

Communication 026/2026

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From experimental animal husbandry “released for adoption”

55th Seminar on Laboratory Animals and Animal Experiments at the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment discusses alternative approaches to the handling of laboratory animals

In some cases, laboratory animals can be rehomed to knowledgeable private households after their time in experimental animal husbandry. A consortium of various research institutions in Germany is working towards the goal of establishing a nationwide online platform to support the rehoming of laboratory animals in future.

The initiative is a topic at the 55th Seminar on Laboratory Animals and Animal Experiments on 19 and 20 May 2026 in Berlin (hybrid). This long-established series is organised jointly by the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR), Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Freie Universität Berlin (Department of Veterinary Medicine) and the Max Planck Institute for Molecular Genetics. The event is organised by the (German) Society for Laboratory Animal Science.

Link to the event: <https://veranstaltungsbuero.berliner-fortbildungen.de/55-seminar-ueber-laboratory-animals-and-animal-experiments.html>

Further topics (excerpt):

A new trend in animal experiments involves studying animals in their familiar environment. In recent years, technical advances have emerged that enable the observation of day-to-day behaviour in the ‘home cage’. The conference will present findings from an EU-funded initiative on the observation of laboratory animals in their home cages. Staff from the BfR are also involved in this initiative.

Mice are the most commonly used laboratory animals. Most are tested at a very young age of 60 to 90 days. However, mice can certainly live longer and, under certain conditions, can

be reused in experiments. This helps to reduce the total number of laboratory animals used. In this context, it is important to recognise the normal, age-related characteristics of 'geriatric' mice and to be able to distinguish them from abnormalities caused by disease. A workshop within the seminar will therefore focus on age-related changes in the appearance and behaviour of laboratory mice.

About the BfR

The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) is a scientifically independent institution within the portfolio of the German Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity (BMLEH). It protects people's health preventively in the fields of public health and veterinary public health. The BfR provides advice to the Federal Government as well as the Federal States ('Laender') on questions related to food, feed, chemical and product safety. The BfR conducts its own research on topics closely related to its assessment tasks.

About the Bf3R

The German Centre for the Protection of Laboratory Animals (Bf3R) was founded in 2015 and is an integral part of the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR). It co-ordinates nationwide activities with the goals of restricting animal experiments to only those which are considered essential, and safeguarding the best possible protection for laboratory animals. Moreover, it intends to stimulate research activities and encourage scientific dialogue.

This text version is a translation of the original German text which is the only legally binding version.

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