

Bureau of Animal Welfare



Industry animal welfare R&D issues
-The future

OIE definition of animal welfare – international policy

Animal welfare means how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives. An animal is in a good state of welfare if (**as indicated by scientific evidence**) it is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, able to express innate behaviour, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear, and distress.

Good animal welfare requires disease prevention and veterinary treatment, appropriate shelter, management, nutrition, humane handling and humane slaughter/killing. Animal welfare refers to the state of the animal; the treatment that an animal receives is covered by other terms such as animal care, animal husbandry, and humane treatment.

Ideas

Animal welfare definition and methodology - livestock (including aquaculture species of fish, crustacea)
Evaluation of welfare outcomes of new Livestock Transport Standards
Humane alternatives to high risk husbandry procedures - castration, dehorning, tail docking mulesing (includes research of public attitudes and education methods)
Humane loading and unloading of bobby calves - evaluation of methods, operator/processor attitude survey, education development, evaluation
Intensive housing design for good welfare for sheep & pregnant sows
N or CO2 Foam depopulation technique for humane mass destruction
Portable mass destruction methods for livestock - maceration, electrocution, gassing system evaluation
Research consumer attitudes to welfare and labelling.
Research free range economics and training programs
Research group housing of sows welfare outcomes
Research long distance transport welfare affects on poultry, pigs, cattle (pregnant cattle and bobby calves) and sheep
Stockperson training program - research on education methods and stakeholder attitudes
Survey of layer hen cage types and assessment of welfare outcomes
Training program for welfare inspectors - police, councils, RSPCA, DPI
Welfare methodology for defined (POCTA) species used in aquaculture – incl' slaughter methods, disposal of ornamental species, pet shop standards
Field evaluation of Lethal Trap Devices and Tranquiliser Trap Devices
Evaluation of trap pan tension settings to improve species sensitivity.

National regulatory environment 1 – drivers for R&D

1. Convert codes of livestock welfare practice to standards
2. **Legislated livestock welfare standards**
3. Consistent enforcement
4. **Scientifically/economically justifiable**
5. Ethically acceptable production systems

Live Export standards

Land Transport of Livestock standards

Sheep

Cattle (- bobby calves: whole of chain welfare)

Pig/poultry regulations; Livestock Management Bill

National regulatory environment 2 – drivers for R&D

Climate change?

Actual

- Water/feed availability & efficiency issues
- Changes to production systems; energy costs
- More drought, fire, floods, hot conditions
- Changes in livestock disease patterns
- More transportation

Policy effects – carbon trading

- Trees vs livestock & cropping in high rainfall areas
- Less livestock, more horticulture & cropping
- Protein sources review – livestock vs protein from nano-technology or GMO's.

Home front risk management

Increased differentiation of market

- :GMO/not-GMO source livestock product
- :health conscious and ethical consumer affects ie brands of milks; free range eggs; free range pigs; happy beef...labelling, proof, scientific basis for claims

Animal activist campaigns

- :increased legal challenge to current laws
- :more co-ordinated campaigns targeting consumers and major retailers
- :may not necessarily improve net welfare

The world

- Increased o/s demand for quality livestock product from major clients (China, India and Japan)
- Intensification/expansion of livestock industries to reduce costs; larger scale enterprises
- Current economic woes causing need for lower cost & input systems

OR

- imports from low cost 3rd world countries
- Distortion of markets caused by carbon change policy differences
- Welfare affects – export the issues or adapt?

Australian Animal Welfare Strategy influence

Working groups

(report to AAWS Advisory Committee>DAFF>PISC AWC)

1. Animals in research and teaching working group
2. Aquatic animals working group
3. Animals for work, sport, recreation & display working group
4. Animals in the wild working group
5. Companion animals working group
- 6. Livestock production animals working group**
7. Education and Training

WG conclusions – welfare R & D

1. Not supportive of a specific CRC for animal welfare
2. Need for national R & D investment framework (PISC project is developing)
3. Need for review of published work to assist gaps analysis and develop priorities
4. Need for coordination of information, expertise and effort from RDC's, centres with animal welfare expertise (Qld-Vic-NZ-et al) to assist decision makers

DPI Science Investment Framework

PAG's –

- Future Farm Services
- Biosecurity Compliance
- Practice change
- Biosciences Research
- Fisheries Research & Compliance
- Food Science
- Bioprotection Research

- Evaluate projects against Ag & Fisheries Strategy
- Prioritisation of funding
- Competitive investment decision process