

Professor Christine Nicol received ISAE Honorary Fellowship in 2021

Biography of Professor Christine Nicol, written by Professor Mike Mendl



Professor **Christine Nicol** is, without doubt, a 'person of eminence in the field of the aims of the ISAE'. Over the three decades since completing her PhD, she has made outstanding contributions to research, teaching and application of research findings in animal welfare science. She also built a leading animal welfare research group at Bristol University, and has mentored over 25 PhD students and numerous research assistants and associates, many of whom have gone on to academic careers or animal-welfare related positions around the world, carrying her influence on the field far and wide.

Christine's work on the behaviour and welfare of chickens has helped to improve the lives of millions of birds. A seminal paper published in 1987 (1) provided evidence that hens do not acclimatise to restricted space, making a fundamental contribution to the case that battery cages could not satisfy their behavioural needs. Subsequent research on furnished cages demonstrated that nesting and perching areas could be well-used by the birds, and showed other welfare benefits (e.g. 2). Studies of the welfare of hens in non-cage systems identified management risk factors for problems such as injurious pecking and bone fractures, and investigated the impact of changes in stocking density and group size on bird welfare (e.g. 3). Findings from Christine's work helped to influence the UK government to sign up to the battery cage ban in January 2012 under the EU directive 1999/74/EC.

Christine has published important work in many other areas including the study of abnormal behaviour (e.g. 4), the development of novel and better indicators of animal welfare (e.g. 5), and cognitive and social learning capacities of chickens, horses and other farm animal species (e.g. 6). Her output has been prolific and influential – she has so far published over 190 papers in peer-reviewed journals and these have been cited 6502 times with an h-index of 48 (Scopus: 24/5/19). On top of all this, she has managed to find time to write a textbook on her second favourite animal, the chicken (7) – horses come first!

Christine's contributions to animal welfare extend beyond research. Alongside her training of PhD students, she has taught many undergraduates including veterinary students, some of whom have been influenced by her teaching to change their original career aims and become prominent animal welfare researchers themselves. Through this educational work she has built a legacy of motivated and talented animal welfare scientists to populate the next generation of research leaders. She has also sat on many national and international committees advising on animal welfare research, funding, and policy, and has been a member of UK research council grant and strategy panels.

Christine's outstanding contributions have been recognised by many awards including the Prince Laurent Foundation Prize (2001 with Paul McGreevy), UFAW Medal for Outstanding Contribution to Animal Welfare Science (2012), European Association for Animal Production (EAAP) A.M. Leroy Fellowship Award (2016), British Veterinary Association (BVA) 50th Wooldridge Memorial Medal (2016), and invitations to give the ISAE Wood-Gush Memorial

lecture (2016) and the ASAB Niko Tinbergen lecture (2017). Being made an Honorary Fellow of the ISAE is a fitting and prestigious addition to this list.

More information about Prof. Christine Nicol work can be found [here](#).

Cited references

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