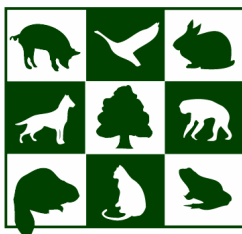


Pound Seizure – Pets in Experimentation



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Animal Alliance of Canada is committed to the protection of all animals and to the promotion of a harmonious relationship between people, animals and the environment.

What is Pound Seizure?

Pound seizure is a term commonly used to describe the practice of taking lost, homeless and abandoned dogs and cats from municipally-funded animal control facilities (pounds) for use in experimentation (research, teaching and testing). Over 170 Canadian research facilities have access to impounded animals for use in experimentation-over 5,000 lost and abandoned dogs and cats are used each year across Canada.

With the growth of the research industry following World War II, commercial animal breeders were unable to meet the new demand. Local animal shelters and pounds were perceived as convenient sources of cheap dogs and cats. The Ontario *Animals for Research Act* (1971) is the only piece of legislation left in Canada that provides a legal framework thereby allowing impounded animals to be sold for experimentation. In the United States, 13 states have enacted laws prohibiting pound seizure. Some of the world's most prestigious research institutions, including Harvard and John Hopkins Universities are located in jurisdictions where pound seizure has been banned. Pound seizure has also been

banned in Sweden, Great Britain, Netherlands and Denmark.

Pound Seizure across Canada

Animal use in research, teaching and testing is a provincial matter. However, Ontario researchers have the law on their side. Regulations under the *Animals for Research Act* mandate that researchers must pay a mere "\$6 for each dog and \$2 for each cat" they request from a pound! The Act falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

(OMAFRA).



Photo 1: AAC

Research facilities in provinces that have no pound seizure legislation, have simply established

contracts or made other arrangements with the pound or municipality.

Are Any Of The Animals Seized For Experimentation Pets?

Yes. Many of the animals chosen by research facilities are spayed or neutered, and some of the cats declawed - all most definitely former pets. Laboratory personnel and students describe animals who respond to commands or who are eager to shake a paw. Researchers pick animals that are healthy and well socialized as these are deemed the most useful research animals. (University of Toronto, Research Highlights, no date). The difficulties in transporting and handling dogs and cats require that the animals be docile - nobody wants to be hurt by an animal not used to humans. Ironically, it's these calm, friendly animals that would be the easiest to adopt out to new homes.

Do Animals Used In Experimentation Experience Pain?

The use of pain-relieving medication is recommended by national guidelines. However, because no specific experimental procedure is entirely ruled out from these guidelines, researchers can burn, poison, irradiate and perform irrelevant surgery on their subjects. Canada has absolutely no federal legislation protecting laboratory animals. Instead, the above mentioned voluntary guidelines are overseen by the self-policing Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC).

The CCAC grades experiments into Categories of Invasiveness (CI). The most invasive experiment (CI=E) is one "which cause severe pain near, at, or above the pain tolerance threshold of unanesthetized conscious animals". Clearly, while the guidelines state that pain is to be relieved, the CI=E experiment permits pain alleviation to be withheld because pain is deemed "necessary" to the experiment.

As long as specific animal husbandry standards (food, water, etc.) are met, the animal's actual experimental use is not seriously questioned. Research facilities are exempted from anti-cruelty legislation. Consequently, there is no legal protection for experimental animals.

What Kind of Experiments Are Done on Pound-Seized Animals?

Animals taken from pounds are used by researchers in every conceivable way. Dogs tend to be used as the standard "large" lab animal in procedures ranging from cardiovascular research to toxicology tests to education. Cats, meanwhile, have highly-developed nervous

systems and are often used in studies of behaviour and the brain.

Pound-seized animals are used in medical education. A typical dog lab requires that the animal be kept alive for some time in order to demonstrate the effects of drugs and organ manipulation and to allow for the practice of various skills. However, Great Britain has not allowed students to use live animals for over a century - surely British physicians and veterinarians are just as competent as their North American counterparts. Dog labs are archaic, cruel and unnecessary and should be prohibited.

Do Pound-Seized Animals Make Good "Guinea Pigs"?

Several organizations of health professionals, including the Physicians' Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM), assert that the use of pound animals may actually interfere with the scientific soundness of an experiment. PCRM Chairman Neal Barnard, M.D., explains, "Pound animals are the worst possible research subjects. We don't know their age, we don't know what diseases or parasites they may be harboring, we don't know their history of treatments or what genetic illnesses may be in their ancestry. A study that failed to account for these variables in human subjects would never be taken seriously."

