The role of Veterinarians in Animal Welfare and Inter-sectorial Collaboration

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History

In 1863, Dr John Gamgee convened a first International Veterinary Congress in Hamburg, Germany. An initiative that has grown to what the World Veterinary Association (WVA) is today.
WVA Members

The WVA unites and represents the **global veterinary profession on all its wide aspects.**

WVA is an umbrella organisation for:

- National Veterinary Associations.
- International Associations of Veterinarians working in different areas of veterinary medicine.
WVA Mission

To assure and promote animal health and welfare and public health globally, through developing and advancing veterinary medicine, the veterinary profession as well as public and private veterinary services.
Policy areas

- One Health
  - Animal Health and Welfare
  - Public Health
  - Environment

- Strengthening the veterinary profession
  - Education and Life Long Learning
  - Statutory Bodies and Associations
  - Professional Ethics and Attitude
  - Strengthening collaboration private and public parties
The role of Veterinarians around the world

- Veterinarians play a key role in the triangle formed by *animals, animal owners* and *society* (differ per region).

- This role shall be *science based, objective, independent* and *impartial*.

- Veterinarians shall be *licensed and supervised* by the independent Veterinary Statutory Body (VSB).
Global Veterinary Education

In view of the developing Veterinary Education, the WVA follows and addresses the following issues:

• The **minimum requirements** for veterinary education for schools.

• The **expectation of the profession** regarding veterinary training.

• The **expectation of the Society** for new graduates.
Minimum requirements for Veterinary Education

Education and training of a veterinarians shall provide an assurance that the person in question has acquired the following adequate knowledge and skills:

• of the sciences on which the activities of veterinarian are based.

• of the structure, functions, behaviour and physiological needs of animals.

• of the clinical, epidemiological, analytical competences required for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of animal diseases including Zoonosis.
Minimum requirements for Veterinary Education (continue)

• of competences for **preventive medicine**, including competences dealing with inquiries and certification;

• of the hygiene and technology involved in the production of **animal foodstuffs** and **foodstuffs of animal origin**.

• of competences required for the responsible and prudent use of **veterinary medicinal products**.
Animal Welfare in Veterinary Education

- Animal Welfare education is an **essential part of veterinary education**

- Animal Welfare should be incorporated as a discipline in its own right within the **veterinary curriculum**.

- The overall scientific discipline of Animal Welfare should contain aspects of **ethology, bioethics** and the concepts of **suffering** and **well-being**.

- It is considered necessary for **postgraduate** opportunities in education to be available to veterinarians wishing to specialize in ethology and welfare.
AW in the world regions

Many factors such as values and beliefs, religious, cultural traditions, economic and educational levels lead to:

- Different Awareness of AW
- Different Understanding of AW
- Different voluntary and regulatory AW acts, (which are usually unique to the region).
Global definition for Animal Welfare?

For example:

An animal is in a good state of welfare if it is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe and able to express innate behaviour, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear and distress.

World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) - 2009 Terrestrial Animal Health code
Requirements to achieve a basic level of AW globally

WVA recognizes the **five freedoms Concept.** Every practical effort should be made to achieve them.

I. Freedom from **hunger** and **thirst**.
II. Freedom from **physical discomfort** and **pain**.
III. Freedom from **injury** and **disease**.
IV. Freedom from **fear** and **distress**.
V. Freedom to conform to **essential behaviour patterns**.
The role of Veterinarians in Animal welfare

1. Veterinarian daily practices
2. Veterinary advocacy to animal owners
3. Education and promotion of AW to the wide public
4. AW Scientific research
5. Drafting AW legislations/standards and participating in programs and projects
6. Collaboration with other interested parties on AW
The role of Veterinarians in Animal welfare

1. Veterinarian daily practices
In their every day dealing with animals, veterinarians must always adhere to the principals of care and compassion which can be expressed by providing appropriate:

• veterinary medical care and disease prevention.
• development and applying effective management protocols and techniques and;
• sufficient and qualified staff to ensure routine veterinary activities to be performed with less duress to the animals and in an animal compassionate manner

This is considered a professional obligation for any member of the veterinary community.
The role of Veterinarians in Animal welfare

2. Veterinary advocacy to animal owners

Veterinarians are **best positioned:**
- Knowledge and Skills
- Licensed, supervised and accountable to independent SVB to educate animal owners, managers and other members of the community to protect and improve welfare of animals

In addition to specific training, they must foster and promote best animal management practices and an understanding of the benefits from such practices.

**Veterinarians have the scientific and medical training as well as the statutory accountability to ensure animal welfare expectations and standards are met**
The role of Veterinarians in Animal welfare

3. Education and promotion of AW to the wide public

There is increased interest and concern from the wide public on how animals are used and treated.

