

TikTok Fame, Scientific Shift: Why one small charity's moment could mark the decline of animal testing in the UK

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This week's UK government release of its long-awaited strategy to phase out animal testing has received a largely warm response from organisations involved in the protection of animals.

With published targets, such as ending the use of rabbits to test for skin and eye irritants by 2027 and stopping the use of '100 mice a batch' tests for measuring toxic levels of Botox by 2028, it could be seen as real progress for animals used in science in the UK.

Perhaps now more than ever, people are taking a stand against animal testing, and a small UK-based animal welfare charity has amplified its message by utilising TikTok to engage with a new audience.

Naturewatch Foundation's presence at the TikTok Ad Awards 2025, a glitzy London award ceremony, spotlights the need for more education and awareness around the reality of animal testing and society's desire for it to end for good.

Shortlisted in the category 'Greatest Impact' for their short animated film, 'A Tail of Two Dogs', the charity highlights the difference in lives between two beagles, Toby and '43'. Toby is a much-loved family member, and '43' was bred and used in scientific research in the UK. Toby does zoomies in the park; '43' will never touch grass or feel love. The difference in the lives of two dogs, the same, just born into different circumstances, was expertly animated by Fire Lily Studio, known for their hard-hitting animations.

In UK animal testing, the majority of beagle dogs used in experiments are bred at facilities such as the infamous MBR Acres in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire with many people regularly joining protests against the facility's existence.

Kate Salmon, Campaign Manager at Naturewatch Foundation, said, *"We've had thousands of comments from people telling us that they didn't think animal testing happened anymore. It's so wrong that people are unknowingly buying products tested on animals, and aren't being informed of the suffering animals endure for everyday things like Botox or washing up liquid. People deserve to be able to make an informed choice about what they're funding."*

Launched in August, the short film has been viewed over 15 million times, going viral in less than 24 hours.

Paul Goodenough, Emmy-nominated and award-winning writer, founder of Rewriting Earth and Naturewatch Foundation patron added, *"Too often our eyes are closed to just how much suffering there is for animals, even in today's modern world- and that is by design- they don't want us to know. Films like A Tail of Two Dogs, and the tireless work of amazing people like Naturewatch is essential, because when people have their eyes opened, their hearts aren't far behind."*

Social media has its faults, with many social and ethical issues following its rise, yet this small UK charity has reached numbers far beyond its expected audience and used the platform for good.

More information and advice is available on the Naturewatch Foundation website:
www.naturewatch.org

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