



PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

November 21, 2024

Mike Malone, Ph.D.  
Vice Chancellor, Office of Research & Engagement  
University of Massachusetts–Amherst

Joseph Jerry, Ph.D.  
IACUC Chair  
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Via e-mail: [mmalone@umass.edu](mailto:mmalone@umass.edu); [jjerry@vasci.umass.edu](mailto:jjerry@vasci.umass.edu)

Dear Drs. Malone and Jerry:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) to direct your attention to the mismanagement and complete disregard for the lives and welfare of marmosets in Agnès Lacreuse's laboratory at the University of Massachusetts–Amherst.

According to records obtained via a public records request, 10 marmosets in the Lacreuse laboratory were recently killed in just one month. The marmosets, named Cactus, Chloe, Diana, Gabrielle, Jolly, Lara, Noel, Wakanda, Xena, and Yax, ranged in age from 7 to 12 years and were healthy when killed.

For a laboratory that purports to study aging, killing off such a large number of healthy animals, including many who were less than 8 years old, is not only callous but also short-sighted. This mass killing is particularly shocking given Lacreuse's recent complaint to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) that she didn't have enough marmosets in this age range to complete one of her taxpayer-funded projects. This "shortage" led UMass-Amherst to enter into a subcontract with the University of Wisconsin–Madison to perform sleep fragmentation procedures on marmosets held there. It also required that UMass-Amherst funnel a large portion of the money received for that project to UW-Madison.

As I'm sure you are aware, the transfer of that project (and its funding) was nothing short of a disaster, with minimal data acquired even after a 12-month No-Cost Extension was provided to the investigators by NIH. Due to the failure to complete the project's original goals and aims, UMass-Amherst had to return a portion of the funds to NIH, and the minimal data collected at UW-Madison is likely wholly unusable.

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As you also know, the Lacreuse laboratory consistently and repeatedly violates federal laws and guidelines related to the care of animals in laboratories, racking up numerous citations and warnings from oversight bodies in the past decade, including the following:

- During a routine USDA inspection on June 10, 2014, inspectors [noted](#) that a marmoset named Pat was shaky and moving slowly. They also found that communication between laboratory staff and attending veterinarians was inadequate for ensuring the animals' well-being.
- According to a USDA [inspection report](#) dated May 9, 2016, on October 2, 2015, a post-surgical male marmoset was given thermal support using an "alternate method" from the standard heating blanket. As a result, the marmoset was burned so severely that he died 72 hours after the incident. Staff were reminded to use approved thermal support in the future. The inspection report noted that "handling of all animals shall be done as expeditiously and carefully as possible in a manner that does not cause trauma, overheating, behavioral stress, physical harm, or unnecessary discomfort."
- According to veterinary records that PETA obtained through open records requests, a marmoset named Han had escaped from a transfer box on March 20, 2017, injuring another marmoset named Padme, who sustained small punctures and lacerations on each hand. The USDA didn't cite UMass-Amherst for this incident, and the institution didn't notify the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) about it, as required.
- In April 2017, a marmoset named Chewie escaped from an acclimation device. Laboratory personnel recaptured the monkey, injuring his tail in the process. Records PETA obtained note that Chewie's "tail tip got caught in [a] metal flange at [the] bottom of [an] air duct, distal approximately 1 cm of tail tip avulsed with amputation of distal tip." The [inspection report](#) noted that "handling of all animals shall be done as expeditiously and carefully as possible in a manner that does not cause trauma, behavioral stress, physical harm, or unnecessary discomfort."
- According to [veterinary records](#) that PETA obtained via an open records request, in July 2018, Chewie also sustained bruising on his mouth and an abscess under his chin that required topical antibiotics. The bruising and possibly the abscess appear to have resulted after a neck-worn device became caught in his mouth. To date, this incident has not been reported to OLAW.
- According to [documents](#) that the institute submitted to OLAW, on October 5, 2018, students attempted to move a marmoset between a transport box and a home cage. The animal slipped through a gap between the containers and then engaged in aggressive behavior with another marmoset who was recovering from surgery. The USDA didn't cite the university for this incident.
- On May 13, 2023, a marmoset escaped from a cage in this laboratory, causing another one to be injured. On January 12, 2024, APHIS conducted a focused inspection and cited UMass-Amherst for a "primary enclosures" violation because of this incident. The [inspection report](#) notes, "Primary enclosures must contain the animals and prevent opening of the enclosure by the animal. The facility must ensure that the animals are securely contained by their primary enclosures."
- On May 23, 2024, a marmoset who was being transferred from his home cage into a transport box was injured when animal care staff closed the cage door while the monkey's tail was still inside. The injured tail required medical attention. The [inspection report](#) again notes, "Primary enclosures must contain the animals and prevent opening of the enclosure by the animal. The facility must ensure that the animals are securely contained by their primary enclosures."

- During a routine inspection in June 2024, the APHIS inspector [noted](#) that two marmosets were being contained in an enclosure that didn't meet the minimum space requirements for nearly two hours while their cages were being cleaned.

It is profoundly concerning that these animals are considered disposable by the university and that the lead investigator of this laboratory cannot plan her projects, manage this colony, or train her staff to care for these animals properly.

Again, we urge you to end these experiments on marmosets and ask that Dr. Lacreuse transition to superior, human-relevant research methods to study the impact of age and menopause on cognition and neurodegenerative disease.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kath Roe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kath" and last name "Roe" clearly distinguishable.

Katherine V. Roe, Ph.D.  
Chief Scientist  
Laboratory Investigations Department