

Unilever to stop testing Lipton tea on animals

WASHINGTON, USA: Animal rights group PETA claimed victory on Tuesday, 1 February 2011, after the owner of Lipton and PG Tips teas, the giant Unilever group, said it would stop using animals to show the curative properties of its teas.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals said London-based Unilever had bowed to 40,000 emails and meetings between the group and company officials and halted the testing.

"After representatives from PETA and our affiliates in India and Europe flew to London to meet with Unilever... the company agreed to halt all such tests," PETA said.

No more testing

In an undated statement on its website, Unilever, the Anglo-Dutch conglomerate, said:

"Given the leadership role our tea category takes in the area of environmental sustainability and the ethical sourcing of tea, Unilever is committing to no animal testing for our tea and tea-based beverages, with immediate effect."

According to PETA, the world's largest tea maker had been injecting pigs with E. coli bacteria and then feeding them tea to see if it helped block the infection.

Unilever would also have rabbits fattened up and then fed tea to see if it would help clear the plaque build-up in their arteries.

And rats were fed tea to see if it could mitigate the ill-effects of high-sugar diets they were given.

Those and other tests appeared aimed at demonstrating whether tea had various healing properties that could be used in marketing.

"No more piglets will be infected with E. coli toxin and have their intestines cut apart while they are still alive... rabbits' heads won't be cut off, and other cruel tests that involved tormenting and killing animals simply to study the health effects of tea products and ingredients will no longer take place," PETA said in a statement.

Source: AFP