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This is the third edition of the Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching, commonly referred to as the Ag Guide. The first edition was published in 1988 and the first revised edition was published in 1999.

This third edition differs from the past editions in several meaningful ways. For the first time, the Ag Guide is available online at no cost to readers. This is possible thanks to countless hours of voluntary time by 62 authors.

Authors included experts in each species and in animal care and use including animal scientists, veterinarians, teachers, and engineers. Experts reviewed the scientific literature to update the Ag Guide. Authors were chosen for their prominence in the many fields of the animal sciences so that the best available science could be applied to this revision.

The full name of the Ag Guide has changed in this edition. Previous editions were titled the Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Agricultural Research and Teaching. This edition drops the second use of the word agricultural in the title. By doing so, the title reflects a new philosophy. Farm animals have certain needs and requirements and these needs and requirements do not necessarily change because of the objectives of the research or teaching activity. Therefore, regardless of the teaching or research objective, the FASS Ag Guide should serve as a primary reference document for the needs and requirements of agricultural animals.

The writing team included two co-chairs and species and topic chapter sub-committee chairs. Each chapter sub-committee chair had a sub-committee of species and/or topic experts. Individual chapters were updated based on the scientific literature. Then, each chapter writing team reviewed all the other chapters. The co-chairs and sub-committee chairs met in person and online to discuss difficult matters and they solicited input from other outside experts, especially in the specialized area of genetically modified and cloned farm animals. After a first draft of the current edition was produced, it was sent to three fully constituted Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees (IACUC) for peer review. Each peer-review IACUC included experts on farm animal care and a range of other species normally found at major research institutions. In addition, these IACUCs included non-scientific and administrative representatives and farm animal users and experts. Their peer-review comments were incorporated and then a 60-day period of public comment was opened during July and August 2009. After public comments were considered, the final version was produced and made available online.

This edition expands on information on some topics that were covered incompletely in past editions due in large part to a developing literature. With more information now available on (a) environment enrichment and (b) handling and transport, these topics now have dedicated chapters. In addition, new information is included on biosecurity and genetically engineered and cloned farm animals. Several species chapters were expanded to be more complete and the veal chapter was eliminated in favor of incorporating calf care into the beef and dairy cattle chapters.

This guide has been deliberately written in general terms so that the recommendations can be applied in the diverse institutions that use agricultural animals in agricultural research and teaching in the United States. In the context of this guide, the verb must is used for considerations or practices that are viewed as imperatives. The verb should indicates a strong recommendation but one for which alternative strategies might be justified after careful consideration. A recommendation connotes a practice or policy that is generally preferred but for which there are acceptable alternatives. It should be emphasized, however, that professional judgment is essential in the application of these guidelines. Veterinarians, institutional animal care and use committees, and users of agricultural animals must play a critical role in making specific suggestions regarding animal care and use at their institution. The US Government Principles for the Utilization and Care of Vertebrate Animals Used in Testing, Research, and Training of the IRAC (1985; Appendix 1) are endorsed in this guide as a basis for professional judgments about the appropriate treatment and use of agricultural animals in research and teaching activities. These judgments can be validated by third-party peer review, such as that provided by accreditation through Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International (AAALAC).

FASS solicits comments and suggestions related to this current edition of the Ag Guide during the period from now until the next revision is undertaken. Comments will be kept on file until the next revision. Comments about this version should be addressed in writing or by e-mail to

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