News from Senator

BOB DOLE

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DOLE INTRODUCES LABORATORY ANIMAL RESEARCH BILL

WASHINGTON -- Senator Robert Dole (R.-Kan) today introduced the "Improved Standards for Laboratory Animals Act" as an amendment to Animal Welfare Act. Dole stated "my bill will upgrade research facility standards, set up committees to periodically review conditions in research facilities, and establish special procedures such as using anesthetics for operations when scientifically appropriate. The bill will also establish an information service at the National Agricultural Library to provide information to research facilities on the latest methods for reducing animal pain and use in testing procedures."

"Many research facilities do an outstanding job in the care and treatment of animals," said Dole. "However, there has been growing concern by the public about the practices of some facilities in using animals for research purposes as a result of specific instances of mistreatment," he added.

"Since the United States uses about 60 million animals each year for biomedical research purposes, it is our responsibility to assure that proper standards are in place," said Dole. "I feel that the Animal Welfare Act can be improved upon to eliminate the limited but unconscionably cruel mistreatment of animals. Presently there is only a minimum set of standards under the Animal Welfare Act, which is under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Agriculture.

"I would further emphasize that the bill does not affect animal agriculture," Dole added. "We must protect our food production and marketing system and the livelihood of farmers who depend upon it. The Animal Welfare Act exempts animals used for food production, and the spirit and intent of the Act are consistent with my proposed legislation."

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