

Ross argues that the system has worked well and I have had this confirmed more recently by acquaintances in Sweden. Also, it has led to a developing bridge of mutual respect between the researchers and the animal welfare societies. He therefore argues that it should be tried in Australia but there is no news of any such initiative to date. The idea is unlikely to be practical in the United States because there is still far too much suspicion and animosity between animal welfare groups and biomedical researchers. However, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that some sort of institutional animal research committee could be codified in Federal statute before too many more years pass by. The bill being introduced by Congresswoman Schroeder is based upon just this principle.

Andrew Rowan
Institute for the
Study of Animal
Problems

Michael Ross. "The Ethics of Animal Experimentation; Control in Practice" in Australian Psychologist, Vol. 13, 375-378, 1978.

The article is a relatively brief description of a Swedish attempt at "self-regulation" of research activities by scientists themselves. The basic idea is that each institution (e.g., university) should establish an ethics committee to review animal research proposals. The committee would consist of at least fifteen members, including five lay persons. Each research proposal would have to be submitted to at least two members of the committee for initial approval, subject to later ratification by the full committee. As a guide to the committee, experiments have been divided into six categories according to the amount of pain or distress likely to be imposed on the animal. In the first year of operation, over 85% of the experiments fell into the least stressful categories.