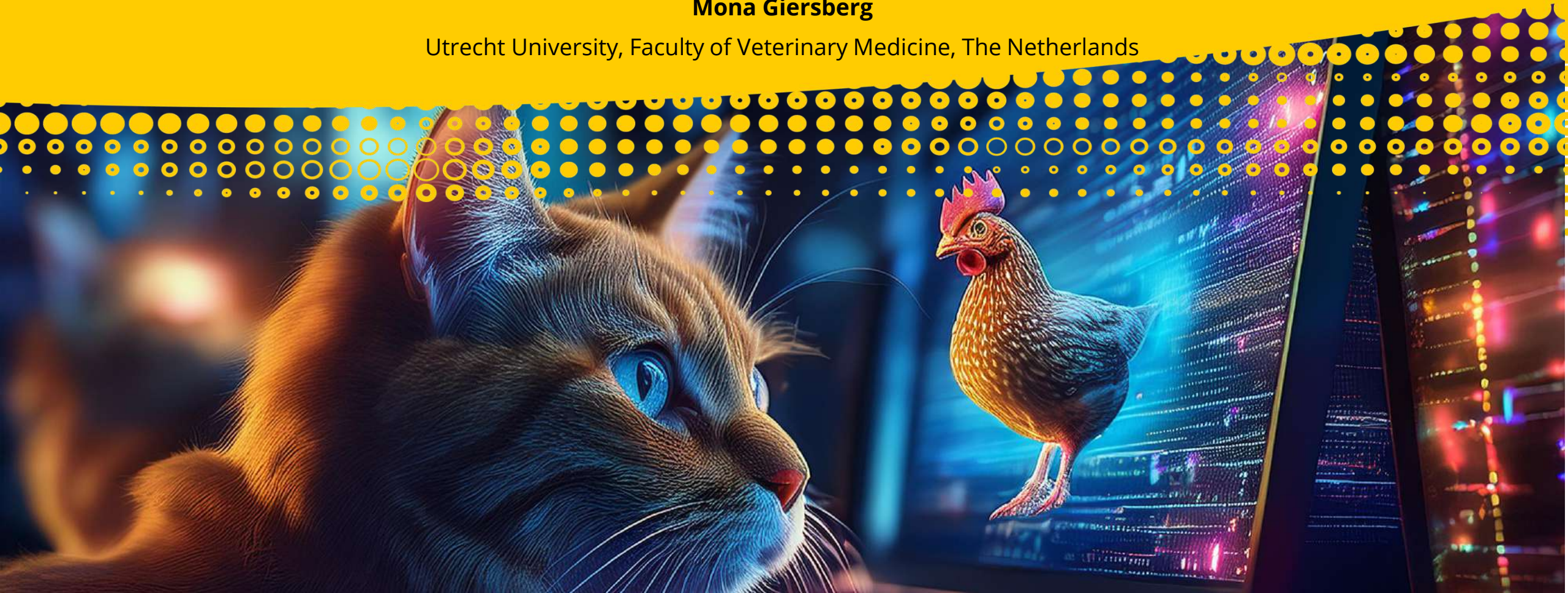


# Animals: the forgotten stakeholders in AI ethics discourses?

**Mona Giersberg**

Utrecht University, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, The Netherlands



# Ethics of AI

## AI

Technologies with the ability to process data in a way which resembles intelligent behaviour.

What is ethics of AI?

- Rapidly developing field of digital technologies
- Significant impact on the development of humanity
- Fundamental questions:

What should we do with these technologies?

What should these technologies do?

What risks do these technologies involve?

How can we manage these risks?

→ Focused on concerns

# Ethics of AI

Why is it important?

- Designed to replicate intelligent behaviour
- Opportunities and benefits
- Same issues that can come with human judgement

Critical application areas: healthcare, education, criminal justice, military

Underrepresented or marginalised groups or individuals

- Challenges current norms and conceptual systems

# Ethics of AI

Why is it important?

