
Genetically engineered 'man made' mice sold at a discount

Coffee machines, a plush mouse and Apple gift cards as promotional gifts
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Sales promotions for patented and genetically engineered animals are flourishing on the internet. There are promotional discount prices and give-aways. Suppliers promise fast and low-cost delivery of mice and rats manipulated with synthetic DNA. Genetic engineering of the rats and mice can be carried out at any chosen location of the animal's genome. Prices start from around 15.000 € and the animals, often diseased, can be delivered on demand. All enquires are naturally strictly confidential. A new Testbiotech report reveals that the correlation between animal welfare and economic interests is deeply unbalanced. Recent developments will be discussed at a conference on 17 June in Berlin.

"The genetic engineering of laboratory animals has become a self-serving enterprise. Animal models are traded as profitable products, protected by patents and marketed aggressively. It is very hard to believe that the increase in experiments with genetically engineered animals is driven by a desire to increase medical benefits", says Christoph Then for Testbiotech.

In addition to economic interests, new methods in genetic engineering are playing an important role in these developments. Synthetic gene technologies allow the production of countless numbers of animal models. The report warns that this huge increase in technical feasibility is rapidly overriding the question of what is deemed to be necessary to find potential medical uses.

While most of the companies selling genetically engineered animals are based in the US, it has to be assumed that European institutions are also using these services. A large part of the experiments conducted on behalf of the European institutions are likely to remain unregistered in the EU. In any case there is substantial economic interest in the European market as evidenced by around 1500 patents already granted on animals and their usages. These patents even cover genetically engineered chimpanzees and can further create incentives to market as many animals as possible within the period that the patent is valid.

Testbiotech calls for ethical standards for ethical investments, more controls, higher standards in animal welfare and a prohibition of patents on animals and their usage in laboratory experiments.

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Further information: [The Testbiotech report](#) [2]

[The conference in Berlin](#) [3]

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