

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

March 2019

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about animal testing at Porton Down.

The work done by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) at Porton Down helps deliver the latest scientific and technological advantages for the UK's defence and security. This includes the means to tackle chemical and biological attacks as well as injuries from conventional warfare. I know it is not the answer you were hoping to receive, but part of Dstl's role is to find solutions to problems that unfortunately cannot currently be addressed without the use of animals in research. Animals are essential in supporting the scientific processes that save British lives at home and abroad. However, quite rightly, there are rules in place to make sure the testing of animals meets certain ethical standards.

Experimental procedures have to be in line with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, which aims to ensure the suffering of the animals is minimised. This legislation requires the Dstl to report to the Home Office how many animals are used in research every year. When research programmes are being planned, Dstl also follows the 3Rs principle to seek experimental procedures which either replace the use of animals, reduce the number of animals used, or refine how the animals are treated.

As necessary as animal testing is for scientific research, I am glad that Dstl has made significant efforts to keep its levels of animal testing under control, while still helping contribute to the security and defence capability of the UK. Animal testing by Dstl only makes up less than 0.5 per cent of the national total.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY

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