



Animal welfare

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Brussels June 2008

Foundation of animal welfare in EU

- Treaty of Amsterdam May 1999 Protocol on the protection and welfare of animals (as sentient¹ animals)
- EU to respect welfare requirements
- EU to improve welfare
- EU to prevent cruelty & mistreatment
- MS responsible for AW not covered by the Treaty

¹Sentience=the ability to experience suffering

Animal Welfare in the EU

- The Protocol on protection and welfare of animals annexed to the Treaty requires that in formulating and implementing the Community agriculture policy:

“the Community and the Member States shall pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals, while respecting the legislative provisions and customs of the Member States relating in particular to religious rites, cultural traditions and regional heritage”

Definition

- There are several definitions of “Animal Welfare” – such as :
 - “Living in harmony with itself and with its environment, from a mental and physical point of view”
 - “State of attempts of an animal to cope with its environment”
 - “Providing an environment corresponding to its biological needs”

Political context

- Animal welfare is of political importance in the EU
- European Parliament, Animal Welfare Associations, etc. have repeatedly expressed the desire to see that the Community adopts effective measures
- European Commission gives animal welfare a high priority

Several opinions

- ➡ Various opinions on animal welfare and on the level of protection
- ➡ To provide “satisfactory conditions” for animals is a political choice
- ➡ Sometimes tension between ‘Animal Welfare’ and “Economy”
- ➡ Animal welfare policy is a “compromise policy”

Basis for EU legislation

- There are 2 fundamental reasons for EU animal legislation:
 - the fact that disparities in national legislation in the field of the protection of animals directly affect the functioning of the common market, and
 - the statement that the Community should take action to avoid in general all forms of cruelty to animals

Some general comments

- ➔ No comprehensive anti-cruelty code in EU legislation
- ➔ Protocol on Animal Protection and Welfare in EU Treaty (see next slide)
- ➔ EU legislation: Farm-, Laboratory-, and Wild- animals (including captive wildlife)
- ➔ Farm animals: keeping, transport and slaughter

Comments - proceed

- Structure of EU legislation - future
- Transposition, implementation and enforcement of EU legislation
- Training of persons involved
- Co-operation between Government, Animal Welfare Association(s) and industry involved
- EU third country import policy

EU animal welfare legislation

- Based on European Convention for the Protection of animals kept for farming purposes
- reflects five freedoms:
 - Hunger & thirst ; Discomfort; Pain, injury & disease; Normal behaviour; Fears & distress

EU animal welfare legislation

- Farm animals (Dir.98/58/EC)
 - animals kept for farming purposes
 - laying hens
 - calves confined for rearing and fattening
 - pigs confined for rearing and fattening
 - protection of animals during transport
 - protection of animals at the time of slaughter or killing

EU Animal Welfare legislation

- Laboratory animals
 - keeping and care of laboratory animals
- Wild animals
 - provisions for wildlife, including captive wildlife
 - Zoos
 - CITES
 - Trapping
 - Habitats Directive
 - Birds Directive

EU animal welfare legislation

- More specific legislation on certain species:
 - Laying Hens (Dir.99/74/EC)
 - Calves (Dir. 91/629/EC)
 - Pigs (Dir.91/630/EC)
 - Laboratory animals .. (Dir. 86/609/EEC)
 - at Slaughter (Dir.93/119/EEC)
 - during transport (Reg. (EC) 1/2005)
 - for zoos (Dir.99/22/EC)



Animal Welfare issues to consider

- Public awareness
- General animal welfare legislation
- Implementation and enforcement
- Staff at headquarter knowledge/experience - training
- Co-operation with parties involved (government, national/ international animal welfare associations and industry involved)

Council of Europe

- Separate organisation: head quarter in Strasbourg; each democracy may join as a Member
- 5 Conventions on the protection of animals:
 - International transport
 - Animals kept for farming purposes
 - Slaughter of animals
 - Laboratory animals
 - Pet animals



OIE code for animal welfare

Challenges

- Animal welfare awareness is very different from one country/ continent to another
- It is generally accepted that animal welfare has considerable impact on animal health – e.g. high density
- Animal welfare is sometimes difficult to measure. When is an animal pleased?
- The issue is very emotional in some countries
- Some OIE Member Countries are sceptical, afraid these issues will be used as trade barrier.



