



SJDAWC

SIR JAMES DUNN ANIMAL WELFARE CENTRE *at the Atlantic Veterinary College*



PROMOTING ANIMAL WELFARE THROUGH RESEARCH, SERVICE, AND EDUCATION

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

ATLANTIC VETERINARY COLLEGE
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SIR JAMES DUNN ANIMAL WELFARE CENTRE 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre, Atlantic Veterinary College, University of Prince Edward Island

MANDATE

The Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre (SJDAWC) exists to promote animal welfare by generating and disseminating evidence-based knowledge and understanding of animal welfare issues. Our vision is “to be a centre of excellence dedicated to advancing animal welfare through research, service, and education”.

STRUCTURE

The SJDAWC is governed by a management board that reports to the Dean of the Atlantic Veterinary College at UPEI.

MANAGEMENT BOARD

- » DR. DOMINIQUE GRIFFON, Dean, AVC, Management Board Chair (ex-officio)
- » DR. KATY PROUDFOOT, Director, SJDAWC (ex-officio)
- » DR. MICHAEL COCKRAM, Chair in Animal Welfare (ex-officio)
- » MS. APRYL MUNRO, AVC External Engagement Officer (ex-officio), stepped down in September 2025
- » MS. MEGHAN DEWAR, Administrative Assistant, SJDAWC (ex-officio), replaced Ms. Sherri Pineau in August 2025
- » DEPARTMENTAL REPRESENTATIVES
 - » DR. GLENDA WRIGHT, Department of Biomedical Sciences
 - » DR. SONJA SAKSIDA, Department of Health Management
 - » DR. STEPHANIE LANDRY, Department of Companion Animals, replaced Dr. Cate Creighton in September 2025
 - » DR. RUSSELL FRASER, Department of Pathology and Microbiology
- » DR. BEVERLY DAWE, Chief Veterinary Officer and Divisional Director, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, external veterinarian representative
- » MR. RON MAYNARD, external community representative
- » MS. LAURA GROVES, student representative

SJDAWC ACTIVITIES IN 2025

Animal Welfare Webinar Series



The 10th annual SJDAWC webinar series covered animal welfare issues in small mammals kept as pets, such as rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters and rodents. The series included three speakers covering topics ranging from day-to-day care, behaviour, and common health disorders in these animals. We are grateful for funding from the Animal Welfare Foundation of Canada to support the series.

In the first webinar of the series, Dr. Lee Niel, Associate Professor at the University of Guelph, discussed the advantages and disadvantages of keeping rodents as pets. In the second webinar, Dr. Carol Tinga discussed important considerations for pet rabbit care; Dr. Tinga recently completed her PhD on rabbit welfare at the University of Guelph where she is currently a Postdoctoral Scholar. The final webinar was presented by Dr. Dan O’Neill, Associate Professor Companion Animal epidemiology at the Royal Veterinary College. Dr. O’Neill described a unique tool that he and others use to track and understand common disorders of rabbits, guinea pigs and hamsters.

Some previous webinars were made available on our YouTube channel: <https://upei.ca/youtube/awc>

GRANTS AWARDED

Through an annual competition and other sources, the SJDAWC provides funding for research, integrated, and service projects.

RESEARCH OR INTEGRATED

Research or integrated grants awarded in 2025

BERNARD P, SPEARS J, BIGELOW L, POPE E. Identification and characterization of ultrasonic noise for the improvement of zoo animal welfare

CUSACK L, PROUDFOOT K. Community perceptions of the role of veterinarians in multi-species welfare

OVERALL K, MARTIN C, MONTELPARE W, VERNICK J. Understanding when normal and abnormal behaviours diverge – using physiological and behavioural measures to define developmental trajectories for problematic behaviour. Part II: Physiology

Ongoing or recently completed research or integrated projects

BERNARD P, SPEARS J, BIGELOW L. The effect of common laboratory ultrasounds on rat behaviour and physiology

CRANE B, PROUDFOOT K, MCKENNA S. Behavioural evaluation of bulls during semen collection using electroejaculation and alternative techniques

COCKRAM, M. Identification of potential welfare issues in Nigeria and approaches to enhance animal welfare in Nigeria

CUSACK L, PROUDFOOT K, VANLEEUEWEN C. The impact of volunteering with a wildlife service on empathy in veterinary students

MELLISH M, RITTER C, VANLEEUEWEN J. Improving the welfare of working donkey harnesses in Meru County, Kenya, through participatory action research

OVERALL K, PROUDFOOT K, MARTIN C, MONTELPARE W, VERNICK J. Effects of early life experiences on later problematic behaviours in homeless, rescue shelter kittens

SAKSIDA S, FAST M, WHYTE S, REYNOLDS K. Environmental enrichment for stress reduction in land-based salmonid aquaculture

STOUGHTON W, BRESSAN N. Development of an equine nasogastric intubation simulator as an aid or alternative to the use of animals in teaching

VANLEEUEWEN J, HALL D, RITTER C, RAO J, MUUNDA E, ALONSO S. Motivations and cost-effectiveness of improved cow comfort on smallholder dairy production systems in Kenya

Please visit <https://awc.upei.ca/research-projects/> for more information about these and other research projects.

