

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Animal Sentience Committee

Register of members' interests

Last updated: 14 August 2024

The following provision for the declaration of interests are intended to prevent the members of the Animal Sentience Committee being influenced, or appearing to be influenced, by their private interests in the exercise of their duties.

All personal or business interests which may influence or, in the judgement of the member, may be perceived by a reasonable member of the public to influence their judgement in relation to Committee work should be declared. For our purposes, this relates to interests connected with animal welfare. This should include, as a minimum, personal direct and indirect financial interests. The register of interests is maintained by the Committee secretariat and is open to the public.

Committee members are required to complete a declaration of interests. There is no lower threshold for declaration of personal and non-personal interests, including shareholdings. All relevant current interests should be declared. Members are asked to inform the secretariat as soon as is practicable of any changes in their interests and will also be required to provide an annual declaration of interests. When considering what non-financial interests should be declared, members should ask themselves whether a member of the public, acting reasonably, would consider the interest might influence the member's words, actions or decisions.

Committee members are required to declare any relevant interests in matters under discussion at each meeting, at which they should decide in consultation with the Chair of the meeting, to excuse themselves from discussions or not. More detailed guidance on declaring interests is set out in the Animal Sentience Committee Terms of Reference.

The current register of interests for each of the Animal Sentience Committee members is as follows:

Michael Seals CBE (Chair)

Financial interests

- Marstons, BT and Tesco – shareholder
- Hall Farm, Sutton on the Hill, Derbyshire – farm owner

Employment, appointments and other outside roles

- Seals Investments – director
- Seals Equestrian – director

- Animal Medicines and Regulatory Authority – chair
- National Fallen Stock Company – chair
- Hall Farm, Sutton on the Hill, Derbyshire – farm owner
- Animal Health & Welfare Board England – previous chair

Personal interests

None.

Other

None.

Professor Richard Bennett

Financial interests

None.

Employment, appointments and other outside roles

- Professor of Agricultural Economic, University of Reading – main employer
- Universities Federation for Animal Welfare – trustee and council member
- Humane Slaughter Association – trustee and council member
- Defra – paid ad hoc reviewer services

Personal interests

None.

Other

- Coordinating Group of the Animal Welfare Research Network (funded by UKRI) – member

Richard Cooper

Financial interests

- S&S ISA managed by an IFA

Employment, appointments and other outside roles

- Map of Ag – main employer
- Royal College of Veterinary Services – other employer
- Responsible Use of Medicines Alliance – pro bono advisory services
- RSPCA STAG (Standards Steering Group) – pro bono advisory services

- Register of Mobility Scorers – member
- Feed Advisors Register – member
- British College of Veterinary Specialists - member
- British Cattle Veterinary Association - member
- Society for Veterinary Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine - member

Personal interests

- A friendship with Alastair Hayton who has interests in the Enferplex TB diagnostic test

Other

None.

Dr Penny Hawkins

Financial interests

None.

Employment, appointments and other outside roles

- Head of Animals in Science Department, RSPCA – main employer
- Institute of Animal Technology – vice president
- University of Southampton Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body – independent member

Personal interests

None.

Other

None.

Professor Anna Meredith

Financial interests

- Collective investment through Abrdn plc.

Employment, appointments and other outside roles

- Professor at University of Keele – main employer
- Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Fellowship Science Advisory Panel – chair

- Board member, Royal Zoological Society of Scotland
- British Veterinary Association – member
- British Veterinary Zoological Society - member
- Zoos Expert Committee – previous chair
- Wildlife Vets International – trustee
- Uplands Wildlife Trust – trustee (in process)

Personal interests

- A friendship and professional acquaintance with Dr Christine Middlemiss CVO

Other

None.

Professor Christine Nicol

Financial interests

None.

Employment, appointments and other outside roles

- Royal Veterinary College – part time employer
- Frontiers in Animal Science – paid role of Field Chief Editor
- Programme NRP 79 (Advancing the 3Rs), Swiss National Science Foundation – member with honoraria payments
- External examiner for PhD theses – ad hoc honorarium payments
- Occasional member of scientific grant awarding bodies – ad hoc honorarium payments
- Occasional work on EFSA panels concerning laying hen welfare
- Occasional expert witness in legal cases concerning laying hen welfare
- Multiple scientific reviews of evidence on poultry welfare for the government of Victoria, Australia (2017, grant awarded to University of Bristol); RSPCA Australia (2018, personal consultancy); Eurogroup for Animal Welfare (2019, personal consultancy); and the Welsh government (2020, personal consultancy)
- Since 2003, has received (as PI or co-applicant) research grant funding from Defra, BBSRC, Tubney Trust, RSPCA, NC3Rs, Waltham Centre for Pet Nutrition, Noble Foods, Vencomatic, Stonegate, Oaklands Eggs, Meat and Live-stock Australia, Open Philanthropy, British Poultry Council, British Veterinary Association, Formas Sweden, Morris Animal Foundation, CVS Veterinary Group. The funding has gone to either the University of Bristol or the Royal Veterinary College to support employed staff, direct and indirect research costs, with no personal remuneration
- We are All Mammals charity – trustee from June 2019 to June 2023

- RSPB ethics advisory committee – member from 2018 – 2020
- Houghton Trust – member
- International Society for Applied Ethology – honorary lifetime member
- Local village hall – trustee
- Foster carer for Somerset County Council – small allowance for the permanent placement of a child
- Royalties for books on poultry welfare – author
- Member of Scientific Advisory Board for the European Partnership on Animal Health and Welfare

Personal interests

None.

Other

- Endurance GB – member
- British Horse Society – member
- Keeps horses and occasionally competes in horse riding competitions
- Owns a Sealyham terrier