



## Actively shaping the dialogue on animal experimental research

Research Institute for Farm Animal Biology (FBN) in Dummerstorf is one of the first signatories of the "Initiative Transparente Tierversuche" (Transparent Animal Experiments Initiative)

The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) and the information platform "Understanding Animal Experiments", supported by the Alliance of Science Organisations, today launched the "Initiative Transparent Animal Experiments". In this initiative, research institutions with a life science orientation declare that they will provide transparent information on animal experiments, actively participate in the public dialogue on research involving animal experiments, and exchange experiences and publicise activities among themselves.

The 53 initial signatories of the initiative include universities, clinics, non-university research institutions, research-based companies as well as professional societies and funding organisations. "The Research Institute for Farm Animal Biology Dummerstorf supports the initiative as the first signatory," said FBN board member Prof. Dr Klaus Wimmers. "Research for more animal welfare and animal health has been the focus of our work for many years. We work in many research approaches, e.g. with cell cultures, replacing animal experiments. But, in order to be able to assess animal welfare, for example, it is necessary to make observations on the animal. We want to make our research more transparent in this context in order to do justice to the understandable social interest."

The Animal Welfare Officer at the FBN, Dr Olaf Bellmann, agrees: "Using animals in scientific experiments is still a necessity that poses an ethical dilemma for every scientist. By making use of all possibilities, we try to keep the possible burdens for the animals as low as possible. By transparently presenting the research we conduct on animals in order to better understand their need for well-being as well, we want to contribute to the basic understanding of such research and encourage an exchange of ideas about it."

A dedicated website for the initiative lists all signatories, provides examples of successful communication on animal experimentation and provides information to support signatories in achieving the stated goals. The initiative follows similar activities in other European countries, such as the UK, France and Spain. At the same time, it follows on from the "Understanding Animal Testing" platform founded five years ago by the Alliance of Science Organisations.

"Animal experiments are a controversial topic in society. Transparent communication about the scientific and ethical aspects of research involving animal experiments is therefore of particular importance in order to make it clear to the public that unfortunately not all animal experiments in life science research can currently be avoided - and at the same time to emphasise that each animal experiment is only carried out after careful ethical consideration of the scientific gain in knowledge against the potential suffering of the animals," clarified DFG President Professor Dr. Katja Becker today at the presentation of the initiative in an online press conference.

"It is important to have the support of the entire scientific community in order to give the greatest possible weight to the idea of transparency," also emphasised the Chair of the DFG Senate

Commission on Animal Experimental Research, Professor Dr. Brigitte Vollmar, from the University Medical Center Rostock.

## Background

*The Transparent Animal Experiments initiative joins various communication activities worldwide on 1 July. The occasion is the international "Be Open about Animal Research Day" organised by the European Animal Research Association (EARA), a day of action to share examples of openness and transparency in animal research. The accompanying social media campaign can be found under the hashtag #BOARD21. The Permanent DFG Senate Commission on Animal Experimental Research and the platform "Understanding Animal Experiments" coordinated by the Alliance of German Science Organisations have jointly launched the Transparent Animal Experiments initiative. The Senate Commission is an interdisciplinary body of experts that deals with current scientific developments as well as the complex ethical and legal framework of animal protection and animal experimental research. It advises the DFG's committees as well as politicians and authorities. "Understanding Animal Experiments" provides up-to-date and fact-based information on animal experiments in publicly funded research and contributes to communicating the social importance of animal experimental research. According to the current state of research, animal experiments are an important part of the spectrum of experimental methods in biomedical research. Research with animals is essential for fundamental findings and medically relevant developments. Although recent methodological research has contributed to the fact that animal experiments can be replaced or reduced in scope by alternative methods in some experimental approaches, a complete replacement of animal experiments is not yet foreseeable. In the future, too, these experiments will be needed to gain knowledge and to develop new therapeutic approaches and methods. A recent example of the need for animal experiments is the research into vaccines - without animal experiments there would be no Corona vaccine.*

## Further Information

[www.initiative-transparente-tierversuche.de](http://www.initiative-transparente-tierversuche.de)

[www.tierversuche-verstehen.de](http://www.tierversuche-verstehen.de)

[www.eara.eu/post/globaldaytocelebrateopennessonanimalresearch-1july](http://www.eara.eu/post/globaldaytocelebrateopennessonanimalresearch-1july)

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## Fotos FBN/Isabel Haberkorn:

Animal experiments at the FBN are primarily concerned with improving the well-being and health of the animals.

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