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## Mice get dirty

A dirty mouse in the lab: unwanted vermin about to contaminate a colony, or a welcome change of pace? Recently, some immunologists have been thinking the latter, with experiments running the gamut from “rewilding” lab mice in the fields of New Jersey to comparing clean animals and their pet shop relatives to simply paying closer attention to what pathogens are and aren’t found behind health barriers. The idea is that ceding control and introducing more natural variability could make findings more robust and translatable to humans, but using “dirty” mice can be complicated. Researchers must re-think how to design and control their experiments and staff in animal facilities have the health of all their animals to consider. Read more about the promise and the challenges of breaking mice out of the clean room in a new Technology Feature.

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## ...and take to the skies

Look up into a darkening sky in the right place at the right time and you might notice a curious light quickly gliding along above the horizon. Brighter than any visible star yet a steady glow unlike any airplane, the light is the International Space Station, suspended 250 miles above the ground and circling the earth at 17,500 miles per hour. An unlikely place for a laboratory mouse? Not since 2014, when NASA and its partners launched the first Rodent Research mission to the space station. Since then, mice have been frequent fliers. Our November News Feature looks at why they’re there and how they make it to space in the first place.

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