



# Global Conference on Animal Welfare: An OIE\* Initiative

Paris, 23-25 February 2004

This was the first conference organised by the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) focussing solely on animal welfare issues. These were discussed by representatives of the meat industry, farmers, animal traders, industrialists, state/government personnel and animal welfare groups. The conference was attended by 415 participants plus 28 participants from OIE and 5 guests of honour representing 59 countries and 17 international organisations including the Council of the EU (European Union), EFSA (European Food Safety Authority), EFTA (European Free Trade Association), EP (European Parliament), FEI (Financial Executives International), FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), WTO (World Trade Organization), WHO (World Health Organization), World Bank, etc. There was a strong presence of international animal welfare groups like the Asia Animal Foundation, RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), WSPA (World Society for the Protection of Animals), Compassion In World Farming, Born Free and more.

## The OIE and animal welfare

The OIE, which is looked upon as the World Organisation for Animal Health, is an intergovernmental organisation created in 1924 with currently 166 member countries. The OIE collects, analyses and publishes the latest scientific information on controlling animal diseases, provides support to developing countries in the implementation of animal disease control and eradication, provides safety measures in the international trade of animals and their products, sets standards in eliminating hazards prior to slaughter of animals and in the primary processing of animal products. In its mission statement, the OIE states that animal health and animal welfare are closely related.

The conference was a great success. Representatives of the OIE stated they wanted to incorporate animal welfare issues and standards in their mission, recognise animal welfare groups as major stakeholders and that they were keen to include the recommendations of the representatives of all animal welfare groups and other stakeholders. Representatives from animal welfare organisations gave their recommendations generously and participated actively in discussions. These recommendations, when implemented, could benefit millions of animals worldwide.

## 23 February 2004 – Session I

### 1 Setting the scene

**Adjoudji Hamadjola**, Minister for Animal Production, Fisheries and Animal Industries, Cameroon, officially inaugurated the conference. The inaugural session also included addresses by Commissioner David Byrne (EU) and by the Ministers of Agriculture from France, Germany and Ireland.

The OIE Director General, **Bernard Vallat**, explained that the mandate of the OIE deals with animal health issues relating to international trade in live animals, definition of standards for the eradication of epizootic diseases, certification procedures for meat and slaughterhouse products. The OIE has been mandated to prepare the basis for an international guide to good practice for animals and hence called this conference.

**David Bayvel**, Chair, OIE Working Group on Animal Welfare, spoke on “The OIE Animal Welfare Initiative – Progress, Priorities and Prognosis”. In recognition of the increasing scientific, political and public attention being given to animal welfare, this topic was an important issue in the preparation of the

2001-2005 OIE third strategic plan. He addressed in detail the OIE’s animal welfare initiative. Specific recommendations concerning the scope, policies and *modus operandi* of the OIE’s involvement in animal welfare were presented at the 70<sup>th</sup> general session of the OIE in 2002:

1. To develop a detailed vision and strategy to recognise the complex nature of animal welfare issues
2. To develop policies and guiding principles to provide a sound foundation from which specific recommendations and standards will be elaborated
3. To establish a working group on animal welfare to define and coordinate activities
4. The working group to develop a detailed operational plan for priority issues in the initial 12 months
5. The working group and ad hoc groups to consult NGO’s with a broad international representation and to make use of all available expertise and resources including academia, research community, industry and other relevant stakeholders.

A permanent animal welfare group was established in October 2002 to define and coordinate OIE animal welfare activities. This working group defined a mission statement plus policies and guiding principles and identified members for four ad hoc groups. The four groups will address land transport, sea transport, humane slaughter, and population control for disease control. These recommendations were endorsed by the 71<sup>st</sup> General Session of the OIE.

