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Animal welfare “Public education”

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Issues

- ◆ Why educate? – attitudes and behaviour
- ◆ Attitudes and knowledge
- ◆ Education vs persuasion
- ◆ Credibility
- ◆ How to educate – modes and targets



Why are we interested in public knowledge?

- ◆ Beliefs are treated as facts by people eg “fish are insensitive to pain”
- ◆ Knowledge can be seen to comprise a combination of more-or-less formally learned facts and beliefs
- ◆ Beliefs form part of attitudes
- ◆ Our attitudes can impact on behaviour



Perceptions and attitudes

- ◆ What are public perceptions?
 - Nature of attitudes
 - Affect – emotional response
 - Conation – behavioural disposition
 - Cognition – beliefs or “subjective facts” i.e. perception
- ◆ Thus public perceptions are things that people believe to be true but in fact are part of their attitudes – the belief part.



Attitudes and behaviour - a psychological approach

- ◆ Attitudes are of interest because attitudes reflect a behavioural disposition expressed in:
 - Treatment of domestic animals (eg semi-owned cats)
 - Treatment of farm animals (cf Prohand)
 - Consumer behaviour,
 - Community behaviour.



- ◆ These behaviours may lead to
 - Large numbers of companion animals being killed because of large numbers of strays
 - Compromised welfare and production in farm animals
 - Retailer demands regarding welfare practices,
 - Changes in consumer purchasing behaviour,
 - Changes to regulation/legislation/codes of practice, and
 - Changes to industry husbandry practices



- ◆ Therefore, it is desirable to attain, as far as possible, a convergence of attitudes held by
 - the community,
 - livestock industries,
 - legislators and regulators,
 - research groups and
 - those who actively support or oppose the uses and management of animals.

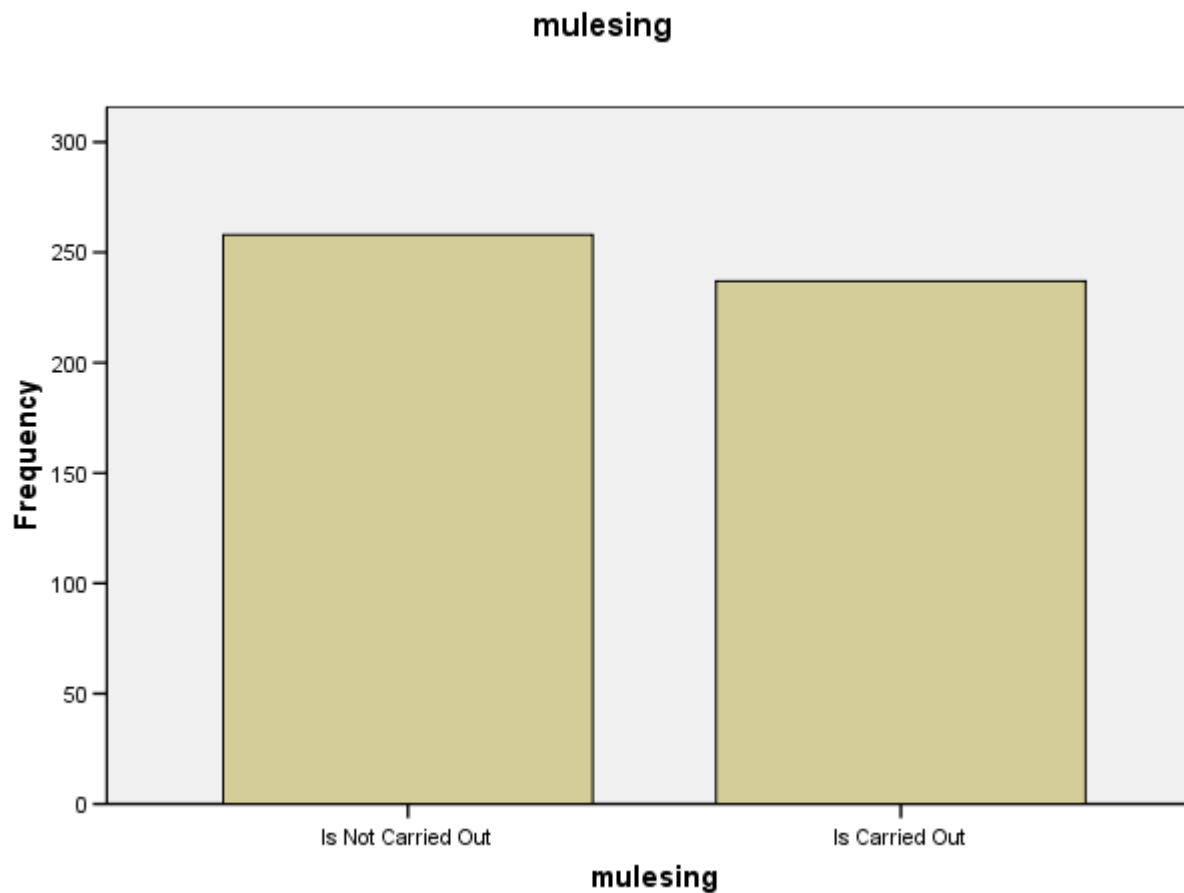


Direct experience

- ◆ MLA (2000) reports only about 15% of respondents have personal knowledge of animal welfare



