



Global Conference on Animal Welfare: an OIE initiative

TOPIC: Global animal welfare challenges: various perspectives

TITLE: A market-place perspective

AUTHOR: Brown, K. H.
Food Marketing Institute
655 15th Street, NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
United States of America

ABSTRACT:

In order to achieve real change, there must be a motivating force and all of the stakeholders need to be involved. This is the premise of the animal welfare program developed for the food retail, wholesale and chain restaurant industries in the United States by the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) ¹ and the National Council of Chain Restaurants (NCCR) ².

The retail food industry's efforts began in 2000 and by January 2001 the FMI Board of Directors adopted a policy to address animal welfare. The policy stated that animals must be raised, transported and processed in a clean, safe environment free from cruelty, abuse or neglect; that FMI members will work cooperatively with their suppliers to promote best practices for each species in order to ensure animal well-being throughout the production process; that recommendations will be developed working with experts in animal welfare, animal husbandry, veterinary medicine and agricultural production; and that best practices will be communicated broadly to maintain consumer confidence.

In June 2001, FMI and NCCR joined efforts to achieve a consistent program across the retail sector. The program includes a measurable audit process, implementation of practicable and attainable guidelines based on science, an ongoing advisory council of independent animal welfare experts, and improved communications across the supply chain on animal welfare issues.

¹ Food Marketing Institute (FMI) conducts programs in research, education, industry relations and public affairs on behalf of its 2300 member companies – food retailers and wholesalers – in the United States and around the world. FMI's US members operate approximately 26,000 retail food stores with a combined annual volume of \$340 billion, three-quarters of all retail food store sales in the US. FMI's international membership includes 200 companies from 60 countries.

² National Council of Chain Restaurants (NCCR) is a national trade association in the United States representing 40 of the US's largest multi-unit, multi-state chain restaurant companies. NCCR's member companies own and operate more than 50,000 restaurant facilities and another 70,000 facilities under their trademarks through franchise and licensing agreements.

Since June 2001 the FMI-NCCR Expert Advisory Panel has held eight meetings and reviewed the proposed animal welfare guidelines of seven supplier organizations. Guidelines have been endorsed for slaughter (cattle, swine, sheep, goats), laying hens, milk and dairy cattle, and broiler chickens (including slaughter). Guidelines are still under review for swine, beef cattle and turkeys and have yet to be reviewed for veal calves and ducks. Progress in developing the program is made publicly available.

Some segments of the producer community in the US have been working actively on animal welfare assurance systems for some time by undertaking research, seeking counsel of outside experts and developing and revising guidelines as new information becomes available. Other segments have begun their efforts more recently. This diversity creates many challenges but the work is motivated by the strong commitment and desire of food retailers and restaurants to enhance animal welfare. FMI and NCCR believe these efforts have made and will continue to make a significant contribution to enhancing the well-being of animals in food production.