

Animal rights organisations in Norway and their work against animal experiments



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Preface

This paper was written as a part of the course Dyreforsøkslære ZO8091, at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. The given subject was animal rights organisations. We chose to restrict the subject to Norwegian animal rights organisations and their work against animal experiments. The references were found on internet, as this is the most important way the animal rights organisations front their view and spread information.

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1. Introduction

In Norway there exist many organisations that work on issues related to animal welfare. Some of these are The Norwegian Animal Welfare Alliance (Dyrevernalliansen), The Norwegian Society for the Protection of Animals (Dyrebeskyttelsen), Animal Liberation Front (Dyrenes frigjøringsfront), NOAH - For Animals' Rights (NOAH - for dyrs rettigheter), World Wildlife Fundation (WWF), Foreningen Våre Rovdyr ("Association for our Beast of Pray") and Norsk Liga for Dyrs Rettigheter ("Norwegian Animal Rights League"). We chose to focus on the most powerful organisations when regarding the public masses, spanning from the liberal to the most extreme organisations in Norway. We also briefly look into their argumentations supporting their views and their achievements in reducing the use of animals for teaching, experiments, farming and amusements.

2. Organisations against animal experiments in Norway

2.1 The Norwegian Animal Welfare Alliance



The Norwegian Animal Welfare Alliance was established in 2001 and works with a wide range of issues related to animal welfare and animal rights, giving priority to factory farming, fur farming, animal experiments and animal related legislations.

The main objectives of this organisation are:

- To promote animal interests to public authorities, trade and industry.
- To document evidence of human mistreatment of animals, especially concerning animals used for commercial purposes and suffering that are permitted by existing laws.
- To increase accessibility to information about human mistreatment of animals to animal welfare and animal rights organisations, the authorities, trade and industry, media and the public.

Norwegian Animal Welfare Alliance is a membership organisation, but also collaborates with other existing animal welfare organisations in Norway. These organisations will be able to influence the authorities through the Norwegian Animal Welfare Alliance. The alliance also collaborates internationally and is a member of several organisations, like for instance World Animal Net and European Coalition to End Animal Experiments.

The Norwegian Animal Welfare Alliance achieves their goals through communication with government, science forums and the public based on documented facts and science. They are a democratic organisation and ban any working methods that violate Norwegian law or lead to violence. This is a basis they demand from all their member organisations.

The most important forum for the Norwegian Animal Welfare Alliance may be through their representative in the National Animal Research Authorities. Their candidate Anton Krag works to address questions regarding the welfare of animals in research and give light on the animal welfare organisations opinion on the legislations for use of animals in science. He is also an active participant on conferences and courses which has animals testing or animal welfare one their agenda.

Since the Norwegian Animal Welfare Alliance has a working group consisting of lawyers and political- and environmental- advisors they have the ability to, and do, influence the government of Norway like none of the other organisations can.

Norwegian Animal Welfare Alliance's work is based on the assumption that an animal's value is independent of the animal's species, individual qualities and human emotional relationship

to the animal. They think that human interests rooted in entertainment, economy, science, religion or tradition do not give humans the right to expose animals to negative experiences. Norwegian Animal Welfare Alliance wishes to achieve five freedoms for all animals and these are today internationally accepted as good animal welfare starting points (1).

These five freedoms are:

- Freedom from hunger and thirst
- Freedom from physical distress
- Freedom from pain, injury and disease
- Freedom from anxiety and fear
- Freedom to carry out natural behaviour

2.2 The Norwegian Society for the Protection of Animals



The Norwegian Society for the Protection of Animals (NSPA) was founded in 1859 and is the biggest and oldest organisation for animal rights in Norway. NSPA is an umbrella organisation for 25 local groups and has 9 000 members. NSPA is represented in the National Council for Animal Ethics (Rådet for dyreetikk) in Norway. They also work internationally by being a member of the World Society for the Protection of Animals and by being an observer group with the [Euogroup for Animal Welfare](#).

The main objectives of this organisation are:

- To spread knowledge about the importance of animal welfare
- To influence attitudes towards animals among the general public
- To be a consultant for the government and others, with regard to animal related issues
- To take part in international animal welfare projects
- To undertake practical animal welfare work

Many of the local groups are members of the Norwegian Animal Welfare Alliance. The NSPA members mainly work on a local scale and by planned national campaigns. They strive to distribute information and make an awareness drive about animal welfare in science, hunting and farming. NSPA sell artefacts like t-shirts and hoodies, so members and sympathisers can proclaim their attitudes public and give the cause a face.

NSPA is, as the Norwegian Animal Welfare Alliance, strictly against violence and actions that are against the Norwegian law.

Their present most important fields are to challenge the legality of fur farming, influence the government to improve regulations concerning farming of reindeer and to spread information about the welfare aspect of whaling. They also want to improve the regulations governing the wild fur animals and animal experiments (2).

