



February, 2010

Dear Friend,

Once again, you and I begin a New Year working together to protect animals and the environment. Thank you so much for your generosity in 2009 and for helping to rescue so many animals through Project Jessie.

Please, start 2010 by joining with me in an urgent campaign directed at the University of Guelph and its Ontario Veterinary College. They're getting municipal pounds to sell them healthy and adoptable lost and homeless pets. Then, they knowingly let their veterinary students kill them unnecessarily. We have to stop them.

These practices are so harmful to animals, so unethical, and so bad for teaching students that the world's finest veterinary colleges rejected them long ago. But not the University of Guelph. And, not the Ontario Veterinary College.

And, that's not the worst of it. The University of Guelph doesn't confine its quest for "education" animals to its campus. No. It "seizes" lost pets from pounds and shelters in the wider community. Often when we work to convince municipalities to stop giving their lost pets to research institutions, University of Guelph attempts to block our efforts to pass better laws to help animals. Modernized, humane animal welfare laws, you see, would stop the University of Guelph buying healthy adoptable pets from pounds (in Ontario cats go for \$2, dogs for \$6 and in other provinces, its an open market), and having them killed for no justifiable reason.

Working together, you and I – and others like us – can protect lost and abandoned pets from the University of Guelph and the Ontario Veterinary College.

Let me explain the campaign we're planning, and why it must have your support. In fact, our plan can't work without you, because it's all about you.

Our plan is a two-pronged attack. Let's start with the first prong. Based on their actions and policies, neither University of Guelph nor the Ontario Veterinary College takes seriously the ethical treatment of animals. However, what they do take seriously is money – and very, very seriously at that.

221 Broadview Avenue, Suite 101, Toronto, Ontario M4M 2G3
T/ 416-462-9541 F/ 416-462-9647

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The University of Guelph has shown that will never modernize its animal care policies because it's the right thing to do for the animals or its students. It *will* do it, I'm convinced, if it thinks that \$8 million in donations might be threatened. That's where you come in.

You buy pet food. That gives you enormous power, "consumer power". I need you – I'm asking you – to use it now to protect animals from the University of Guelph.

Here's how. Two of the University of Guelph's largest donors are Hill's Pet Nutrition and Royal Canin. They're pet food companies that market their products to people like you, ethical people who love their pets as family members.

Hill's Pet Nutrition has pledged to give \$5 million over 10 years (\$500,000 per year) to the University of Guelph's Ontario Veterinary College. Royal Canin has committed \$3 million.

I'm hoping that you'll write to Hill's Pet Nutrition and Royal Canin and ask them to delay their donations until the Ontario Veterinary College's animal care policies reflect the ethical positions that the two companies claim that they adhere to and promote to persuade people like you to buy their products. Or at the very least use their considerable influence to convince OVC to stop using live animals for terminal surgeries and other invasive procedures.

Included with this letter are two special mailers. Please use them today to send your animal caring, "consumer power" message to Hill's Pet Nutrition and Royal Canin. They will hear and heed your message, of that you can be sure.

They'll listen to you because both Hill's Pet Nutrition and Royal Canin advertise that they are "ethical" producers of high quality pet food. It's you they want as a customer.

Hill's Pet Nutrition states that it "does not participate in studies that jeopardize the health of dogs and cats." Royal Canin, it says, "treats animals with the utmost respect and does not participate in any invasive testing, or cause any harm or discomfort to any animals."

The "ethics" of the University of Guelph and the Ontario Veterinary College are the exact opposite of those of Hill's Pet Nutrition and Royal Canin. Indeed, the Ontario Veterinary College is guilty of the very unethical practices that the two pet food companies condemn.

By contributing to the Ontario Veterinary College, both Hill's Pet Nutrition and Royal Canin are betraying their own stated ethics. Their donations will, in fact, be used to jeopardize the health of dogs and cats and will cause harm and discomfort to animals. Many veterinary students who will benefit from the Hill's and Royal Canin contributions conducted terminal surgeries on live animals, including people's lost pets.

Please, use your “consumer power” and ask Hill’s Pet Nutrition and Royal Canin to withhold their donations to the Ontario Veterinary College until it and the University of Guelph stop forcing municipal pounds to sell lost and abandoned pets to them, and stop veterinary students unnecessarily killing pets to earn their degrees.

This won’t be the first time we’ve had dealings with the University of Guelph. It has rejected all of our appeals to modernize its animal use policies. Will it continue to reject them if it means having donations like the \$8 million delayed? I don’t believe so.

For ammunition when you write to Hill’s Pet Nutrition and Royal Canin, let me give you some background on the University of Guelph’s animal use policies and procedures.

The University of Guelph disregards the overwhelming evidence that killing pets – particularly those bought from municipal pounds – and other animals is detrimental to the education of its veterinary students, is often cruel to animals, and undermines efforts to persuade municipalities to implement sound companion animal policies.

Why does the University of Guelph act this way? I believe it’s because its deans and administrators believe that any concession – no matter how slight or justified – that reduces the use of live animals in teaching and research (much of it funded by major agri-business) would lead to further restrictions on its use of animals.

I say that because the University of Guelph has one of the worst animal use policies that I’ve ever encountered. Its policy is to do the very least that the law requires of it, and to confound any efforts to reduce its access to cheap research and teaching animals.

Just how poor the University of Guelph’s policies are and how much disregard it has for animal welfare is written in its own documents. This is from “Section 3” of its animal use policy statement:

3. Acquisition of Animals

b) Animals acquired from suppliers ... with whom the University has had prior unsatisfactory dealings, must be certified by veterinary inspection prior to shipping.