Most people live in the city and no longer understand basic animal husbandry.

Much of the current focus on AW is driven by developed world view, especially the affluent sector, where in some countries, celebrities have been influencing the AW perceptions and expectations of the public.

Veterinarians shall become sufficiently influential and act as the society AW main source to give science-based expertise and educate the wide public on basic animal husbandry
The role of Veterinarians in Animal welfare

4. AW Scientific research

Animal welfare is a multidisciplinary field of expertise which includes veterinary science, ethics, religions, politics, economics etc.

It is evident that further scientific research in these areas is necessary in order to understand better and to discover best practices to enhance animal welfare.

Veterinarians have the scientific and medical training as well as the statutory accountability to work in research areas and to collaborate with scientific and other experts in a variety of capacities in the AW field.
The role of Veterinarians in Animal welfare

5. Taking part in drafting AW legislations/standards and in AW programs

As the need for AW voluntary and regulatory acts and assurance programs increases, there is a role for veterinarians to play in both their development and implementation.

Veterinarians need to assure that the Animal Welfare Acts and programs are useful and truly serves societal need as well as the needs of the animals.

All legislation related to animal welfare should be drafted in close co-operation with veterinarians and veterinary associations.
The role of Veterinarians in Animal welfare

6. Collaboration with other interested parties

There are numerous AW programs, projects, initiatives on different national and international levels involving government and private sector to improve and promote the welfare and the protection of animals in different fields.

Veterinarians should make themselves available to cooperate with all interested parties (e.g. legislators, livestock and food industries, AW NGOs, consumer org. etc.) to improve the welfare and well-being of animals.
WVA collaborations in the field of AW

WVA believes in working in partnership.

WVA signed a Memorandum of Understanding and effectively collaborates with relevant **global partners** on various veterinary issues related to Animal Health and Welfare.

- World Animal Health Organization (OIE)
- Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO)
- World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA)
- International Dairy Federation (IDF)
- World Farmers Organization (WFO)
WVA collaborations in the field of AW

On 17th September 2013, The WVA signed MoU with WSPA and has a wide action plan for 2013-2016 on various AW issue such as:

- Promote animal welfare education globally
- Raise awareness globally for animal welfare issues
- Work towards effective Rabies control
WVA collaboration on AW

On 17-18 September 2013, the WVA together with the European Commission organized a **Global Veterinary Seminar on Animal Welfare** in Prague, Czech Republic during the World Veterinary Congress with more than 25 AW world-known speakers covering:

- **Companion animals welfare**
- **Aquaculture welfare**
- **Laboratory animals welfare**
- **Welfare at Slaughter**
- **Welfare during Transport**
Inter-sectorial collaboration on Animal welfare (example from Europe)

- In 2010 several European stakeholders (Veterinarians, Meat Industry, Livestock Traders, AW NGO, Livestock transporters and scientific institution on AW) prepared **practical guidelines to assess fitness for transport of adult bovines**.

- The main objective was to improve Animal Welfare in practice and to avoid distortion of competition of the European Union (EU) single market.

- The guidelines were designed to provide easy understanding of the EU legislation on Animal Welfare during transport, using photographs and simple texts to help all operators decide on the suitability of an adult bovine animal for transport.
Inter-sectorial collaboration on Animal welfare

- The guidelines were published in January 2012 in 6 different languages and were widely disseminated among governments, private and official veterinarians, farmers, livestock transporters, Universities and other interested parties.

- Two further initiatives are on-going preparing guidelines to assess fitness for transport of horses and pigs.

- A personal copy can be obtained by sending a request to info@uecbv.eu
Conclusions

1. The veterinary profession is the **best prepared** and **responsible** to use its skills and expertise to help animal owners, managers and the public to provide the best practices and education about animal welfare.
Conclusions

2. The role of the veterinary profession regarding AW now expands well beyond simply individual veterinary daily practices. The veterinary profession has great potential, opportunity and responsibility to engage in a wide range of employment fields that deliver animal welfare services to the benefit of society and all animals.
Conclusions

3. **The veterinary community shall:**
   - continue to identify current needs and future developments in the field of AW.
   - ensure that veterinarians are always **properly trained**
   - Veterinarians have the necessary skills and tools to meet the **social expectations** and **profession obligations** regarding to animal welfare.
Conclusions

4. Veterinarians should make themselves available to cooperate with all interested parties to improve the welfare and well-being of animals.
Conclusions

5. All legislation related to animal welfare should be drafted in close co-operation with veterinarians and veterinary associations.

In countries where there is no AW Acts, the National Veterinary Associations should initiate such legislation.

WVA is always willing to help.
Thank you for your attention and feel free to contact us
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