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Editors’ Introduction to the Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science

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Animal welfare names a science in which investigators ask the general question: What are the capacities, sensibilities, needs, and interests of animals as they relate to their welfare? The objects of study in this emerging field are exclusively animals other than humans. Numerous contexts give rise to this interest in nonhuman animal welfare:

- The intensification of the use of animals since World War II, particularly on the farm and in the laboratory.
- The development of moral philosophies that establish nonhuman animals as objects of moral consideration.
- The advances in science in fields that have added to our understanding of animals, such as cognitive ethology.
- Advances in technology that give us more direct access to human physiology and psychology and undercut the tradition of using animal models.
- The success of the contemporary animal rights movement in placing the issue of the treatment of animals before the public.

Although the term animal welfare names a science rather than a philosophy or a social policy, our postmodernist age has taught us that the scientific enterprise does not exist in a vacuum. Although the enterprise of science is built on the regulative ideal of investigator neutrality, we scientists are embedded in cultural and historical contexts that circumscribe, guide, and give form to our research projects—to the questions that interest us, the hypotheses we consider, and the investigative methods we employ.
The philosopher of science, Habermas, distinguished three basic investigator interests and goals that operate in contemporary science (1971). Scientists can seek understanding for its own sake (basic science), technical innovation (applied science), or emancipation (ameliorative science). This last science refers to the changes that can come with identifying impediments that constrain and conditions that can enhance the quality of life and its duration. Clearly amelioration and welfare are intimately related.

Whether focally interested in basic, applied, or ameliorative science, we encourage contributors to JAAWS to utilize this broadened notion of scientific rationality to address the occasioning context and the anticipated effects of their research as they bear on animal welfare. In this way the science of animal welfare can contribute to and elevate the debate over appropriate practices involving animals other than humans.

Although animal welfare science is in its infancy, one conceptual framework, that of alternatives, already has significantly influenced its development. Russell and Birch (1959/1992) described strategies, the three Rs, to lessen the suffering of animals. Investigators scrutinize procedures to reduce the numbers of animals utilized, to refine that use, and to replace the use of animals altogether.

The application of the three Rs in product testing was stimulated by the efforts of Henry Spira to involve industry in the development of alternatives (Jasper & Nelkin, 1992). This eventually led to the founding of several university-based centers for their study (e.g., Rockefeller, John Hopkins, and California at Davis). In 1993 in Baltimore and again in 1996 in Utrecht, a World Congress on Alternatives in Research, Testing, and Education was held.

Although articulated in the context of animals in the laboratory, the three Rs schema readily lends itself in modified form to animal welfare research in other settings. Hopefully, animal welfare science will construct additional paradigms as needed.

Through the publication of original empirical research and commentary on it, JAAWS intends to encourage these developments. Lead articles will at times be solicited to cover specific areas of particular importance or concern. These will be accompanied by open peer commentaries to ensure that a variety of points of view are presented. In addition, the journal will publish reviews of books, summaries of the meeting proceedings, and resource information such as availability of grants, bibliographic databases, and electronic-based information.

This inaugural issue features two articles on the welfare of laboratory animals. Brent and Stone test the provision of destructible objects as one method of enriching the environment of captive chimpanzees. Using facility reports furnished to the United States Department of Agriculture, Stephens, Mendoza, Weaver, and Hamilton examine experimental procedures that cause unrelieved pain and distress in laboratory animals to identify priorities for the development of alternatives. A third article is on abnormal behavior in caged birds kept as pets, and a fourth presents a proposed alternative production system for pigs.
In subsequent issues, we will publish overview articles in the four areas treated by the journal—laboratory and companion animals, and animals in the laboratory and in agricultural settings.

_JAAWS_ is fortunate in the quality of its editorial board. The four area editors are leaders in their fields. All the editors are known not only for their scientific contributions to their respective disciplines, but also for their wide-ranging interest and concern for ethical issues in science and society.

We are also fortunate for the support of the staff at Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. It was clear from our initial discussion with Larry Erlbaum that he and his staff were committed to doing this project as much as we were.

We the coeditors come from very different backgrounds. Stephen Zawistowski is a behavior-geneticist schooled in the methods of the laboratory, statistics, and analysis, and Kenneth J. Shapiro is a clinical and personality psychologist whose research is in qualitative methods. _JAAWS_ has been a shared endeavor that we both feel passionately about. It is as much a product of our differences as our agreements. In the spirit of this constructive tension, we invite you to submit articles and comments that will help make this an interactive and dynamic project.

REFERENCES

