

## Welfare and Environmental Enrichment for Dogs and Cats.

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In recent decades, public pressure to improve the welfare of animals in human care has grown enormously. In addition to being a matter of public concern, welfare enhancements for animals have important practical and economic implications. In production (food) animals, for example, improved welfare is associated with improved health and productivity. Likewise, in laboratory animals, the stress caused by poor housing and husbandry can affect physiological and behavioral responses to experimental interventions, thereby potentially invalidating research results. While much scientific attention has been focused on ways of reducing or eliminating negative affective states such as fear, pain, stress and distress in captive animals as a means of improving their welfare, welfare scientists are also beginning to focus increasingly on so-called “positive welfare” or the provision of environmental factors that stimulate positive emotional states (Mellor & Beausoleil, 2015). This new focus on positive welfare has altered our understanding of the concept of environmental enrichment. Whereas the term “enrichment” was used traditionally to refer to methods of supplementing impoverished housing to improve an animals quality of life, the modern emphasis is on enriching the environment above and beyond an animal’s basic needs (Boissy et al., 2007). This presentation will apply these ideas to a discussion of environmental enrichment opportunities for domestic dogs (*Canis familiaris*) and cats (*Felis catus*). As might be expected, given their very different evolutionary origins and history, dogs and cats have different environmental requirements and needs, and different preferences in terms of what they like and dislike. Furthermore, intense human selection for breed-specific aspects of temperament and behavior means that different breeds of dog, especially, may react to the same environment in very different ways. Additionally, these animals’ responses to their environment are profoundly affected by experience during early development. All of these different factors need to be considered when designing and implementing appropriate physical, social and cognitive enrichment strategies for dogs and cats.

### References

Boissy, A., Manteuffel, G., Jensen, M.B. et al. 2007. Assessment of positive emotion in animals to improve their welfare. *Physiology & Behavior*, 92: 375-397.

Mellor, D.J. & Beausoleil, N.J. 2015. Extending the 'Five Domains' model for animal welfare assessment to incorporate positive welfare states. *Animal Welfare*, 24(3): 241-254.