Swimming with the Tide: Animal Welfare in Veterinary Medical Education and Research

Summary and Action

David B. Morton
Swimming with the tide = Swimming in the sea:

Tides are 2 way

Can be dangerous not always pleasant like scotch

on the rocks
Animal Welfare as an evolving multi-disciplinary field of research

The roles of Science and Society
Laws in various countries - laws
AW education and research
Communication and Advocacy
Moving Forward or Catching up?
Summary and action

and
A few comments from the other side of the pond(s)
Congratulations to the AVMA

Courage to change and to embrace that change
DO ANIMALS MATTER & WHY?

Sentience
Pain & Distress
“Suffering”
Rural vs Urban

Welfare Science
Ethics
Legislation
The veterinary profession has a responsibility to its members and the public to provide and ensure a good education in animal welfare science, ethics and law

Undergraduates

Postgraduates as part of CPD

Vet techs?

Oaths
Veterinarian's Oath  (2004)

• 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.

BUT: No mention of welfare, nor to positive welfare
“Veterinarian’s oath and values”?

• Being admitted to the profession of veterinary medicine, I solemnly swear to use my scientific knowledge, skills and values for the benefit of society through the protection of animal health, the avoidance and alleviation of animal suffering, the advancement of positive animal wellbeing, 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.
New Zealand Oath

“Veterinarians have a special **duty** towards animals’ welfare and to alleviate animal suffering”

NB: “Rights” never solve an argument. A right always depends on others to deliver them.

Duty of care alternative concept
Veterinary profession has a responsibility to the **public** to provide and ensure a good education in animal welfare science, ethics and law

Consumers
Citizens (Ops)
Producers/Farmers/Processors (farm assurance schemes)
Retailers and caterers
Media

NGOs (Socrates’ gnat?) here to stay! Goals may differ

What are the qualities of a “good vet”

**CONFIDENCE in the profession**
(given their privileged position in society)

Need to convince them we take AW seriously e.g. ACAW
Veterinary profession has a responsibility to provide and ensure a **good education** in animal welfare science, ethics and law

**Knowledge** (time in the curriculum?)

On line courses and exams?

**Skills** (examination, on-line?) what makes a good vet?

**Attitude** (philosophy, macro- and micro-ethics, moral agency)

02.00 vs 14.00h,
Kant & Ghandi
Veterinary profession has a responsibility to its members and the public to provide and ensure a good education in animal welfare science, ethics and law

*Recognition of a welfare problem
Assessment of the impact
Severity (intensity and duration),
Numbers affected (surveillance)
Outcomes vs resources
Alleviation
Prevention

*Morton & Griffiths 1985 Vet Rec. 116, 431-436
WQ Figures

• 19 Countries (EU and 4 S Amer.)
• 44 institutes and universities (~250 scientists)
• Cattle (beef and dairy), pigs, and poultry (broiler chickens and laying hens).
• 600 + farms
• Integrated AW assessment, but also includes perceptions and concerns of consumers, retailers and producers
• On farm assessments - time concerns so KWIs, abattoir measures
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Welfare criteria</th>
<th>Examples of potential measures</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good feeding</td>
<td>1 Absence of prolonged hunger</td>
<td>Body condition score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Absence of prolonged thirst</td>
<td>Presence of drinker and routine for checking function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good housing</td>
<td>3 Comfort around resting</td>
<td>Frequencies of different lying positions, standing up and lying down behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Thermal comfort</td>
<td>Panting, shivering</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 Ease of Movement</td>
<td>Slipping or falling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good health</td>
<td>6 Absence of injuries</td>
<td>Clinical scoring if integument, carcass damage, lameness</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 Absence of diseases</td>
<td>Enteric problems, downgrades at slaughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 Absence of pain induced by management procedures</td>
<td>Evidence of routine mutilations such as tail docking, dehorning, stunning effectiveness at slaughter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appropriate behaviour</td>
<td>9 Expression of social behaviours</td>
<td>Social licking, aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 Expression of other behaviours</td>
<td>Play, abnormal behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 Good human-animal relationship</td>
<td>Approach and/or avoidance tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 Absence of general fear</td>
<td>Novel object test</td>
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Veterinary profession has a responsibility to its members to ensure a good education in **ethics** and law

**Ethics**

The journey!

Shared and non-shared non-scientific values

Recognise an ethical dilemma (*can vs ought*)

Need to be based on good science when available, but when not???

**Communication**, argument, logic, rhetoric

“Cannot be a ‘good’ veterinarian unless welfare and ethics are incorporated into clinical practice”

Economics?

