

Clinton's science adviser supports animal rights

WASHINGTON (AP) President Bill Clinton's science adviser is a firm believer in animal rights who refuses to eat veal and believes some researchers have been guilty of needlessly abusing experimental animals.

John Gibbons' views have aroused concern among some scientists, who were particularly disturbed by a report that Gibbons' wife belonged to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, or PETA, one of the most radical animal rights groups.

Gibbons said Monday that his wife was once a member of PETA, but that she let her membership lapse three or four years ago.

"They were getting more

and more 'fringy,' so she didn't renew her subscription," he said in an interview. "Fringy" means "on the fringe - out of the mainstream."

An animal rights bumper sticker that Gibbons said he thinks came from PETA adorned the family station wagon in the mid-1980s, Gibbons said.

PETA has served as the mouthpiece for the Animal Liberation Front, which has broken into laboratories and disrupted research. A spokeswoman for PETA said PETA itself neither encourages nor condemns violence.

Gibbons said he and his wife eat meat, but he does not eat veal. "You know how veal

is raised? In the dark, milked, force-fed, in a cage, never sees ground. And I don't want to eat an animal that's been given that kind of life."

Gibbons dismissed scientists' concerns about his views, however, saying he is a strong supporter of the use of animals in research when necessary.

"My gosh, yes, you've got to have whole animals for a lot of very critical experiments and evaluations," Gibbons said. "But that doesn't mean you abuse them either or are callous in the way you use them."

"I want to see animal use on the basis of necessity — defensible necessity," he said.

The National Association

for Biomedical Research in Washington, D.C., which was formed to promote scientists' views of laboratory animal research, said its members expressed concern about Gibbons' views after his appointment in December.

"I'd like to be sure that he has all the information about what modern laboratory animal medicine is all about," said Barbara Rich, executive vice president of the association.

"My accusation to that community at my confirmation hearing was they ought to be taking better care of the abuses that historically have occurred," Gibbons said. "I've seen video tapes. I know. Abuses have occurred."

Rich said Gibbons had pro-

duced a balanced report on animal research while he was director of the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, and she said she did not believe he held unreasonable views on animal rights.

Gibbons said both he and his wife are interested in protection of primates, and his wife belongs to a group called the International Primate Protection League. The league monitors illegal primate trade and has filed suits to enforce laboratory animal protections.

In a 1991 case, the league joined PETA in a lawsuit over treatment of laboratory monkeys at a Tulane University primate center in Covington, La.