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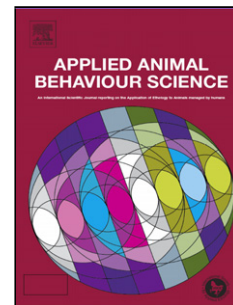
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# **What we can measure, we can manage: the importance of using robust welfare indicators in Equitation Science**

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## **1. Introduction**

Animal welfare has been described as a complex, multi-faceted public policy issue that includes important scientific, ethical, economic and political dimensions (Carenzi and Vergi, 2009). Alongside increasing concern for the welfare of many of the animals used for food and other utility purposes, there is increasing recognition of the need for animal welfare issues to be addressed objectively in a scientifically credible manner (Dawkins, 2015). Key priorities for ensuring the welfare of animals include understanding what welfare is, how it can be assessed in a wide range of species across a variety of environments and what can be done to achieve higher welfare status for individuals.

Defining what animal welfare is has been the subject of many papers and conferences, and it is fair to say that opinions regarding this important starting point have varied and changed over time (see Carenzi and Verga, 2009). Most scientists now, not only agree that animals are sentient beings and as such they should be conferred special consideration through international legislation (Millman et al., 2004), but also that animal welfare matters because it relates to the animal's subjective experience, which can be good or bad. For the purposes of this review, we have assumed

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