Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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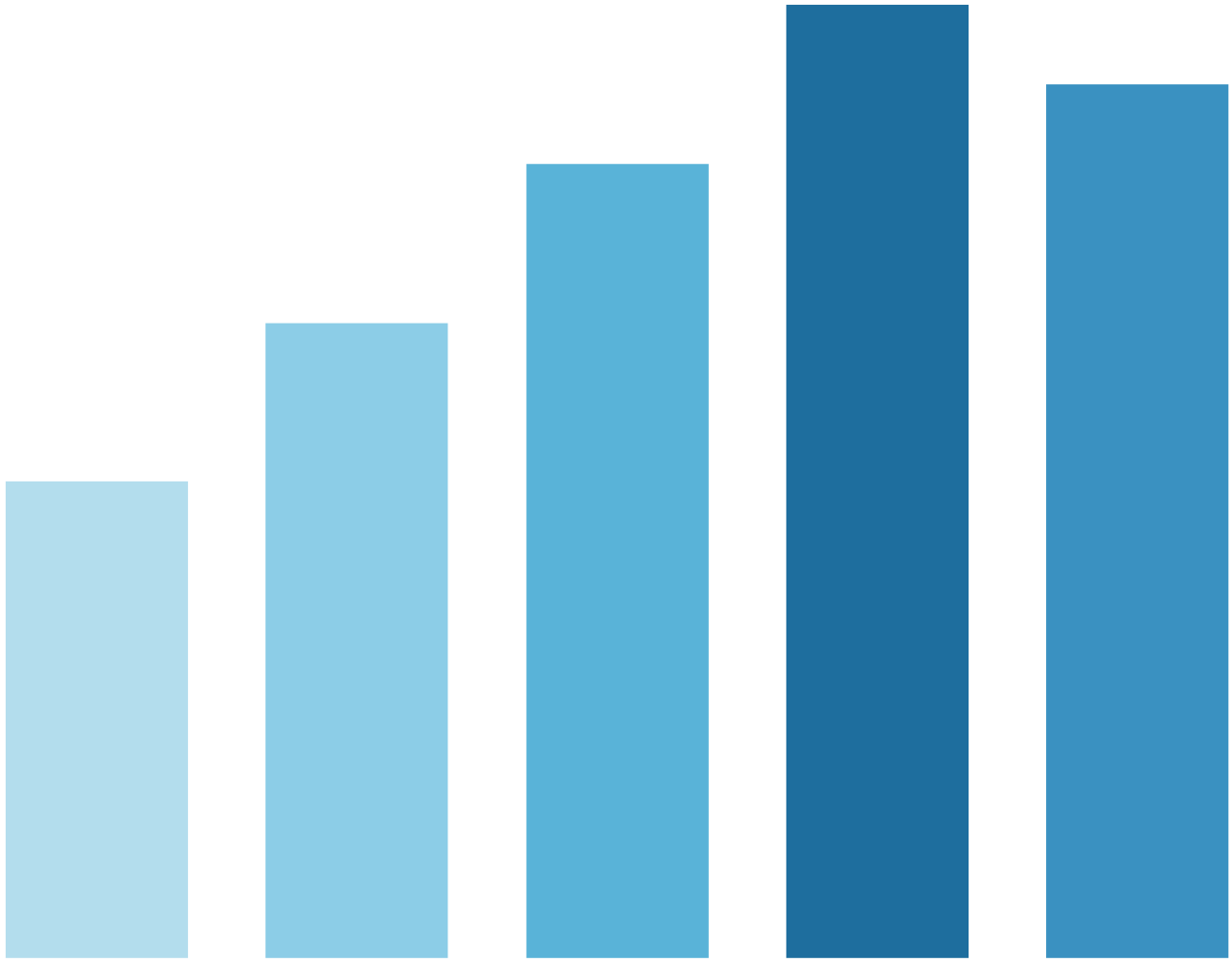
Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA
Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office FSVO
Animal Health and Welfare

17th September 2025

Report

Animal Experimentation Statistics

2024



KEY FIGURES AT A GLANCE

In 2024, compared to the previous year, a total of 72 669 fewer animals were used in animal experiments. However, the number of animal uses in severity degree 3 increased by 990. Around 36 % of animal experiments were conducted in severity degree 0, 30 % in severity degree 1, 29 % in severity degree 2 and 5 % in severity degree 3.

Summary:

- In 2024, a total of **522 636** laboratory animals were used. This corresponds to a decrease of **72 669** animals compared to the previous year. (For more information, see section 1)
- The number of newly issued licences increased slightly compared to the previous year (**+28 licences**) (see section 2).
- The number of animal uses with severe strain (severity degree 3) rose **to 27 380** uses. This corresponds to an increase of **990** animals compared to the previous year. Experiments in severity degree 2 decreased compared to the previous year (–**13 339**). The number of animal experiments in these two categories with the highest strain, severity degree 2 and 3, decreased overall (–12 349) (see section 3).
- In 2024, mice (approx. 67 %), birds (13 %), fish (6 %) and rats (8 %) were most frequently used in animal experiments. The use of mice declined by 3 %, continuing the downward trend for the most important laboratory animal species (see section 4).
- Around **62 %** of the laboratory animals were used in basic research (see section 5).
- Around **72 %** of the laboratory animals were used for research on human diseases (see section 6).

The raw data used for this report are available on opendata.swiss. Other visualisations are also available on the FSVO dashboard and can be accessed interactively there.

Table of Contents

1 General Information

1.1. Introduction

The number of animals used for experiments varies from year to year and depends largely on the animal species utilised and the research objective. Individual experiments can significantly influence the annual statistics. Only an analysis over several years would allow reliable conclusions about the development of the number of animals used.

This report is based on descriptive analyses. New animal experimentation licences are generally issued for a period of up to three years, which may have an impact on the use of animals in subsequent years. Combined with a very dynamic research environment, the data summarised in the annual reports are therefore subject to considerable fluctuations. This makes it difficult to establish causal relationships and to apply predictive models.

Against this background, it is of central importance that the following statistics are interpreted solely in a descriptive manner. They are not suitable for drawing conclusions about future numbers of animal experiments or for predicting future developments.

1.2. Overview

In 2024, a total of 522 636 animals were used in experiments in Switzerland. This corresponds to a decrease of around 73 000 animals, or about 12 %, compared to the previous year. Over the past 20 years, the number of animals used in experiments has ranged between about 560 000 and 760 000 per year. With the figures for 2024, the value is at its lowest level since the start of the animal experimentation statistics in 1983 (see Fig. 1). In the previous two years, fewer new licences were issued and the number of used ("active") licences decreased in 2024. In addition, three experiments involved significantly fewer animals (a total of about 41 000 fewer animals) than in the previous year. This partly explains the decrease in the total number of animals used but does not allow any forecast for the coming year or a trend for the next years.