SERVICE

Service grants awarded or renewed in 2025

CARR M, FOLEY P. Neutering feral cat of PEI Cat Action Team (CAT)

OGILVIE A, FOLEY P, MACLEAN R, MACLEAN M, ELLIS L. Medical and surgical care of homeless small animals (2025-2026)

SPEARS J, CRANE B, STEWART K, KNIGHT J. Evaluation of teaching cattle and horse welfare using automated AI technology

Ongoing service projects

CARR M, MACDONALD K. Pegasus feral cat neutering program

FALCONBRIDGE O, MACLEAN R. Pegasus Helping Hand Fund

HOPSON M, LANDRY S, GILROY C. Chinook Project (funded independently since 2011)

MUIRHEAD T, MACMILLAN K. Health management services for Handibear Hills Equine Sanctuary, Inc. (funded independently since 2023)

Please visit <https://awc.upei.ca/service-projects/> for more information about these and other service projects.

GRADUATE STUDENTS FUNDED OR PARTIALLY FUNDED BY THE SJDAWC

Current students and post-doctoral researchers

EMILY POPE, PhD student. Identification and characterization of ultrasonic noise for the improvement of zoo animal welfare (with Dr. Paul Bernard).

EMMANUEL MUUNDA, PhD student. Motivations and cost-effectiveness of improved cow comfort on smallholder dairy production systems in Kenya (with Drs. David Hall and John VanLeeuwen).

EYESUN FAJEI, PhD student. Environmental enrichment for stress reduction in land-based salmonid aquaculture (with Dr. Mark Fast).

GUSTAVO DIAS, PhD student. Factors that affect sleep in dairy calves (with Dr. Katy Proudfoot).

JENNIFER VERNICK, PhD student. Effects of early life experiences on later problematic behaviours in homeless, rescue shelter kittens (with Dr. Karen Overall).

JOSEPHAT MATARA, MVSc student. Improving the welfare of working donkey harnesses in Meru County, Kenya, through participatory action research (with Dr. Martha Mellish).

KRISTEN REYNOLDS, Post-Doctoral Researcher. Environmental enrichment for stress reduction in land-based salmonid aquaculture (with Dr. Mark Fast).

LOGAN BIGELOW, PhD student. Ultrasonic vocalizations analysis: A non-invasive ethologically relevant tool to assess home cage welfare in rats (with Dr. Paul Bernard).

MEGAN ROSS, PhD student. Assessment and improvement of horse welfare on Prince Edward Island through benchmarking and a better understanding of horse caretakers' decision-making (with Drs. Caroline Ritter and Katy Proudfoot). ***Thesis successfully defended in April 2025.***

MORGAN MACINNIS, MSc student. Behavioural evaluation of bulls during semen collection using electroejaculation and alternative techniques: Facial expression (with Drs. Bronwyn Crane and Katy Proudfoot).

NESMA YOUSIF, MSc student. Behavioural evaluation of bulls during semen collection using electroejaculation and alternative techniques: Conditioned place aversion (with Dr. Bronwyn Crane).

OBIANUJU JOY EZE, MSc student. Identification of potential welfare issues in Nigeria and approaches to enhance animal welfare in Nigeria (with Dr. Michael Cockram).

REZA GHANEI MOTLAGH, Post-Doctoral Researcher. Environmental enrichment for stress reduction in land-based salmonid aquaculture (with Dr. Mark Fast).

WENXUAN MA, MSc student. The effect of sleep disruption on cognition in dairy calves (with Dr. Katy Proudfoot).

PUBLICATIONS

AMENDOLA L, PAIRIS-GARCIA M, MILLMAN S, PROUDFOOT K. 2025. Teaching Tip: Developing and evaluating animal welfare case studies for veterinary students. *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*.