2.3 NOAH - For Animals' Rights



NOAH was founded in 1989 and is an organisation with 2 000 members. NOAH's work is based on voluntaries and gifts. They cooperate with international organisations, like for instance Fur Free Alliance, but first of all they see themselves as an organization for people that love animals. Their vision is that animals should not be killed just for the purpose of humans' interest.

The main objectives of this organisation are:

- No animals should be in cages
- No animals should be used in painful experiments
- No animals should be trained to obey humans but rather be in their natural habitats

NOAH is for many regarded as a more extreme animal welfare organisation than the previous, but this is not correct. NOAH is a member of the Norwegian Animal Welfare Alliance, and, as the latter, NOAH is against violence and actions that are against the Norwegian law.

NOAH distributes their opinions through their magazine, internet, and public awareness actions like provoking posters and street demonstrations. They also have “documentary” raids to fur farms, other animal farms, universities or research facilities to document what kind of conditions these animals live in, or activities animals are used for. Through this documentation this organisation has been able to achieve a lot of their goals. They have worked for restricting animal experiments in teaching and this has resulted in a decrease of this kind of teaching in the schools. A lot of alternative teaching methods like computer simulations, movies, and models are now in use. They have also influenced the government to establish a group that shall work with issues related to replacing animal experiments in science (stated in Dyrevernmeldingen 2003). Alternatives like *in vitro* experiments, computer simulations and experiments on voluntary humans are suggested to be good alternatives to animal experiments in science research (3).

2.4 Animal Liberation Front in Norway



This organisation was founded in 1972 and is the Norwegian version of the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) in England, which often performs illegally actions against animal experiments. Since the actions are illegally the actionists work anonymously and have no direct contact with any individual or organisation. To be a member you have to take part in an action, for instance set free animals from a fur farm and you have to be a vegetarian. This organisation was founded because activists meant that the legal fight for the animal's rights was not good enough in the work against animal experiments.

The objectives of this organisation are:

- To directly save animals from suffering in laboratories, fur farms, fish farms etc., and to destroy the equipment used to inflict that suffering

- To force all animal abuse enterprises to close
- To carry out economically sabotage to those people and groups that torture animals

ALF believe that a broken window is justified if it helps to save animal lives. If burning a car will save an animal's life, then there is no contest. The central belief to the ALF's philosophy is that life is always worth more than property. They have not given up on peaceful protest, but they feel that those animals being exploited right now can not wait for some far off day when all abusers 'see the light' and stop their exploitation. ALF exists to take illegal action to save animals, their actions serve as a last resort, when all other forms of action have failed, or will fail (4).

3. Argumentation against use of animals in experiments

Why are people against animal experiments, and how do they argue for their view? A wide range of people are against animal experiments, and their argumentation span from scientific and philosophical critique to horrifying descriptions and the use of awful pictures.

The Norwegian Animal Welfare Alliance's report presents two philosophical views. The first is that every individual, animal or man want and is trying to stay alive without suffering. If respecting this interest, and in addition not discriminating between what species the individual is belonging to, then it is equally bad to kill a human and an animal. In this view animal experiments can not be tolerated since it results in the killing and suffering of many individuals. The second view, which is more moderate than the first, is also based on the same respect but with the modification that humans have a higher value than animals. If experiments are absolutely necessary, then it is better that these are done on animals instead of on humans. In other words, the humans' interests are fully respected and the animals' interests are only respected to a certain degree. The only valid argument for conducting an experiment on an animal, in this view, is to avoid greater damage, and the necessary animal experiments should be reduced to a minimum and made as humane as possible. (5)

Most ethical arguments against animal experiments are based on variants of the two philosophies, and by fronting these the animal rights organisations play an important role in

almost all political questions regarding animals. These philosophies appear in arguments such as: “animals live for their own sake, not for being used as food, clothes, in experiments and entertainment” (3), “is an animal’s pain less worth than a human’s?” (2), and “is it right that animals should suffer in the search for medicines which is suppose to cure lifestyle sicknesses that follows from fat food, stress, smoking, little training, and pollution?” (2).

The scientific critique is based on that no species are similar, which imply that the achieved results from the experiments conducted on animals can not be extrapolated to humans. It is a possibility that commercial products are discarded due to negative effects on animals without being tested on humans where it could have had positive effects. In the opposite situation commercial products with positive effects on animals can consequently be tested on humans where it may cause negative effects. In addition, a lab environment is different from the “real world”, and results achieved in the lab may not hold for a similar situation outside the lab (2).

The high amount of animal used in experiments is often used as an argument against animal experimentation. Worldwide, several million animals are used every year in such experiments (2). Norway uses more animals in animal experiments per inhabitant than most other countries in Europe (5). The use of statistics in this way does not give information about how these animals were used and is therefore not very valuable. The Norwegian Animal Welfare Alliance agree on this in their report (5)

Animal rights organisations front the use of alternative methods instead of animal experiments. They claim that in many situations, alternative methods are equally good or better. Examples are computer models, mechanical models, skin and organ cultures, and the use of micro organisms (2, 3).

Unfortunately not all arguments against animal experiments are based on logical argumentation. A lot of the argumentation is irrelevant and often emotional based, that is, it presents the animals as cute and pitiable, the experiments as cruel, and the experimenter as hard and greedy. It is mostly the “extreme” groups (like The Norwegian ALF) that use this kind of argumentation, but it is also used to some degree by most animal rights organisations. All organisations we have looked into lack a balanced description of animal experiments. It is not only the organisation against animal experimentation that are diverse, the experiments and

the treatment of animals in experiments are also diverse. Despite of this it seems as the organisations refer to all experiments as bad.

The following citations include some of these arguments. “Normal routines in the laboratory give the animals fear and pain” (2). “Is it necessary to induce pain on an animal to gain new knowledge? [...] The law does not control how strong or for how long it is allowed to induce pain on an animal” (2). “When you free an animal from an animal breeder, the animal will live a life without pain in a nice home instead of a certain future with pain and death” (4). “Direct action is about maximising the efficiency. Aim where it makes most pain for the animal assailant - in his wallet. It is the craving for money that drives them. [...] Those who do harassment against animals do not care about ethical argumentation. The greed and effort for profit is what counts. Therefore you have to use actions they understand” (6).

A related argumentation is the use of pictures of cute animals, or more extreme, cute animals which are subjects to “cruel” experiments (Fig. 1). All organisations we have looked into (*e.g.* The Norwegian Animal Welfare Alliance, The Norwegian Society for the Protection of Animals, and The Norwegian ALF) use such pictures. The purpose of these pictures is to make people feel pity for the animal. That an animal is cute is not a good argument against animal experiments. Additionally, it is hard to tell from a picture of an experiment if an animal is in pain or not. To know what is harmful for an animal it is necessary with background information, both of the experiment and the species.



Figure 1: Picture used at the Norwegian Animal Welfare Alliance homepage.

A curiosity in the argumentation against animal experiments is that animal experimentation is one of the most important causes of pollution. It is argued that experimenting on animals is not a very scientific methodology for chemical testing and that the incorrect nature of animal experiments makes a cloudy alibi that allows production of every kind of poisonous and dangerous chemicals (2).

4. Animal rights organisations' influence on research institutions

Researchers and people concerned about animal's welfare do most often agree that animal experiments are a necessary evil. However, they do not agree upon the necessity of it. Animal rights organisations wish to influence the prevailing practice of animal experiments, and their methods varies. Some choose to do their mission in a diplomatic way while others give their message more extremely. Here we list several examples of how animal rights organisations affect the activity of scientists and scientific institutions in Norway.

4.1 National Animal Research Authority

One of the best opportunities animal rights organisations have to influence the practice of animal research in Norway is through their representative in the National Animal Research Authority. Today Anton Krag from the Norwegian Animal Welfare Alliance is the representative who fights for the animal's rights by influencing principal resolutions that are made and also affecting responses to animal research applications. At the University of Tromsø, all research on animals at under graduate level in biology was stopped in 2005 by the National Animal Research Authority and the Norwegian Food Safety Authority. The university let the physiology students castrate rats in order to see the effects of hormones. The Norwegian Animal Welfare Alliance has to the Norwegian Food Safety Authority argued that testing on living animals is old fashion and causes a lot of unnecessary pain for the animals, and that alternative, modern teaching methods should be used. Prof. Erling Nordøy at the University of Tromsø says that the animals can not feel pain as they are drugged during the experiments, and he thinks that the quality of learning is decreased when the students can not see how physiological processes work in practice (7).

Krag thinks that information is the most important presumption in order to criticise testing on animals. His first priority in the National Animal Research Authority has therefore been to improve the access to the Authority's documents and work which is now become much more public than it traditionally was. Another "hot" case has been the establishment of a consensus-platform for alternatives similar to what exists in Europe, *i.e.* consensus between animal welfare, industry, academia and governmental institutions as a way to stimulate research into alternatives to animal experiments and enforcing the acceptance of alternatives in

experimental practice. In 2005 it was finally granted 1 million NOK for establishing such a national platform in Norway. Other decisions Krag directly has affected are to make the concept of painful experiments wider (more experiments is defined as painful), to ban LD-50 testing (acute toxicity testing), to enforce testing of oil chemicals on algae before Crustaceans and fishes, to establish more restrictive regulations for the use of research animal in teaching, and to permit only alternative methods (as a rule) for monoclonal antibody production without animal testing. In addition, Krag has pleaded research animal's cause at meetings and courses for animal researchers, and also participated at international conferences about animal testing (8).

4.2 NORINA

Another way animal rights organisation influence the practice of animal research is by working for making the alternatives to animal testing better and more available. NORINA (A Norwegian Inventory of Alternatives) is an English-language database with information on approximately 3700 audiovisual aids and other alternatives that can be used in teaching and training from Junior School to University level. The development of the NORINA database reflects the enormous increase in the number of potential alternatives or supplements to the use of animals that has occurred over the last ten years. The NORINA project started in 1991 when the database was sold on floppy disks. By 1996, NORINA was so large, and in demand worldwide, that a decision was taken to place the entire database on the Internet, free of charge. The English organisation Laboratory Animals Ltd. donated the NORINA server at the Veterinary School, along with several of the computers used for the development and compilation of the database. Since NORINA is available free of charge, the project is entirely dependent upon external funding. Since 1996 this funding has come from a wide range of sponsors, including animal welfare organisations, trusts, legacies and pharmaceutical industry (9).

4.3 SKANDULV

The Scandinavian wolf research project (SKANDULV) is a working collaboration between nine different research institutions, where, among others, NINA in Trondheim is involved. The aim of the project is to obtain knowledge necessary for an optimal management of wolf in Norway and Sweden, and also provide information of the wolf's biology and management to the public (10). However, the use of radio transmitters (Fig. 2) for marking individuals as a

method for following the wolf's movements has invoked attention from animal rights organisations. The Action Group against Marking of Wolves (Aksjonsgruppa Mot Radiomerking av Ulv) insists that the Directorate of Nature Management (Direktoratet for naturforvaltning, DN) stops the activity of SKANDULV in Norway. The organisation thinks that marking by radio transmitters are unethical respective to animal protection and the wolf's biology, and to chase wolves by helicopter in order to catch the animal by sedation or with neck loop is cruelty to animals. If DN does not withdraw all permissions for radio marking of wolves in Norway, The Action Group against Marking of Wolves will consider reporting the project to the police. It is decided that SKANDULV shall continue radio marking of wolves until 2008 (11).



Figure 2: Marking of wolves is controversial in Norway.

4.4 The Norwegian University of Life Sciences

The Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB) has a close co-operation with the fur industry in Norway and runs, with financials from the fur industry, a fur farm which is used in the research of behaviour of caged fur animals. Fur farms are controversial in Norway and have been, together with fur shops, subjects to many actions from animal rights organisations. In 2002 UMB was subject to a burglary and serious destruction performed by the Norwegian Animal Liberation Front. A large amount of research material was taken, such as video tapes,

research notes, computers, address books, equipment, etc. Painting and acid were spread out, six caged foxes were released, empty cages were destroyed and water pipes were broken. The Norwegian ALF said that they would come back when the mink were old enough to be released so that they could survive in the nature. Further, they wanted to publish a summary of the stolen material to show the public how fur animals are exploited for financial profit. The Norwegian ALF doubted the objectiveness of the research on fur animals at UMB since their activity is financed by the commercial fur industry. Therefore, they think that UMB had to be treated similar to other companies which keep animals in cages for fur production (12). The leader of the [Departement of Animal and Aquacultural Sciences](#) at UMB, Bjarne O. Braastad, rejected the criticism. He thought that the people behind the sabotage did the animals a disservice. The broken equipment put the research, which contributed to the improvement of animal's condition and health, half a year back in time (13).

4.5 Løken farm

At Løken farm in Østfold, dogs and pigs are produced for scientific purposes. The animals are sold to Rikshospitalet and Nycomed among others who use them for animal experiments. Experiments on dogs are controversial, and the fact that Løken farm sells 50-60 dogs and a large number of pigs each year to medical experiments has provoked animal rights activists (14). The farm, run by Terje Gammelrud, has experienced several actions from activists from, among others, the Norwegian Animal Liberation Front. In 2002, members of the organisation broke into the farm and stole ten puppies that were relocated to "safe homes" (4). In 2004 a fake advertisement was published in the Norwegian newspaper Aftenposten that said: "Løken farm has during two centuries built up capital by selling young dogs for animal experiments in the North. Animal experiments are without doubt controversial, but the business yield a good profit" (15). In 2003, the campaign "Close Løken farm" was started by independent activist. The aim was simple; to get the farm closed. They opened a web site with information about the farm and its' work, and they also request people to demonstrate and to show "personal initiative" (16).

5. Conclusion

There are a wide variety of animal rights organisations in Norway, and these have played an important role influencing the attitude of the public masses towards animal welfare and the use of animals in teaching and experiments. Their methods to front their interests span from educational work to performing illegal direct actions. They often give an unbalanced view, but their contribution to the discussion about animal welfare is highly significant.

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