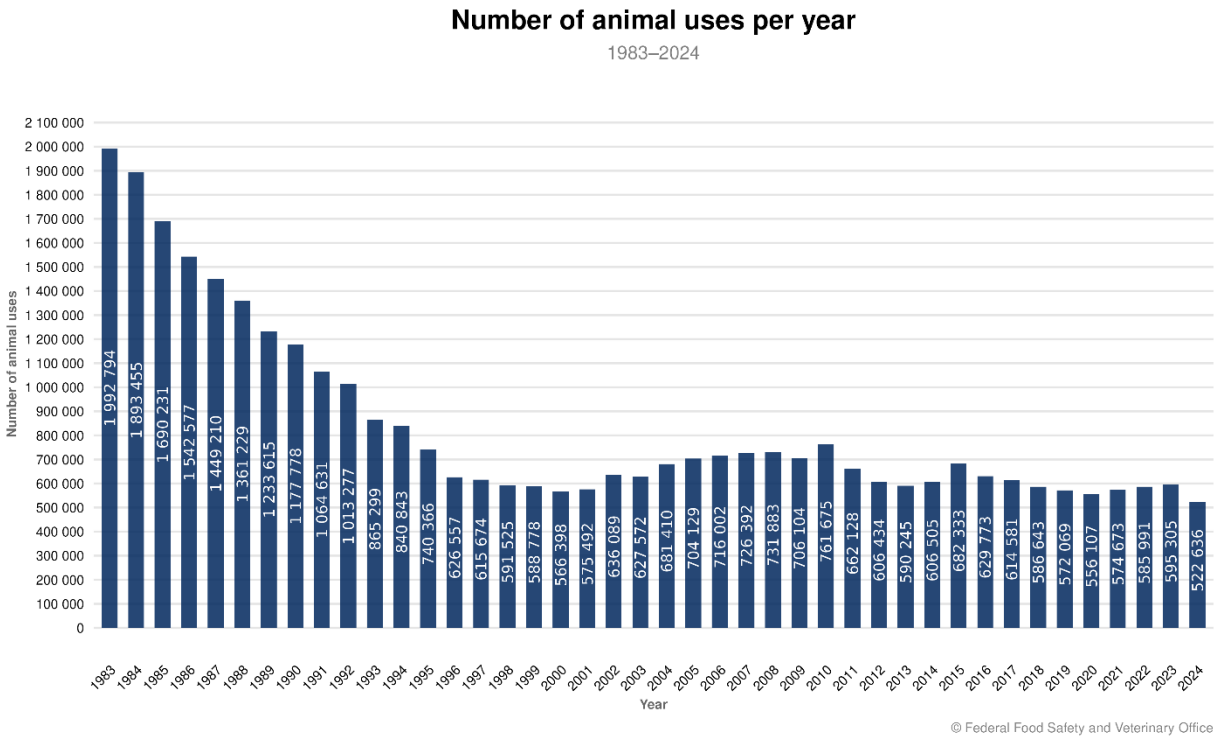


Fig. 1: The number of animals used fell very rapidly from 1983 to 2000. Since then, the numbers have stabilised within a certain range, with fewer animals used in the last 10 years than in the 10 years before.

2 Licences

In 2024, animals were used under a total of 2 245 cantonal (“active”) licences (80 fewer than in the previous year; see Fig. 2). Licences are considered active if they were valid in the reporting year and if animals were used under them; inactive licences are valid but no animals were used under them in the reporting year.

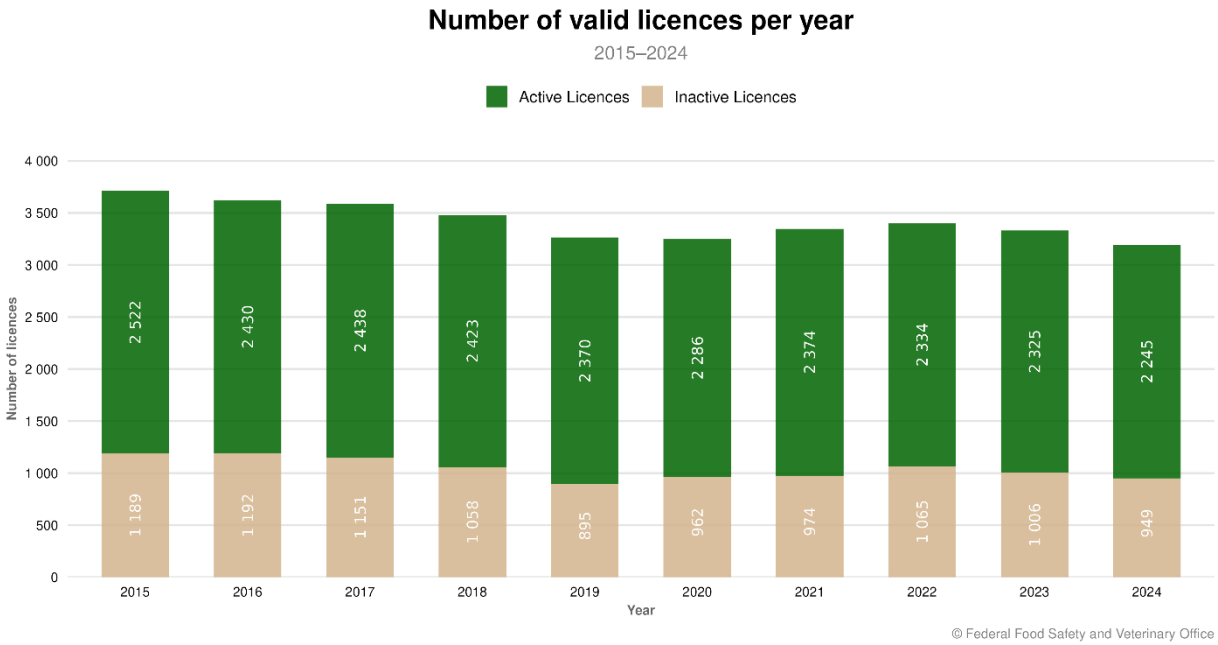


Fig. 2: In 2024, fewer licences (in green) were used for animal experiments.

In 2024, a slight increase was observed in the number of newly issued licences. A total of 588 licences were newly issued by the cantons (excluding renewal licences), of which 112 (+14) were in severity degree 0, 123 (+8) in severity degree 1, 236 (–11) in severity degree 2 and 117 (+17) in severity degree 3. This corresponds to an increase of 28 licences compared to the previous year. Nevertheless, the number of newly issued licences is lower in comparison with the last 10 years (see Fig. 3).