Animal **first** priority for the veterinarian, client 2nd
Veterinary profession has a responsibility to the its members to ensure a good education in ethics and law

Ethical concerns lead to legislation (vet input)

Direction over past 100 years is in one direction only

Careful drafting to allow for exceptions
ANIMAL WELFARE in GB: Past, present and future (FAWC 2009) Recommendation

Quality of Life

A good life

A life worth living

A life not worth living

Good Welfare

Protected label
“A good life”
“Higher welfare”
“Ethical label”

Poor Welfare

Legal minimum
CE mark:
“Conforms to EU standards”
Quality of a Life – Proposed definitions
a retrospective judgement (can apply to all uses of animals)

- **A life not worth living** - Negative experiences outweigh the positive; literally, the animal would be better off dead than alive.

- **A life worth living** - Although some pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm may occur, on balance, the animal’s positive experiences outweigh the negative.

- **A good life** - Positive experiences heavily outweigh the negative beyond any reasonable doubt; certain husbandry practices are proscribed and others prescribed.
Table 2. Opportunities for promoting positive experiences of farm animals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valued opportunity</th>
<th>Example of resource that could be provided to enable an animal to have a good life</th>
<th>Positive outcomes that indicate that the animal valued the opportunity</th>
<th>Possible negative outcomes that would need to be managed to avoid potential harm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>A range of (comfortable) environmental temperatures within an animal house</td>
<td>Animal choose to lie in an area with a higher or lower temperature</td>
<td>Competition with other animals that might also prefer certain temperatures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasure</td>
<td>Diet with varied constituents</td>
<td>Animal choose to consume different foods</td>
<td>Dietary imbalance (e.g. excess body condition) if constituents of the overall ration were not controlled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>Novel object provided for inquisitive animals</td>
<td>Animal choose to play with or investigate the object</td>
<td>Competition with other animals that might also want to play with or investigate the object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Housing design that enabled intermittent avoidance of other animals or people</td>
<td>Animals choose to avoid or to be with other animals</td>
<td>Animals unwilling to leave a quiet zone to access other resources such as food and water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“The primary aim of the future strategy for farm animal welfare should be to ensure that every farm animal has a life worth living and that a growing number enjoys a good life, with a higher standard of welfare than the minimum prescribed by the law.”

Government and industry should continue to develop improved, national schemes of public and private welfare surveillance, respectively. They should work together to coordinate surveillance to eliminate duplication and maximise the uses of surveillance data.

Improvements are needed in analysis and interpretation of the collected data and summaries of the principal findings should be published.
NOT MENTIONED but of note?

Risk Assessment approach to welfare (EFSA - European Food Standards Authority)

Poor (good) welfare is a consequence of exposure to a hazard

The degree of poor welfare is determined
The character and frequency of exposure to the hazard
The number of animals affected
Evaluate quality of evidence

Helps prioritise key and important issues e.g. high severity, numbers affected, HACCP
Additional issues (time)?

“Advanced” surgery, Quality vs Quantity of Life
(can vs ought)

Fish farming and slaughter

Breed standards
Companion Animals e.g.
Breed Standards for dogs

TV documentary on dog breeding
focussed on Cavalier KC, bulldogs

In top 50 breeds, a total of 322 inherited
disorders have been identified

TV ban on Cruft’s dog show

Independent report commissioned

Government Ctte

Where were the vets?
Potential Actions by AVMA/AAVMA

INTERNAL FACTORS

To build welfare and ethics into vet school curricula and make them core subjects

Set up a group for vets to exchange and promote welfare and veterinary ethics programs, and support welfare science research e.g. ACAW, USAD Ctr?

To promote harmonisation within the profession - foster students - revisit oath “to promote positive welfare”

To provide information on pros and cons on welfare issues and have position statements available, ADVOCACY

To have a clear set of values in regard to animals and have clear ideas on harms and benefits analysis

To broaden debate to include other states of suffering
Potential Actions by AVMA/AAVMA

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (EXTERNAL)

Reaffirm the public that vets take mental health (welfare) seriously
To promote discussion groups with interested parties (e.g. other non-vet AW scientists, SHs (retailers, producers, politicians) to promote AW
To condemn obvious abuses and inform on others
To note that Vets have to EARN their place at the table (but have a head start but can do better)
To be aware of other related issues e.g. human welfare, environmental protection and pollution, sustainability, etc.
Potential Actions by AVMA/AAVMA

1. To promote welfare and ethics within the profession at all levels (PG - CPD/UG) and promoting harmonisation
2. To build welfare and ethics into vet school curricula and make them core subjects so demonstrating that vets take (mental health) welfare seriously
3. To provide information on welfare issues - outreach - opinion leader
4. To promote discussion with SHs and advocacy and be involved in media, making public policy, identifying gaps
5. To keep up with developments outside the US (e.g. EU, NOZ, OIE, FAO, etc!)
6. Think about how to measure success!
Last speaker: Thanks from us

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