“KIDS-4-RESEARCH” WEB SITE

The Kids-4-Research web site provides information to students, teachers, and parents on responsible laboratory animal care and use in biomedical/biological research, testing, and education. The site also provides information on the benefits of such research to animals, humans, and the environment. The educational curriculum is divided into appropriate age groups – Kindergarten through 6th grade and 7th grade through 12th grade – and covers such things as:

- How research helps animals;
- Disease Fact Sheets;
- Frequently Asked Questions About Biomedical Research;
- Curriculum packets on biomedical research;
- What’s the Point of Biomedical Research;
- Animals in Science; and
- Consumer Product Safety & how animals are used.

You can enter essay contests from the site or request health research videos. Also available is information geared toward teachers and parents who are interested in teaching children about medical research. You also have the option of searching the site by subject matter.

All of this information is written in a language that is easy to understand and is geared toward specific age groups.

This website (www.kids4research.org) is a valuable tool in dispelling some of the propaganda circulated by animal rights activists, who regularly target children in their campaigns.

CUNNINGHAM CHAMPIONS PROTECTION FOR FARMERS AND RESEARCHERS

WASHINGTON- On Oct. 10, 2000 Congressman Randy “Duke” Cunningham (R-San Diego) introduced legislation to protect our nation’s researchers and farmers from terrorists who, in the name of animal rights, resort to violence, property destruction, attempted homicide, blockades, and other vigilante tactics. “We must take federal action to deal with the ongoing wave of violence aimed at our researchers and farmers across our country,” said Cunningham.

“It is my hope that Congress will take steps to protect the farmers which feed America’s children and the researchers who may someday cure cancer, AIDS or any thousands of diseases. We must protect them from the terrorists who, through their extremists agenda, would deny America the fruits of the future,” Cunningham said.

The Researchers and Farmers Freedom from Terrorism Act will make violations of the Animal Enterprise Terrorism statutes (18 USC Sec. 43) punishable as RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization) crimes. This bill will also increase penalties for Animal Terrorism and establish the National Animal Terrorism and Ecoterrorism Clearinghouse at the Federal Bureau of Investigation to help lawful enforcement agencies gather and exchange information on animal and ecoterrorists nationwide. “I am introducing this legislation in response to this growing threat of terrorism. This bill will not undermine the right to peaceful protest protected under the Constitution and the peaceful expression of animal rights importance will not be barred,” said Congressman Cunningham.

“I am introducing this legislation because groups such as the Animal Liberation Front and Earth Lib-

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ANIMAL BEHAVIOR AS A MEASURE OF ANIMAL WELFARE

What is animal welfare?

For all the pages of rules and recommendations devoted to the topic, neither the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals nor the Animal Welfare Act regulations actually attempts a definition of the phrase “animal welfare.” [1, 2] Perhaps we should follow their wisdom here; perhaps we can recognize and promote animal welfare without an actual definition of the term. But measurement and definition are intimately entwined, and it really is not possible to do one without some attention to the other.

Many animal welfare specialists have converged on the idea that welfare has to do with how an animal feels. An animal in good mental and physical health feels good, has good welfare. [3]

Mental and physical health each influence the other, but do not always precisely coincide. It is partly because of this that animal welfare cannot be reduced to a purely scientific question, but must always include some ethical and valuational component. For example, an animal may not even know she carries early stages of a cancer that will dramatically shorten her life or cause her great pain – how do we score the welfare of such an animal? Another may settle for or acclimate to a life in confinement and not even realize what he is missing – how we score his welfare depends a great deal on what we value in animals’ lives. Yet a third may live a long life of boredom and loneliness with no detectable physical abnormalities or ill-health – would we say such an animal has poor welfare with no data to confirm this presumption?

There are several ways to measure animal welfare, but all start with values: what we measure depends on what we think is worth measuring. And all end with ethics – what we do about animal welfare depends on how important it is to us, and how important competing values (such as scientific data, medical progress, time and staff limitations) are. In between lies the work of a range of animal welfare scientists: physiologists, ethologists, veterinarians, animal scientists, immunologists, pain specialists and others.

The role of ethology

Many animal welfare specialists have focused on largely physical parameters to both define and measure animal welfare. Agricultural scientists focus on productivity – numbers of eggs laid or gallons of milk produced – or on growth rate as measures of physical health and (by implication) general welfare. Veterinarians too may focus on the physical: absence of infection, pain, fever, disease, etc. Physiologists measure cortisol or other stress hormones while immunologists measure immune function – both are interested in the physical manifestations of stress with the working assumption that stress and welfare are tightly bound.

