



Development of 3Rs Information Sources at the Animal Welfare Information Center



Tim Allen¹, Adrian Smith², D'Anna Jensen¹, Karina Smith², Øyvind Wærenskjold³, Kristina Adams¹, Sandra Ball¹

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal Welfare Information Center (AWIC), National Agricultural Library, Beltsville, Maryland, USA;

²Norway's Consensus-Platform for Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of Animal Experiments (Norecopa), Oslo, Norway; ³Bitfarm, Kristiansand, Norway

Introduction

More than 30 years ago, Congress passed the Improved Standards for Laboratory Animals Act that requires scientists to “consider[s] alternatives to any procedure likely to produce pain to or distress in an experimental animal.” Senator Alfonse D’Amato (R-New York), co-sponsor of the bill, stated, “[This bill] encourages researchers to consider other research techniques which do not require the use of animals and to use less painful methods when animals must be involved. This type of encouragement will raise the consciousness of researchers. Because the individual researcher is ultimately responsible for his or her relationship to the animal, this aspect of the legislation is essential.”

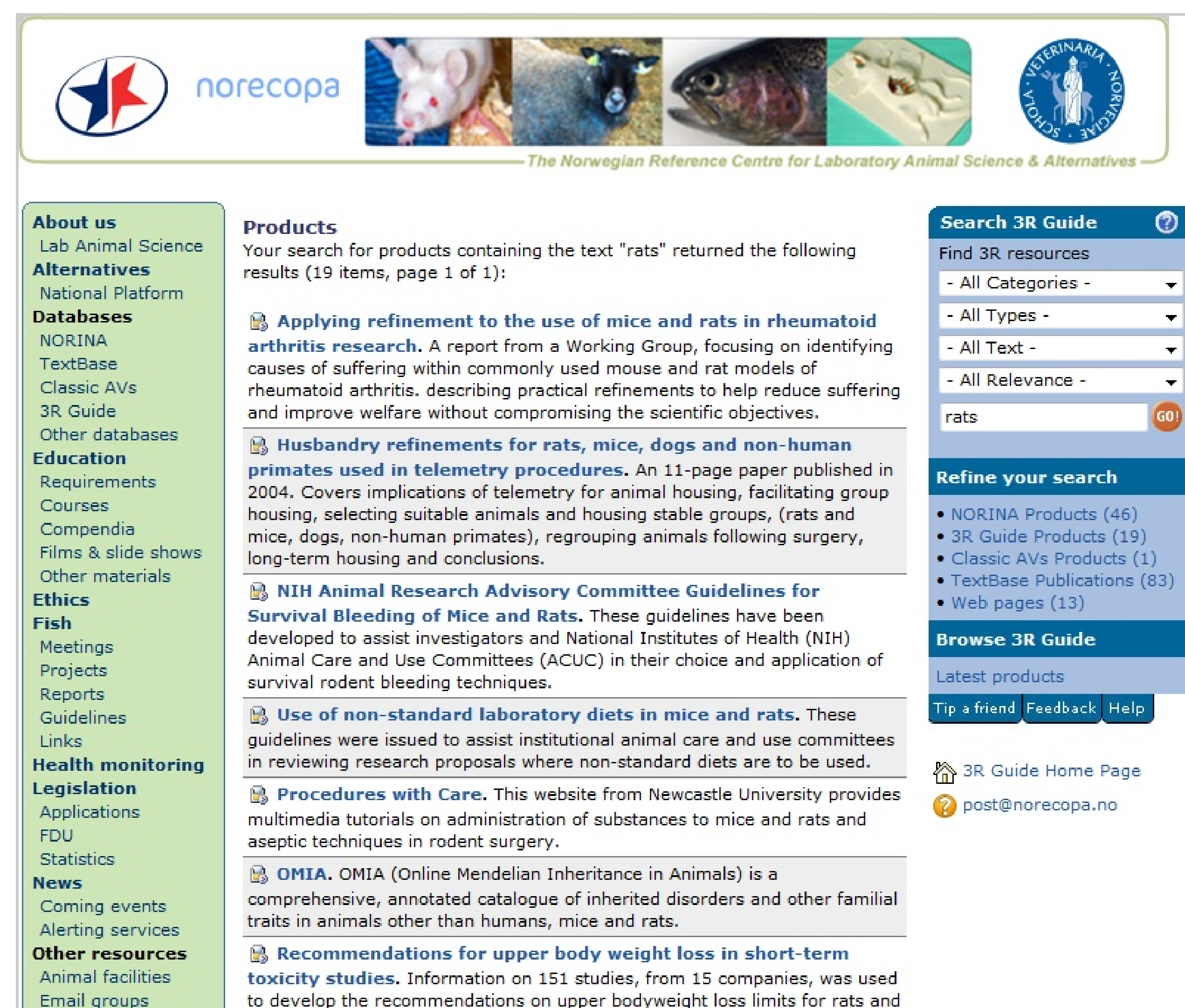
The Animal Welfare Information Center (AWIC) was created by the new law to provide information on the 3Rs. While the primary sources of information are large bibliographic databases, a wonderful array of specialist databases and websites have been developed throughout the world. The downside to the explosion of information sources is that they are hard to find and the quality of information is not always appropriate for decision making by scientists seeking to incorporate new methods in their projects.

