Charles River Laboratories (CRL) – Overview:

Charles River Laboratories profits by importing, breeding and selling millions of animals—from mice to monkeys—for use in cruel and invasive experiments in laboratories around the world, as well as by conducting tests on animals for companies that produce industrial chemicals, pesticides, food additives, and pharmaceuticals. The world's largest breeder of animals for use in experiments, Charles River supplies one of every two animals used in experimentation—which means that the company has a hand in fully half of all the pain, misery, fear, and distress endured by animals in laboratories.

The company is the second-largest importer of nonhuman primates into the U.S., bringing in thousands of monkeys from China and Mauritius, fueling the cruel international primate trade, in which infant monkeys are trapped in the wild and ripped from their families; and female monkeys are imprisoned for years as breeding machines on inhumane monkey factory farms. According to documents from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in 2012, CRL imported 4,478 monkeys into the U.S.

In some of the painful and deadly experiments that CRL is paid to conduct, dogs, monkeys, rabbits, rats, and other animals are poisoned by being force-fed test compounds. In other tests, animals have their skin burned off when experimental chemicals are smeared onto their bare skin and they are left for days without any pain relief. And in yet other tests, animals are forced to inhale toxic substances. The animals may endure severe abdominal pain, diarrhea, convulsions, seizures, paralysis, and bleeding from the nose, mouth, and genitals before they ultimately die or are killed. Even when modern and effective non-animal alternatives are available, CRL doesn't always use them. According to a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) report, in 2012, Charles River experimented on 753 dogs, 5,186 guinea pigs, 4,589 rabbits, 1,373 hamsters and 4,248 nonhuman primates. In 2012, the company used 5,187 animals in painful experiments; 83 of these animals were given no pain relief whatsoever. These numbers don’t include mice or rats, who comprise the majority of animals used in laboratories.

In order to secure contracts with the federal government, companies must submit the numbers of all vertebrate animals held at the facilities covered by the “assurance.” In 2010, the CRL facilities that submitted numbers to the government reported holding 1,797,980 animals. This does not include CRL’s facilities in Nevada, as the animal numbers were redacted from that government document.

The company has a long and sordid history of violating the federal Animal Welfare Act, and a summary of the company’s recent violations reads like a criminal indictment: inadequate veterinary care, failure to provide pain relief to animals, shoddy surgical methods resulting in the protracted misery and eventual death of a dog, and failure to investigate non-animal alternatives to experiments involving severe suffering.

- Rabbits with skin lesions 4.5-inches deep were given no medical care
- A dog suffered for more than three weeks, and was eventually killed, because gauze was left in his body after surgery.
Guinea pigs were repeatedly bled from their eyes, multiple times over a two-day period in violation of veterinary practices. Moreover, the animals were not given pain relief for the procedure.

Unqualified personnel caused such severe injuries to monkeys' fingers that the digits had to be amputated.

In 2008, 32 monkeys in Charles River's Nevada facility were cooked to death as a result of incompetence and inadequate institutional oversight. CRL employees were so upset by this incident that they leaked information about it to PETA, and we subsequently filed a complaint with the USDA.

In 2009, CRL employees carelessly ran a monkey through a high-temperature cage washer and boiled him alive. The company was fined $14,000 for these two incidents.

CRL neglected to provide treatment for primates so traumatized by living conditions in the laboratory that they showed abnormal behavior. A federal inspector witnessed one monkey in so much psychological distress that he had picked all the hair off his back.