updated to take into account the animal welfare, ethical and societal concerns of the development and intended use of all modern biotechnologies.
- The cloning of animals for food production should be banned, as well as the sale and imports of food products from cloned animals and their descendants.

RELATED LINKS

- [European Commission's Working document on genetically altered animals](#)
- [European Commission's page on biotechnology \(DG SANCO\)](#)
- [Eurogroup's position on GM Food & Feed \(June 2012\)](#)
- [Eurogroup Genetically alternative animals and cloning briefing](#)