

## **30 years of commitment**

In the beginning there was an account. The animal welfare organisation Tierschutzbund Zürich had installed a fund in 1974 collecting money for the advancement of research without animal experiments. But according to the view of the two committee members Irène Haggmann and Susi Goll a lot more had to be done. Shaken by the usual practices in animal experiments the two women wanted to approach the scene of events: life sciences, laboratories. In order to establish a dialogue with the scientists, the emotionally challenged word “animal welfare” was to be avoided; so in February 1976- with a starting sum of 5000 Swiss francs- the independent foundation FFVFF was formed. Very soon, the limnologist Peter Bossard joined. Irène Haggmann took over the executive management in 1983, Susi Goll was in charge of public relations- all honorary appointments, which later became partial employments. 2007 the foundation was renamed into Animalfree Research.

### **Ethically motivated, practical in implementation**

The founders of Animalfree Research were deeply moved by ethical qualms concerning animal experiments as painful procedures, with scientific progress for the advantage of man naturally being superior to concerns on animal welfare. At the same time it was clear that a worldwide abolishing of animal experiments from one day to the other was just not possible. With this background, the purpose of the foundation Animalfree Research was put like this: “impress on humans their responsibility for the animal as an object in experimentation and support the development of methods, which on one hand allow for the replacement of live animals while, on the other hand, provide relevant results.” The foundation wanted to dedicate itself to stopping the thoughtless mass use of experimental animals. Through communicating with all people involved in

animal experiments, procedures which were generally regarded as necessary should be questioned and the public informed about nature and dimension of animal experiments.

### **The very first project- a success for animals and foundation**

In the 70s, alternative methods were largely unknown in the Swiss scientific community, or they were dismissed as unworldly reverie. All the more important for Animalfree Research to tackle its first project together with a scientist who took the concerns of the foundation seriously: the literature study on the cruel LD50 test, written together with the then director of the Institute of Toxicology Zurich Prof. Gerhard Zbinden. In this test procedure for the development of new drugs, cosmetics or cleaning agents the lethal dose (LD) of toxic agent is determined by injecting or feeding the substance to mice, rats, rabbits or dogs. The concentration leading to the death of half the animals is the criterion of the agent's hazard. The literature study which demonstrated the low scientific value of this test and urged to discontinue it, found worldwide recognition. It was the beginning of the end of an animal experiment that had been regarded as indispensable for decades-and it had given Animalfree Research the attention of the scientific world.

### **Properly linked...**

At a very early stage, Animalfree Research sought contact to physicians. By the end of 1979 the organization "Ärzte gegen Tierversuche (Physicians against animal experiments)" emerged from these efforts, enlarging the framework for questioning the established experimental practice considerably. The organization, today called «Ärztinnen und Ärzte für Tierschutz in der Medizin»(Physicians for animal welfare in medicine) has more than 200

physicians, veterinarians and dentists as members. It looks into questionable – especially stressful, unnecessary or replaceable-animal experiments and tries to put a stop to them.

### **...and innovative off the beaten track**

Pioneer work was done by Animalfree Research in the past 30 years by supporting young researchers to develop novel methods which do not require animal experiments. The fact that cell culture methods or computer simulations as replacement of procedures on animals have found their place in the world of science can be traced back to such projects. Worldwide distribution was granted to the “Pharma Tutor”, developed in 1982, a computer simulation programme that demonstrates the effects of chemicals on the screen instead of in an animal’s organism. Taken together, our foundation has supported close to 50 projects in 30 years.

### **Founder of the platform for an international scientific community**

Today, the latest results from the international research and development of alternatives to animal experiments are disseminated in the journal “ALTEX”- a journal that was released for the first time in 1984 and published by FFVFF. The simple brochure named „Alternatives to animal experiments“ quickly evolved into a well-known journal in scientific circles which made Animalfree Research known and linked far beyond the national borders. Besides being a platform contributing to the exchange of scientific developments, ALTEX aims to be a forum for social and ethical debate on the topic of animal experiments. In 1986, the German veterinarian PD Dr. Franz P. Gruber joined the foundation Animalfree Research which had formerly been carried by engaged laymen and scientists. He reinforced the team first as scientific counselor and then took over the executive management from 1993 to 2006.

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