

RSPCA (Victoria)

Farm animal welfare – The next 5 years



For all creatures great and small.

RSPCA Charter

“RSPCA Australia believes that animals must be treated **humanely**. Where humans **make use** of animals or interfere with their habitat, they should bestow a level of **care** befitting human dignity as rational, intelligent, compassionate beings, and a level of care merited by the nature of the animal as a **sentient** creature capable of responding to human care and attention. Such care should be marked by sympathy, consideration, compassion and tenderness towards animals.”

Five freedoms

- Freedom from hunger and thirst
- Freedom from discomfort
- Freedom from pain, injury or disease
- Freedom to express normal behaviour
- Freedom from fear and distress

RSPCA Policy

- RSPCA is opposed to all forms of farming and animal husbandry practices which cause injury, suffering or distress to animals, or which unreasonably restrict their movements and / or behavioural patterns which are necessary for the well-being of the species concerned.
- RSPCA is opposed to the confinement of animals or husbandry and management procedures which deny the animal freedom of movement and the ability to satisfy its behavioural, social and physiological needs.

Welfare Issues – transport and slaughter

- Transport
 - Long distance land transport
 - Long distance transport (export) for slaughter
 - Time off feed/water
 - Stocking density
- Slaughter
 - Treatment of downer animals
 - Religious slaughter
 - Stunning

Welfare Issues – beef cattle

- Beef cattle
 - Feedlots (shelter, shade, heat stress, environment)
 - Painful husbandry procedures (dehorning, castration, hot-iron branding, spaying)
 - Management during drought

Welfare Issues –dairy cattle

- Dairy cattle
 - Bobby calf welfare (age, transport)
 - Housing of adult cattle and calves
 - Painful husbandry procedures (disbudding, dehorning, tail docking)
 - Induction, mastitis, lameness
 - Management during drought

Welfare Issues – sheep (meat and wool)

- Feedlots (shelter, shade, heat stress, environment)
- Individual penning
- Painful husbandry procedures (mulesing, castration, tail docking, laparoscopic insemination)
- Ewe/lamb survival/mortality
- Management during drought

Welfare Issues – pigs

- Pigs
 - Housing
(sow stalls and farrowing crates, conventional pens)
 - Painful husbandry procedures
(castration, tail docking, teeth clipping)
 - Piglet mortality
 - Slaughter
(stunning)

Welfare Issues – poultry

- Poultry (broilers and/or layer hens)
 - Collection and transport
 - Housing
(stocking density, cages)
 - Breeding
(growth rate)
 - Management
(lighting, ventilation, forced moulting)
 - Painful husbandry procedures
(beak trimming)
 - Slaughter
(stunning, method)

Welfare Issues – aquaculture

- Transport
- Handling
- Slaughter

Welfare Issues – general

- Development and enforcement of National animal welfare standards
- Assessment of impact on animal welfare of implemented standards
- Labelling of animal welfare friendly food products

Broiler welfare – the issues



Image taken from www.helpsaveslivestcst.com/broiler

- Leg weakness
- Housing
 - Stocking density
 - Ventilation
 - Shed/facility design
 - Lighting levels
- Handling / Management

Broiler welfare – research

- Review / survey – to id welfare issues
- Possible areas to research subject to results of review
 - Genetics
 - Housing
 - Handling

Painful procedures – the issues



image taken from Meat and Livestock Australia
Guide to best practice husbandry in beef cattle - Branding, castrating and dehorning

- May cause pain, suffering or distress
- Routinely performed without anaesthetic or pain relief
- Despite research
- Lack of understanding and availability of pain relief
- Lack of enforcement in codes

Painful procedures – research

- Alternatives (castration and dehorning)
- Education and implementation of alternatives and pain relief
- Long term post - operative care

Bobby calves age at transport – the issues

- Physiologically too young for transport
- Following behaviour undeveloped
- Accuracy of age determination difficult
- Trucks little protection from elements, no bedding
- Holding yards no bedding and no protection from elements
- Deprived of milk for extended periods

Bobby calves age at transport – research



- Age and stocking density
- Research aligned with common practice
- Appropriate handling
- Provision of bedding

Conclusion

- RSPCA has many concerns in the farming industry
- Three top concerns (relevant to AWSC)
 - Broiler welfare
 - Painful husbandry procedures
 - Age at transport of bobby calves
- Additional suggestion
 - The implementation and impact of standards on animal welfare



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