

### Animal experimentation

The literature available to schools on animal experimentation in the biomedical sciences has increased both in quantity and quality over the last few years. Organizations which support animal experimentation and the animal welfare/anti-vivisectionist societies have put much effort into preparing clear and attractive, well-argued booklets on the cases for and against the use of animals for scientific purposes.

*Animal Experimentation* a reference guide for schools, is a recent example of the improved antivivisectionist literature. It is factual – may be a little selectively factual – clearly written and employing much use of diagrams and artwork. It paints a rather negative picture. It does not seemingly give any indication of how firmly animal experimentation is controlled in the UK. There is no credit given to the dramatic drop in animal usage in the UK from some 5.5 million per year in the 1970s to some 2.5 million per year today, nor to the fall in the use of animals for cosmetic testing from c 30,000 per year in 1979/80 to c 3,000 per year today – even though it clearly illustrates these two trends in graphic form.

There have been improvements, over the last few years, in the ways in which animals are used – not as many improvements as we would wish – but still improvements.

The booklet paints a rather black and white picture. The debate on the value and ethics of animal experimentation contains many grey and uncertain areas. *Animal Experiments* is still, however, a stylish and well produced document. It sets a high standard: a standard which the publications of the pro-animal usage groups will have to match.

*Animal Experiments*. A reference guide for schools. Produced and published by the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection: London (1994). 16pp. Paperback. Obtainable free from the publishers, 16A Crane Grove, London N7 8LB, UK.

### BST

Bovine Somatotrophin (BST) is a synthetic growth hormone that can increase milk yield in dairy cows by between 10 and 20 per cent. BST was approved for commercial use in the United States last year, where reaction from consumers, farmers and retailers to the use of the drug has been cool. For several years pharmaceutical companies have been testing and seeking official authorization to market BST in the European Union (EU). However, its introduction has been resisted by many farmers and most consumers because of concern for the health and welfare of the cows, the health of consumers and the possible effects on the economic viability of the small dairy farm. The use of BST does increase the milk yield but it also seems to be associated with a higher level of mastitis. It has also been suggested that the use of the hormone may also result in an increased incidence of anaemia, digestive disorders, enlarged hocks and lesions of the knees.

*The Cynical Abuse: BST – A Welfare Analysis* is a short booklet produced by Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) which provides a clear, if slightly one-sided introduction to this complex topic. It details what BST does to the cow, the research into the effects of BST on the health and welfare of the animals, and concludes with ‘. . . that in view of the health and welfare problems caused by BST administration, the product should not be licensed for use in the EU’.