

UK (or even the EU, under the jurisdiction of which the UK's system operates) and especially those working in regions where there are not detailed guidelines on the use of animals in research.

Advice Note 02/2015: Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986: Use, Keeping Alive and Re-use (October 2015). A4, 21 pages. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/470008/Use_Keeping_Alive_and_Re-use_Advice_Note.pdf.

Advice note 02/2015: Re-homing and setting free of animals

Alongside the Advice note on re-use of animals (see above) a guidance note on the re-homing and setting free of animals after they have been used for licenced procedures in scientific research has also been produced.

It is often thought to be highly desirable that animals which have been used for scientific research and testing should be released into the wild or re-homed (as companion animals) at the end of their use for scientific purposes rather than being humanely killed, which is the fate of most animals currently. Some livestock animals used in research can also be released to commercial slaughter for meat at the end of their use.

Whilst, in many cases, it may be beneficial for animals to be re-homed or released, careful consideration must be given to whether animals are suitable for re-homing and to whether they will benefit from being released or re-homed. In some cases the welfare of the animal may be best served by being humanely killed at the end of a scientific procedure. In other cases it may be possible to re-use the animal in further scientific procedures, preventing another animal being used for those procedures.

The guidance note aims to guide users of animals in scientific procedures in the UK through the legal and ethical framework which allows animals to be re-homed or set free. It also outlines the measures which should be taken to ensure the welfare of re-homed or released animals.

A useful flow-chart guides users through the questions which must be answered before an animal can be re-homed or released including considerations of whether the animal is suffering as a

result of scientific procedures; whether it poses a danger to the public or other wildlife; and whether animals to be re-homed as companions have been appropriately socialised.

The Advice note is divided into four sections covering: UK-specific legal criteria for re-homing or release; advice on re-homing to ethical review bodies and project licence holders; species- and fate-specific guidance; and a final section providing practical guidance on setting free of wild animals.

Throughout the document specific examples of real situations are given which puts the legislative and ethical considerations into a practical context which should greatly aid those involved in the decision-making process.

The document also provides a great deal of practical information on measures which can be taken to ensure that animals thrive when they are released or re-homed, such as rehabilitation programmes for animals caught from the wild and destined for release back to the wild or socialisation schemes for companion animals raised in the laboratory and destined to be re-homed as companion animals.

Much like the Advice note on re-using animals the note on re-homing and setting free has applicability beyond the UK in providing a framework for those using animals in research to make systematic, informed judgements about when re-homing or setting free might be an appropriate use for animals at the end of their use in research and testing. The document is to be commended for its balanced approach which avoids the pitfall of assuming that re-homing or release is always the best fate for animals at the end of their scientific use whilst at the same time encouraging the thoughtful consideration of the possibility for giving ex-research animals a future outside the laboratory where appropriate.

Advice Note 02/2015: Re-homing and Setting Free of Animals. Animals in Science Regulation Unit (October 2015). A4, 49 pages. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/470146/Advice_Note_Rehoming_setting_free.pdf.

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