Objection. Sen. Jesse Helms says that mice and rats won't benefit from "regulatory shenanigans."

from setting new rules on how scientists use and care for millions of research rodents. "A rodent could do a lot worse than live out its life-span in research facilities," Senator Jesse Helms (R–NC) said as he successfully introduced an amendment to a major farm bill. Helms said that the new language will keep biomedical research from becoming entangled by "regulatory shenanigans" promoted by the "so-called animal-rights crowd."

Animal-rights groups have vowed to strip the new rule from any final version of the bill, which still must be reconciled with a House version that lacks the lab-animal language. "It's a setback, but we are not rolling over on this one," says Nancy Blaney of the Working Group to Preserve the Animal Welfare Act, a coalition of animal-rights groups.

The controversy stems from a 30-year-old USDA policy that exempts mice, rats, and birds—which account for 95% of all experimental animals—from regulation under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). Two years ago, after several court battles, USDA agreed to draft caging and care rules. The deal outraged biomedical groups, which argued that Congress never intended for AWA to cover laboratory animals. They also charged that USDA regulation would duplicate existing government and voluntary rules and drain millions of dollars from research accounts. The groups convinced Congress to delay the rules once, but last year lawmakers told USDA to begin writing the regulations (*Science*, 23 November 2001, p. 1637).

Animal-rights groups plan to blanket negotiators on the final bill with appeals to drop the new language, which says that lab rats and mice aren't covered by AWA's definition of "animal." "Lawmakers will be hearing from us. ... This is making a huge change in the law without adequate debate," says Blaney. But Frankie Trull of the National Association for Biomedical Research, which lobbied for the ban, says the new law "restates what has been agency policy for decades."

Many Washington policy watchers, meanwhile, are smiling at the sight of a research establishment often accused of liberalism joining forces with an archconservative and frequent opponent. Says one lobbyist: "I'm sure some scientists had to hold their noses when they learned that Jesse Helms was going to be their savior." –DAVID MALAKOFF

AIDS RESEARCH

Longtime Rivalry Ends In Collaboration

AIDS researchers Robert Gallo and Luc Montagnier, who fought a long and bitter battle over credit for the discovery of HIV and the resultant blood test, this week announced plans to collaborate on developing AIDS vaccines for Africa and other impoverished regions. "A whole lot of people say, 'Why can't you guys collaborate, why don't you work together to try to help solve the problem?' " says Gallo, who heads the Institute of Human Virology at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. "It will stop a lot of that." Montagnier, who recently retired from France's Pasteur Institute and now heads the World Foundation for AIDS Research and Prevention—an organization he helped form under the auspices of UNESCO—cites another reason: "If we join our efforts, it will be more credible for fund-raising. ... We have some names that can help."

Montagnier approached Gallo a few years ago about setting up a collaboration. Gallo says he became intrigued in part because Montagnier's foundation has begun to develop testing sites in Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon; a collaboration might speed the testing of Gallo's vaccines. The two also plan to merge their vaccine approaches. Gallo's

Rapprochement. Robert Gallo (left) and Luc Montagnier sign collaboration agreement.

CREDITS: (TOP TO BOTTOM) GRANT HALVERSON/AP; ROBERT GALLO

ScienceScope

MIT Inquiry After nearly a year of pressuring Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) leaders, security studies professor Theodore Postol has gotten the university to investigate alleged scientific misconduct by professors involved in ballistic missile defense studies. In an 11 February letter, MIT provost Robert Brown grudgingly agreed to the inquiry, which will be headed by Edward Crawley, aeronautics and astronautics department chair. Crawley's panel will examine whether MIT Lincoln Lab researchers involved in a 1998 study covered up failures in a Pentagon missile test, as Postol has charged (*Science*, 1 February, p. 776).

Postol says the inquiry is too little, too late, and refuses to cooperate. "I will only respond to an inquiry that clearly is independent," he says. But Brown has rejected including non-MIT officials on the panel, which is the first step toward a formal university investigation. The feud is likely to continue. In a 7 February letter to the MIT board, Postol rails against a culture of "negligence, indifference, and lying" within the university's management.

More Light Germany wants its brightest scientists to focus on cutting-edge optics technology. Government officials this week said they will spend $243 million over the next 5 years on an array of projects, including optical lithography for better computer chips and optical scanners to identify new drugs, in a bid to lift Germany back to the top of a field it once dominated. Japan and the United States have the lead in some optics fields, says Eckhard Heybrock of VDI, the German association of engineers, who advised the government on the new program. To catch up, Germany will award funding to applied research done by several recently established "competence networks," collaborations between academic and industry researchers.

Yucca Yes Saying 2 decades of study is enough, President George W. Bush last week approved plans to bury radioactive waste from U.S. commercial nuclear reactors under Yucca Mountain in Nevada. But state politicians are vowing to block the long-controversial plan in the courts and Congress (*Science*, 28 April 2000, p. 602). Nevada governor Kenny Guinn (R) sued Bush just hours after the 15 February announcement, claiming the state didn't get enough time to review an environmental study. And a major congressional fight over the issue is expected this summer. The White House needs to win a simple majority in the House and Senate for the plan to proceed.

among the microbes used in the attacks and other representatives of the Ames strain. At the meeting, Keim reported an advance that may help federal investigators home in on the bioterrorists who sent the anthrax letters last fall. With a new marker discovered in his lab last year and dubbed Homomeric-1 (HM1), Keim says he's able to tell apart five different Ames strains, four collected from research laboratories and one from a goat that died in Texas in 1997.

