



SHAC
STOP HUNTINGDON ANIMAL CRUELTY



BM SHAC, London, WC1N 3XX



+44 (0)845 458 0630



www.shac.net

23rd January 2012

For immediate release

DYING FOR FOOD ADDITIVES: LINCOLNSHIRE FARM SENDS RABBITS TO DIE FOR SWEETENER EXPERIMENTS INSIDE EUROPE'S MOST NOTORIOUS TESTING LAB

A leaked document has led to outrage amongst animal lovers after finding out nearly 100 rabbits were forcefully impregnated and made to suffer weeks of agonising experiments, all for a 'new' food sweetener which is derived from a substance already widely consumed by the public [1].

Highgate Farm (Market Rasen, Lincolnshire) bred the rabbits and sent a group of 96 'virgin' females to Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS), a controversial contract research laboratory who test food additives, chemicals, and cosmetic components on animals. HLS are the most notorious laboratory in Europe, having been exposed eight times in 12 years for various counts of animal cruelty and gross misconduct, including the falsification of data [2].

The experiment (published 2011) was carried out in order to test Advantame, a new type of food additive derived from aspartame – a sweetener which is already widely consumed by people on a daily basis [3].

The group of 96 Highgate rabbits were kept in solitary confinement inside plastic cages and impregnated on arrival at HLS. After one week, the administration of Advantame began using a procedure known as 'oral gavage' – forcing a tube down the rabbits' throats in order to pour concentrations of the substance straight to the stomach. Naturally, this method of administering substances is extremely traumatic for animals who are shy and gentle by nature. One rabbit died of this procedure alone – she was "killed after showing convulsion-like signs, vocalization, and respiratory distress shortly after dosing ... This death was considered to arise from difficulties during the gavage dosing" [4]. Later during the experiment, a further five rabbits were killed due to adverse health problems and several rabbits aborted their unborn litters [5]. The shocking document goes on to reveal that approximately 20% of the pregnant female rabbits receiving the highest dose of Advantame became so ill that they had to be killed before the scheduled date [6]. At the end of the designated experiment, all survivors and their unborn babies were killed. Advantame was also contracted at HLS to be tested on dogs and rats over a period of several years by the same manufacturer.

Debbie Vincent of Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) commented, *"As we move into 2012, it's hard*

to believe these kinds of experiments have been taking place in this day and age. Not only was there immense suffering involved here, nearly 100 rabbits supplied by Highgate Farm were killed for the sake of a slightly different sweetener to one already existing on the market. This is an absolute disgrace. The general public rightfully find such abuse of animals absolutely unacceptable. Animal experiments are outdated, unreliable and cruel beyond words. It's high time companies like Highgate Farm and Huntingdon Life Sciences caught up with the modern day and stopped taking short cuts with human health and animal welfare."

Goeff Douglas, owner of Highgate Farm, previously justified his business by wrongfully telling people he contributes to 'life-saving research'; In July 2010 he stated that "as far as we are concerned, we are helping to save tens of thousands of lives" [7]. However, the shocking document detailing the immense suffering of such gentle animals for the development of a 'new' food sweetener tells a very different story indeed.

Ends

Notes for editors:

Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS)

HLS are Europe's largest and most exposed animal research laboratory who kill 500 animals every day in cruel unnecessary tests. Recent experiments at HLS include ingredients for Splenda coffee sweetener [8], cleaning products [9], mushroom extract [10] and fermented vegetables [11]. They were famously exposed in 1997 when Channel 4 filmed HLS workers punching beagle puppies in the face, but since then they have been exposed a further seven times for animal cruelty, showing workers dealing with animals whilst drunk, cutting open a monkey whilst still alive, hitting and abusing dogs, falsifying test data, and many more breaches of the most basic animal welfare laws. As such, HLS are the most exposed animal testing facility in the world.

Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC)

SHAC was formed in 1999 with the sole aim of closing down HLS. The campaign operates by targeting the structures which hold HLS up – financial, customers and suppliers. SHAC is a voluntary, grass-roots organization with no paid members. There are SHAC activist groups present in many countries around the world, and carry out demonstrations at a variety of targets, all linked to HLS.

References

- [1] Evaluation of the teratogenic potential of N-[N-[3-(3-hydroxy-4-methoxyphenyl) propyl]-a-aspartyl]-L-phenylalanine 1-methyl ester, monohydrate (advantame) in the rat and rabbit, Food and Chemical Toxicology 49 (2011), pages S60–S69
- [2] <http://www.shac.net/HLS/exposed.html>
- [3] Evaluation of the teratogenic potential of N-[N-[3-(3-hydroxy-4-methoxyphenyl) propyl]-a-aspartyl]-L-phenylalanine 1-methyl ester, monohydrate (advantame) in the rat and rabbit, Food and Chemical Toxicology 49 (2011), page S60
- [4] Evaluation of the teratogenic potential of N-[N-[3-(3-hydroxy-4-methoxyphenyl) propyl]-a-aspartyl]-L-phenylalanine 1-methyl ester, monohydrate (advantame) in the rat and rabbit, Food and Chemical Toxicology 49 (2011), page S62
- [5] Evaluation of the teratogenic potential of N-[N-[3-(3-hydroxy-4-methoxyphenyl) propyl]-a-aspartyl]-L-phenylalanine 1-methyl ester, monohydrate (advantame) in the rat and rabbit, Food and Chemical Toxicology 49 (2011), page S62 and S66
- [6] Evaluation of the teratogenic potential of N-[N-[3-(3-hydroxy-4-methoxyphenyl) propyl]-a-aspartyl]-L-phenylalanine 1-methyl ester, monohydrate (advantame) in the rat and rabbit, Food and Chemical Toxicology 49 (2011), page S66
- [7] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campaign_against_Highgate_Rabbit_Farm
- [8] 'The Pharmacokinetics and Metabolism of Sucralose in the Dog', Food and Chemical Toxicology 38 (Suppl. 2) (2000)

S99±S106, http://www.shac.net/HLS/what_tests.html

[9] Development of an occupational exposure limit for n-propylbromide using benchmark dose methods, *Regulatory Toxicology and Pharmacology*, August 2004, http://www.shac.net/HLS/research_papers/cleaningchemical.pdf

[10] Himematsutake (Iwade Strain 101) extract (ABM-FD):

Genetic toxicology and a 3-month dietary toxicity study in rats, *Food and Chemical Toxicology* 46 (2008) 1949–1959, T. Sumiya a, Y. Ikeda a, A. Broadmeadow b,* , K. Mayb, Pritchard b, C. Horne b, B. Burlinson B.

http://www.shac.net/HLS/research_papers/mushroomextract.pdf

[11] Safety assessment of *Lactobacillus brevis* KB290 as a probiotic strain, *Journal of Food and Chemical Toxicology*, July 2009.

http://www.shac.net/HLS/research_papers/2009%20HLS%20vegetable%20study.pdf