

SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

POLICY

UK animal research

The British government says that it is still committed to cutting the number of animals used in research, despite failing to meet a 2010 pledge to do so. The number of animal experiments in the United Kingdom topped 4 million in 2012, up from more than 2.5 million in 2000. On 7 February, science minister David Willetts unveiled a new plan to reduce animal research, which included encouraging data sharing and providing advice on alternatives to animal testing. But he stopped short of setting a numerical limit on animal experiments. See go.nature.com/zvmeru for more.

Suicide prevention

A national research agenda for suicide prevention in the United States was published on 5 February. The plan was drawn up by the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, a public-private partnership. It sets a goal of decreasing suicides by 20% over five years. In its report, the team said that researchers should focus on the areas that

JOURNALISM GRANT

The International Development Research Centre in Ottawa is offering a science-journalism grant worth up to Can\$60,000 (US\$54,000). The winner will spend six months working in *Nature's* London newsroom and reporting science stories from developing countries. Candidates must be English-speaking Canadian citizens or permanent residents, and have at least three years' journalism experience. For more information, see go.nature.com/len5fl.



FREDERIC STEVENS/GETTY

Illegal ivory crushed

France destroyed 3 tonnes of poached ivory on 6 February. It is the first European country to take such a step since the global ban on ivory came into force in 1989. "We are resolved to

continue the fight against trafficking and to remove any temptation to recover the seized ivory" for black-market sales, said French environment minister Philippe Martin.

will prevent the most deaths, such as identifying at-risk people through mental-health screenings in hospital emergency departments, and preventing suicidal people from accessing firearms. See page 131 for more.

Wolf plan flawed

The US government's proposal to weaken protection for grey wolves (*Canis lupus*) is not based on good science, said an independent review panel on 7 February. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) says that wolves in the lower 48 states no longer face extinction (see *Nature* 501, 143–144; 2013). But the scientists, appointed by the FWS to review its policy, found that the agency failed to use the best available science to reach its conclusions. The FWS is now reviewing its

proposal and will reopen it for public comment for 45 days. The government is expected to make a final decision this year.

Growing fish farms

Some 62% of all the seafood eaten globally will be farm-raised by 2030, the World Bank predicts in a report released on 5 February. Fish farming contributed 40% of total supply in 2010, and is projected to expand to meet growing demand from regions including Asia, the bank says. Depleted wild fish stocks will also contribute to the growth in farmed fish, the report notes.

Climate hubs

US agriculture secretary Tom Vilsack announced the creation of seven regional 'climate hubs' on 5 February, to help farmers to reduce

carbon emissions and cope with climate change. The hubs will provide climate data and assessments, and will support agricultural research. They are part of a move by President Barack Obama's administration to advance climate science at regional and local levels.

UK funding cuts

English universities will lose an extra £125 million (US\$205 million) from their funding in 2014–15. The government's Department for Business, Innovation and Skills announced the cut from the budget of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (which will now stand at £4.1 billion) on 10 February. The annual grant letter setting out the allocations says that the council's core research funding

CONTRASTO/EVEMINE

(£1.57 billion annually) will not fall. Cuts will hit teaching grants and funds targeted at helping the poorest students. See go.nature.com/lyb21y for more.

BUSINESS

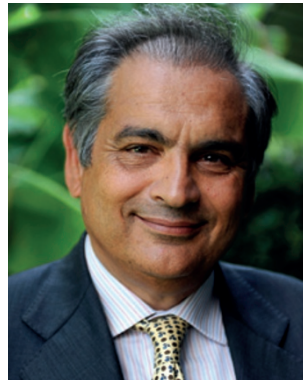
Stem-cell ruling

Certain types of stem-cell treatment should be regulated as drugs, a US appeals court decided on 4 February. The ruling rejects claims by Regenerative Sciences of Broomfield, Colorado, that its stem-cell therapy, used in orthopaedic applications, is a medical procedure that does not require regulation by the Food and Drug Administration. The court decided that processing the cells for use in the therapy made the end product a drug. The company has not completed clinical trials on the treatment so cannot market the product in the United States. It does sell it in the Cayman Islands (see *Nature* **488**,14; 2012).

PEOPLE

Italian space head

The president of the Italian Space Agency resigned on 7 February following allegations of bribery and corruption. Enrico Saggese (**pictured**) is accused of accepting bribes in exchange



for contracts, inappropriately promoting friends and using public money to finance luxurious business travel, including a 3-week trip for 33 people to a rocket launch in Vandenberg, California. Saggese denies the charges. The agency has an annual budget of more than €550 million (US\$750 million) and is the third-largest contributor to the European Space Agency.

Insider trading

On 6 February, a US court found former hedge-fund manager Mathew Martoma guilty of leading a massive insider-trading scheme using confidential information about an Alzheimer's disease clinical trial. Sidney Gilman, a neurologist formerly at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, admitted to leaking data from the trial to Martoma before the results were made

public. Martoma's company netted US\$276 million in illicit gains, making it the largest insider-trading case ever charged by the US Securities and Exchange Commission. See go.nature.com/b8t9qx for more.

FACILITIES

Array revival

The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has decided to restore an ailing Pacific Ocean monitoring network used to observe and predict the periodic and disruptive ocean-warming event known as El Niño. The 2014 federal-government budget, approved last month, would provide US\$4 million — an increase of about one-third — to expand charter operations and revive the array, NOAA told *Nature* on 4 February. See go.nature.com/nrhvbo for more.

RESEARCH

Cancer genomics

Tumour genome sequencing may identify targeted treatments for only a fraction of patients with advanced breast cancer, according to research published on 7 February (F. André *et al. Lancet Oncol.* <http://doi.org/rdh>; 2014). Of 423 people studied, the authors identified only 13% with mutations

COMING UP

11 FEBRUARY
European member states will vote on whether to approve a genetically modified maize (corn) crop called Pioneer 1507, which is engineered to be resistant to insect pests.

12-13 FEBRUARY
London hosts a global conference on the illegal trade in wildlife. In May 2013, the United Nations officially characterized international wildlife and timber trafficking as a "serious crime", which carries a minimum prison sentence of four years. go.nature.com/httpd2l

that matched an available experimental treatment. The rate of successful therapy-matching falls short of claims from some tumour-sequencing companies, but researchers expect odds to improve as more drugs move into clinical trials.

Sharing drug data

Ten major pharmaceutical companies have agreed to share data from early-stage trials with each other and with academic researcher, as part of a US\$230-million venture with the US National Institutes of Health. The Accelerating Medicines Partnership, announced on 4 February, is designed to speed up identification of biomarkers and promising drug targets for four diseases: Alzheimer's, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus and diabetes. Once the data are shared, the companies will be free to pursue proprietary research towards their own therapies. See go.nature.com/rn12cl for more.

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SOURCE: NSF

TREND WATCH

In *Science and Engineering Indicators 2014*, a biennial round-up of global trends in research, the US National Science Foundation notes that the number of papers authored or co-authored by Chinese scientists grew by an average of more than 15% per year between 2001 and 2011 — leading the country to an 11% share of world output as the United States' share declined to 26%. The total world output of research papers grew by 2.8% per year. See go.nature.com/wfptv8 for more.

CHINA'S RESEARCH RISE

The US National Science Foundation charts the growing proportion of scientific articles with Chinese authors.