<https://doi.org/10.3138/jvme-2024-0131>

BIGELOW L, POPE E, LEE C, SOHASKY V, MACLEOD S, BERNARD P. 2025. Shelved cages impact affective behavior in Sprague Dawley rats—implications for animal welfare. *Laboratory Animals*.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/00236772251384749>

BIGELOW L, POPE E, OUSLEY C, MCGRATTAN A, MACDONALD S, BERNARD P. 2025. Rearing in a shelved environment chronically modifies offspring behaviour and physiology. *European Journal of Neuroscience*.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/ejn.70199>

CHENG T, PEMPEK J, RENAUD D, PROUDFOOT K, ENGLAND Z, WILSON D, HABING G. 2025. Benchmarking hydration, navel health, and transfer of passive immunity in surplus dairy calves. *Journal of Dairy Science Communications*.

<https://doi.org/10.3168/jdsc.2024-0693>

FAJEI E, WHYTE S, SOTO-DAVILA M, ESLAMLOO K, GROVES L, STOREY K, GHANEI-MOTLAGH R, GROMAN D, PURCELL S, FAST M. 2025. Impact of co-exposure to *Chaetoceros* spp. and *Tenacibaculum maritimum* on Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) gills. *Aquaculture*.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aquaculture.2025.743530>

KHODDAMI S, RITTER C, BRUNT M, VENTURA B, RENAUD D, PROUDFOOT K. 2025. Veterinary students' perspectives on their relationship with animals used in veterinary education. *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*.

<https://doi.org/10.3138/jvme-2024-0134>

KELLY B, PROUDFOOT K, COSTA J, DA SILVA T, VENTURA B. 2025. Animal welfare information frames U.S. public perceptions of precision technology use on dairy farms. *Journal of Dairy Science*.

<https://doi.org/10.3168/jds.2024-25603>

MCDUFFEE L, DAWSON S, HODDINOTT K, MARTIN C, PROUDFOOT K, VANLEEUEWEN L, GRIFFON D. 2025. Pursuing relevant regional and far-reaching research. *American Journal of Veterinary Research*.
<https://doi.org/10.2460/ajvr.25.01.0025>

MELLISH M, STULL J. 2025. Working donkey welfare assessment and owner survey in Meru County, Kenya. *Animal Welfare*.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/awf.2025.10031>

MILLS M, PROUDFOOT K, ELSOHABY I, BURNS J, ROSS M, MCKENNA S, RITTER C, MACMILLAN K. 2025. The effect of benchmarking on equine management practices and horse welfare on Prince Edward Island. *Animal Open Source*.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.anopes.2025.100093>

MUUNDA E, CEBALLOS M, RITTER C, VANLEEUEWEN J, RAO E, HALL D. 2025. Economic evaluations of cow comfort interventions in dairy production systems: A systematic review protocol. *University of Calgary Veterinary Science*.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.11575/PRISM/50815>

PROUDFOOT K, EDE T, RYAN C, NEAVE H. 2025. Cognition of dairy cattle: Implications for animal welfare and dairy science. *Journal of Dairy Science communications*.
<https://doi.org/10.3168/jdsc.2025-0860>

PROUDFOOT K, MILLER-CUSHON E, RØRVANG M, MEAGHER R. 2025. Environmental enrichment for farmed ruminants within a positive animal welfare framework. *Veterinary Clinics: Food Animal Practice*.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cvfa.2025.07.006>

PROUDFOOT K, AMENDOLA L, PAIRIS-GARICA M, HERNANDEZ M, VENTURA B, MILLMAN S. 2025. Veterinary student knowledge, attitudes, and perspectives on differing viewpoints after role-play case study on piglet castration. *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*.
<https://doi.org/10.3138/jvme-2024-016>

ROSS M, PROUDFOOT K, MERKIES K, LUNDGREN C, RITTER C. 2025. A wicked problem: Systemic issues surrounding Canadian equestrian dressage and dressage horse welfare. *Animal Welfare*.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/awf.2025.2>

ROSS M, PROUDFOOT K, DOIRON G, MERKIES K, LUNDGREN C, RITTER C. 2025. “My horse has a voice; I’m just trying to figure out what to do with it”: Communication between Canadian dressage coaches, riders, and horses. *Anthrozoös*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08927936.2025.2597085>

VANLEEUEWEN J, GITAU G, MCKENNA S, HEIDER L, KEEFE G. 2025. Investigating compliance with cow comfort and mastitis control recommendations on mastitis outcomes in smallholder dairy farms in Central Kenya. *Research in Veterinary Science*.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rvsc.2024.105469>

VERNICK J, MARTIN C, MONTELPARE W, DUNHAM A, OVERALL K. 2025. Understanding the influence of early-life stressors on social interaction, telomere length, and hair cortisol concentration in homeless kittens. *Animals*.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/ani15030446>

