

Product animal-testing: an eye-opener

STI-ANNE-DE-BELLEVUE (CUP)--

by Yacinda Vallejo

Has anyone out there ever thought about how that Gillette Shaving Lotion came to be? Or how that sheet of Bounce was manufactured to make your clothes soft and oh-so-static-free? Well, the following may be of interest to you, because the ingredients in your Gillette Foamy were achieved at the cost of many animal lives. Gillette, Procter and Gamble, Colgate-Palmolive, and many others all have one thing in common (besides selling shaving cream and soap): they test their products on living, breathing, defenceless animals, a practice we would call torture if it were performed on humans.

"So what?" you might say. But what many people are unaware of is the degree of needless pain and suffering these tests inflict on the animals and just how widespread this testing is; the National Anti-Vivisection Society of the U.S. lists more than 300 products, mainly cosmetics and household cleaners.

Manufacturing companies have various ways of determining whether a product is "safe" enough to be put on the market, and also favour certain animals on which to put their tests to use. Rabbits are at the top of the list because, first, they are inexpensive (and profit is the name of the game), and second, they are not difficult to work with because of their gentle and peaceful nature. These factors are necessary to the performance of one of the most popular tests, the "Draize." This test involves putting some of the experimental compound (anything from hair wax to eyeshadow) into a rabbit's eye sac onto a patch of its shaved fur, and then sitting back to see what happens. After twenty-one days the results are recorded and the test-rabbit is killed.

Another interesting test is called the "Lethal Dose 50%." The LD-50 requires the animal to be force-fed or injected with the test material. The point of this one is to see how great a dosage of the compound is needed to kill 50% of a test-animal population. Once the rabbit has ingested enough toothpaste or bleach

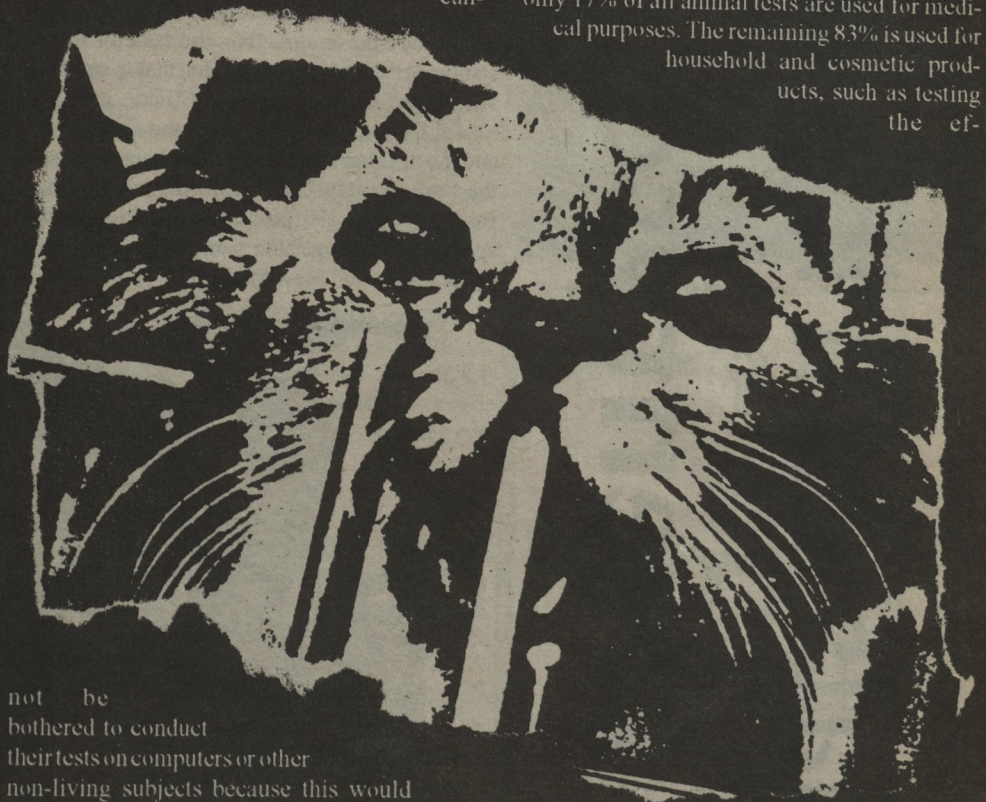
to kill it, the test is terminated.

Some other tests require the animals (cats, monkeys, dogs) to be operated on without anaesthetic, sometimes several times over, in order to verify the progress of the test.

There are alternatives to this kind of inhumane treatment, and why the major manufacturers of cleaning and cosmetic products don't use them is a good question. Most can-

Granted, the computers would cost a lot of money but try telling that to over twenty million dead animals. The American Food and Drug Administration (FDA) insists only that products put on the market for human consumption are safe; it does not specify that these products be tested on animals.

For those who are in favour of animal-testing because they believe medical research is furthered by these experiments, a maximum of only 17% of all animal tests are used for medical purposes. The remaining 83% is used for household and cosmetic products, such as testing the ef-



not be bothered to conduct their tests on computers or other non-living subjects because this would cost a lot of money. Mechanical and computerized models can be, and have been, used to reproduce physiological systems, and in-vitro studies with cell cultures are proven substitutes for animal-testing. However, converting their syringes, operating tables, and cages into computers and mechanized models is too expensive and bothersome. Dropping bleach into an animal's eyes is much simpler than using one's brain to conduct the research on other models.

fects of ingesting bleach. I believe that it is safe to say that something strong enough to clean your toilet-bowl is not safe to eat.

Does your cleanliness really need to be achieved at the expense of even one dead rabbit? ●