The World Health Organization, the Council of Europe and the International Council of Organizations for the Medical Sciences all strongly recommend against the use of shelter animals in experimentation.

The Animal Pound: Refuge Or Warehouse?

Animal shelters and pounds were established as refuges for lost, stray and abandoned animals, not as warehouses for cheap laboratory subjects. For these organizations to operate effectively, the public must be confident that animals taken there will be returned to their owners, adopted into loving homes or humanely euthanized. Pound seizure jeopardizes public trust and diminishes support for the shelter. Well-meaning individuals may choose to abandon an animal rather than take it to a



Photo 1: Cat with electrode

pound known for releasing animals for research. The use of former pets in experimentation is a betrayal of that animal's trust in humans. Dogs and cats have been

domesticated for thousands of years and look to us for love, shelter and companionship. We betray their trust by placing them in a cold, sterile laboratory environment and by subjecting them to potentially painful and psychologically stressful procedures. Lost or stray animals must be actively protected against trauma, injury and pain. The research community has taken advantage of society's inability to address irresponsible pet owners. However, surrendering animals to an uncertain, possibly painful fate, is not the answer.

What Is The Animal Alliance Doing To End The Tragedy?

1. We are addressing the issue of pound seizure through public education (the distribution of pamphlets, speaking engagements, media).
2. We are campaigning for greater pet owner responsibility, mandatory sterilization legislation and low-cost spay/neuter clinics.
3. We are working towards amending existing legislation and adopting new legislation to ban pound seizure.
4. Our **Project Jessie Rescue Network** focuses on saving dogs and cats from pounds in Ontario that would otherwise send them to research and finds loving homes for them.

What Can You Do To Fight Pound Seizure

1. Find out how your municipality deals with its unclaimed animals. Municipalities should have the choice as to what to do with lost and abandoned animals, a choice that provincial legislation removes.
2. Write letters to elected officials at all levels of government, and to local media, including newspapers in the "Letters to the Editor" section. Ask that pounds immediately be given the choice as to whether or not to surrender animals. Ask that elected officials to ban on the use of pound animals in experimentation.

Join Us in Our Campaign to Stop Pound Seizure across Canada

Progressive and compassionate municipalities like the City of Toronto, the City of Calgary and more recently, the City of Winnipeg have been swayed by public sentiments and have stopped the practice in their jurisdiction. But we need the commitment of all the provincial governments and territories to enact legislation to put an end to pound seizure for good! Visit our website to find out how to contact your premier and ask for a provincial ban.

Other On-line Resources:

www.cruelscience.ca



www.animalalliance.ca



www.environmentvoters.org

Join Us in Our Campaign Against Existing Pound Seizure Legislation

As Ontario is the only province with pound seizure legislation left in Canada, we are now focusing our efforts to get Premier Dalton McGuinty to amend the *Animals For Research Act* and ban the practice. We need your letters, e-mails and phone calls to send a strong message to the Ontario government.

What You Can Do

1. Write a letter to the addresses below and ask that the *Animals for Research Act* immediately be amended to ban pound seizure.

The Hon. Dalton McGuinty
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

p: 416-325-1941 f: 416-325-3745
feed back form:
<https://www.premier.gov.on.ca/feedback/feedback.asp>

The Hon. Leona Dombrowski
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Public Archives Building
77 Grenville St., 11th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1B3

p: 416-326-3074 f: 416-326-3083
e-mail: minister@omafra.gov.on.ca

2. Write your own member of provincial parliament (MPP). Ask for his or her support on this issue and ask that he or she encourage his/her colleagues to support us also. Contact us if you need assistance.

3. Legislation takes a long time to pass. In the meantime, and in order to provide interim protection for our lost pets, please contact your local city council and ask them to pass a resolution to stop this practice. The address is available in the blue pages of your telephone book.

4. Ensure that your pets always have identification on them, whether or not they are "outside" animals. The microchip is the most effective method of identification today. Remember accidents happen! If your pet does disappear, contact all local pounds, humane societies and shelters immediately, with a photograph if possible.

5. Inform your friends, family and colleagues and encourage them to add their voice by signing our [Sign-On Letter to Stop Pound Seizure in Canada](#). We can send them information if you'd like. The more the better - politicians can't ignore public opinion.

Photo 1: Animal Alliance of Canada
Photo 2: Animal Alliance of Canada

poundseizure2008

For More Information...

Contact Animal Alliance to receive information sheets on a variety of topics.
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