

Building a Future for Wildlife: The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy (2005). Produced by the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA). Published by WAZA Executive Office, 3012 Bern, Switzerland. Available to download at <http://www.waza.org/conservation/wzacs.php>. Hard copies available from the WAZA secretariat (email secretariat@waza.org) priced €12 plus postage for non-WAZA members.

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World Organisation for Animal Health agrees new animal welfare standards

On 24 May 2005 delegates of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) voted unanimously to adopt new animal welfare standards during its annual general meeting. These new guidelines, brought about through amendments to the OIE's Animal Health Code, represent the first global standards on animal welfare and will take immediate effect within the OIE's 167 member countries.

The aim of the Animal Health Code is to provide "standards, guidelines and recommendations designed to prevent the introduction of infectious agents and diseases pathogenic to animals and humans into the importing country during trade in animals, genetic material and animal products". Of particular significance is the chapter on animal welfare, which contains new guidelines for the slaughter of animals for human consumption, for the transport of animals by land and sea and for the humane killing of animals for disease control purposes.

The guidelines on the slaughter of animals for human consumption address the need to ensure the welfare of food animals both during pre-slaughter and throughout the slaughter processes. They cover a range of topics including personnel, animal behaviour (eg flight zones in relation to getting an animal to move), moving and handling animals, lairage design and construction, care in lairage, the management of fetuses during slaughter of pregnant animals and stunning methods. The latter chapter includes a useful table summarising acceptable slaughter methods for each species and the associated animal welfare issues. A second table in which acceptable handling and restraining methods are presented according to each species and the method of slaughter used is also presented, in which the associated animal welfare issues are discussed in terms of requirements and possible areas of concern.

The guidelines for the transport of animals by land and by sea both contain recommendations related to responsibility, competence of animal handlers, journey planning (including duration, vehicle and container design and maintenance, space allowance, rest, water and feed, control of disease, emergency procedures and special provisions for transport on roll-on/roll-off vessels), documentation, the pre-journey period (including the selection of compatible groups, the holding area, the effect of travel, fitness to travel, and species-specific requirements), loading (including facilities and the use of goads), the travel period (including methods of restraint, regulation of the vehicle

environment, water and feed requirements, and sick, injured and dead animals), and unloading and post-journey handling (including sick and injured animals, disease risks, and cleaning and disinfection). In the case of transport by sea, actions in the event of a refusal to allow the import of a shipment are also discussed. Species-specific issues have yet to be developed for the transport of animals by land, but brief a section is included in the guidelines for the transport of animals by sea.

Subjects addressed in the guidelines for the humane killing of animals for disease control purposes include responsibility (both at the national and the farm level, including the role of veterinarians, animal handlers, slaughterers, farmers etc) and operational guidelines (planning the humane killing of animals). The requirements, advantages and disadvantages of using of free bullets, and penetrating and non-penetrating captive bolts are also considered. Other methods of killing discussed include maceration, the application of an electric current, carbon dioxide/air mixture, nitrogen/inert gas mixed with carbon dioxide, nitrogen and/or inert gasses, lethal injection, the addition of anaesthetics to feed or water, and killing methods for unconscious animals (cervical dislocation, decapitation, pithing, bleeding).

These new guidelines largely reflect existing EU legislation, and although they are advisory and do not have legal status, they may form the basis of legislation or best practice standards in countries where none currently exist.

OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code (2005). Produced and published by the World Organisation for Animal Health. 73 pp A4 paperback. http://www.oie.int/download/sc/2005/animal_welfare_2005.pdf

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EU survey on attitudes of consumers to the welfare of farmed animals

A new EU-wide survey, commissioned by the European Commission's Health and Consumer Protection Directorate General, has recently been published in which the attitudes and opinions of citizens of the 25 Member States to the welfare of farmed animals are revealed. The survey focused on three main themes:

- the welfare of farmed animals;
- purchasing behaviour and the welfare of farmed animals;
- animal welfare at the European level.

The first section aimed to identify and determine consumer knowledge about the production systems of different food species and the welfare and protection afforded to them. The survey revealed that people who have visited farms where animals are raised for food have a greater awareness and concern for animal welfare and are more likely to accept a price increase based on welfare-friendly production systems. However, there appears to be a marked difference in attitudes towards perceived levels of care for different species; a majority of those surveyed (66%) regard the welfare and protection afforded to dairy cows as positive,

compared with 45% for pigs and 32% for laying hens. In the latter case, those that were more critical of the welfare and the protection of laying hens were those that never ate meat, had visited farms more than three times and had spent the longest amount of time in education.

In terms of peoples perceptions of which species should be the focus of welfare improvements, laying hens and broiler chickens are regarded as priorities. More than 40% of respondents rank these species among the top three that most require improvements. Interestingly, without prompting, 12% of respondents stated that the welfare of all the species mentioned needs improving.

The second section focused on consumer purchasing behaviour and revealed that three quarters of respondents believe that through their purchasing behaviour they can influence welfare standards. However, a slight majority of citizens (52%) never or very rarely think about the welfare and protection of animals when they buy meat (43% consider it most or some of the time) particularly those in the new Member States, who also found the identification of animal welfare production systems very difficult. This trend occurs across much of the EU, with a slight majority of respondents (51%) stating that they can very rarely or never identify from the label whether the production system is welfare friendly, with almost a third of respondents stating

that identification is never possible. The survey also revealed a strong correlation between the ability to identify products sourced from welfare friendly production systems and the acceptability of a price increase; 63% of those who are ready to accept at least a 25% price increase can easily identify welfare friendly production systems from the label.

The third section, concerned with animal welfare at the European level, revealed a significant difference in knowledge of existing European legislation between different member states, with respondents from new Member States being less aware of it, particularly with regard to legislation relating to conditions under which animals are kept on farm. It appears that a majority of EU citizens (55%) believe that animal welfare does not receive enough importance in their own country. Few (7%) believe that it receives too much attention, whilst almost half think that the welfare and level of protection afforded to animals within the EU is better than in other parts of the world.

Attitudes of consumers towards the welfare of farmed animals (June 2005). Special Eurobarometer 229 / Wave 63.2 — TNS Opinion & Social. http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/animal/welfare/euro_barometer25_en.pdf

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