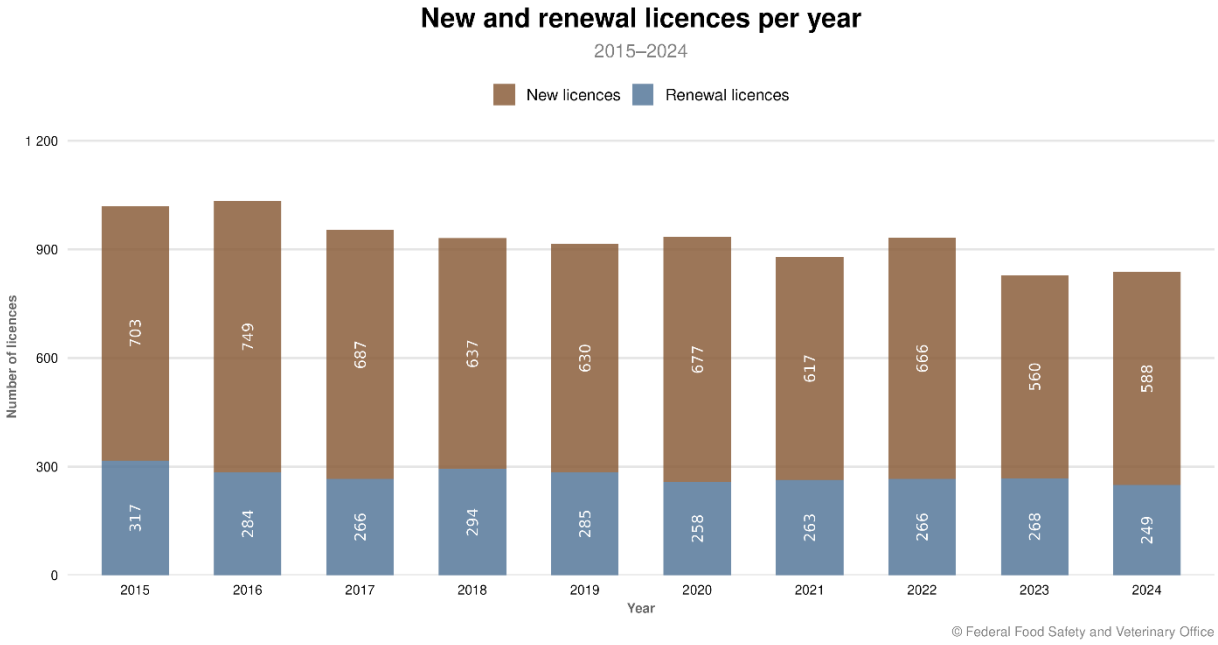


Fig. 3: In 2024, as in the previous year, fewer new licences were issued by the cantons than in the years before.

3 Severity Degrees

In 2024, there was a marked decrease of around 48 000 animals in severity degree 0. This development is partly related to the lower number of animals in experiments that had involved larger numbers in the previous year (in particular pigs and fish). In severity degree 1, around 12 000 fewer animals were used than in the previous year, and in severity degree 2 about 13 000 fewer.

In severity degree 3, the number of animals used increased by 990 to 27 380 compared with the previous year. This number thus corresponds approximately to the level of 2022 (27 030 animals used in severity degree 3) (see Table 1) and was not as high for the past 25 years. This increase over the last 10 years is mainly attributable to research on cancer (severity degrees 2 and 3) as well as on neurological and mental disorders (severity degree 3).

Change in the number of laboratory animal uses by severity degree

Year 2024 compared to the previous year

Severity degrees	2024	Difference between 2024 and 2023	%
Severity degree 0	187 400	−48 256	−20.47%
Severity degree 1	155 670	−12 064	−7.19%
Severity degree 2	152 186	−13 339	−8.06%
Severity degree 3	27 380	990	3.75%
Sum:	522 636	−72 669	−12.20%

Tab. 1: Change in the number of animals used by degree of severity in 2024 compared with the previous year. Only in severity degree 3 was there an increase.

The development of the severity degrees over the past 10 years shows that the total number of animals in severity degrees 2 and 3 has increased (see Fig. 4 and 5).

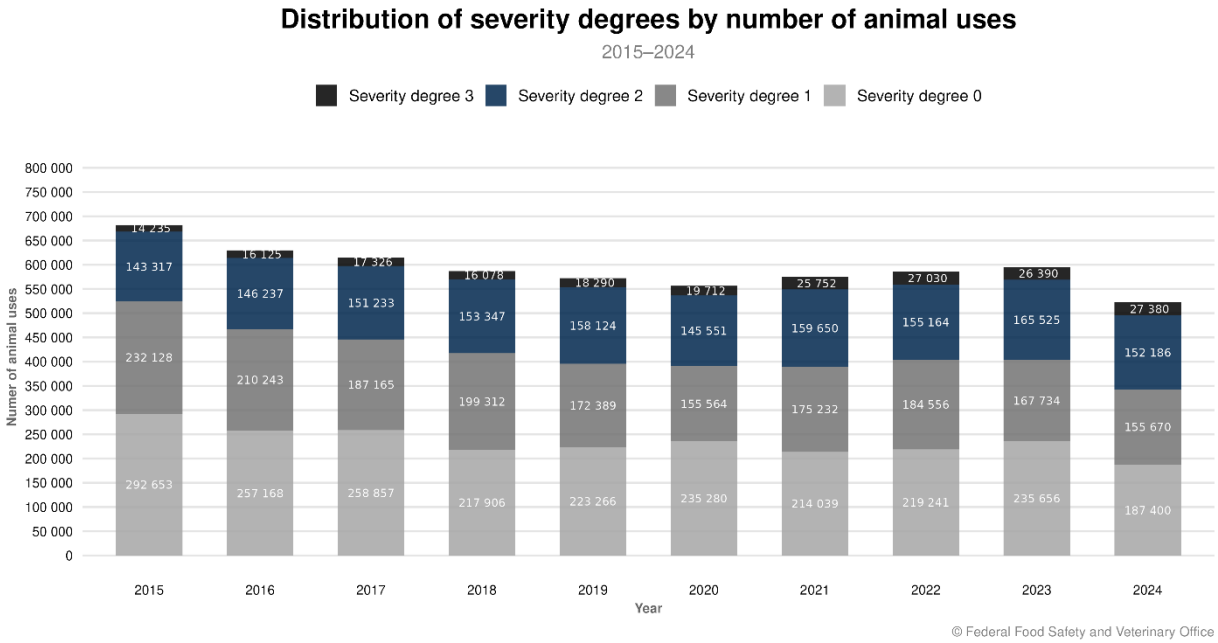


Fig. 4: The number of animals in severity degrees 0 and 1 has decreased over the past 10 years, while the number of animals in severity degrees 2 and 3 has increased.

The sum of the two highest severity degrees, 2 and 3, serves as an indicator for the use of animals in particularly high-strain experiments (see Table 1 and Fig. 5). Compared with the previous year, this indicator decreased by around 12 000 animals, which is due to a significant reduction in the number of animals in severity degree 2.

