FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Animal Grantmakers’ 23rd Annual Conference October 23 – 26, 2022 in San Francisco Bay Area to Focus on Animal Sentience**

**Flagship Event Also to Discuss Intersections between Animals and Climate Change, Pandemics, the Environment, and Other Pressing Issues**

**Berkeley, Calif. (September 27, 2022)** – [Animal Grantmakers](http://www.animalgrantmakers.org/), the nation’s only group of philanthropic funders focused on protecting and enabling the wellbeing of all animals, will convene its [members](https://animalgrantmakers.org/member-organizations-listing), other peer funders, grantees and other experts, and leaders of animal and environmental protection organizations in the Bay Area, October 23 – 26, 2022. Funders will discuss pressing issues ranging from animal sentience, factory farming and plant-based food alternatives to innovative practices at cat and dog shelters, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in animal philanthropy, and key developments in California. Exclusively for funders, the [2022 Animal Grantmakers Conference](https://animalgrantmakers.org/2022-Annual-Conference) will be held at the Residence Inn Berkeley in partnership with [Farmed Animal Funders](https://farmedanimalfunders.org/).

“Animal sentience—animals’ ability to feel and experience emotions—is an increasingly important issue, with recent developments worldwide in both legislation and courtrooms,” said Lori Grange, president of the board of Animal Grantmakers and strategy officer at the Hewlett Foundation. “Animal welfare is also central to human welfare, whether it’s climate change, pandemics and public health, land conservation and water, economic innovations, workers’ rights, equity for people and communities of color, and other issues. This is a unique opportunity to bring funders and other experts together to think about both challenges and solutions.”

Sponsoring this year’s conference are the following Animal Grantmakers members:

* **Hero:** [Life of Riley at Spring Point](https://lor.dog/), [Thelma Doelger Trust for Animals](https://thelmadoelgertrustforanimals.org/) (in honor of Susan Doelger’s work on behalf of Animal Grantmakers), and [William and Flora Hewlett Foundation](https://hewlett.org/)
* **Champion:** [Maddie’s Fund®](http://www.maddiesfund.org/index.htm), [Summerlee Foundation](https://summerlee.org/), [Tigers in America®](https://tigersinamerica.org/), [Michelson Found Animals Foundation](https://www.foundanimals.org/), [PetSmart Charities](https://petsmartcharities.org/)®, [Kirkpatrick Foundation](http://kirkpatrickfoundation.com/), and an anonymous donor
* **Steward:** [The Botstiber Institute for Wildlife Fertility Control](https://wildlifefertilitycontrol.org/)

“We are extremely grateful to all of our 2022 conference sponsors,” said Grange. “Their support has ensured we will have prominent, provocative, and diverse speakers and viewpoints. And it strengthens funders’ ability to build meaningful relationships and make their work, and collaboration, even more effective.”

The conference will begin on October 23 with field trips to the [Marine Mammal Center](https://www.marinemammalcenter.org/) in Sausalito and a nature hike in Marin Headlands guided by [Project Coyote](https://projectcoyote.org/); or four innovative non-profits serving companion animals in San Francisco and Oakland ([Cat Town](https://www.cattownoakland.org/), [Muttville](https://muttville.org/), [San Francisco SPCA](https://www.sfspca.org/), and [San Francisco Animal Care and Control](https://www.sfanimalcare.org/)). That evening, attendees will get a glimpse into the lives of male cat aficionados as filmmaker Mye Hoang shares clips from her 2021 film, [Cat Daddies](https://www.catdaddiesmovie.com/), at the opening reception.

The opening keynote from Stevan Harnad, professor of cognitive science at the Université du Québec à Montréal, on why protecting the feelings of animals, human and non-human, is of the utmost importance will set the tone for the core program on October 24 and 25. Harnad will also moderate “Once More with Feeling,” in which Vicky Bond, president of [The Humane League](https://thehumaneleague.org/), Mikko Jarvenpaa, founder of [*Sentient Media*](https://sentientmedia.org/), and [David Peña-Guzman](https://humanitiesliberalstudies.sfsu.edu/david-pena-guzman), associate professor at San Francisco State University, will discuss the policy implications of the evidence of sentience for farmed mammals, birds, fish, and invertebrate species. In a related session, “That’s Your Opinion,” Chris Berry, managing attorney at the [Animal Legal Defense Fund](https://aldf.org/), Joyce Tischler, professor of practice at Lewis & Clark Law School (and a trailblazer in the field of animal law for more than 40 years), and Steven Wise, founder and president of the [Non-Human Rights Project](https://www.nonhumanrights.org/), will discuss why animals are considered property and how that impacts their protection under the law; Happy the elephant and Pablo Escobar’s hippos will be cases in point, and the Prop 12 case before the Supreme Court will also be covered.

Sessions on companion animals include “How Covid 19 Transformed Animal Shelter Operations and Inspired the Formation of Human Animal Support Services,” in which leaders from three California animal shelters will share the changes they implemented to follow this new community-centric model and how those changes better meet the needs of animals and people where they live. Jyothi V. Robertson, DVM, DABVP, an internationally-recognized specialist in shelter medicine and owner of [JVR Shelter Strategies](https://www.shelterstrategies.com/), will highlight the interdependence of work within animal welfare and outside of it, including education reform, climate change, and social justice, in a luncheon keynote. James Evans, founder and CEO of [Companions and Animals for Reform and Equity (CARE)](https://careawo.org/), a Black, Indigenous and People of Color-led organization inspired to rethink and rebuild animal welfare and protection, will lead a workshop on “How Funders Can Identify and Support Proximate Leaders” along with representatives from two CARE Centers.

