

Animals in Science (Research, Testing, and Teaching)

Position:

The Edmonton Humane Society (EHS) is opposed to the use of animals in research, testing, and teaching which causes them pain, injury, suffering, or distress. EHS encourages alternatives to animal methods to be used and further developed.

Definitions:

Reduction: Minimizing the number of animals used to obtain comparable levels of information.

Refinement: The modification of procedures to remove or minimize potential pain, suffering or distress, and enhance welfare for animals used.

Replacement: The use of non-animal methods instead of animal methods to achieve the same scientific aims.

Teaching: In the case of animals used in science, teaching refers to procedures using animals to develop skills or meet curricular requirements, such as dissection, handling, and surgical techniques.

Summary

- Non-animal alternatives should be used whenever possible, and animal welfare should be at the forefront when their use in science is necessary.
- Scientific procedures should utilize replacement, reduction and refinement in their design when animal use is necessary.
- Further oversight and legislative protection of animals used in science should exist.

Rationale

- Any use of animals in science must be valid and ensure the welfare of animals is maintained throughout and after their use.
- Any potential animal use should be reviewed to ensure welfare concerns are addressed, and to confirm welfare will be monitored and assessed throughout their use.
- The principles of replacement, reduction and refinement should be applied to any scientific procedure utilizing animals.
- Appropriate housing, veterinary care, enrichment, and diets should be provided to animals used in science.
- Euthanasia methods must be humane and performed in a timely manner if necessary.

- The procurement of animals and cadavers used in science should be ethical, humane, and should not disturb the ecosystem.
- EHS encourages the development of non-animal alternatives and for government, industry, research institutions and academic institutions to incentivize their use.
- Personnel involved in the care of and research involving animals must be trained in species-appropriate handling, husbandry and animal welfare prior to caring for or using animals.
- Veterinarians should be consulted when animals are used to ensure good animal welfare, and available to provide treatment when necessary.
- Animals who cannot have their welfare needs met in captivity should not be kept for use in science.
- Teaching using animals should not subject animals to unnecessary or gratuitous procedures, and ideally incorporate learning into procedures an animal would already be undergoing.
- EHS is opposed to the mandatory surrender of animals from animal control agencies or shelters, also referred to as pound seizure, for use in science.
- The Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) currently provides national oversight for the use of animals in science. EHS encourages all institutions to abide by CCAC guidelines at minimum and seek CCAC certification, and for CCAC standards to continue to be developed and strengthened.
- EHS supports the development of legislation and governmental oversight to consistently protect the welfare of animals used in science.
- Humane rehoming or retirement programs should be established to provide eligible animals who are no longer required for science a good quality of life for their entire lifespan.
- Animals should be considered for rehoming programs if they are healthy, can be treated by a reasonable and caring guardian, and there is no danger to people, other animals, or the environment if the animal is rehomed.

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