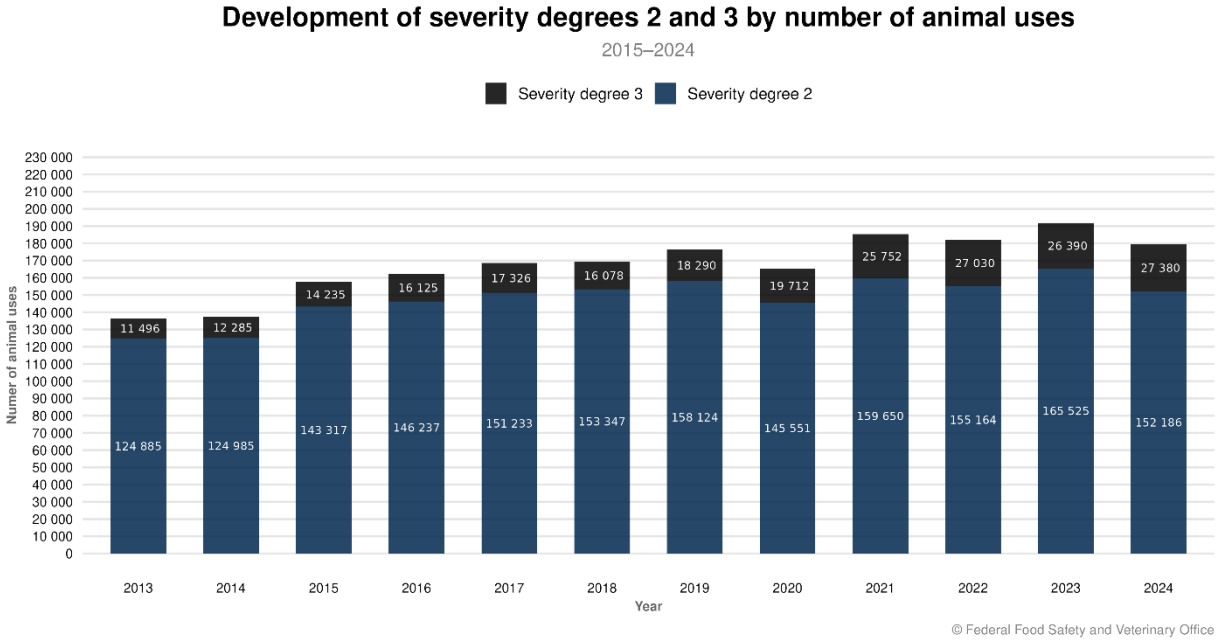


Fig. 5: The total number of animals in severity degrees 2 and 3 has increased since 2013. In 2024, however, a decrease in the number of uses in severity degree 2 was observed.

The increase in the two highest severity degrees, 2 and 3, since 2013 depends on various factors that cannot be fully derived from descriptive statistics. Nevertheless, two notable trends can be clearly observed. The rise in severity degrees 2 and 3 coincides with an increased use of genetically modified animals (GMA) in these severity degrees. The number of GMA has therefore more than doubled since 2013 (see Chapter 7). At the same time, it can be observed that the number of animals used for research on cancer in severity degrees 2 and 3 and on neurological and mental disorders, particularly in severity degree 3, has increased substantially since 2013 (see Fig. 6).

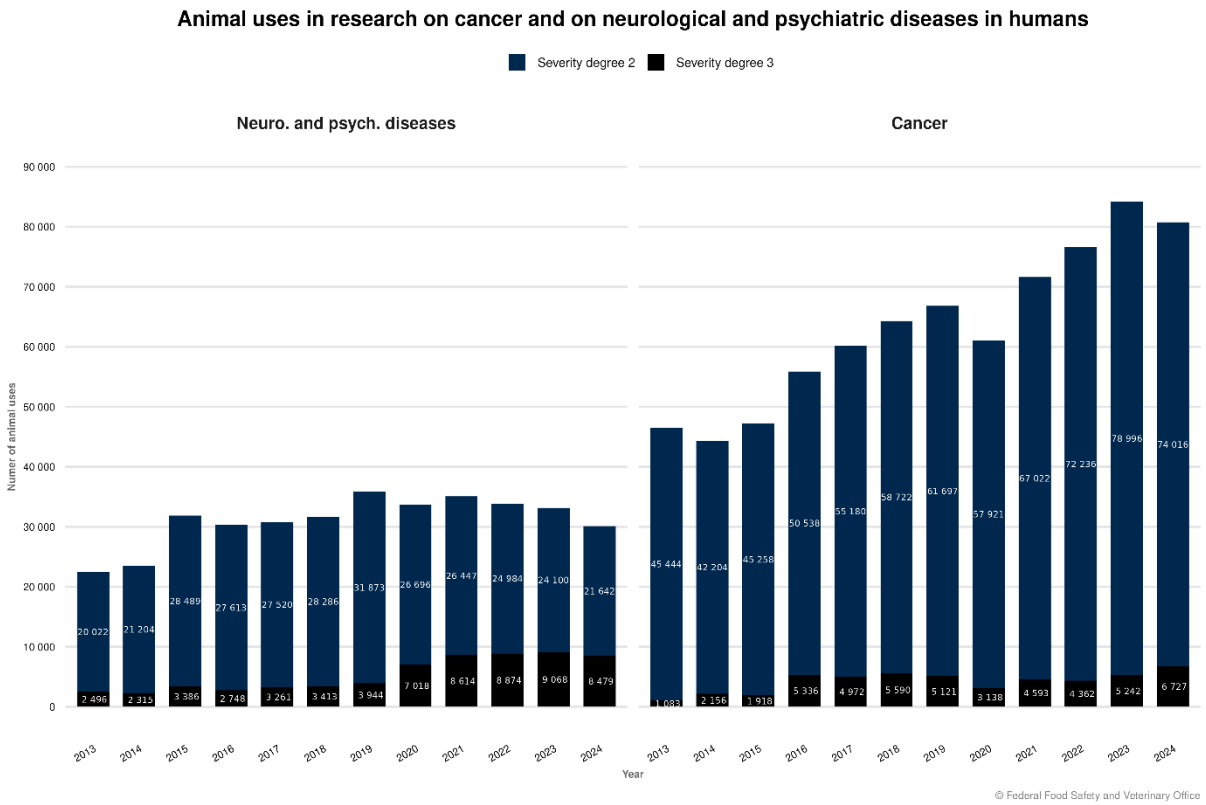


Fig. 6: The number of animals in severity degrees 2 and 3 used in research on human diseases, specifically neurological and mental disorders and cancer, has increased sharply since 2013.

Although the number of animals used in severity degree 3 decreased in 2023 for the first time (640 fewer animals than in 2022), it rose again in 2024 by about 1 000 animals and is thus back at a comparable level to 2022 (see Fig. 7). In 2024, mice (+1 367) showed the most pronounced increase in severity degree 3. Mice continue to account for the largest share in severity degree 3 (around 25 000 animals / 91 %).

