



Global Conference on Animal Welfare: an OIE initiative

TOPIC: Global animal welfare challenges: various perspectives

TITLE: The expectations of the international animal welfare movement

AUTHOR: Wilkins D. B., MBE MA MRCVS

International Coalition for Farm Animal Welfare

ABSTRACT:

The primary objectives of animal welfarists are universal. The alleviation of suffering and prevention of cruelty. There are many causes of animal suffering, both physical and mental and animals can suffer in different ways and to varying degrees. Much suffering is caused by injury or disease, some by ignorance, some in the name of religion, and some as a result of deliberate cruelty. The international animal welfare movement is united in its determination to alleviate suffering wherever it occurs and in all its forms.

The exploitation of animals occurs throughout the world. The reasons are various, for example: source of food, for clothing, for knowledge, for medicine, for companionship, for sport and for exhibition.

There is great abuse of animals through a lack of care and consideration during their exploitation. Examples could include the very intensive livestock production systems, the keeping and showing of wild animals in circuses and unnecessary toxicological testing.

Animal Welfare expectations, on the other hand, vary enormously and are strongly influenced by the socio-economic situation in that part of the world in which the person lives. Communities in which there is a shortage of food and other amenities for humans are not going to spend much time, effort or money on problems relating to the welfare of animals in that community.

However, in most parts of the world those who desire to protect and care for humans also have compassion for animals. There will be expectations of some sort for animal welfare in virtually all circumstances. Therefore it is important that efforts are made to realise these expectations.

At the sophisticated end of the animal welfare activity scale is the effort of the OIE to develop standards and guidelines for animal welfare. The extent to which these standards are likely to improve the welfare of animals will be examined.