

PETA asks Merck, Pfizer to change animal testing policies

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Singapore: People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has called upon the stockholders of Merck and Pfizer to help facilitate the end of animal abuse by enabling changes in the companies' testing policies.

PETA, which owns around \$2,000 worth of stocks in Merck and Pfizer, submitted resolutions at the companies' annual board of directors meetings, asking them to immediately modify their animal testing policies. The US Federal Securities and Exchange Commission allow shareholders, who own \$2,000 in a firm's stock, to submit resolutions to the company. If a majority of shareholders approve the measures, PETA's resolutions could change the companies' policies.

PETA has claimed that Merck has been "repeatedly cited by the government for failing to adhere to minimal federal regulations governing the treatment of animals in its laboratories." PETA's also claimed that Merck used five outside drug testing or development laboratories, including Covance in Princeton, "with numerous violations noted by government inspectors."

In 2011, according to PETA, Merck "held or used in-house," 12,242 animals, including about 1,700 dogs and 2,100 primates. "More than 6,500 of them were used in painful experiments," the proposed resolution states. Those figures do not include animals used at outside contract laboratories and "vast numbers of mice and rats," PETA wants the Merck board to "issue a

report detailing all new and additional measures implemented to oversee the welfare of animals used both in-house and at external laboratories."

Similarly, PETA wants Pfizer to detail "all measures to reduce the use of animals, especially in painful procedures, and specific plans to promote alternatives to animal use." According to PETA's Pfizer resolution, "Hundreds of dogs and cats used in painful experiments at Pfizer were not given pain relief, including some who stopped eating and were eventually killed." The resolution states that Pfizer used 51,862 experimental animals in 2011, not including mice and rats. "More than 15,000 of these animals were used in painful experiments and pain relief was completely denied for more than 6,000 of these animals, including dogs, cats, primates, and horses," the proposed resolutions states.