

New Insights from Animal Welfare Science

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This presentation identifies several new insights and developments in animal welfare science and explores how they can be applied to laboratory animal welfare. First, numerous studies, especially on farm animals, have now shown that a wide range of welfare outcomes can occur in the same type of physical environment, at least partly because of differences in human behaviour. This indicates the need for increased emphasis on professional skills, knowledge and dedication as key factors in animal welfare, rather than simply setting standards based on the animals' physical environment. Second, there are early indications that "bench-marking" animal welfare outcomes, so that managers are informed about how their outcomes compare with others, can be a powerful motivator for improvement. Third, the term "one welfare" (inspired by "one health") is being used to emphasize the many links between human welfare, animal welfare and the environment. This is leading to the realization that professionals in different fields, such as animal protection and human mental health, need to work in a coordinated way to achieve better outcomes for people and animals alike. The concept is being applied to issues including animal protection, conservation, and now laboratory animal welfare.