Challenges proceed

- To create standards to harmonise scientific and emotional issues, taking due account of religion, ethics, trade and politics
- To involve all stakeholders in all the member countries.

OIE animal welfare working group

- Manages OIE animal welfare activities
- Members from government, academia and private sector from all regions
 - now includes industry expertise directly
- Identifies priorities for work programme
- Oversees work of expert groups

Introduction

- Outcome-based not prescriptive
 - what does an animal need and what options may achieve those needs?
- Standards adopted in 2005
 - transport of animals by land and sea
 - slaughter of animals for human consumption
 - killing of animals for disease control purposes
- Air transport issues addressed with IATA

Common concepts

- Animal handler - definition
 - a person with a knowledge of the behaviour and needs of animals which, with appropriate experience and a professional and positive response to an animal's needs, results in effective management and good welfare
 - their competence should be demonstrated through independent assessment and certification
- Competence
- Responsibilities

Transport standards

- the welfare of animals during their transport is the joint responsibility of all people involved
- the roles of each of those responsible are defined
 - transport companies, vehicle/vessel owners and drivers/masters
 - business agents, buying/selling agents
 - owners and managers of animals



Transport standards

- planning the journey
- documentation
- pre-journey period
- loading
- travel
- unloading and post-journey handling
- actions in the event of a refusal to allow the completion of the journey
- species specific issues



Slaughter standard

- ➡ the welfare of animals during their unloading, moving, lairaging, restraining, stunning and slaughter is the joint responsibility of all people involved

Slaughter Standard

- General principles
- Moving and handling animals
- Lairage design and construction
- Care of animals in lairages
- Summary of acceptable handling and restraining methods and the associated AW issues
- Summary of acceptable stunning methods and the associated AW issues
- Summary of acceptable slaughter methods and the associated AW issues
- Unacceptable methods, procedures and practices

Disease control standard

- disease control contingency plans should be in place at a national level
 - should contain details of management structure, disease control strategies and operational procedures
 - animal welfare should be addressed
 - should ensure that an adequate number of competent personnel available
- general principles apply when animals need to be killed for other purposes e.g. after natural disasters



Disease control standard

- Following the decision to kill the animals, killing should be carried out as quickly as possible
 - normal husbandry should be maintained for as long as possible
- Handling and movement of animals should be minimised and done in accordance with the guidelines
- Animal restraint should align with animal welfare and operator safety requirements

Disease control standard

- Methods used should result in immediate death or immediate loss of consciousness lasting until death
 - when loss of consciousness is not immediate, induction of unconsciousness should be non-aversive and not cause anxiety, pain, distress or suffering in the animals
- Animal welfare vs. biosecurity Considerations

Implementation

- OIE guidelines are international standards
 - AW not explicitly referenced in the SPS Agreement, so international legal standing unresolved
- Other documents for guidance and information
 - e.g. Revue Scientific et Technique August 2005 on Animal Welfare: global issues, trends and challenges
- OIE has no mandate to police implementation of its standards



Using the guidelines

- In international trade by veterinary services
 - in bilateral discussions between trading partners
 - as part of general import regulations
- As domestic government policy
 - by national / provincial / state veterinary services
- As guidelines for private sector
 - by private / company veterinarians

Unchanged approach

- ➔ Progress in AW being by 'evolution not revolution'
- ➔ Proposals continuing to be science-based
 - ➔ but taking account of other dimensions
- ➔ Leading role of veterinarians in standards development and implementation

Future OIE work

- Standards being developed
 - stray animal control
 - laboratory animal welfare
 - aquatic animal welfare
 - housing of production animals
 - zoo / exotic animal welfare
- WSPA International Declaration
- Activities of commercial processors and retailers
- Animal welfare in the veterinary curriculum

Conclusion

- ➔ Animal welfare is an important issue in the EU
- ➔ The OIE has recently developed animal welfare standards which are similar to EU standards
- ➔ Animal welfare standards are not yet used in the context of WTO-SPS