Example: belief that mulesing is carried out



(Coleman 2003)



Community sources of information

Source	% 1994	% 2000
Television	53	59
Newspapers	43	47
Animal welfare organisations	23	14
Friends/relatives	19	17
Personal knowledge	15	14
Farmers/farmer organisations	11	9
Primary/secondary education	10	10

MLA, 2000



Constraints on public education

- ◆ Polarisation
- ◆ Perceived bias in the mass media
- ◆ Perceived reach of the mass media



Public perceptions: Attributions about opponents - polarisation in attitudes (an example)

- ◆ Attribution – internal vs external:
 - Researchers see themselves as motivated by external causes , e.g. “Animals are the best and only model for studies of integrated physiological systems or mechanisms” but see animal rights people as showing “Ignorance about the importance of biological processes for society”.
 - Animal protectors, however, attribute researchers with having “A blind belief in causality research” but believe themselves to be motivated by concern for the prevention of animal suffering and unnecessary animal experiments

Kemdal and Montgomery (2001)



Effects of the mass media

- ◆ People who are highly involved in a controversial issue will find media coverage of an issue to be relatively disagreeable.
- ◆ Such partisans will see public opinion on that issue as more contrary to, or at least less compatible with, their own opinions.
- ◆ This tends to polarise those individuals who are most actively involved – as practitioners or as opponents of animal research.
- ◆ Gunther et al. (2001)



Media effects - processes

- ◆ Two processes are thought to govern perceptions of media influence:
- ◆ The hostile media effect
- ◆ Persuasive press inference:
 - People believe that even a small sample of views represents the population at large.
 - The notion of perceived reach – people assume that others are exposed to media coverage similarly to themselves.



Evidence of media effects

- ◆ Data collected from a group of animal rights activists picketing at the University of Wisconsin in 1999:
 - Participants' opinions correlated with their perceptions of the proportion of Americans who opposed chimpanzee research
 - Partisans saw the news articles as more hostile to their own point of view relative to those of the of the other camp.
 - Partisans inferred general media coverage from the sample they were exposed and also adjusted their perceptions of public opinion accordingly.
- ◆ Gunther et al. (2001)



Welfare attitudes and consumer behaviour

- ◆ Humane treatment of animals typically ranks near the middle of a range of food attributes ranging from taste (most important) to packaging (least important)
- ◆ Humane treatment of animals is only marginally ahead of price
- ◆ Living conditions of caged hens and free range hens were slightly ahead of price

Smith (2001)

Ranked means of importance of attributes for livestock products in general and pork products

	Mean
quality	6.54
appearance	6.06
Australian	5.99
shelf life	5.82
GM	5.69
hormones/antibiotics	5.65
humane treatment	5.59
price	5.57
free-range	5.47
produced locally	5.45
size	4.88
brand	4.25
packaging	4.22

a) Livestock products in general

	Mean
quality	6.23
Australian	5.86
appearance	5.84
shelf life	5.73
humane treatment	5.58
concern for environment	5.54
hormones/antibiotics	5.54
produced locally	5.37
free-range	5.32
price	5.21
size	4.65
packaging	4.36
brand	3.89

b) Pork

Coleman and Hay, 2004

Correlations between rated importance of pork attributes and pork consumption

	POS total pork	Self reported total pork purchase	POS pork yes/no	Self reported purchased pork yes/no
brand	.07	.04	.16	.05
price	-.07	.02	-.01	.16**
hormones/antibiotics	-.02	-.04	.05	.11*
Australian	.04	.02	.14	.18**
free-range	.02	-.06	.09	.11*
appearance	.05	.06	.18*	.28**
shelf life	-.01	.01	.15	.23**
quality	.05	.10*	.15	.32**
packaging	.04	-.06	.10	.01
humane treatment	.07	.00	.16	.16**
concern for environment	.03	-.05	.16	.16**
size	.07	.02	.16	.10*
produced locally	.09	-.02	.19*	.11*

** . P < 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . P < 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Coleman and Hay, 2004

Community behaviour

	Have never Done		Have done	
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %
Actually written to a politician	485	95.5%	23	4.5%
Actually called radio talk back	500	98.4%	8	1.6%
Actually attended a public rally	492	96.9%	16	3.1%
Actually signed a petition	378	74.4%	130	25.6%
Actually donated money to animal welfare organisation	327	64.4%	181	35.6%
Actually donated goods to animal welfare organisation	441	86.8%	67	13.2%
Actually volunteered services to animal welfare organisation	493	97.0%	15	3.0%
Actually spoken to colleagues, family or friends	355	69.9%	153	30.1%
Actually written to a newspaper	497	97.8%	11	2.2%

(Coleman and Hay, 2004)



Correlations between various community behaviours and the total number of such behaviours – opinion leaders?

