

Source: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/undercover-video-raises-questions-about-treatment-of-animals-in-baie-durfe-laboratory>



## Undercover video raises questions about treatment of animals in Baie D’Urfé laboratory

KATHERINE WILTON, MONTREAL GAZETTE

[More from Katherine Wilton, Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: March 12, 2017 | Last Updated: March 12, 2017 7:03 PM EDT

The Canada Council on Animal Care says about 3.5 million animals are used every year to conduct tests on experimental drugs, cosmetics and some household products.

A U.S. animal rights organization wants the Quebec government to investigate allegations of animal cruelty at a research lab in Baie D’Urfé.

A group called Last Chance for Animals conducted an undercover investigation at International Toxicology Research Laboratories Canada in 2016 and says it discovered several cases of animal abuse.

The Los Angeles-based group has released a disturbing video it says shows the mistreatment of pigs, monkeys and dogs at the ITR facility, a company that uses animals to test the toxicity of several products.

“The most egregious thing is the hitting, slapping and holding dogs up by their ears and throwing them into their cages,” said Adam Wilson, the director of investigations for Last Chance for Animals.

Wilson said technicians were observed swinging dogs by catheters that run down their spine and into their abdomen. “It’s abusive and is not permitted in a lab setting,” he said.

A member of the animal rights group secretly recorded the video after being hired as a technician by the West Island firm. The video also shows upsetting images of animals being restrained and confined while undergoing various tests.

Wilson said ITR became the subject of an investigation after his group discovered they use animals to conduct toxicology studies.

The video also shows animals being subject to stressful procedures in front of other animals, which Wilson says violates guidelines set by the Canada Council on Animal Care.

“If you are doing a procedure that causes an animal to scream or writhe in agony to show distress, you can’t do that in front of the other animals because they know what’s coming next for them,” Wilson said.

The Canada Council on Animal Care posted a statement on its website this weekend saying it will conduct “a special assessment visit of the institution in question ... in order to obtain all of the facts.”

The council sets and regulates the ethical standards that companies must follow when conducting animal testing for science.

According to the council, about 3.5 million animals are used every year to conduct tests on experimental drugs, cosmetics and some household products.

Last Chance for Animals said it submitted three hours of video and many pages of documentation to Quebec’s agricultural department, which oversees animal welfare, in January, but officials have refused to tell the group whether they are investigating.

Wilson said he hopes that public pressure will force the Quebec government to intervene and charge ITR and its technicians with violations of animal-welfare regulations.

In 2012, the animal rights organization posted a \$7,500 reward for any tip that would lead to the capture and conviction of Luka Magnotta for his torture of kittens. Magnotta was convicted in 2014 of the killing and dismemberment of Concordia student Lin Jun.

A spokesperson for ITR was not available for comment on Sunday. However, a company spokesperson told CTV’s investigative program W5 “it has zero tolerance for the mistreatment of animals under our care and maintains procedures to ensure staff may report and discuss concerns openly.”

After viewing the video, the Montreal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has determined there might be a number of violations of the provincial animal-welfare legislation and the regulations respecting animals in captivity.

“It is obvious from the footage that the animals used by ITR endure unimaginable suffering, pain and distress,” the SPCA said in a statement on Sunday. “Regardless of the ultimate purpose of the research, the manner in which they are housed and treated is completely unacceptable.”

The SPCA called on the government to “increase oversight of research facilities that use animals, particularly within the private sector, and the need for continued development and implementation of non-animal methods in the field of biomedical research.”

Alanna Devine, the SPCA’s director of animal advocacy, said the images in the video are extremely disturbing. “The practices and procedures that we see, whether they are legal or illegal, are unacceptable,” she said.

[kwilton@postmedia.com](mailto:kwilton@postmedia.com)

*Here is the video investigation. Viewer discretion is advised as the video contains disturbing images of animals in distress.*