Factory farming will be examined from various angles and be a major focus of sessions on October 25. Mikaela Saccoccio, executive director of Farmed Animal Funders, will start these discussions with an “Introduction to Effective Altruism and Why Farmed Animals Are Center Stage.” lauren Ornelas, founder and president of the [Food Empowerment Project](https://foodispower.org/), will pick up the baton in her afternoon keynote, “Addressing Your Bias,” in which she will illustrate how systemic racism intersects with our food system and its ties to animal abuse on factory farms.

Aquatic factory farming, particularly from an animal welfare perspective, will be the subject of “The Suffering Seas,” a panel discussion with Marcus Davis, co-CEO of [Rethink Priorities](https://rethinkpriorities.org/), Catalina Lopez, director of the [Aquatic Animal Alliance](https://aquaticanimalalliance.org/), and Andrianna Natsoulas, campaign director for [Don’t Cage Our Oceans](https://dontcageouroceans.org/). Next, Rachel Dreskin, CEO of the [Plant Based Foods Association](https://www.plantbasedfoods.org/), Amy Huang, university innovation manager at the [Good Food Institute](https://gfi.org/), and Ricardo San Martin, co-director of the Alt: Meat Lab at the [Sutardja Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology](https://scet.berkeley.edu/tag/ricardo-san-martin/) at the University of California at Berkeley, will examine the science and work behind cruelty-free protein and what’s new on the horizon in “The Future of Food.”

That evening, Miyoko Schinner, CEO and founder of [Miyoko’s Creamery](https://miyokos.com/), will delight attendees with her personal story of innovation in the plant-based food world during a gala dinner. On October 26, up to 20 attendees will get to peek under the hood of one of the premier alternative protein companies in the world, [Eat Just](https://www.ju.st/) (maker of JUST Egg), in a free tour of the company’s Alameda headquarters.

“What’s Up with Cali?” will showcase animal issues and developments in the conference’s host state. Panel participants include **Allison Cardona**, California State director at Koret Shelter Medicine Program at the University of California at Davis, and **Josh Balk**, vice president of farm animal protection at the Humane Society of the United States (and co-founder of Eat Just). California will be on the “menu” again during a special lunch conversation with anti-rodeo activist and founder of Oakland-based [Action for Animals](https://www.actionforanimals-oakland.com/), Eric Mills, and will also be spotlighted during the inaugural Animal Grantmakers Melanie Anderson Lifetime Excellence in Animal Protection (LEAP) Award, which will be presented to Sharon Negri, founder and director of [WildFutures](https://www.wildfutures.us/) (a project of the Earth Island Institute).

A series of dynamic TED-style talks at the [David Brower Center](https://browercenter.org/) on the afternoon of October 24 is a special conference attraction this year. Among the 10 prominent speakers are:

* *Dr. Aysha Akhtar*. A board certified neurologist and co-founder of the [Center for Contemporary Sciences](https://contemporarysciences.org/), Dr. Akhtar is also a fellow of the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics and author of “Our Symphony with Animals.”
* *Bobak Bakhtiari*. The *Silicon Valley* actor, philanthropist, and entrepreneur is also president of [Hangry Planet](https://www.touchfreewash.com/), North America’s first 100% plant-based convenience store in San Bruno, California.
* *Dotsie Bausch*. After winning a silver medal in cycling at the 2012 Olympics at age 39, Bausch founded [Switch4Good](https://switch4good.org/), an evidence-based non-profit advocating for a dairy-free world.
* *Thomas Linzey*. Senior legal counsel for the [Center for Democratic and Environmental Rights](https://www.centerforenvironmentalrights.org/), Linzey is widely recognized as the founder of the contemporary “community rights” movement and was named one of the top 400 environmentalists of the last 200 years (*American Environmental Leaders*).
* *Dave Phillips*. President of [Earth Island Institute](https://www.earthisland.org/) in Berkeley, Phillips has successfully educated and engaged people in the protection of dolphins and whales for over 30 years. One of the people who truly “Freed Willy,” his work also resulted in the “dolphin-safe” label on tuna cans and was featured in the Academy Award-winning documentary, The Cove.

Complete [program](https://animalgrantmakers.org/2022-Program) information and the full lineup of conference [speakers](https://animalgrantmakers.org/2022-speakers) can be found on the [Animal Grantmakers website](https://animalgrantmakers.org).

The deadline to [register](https://animalgrantmakers.org/2022-Register) for the conference is October 14, 2022. Representatives of non-member grantmaking organizations who are interested in learning more about Animal Grantmakers are invited to attend their first conference at no charge; to learn more, contact membership@animalgrantmakers.org.

**About Animal Grantmakers**

[Animal Grantmakers](http://www.animalgrantmakers.org/), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is the nation’s only funder affinity group focused on protecting and enabling the wellbeing of all animals. Animal Grantmakers welcomes funders with animal protection, welfare, and rights perspectives. A diverse group of foundations, public charities, corporate giving programs, individuals, and other philanthropists, Animal Grantmakers’ members support animal shelters, rescues, and sanctuaries, as well as other organizations that advance spay/neuter and other forms of animal population control, humane education, wildlife protection and rehabilitation, alternatives to factory farming and animal testing, minimization of pain and suffering, and many other programmatic areas. Animal Grantmakers seeks to empower its members and allies to deploy, grow, and leverage their resources more effectively on behalf of animals, people, and the environment. To learn more, visit [www.animalgrantmakers.org](http://www.animalgrantmakers.org).

# # #

**Media Contact:** Jill Hoffman, communications@animalgrantmakers.org or 323-719-7111