

An Alliance for
Evidence-Based Science



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Ricky Gervais and Chris Packham join FLOE's Patron, Peter Egan, in leading public figures on an Open Letter to end animal experiments

Ricky Gervais and Chris Packham have joined Peter Egan in leading public figures on an Open Letter to animal experimenter Prof. Colin Blakemore – infamous for sewing kitten's eyes shut and Britain's main advocate for experiments on dogs, cats and other animals.

The Open Letter focuses on Prof. Blakemore's support for the mass breeding of laboratory Beagle puppies, at B&K Universal in Yorkshire.

The letter calls for Prof. Blakemore to agree to debate his views in a rigorous public science hearing, overseen by independent scientific experts who will judge his claims: that results from animal experiments are able to predict the responses of human patients, in medical research and testing.

The Open Letter draws attention to current scientific evidence which proves that Prof. Blakemore's claims about animal testing are now exposed as false. Up-to-date medical facts confirm that results from animal experiments are now proven to fail the search for human treatments and cures – a position reported by pharmaceutical companies and *The British Medical Journal* in its Editor's Choice, June 2014.

Leading human rights defence barrister, Michael Mansfield QC, has endorsed the hearing's debate conditions as "well set out and fair".

Ricky Gervais says:

"Watching Colin Blakemore narrating a film about his light deprivation experiments on kittens, kept in total darkness from birth, is chilling. I'm delighted to be signing an Open Letter calling for Prof. Blakemore to face the world's leading medical opposition to such experiments, in a public science hearing judged by independent experts. I want people to be able to understand how these shocking experiments, on beautiful cats, are now proven to also fail humans".

Chris Packham says:

"I am delighted to be adding my name to an Open Letter to Prof. Colin Blakemore, and hope very much that he will agree to participate in its vital call for a rigorous public scientific debate.

Historically speaking, experiments on animals were first institutionalised in 1847, by a doctor who went on to reject the Theory of Evolution. With today's scientific expertise, we now understand that even human identical twins do not always predict biological responses for each other – such is our detailed level of knowledge about genetics, and the unique genetic profile of each individual patient. Add this to our present-day understanding of the roles evolutionary biology and complexity science play in medical research, and we have evidence which exposes the fallacy of continuing to claim that experiments on dogs, and other animals, are a viable scientific practice for human patients.

Our letter to Prof. Blakemore represents a vital call for fair and open public scientific debate, so that decision makers can be informed by highly qualified experts - outside those with a vested interest”.

FLOE’s Patron, Peter Egan says:

“It is time to raise national awareness about the shocking reality of state-sponsored cruelty to dogs, happening right here on our doorstep, in the UK. Ruling against years of informed local planning decisions, the Government has now granted permission for Hull-based laboratory animal breeders ‘B&K Universal’ to breed around 2,000 Beagles annually - for cruel medical testing experiments that are also now proven to fail human patients, in the search for effective treatments and cures.

With those still holding a vested interest in selling the 19th century practice of animal testing to society, under their false promise of medical progress, our Open Letter calls for a fair and rigorous public scientific debate, that stands to save millions of laboratory animals and human patients alike. The outcome of this debate - determined by up-to-date scientific knowledge – with its vital effect on the lives of so many, quite simply cannot happen soon enough”.

Over 100 cross-party MPs have signed EDMs calling for this historic hearing, including Jeremy Corbyn, Sir Greg Knight, Caroline Lucas, Tim Farron and Sammy Wilson.

Life-saving cutting edge Non-Animal Techniques (NATs) are available and have a human-relevant track record of success. According to medical experts – working outside the animal-based research sector – the continued finance of worthless animal experiments starves NATs of vital funding, preventing their essential role in the discovery of effective treatments and cures.

RESOURCES

Prof. Colin Blakemore narrating a film about his light deprivation experiments on kittens: available [here](#).

Footage filmed at laboratory puppy breeders, B&K Universal, [here](#).

British Medical Journal Editor’s Choice, June 2014, ‘How Predictive and Productive is Animal Research?’, available [here](#).

Quotes by pharmaceutical companies, available [here](#).

Dr. Jane Goodall’s [filmed statement](#) calling for the rigorous science hearing.

Expert [science lecture](#) given in July 2017, at the University of British Columbia.

OPEN LETTER

Dear Prof. Colin Blakemore,

A freedom of information request provided [your letter](#) to the Planning Inspectorate, recommending the extension of a Beagle Breeding Farm at B&K Universal in Grimston Hull. The farm will purpose breed around 2,000 dogs annually, destined for painful and traumatic laboratory experiments - typically involving dogs being force-fed chemicals in experiments lasting ninety days with no pain relief or anaesthetic. According to current medical knowledge the results of such experiments are not capable of predicting the responses of human patients, a position highlighted by The British Medical Journal in its Editor’s Choice,

June 2014. Over a hundred MPs, to date, have signed Parliamentary EDMs to hear this evidence in a public scientific debate, overseen by independent judges from the relevant fields of scientific expertise. In your letter, you claim to have 'always tried to engage with those who oppose animal research and take proper account of their objections', and that it is 'unacceptable' that research 'is impeded or prevented by extreme action'. We therefore call upon you to agree to participate in the thorough scientific debate, as called for by the Parliamentary EDMs and their growing support.

Yours sincerely,

Ricky Gervais, Chris Packham, Peter Egan, Lesley Nicol, Dr. Jane Goodall DBE, Jill Robinson MBE, Jane Fallon, Rick Wakeman and Rumer.

This Open Letter will remain active at [For Life On Earth](#), where further public figures can sign it.