



April 25, 2016

**Statement from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)
The Use of Rabbits for Veterinary Classical Swine Fever Vaccine Production**

Tens of thousands of rabbits are killed each year for veterinary classical swine fever (CSF) vaccine production in Taiwan even though superior non-animal methods exist. CSF is a deadly and highly contagious disease that affects artiodactyls. It is important that we prevent CSF and modern technology allows us to do so without killing animals. Considering the availability of non-animal production methods, live animals should not be used to produce vaccines. Given the drawbacks associated with animal methods and vast animal welfare cost, Taiwanese government and vaccine manufacturers should opt for non-animal methods instead.

Vaccine production using live animals is an outdated practice. Non-animal technologies including cell culture and recombinant techniques are readily available and have been in use globally for many years.¹ In Taiwan, the cell culture technique is well established and has been used to produce Lapinized Philippines Coronel and E2 Subunit CSF vaccines.² Animal methods are more time intensive, and the immune response induced by live virus vaccines varies between individuals and hence is harder to control.³ As a consequence, regulatory agencies such as the United States Department of Agriculture encourage the development and use of new platforms that replace the animal methods.⁴ Vaccines have already been approved for marketing using these new platforms.⁵

Vaccine production using live animals comes with an enormous animal welfare cost, as animals endure pain during the process and are ultimately killed. According to the Environment and Animal Society of Taiwan, rabbits were previously killed by air embolism in Taiwan. In this procedure, air is injected into the vasculature, causing blockages in the circulatory system. This method is now banned in Taiwan and internationally, for humane reasons, as it leads to

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¹ Hegde, N. R. (2015). Cell culture-based influenza vaccines: A necessary and indispensable investment for the future. *Human vaccines & immunotherapeutics*, 11(5), 1223-1234.

² 陳啟銘(2012)。要不要用新生技的豬瘟疫苗。《現代養豬》，第33卷，第8期，39-43頁。

³ 鄧明中(2015)。豬瘟防治及現行豬瘟疫苗的比較探討。《獸醫專訊》，第11期，53-60頁。

⁴ United States Department of Agriculture. (2013). VETERINARY SERVICES MEMORANDUM NO. 800.213

⁵ Harrisvaccines. Retrieved from:

https://www.sbir.gov/sites/default/files/SBASuccess_Harrisvaccines_Final.pdf

painful convulsions and muscle spasms, causing the animals to cry out.⁶ The more common carbon dioxide inhalation method, however, is by no means humane. Carbon dioxide can induce pain, distress, fear, and "air hunger" in animals, who struggle for their last breath before losing consciousness. Several countries recommend against using carbon dioxide alone as a euthanasia method. In the US, for example, the American Veterinary Medical Association recommends that it not be administered as the sole euthanasia agent but should be used with a sedative as premedication as rabbits can hold their breaths and show distress when carbon dioxide alone is administered.⁷



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⁶ Leary, S., Underwood, W., Anthony, R., Cartner, S., Corey, D., Grandin, T., ... & Miller, D. (2013). AVMA guidelines for the euthanasia of animals: 2013 edition.

⁷ Leary, S., Underwood, W., Anthony, R., Cartner, S., Corey, D., Grandin, T., ... & Miller, D. (2013). AVMA guidelines for the euthanasia of animals: 2013 edition.