

# Animal welfare: What is it?

Animal welfare means how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives. An animal is in a good state of welfare if (as indicated by scientific evidence) it is healthy, comfortable, well-nourished, safe, able to express innate behavior, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear, and distress. Good animal welfare requires disease prevention and veterinary treatment, appropriate shelter, management, nutrition, humane handling, and humane slaughter. Animal welfare refers to the state of the animal; the treatment that an animal receives is covered by other terms such as animal care, animal husbandry, and humane treatment. Protecting an animal's welfare means providing for its physical and mental needs.



Ensuring animal welfare is a human responsibility that includes consideration for all aspects of animal well-being, including proper housing, management, nutrition, disease prevention and treatment, responsible care, humane handling, and, when necessary, humane euthanasia.

There are numerous perspectives on animal welfare that are influenced by a person's values and experiences. There are also various means of measuring animal welfare, including (but not limited to) health, productivity, behavior, and physiological responses.

The American Veterinary Medical Association has defined its commitment to animal welfare through the adoption of [animal welfare principles](#) that serve as guidance when the Association develops policies and takes action to ensure the welfare of animals: