

The Hidden Face of Animal Research

From [Martha Rosenberg, CounterPunch.org](https://www.counterpunch.org/)

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Plum Island - photograph Source: kyselak – [CC BY-SA 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)

Animal disease research in government or government-funded labs often flies under the public radar and it goes way beyond COVID-19 questions. For example few are aware of the existence of the U.S.' [Plum Island Animal Disease](#) Center even though it is located in New York state near the northeast coast Long Island. During the Nixon era, bioweapons were [developed](#) there. Now the USDA's Agricultural Research Service conducts gain of function-like research into vaccines and other countermeasures against foreign animal diseases like vesicular stomatitis virus, foot-and-mouth disease and swine fever.

The 2005 book, "[Lab 257: The Disturbing Story of the Government's Secret Plum Island Germ Laboratory](#)," exposed biological meltdowns, infected workers and virus outbreaks at the facility [including lab](#) leaks that were seriously underreported by mainstream media.

Recently, a French laboratory worker was diagnosed with Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) leading to an immediate moratorium on the prion research the worker and others conduct at five public research institutions in France. Prions, misfolded infectious proteins, cause the fatal brain diseases of scrapie in sheep, mad cow disease in cattle (bovine spongiform encephalopathy or BSE), chronic wasting disease (CWD) in deer and elk and CJD in humans. The prion-caused CJD brain-based fatal has been confused with Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases in humans because of the severe cognitive and mobility impairments it causes.

While the infected worker is retired, prion research has been halted for three months to determine if a lab accident or exposure explains the illness.

In 2019, a French lab employee who also worked with prions, Émilie Jaumain, [died](#) at age 33 of lab-contracted CJD. Jaumain was infected with variant CJD, or vCJD, normally associated with eating prion-contaminated beef, venison or other meat said officials. In humans, CJD can develop spontaneously from no known cause or have genetic causes. Jaumain had [stabbed her](#) thumb with an instrument while cleaning a machine she was using to cut brain sections from transgenic mice infected with a sheep-adapted form of mad cow disease/BSE.

Prions are Widespread and Almost Indestructible

Though prions lack a nucleus, they reproduce and are almost impossible to obliterate as I reported in my [2012 animal disease expose](#). Prions are not inactivated by cooking, heat, autoclaves, ammonia, bleach, hydrogen peroxide, alcohol, phenol, lye, formaldehyde, or radiation and they remain in the soil, contaminating it for years.

The prion-caused chronic wasting disease (CWD) has become epidemic in U.S. deer and elk and [humans can catch it](#) though urban communities remain mostly untouched and unaware. Human cases of variant CJD (vCJD) caused by mad cow disease (BSE) in meat that was eaten [have occurred](#) in the U.S. but in recent years have been dismissed as “atypical” and thus not requiring herd and offspring searches for “Cow 1.”

Mad cow outbreaks in cattle threaten beef producers, exports and financial markets and CWD outbreaks in deer and elk threaten hunting income and state revenues. Both are barely reported as public health stories by mainstream media because of their serious financial implications.

And, with Midwest deer now carrying COVID-19 including one half of deer tested in Michigan, how might prions interact with the coronavirus? Why is that possible disease adaptation not being reported?

Brave New Animals Are Created for Lab Research

The creation of transgenic, hybrid and chimeric animals is underreported and disturbing. Transgenic mice like those infected with a sheep prion used by Émilie Jaumain are not new and date back to the early “[oncomouse](#)” and knock-out mice. “hACE2 mice” were developed to study SARS but interest waned when the COVID-19 predecessor seemed to hide. The mice are now [greatly in demand](#) for such research which is back with a vengeance. COVID-19 is, after all, SARS-CoV-2.

Because of the ethical and disease spread/security dangers presented by transspecies experiments, some Western scientists have outsourced such research [reported the Sun](#) earlier this year. “Human-monkey hybrids, souped-up viruses, head transplants and gene editing are just some of the tests known to have been carried out by Chinese scientists,” the news outlet wrote.

Most Pandemics Are Zoonotic Including COVID-19

The 1918 flu epidemic originated in birds and the [HIV epidemic](#) originated in apes but the zoonosis of COVID-19 has been all but ignored for political reasons. It is now found in U.S. [minks](#), zoo animals and deer.

Whether a fatal animal disease is bred in labs, hunting ranges (CWD), factory farms (BSE) or unhygienic wet/wildlife Asian markets, the possibility of animal-based human pandemics *and their variants* is the biggest lesson of the 21st century.