Understand technologies in their contexts



Form societal response

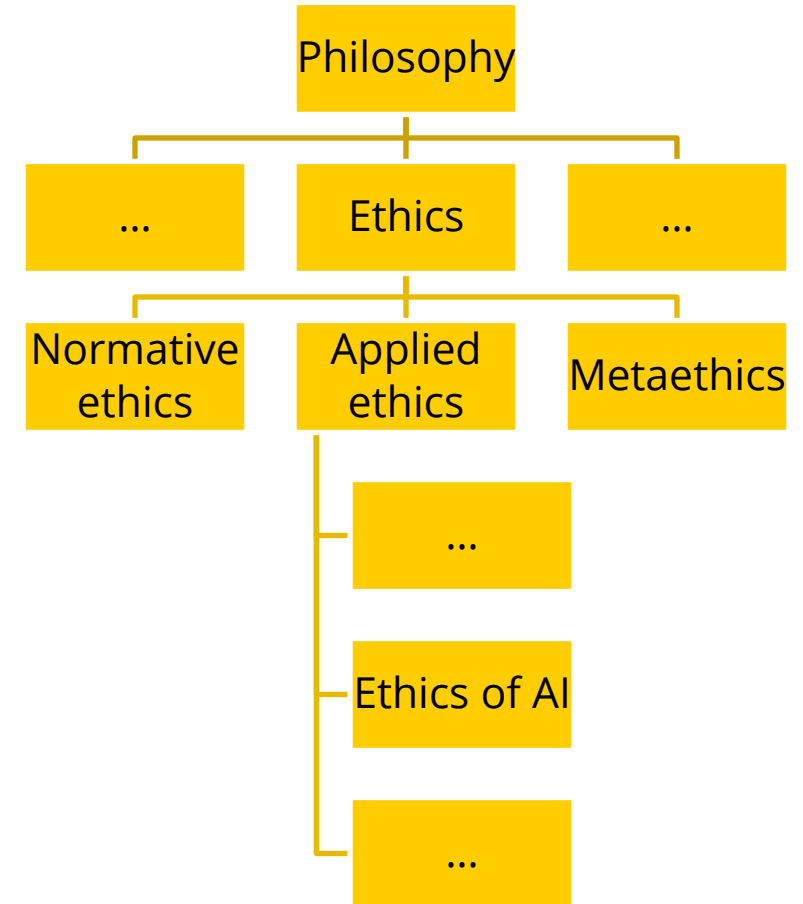


incl. guidelines, regulations, laws

**'responsible use' and  
'responsible design'**

# Ethics of AI in research

- Young, dynamic field
- Separate issues from non-issues
- 'Ethics washing' vs. genuine problems of ethics
  - It is *not* readily known what the right thing to do is
- No presupposed ethical approaches (e.g. based on consequentialism, deontology, virtue ethics)



Müller (2023)



# Ethics of AI in practice

- Ethical principles for the adoption of socially beneficial AI
- Overlap with core principles of bioethics

## Bioethics principles

## Enabling principle for AI

### Beneficence

- Promoting wellbeing
- Preserving dignity
- Sustaining the planet

### Non-maleficence

- Privacy
- Security
- 'Capability caution'

### Autonomy

- Retain power to decide
- Overridable delegation

### Justice

- Promoting prosperity
- Preserving solidarity
- Avoiding unfairness

### Explicability

- Transparency
- Intelligibility
- Interpretability
- Accountability

Beauchamp & Childress (2012); Floridi & Cowls (2019)

# Ethics of AI – who is missing?



# Why is this problematic?



<https://www.cowmanager.com/>



<https://www.delaval.com/globalassets/inriverresources/pdfs/Abdelal-2019-Body-condition-scoring-bcs2.pdf>



# Why is this problematic?

- Animals are in a vulnerable position
  - Depend on human care
  - Lack self-reporting capacities
- People have (more or less) agreed on the moral status of animals
  - Human obligations in terms of animal welfare and duty of care
- AI has the potential to fundamentally change our notions and practices of animal handling and care



Giersberg & Meijboom (2022); Janssens (2022)

# UNESCO global stand:

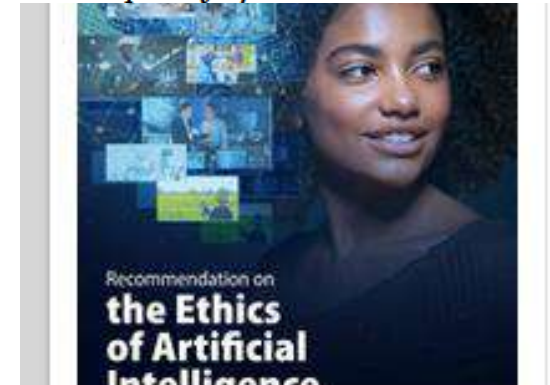
## ANIMAL DIGNITY

By  
Reed Elizabeth Loder\*

- Four core values:

- 1) Human rights and human dignity
- 2) Living in peaceful, just and interconnected societies
- 3) Ensuring diversity and inclusiveness
- 4) Environment and ecosystem flourishing

*The aim of this Article is to find a broader theoretical basis for animal protection than the current ideas of personhood and capabilities provide. Human dignity is variously defined but pervasive in grounding human rights and should have a counterpart for animal protection beyond minimum welfare that can improve the quality of animal lives overall. Dignity*



## JOURNAL ARTICLE

### Experiencing the More-than-Human World

Michaela Fenske and Martha Norkunas

Narrative Culture

Vol. 4, No. 2 (Fall 2017), pp. 105-110 (6 pages)

Published By: Wayne State University Press

# UNESCO global standard on AI ethics

- Human-rights centred approach to ethics
  - 1) **Proportionality** and do-no-harm
  - 2) Safety and security
  - 3) Right to **privacy** and data protection
  - 4) **Multi-stakeholder** and adaptive governance and collaboration
  - 5) ...

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH article

Front. Vet. Sci., 07 January 2022

Sec. Animal Behavior and Welfare

Volume 8 - 2021 |

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fvets.2021.784794>

This article is part of the Research Topic  
Animal-Computer Interaction and Beyond:  
The Benefits of Animal-Centered Research  
and Design

[View all 13 articles >](#)

## The Case for Animal Privacy in the Design of Technologically Supported Environments

 Patrizia Paci<sup>1†</sup>

 Clara Mancini<sup>1†</sup>

 Bashar Nuseibeh<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> School of Computing and Communications, The Open University, Milton Keynes, United Kingdom

<sup>2</sup> Lero, Irish Software Research Centre, University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland

the Ethics  
of Artificial  
Intelligence

Online

Open Access

# How to proceed?

Including animal perspectives in the design and use of AI-based solutions



## Representatives

- Animal (welfare) scientists
- Biologists
- Animal ethicists
- Governments
- NGOs

# Invitation

When listening to presentations during this conference ask yourself (or the presenter):

- Which core values or ethical principles underly the technology?
- Do these include animals (directly/indirectly)?
- Is it relevant to include animals in these considerations? Why/why not?

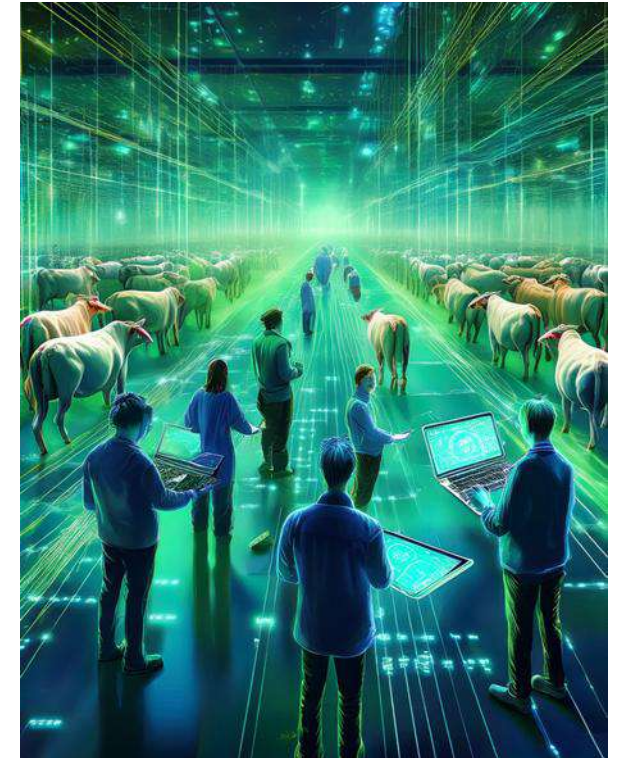




# Invitation

When listening to presentations during this conference ask yourself (or the presenter):

- Who benefits from the technology?
- Do animals benefit from it? Is this relevant?
- What are the risks of the use/within the design of the technology?
- Are these risks relevant for animals?