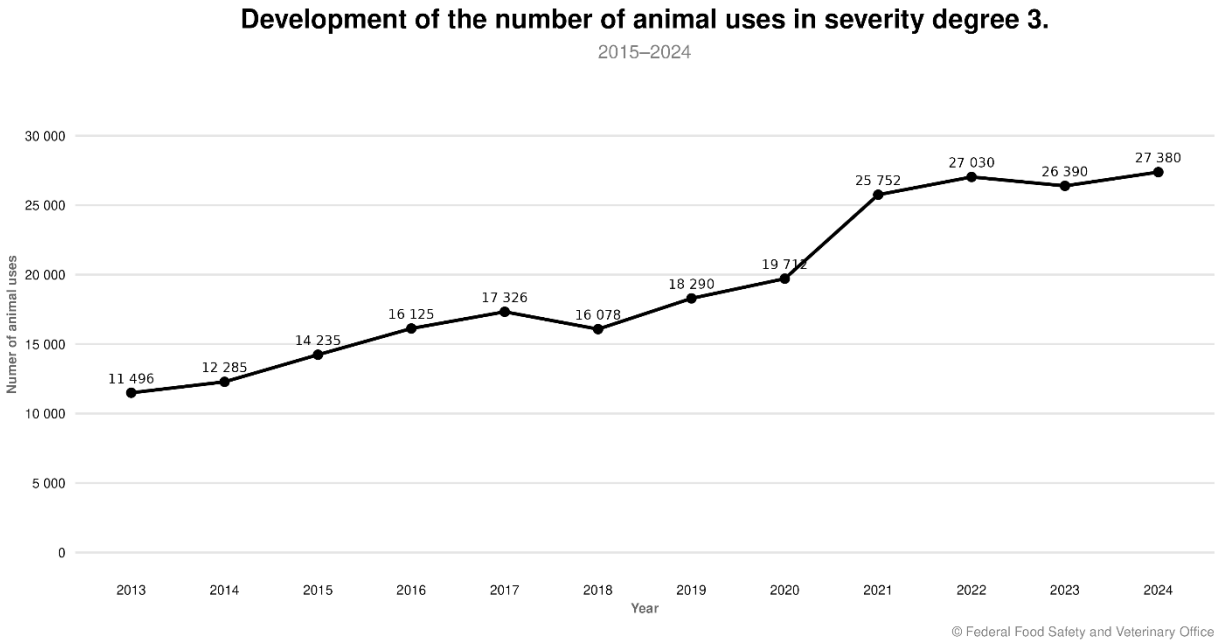


Fig. 7: Development of the number of animals in severity degree 3 over the past 10 years

The increase in high-strain animal experiments observed since 2013 was further influenced from the end of August 2018 by the revision of FSVO technical information 1.04 “Severity Degrees”. This revision led to experimental strains being more frequently assigned to a higher severity degree since 2018.

In severity degree 3 as well, a strong trend in research on neurological and mental disorders and cancer in humans can be seen. Since 2013, the animal use numbers have increased about sixfold in cancer research and about threefold in neurological and mental disorders (Fig. 6).

Further figures on severity degree 3:

- Around **91 %** of the animals used in severity degree 3 were mice, compared with **89 %** in the previous year.
- Around **81 %** of the animal uses in severity degree 3 were in basic research.
- Around **90 %** of the animal experiments in severity degree 3 were conducted for research into human diseases. In cancer research, 6 727 animals (+1 485 compared with the previous year) were used, representing a peak. In research on neurological and mental disorders, the number was 8 479 animals used, 589 fewer than in the previous year.
- Genetically modified animals accounted for about 42 % of all animals used in severity degree 3.

4 Animal Species

Compared with the previous year, mice (around 67 %), birds including poultry (approx. 13 %), fish (approx. 6 %) and rats (approx. 8 %) were again the most frequently used species in animal experiments. In 2024, the use of mice decreased by around 3 % compared with 2023. This continues the downward trend of the past five years (see Fig. 8). As mice still represent the most frequently used animal species, with a share of about 67 %, of which around 79 % are in basic research, this development is particularly relevant.

The number of fish used decreased significantly by 30 %. The number of rats and cattle also decreased sharply. Particularly striking is the decrease in pigs: after an exceptional increase in 2023 to over 41 000 animals, the number fell by about 86 % to just under 6 000 animals in 2024 and thus accounted to a large extent for the overall decrease in animal experiments in 2024.

For birds, an increase of about 1 % was observed, while the use of primates declined by around 27 % (see Table 2). In contrast, the number of rabbits used rose by 500 to about 1 000 in 2024. This increase is mainly attributable to around 650 more uses in severity degrees 0 and 1 and was caused by experiments aimed at improving rabbit health by investigating various health factors as well as studies to determine the properties of new medicinal products. In severity degrees 2 and 3, about 120 fewer rabbit uses were reported than in the previous year.

Change in the number of primate uses by severity degree

Year 2024 compared to the previous year

Severity degrees	2024	Difference between 2024 and 2023	%
Severity degree 0	182	−64	−26.02%
Severity degree 1	6	0	0.00%
Severity degree 2	7	−8	−53.33%
Severity degree 3	0	0	0.00%
Sum:	195	−72	−26.97%

Tab. 2: The majority of primates used were in severity degree 0 in observation and behavioural studies. Fewer primates were used in severity degree 2 and none in severity degree 3.

Overall, in 2024 fewer animals were used in most species compared with the previous year, after many animal species had shown increases in 2023.

