

perconductors and their quirky parents will remain one of the most enigmatic families in physics.  
—ROBERT F. SERVICE

## ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION

## India Backs Off on Central Control

**NEW DELHI**—Indian scientists are hailing a government decision to scale back a proposal for a centrally run system to regulate research involving animals. The final rules, adopted late last month, would instead place primary responsibility in the hands of animal ethics committees at individual universities and institutes, avoiding a bottleneck that scientists feared could stifle research. "I am satisfied that science will not suffer"



**Keeping count.** New animal care rules place responsibility in the hands of individual facilities like the National Institute of Immunology, above.

once the rules are implemented, says Pradeep Kumar Dave, an orthopedic surgeon and director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences here.

The initial proposal, from a committee chaired by social justice and empowerment minister Maneka Gandhi, would have prohibited all animal experimentation without the explicit written approval of the committee (*Science*, 18 September, p. 1777). Gandhi, an outspoken animal rights activist, said at the time that the government needed to step in after an attempt at self-regulation, based on 1992 guidelines from the Indian National Science Academy, had failed. But her proposal kicked up a ruckus among the scientific community. Passions ran high: Immunologist Nirmal Kumar Ganguly, director-general of the Indian Council of Medical Research here, warned of "chaos and confusion leading to anarchy" if the rules were implemented without amendments.

The final rules give institutional panels the authority to approve animal experiments for entire programs and projects rather than the experiment-by-experiment basis envisioned in the initial proposal. All biomedical institutions using animals still must register with the social justice ministry within 60

days, but institutions need not wait for a response before carrying out the necessary oversight duties.

The institutional panels will be composed of biomedical scientists both from within the institution and outside, as well as a veterinarian, a nonscientist, and a government representative. The first order of business for many institutions will be to create such a panel: A recent survey revealed that only 50% of all laboratories had any form of animal ethics committee. The committees will be responsible for day-to-day monitoring of experiments, but they must report periodically to the ministry, which can suspend or revoke the license of any laboratory found wanting.

The final rules also remove a proposed ban on contract and collaborative research involving animals with overseas educational institutions, although they still prohibit contract research—such as the use of monkeys to test drugs for multinational drug companies—carried out purely for monetary considerations. It will also be more difficult for Indian institutions to import animals from overseas labs: The rules allow transfers only between labs already registered with the Indian government, in effect limiting the pool to domestic facilities.

The rules are expected to become law by the end of the month, putting an end to what Gandhi calls "rogue firms" that have ignored proper procedures for animal safety. "It's time for them to put up or shut up," she says.

—PALLAVA BAGLA

Pallava Bagla is a correspondent in New Delhi.

## GERMAN RESEARCH

## Extremists Steal Minister's Spotlight

It had the makings of a banner week for German science, with the new education and research minister, Edelgard Bulmahn, announcing plans to increase federal funding for research and higher education, dismantle some outmoded nuclear-power research facilities, and strengthen programs to help women and young scientists. The premiere basic-research organization, the Max Planck Society, also pitched in with a positive spin on its plans for the year ahead. But the week also saw a sharp reminder of deep divisions in public attitudes toward science: The boldest headlines went to an incident in which a prominent German researcher was placed under police protection following threats from animal rights activists.

In a speech in Bonn, Bulmahn announced that the government plans major investments and reforms in Germany's trou-

## ScienceScope

### NIH STAKES CLAIM FOR GENETIC DRUG DATA

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) plans to spend \$100 million over the next 5 years to secure public access to genetic data that might otherwise be locked up by drug firms. The move comes as researchers scramble to turn unprecedented knowledge of the human genome into drugs tailored to fit an individual's genetic makeup.

Later this month, NIH will unveil a plan to establish a public pharmacogenomics database holding information about individual genes and functions that could be useful to basic researchers and drug designers. It augments another NIH program, announced last month, to search for genetic variations that alter drug effectiveness. The new initiative, which will fund a network of about a dozen centers, is "very timely," says biochemist Fred Guengrich of Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. And it will have "a real soup-to-nuts flavor," adds Rochelle Long of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, involving researchers from a variety of disciplines working on a range of diseases.

### GEORGETOWN FACULTY ON WARPATH

A high-profile campus feud is heating up. Researchers at the Georgetown University Medical Center in Washington, D.C., are threatening to sue their employer, claiming the university's board of directors unfairly rejected a faculty protest of a new salary policy.

Last spring, 18 scientists filed a grievance complaining that the policy, which requires researchers to hustle up the lion's share of their pay through grants, violates tenure and academic freedom (*Science*, 5 June, p. 1531). A grievance panel ruled in the scientists' favor, but on 30 October the board ruled the dispute out of bounds for a grievance proceeding. The board did suspend further implementation of the policy pending a review.

Faculty members, unappeased, say the board has run roughshod over campus rules. "It's like declaring martial law," says professor Karen Gale. The grievants' lawyer, Steve Hoffman, says he'll go to court if the university fails to nix the policy by 13 December. A Georgetown spokesperson insists that "the review is a fair approach made in the spirit of cooperation and collegiality."

**Contributors:** David Kestenbaum, Eliot Marshall, Elizabeth Pennisi, and Constance Holden