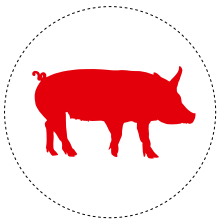


MICE TIMES

Different standards of concern for animals in research, animals for human consumption and animals as human companions.
Germany with a population of around 80 million people

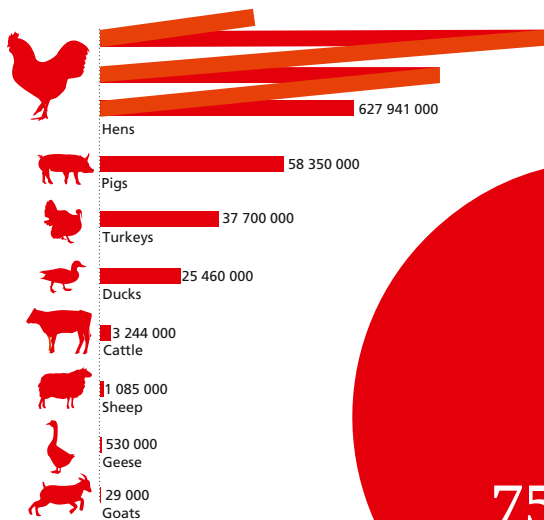


Farm animals
(excluding fish)

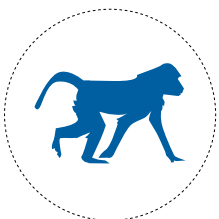
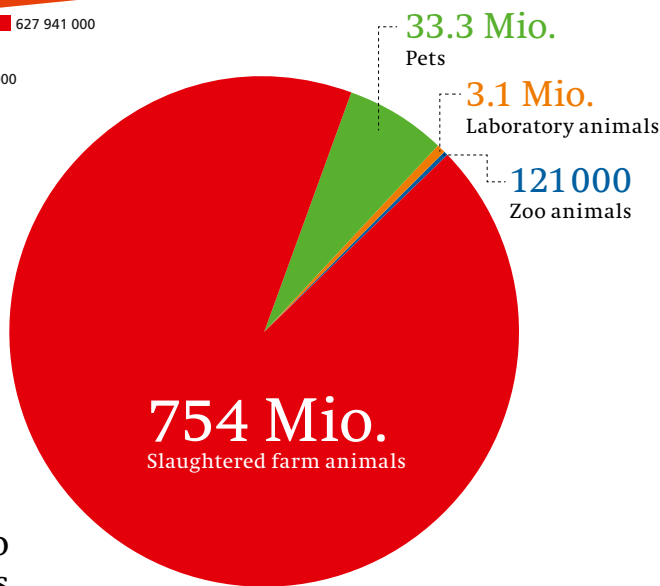
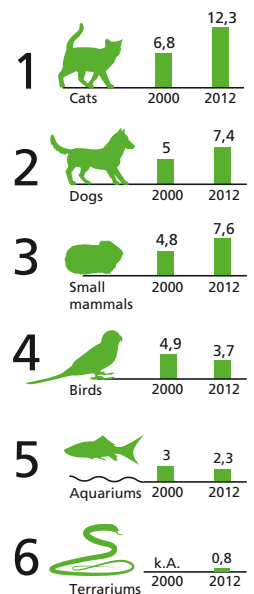


Pets

Animals slaughtered for human consumption (Germany 2012)



The pet population in Germany is (numbers in millions)

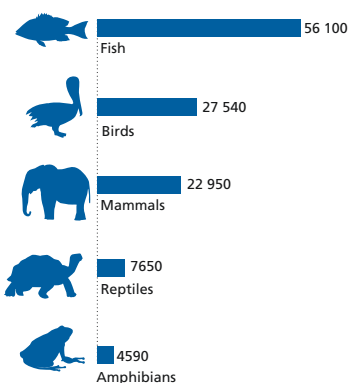


Zoo animals

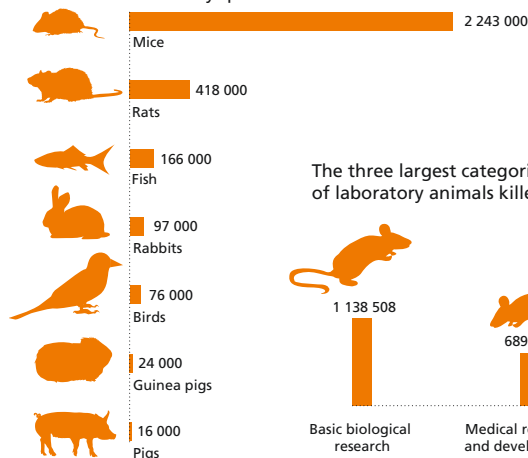
Laboratory animals



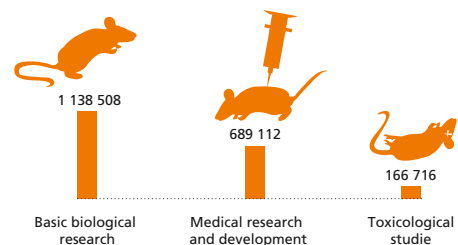
Vertebrate population in the 51 largest German zoos