PRESENTATIONS

BERNARD B, BIGELOW L, POPE E, OUSLEY C, SOHASKY V, LEE C, MACLEOD S, MCGRATTAN A. 2025. Considerations for improving animal husbandry practices for laboratory rodents. Presented at the Federation of European Laboratory Animal Science Association, Athens, Greece. Poster Presentation. (International)

BERNARD P. 2025. The sounds we can’t hear, the stress animals can’t escape. Presented at the AVC Research Seminar Series, Charlottetown. Oral Presentation. (Local)

CRANE B. 2025. How does it really feel? Assessing bulls’ electroejaculation experience. Maritime Beef Day at the University of Prince Edward Island, Maritime Beef Council, Charlottetown. Oral Presentation. (Regional)

DIAS G, TERNMAN E, PROUDFOOT K. 2025. Exploring sleep in farmed ungulates: A scoping review. Presented at the North American Regional Meeting of the International Society for Applied Ethology, Guelph, Ontario. Oral Presentation. (International)

EHIGBOR T, PROUDFOOT K, KORALESKY K, RITTER C. 2025. Dairy farmer engagement in antimicrobial stewardship

programs: A narrative review through the lens of the participation ladder. Presented at the Fourth Annual Healthy Cities Conference, Ottawa, Ontario. Oral Presentation. (National)

GÜTTLER M, SEMINARA J, CREUTZINGER K, DANN H, PROUDFOOT K, MCART J. 2025. Prolonged birth makes it worse—labor duration impacts postpartum systemic inflammation in dairy cows. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Bovine Practitioners, Omaha, Nebraska. Oral Presentation. (National)

KLYMCHUK J, MELLISH M, MACMILLAN K, BURNS J. Investigation of preventative healthcare and management practices in standardbred breeding in Prince Edward Island. Atlantic Veterinary College Summer Research and Leadership Program Poster Presentations, Charlottetown. Poster Presentation. (Local)

KLYMCHUK J, MELLISH M, MACMILLAN K, BURNS J. Investigation of preventative healthcare and management practices in standardbred breeding in Prince Edward Island. Veterinary Scholar Symposium, Seattle, Washington. Poster Presentation. (International)

KLYMCHUK J, MELLISH M, MACMILLAN K, BURNS J. Investigation of preventative healthcare and management practices in standardbred breeding in Prince Edward Island. Canadian Emerging Veterinary Scholars Summit, Calgary, Alberta. Oral Presentation. (National)

KLYMCHUK J, MELLISH M, MACMILLAN K, BURNS J. Investigation of preventative healthcare and management practices in standardbred breeding in Prince Edward Island. Atlantic Veterinary College, 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition, Charlottetown. Oral Presentation. (Local)

MELLISH M. 2025. Global partners, local impact: Advancing working donkey welfare in Meru county, Kenya. Presented at the AVC Research Seminar Series, Charlottetown. Oral Presentation. (Local)

POPE E, BIGELOW L, SOHASKY V, LEE C, BERNARD P. 2025. The impact of ultrasonic noise on laboratory animals. Presented at the Federation of European Laboratory Animal Science Association, Athens, Greece. Poster Presentation. (International)

PROUDFOOT K, VANDRESEN B, RITTER C, VENTURA B. 2025. Where do you draw the line? A conversation about how we use animals in our research as applied ethologists and welfare scientists. Workshop at the 58th Congress of the International Society of Applied Ethology Annual Meeting, Utrecht, Netherlands. Workshop Presentation. (International)

PROUDFOOT K. 2025. From curiosity to on-farm care: Integrating insights from behaviour, cognition and sleep to improve the lives of dairy cattle. Presented as part of the Zoetis Award for Research Excellence, Charlottetown. Oral presentation. (Local)

ROBBINS J, PROUDFOOT K, HEMSWORTH L, COLEMAN G, HEMSWORTH P, VAN OS J. 2025. Dairy consumer attitudes toward a hypothetical animal welfare initiative. Presented at the 58th Congress of the International Society of Applied Ethology Annual Meeting, Utrecht, Netherlands. Poster presentation. (International)

ROSS M, PROUDFOOT K, MERKIES K, LUNDGREN C, RITTER C. 2025. A wicked problem: Systemic issues surrounding Canadian equestrian dressage. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Society for Equitation Science, Fort Collins, Colorado. Oral Presentation. (International)

ROSS M, PROUDFOOT K, MERKIES K, LUNDGREN C, RITTER C. 2025. “I get it, but you’re also scaring me”: A multispecies ethnographic account of the relationship between dressage rider emotions, horse behaviour and coach-rider communication. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Society for Anthrozoology, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Oral Presentation. (International)

