

The Veterinary Profession's Role in the Implementation of OIE Standards



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*“Nobody cares how much you know
until they know how much you care.”*

Veterinary Oath



Being admitted to the profession of veterinary medicine, I solemnly swear to use my scientific knowledge and skills for the benefit of society through the protection of animal health, the relief of animal suffering, the conservation of animal resources, the promotion of public health, and the advancement of medical knowledge.

I will practice my profession conscientiously, with dignity, and in keeping with the principles of veterinary medical ethics.

I accept as a lifelong obligation the continual improvement of my professional knowledge and competence.

A moral duty...

- Provide for animal patients
- Ensure that needs of society are met
- Seek continual improvement

Consistent with appropriate development and implementation of animal welfare standards



Veterinarians Well Suited to Assist with Implementation



- Science-based approach
- Credibility with multiple stakeholder segments and the public at large
- Direct access to facilities



No better advocate for the animal



Ensuring Good Welfare



- Good welfare = Satisfying an animal's needs¹
- Animal needs can be classified into
 - Physiological needs
 - Good nutrition, health, suitable environment
 - Safety needs
 - Protection from injury, freedom from abuse, safe environment
 - Psychological needs
 - Social relationships, exercise of normal behaviors, and freedom from stress, frustration, deprivation

¹Curtis SE. Variations in US animal production systems: current trends and their impacts on animal well-being and the economics of production. In: Food Animal Well-Being, Conference Proceedings and Deliberations. West Lafayette, Ind: USDA & Purdue University Office of Agricultural Research Programs, 1993.

Improving Welfare and Return on Investment



- Fulfilling physical and safety needs generally results in tangible return on investment (e.g., more eggs, lower mortality)
- Fulfilling psychological needs usually results in less obvious return on investment



Implementation in Developing Countries



- Focus on meeting physical needs
 - Adequate nutrition
 - Protection from injury and disease
- Tangible payback → Motivation for adoption
- Competing with other pressing concerns that demand attention and resources



Implementation in Developed Countries



- Majority of physical needs likely being met
- Focus more toward meeting psychological needs



Looking at Where We Are - The Welfare Curve



- Moral duty to help developing countries move forward because benefits for animal and society
- Moving forward in developed countries = progressivism and leadership

Developing the Effective Advocate



■ Veterinary education

- School in objective approaches to animal welfare
- Provide information about the philosophy and content of relevant standards
- Encourage exploration of practice improvements and procedural changes that will move animal care along the continuum



Roles in Implementation



- Veterinarians in all types of practice have the opportunity to help animal owners, caretakers and the public move animal welfare forward
- Private clinical or corporate practice
 - Direct to owner/caretaker assistance
 - Provide hands-on training and monitoring
- Consulting practices
 - Recommend best standard operating procedures
 - Assist client compliance with assurance schemes
- Governmental and non-governmental organizations
 - Help create and certify OIE-responsive animal care standards
 - Assist in implementation through market-driven or legislative/regulatory processes
- Provide public education to build market support for welfare-friendly animal care practices
- Serve as highly qualified auditors for certification programs



Some Cautions

- Components of animal care systems do not exist in a vacuum - each affects the system as a whole.
- Choosing among animal care systems involves trade-offs
 - ↑ behavioral freedom → ↑ risks of injury & disease



Indicators	Conventional Cage	Furnished Cage			Non-cage (Barn)		Outdoor (Free-range)
		Small	Medium	Large	Single Level	Multiple Levels	
Mortality (%)	Good	Medium	Medium	Poor	Insuff Data	Insuff Data	Insuff Data
Mortality from feather pecking and cannibalism	Good	Medium	Medium	Poor	Insuff Data	Insuff Data	Insuff Data
Bone strength and fractures	†	*	*	*	‡	‡	‡
Exposure to disease vectors (e.g., wild birds)	Good	Good	Good	Good	Medium	Medium	Poor
Internal parasites (e.g., coccidia, roundworms)	Good	Good	Good	Good	Medium	Medium	Poor
External parasites	Good	Good	Good	Good	Medium	Medium	Poor
Bumblefoot	Good	Good	Good	Good	Medium	Medium	Poor
Feather loss	Good	Good	Good	Good	Medium	Medium	Poor
Hen hysteria and piling/smothering	Good	Good	Good	Good	Medium	Medium	Poor
Risk of predation	Good	Good	Good	Good	Medium	Medium	Poor
Level of egg production and cleanliness	Good	Good	Good	Good	Medium	Medium	Poor
Use of nest boxes	Good	Good	Good	Good	Medium	Medium	Poor
Use of perches	Good	Good	Good	Good	Medium	Medium	Poor
Foraging behavior	Good	Good	Good	Good	Medium	Medium	Poor
Dustbathing behavior	Good	Good	Good	Good	Medium	Medium	Poor
Air quality (e.g., dust, ammonia)	Good	Good	Good	Good	Medium	Medium	Poor

§ = Recent unpublished data indicate lower mortality may be achievable in large furnished cages

† = Reduced bone strength, fractures when birds are caught

* = bones stronger from perch use but increased incidence of deformation of the keel

‡ = More fractures during lay despite stronger bones

How well welfare measures are met:



Some Cautions (con't)



- Choosing appropriate animal production systems is also a balancing act involving animal needs, human needs (including occupational health and safety), environmental concerns, and economics.





Veterinarians

Doctors Protecting
The Health of Animals and People



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