# AI & Animal Welfare Lab

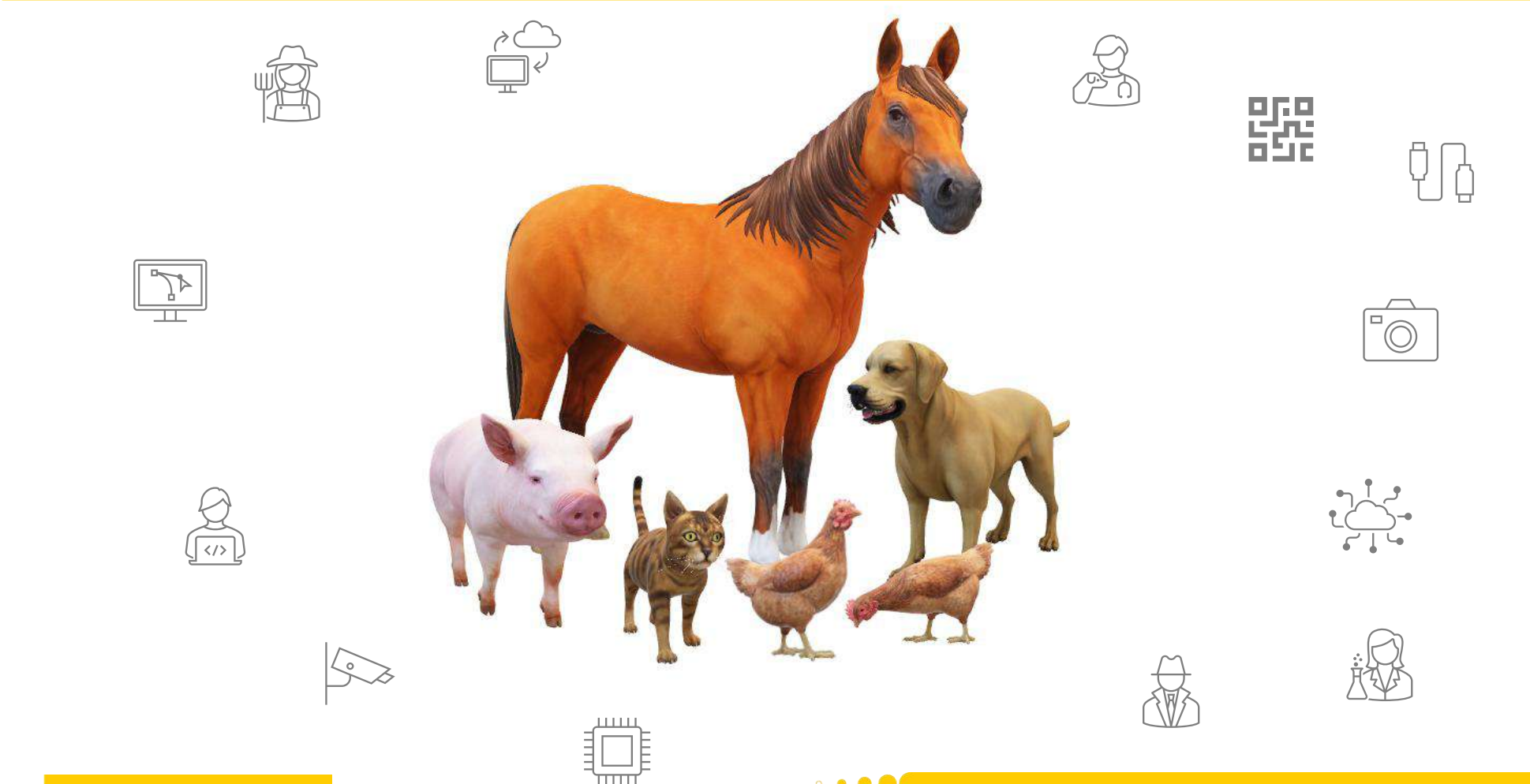
## Our vision:

We strive to improve animals' lives in practice

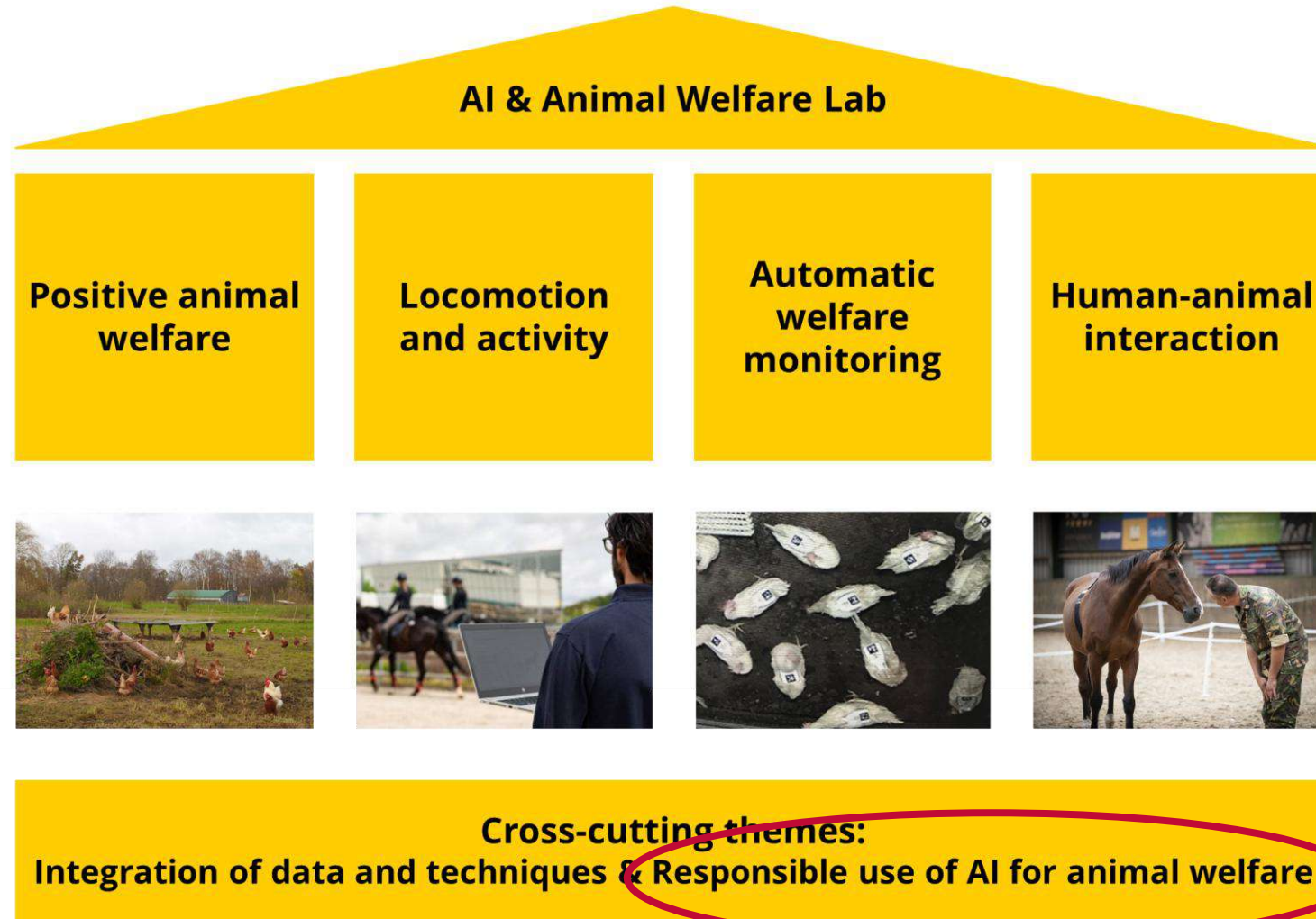
- by using the **full potential of AI** in a **responsible** way
- by developing AI-based solutions with **added value for the animals**
- by fostering a community in which **stakeholder perspectives** – including the one of the animal – are understood as best as possible and are **taken seriously**



## **‘The animal at the centre’**



# Thematic focus



# Got sparked?

IACAP/AISB Conference on Philosophy of Computing and AI (IACAP/AISB-25)

- 1-3 July 2025, University of Twente, The Netherlands





# Thank you!

I would like to thank the whole team of the **AI & Animal Welfare Lab** for their valuable contributions to the thematic areas and for shaping the overall focus of the Lab!

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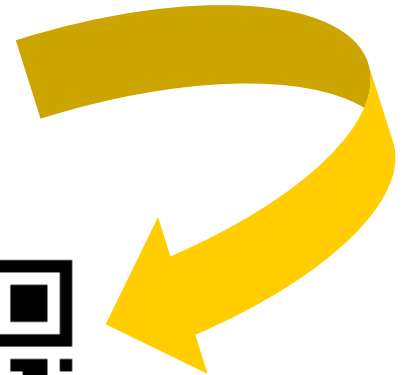


Mona Franziska Giersberg



Mona F. Giersberg

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*shaping tomorrow*