animals under certain circumstances are entitled to freedom from exploitation. In fact, ALDF is working to advance existing law to cover all animals, not just selected ones.

Needless to say, this growing concept of animal rights has profound legal and ethical implications. And it has strong opposition, too.

Many of the changes which we believe should -- indeed, must -- be made run head on into well-financed industry "interest groups" who try to portray those of us concerned with animal rights as "too emotional and uninformed" to understand the necessity for their particular brand of animal cruelty and abuse.

Right now, a major concern of ours is the giant "research industry" and the unnecessary cruelties and traumas to animals they continue to foster as essential.

While the research industry would like you to believe that all such research has a profound impact on cancer, heart disease and birth defects, the truth is that millions of animals are the victims of today's laboratory research which is repetitive, unnecessary, duplicates other studies, and will not significantly benefit humans or animals.

For instance, there are hundreds and hundreds of non-medical related tests fostered by the household products industry, alone, (although not required by federal or state laws) in which massive quantities of detergent, floor wax, oven cleaner, and a host of other products are forced into the bellies, eyes, and mouths of cats, dogs (beagles are a favorite subject), and rabbits to see how much the animals can take.

Predictably, these cruel efforts produce convulsions, hemorrhaging, extreme high blood pressure, violent vomiting, paralysis and death.

Of course, to maintain "scientific accuracy", the tests are administered without using any anesthetics or pain killers. To the animals, the pain and suffering are enormous. Still ... the tests continue.

But physical pain and suffering aren't the only abuses that animals must endure. Psychological and behavioral research tests are just as traumatic to the animals.

Here, the animals are deprived of light; kept in isolation; denied sleep; subjected to electric shock; pushed to exhaustion; tormented with ear-splitting sound; or suffer dozens of other "behavior altering" techniques.

Simply put, the researchers want to see what happens to their animal subjects -- frequently without any direct research benefit to either animals or humans.

And if the physical and psychological suffering isn't enough, the care and treatment the animals receive is often inadequate or inhumane.

In 1982, a government-funded researcher, was successfully prosecuted by the State of Maryland (by attorney Roger Galvin, now the head of our Washington, DC office) for animal cruelty, when it was determined that his macaque monkey subjects were kept in filthy conditions without proper veterinary care or concern for the animals. The researcher subsequently lost his $221,000 National Institutes of Health grant.

Believe it or not, this was the first time that an American scientist was ever held accountable for cruelty to animals. And we don't think it will be the last, either.

Each year, more than 50 million animal lives are snuffed out in tormenting "research projects" which are inhumane, cruel, unnecessary and costly.

Since much of this research is performed with the help of governmental and corporate funds, guess who pays the bill? Right ... you and I do, with our tax dollars and in higher prices for consumer goods.

We believe, and our scientific consultants confirm, that much of this research could be eliminated, at once, without any significant impact on scientific knowledge. We also believe that other research projects could be replaced with scientific techniques which don't require animal subjects. (Remember, at one time the only reliable test for pregnancy was the "rabbit test". Now, faster and less expensive chemical tests are more accurate and have eliminated the need to use live animals.)

This is just one example, but it clearly demonstrates that alternative testing methods can replace the cruel and needless destruction of millions of animals each year.

While we expect some voluntary cooperation from the research community may emerge, we believe that the problem of animal abuse and neglect has reached such immense proportions, that only aggressive legal action will expedite an end to these and other unnecessary research practices.

And just in case you've begun to think that we are only concerned with laboratory animals, I want you to know that ALDF's interests go far beyond this important topic.

ALDF is also actively involved in fighting for an end to other forms of animal abuse, too.

High on our list of animal abuses to be ended is the lingering use of the barbaric steel-jawed leghold trap which maims and kills wildlife, pets and domestic animals ... anything which steps into the trap's destructive jaws.

We believe that fighting for an end to all forms of animal cruelty and abuse is beginning to bring significant results.

Over the past several years, the animal rights movement, fueled by widespread public concern for all animals, has grown in support and sophistication.

Now, with several successful legal actions already resolved in favor of animals, with many other lawsuits presently in or headed for the courts, the need for a well-organized, adequately financed and professionally competent effort is essential.

While many lawyers have generously donated their time to fight on behalf of these precedent-setting issues, the importance of quick, decisive actions must be handled on a full-time basis -- far beyond the reasonable generosity of interested lawyers. The Animal Legal Defense Fund was created specifically to provide full-time legal effort to carry out this important work and to insure that animal cruelty and abuse will come to an end soon.

The approach which our staff of highly trained and experienced attorneys takes is