Informed consent

For all research involving human subjects, informed consent to participate in the study must be obtained from the participants (or their parents or guardians in the case of children under 16 years of age) and a statement to this effect must be included in the manuscript.

For all manuscripts that include details, images, or videos of individual participants, written informed consent for publication of these must be obtained from the participants (or their parent or legal guardian in the case of children under 16 years of age) and a statement to this effect must be included in the manuscript. If the participant is deceased, consent for publication must be sought from the participant's next of kin. This documentation must be made available to the editors upon request and will be treated as confidential. In cases where the images are completely unidentifiable and the manuscript contains no details about the individuals, consent for publication of the images may not be required. The final decision as to whether consent for publication is required rests with the publisher.

Experimental research on vertebrates or any regulated invertebrate must comply with institutional, national, or international guidelines and, where applicable, must have been approved by an appropriate ethics committee. The Basel Declaration sets out the basic principles to be followed when conducting animal research and the International Council for Laboratory Animal Science (ICLAS) has also published ethical guidelines.

A statement detailing compliance with relevant guidelines (e.g., the revised Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 in the UK and Directive 2010/63/EU in Europe) and/or ethical approval (including the name of the ethics committee and reference number, if applicable) must be included in the manuscript. If a study has been exempted from ethical approval, this must also be detailed in the manuscript (including the name of the ethics committee that granted the exemption and the reasons for it). The editor will consider animal welfare issues and reserves the right to reject a manuscript, particularly if the research involves protocols that are inconsistent with commonly accepted standards for animal research. In rare cases, editors may contact the ethics committee for additional information.

For experimental studies involving client-owned animals, authors must also document informed consent from the client or owner and adherence to a high standard (best practice) of veterinary care.

Field studies and other non-experimental animal research must comply with institutional, national, or international guidelines and, where applicable, must have been approved by an appropriate ethics committee. A statement detailing compliance with relevant guidelines and/or appropriate approvals or licenses must be included in the manuscript. We recommend that authors comply with the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the IUCN Policy Statement on Research Involving Endangered Species.

Authors are strongly encouraged to follow the Animal Research: Reporting In Vivo Experiments (ARRIVE) document, developed by the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs), for reporting animal studies.

For studies reporting livestock trials with production, health, and food safety outcomes, authors are encouraged to follow the REFLECT (Reporting Guidelines for Randomized Controlled Trials in Livestock and Food Safety).