

## **Advancing Laboratory Animal Science in the Philippines: PALAS Highlights for 2025**

The Philippine Association for Laboratory Animal Science (PALAS) marked 2025 as a year of renewed momentum in laboratory animal science, capacity building, and animal welfare advocacy. PALAS' flagship event, the 34th Annual Scientific Conference, "Beyond the Human Body: Understanding Diseases Through Translational Research," convened veterinarians, researchers, IACUC members, and animal-care staff in August, spotlighting translational models, welfare-centered study design, and One Health approaches that link animal, human, and environmental health.

Beyond the conference hall, PALAS strengthened hands-on training across the academe. PALAS-affiliated and partner IACUCs conduct intensive workshops on laboratory animal care and use – practical training that equips students and professionals with up-to-date standards for humane handling, husbandry, and ethical review of animal studies. These trainings emphasize the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction, Refinement) and help institutions meet regulatory and welfare expectations.

PALAS also broadened its educational reach with specialty workshops – including free invertebrate handling sessions tied to biology week activities – reflecting the association's commitment to inclusive, species-appropriate welfare education for researchers working with both vertebrates and invertebrates. Such outreach supports safer, more ethical research practices across Philippine laboratories.

The association's continued role in professional recognition remains vital: PALAS conference platforms enable institutions and scientists to showcase best practices, share innovations in enrichment and welfare, and celebrate research excellence illustrated by award recognitions at recent PALAS meetings. Together, these activities show PALAS' dual focus in 2025: advancing scientific rigor in animal-based research while embedding animal welfare and ethical oversight at every step of the research pipeline.

As PALAS moves forward, its 2025 programs underscore a practical, education-first approach: building competence, strengthening IACUCs, and fostering a research culture where scientific progress and animal welfare progress together.

