

ISAE New Investigator Award 2020/21

In 2021, the New Investigator Award committee received nominations from candidates that completed their PhD studies less than 6 years ago, this was to accommodate that no nominations were accepted in 2020 due to the circumstances.

This year New Investigator Award was given to Dr **Christian Nawroth**. The award committee found that Dr Nawroth represented ethology not only through his work but also bringing attention to the field through his work in science communication, making him a more rounded scientist.

Christian's work focuses how farm animals perceive and interact with their physical and social environment. To answer these questions, he uses a highly interdisciplinary approach covering fields such as animal behaviour, comparative psychology, and animal welfare science.

His track-record indicates a remarkable productivity, including 35 peer-reviewed paper to date. Much of this work is very recent but it is already well cited, evidence of his contribution to the field of farm animal cognition. His highly cited publications on the cognitive capacities of farm animals have helped motivate interest and new work on the use of psychological concepts in an animal-centred approach to improve husbandry and handling practices of farm animals. Notably, he was one of the first to show that pigs can use human-given cues, such as a pointing gesture, to locate food and that goats show human-directed behaviour when confronted with an unsolvable problem – with both topics been extensively studied in the light of how domestication impacted on animal behaviour and cognition in canids but have so far been rather neglected in other domestic species, such as farm animals. He also successfully applies a comparative approach in his research, e.g. by demonstrating that goats and sheep differ in certain cognitive capacities that are likely linked to their feeding ecology. He recently has summarised the current state of research in the field of farm animal cognition in a highly cited review paper.

In addition to his impressive record of research, Christian has an exemplary record of service to the field, serving on the Editorial Board of Animal Behavior and Cognition, Archives Animal Breeding, Frontiers in Psychology and Frontiers in Veterinary Science, and acting as co-editor of two highly topical Frontiers Research Topics (Farm Animal Cognition and Human-Animal Interactions). Christian also has an excellent record of service within ISAE, acting as Membership Secretary and Communications Officer. He is also an accomplished and innovative scientific communicator, as shown by his professional use of social media (including Twitter and other platforms, including his own blog), helping translate applied ethology research for the public. In addition to this public communication, he has helped to lead innovative efforts to improve communication within our academic society, as co-founder of the Slack workspace "Animal Welfare" with more than 700 members, and as co-organiser of the bi-weekly "Applying Ethology" webinar.

In the words of Prof. Daniel Weary and Dr Anna Olson: "we are most impressed with Christian's rapidly developing record of innovative and interdisciplinary research, combined with his excellent track record of scientific achievements and community service".

For more information about Dr Christian Nawroth work, please click [here](#).

