

Planning, conducting and reporting farm animal research

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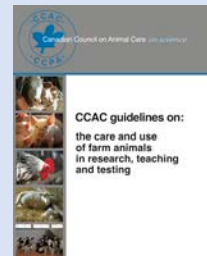
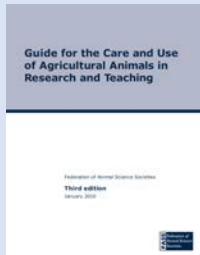
Improvements in farm animal welfare have mainly focused on those kept under farm conditions, and may be less applicable in the laboratory. Confining animals under regulated conditions of space, ambient temperature and lighting conditions may cause considerable stress. This also makes them less amenable to physical restraint, and increases the risk of injury. Meeting standards of hygiene and personal protection which are common in rodent facilities may also prove challenging.



Specific challenges when using farm animals include:

- The use of animals from heterogeneous sources, with variable and poorly-controlled health status
- The need for a clear agreement with farmers, to avoid being given unwanted stock
- Unknown health monitoring practices or compliance with FELASA's recommendations
- Young animals which have to be weaned before transport, or brought to the facility with their dams
- The fact that some farm-sourced animals may *never* acclimatize to the laboratory environment
- The potential for contingent suffering, which should be addressed from day 1 of planning.
- The widespread lack of information on pharmaceuticals, including analgesics (many drugs are unlicensed for use in some species and age groups)
- Our lack of information on signs of pain after experimental surgeries
- The under-reporting (and probably under-use) of analgesics after noxious procedures
- The expense of large animal housing which can promote a tendency to minimize acclimatization
- The need for specially trained personnel to care for and handle farm animals
- Few educational events for those caring for or using farm animals
- The need to demonstrate the key role played by the veterinarians on the farm and at the research facility

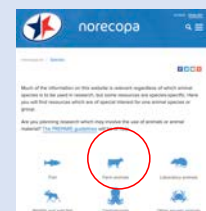
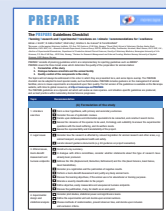
There are relatively few guidelines for the care and use of farm animals in research and testing. Norecopa has so far organized one international consensus meeting on the subject, and many more such meetings should be held. The Norecopa website contains links to those guidelines of which we are aware.



Consensus statement from Norecopa's meeting

As part of ongoing efforts to **reduce waste** and **increase reproducibility, health & safety and welfare**, both the PREPARE guidelines for planning animal research and testing, and the Norecopa website, have sections on farm animals:

norecopa.no/PREPARE norecopa.no/farm-animals



There are no grounds for denying farm animals the same standards of protection that are provided for other species. This will also increase external validity when farm animal models are used in translational research.



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