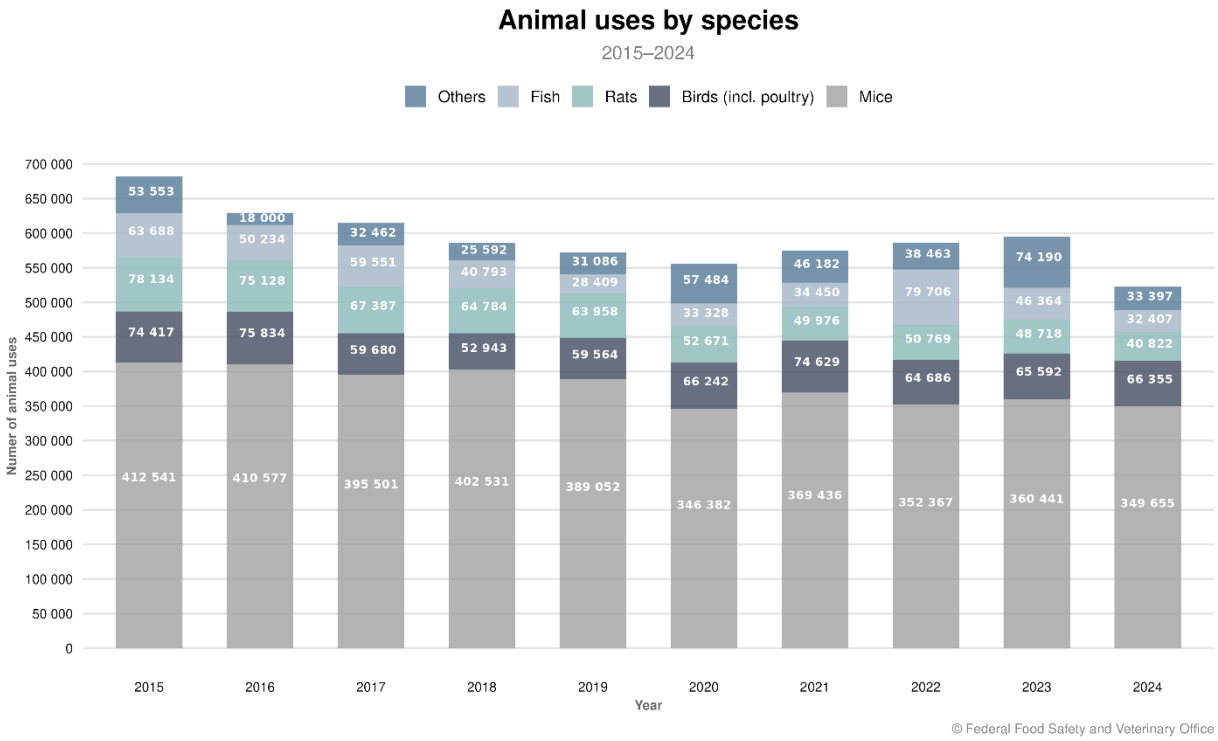


Fig. 8: Development of the number of animal uses by species 2015–2024

5 Area of Application

The distribution of animal experiments by area of application is comparable with 2023 (see Fig. 9). Most animals, around 325 000 (about 62 % of all laboratory animals), were as previously used in basic research. There were fewer animals than in the previous year, however proportionally about 7 % more animals in basic research were used. The percentage increase in most of the area of application categories is mainly due to the decrease in animal experiments in the category “Other studies”.

Compared with the previous year, there was a decrease of around 12 500 animals in the category “Protection of humans, animals and the environment” and an increase of around 800 animals in the category “Diagnosis of disease”. In the category “Discovery, development and quality control”, around 5 000 fewer animals were recorded than in the previous year. A decrease was also observed in the category “Education and training”, with around 4 000 fewer reported animal uses compared with the previous year.

In the category “Other studies”, a decrease of around 46 000 animals was observed compared with the previous year. This category includes experiments in fields such as animal health, animal breeding, environmental protection and animal welfare. This decrease is due to the fact that in the previous year a large number of animals were used in the main experimental phases of three research projects, which were no longer required in the current reporting year (see also Chapters 1 and 4 on the decline in animal numbers).

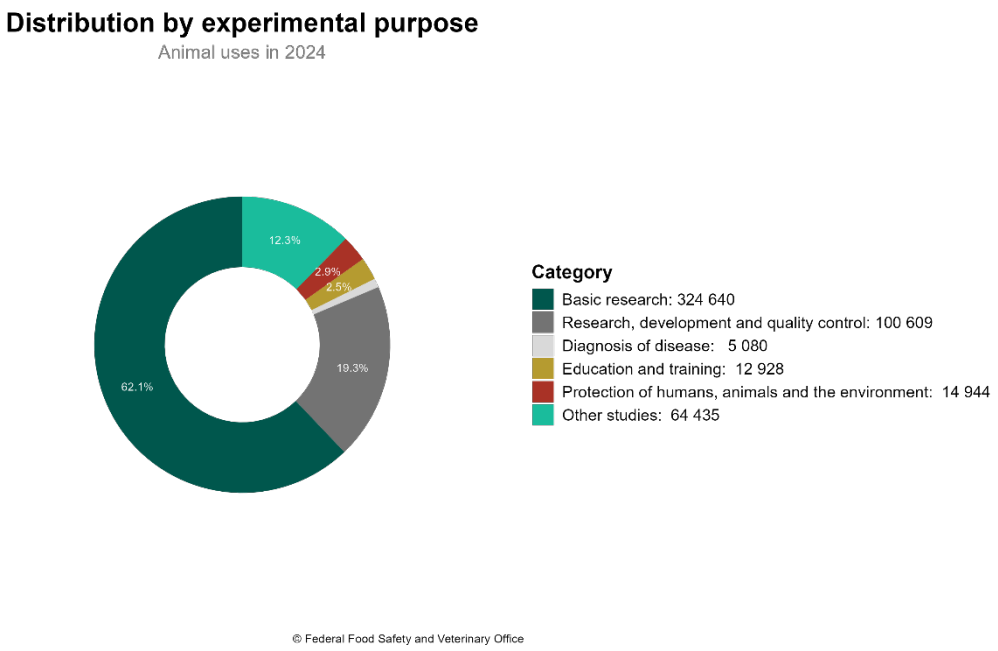


Fig. 9: The distribution of animal experiments by area of application is comparable with 2023. Most animals were used in basic research in 2024.

6 Human Diseases

Around 72 % of the laboratory animals were used for research on human diseases. This corresponds to a total of about 378 000 animals (approx. 12 000 fewer than in the previous year).

In cancer research, about 127 000 animals were used (similar to the previous year), and in research on neurological and mental disorders about 58 000 animals (approx. 6 000 fewer than in the previous year) were used (Fig. 10). Cancer and neurological and mental disorders thus account for the largest share of the human diseases studied as well as for slightly more than one third of all animal experiments (see Fig. 10).

A trend can be observed over the past 10 years: the number of animals used for research on neurological and mental disorders across all severity degrees has been declining, while cancer research has shown a continuous increase (see Fig. 11). In severity degrees 2 and 3, however, the numbers have increased since 2013 for research on cancer in humans, and in research on neurological and mental disorders the numbers have increased particularly in severity degree 3 (see Chapter 3).

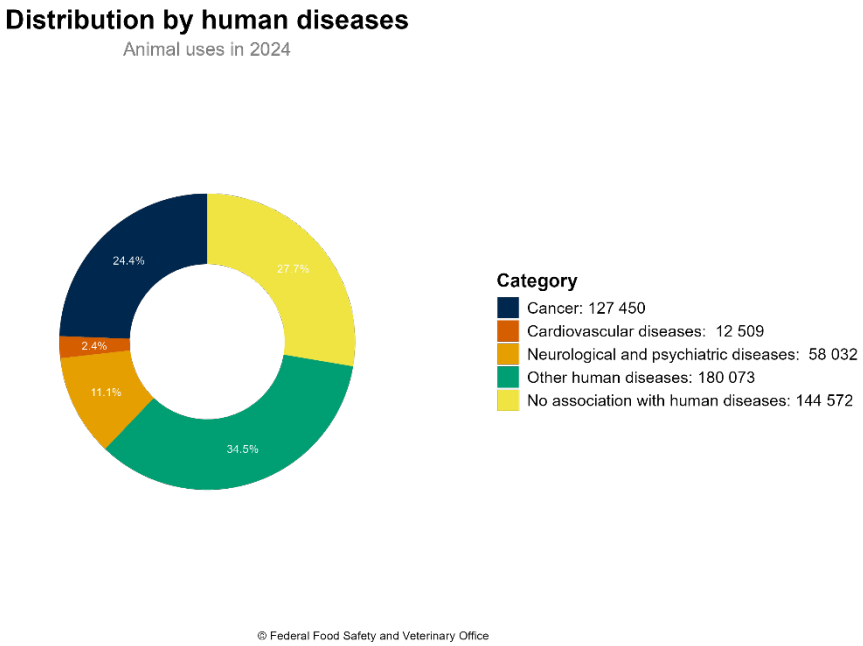


Fig. 10: Research on human diseases accounts for the majority of animal experiments (around 72 %).

