

Position Statement: The Use of Animals Housed in Shelters for Research

(Updated February 2021)

The ASV supports research involving animals in shelters, particularly when intended to improve animal welfare and to expand veterinary medical knowledge.

The use of live animals in research is a privilege. Research conducted using animals in shelters must demonstrate commitment to professional, scientific, and moral principles and ethical responsibilities.¹ Study methods and objectives should be neutral or benefit the animal population used in the study. Studies should be subject to Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee review or its equivalent, as well as approval of shelter leadership.

Animals in shelters should not be euthanized for research purposes. When animals are euthanized for other reasons, cadavers may be used for research; animal cadavers must be treated with respect.

The ASV is opposed to “pound seizure,” the practice of allowing or mandating animal shelters to provide live animals for research purposes. The ASV is also opposed to the use of “random-sourced” animals that Class B dealers collect from shelters, owners, auctions or other non-purpose bred sources and sell for research purposes. Pound seizure or random-sourcing of shelter animals for research is a breach of public trust in that animals are transferred to another party whose purpose is different from that of the shelter.

References:

¹AVMA Use of Animals in Research, Testing, and Education.

<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/avma-policies/use-animals-research-testing-and-education>