	Total number of community behaviours	Behaviour to oppose farming	Behaviour to support farming	Behaviour to oppose pig farming	Behaviour to support pig farming
Total number of community behaviours	1	.837	.765	.710	.559
Behaviour to oppose farming		1	.500	.462	.202
Behaviour to support farming			1	.341	.317
Behaviour to oppose pig farming				1	.508
Behaviour to support pig farming					1

Coleman and Hay, 2004



Variables predicting participation in community activities

	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)		-2.27	.02
Number of dogs and cats	.07	1.75	.08
Importance of promoting welfare	.29	6.13	.00
Activists should not be involved	-.15	-3.69	.00
Knowledge of farming procedures in agriculture	.09	2.29	.02
Concerns about free range	.13	3.46	.00
Importance of animal welfare	.10	2.17	.03

Coleman, G.J. Hay, M., and Toukhsati, S.R., 2004

- ◆ N = 546, Adjusted R2 = 0.22



Summary

- ◆ Community perceptions based on limited direct knowledge and experience
- ◆ People attribute the media with having a significant influence
- ◆ Perceptions tend to be polarised
- ◆ Community knowledge may be mediated by opinion leaders



Changing perceptions

- ◆ Who to target
- ◆ What to say
- ◆ How to say it



Who to target

- ◆ General population
 - Adults
 - School children
 - Farming community
 - Legislators



AAWS-Key influencers in communication about animal welfare

Target audience	Key influencers
Livestock and production	Industry leaders Farm consultants Veterinary surgeons Animal health companies Rural merchandise retailers Women in Agriculture/Australian Rural Women's Network etc Media
Aquatic animals	Tackle shops Industry associations Media
Companion animals	Veterinary surgeons RSPCA Media



AAWS-Key influencers in communication about animal welfare (Cont.)

Research and teaching	University leaders
Animals used for work, recreation, entertainment and display	High-profile scientists
Wild animals	High-profile circus families/owners
	Zoo chief executive officers/boards
	Guide and companion dog spokespeople
	Shooters associations
	Game councils
	National Parks and Wildlife Services
	WIRES
	Conservation groups/users of national parks
	Community group spokespeople (eg former ABC news presenter and author of wildlife books, Richard Morecroft)



AAWS-Key influencers in communication about animal welfare (Cont.)

.School children	Teachers, education lecturers, educationists responsible for Curriculum and teaching aid design
International audiences	Australian political leaders World Organisation for Animal Health (the OIE) FAO International animal welfare organisations eg John Gould Society, Greenpeace
General public	Veterinary surgeons Local government Land/Pasture Protection Boards RSPCA Media



AAWS-Key influencers in communication about animal welfare (Cont.)

Indigenous groups	Respected community leaders Sports champions and athletes Artists Indigenous media
NESB groups	Community leaders Existing organisations including horticultural/farm and Landcare groups based on ethnic populations Ethnic media



AAWS-Audiences and communication tools and channels for the AAWS communication strategy

Audience	Communication tools and channels
Stakeholders	Newsletters, brochures, media, internet, key influencers, letters, e-newsletters
General public	Media, key influencers, internet including specific media markets such as teenagers and men eg Dolly, or HQ
School children	Media, school materials, internet, kids sections in magazines
Key influence media	Briefings, e-newsletters
Indigenous groups	Community consultation, key influencers
NESB groups	Community consultation, media
Overseas groups	Brochures, e-newsletters, internet
Local, state and Australian Government agencies	Letters, briefings, media, Municipal Association Magazine and newsletters



Issues in changing perception

- ◆ Education vs persuasion
- ◆ Credibility and trust
- ◆ Individual vs community change
- ◆ An example of a strategy for change



Persuasion

- ◆ Persuasion involves attitude change, not merely knowledge transfer. As such, all the attributes relevant to attitude change apply:
 - Credibility of the source
 - Mode of delivery – mass media vs individualised approaches



Credibility

- ◆ It is simplistic to assume that better “education”, in the sense of persuasive messages, will lead to changes in public attitudes.
- ◆ Aldhous, Coghlan, & Copley (1999) provided evidence that people’s attitudes to animal experimentation became more positive when they were given some information about the benefits of medical research.
- ◆ However, such a finding does not necessarily permit the conclusion that people just need to be better informed
- ◆ MORI survey (2002) showed that trust of sources varied widely:
 - animal welfare groups and veterinarians at 45%.
 - Scientists 23%.
 - Amongst scientists, university scientists rated highest at 50%.