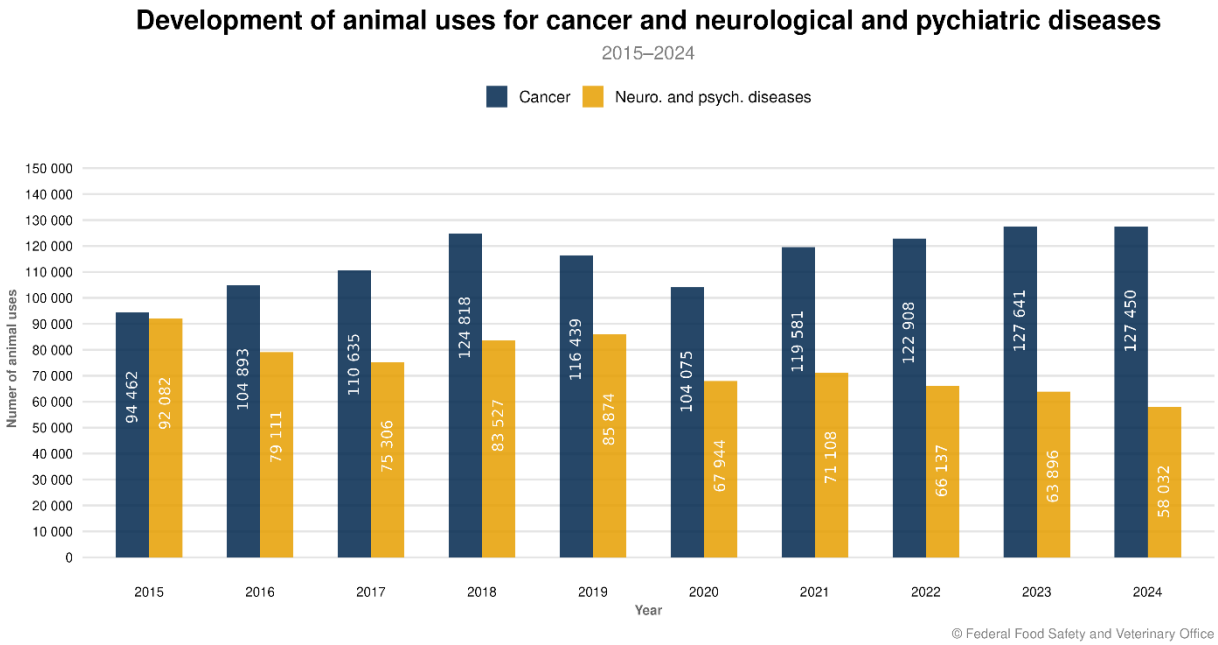


Fig. 11: The number of animals used for research on neurological and mental disorders across all severity degrees has been declining, while a continuous increase can be observed in cancer research.

7 Genetically Modified Animals

In 2024, around 165 000 genetically modified animals (GMA) were used in experiments (about 3 000 fewer animals than in the previous year). Of these, around 11 000 were used in severity degree 3 experiments, which corresponds to an increase of about 370 animals compared with the previous year. In severity degree 2, around 66 000 GMA were used in 2024, representing a decrease of about 800 compared with the previous year (see Fig. 12).

Since 2005, GMA have been increasingly used in animal experiments of severity degrees 2 and 3. The number of these animals has risen from about 13 000 in 2005 (which at that time corresponded to around 2 % of all animals used) to around 78 000 in 2024, which corresponds to about 15 % of all animal uses (see Fig. 13). By comparison: across all severity degrees, the proportion of GMA is about 32 %. In severity degrees 2 and 3, the proportion of GMA is around 47 %. This shows that genetically modified animals are particularly frequently used in experiments with moderate to severe strain. This indicates increased research activity with GMA in more high-strain animal models.

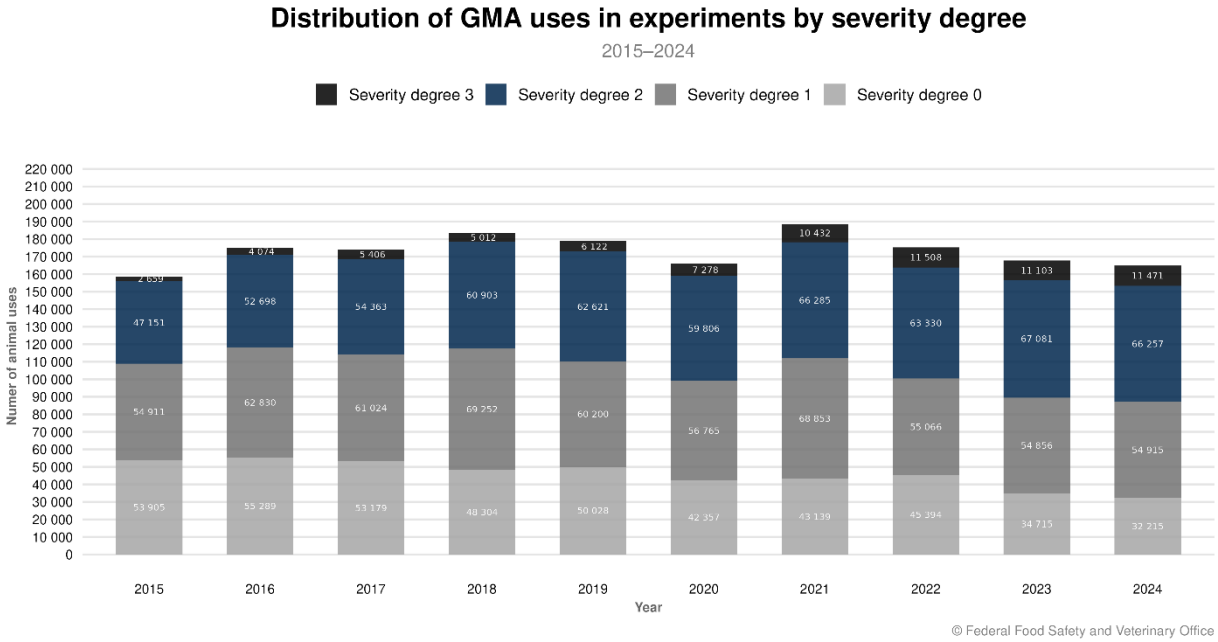


Fig. 12: The proportion of genetically modified animals (GMA) in severity degrees 2 and 3 was around 47 % in 2024.

