

# Research Guidelines for Vertebrate Animal Use

## History of the Animal Welfare Act

Until the mid-20th century, no widespread guidelines for animal experimentation existed in the United States. Several groups interested in animal welfare expressed concern about the pain and suffering of live vertebrate animals during studies. The United States Congress passed the Animal Welfare Act in response to these concerns to ensure that the use of live vertebrate animals in such studies is in fact necessary and that these animals are humanely treated and properly housed and fed during a study.

The Animal Welfare Act acknowledged that, in some instances, studies involving live vertebrate animals are necessary to enhance the understanding of biological processes. Organizations that use live vertebrate animals in studies, particularly those that receive any federal funds for scientific experimentation, must establish policies that ensure that the organizations meet this law's directives.

The Animal Welfare Act pertains to any human intervention into the lives of live vertebrate animals or their natural environments. These interventions include physically handling, training, feeding, housing, or restraining such animals or altering their natural environments in any way. The only exception involves investigators observing animals without interfering with them, their activities, or their natural environments in any manner.