

Annual Report for 2025

Introduction

The Swedish 3Rs Center is a national competence centre dedicated to promoting and coordinating efforts to replace, reduce, and refine animal experimentation.¹

The 3Rs Center is based at the Swedish Board of Agriculture and is governed by the National Committee for the Protection of Animals Used for Scientific Purposes.²

For 2024, the government decided to remove the earmarked funding for the 3Rs Center's activities. As a result, the Swedish Board of Agriculture had to reduce the capacity for 3Rs-related work. Unlike the previous year, the impact of these reductions is now fully evident, as the Center began 2025 with almost no previously initiated projects awaiting completion. During the year, the Center has had three employees and a budget of SEK 3.5 million.

As a further consequence of the reductions, the National Committee tasked the Center with exploring the possibility of discontinuing the Committee's expert group. Following this, the Swedish Board of Agriculture implemented a regulatory amendment to provide greater flexibility in the work involving the expert group.³ Since then, the Committee has not had an expert group.

Ahead of 2025, the Swedish Board of Agriculture introduced a new visual identity for its operations. Consequently, the 3Rs Center's visual identity was also reviewed. The Center now has a darker blue colour in its logo and an updated design in its presentation materials.

Below is a summary of the outreach activities carried out by the Center and the Committee during the year. The published materials are available on the Center's website: jordbruksverket.se/3R.

¹ 28 b § förordning (2009:1464) med instruktion för Statens jordbruksverk.

² 4 § Statens jordbruksverks föreskrifter (SJVFS 2017:44) om instruktion för Nationella kommittén för skydd av djur som används för vetenskapliga ändamål.

³ 4 a § Statens jordbruksverks föreskrifter (SJVFS 2017:44) om instruktion för Nationella kommittén för skydd av djur som används för vetenskapliga ändamål.

Target Groups

In its operational plan for 2025, the National Committee decided that the following target groups should be prioritised in the 3Rs Center's activities for the year:

- Animal Welfare Bodies
- governmental agencies
- research funding bodies
- researchers – with a focus on doctoral students
- animal technicians
- designated veterinarians and persons responsible for animal care and welfare, information and education.

Completed Initiatives

Advice and Statements

The 3Rs Center has published a more overview-oriented form of advice on refined methods for

- blood sampling
- handling, habituation, and training
- administration of medicinal products or other substances.

In addition, the Center has released a statement from the National Committee regarding furnishings and enrichment for laboratory animals. The statement is available as a short report and as a summary poster, which can be printed and displayed in suitable locations.

The advice and statements published during the year are available in English. The Center has also published an English translation of the previously developed discussion material on the Culture of Care.

Network Meetings

The 3Rs Center has organised in-person network meetings for the following target groups:

- Animal Welfare Bodies
- animal technicians
- research funding bodies
- governmental agencies.

During these meetings, participants received information from the Center and invited speakers and had the opportunity to discuss various issues with one another.

The Center has also organised three digital meetings to facilitate discussions among the chairs of Animal Welfare Bodies.

International Collaborations and Activities

The 3Rs Center has long been part of two international collaborations with other 3Rs Centers:

- The COST project IMPROVE⁴ and the EU3Rnet network, which during the year held one in-person meeting and several digital meetings to strengthen cooperation.
- The Togeth3R consortium, which launched a webinar series at the beginning of the year, focusing on methods to replace animal experimentation in basic research.

During the year, the Center or its staff were invited to join two additional international groups:

- ENAWB, the European Network of National Networks of Animal Welfare Bodies.
- ILMERAC's working group on New Approach Methodologies in food safety assessments.⁵

The Center has also taken on the role of national coordinator for an initiative within the European Research Area. This initiative, which will run until 2028, aims to facilitate the development, validation and implementation of animal-free methods in biomedical research, as well as in the testing of medicinal products and medical devices.

Additionally, the National Committee has been invited to participate in meetings organised by the European Commission for the Member States' contact points for Directive 2010/63/EU.

⁴ COST Action CA21139 3Rs Concepts to Improve the Quality of Biomedical Science (IMPROVE).

⁵ International Liaison Group on Methods for Risk Assessment of Chemicals (ILMERAC) Working Group on New Approach Methodologies (NAMs).

Continuous Work

As part of its continuous work, the 3Rs Center has

- organised nine lunch webinars
- held two digital training sessions for the Regional Animal Ethics Committees, in collaboration with the Swedish Board of Agriculture's Research Animal Unit
- delivered 3Rs training to a secondary school class
- published five editions of the newsletter *Focus on the 3Rs*
- distributed news to Animal Welfare Bodies, animal technicians, and the replace network
- published news on the website and on LinkedIn
- made minor updates to the website
- maintained communication with the six Swedish governmental agencies that have a 3Rs strategy
- in a collaboration with the Swedish Chemicals Agency and the Swedish Veterinary Agency, funded the work of an expert in the OECD expert group Thyroid disruption methods
- in a collaboration with the Swedish Chemicals Agency and Uppsala University, funded the work of an expert in reviewing a validation study within the OECD
- participated in the work of the National Hub for governmental agencies within the project *Partnership for the Assessment of Risk from Chemicals* (PARC)
- participated in a meeting within the PARERE network
- closely followed the European Commission's work on developing a roadmap to phase out animal testing in chemical safety assessments
- planned and organised meetings of the National Committee.

The Center's ongoing work also includes participating in national and international seminars to present the 3Rs and the Center's activities. During 2025, the Center or the Committee have presented their work in various ways at the following events:

- The seminar BME@LiU at Linköping University.
- The FELASA Congress.
- The annual 3Rs seminar organised by the University of Gothenburg and AstraZeneca.
- The annual animal welfare seminar organised by the Swedish Board of Agriculture and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences' Scientific Council for Animal Welfare.

- The Danish 3R Symposium.
- The Swedish Research Council's seminar on current issues in animal experimentation.

Additionally, the Center presented its activities in an article featured in the Danish 3R-Center's Annual Report for 2024 and in an episode of *Vetenskapspodden* on Swedish Radio.