



Global Conference on Animal Welfare: an OIE initiative

TOPIC: Global animal welfare challenges: various perspectives

TITLE: The role of the veterinarian in animal welfare – a global perspective

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ABSTRACT:

The veterinary profession is dedicated to animal welfare. Veterinarians spend their professional lives working under a code of ethical behaviour that emphasises their commitment to animal welfare.

Society has an expectation that a professional approach is applied to the management and maintenance of animal welfare. The veterinary profession interprets this as its societal obligation to meet this expressed need.

The intensification of animal production industries over the last fifty years in an effort to meet the economies of scale required to feed the rapidly growing human population, has seen spectacular improvements in animal health and production, but it has been accompanied in some cases by a decline in animal welfare standards. The conflicts and choices between animal welfare and productivity are encountered by veterinarians in their daily work.

Veterinarians must look at strategies that will attempt to satisfy all the stakeholders. We need to increase overall production in the context of global demand. We need to ensure that the animals are well looked after and that their welfare is not compromised beyond an acceptable level.

The challenge for all veterinarians is to actively participate and contribute to the advancement of animal welfare for all animals on this planet.