### 2 Global animal welfare challenges: some perspectives

The second half of Session I included thought-provoking presentations of **Jim Edwards**, World Veterinary Association, “On the Role of the Veterinarian in Animal Welfare” and a presentation by **Leopoldo R. Estol**, Universidad el Salvador, on “Some Perspectives of Animal Welfare in the Veterinary Cur-

\* The OIE (Office International des Epizooties) is an intergovernmental organisation created by the International Agreement of 25 January 1924, signed by 28 countries. In March 2004, the OIE totalled 166 member countries.



riculum". The second presentation emphasised the imperative need to address animal welfare in the teaching curriculum including aspects of bioethics, ethology, and the concepts of suffering and welfare; and should be taught at both the pre-clinical and clinical level. "The Industry View Point", "A Market Place Perspective", "Consumer Concerns" and a perspective on "Animal Welfare Challenges in a Developing Country" were dealt with by Emma Stamper, AATA, **Karen A. Brown**, Food Marketing Institute, USA, **R. Quintilli**, Il Salvagente, Italy, and **Siri Abdul Rahman**, Bangalore Veterinary College, India, respectively.

## 24 February 2004 - Session II

### Applying science to animal welfare

The session, chaired by Hamadou Saidou, OIE Regional Commission for Africa, included the following presentations:

1. "Applying Science to Animal Welfare Standards" by **David Fraser**, Maurice Young Centre for Applied Ethics, University of British Columbia. His talk elaborated the need to define animal welfare standards that strike a defensible balance between the three elements: natural living criteria, biological functioning and the philosophy of "affective states", which advocates preventing negative states (pain and suffering) and permitting positive states (comfort and contentment).
2. The presentation on "Space, Environmental Design and Behaviour Effect of Space and Environment on Animal Welfare" by **P. Le Niendre**, INRA, France concluded that it is possible to improve and attain required animal welfare standards and still have sustainable production in animal husbandry systems.
3. "Management, Handling and Transport - Human-Animal Interactions and Pre-slaughter Management of Farm Animals" by **Joy A. Mench**, University of California, USA, addressed the different aspects of animal welfare during pre-slaughter with special emphasis on human handling of animals prior to slaughter. Transport of animals to the slaughterhouse is associated with many

stressors, like confinement, thermal challenge, food and water deprivation, noise, vibration and movement in the transport vehicle. He stressed the need to define global standards to decrease mortality during transport, such as guidelines for stocking density and maximum journey length.

4. "Pain, Fear and Distress" by **Ian J. H. Duncan**, University of Guelph, Canada. This paper referred to techniques used to investigate states of suffering and how to apply them quantitatively to farm animals.
5. "Injury and Disease" by **Bo Algiers**, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden. The presentation indicated that injury or disease should be regarded as instantaneously accessible evidence of an animal's state of welfare and should be used in animal welfare monitoring programs. This kind of clinical scoring should be used as a tool to indicate the level of animal welfare to authorities, industry and consumers.
6. "Food, Water and Malnutrition" by **Alistair Lawrence**, Scottish Agriculture College, Scotland. The paper addressed periods of water and food deprivation, food restriction practices, malnutrition and water restriction and the need to develop species-specific transport standards and feed and water availability to animals in transport and in farming.
7. "Animal Welfare: Between Profit and Protection" by **Hans Wyss**, Swiss Federal Veterinary Office, Switzerland. This presentation, with examples, clearly showed that animal welfare need not be in conflict with low production costs. His conclusions were that veterinary services should play a mediating role between producers and consumers, local constraints should be considered when setting minimum standards for animal welfare on an international level and that housing systems that are beneficial for animal welfare do not generally increase production costs.
8. "Animal Welfare Issues relating to Aquaculture, with Special Emphasis on Conditions in Norway" by **Tore Hastein**, National Veterinary Institute, Norway, discussed pain reception in aquatic animals and demonstrated that fish have a nociceptive system and may thus register painful situations. Farming condi-

tions, feeding, transport, stunning and slaughter methods in aquaculture were detailed in which animal welfare and ethics are of importance.

## 25 February 2004 - Session III

### The way forward

This session was chaired by Herbert Schneider of the World Veterinary Association.

**A. B. Mohan Raj**, University of Bristol, UK, spoke on the "Cultural, Religious and Ethical Issues associated with Animal Welfare". He explained the innate position animals have held and their influence in the origin of human cultures and religions. He dwelled on the need for human kind to develop a positive attitude towards the welfare of animals. He also referred to scientific evidence, which suggests that improved animal welfare standards improve the quality and safety of the food we consume and argued that improving and setting animal welfare standards is truly the "way forward".