SHUTE S, PROUDFOOT K, EHIGBOR T, RITTER C. 2025. Veterinary students’ perspectives on the quality of life of teaching animals. Atlantic Veterinary College Summer Research and Leadership Program Poster Presentations, Charlottetown. Poster presentation. (Local)

VALDES S, SEBASTIAN M, BRESSAN N, BOIRE E, STEWART K, STULL J, STOUGHTON W. 2025. Development and multilevel assessment of an equine nasogastric intubation simulator in veterinary education. Atlantic Veterinary College Summer Research and Leadership Program Poster Presentations, Charlottetown. Poster Presentation. (Local)

VALDES S, SEBASTIAN M, BRESSAN N, BOIRE E, STEWART K, STULL J, STOUGHTON W. 2025. Development and multilevel assessment of an equine nasogastric intubation simulator in veterinary education. Veterinary Scholar Symposium, Seattle, Washington. Poster Presentation. (International)

VALDES S, SEBASTIAN M, BRESSAN N, BOIRE E, STEWART K, STULL J, STOUGHTON W. 2025. Development and multilevel assessment of an equine nasogastric intubation simulator in veterinary education. Atlantic Veterinary College, 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition, Charlottetown. Oral Presentation. (Local)

VALDES S, SEBASTIAN M, BRESSAN N, BOIRE E, STEWART K, STULL J, STOUGHTON W. 2025. Development and multilevel assessment of an equine nasogastric intubation simulator in veterinary education. Canadian Emerging Veterinary Scholars Summit, Calgary, Alberta. Oral Presentation. (National)

VERNICK J, MARTIN C, MONTELPARE W, DUNHAM A, OVERALL K. 2025. Kittens redux: Integrating the effects of early life stressors on human interaction, telomere length, and hair cortisol concentration in homeless kittens. Presented at the American College of Veterinary Behaviorist Symposium, Lexington, Kentucky. Oral presentation. (International)

EDUCATION

PROUDFOOT K. Coach for the AVC student teams in the veterinary of the 2025 annual Animal Welfare Assessment Contest, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas. November 2025.

PROUDFOOT K. VHM 8470: Animal Welfare, course for graduate students.

PROUDFOOT K. VHM 1030: Animal Behaviour and Welfare, course for first-year veterinary students at the AVC.

PROUDFOOT K. VHM 4230: Food Animal Health Management, one day teaching animal welfare to fourth-year veterinary students during a two-week clinical rotation.

COMMITTEE/BOARD MEMBERSHIPS

DR. MICHAEL COCKRAM

- » Member of NFACC Code of Practice Scientific Committee for the Care and Handling of Sheep

DR. KATY PROUDFOOT

- » Member, Animal Welfare Committee, American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), representative for the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC)
- » Member, AVMA Animal Welfare Management Subcommittee
- » Member, Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) Farm Animal Subcommittee
- » Panel Member, Review of Animal Welfare Audit Program for the Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization (PAACO)

AWARDS

- » 2025 Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Summer Research Award
 - » Jon Klymchuk, AVC Class of 2028
- » 2025 Christofor Award in Animal Welfare
 - » Laura Groves, AVC Class of 2026
- » 2025 Dr. Tom A. W. Taylor Scholarship
 - » Katelyn Visser, AVC Class of 2027
- » 2025 Zoetis Award for Research Excellence
 - » Dr. Katy Proudfoot, Director of SJDABC
- » 2025 University of Prince Edward Island's Faculty Association Scholarly Achievement Award
 - » Dr. Katy Proudfoot, Director of SJDABC

FUNDING

- » Sir James Dunn and Christofor Foundations: founding and sustaining funding
- » Multi-year donors: Mr. Glenn Loranger, Ms. Katharine E. Gordon, Ms. Rosemary O'Malley-Keyes, Drs. Stephen and Tina McCarthy
- » Project funding:
 - » Pegasus feral cat neuter program: Dr. Eric Butler and Ms. Suzanne Rocca-Butler

- » Pegasus Helping Hand Fund: Dr. Eric Butler and Ms. Suzanne Rocca-Butler, SAVMA - AVC Chapter, Dr. Les and Ms. Holly Burrige
- » Handibear Hills Equine Sanctuary, Inc. project: Mr. Derek Mathers
- » SJDAWC Grant Competition Fund: Fairview Animal Hospital, Ms. Julie Waddell, Andrew MacLeod Veterinary Professional Corporation,
- » Chinook Project: Victoria City Kennel Club, Rathlyn Foundation, Ms. Kathy Morrissey, Mission Kitty
- » American Veterinary Medical Association
- » Animal Welfare Foundation of Canada
- » Many other generous individual supporters *in memoriam*

CONTACT INFORMATION

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