2.7 COMMUNITY TRUST IN THE PROVISION OF ANIMAL WELFARE EDUCATION

The TNS research identified that the Australian community wants the organisations responsible for animal welfare to promote improved understanding of animal welfare and to achieve improved standards of animal welfare. An important consideration is how best to provide education and training to underpin public confidence in Australia's animal welfare initiatives.

Systematic research is yet to be undertaken in relation to public trust in animal welfare education initiatives. However, important lessons may be learnt from related research that reveals that public trust (in food) was strongest if the state was the sole instigator of change, followed by non-government organisations and then Industry.

If the same is true for animal welfare, then there is a strong argument for governments taking the lead role in facilitating improved animal welfare education and training. There is also support for including information on the education initiatives of non-government organisations, including that provided by animal interest groups, as public trust in such sources is high.



Individual vs community

- ◆ There is a number of strategies that can be adopted to match the message to the intended audience.
- ◆ Some examples follow



What to say/ How to say it

Target group	Distribution Level	Content	Comments
Farmers Hobby farmers Companion animal carers	Veterinary clinics	Animal welfare awareness Basic husbandry matters Welfare monitoring Codes of practice	A one-page glossy document with dot points covering the major issues and relevant contacts



What to say/ How to say it

Target group	Distribution Level	Content	Comments
Hobby farmers Companion animal carers	Councils	Animal welfare awareness Basic husbandry matters Stock transport Welfare monitoring Disposal of animals and euthanasia Codes of practice	Small handbook ² covering the material in a little more detail with references to detailed source material. Sent out with rate notices?



What to say/ How to say it

Target group	Distribution Level	Content	Comments
School children	Schools	Detail of livestock, farming practices, animal food production, animal welfare issues	Develop material to fit in with the relevant curriculum



What to say/ How to say it

Target group	Distribution Level	Content	Comments
Farmers Hobby farmers Companion animal carers	Field days/shows	Animal welfare awareness Basic husbandry matters Stock transport Welfare monitoring Disposal of animals and euthanasia Codes of practice Advertising technical training sessions	Seminars covering a number of the main issues. Distribution of the handbook covering the material in some detail with references to detailed source material



What to say/ How to say it

Target group	Distribution Level	Content	Comments
Farmers Hobby farmers Legislators/regulators	Technical training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Legislation 2. Codes of practice 3. Species-specific management issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing and stocking density - Food and water - Predators - Managing health and disease - Disposal of animals and euthanasia - Transport and sale of livestock - Economics of rural businesses 	Scheduled workshops dealing in-depth with specific topics and delivered by extension officers.



What to say/ How to say it

Target group	Distribution Level	Content	Comments
General community Legislators/ regulators	Mass media/web sites/seminars/ workshops/ interviews	Animal welfare awareness Legislation Codes of practice Scientific knowledge about community concerns, welfare science	Press releases Expert opinion Media officers Website content



Remember

- ◆ It is desirable to attain, as far as possible, a convergence of attitudes held by
 - the community,
 - livestock industries,
 - legislators and regulators,
 - research groups and
 - those who actively support or oppose the uses and management of animals in the livestock industries and in animal experimentation.



Conclusion

- ◆ It is important for livestock industries to carefully analyse community views and to develop both short term and long term responses. These responses would include
 - the use of scientific information to brief regulators and legislators and the community on welfare relevant practices in the livestock industries
 - informing the livestock industries of these results as a mechanism for instituting changes where appropriate
 - seeking opportunities to provide education to the community from early school age onwards about food sources, best practice and the role of the livestock industries in providing economical and quality food for the community.



Conclusion

- ◆ A credible, neutral source of information is a key requirement for an informed community.
- ◆ It is essential to ensure that policy-making bodies have a membership representing as wide a constituency as possible.



AAWS activities

- ◆ Working groups
- ◆ Scientific seminars
- ◆ Strategic funding (limited!)
- ◆ Possible long-term funding
- ◆ Broad constituency, therefore awareness of the sensitivities, political realities and discourse amongst the key stakeholders.



Conclusion

- ◆ There is a clear need for ongoing, coordinated, scientific advice to government, industry and the community on public attitudes, priorities and knowledge of welfare issues
- ◆ A credible broadly-based entity needs to assemble and disseminate as widely as possible sufficient information to ensure an informed public in a way similar to ANZCAART's activities in the scientific community. AAWS has the potential to coordinate this.
- ◆ These processes are likely to lead to a greater convergence of attitudes with a resulting greater consensus in regard to duty of care towards animals.



Thank you!