A new database from Norway and America



To address this situation, AWIC has partnered with Norecopa (the Norwegian consensus-platform for the 3Rs, <http://www.norecopa.no>) to create a database, **3R Guide** (<http://3rguide.info>), designed to help researchers and other stakeholders rapidly locate resources relevant to Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of animal experiments. Information includes guidelines, databases, information centers, journals, and other key items from authoritative sources. Searches in the **3R Guide** are enhanced by retrieval of information from Norecopa’s other databases

According to Professor Adrian Smith, Secretary of Norecopa, “3R Guide aims to be the leading global “one-stop shop” for 3R-resources, an “added value” database with emphasis on peer-reviewed products (quality rather than quantity).” Below is a screenshot of the website.

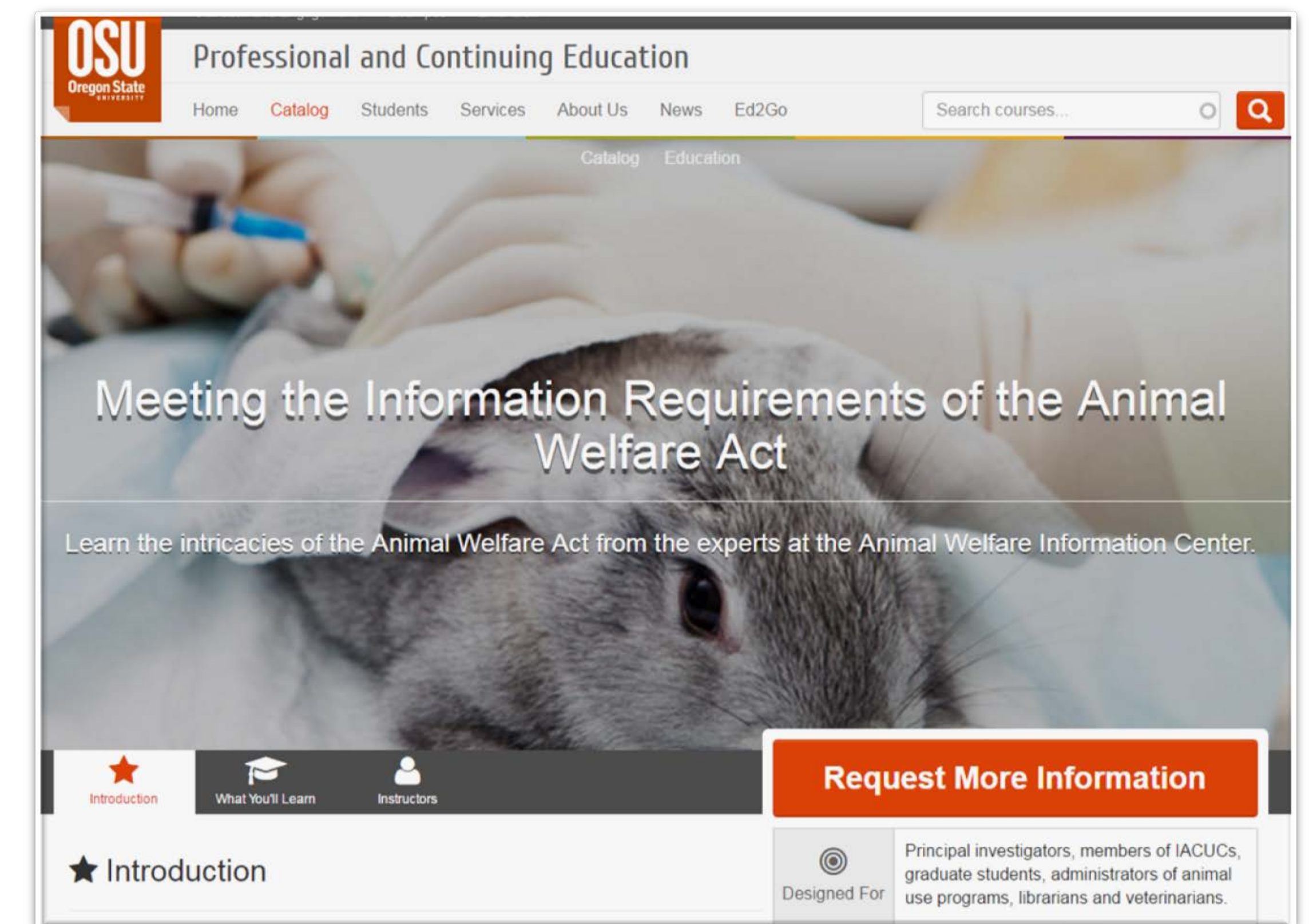


Upcoming: AWIC—Norecopa Database on 3Rs Methods

AWIC and Norecopa are currently developing a bibliographic database on 3Rs methods in research, teaching, and testing. Criteria are being developed to be used in the curation of bibliographic records that will form the 3Rs database. Initial efforts will focus on methods that can or have the potential to reduce animal numbers across a variety of research areas. Staff from the National Agricultural Library has been performing a preliminary analysis on linguistic clues for “animal use reduction” concept so that automated indexing tools can be used to scan journal content for possible inclusion in the database.

Upcoming: On-line Workshop

The Animal Welfare Information Center online workshop provides an interactive environment where participants can learn about conducting literature searches, the history of animal welfare law and the specific responsibilities of researchers and IACUCs. Combining the expertise of the AWIC staff and the flexibility of self-paced learning, the online workshop meets the needs of researchers, librarians and IACUC members nationwide.



These and other resources can be accessed at <http://awic.nal.usda.gov>

References

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- Russell WMS, Burch RL. The Principles of Humane Experimental Technique. Hertsfordshire, UK: Universities Federation for Animal Welfare, 1959.
- Smith AJ, Allen T. The use of databases, information centres and guidelines when planning research that involves animals. Animal Welfare 2005 Nov; 14(4): 347-359.