

## The Sad Link Between Animal Agriculture and Experiments

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Image from [WeAnimalsMedia.org](http://WeAnimalsMedia.org).

It's common knowledge that animals are farmed for food and clothing. However, what will shock a lot of people is finding out that there is long chain of animals who are used in animal experiments to help bolster up and sustain the animal agriculture industry.

Cows, goats, pigs, crustaceans, and other animals are used in gruesome experiments aimed at trying to increase the profits of animal agriculture and prolong the life of this industry.

Imagine strolling down the meat aisle in your supermarket and seeing 'this product has been tested on animals' plastered all over the frozen roast chickens or slices of ham... how would people react to the realisation that by purchasing their lunch or dinner, they could be supporting animal experiments?

It's vital that people know about this strong, dark connection so that we can make informed decisions as consumers and more importantly, so we can use our purchasing powers to help end cruel animal experimentation once and for all.



Image from <https://nzavs.org.nz>

## Goats

Goats are one of my favourite animals and if you've ever met a baby goat, you'll know why! They are affectionate, defenceless, noisy little animals whose company could change a bad day to good one with a single nuzzle of their soft head.

Unfortunately, **baby goats aren't exempt from being used in animal experimentation.**

In one [NZ-based study](#), groups of goats that were two-day old were taken from commercial farms and transported to a research facility. Here they were disbudded (a procedure performed on kid goats to ensure their horns will not develop) with an **electric cautery iron**. At about 28 days of age the animals were divided into two groups, weighed, and **restrained in a device**.

One group of baby goats were euthanised with a non-penetrating captive bolt shot once. Every 30 seconds afterwards, the kids were assessed for sensibility (blink reflex and nose prick), leg movement, and cardiac activity (feeling the heartbeat, signs of breathing). At any sign of sensibility after the initial shot, another shot was fired in the same way.

The animals in the second group were euthanised with a non-penetrating captive bolt shot twice within one second. They were observed the same way as the first group. Kids showing signs of sensibility after the shots were given an overdose of xylazine.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of firing a captive bolt once or twice to kill baby goats. Our research has shown us that this isn't uncommon, that many animals are used in experiments aimed at trying to find the most 'effective' ways of killing them.



Graphic of captive bolt - image credit: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318830582>

## Pigs

Pigs are another animal used in cruel experiments. Previous exposés on pigs include [having wounds cut into their backs](#), [being suffocated](#) and an exposé on how [Auckland Island pigs are being exploited](#).

In [another study](#), **pigs had a fistula surgically implanted into their bodies** to create an opening to the caecum (end of intestine).

Eight weeks after surgery they were fed a casein-based meal, which included titanium dioxide as an indigestible marker.

Digestive matter was then collected through the hole made into the side of their bodies (the fistula) so that it could be analysed in different ways.

**Essentially these animals were treated like machines, like a car that you can pop the boot open of and look inside.**



*An example of what a fistulated pig looks like.*

## Cows

Cows are the number one used animal for science in New Zealand, so the different types of experiments they are subject to is vast. A heartbreaking fact for anyone who loves these gentle giants.

Mycobacterium bovis, a bacterial disease that infects cows has been a hot topic in the media over the past few years.

Rather than focusing on mitigating the impact of this disease by having less cows or transitioning away from farming cows for food all together, research has been conducted into vaccinations against Mycobacterium bovis. While at first glance this sounds like a noble quest, once you dig a little deeper, it's clear that countless animals will be made to suffer to try and combat this disease.

In [one study](#), healthy cows were purposely infected with Mycobacterium bovis that was taken from a diseased possum. These animals were split into three groups, one group received a vaccine before infection, one group received a vaccine after infection and the other group was left untreated.

The effects of this disease don't sound pleasant, [according to Dairy NZ](#) themselves it can cause:

- untreatable mastitis
- severe pneumonia
- ear infections
- abortions
- swollen joints and lameness (severe arthritis/synovitis)

At the end of the study, all animals were killed so that the affected tissue could be examined. A sad outcome for initially healthy animals who could have lived long and happy lives.



Image from <https://nzavs.org.nz>

## Crustaceans

Crustaceans (crabs, lobsters, shrimp etc.) are a less thought about animal when it comes to animal experimentation but since they are eaten, they too are subject to experiments for the animal agriculture industry.

For example, when wild lobsters are caught via commercial fishing and transported nationally and internationally, **some of the animals don't recover from transport conditions** (extreme temperature changes, lack of oxygen, CO2 build-up etc). A potential profit loss for the industry.

One [study](#) investigated the impact on these animals when they are left outside of water. Here, spiny rock lobsters were caught from the wild and kept for experimentation for 12 to 36 months in 1600-litre black plastic tanks.

In the first experiment, lobsters were anaesthetised and then put into respirometers where they didn't have room to move much. They were subjected to three different temperature regimes (17.8, 12 and 6.3 °C). They were put in a recovery tank and the effects of the temperature changes were assessed.

In the second experiment, lobsters were anaesthetised and surgically fitted with electrodes to measure the heart rate. **Through 4 holes made into their shell, the coated electrodes were put in and secured with a piece of rubber matting and superglue.**

They too were subjected to three different temperature regimes (15 °C, 7.5 °C and 3.7 °C).

The fates of these animals weren't specified in the publication. While it's unlikely that they were returned to the wild, we remain hopeful that this was the case.

It hurts my heart to imagine these animals being forcefully taken from their home and then moved from tank to tank, with unnaturally changing water temperatures. **The discomfort they felt would have been very real.**



Image from <https://nzavs.org.nz>

As you can see, the connection between animal experimentation and animal agriculture is strong. Most people don't even know this issue exists, which is why NZAVS has launched a campaign to raise awareness. You can help end these barbaric tests by spreading the word of what is happening to these innocent animals and by using your consumer power to avoid fueling this industry by going vegan.

Learn more about the NZAVS and how you can support their important and impactful work by visiting their [website](https://nzavs.org.nz).