

The Ministry of Economic Affairs

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for the Protection of Animals Used for Scientific Purposes

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Date 8 APR. 2016
Subject Request for a phase-out timetable for animal procedures

Dear Mr Koëter,

On 12 October 2015 I received the opinion from the think-tank on Supplementary Financing for Alternatives to Animal Testing, titled 'In Transition! The Netherlands leads the way in laboratory animal-free innovations' (*In Transitie! Nederland internationaal toonaangevend in proefdiervrije innovaties*). I support the ambition formulated in the think-tank's opinion that the Netherlands should become the world leader in laboratory animal-free innovations in 2025.

I have approached the NCad regarding the implementation of a section of this opinion. I request that you draw up a phase-out timetable for animal procedures. For brevity's sake, I refer you to the think-tank's opinion on which my request to you is based. Sections of the opinion that are also being implemented concern the creation of a fund for laboratory animal-free innovations and the establishment of a support project office.

I wish to ask you to consider the following when drawing up the phase-out timetable:

- The maintenance of the transition perspective (see think-tank's opinion) and the international perspective.
- Full-fledged cooperation with the National Institute of Public Health and Environmental Protection (RIVM) and Stichting Proefdiervrij. The involvement of Stichting Proefdiervrij will guarantee close alignment with the think-tank's opinion. I consider the direct involvement of the RIVM to be very important given this organisation's expertise in the area of toxicity tests and its role as a national and international coordinator of the promotion and acceleration of validation, regulatory acceptance and implementation of 3Rs methods that can be used to determine the safety and/or effectiveness of chemical substances, medicines and vaccines.

- Consideration of the of animal procedure professional field and alternatives for animal procedures.
- Attention to the feasibility of the alternatives as well as priority sectors (which is very important for taking effective action in the international arena). With respect to the prioritised tests that are already included in the validation phase or will be added to it in the near future, I request that you draw up an action plan with the aim of accelerating validation, acceptance and implementation. Such a plan should be a permanent part of all alternatives considered within the context of the phase-out timetable.
- Specified concrete objectives of the phase-out. For example, over the next ten years I would like to phase out the legally required toxicity tests, which account for approximately 10% of animal procedures.

Questions raised by the above are how can the intended phase-out and be accomplished and what international efforts will be required in this regard? In summary, I request that you draw up a comprehensive plan that includes all relevant facets needed to achieve the phase-out.

I also request that, in drawing up the plan, you refer to the previously published reports and documents, such as the RIVM report 'Problems in developing, validating and implementing Alternatives to Animal Procedures' (*Knelpunten bij de ontwikkeling, validatie en implementatie van Alternatieven voor Dierproeven*), the Business Case for Alternatives to Animal Procedures and the Analysis of the Business Case for Alternatives to Animal Procedures (*de Businesscase Alternatieven voor Dierproeven en de Analyse Businesscase Alternatieven voor Dierproeven*), the response of the Regular Consultation Platform on Animal Procedures and Alternatives (RODA) dated 30 October 2014 to the Analysis of the Business Case for Alternatives to Animal Procedures and the recent assessments by the RIVM regarding possible legal impediments to the use of alternatives to animal procedures in the area of chemical medicines, biologicals and vaccines as well as in the area of chemical substances.

I ask that you prioritise the preparation of the phase-out timetable over other current requests for advice and send me your detailed plan no later than October 2016.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Stichting Proefdiervrij and to the RIVM.

Yours sincerely,

Martijn van Dam
Minister for Agriculture