

(Earth Talk) Where can I find household cleaners that were not animal tested?

Written by EarthTalk® From the Editors of E/The Environmental Magazine
Thursday, 06 May 2010 00:33



Dear EarthTalk: *I am very interested in purchasing household cleaners whose ingredients and final product are not tested on animals. Where do I look?* --- Debbie Reek, via e-mail

According to most animal advocates, the fact that manufacturers of household cleaners still use animals to test the toxicity of their products is not only inhumane—why should innocent animals have to suffer and die so we can get our floors a little cleaner?—but also illogical, as modern lab tests not involving living creatures can discern more practical information faster and for less money. Another problem with animal testing is that its findings don't always successfully predict real-world human outcomes.

According to the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), for instance, animal tests on rats and rabbits over several decades “failed to predict the birth defect-causing properties of PCBs, industrial solvents and many drugs, while cancer tests in rats and mice failed to detect the hazards of asbestos, benzene, cigarette smoke, and many other substances.” The group blames these shortcomings of animal testing for “delaying consumer and worker protection measures by decades in some cases.”

While animal product testing is still allowed in the U.S. (researchers here are continuing to improve alternative testing methods that can potentially replace the use of live animals in the lab), Europe is leading the charge toward a future where highly trained lab technicians with computers and robots will replace sacrificial animals in assessing the toxicity of various substances. A ban on animal testing in cosmetics and household products will go into effect across the European Union in 2013.

American animal advocates would like to see similar legislation on the books in the U.S., but at this juncture it appears unlikely to happen for some time. Nonetheless, many are hopeful that Europe's action on the issue will help move the cosmetics and household products industries in the U.S. and elsewhere away from harming animals for consumers' sake.

In the meantime, if you're looking to avoid household cleaners that subject critters to poisons,

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you've never had so many choices. Back in 1996 eight national animal protection groups banded together to form the Coalition for Consumer Information on Cosmetics (CCIC) in order to unify behind one standard for so-called "cruelty-free" cosmetics and household products. The resulting Leaping Bunny certification logo is now proudly displayed on the packaging of more than 300 cosmetics and household products for sale across the U.S. The shopping guide on the coalition's LeapingBunny.org website points consumers to various household cleaning and other types of products that don't contain any ingredients subject to new animal testing.

Some of the top household cleaning products that meet Leaping Bunny criteria and are practical for a wide range of domestic tasks come from companies such as Seventh Generation, Earth Friendly Products, Earth Alive, Citra Solv, Nature Clean and Vermont Soapworks, among many others. You can order these products online via websites like Planet Natural and Green Feet, and many are sold in natural food stores.

CONTACTS:

UNFCCC, www.unfccc.int ;
Worldwatch Institute, www.worldwatch.org .

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EarthTalk®, c/o E – The Environmental Magazine,
P.O. Box 5098, Westport, CT 06881;

earthtalk@emagazine.com .

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