**David J. Mellor**, Animal Welfare Science and Bioethics Centre, New Zealand, in his presentation "Application of Legislation, Scientific Guidelines and Standards", called the issues of animal welfare a challenge which needs to address cultural, religious, economic, political, ethical and scientific issues in the formation of a robust and credible animal welfare policy and practice. He spoke in the context of animal welfare management in New Zealand, which has evolved over the last 25 years. He elaborated various critical factors that should be taken into account before legislations, scientific guidelines and standards are set.

In the latter part of Session III the participants were divided into syndicate groups, which addressed the following issues:

1. Land transport of animals
2. Sea transport of animals
3. Killing animals for disease control
4. Slaughter of animals for human consumption
5. Animal welfare research; current activities and future priorities.

I was included in the last syndicate group which discussed global animal welfare issues from spay and neuter programs, wildlife companion animals to



the application of the 3Rs in research and education based on the four main guiding principles:

1. Animal welfare in trade – threat/opportunities. Animal welfare standards should not be equated with trade barriers.
2. Developing country issues in animal welfare
3. Wildlife issues – circuses, zoos etc.
4. Use of animals in research and teaching.

#### The following recommendations were made:

1. OIE should encourage incentives for local enforcement of animal welfare standards in member countries.
2. International standards on animal welfare should become value-adding features for animal products traded across countries.
3. OIE should develop recommendations to establish and strengthen national animal welfare infrastructure as it has done with veterinary services worldwide.

4. International animal welfare standards should be developed for international trade, animal transport and slaughter in conformity with the WTO Agreement on technical barriers to trade. This however should not preclude countries from applying stricter animal welfare standards.
5. OIE should coordinate with international organisations and develop international guidelines for laboratory animal care and use and act as a nodal organisation in the implementation of the same.
6. OIE should play a leadership role in recommending the use of alternative methods in research and education and promote the principle of 3Rs.
7. OIE should provide guidelines and recommendations for the conservation and welfare of wildlife and protection of exotic species with special reference to the use of wild animals in zoos and circuses.
8. OIE should guide and support animal shelters, spaying and neutering programs and euthanasia by humane methods,

especially in developing countries.

9. OIE should impose regulations to prevent the use of animals in sports such as bull fighting, dog fighting, cock fighting etc.

10. Dogs and cats should be categorised as companion animals and not treated as food animals.

#### Closing session

The reports from the various syndicate groups were discussed followed by a general discussion. In his closing talk, "The Way Forward", David Bayvel, Chair, OIE Working Group on Animal Welfare, reiterated OIE's commitment to the cause of animal welfare and promised that the OIE would work rigorously and systematically to implement the recommendations of this conference. It was acknowledged that this was an important first step taken by OIE for the cause of animal welfare.

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## 12. Kongress über Alternativen zu Tierversuchen

15.-17. Oktober 2004, Johannes Kepler Universität Linz

#### Themen/Subjects

- Recht, Ethik und Tierexperimente
- *Ethical and Legal Aspects in Animal Experimentation*
- Ökotoxikologie
- *Ecotoxicology*
- Pharmakotoxikologie *in vitro*
- *Pharmacotoxicology in vitro*  
Toxicogenomics  
Toxicoproteomics  
Toxicometabonomics  
Toxicocytomics
- Standardisierung von Zellkulturtechniken
- *Good Cell Culture Practice*
- Vakzine & Biologika
- *Vaccines & Biologicals*

- EU-Kosmetik und Chemie Politik (REACH) – ECVAMs Aktivitäten
- *EU-Cosmetics and Chemicals Policy (REACH) – ECVAM's Activities*
- 3R in der Ausbildung
- *3R in Higher Education*
- 6. Rahmenprogramm der Europäischen Kommission – Forschungsförderung von Alternativmethoden auf europäischer und nationalstaatlicher Ebene
- *6th Framework Programme of the EU – Funding of Research for the Development of Alternatives at the European and Member State Level*
- Freie Vorträge
- *Free Communications*
- Postersitzungen
- *Poster sessions*

#### Kongresssprachen/ Congress languages

Vorträge/Lectures: Deutsch/German  
Poster: Deutsch & Englisch/German & English

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