As you can see, the University of Guelph will buy animals from anyone as long as a vet deems that the animals the university is buying are satisfactory. Nothing else seems to matter.

Another example is from the University of Guelph’s “Surgical Exercises, VETM *450” course description:

Students select either the cadaver-surgery program or the live-animal program. In each program, course objectives & evaluation/grading are the same.

In other words, the University Guelph knows that it's not necessary for a student to kill animals to gain the knowledge needed to become a veterinarian. Still, it lets students unnecessarily kill animals, animals that we've shown we can find homes for. That is ethically untenable, and something both Hill's Pet Nutrition and Royal Canin claim they oppose and do not practice.

Unlike the University of Guelph and the Ontario Veterinary College, the world's best veterinary colleges understand that seizing pets from pounds,

- hurts municipal efforts to foster responsible pet ownership
- demoralizes pound managers and workers
- thwarts the return of lost pets to their distraught owners
- undercuts adoption programs that find new homes for lost and abandoned pets.

The world's best veterinary colleges never unnecessarily kill pets to teach. They know that killing pets is often cruel and always unethical. They've learned that killing pets impairs a student's education because it teaches an outdated, and discredited approach to the care and treatment of animals. They understand that killing pets promotes a disdain in veterinarians for the respected and loving place that companion animals have in their clients' homes and communities.

So, what about Hill's Pet Nutrition and Royal Canin? Will they listen to you? Yes, for two reasons. The first is that you, a compassionate and ethical person who loves animals, is the customer they depend upon. If you don't approve of something they are doing, they will take notice.

I've included with this letter a comparison of the animal welfare policies and ethics of Hill's Pet Nutrition, Royal Canin and the University of Guelph. As you can see, the three could not be more ethically different.

After hearing from you, I believe both companies will consider delaying their donations to the University of Guelph until it adopts animal care policies that better reflect both Hill's Pet Nutrition's and Royal Canin's ethics and values.

Please, use your special mailers today. Add your personal and heartfelt comments and mail them to Hill's Pet Nutrition and Royal Canin. Thank you.

The second prong of our two-pronged attack on the University of Guelph's terrible animal use policies is publicly exposing the Ontario Veterinary College's harmful, unethical, and antiquated animal use policies.

With your help, I'll explain to students and faculty why we're trying to block the Hill's Pet Nutrition and Royal Canin donations. I want to ask for their support, and ask them to put pressure on their university to modernize its animal use policies. If our past involvement with the students is any indication, many will.

Here, too, I need your help. With your financial support, I'd like to start the campaign in the university's own "backyard" using the university radio station, CFRU 93.3 FM (www.cfru.ca), and the student newspaper, The Ontarion (www.theontarion.com).

I want to start with campus media to keep costs down (we depend entirely on your donations and use them as effectively and as efficiently as possible) and to give the University a chance to "mend its ways" without having to go to the broader Guelph, Ontario, and Canadian communities.

A 60 second radio advertisement on CFRU costs \$15. A 1/4 page advertisement in The Ontarion is \$208; a 1/2 page is \$390.

Please, as we begin this New Year, I urge you to renew your support of Animal Alliance / Environment Voters with a contribution to this campaign.

The University of Guelph is much more than an institution with truly offensive animal use practices. It is an active, powerful, and determined foe fighting against policies that will help lost and abandoned pets, and laws that will protect companion animals.

If you and I work to influence major corporate donors, like Hill's Pet Nutrition and Royal Canin, to force universities like the University of Guelph to modernize their animal use policies it will help animals across the country. Institutions that do not have the best possible animal use policies will know what we're doing and begin to realize that their funding may be in jeopardy, too.

For the sake of lost and abandoned pets, please make a contribution that will buy two, three or more radio advertisements, or a 1/2 or 1/4 page newspaper advertisement.

Let me finish with this thought, as disturbing as I know it will be. None of the pets who share our homes are safe while the likes of the University of Guelph buys pets from municipal pounds and needlessly kills them.

Laurie Bishop of Dundalk, Ontario – one of our supporters – suffered that terrible reality when her beautiful Golden Retriever, Royal, went missing, and was sold illegally to the ever-eager University of Guelph.

The University of Guelph killed Royal the day he arrived at their facility. The staff deemed him too old to be "suitable" for research. They killed Royal before Laurie could rescue him. Then they tried to cover up the killing.

We were able to force the closure of the pound that captured and sold Royal, but the University of Guelph remains a constant danger to all our pets. Because of the University of Guelph, it's still too easy for a less than caring pound or animal control company to sell a pet for a "quick buck" rather than take the time to find the animal's owner or a new home.

Page 6...

Just as Laurie lost Royal, her friend of 13 years, so too can you and I, through no fault of our own, lose our animal friends to the University of Guelph or any other institution across Canada that seeks to exploit the “lost pet” tragedy.

When people like you and me, who care about animals, fight for change we often win. We did it in Winnipeg, you may remember, when we stopped the city selling lost dogs to the University of Manitoba, another academic institution with a poor animal use ethic.

Working together we can accomplish in Guelph what we did in Winnipeg, and stop the sale of pets to the University of Guelph and stop it killing animals for no good reason.

Please, be as generous as you can, for the safety of our own pet friends, and for those who are lost and abandoned and have yet to be offered their own loving home.

Thank you. And, yours sincerely,



Liz White
Director

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Liz White". The signature is written in a dark ink on a light background.

P.S. Two final requests, please, if you're aware of any pounds or shelters in your area that are selling their lost pets to research, let us know. We can buy them and find them homes. And secondly, please let me know how Hill's Pet Nutrition and Royal Canin respond to your “consumer power” request.