At the HM1 locus, *B. anthracis* has between 12 and 35 copies of adenine, one of DNA's building blocks, and the number varies for all five isolates. If the strain used in the mail attacks matches one of the strains obtained from laboratories, it could tell investigators where to focus their attention. But Keim, following FBI orders, declines to say which four labs the strains came from, or whether he had checked the Florida isolate for the same marker. **–MARTIN ENSERINK**

CLONING

Carbon-Copy Clone Is the Real Thing

"While the cloning of companion animals is not yet possible, Advanced Cell Technology is currently able to store cells from your animal now."

—ACT Web site, 15 February 2002.

ACT needs to update its Web site. Last week, scientists in Texas unveiled the first clone of a pet—a kitten named CC, short for Copy Cat (also Carbon Copy). The kitty is the fruit of a privately funded initiative, Operation CopyCat, started a year ago by Mark Westhusin and colleagues at Texas A&M University, College Station. It's actually part of a larger and much more difficult project that aims to clone a dog.

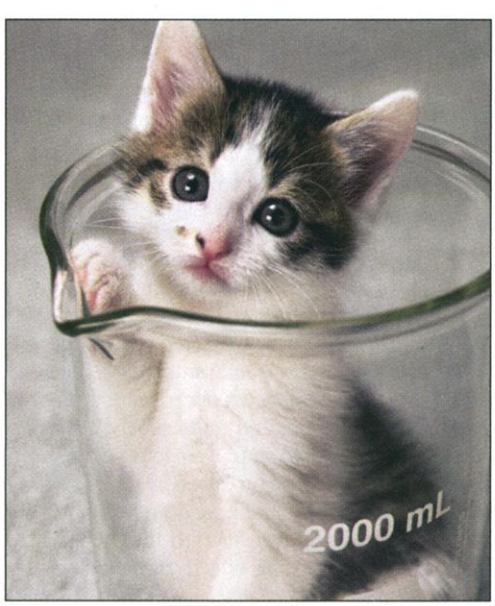
The researchers, who report their feat in the 21 February issue of *Nature*, say cat cloning is just about as efficient (or inefficient) as duplicating mice, cows, sheep, goats, or pigs. Westhusin's team first attempted to use skin fibroblast cells, inserting their nuclei into enucleated cat eggs. Although 82 cloned embryos were implanted into seven surrogate mother cats, only one pregnancy resulted, and the fetus died. In their next try, the scientists created embryos using nuclei from the cumulus cells surrounding the ova of a calico research cat named Rainbow. They implanted five embryos in a surrogate mother—three from cumulus cells and two from the oral mucosa cells. This time, one of the embryos from a cumulus cell made it to term. That puts the success rate at one out of 87.

Born by cesarean section on 22 December 2001, CC is a lively, normal-looking feline, the researchers say. She's not an exact copy of her calico progenitor because these coat markings result partly from random events during development. "I'm not at all surprised at the success of the Texas A&M team; they're an excellent group of scientists," says Robert Lanza, medical director of ACT. He says ACT is moving away from pet cloning and has licensed its technology to the Texas group and others.

CC is the first creation to emerge from the Missyplicity Project. The project was launched 5 years ago by 81-year-old Arizona financier John Sperling, who wants to be able to replace his husky–border collie mix, Missy, when her time is up (*Science*, 4 September 1998, p. 1443). So far, Sperling has put $3.7 million into the Texas A&M group's cloning efforts through a new company called Genetic Savings and Clone, based in College Station, Texas, and Sausalito, California.

Dog clones, however, are still a long way off, Westhusin cautions. "Assisted reproduction technology in cats has all been worked out," he says. And "you can get them to come into heat when you want." But dogs come into heat more rarely and unpredictably. Dogs also release immature eggs from their ovaries, and researchers have found it very difficult to get them to ripen in a test tube. The focus in this area, says Westhusin, is still "how do you get viable ova."

The public appears willing to wait for dog cloning—and probably to pay $20,000 or so for it. Lou Hawthorne, CEO of Genetic Savings and Clone—which stores tissue for possible future pet cloning and is gearing up to open its own lab—says the start-up was formed in response to public demand. "When we launched [it] 2 years ago, we got thousands of calls within the first 24 hours," he says. The company hopes to be offering

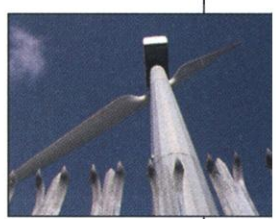


Copied cat. Two-month-old CC seems normal so far.

CREDITS: (TOP TO BOTTOM) NEIL BEER/CORBIS; RICHARD OLSENIUS

ScienceScope

Energetic Discussion U.K. researchers have mixed reactions to a call for a new national energy research center. A government panel reviewing energy policy last week recommended that a new center is needed to energize studies of power use, production, and environmental and social issues. Chemist David King of the University of Cambridge, the government's chief scientist and head of a subpanel that looked at energy research, says the center would help pull together a "broad menu" of new energy technology studies.



But Ian Fells, an energy expert at the University of Newcastle, favors a more decentralized approach that would boost energy research at "half a dozen" local research centers. That is just one funding model currently being studied by the U.K.'s research councils, which oversee government science spending.

No final decision is expected soon. The energy panel's recommendations are now open for public comment, and a final long-term strategic plan is due later this year.

Oversight Overlords British researchers say pending legislation to prevent the export of sensitive technologies to hostile countries could give the government too much control over what research gets published. According to the lobby group Universities UK (UUK), a revised Export Control Bill now before the House of Lords would give the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) the right to review new research before it is submitted for publication. DTI would also be able to impose controls on e-mails and instruction manuals covering topics deemed sensitive. The current law applies only to tangible objects and descriptions of certain military technologies.

DTI officials insist that the rules would pertain only to applied research and that additional legislation will define and exempt basic research from export control oversight. UUK, however, wants to see academic freedom enshrined in the export law itself and is seeking support for an amendment during debate next month.

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