

Basel, 24. September 2009

## **Continuous improvements in animal welfare within Roche Research**

### **Alternative methods to reduce the use of animals in research rewarded**

Roche announced the winners of its global 3Rs Award Program - a unique and innovative program that helps to reduce and limit the use of animals in preclinical research - to recognise and reward innovation and continuous improvement in animal welfare within the Roche research organisation. The award, which is now in its second year, is based on the 3Rs concept, which means **R**eplacing animal tests where possible, **R**educing the number of animals required and **R**efining existing scientific practices as well as animal care and husbandry. Fifteen teams of Roche scientists and animal care specialists from the companies' global research sites in Basel, Penzberg, Nutley and Tokyo applied for awards in two categories: "Scientific Progress Fostering the 3Rs Idea" and "Laboratory Animal Care and Management".

In the Scientific category, a joint Basel-Penzberg Team received the award for improved cellular readouts which allow sensitive detection of drug candidate liabilities before entering animal testing. The team found a new *in vitro* assay that identifies toxic compounds early on without testing them on laboratory animals. This will also help to improve attrition rates in drug research.

The winner in the second category is a team animal care specialists from Basel. Their project involved gradually moving animals that were individually housed into pairs, then into smaller groups and finally into larger collectives. These housing changes increased the animals' social interaction and improved their overall well-being.

The global 3Rs Award program aims to strengthen Roche's commitment by rewarding innovation, fostering continuous improvement, encouraging global idea sharing across the organization, and challenging Roche researchers around the world to think of new ways to implement the 3Rs. Wide participation in the 3Rs Award program proves that Roche scientists are steadfastly dedicated to the tenets of the 3Rs and unwavering in their quest to find ways replace and reduce the use of animals. The award also raises awareness of Roche's continued commitment and responsibility to animal welfare.

While the number of animals used in research has declined over years, researchers still depend on them to gain critical scientific knowledge for novel medicines and to predict the effectiveness and side effects of medicines in humans. About 70 percent of serious side effects of new medicines are only predictable through animal testing.

### **More on the 3Rs**

First described in 1959 by two English scientists, Russell and Burch, the 3Rs concept means **R**eplacing animal tests where possible, **R**educing the number of animals required and **R**efining existing scientific practices while still maintaining comparable results. Although the 3Rs were introduced 50 years ago, the concept continues to provide global companies with guidance on alternative approaches to animal testing in research. Scientists should ask three questions about every experiment: Do animals need to be used at all? Can fewer animals be used? Can tests be conducted in such a way that they do not cause distress and pain to the animals? Abiding by the 3Rs helps to ensure that animals are only used when they are indispensable to gain critical scientific knowledge to develop future medicines.

### **About Roche**

Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Roche is one of the world's leading research-focused healthcare groups in the fields of pharmaceuticals and diagnostics. As the world's biggest biotech company and an innovator of products and services for the early detection, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases, the Group contributes on a broad range of fronts to improving people's health and quality of life. Roche is the world leader in in-vitro diagnostics and drugs for cancer and transplantation, and is a market leader in virology. It is also active in other major therapeutic areas such as autoimmune diseases, inflammatory and metabolic disorders and diseases of the central nervous system. In 2007 sales by the Pharmaceuticals Division totaled 36.8 billion Swiss francs, and the Diagnostics Division posted sales of 9.3 billion francs. Roche has R&D agreements and strategic alliances with numerous partners, including majority ownership interests in Genentech and Chugai, and invested over 8 billion Swiss francs in R&D in 2007. Worldwide, the Group employs about 80,000 people. Additional information is available on the Internet at [www.roche.com](http://www.roche.com).

All trademarks used or mentioned in this release are protected by law.

**Further Information**

-About animal welfare: [www.roche.com/animal\\_welfare.htm](http://www.roche.com/animal_welfare.htm)

- Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International Website:  
[www.aaalac.org/](http://www.aaalac.org/)

**Roche Group Media Relations**

Phone: +41 61 688 8888 / e-mail: [basel.mediaoffice@roche.com](mailto:basel.mediaoffice@roche.com)

- Daniel Piller (Head)

- Alexander Klauser

- Martina Rupp

- Claudia Schmitt

-Nina Schwab-Hautzinger