These physical approaches to animal welfare have their strengths and weaknesses. Some are easy to perform (counting eggs, for instance, or weighing mice); some are not. They can yield interesting findings, such as a 1980 study that the incidence of atherosclerosis in rabbits fed a high cholesterol diet might depend in part on the quality of the “socio-psychological environment.” That is, rabbits who are handled and petted frequently had a measurably lower incidence of atherosclerotic plaques. [4] Interpretation can be difficult – did the rabbits who were petted and handled more frequently enjoy this or find it stressful?

Over the last two decades, ethologists who study animal behavior in more-or-less natural environments have cited inadequacies in these approaches, and have advocated behavioral measures to augment or replace physiological measures of animal well-being.

With publication of her book Animal Suffering, Marian Stamp Dawkins made the case for behavioral studies of animal welfare. [5] Behavioral studies have their limitations, of course, both logistically (they tend to be enormously time consuming and labor-intensive, presuming that one can even get the chance to watch animals’ behavior without influencing it in the process of observation) and conceptually.

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Some behaviorists have focused on behavioral pathology as the index of animal welfare. Are animals engaging in self-destructive behavior? Are they performing stereotypical behaviors (bar-chewing, pacing, circling)? And more importantly, can animals have poor welfare without developing such overtly abnormal behavior?

The presumption that confined or caged animals have good welfare when their behavior is most like that of their wild counterparts likewise has its problems – what if the domestic or genetically modified animal has no wild counterparts, and why should a caged animal act like a wild one in the first place?

Rather than simply compare the behavior of confined animals with that of free-ranging animals, Dawkins advocated preference studies. Simply put, animals are given a choice of two or more conditions – floor types, foods, cage sizes, light/dark areas – and their choices recorded. Variations on this methodology include quantitative comparisons of how much time animals spend in each of the competing choices, and weighted preference tests, testing how much an animal works or what he will forego to obtain a preferred choice.

Preference tests have been particularly relevant to the design of laboratory animal housing. On their basis, the Guide recommends housing rodents on solid rather than grid floors, while the Animal Welfare Act regulations dropped their mandate for larger cages for breeding Guinea pigs and scaled back proposals for dog exercise regulations. [6] Preference studies are the basis of recommendations for pair-housing rabbits and providing cats with soft pillows. [7, 8]

A multidisciplinary approach

The complexity of animals’ feelings and the strengths and limitations of differing measurement tools call for a multidisciplinary approach to enhancing laboratory animal welfare. Post-surgical mice in pain may refuse to eat (behavior) though the most accurate measure of this may be body weight (physical). Developing the best post-surgical protocols may include examining mouse preferences for substrate, food type, social environment and photoperiod. Such combinations of physical and behavioral measures may be useful in a wide range of animal studies. Advances in environmental enrichment strategies for primates and other animals likewise will include preference studies, examination for behavioral pathologies, and physical manifestations of poor mental health and poor welfare.

The scientific examination of animal well-being provides data for what in the end are ethical decisions. Which experiments we perform, how we refine them, and how we justify them ultimately require far more information and deliberation than simply measuring the welfare of the animals involved.

References

LARC WEB SITE CONTENT & ADDITIONS
The LARC web site has been expanded; refer to the listing below for material contained on the site (new items are in green). Please send requests for additional items you would like posted on the site to: webmaster@larc.ucsf.edu.
- Feedback
- Forms
- Frequently Called Numbers
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Guidelines and Procedures
- Site Map
- Links and Useful Resources
- Newsletters
- Occupational Health & Safety in the Care & Use of Research Animals
- Organization Charts
- Program Description
- Purchasing Information
- Recharges Information
- Risk Assessment Program
- Sentinel Program
- Training Program
- Veterinary Data
- What’s New

HARLAN SPRAGUE DAWLEY
JOINS CHARLES RIVER, TACONIC, & JACKSON AS AN APPROVED VENDOR!

Harlan Sprague Dawley has been added as an approved vendor as a commercial source for importing mice into the UCSF barrier facilities. The list of approved vendors now includes, Jackson, Charles River, Taconic, and Harlan Sprague Dawley. Animals from approved vendors can be imported directly into the barrier without the need for a quarantine period.

An approved vendor is a commercial institution with the primary purpose of providing specific pathogen free (commonly known as SPF) rodents for research and that has met the guidelines developed by the UCSF Rodent Barrier Users Group in 1997. These guidelines include documented record of disease-free animals (based on a viral antibody profile for at least 2 years), a defined plan to minimize contact with other vendor rodents/and wild mice during transit, and multi-investigator need and justification for animals from a particular vendor. It is desirable but not mandatory that the animal be helicobacter free and shipped by Harlan Sprague Dawley.