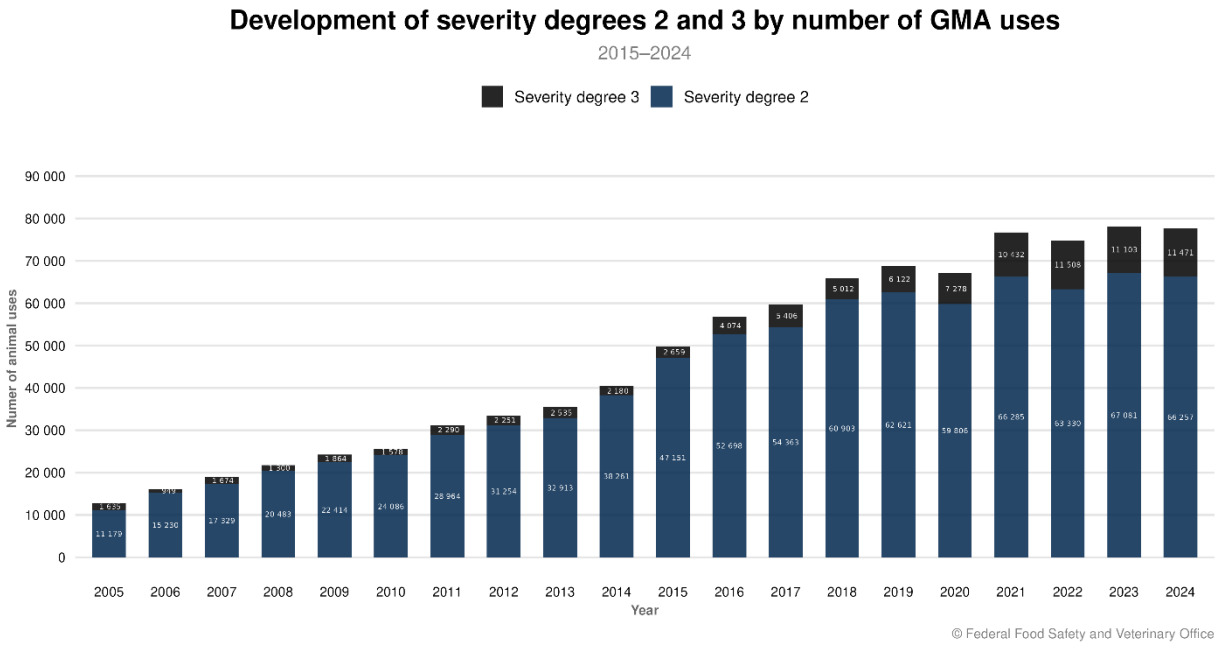


Fig. 13: The increase in severity degrees 2 and 3 coincides with a higher use of genetically modified animals (GMA) in these severity degrees. The number of GMA has therefore more than doubled since 2013.

8 Laboratory Animal Facilities

In 2024, around 926 000 animals were bred and about 217 000 animals were imported in 155 laboratory animal facilities. Compared with 2023, this represents a further decrease in breeding (2023: approx. 997 000) and an almost unchanged number of imported animals (2023: approx. 217 000).

Looking at the past five years, a slight trend can be seen towards fewer laboratory animals being bred in Switzerland: the number of animals bred has continuously decreased from over one million in 2020 and in 2024 was around 13 % below the 2020 figure. For imported animals, too, a decline of about 6 % can be observed over this period (2020: 231 000; 2024: 217 000 – see Fig. 14).

In 2024, mice, fish and rats continued to be the most frequently bred or imported species in Swiss laboratory animal facilities. The total number of mice was around 940 000 animals (2023: around 997 000), with genetically modified animals once again making up the majority. The number of genetically modified mice decreased from around 750 000 in 2023 to about 722 000 in 2024. The downward trend also continued for fish. In total, around 152 000 fish were kept in 2024 (2023: about 153 000), of which about 108 000 were genetically modified (2023: approx. 113 000). For rats, the total number in 2024 was around 38 000 (2023: 44 000), including about 1 500 genetically modified animals (2023: 1 900).

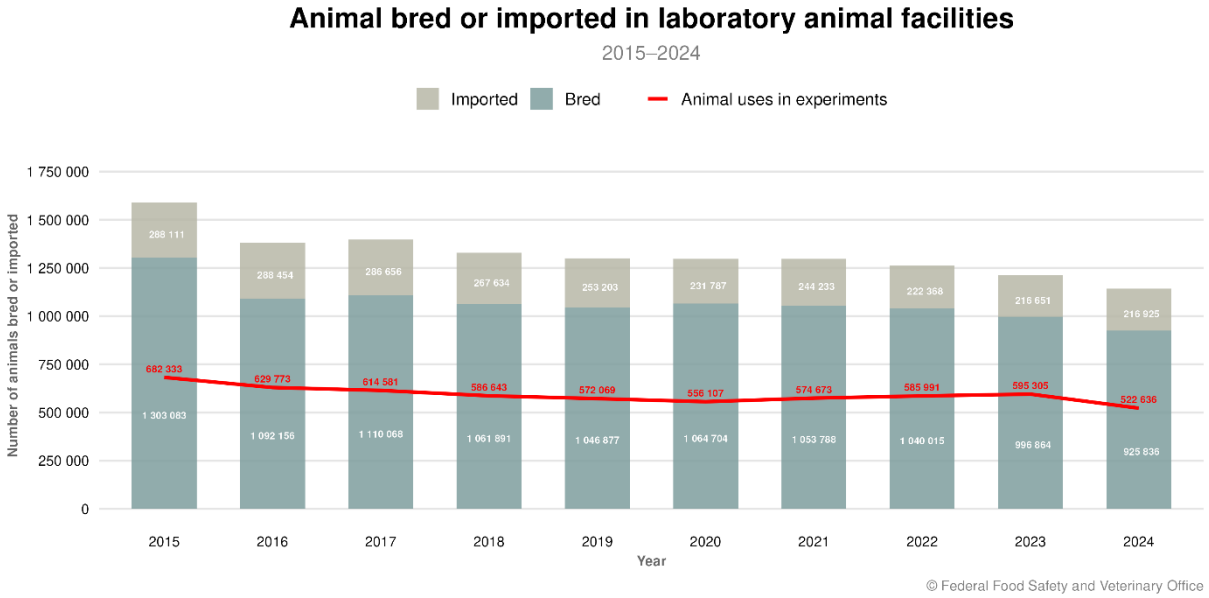


Fig. 14: From 2020 onwards, a decrease in the number of laboratory animals bred in Switzerland can currently be observed.

Since 522 636 animals were used in experiments in 2024, it is evident that many animals born in laboratory animal facilities were not used in experiments. This is largely due to the fact that in the breeding of new genetically modified animals, the rules of heredity also produce animals that do not carry the genetic trait required for the experiment. Animals not used in experiments were either kept for further breeding or, for the most part, euthanised. A small number of laboratory animals are handed over to private animal keepers. The exact number of animals bred that were not used in experiments and were either killed or died in laboratory animal facilities, or were handed over to third parties, cannot be determined from the current reporting obligations of the laboratory animal facilities.

9 List of figures and tables