

## **Statement in support of animal research in Belgium and a transparent approach**

The Belgian life sciences sector is at the forefront of developing ground breaking treatments, cures and diagnostics which transform the lives of humans and animals. To maintain this position we need to continue increasing our understanding of biology in health and disease. In principle, we use cell-cultures and computer models. When for some complex processes these are not suitable, research may involve animals. A substantial proportion of animal research in Belgium is required to protect the safety of human and veterinary patients. We always strive to reduce the number of animals necessary, to refine the methodology and to develop viable alternatives. Animal research in Belgium is highly regulated; it is overseen by ethical committees and carried out by qualified people in accredited facilities.

Openness about animal research contributes to a higher level of public understanding and acceptance of the use of animals in research. Public scrutiny has also played an essential role in the world-leading ethical framework that supports our animal research and encourages us to meet the highest animal welfare standards, only studying animals where no alternative exists. Public confidence in our research rests on the scientific community embracing an open approach and taking part in an on-going conversation about animal research.

We realise the need to continue to develop an open dialogue between the research community and the public about when, why and how animals are used in research, and about the benefits of animal research to bioscience and human and veterinary medicine. We, the undersigned, therefore commit to work together to develop practical steps which will underpin a transparent approach to animal research in Belgium.

23 signatories to the statement

