



## Cosmetics Testing on Animals

Over 5 billion cosmetic products are sold in the European Union every year. The term 'cosmetic' covers a wide range of products including:

- Soaps and bath/shower products;
- Hair care products;
- Shaving products;
- Toothpastes and mouthwash;
- Deodorants and antiperspirants;
- Perfumes;
- Make-up;
- Face packs, moisturisers and hand/body lotions;
- Sun creams and anti-wrinkle creams.

All new substances used in these products are tested for harmful effects on human health and the environment. These tests often involve the use of live animals, including mice, rats, guinea pigs and rabbits, to test whether a substance will cause irritation or sensitisation of the skin or eyes, be harmful if swallowed or be likely to cause cancer or birth defects. There are many thousands of existing ingredients approved for use in cosmetic products, but the drive by cosmetics companies to find 'new and improved' ingredients means that animals continue to be used to test new substances.

### Number of animals used in cosmetics testing

Figures for 2005, published by the European Commission in 2007, show that over 5000 animals were used for testing cosmetics and toiletries in the EU (see Table 1). Although this represents a very small proportion (less than 1%) of the total number of animals used in experiments in the EU, the number of animals used in cosmetics testing has increased by 50% since the European Commission last published figures for 2002. Only two EU countries reported using animals in cosmetics testing, and the vast majority of cosmetics tests on animals were carried out in France.

**Table 1: Number of animals used for testing cosmetics and toiletries in the EU in 2005** (France reporting for 2004). Source: European Commission (2007).

	France	Spain	EU total
Mice	1797	0	1797
Rats	2226	0	2226
Guinea pigs	940	0	940
Rabbits	533	75	608
<b>Total</b>	<b>5496</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>5571</b>

### Labelling of cosmetics

Many cosmetics companies label their products with misleading claims, such as:

- 'Against animal testing' – this does not necessarily mean that the product or its ingredients have not been tested on animals;
- 'This product has not been tested on animals' – this does not necessarily mean that the ingredients in the product have not been tested on animals;
- 'Our company does not test on animals' – this does not necessarily mean that the company's suppliers, another company or an associated company has not tested the product or its ingredients on animals on the company's behalf, or that the company has not used ingredients that have already been tested on animals;

- 'Our company does not use ingredients tested on animals in the last five/ten years' – unless there is a fixed date to the claim (e.g. after 1995) this does not mean that the company will not continue to new use ingredients that have been tested on animals after the stated number of years has elapsed since the ingredient was tested;
- 'Contains no animal ingredients' or 'Contains natural ingredients' – this does not give any information about the testing of the product or its ingredients.

For a company's cosmetic products to be genuinely free of animal testing:

- The products and all of their ingredients must not be tested on animals after a fixed cut-off date;
- The company manufacturing the products must not originate, endorse or finance any form of testing on animals, including the testing of products or ingredients by the company itself or through contractors at any stage of development, production or marketing.

## The legal situation

Several EU countries, including the UK, have banned the testing of cosmetics on animals but continue to allow the sale of animal-tested cosmetic products and ingredients. Within the EU, the testing of cosmetics is governed by Directive 76/768/EEC. In 2003, Directive 2003/15/EC introduced important amendments to phase out the testing of cosmetic products and ingredients on animals within the EU and the sale of animal-tested cosmetic products and ingredients in the EU. The 2003 Directive introduced:

- A ban on animal testing of cosmetic products within the EU;
- Animal testing of cosmetic ingredients within the EU was phased out before 11 March 2009;
- A ban on the sale of cosmetics in the EU where the product or its ingredients have been tested on animals once alternative non-animal tests have been validated – this ban must be fully implemented by 11 March 2013 for three types of toxicity test (for which alternative methods were not yet under consideration at the time of the Directive). All other tests have been phased out since 11 March 2009

These reforms are far reaching. The sales ban is particularly important to prevent companies simply conducting animal testing in non-EU countries and then marketing the products in the EU. However, there are still a number of concerns:

- Certain types of toxicity testing will still be permitted for cosmetic products and ingredients sold in the EU until 2013 and if alternatives to replace those tests have not been developed and validated by two years prior to the ban, the European Commission may propose new legislation to extend the deadline;
- More resources need to be allocated to the development and validation of alternative methods to ensure the sales ban is introduced on schedule;
- Even after the testing and sales bans are fully implemented, the Directive allows the European Commission to grant permission for animal testing in exceptional circumstances where serious concerns arise regarding the safety of an existing cosmetic ingredient which is in wide use and cannot be replaced by an alternative ingredient;
- Non-EU countries which export cosmetic products to the EU may try to challenge the ban on the sale of animal-tested cosmetic products and ingredients under the free trade rules of the World Trade Organisation.

## What you can do

- Join Four Paws and support our campaign to ensure that a complete EU ban on the production and sale of animal-tested cosmetic products and ingredients is introduced on schedule;
- Write to cosmetics companies to ask about their policy on animal testing and ask them to sign up to the Humane Cosmetics Standard;
- Write to your local newspaper and highlight the suffering caused by animal-testing of cosmetics or ask your local radio station to cover the issue;
- Avoid buying cosmetics that have been tested on animals (including the ingredients) and encourage friends and family to do the same – look out for the Humane Cosmetics Standard 'Leaping Bunny' logo:

## Sources

Directive 2003/15/EC of 27 February 2003 amending Council Directive 76/768/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to cosmetic products

Council Directive 76/768/EEC of 27 July 1976 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to cosmetic products

European Commission (2007) *Fifth Report on the Statistics on the Number of Animals used for Experimental and other Scientific Purposes in the Member States of the European Union.*