



MEDIA RELEASE

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PRESTIGIOUS AWARD FOR YOUNG SCIENTIST DRIVEN TO BENEFIT ANIMAL WELFARE

Dr Irene Camerlink awarded Young Animal Welfare Scientist of the Year 2020

Dr Irene Camerlink, Assistant Professor at the Department of Animal Behaviour, Institute of Genetics and Animal Biotechnology, Polish Academy of Sciences, has been awarded the UFAW Young Animal Welfare Scientist of the Year Award in recognition of her exceptional work to improve the welfare of pigs.

Dr Camerlink was nominated for the award by Professor Jean-Loup Rault, Head of the Institute of Animal Welfare Science at the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna who said: *"In addition to possessing excellent scientist skills, Irene is really driven by the wish to make a change to animal welfare in practice. This is best illustrated by the regular articles that she writes in producer or non-specialist journals to disseminate knowledge in regard to pig welfare and practical means to improve it. This, in my opinion, is Irene's greater skill on which she excels, and for which we need more people like her to help translate scientific knowledge into animal welfare improvements in the field."*

Dr Camerlink finished her animal science degree in 2007, after which she commenced an MSc on Research Animal Sciences in Wageningen University (The Netherlands). In 2009, she undertook a PhD studying pig behaviour which signalled the start of her career studying the behaviour and welfare of farmed pigs.

On completion of her PhD, Irene moved to Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), where she began as a postdoc researcher on a project on pig aggression with Dr Simon Turner. During this time, Dr Camerlink has made extensive contributions to the study of social behaviour of pigs, and she is now an internationally respected researcher in this field. After four years in Scotland, Irene moved to at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna to continue with her commitment to studying the behavioural needs of pigs in order to improve their lives. She is now based at the Institute of Genetics and Animal Biotechnology, Polish Academy of Sciences in Jastrzębiec, Poland.



UNIVERSITIES FEDERATION FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

The Old School, Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire AL4 8AN, UK.
Tel: +44(0)1582 831818 Fax: +44(0)1582 831414
Website: <http://www.ufaw.org.uk>

In addition, Dr Camerlink has a notable track record of over 40 papers in peer-reviewed journals and is considered by her colleagues to be an outstanding mentor for students who is passionate about passing knowledge to others. Importantly she has also focussed on disseminating her knowledge to those who can implement changes to improve the welfare of pigs in the real world.

Amongst the letters of recommendation which accompanied her nomination was one from Dr Simon Turner, Senior Researcher in the Animal Behaviour and Welfare Team at SRUC who said: *“Irene has been instrumental in supervising work on farmer attitudes, perceptions and willingness-to-pay for welfare benefits. The field of welfare science has rarely interacted with the fields of human behavioural change and agricultural economics. Bringing together these areas is essential. As an academic community, our failure to bring together these fields is at the root of why so many recommendations that ought to improve animal welfare are not implemented by farmers. Irene has been a champion of efforts to understand constraints to farmer behaviour and how we can overcome these to encourage implementation of management techniques that will improve welfare.*

She recently proactively identified the lack of a farmer-focused accessible book describing the current state-of-the-art recommendations on improving common pig welfare related problems. As a result, she is now the editor of a book that I believe will be a go-to resource for farmers.”

Dr Camerlink has instigated and then organised workshops and been the inspiration for new grant ideas and either led or assisted in the successful writing of these. Her activity to date has been global and she has run animal welfare workshops for farmers in China and elsewhere. She also champions the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) in animal research and has proactively introduced new methods into her own research to avoid more invasive physiological measurement (eg by the use of non-invasive infrared thermography to assess stress responses and human pin-prick kits for low-stress sampling of blood glucose and lactate).

The standard of nominations was extremely high and the judging panel also awarded a Highly Commended to Dr Fay Clark in recognition of her excellent work in the field of zoo animal welfare. Dr Clark is a Lecturer in Animal Behaviour and Welfare at Bristol Zoological Society. Both Dr Camerlink and Dr Clark were virtually presented with their awards at UFAW's *Recent Advances in Animal Welfare Science VII* virtual conference on the 30th of June.

Dr Huw Golledge, UFAW's Chief Executive said: *“One of UFAW's missions is to help encourage the next generation of animal welfare scientists and I am delighted that we have been able to acknowledge the work of these inspiring early-career researchers. Both Irene and Fay are excellent examples of researchers who really are using Science in the Service of Animal Welfare, I look forward to following their careers.”*

The UFAW Young Animal Welfare Scientist of the Year Award is to recognise the

SCIENCE IN THE SERVICE OF ANIMAL WELFARE



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achievements of young scientists who have made significant contributions to improving the welfare of animals. It is open to postgraduate students, anywhere in the world, currently studying for a doctoral degree or who are within six years of the end of their PhD. From 2021, it will be known as the Early Career Researcher of the Year Award.

-ENDS-

30 June 2020

Note to editors:

Image of Dr Irene Camerlink available on request.

The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) is an internationally recognised, independent scientific and educational animal welfare charity. It works to improve knowledge and understanding of animals' needs in order to achieve high standards of welfare for farm, companion, research, captive wild animals and those with which we interact in the wild.

UFAW improves animal welfare worldwide through its programme of awards, grants and scholarships; by educational initiatives, especially at university and college level; by providing information in books, videos, reports and in its scientific journal *Animal Welfare*; by providing expert advice to governments and others, including for legislation and 'best practice' guidelines and codes; and by working with animal keepers, scientists, vets, lawyers and all those who care about animals.

This work relies on the support of members, subscribers and donors.