Laboratory animals killed in Germany in 2012 by species



The three largest categories of laboratory animals killed in 2012



At present, EU Directive 2010/63 is being transformed into national laws in the different EU Member States. It is a lengthy and complicated process that will continue for some time yet until its successful completion. The EU Directive aims to assure that laboratory animals for biomedical research are better protected and receive state of art care, while at the same time guaranteeing the continued use of animals for medical progress.

The principle of the 3Rs

The central principles governing animal experimentation nowadays are the 3Rs: Reduce – only use the minimal necessary number of animals for experiments; refine-animal experiments must be planned and performed using the best suited and least harmful methods, approaches and animal care; replace – the use of animals must be limited to the absolutely essential and be avoided whenever possible and replaced by alternative methods (e.g. in vitro experiments and computer simulations and models).

EU Directive 2010/63

The Directive demands that laboratory animals be housed according to the best and strictest standards and in a manner that takes into considerations their specific needs and welfare. Only specially trained personnel is entitled to manage animal facilities, take care and perform the studies with the animals entrusted to them. The research laboratories and facilities necessary for breeding and housing the animals are subject to external, regulatory supervision. For research on non-human primates (e.g. macaques and rhesus monkeys) strict hurdles have been implemented to limit their use for animal experimentation to the absolute minimum. Studies using great apes (chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas and orang-utans) are forbidden. The only two exceptions involve studies to benefit the survival of the species of apes concerned and situations, in which life-threatening pathogens leading to serious epidemics among humans require essential studies in great apes to control the disease.

«Stop Vivisection» is a threat to Europe's biomedical research excellence

Despite these enormous efforts to improve the standards in animal welfare experimentation, opponents of animal experiments have collected more than one million signatures for a citizens' initiative¹ with the aim to «Stop Vivisection»². The real aim of the initiative¹ is not to stop illegal vivisection, but to ban all animal experimentation in biomedical and toxicology research. If this were to be implemented, the future of one of the most important and innovative research sectors and the Pharmaceutical and Biotech industry of Europe would be put at complete risk and to the serious disadvantage of any efforts to improve human health. In September 2014, this citizens' initiative is to be presented the newly elected members of EU parliament. The first hearings before a parliamentary committee are scheduled already for October.

Ever fewer dogs, cats and monkeys in biomedical research

Contrary to perception of certain parts of the general public, the numbers of dogs, cats, hamsters, rabbits and monkeys participating in animal studies are continuously reduced. Currently, they account for about 0.2 percent of all laboratory animals. But as the opponents of animal research continue to use the images of these animals in their campaigns, which are particularly close to people's hearts, a fraction of citizens are manipulated into continuing to campaign against any type of animal experimentation. Furthermore, philosophers and animal advocates continue to request the implementation of «citizens' rights» for animals into the EU legislation.

What do the statistics say?

Considering the statistics of animal use by humans reveals how inconsistently we humans behave concerning animals. We pamper our pets and more and more consider them as companions and best friends. For them, we request the best possible pharmaceutical and biotech products to be introduced into veterinary medicine, which were developed by animal experimentation to the benefit of human health. At the same time, many continue to consume meat produced cheaply and in general at the expense of animal welfare and animal health. In fact, it would be possible to reduce meat consumption to levels that can be sustained and satisfy high level animal welfare as is the case for animal studies. Animal studies continue to be an essential part of both fundamental and applied biomedical research. They provide fundamental insights into complex biological processes and diseases, are needed to produce vaccines and the next generation of new and effective medicines. While much analysis and drug development is already done in cells, ultimately complex biological processes and new drugs have to be tested in a living organism -and in this respect, animals are the only possible options if we refrain from currently illegal and risky primary testing in humans.

¹ The European Citizens' Initiative is a relatively young political instrument of the EU that commits the European Commission to address a certain issue if at least one million valid signatures are collected within 12 months from a quarter of all EU Member States.

² The term «vivisection» comes from Latin and means the dissection of a living animal. Vivisection has been banned for decades in Europe and elsewhere. While they are aware of this, opponents of animal experiments continue to use this term.

Editors:



Basel Declaration Society,
www.basel-declaration.org

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Author: Astrid Kugler

Editorial staff: Board of the Basel Declaration Society