

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL WELFARE

Chair: J Amelita Facchiano, Dallas, TX
Co-Vice Chair: Carolyn L. Stull, Davis, CA
Co-Vice Chair: Ria de Grassi, Sacramento, CA

Wilbur B. Amand, PA; Joan M. Arnoldi, WI; Chris D. Ashworth, AR; Shane A. Brookshire, GA; Crystal Bryant, TX; Tom Burkgren, IA; Beth W. Carlson, ND; David M. Chico, NY; Tim R. Cordes, MD; Stephen K. Crawford, NH; W. Ron DeHaven, IL; Kevin Dennison, CO; Debra S. Duncan, KS; Reta Dyess, TX; Kathleen D. Finnerty, NY; W. Kent Fowler, CA; Nancy A. Frank, MI; Julie A. Gard, AL; Chester A. Gipson, MD; Gail C. Golab, IL; Nancy E. Halpern, NJ; Steven L. Halstead, MI; Marlene Halverson, MN; Jeffrey J. Hamer, NJ; Del E. Hensel, CO; Terry L. Klick, OH; Cathy A. Liss, VA; Martha A. Littlefield, LA; Calvin W S. Lum, HI; Janet Maass, CO; John R. MacMillian, WV; Amy W. Mann, DC; Chuck E. Massengill, MO; Terry R. Menlove, UT; Sherrie R. Niekamp, IA; Sandra K. Norman, IN; Roger E. Olson, MD; Elizabeth J. Parker, DC; John R. Ragan, MD; Sebastian Reist, NJ; Nancy J. Robinson, Mo; Keith Roehr, CO; David D. Schmitt, IA; Andy Schwartz, TX; Dale F. Schwindaman, MD; Philip Stayer, MS; Bruce N. Stewart-Brown, MD; Paul L. Sundberg, IA; George A. Teagarden, KS; Robert M. S. Temple, OH; Mary Kay Thatcher, DC; Belinda S. Thompson, NY; Charles D. Vail, CO; Lyle P. Vogel, IL; Max Waldo, NE; Gary M. Weber, MD; Katherine Wetherall, CA; Norman G. Willis, ; Ross Wilson, TX; Josh L. Winegarner, TX; Nora E. Wineland, CO; Richard W. Winters, Jr., TX; Michael J. Wood, VT; Ernest W. Zirkle, NJ.

The Committee met on Monday, October 22, 2007, at the John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel in Reno, Nevada. Chair Amelita Facchiano called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. with 30 Committee members and more than 40 guests present. Ms. Facchiano acknowledged the assistance of the Vice Chairs, Ms. Ria de Grassi and Dr. Carolyn Stull, in organizing the agenda. Ms. Facchiano described her background goals concerning animal welfare issues and then recounted the mission statement of the Committee as follows: The Committee on Animal Welfare explores animal welfare concerns and seeks to present data in an honest, unbiased, science-based manner for Membership to evaluate. In this capacity, the committee serves as a forum for promoting dialogue between the various animal welfare groups and industry and for promoting the development of broad-based animal welfare solutions. She then invited Dr. Steven Halstead to review the 2006 meeting and the two resolutions that passed the Committee, but failed the general membership vote.

Michael David, Director, National Center for Import and Export (NCIE), Sanitary International Standards Team, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), provided a historical perspective and future activities of the World Organization for Animal Health(OIE) concerning animal welfare issues. In 2004, the member countries of the OIE voted to develop an animal welfare mandate with guidelines based on science, with focused outcomes, and a commitment to consult and communicate with stakeholders. As of May 2005, four guidelines have been developed and adopted for the issues of slaughter, humane killing for disease control purposes, transportation by sea, and transportation by land. A newly developed animal welfare guideline on dog population control is being circulated for comment. The 2007 Work Plan includes the development of a discussion paper on the housing and production of farm animals that will be based on three objectives for the standards including protection of animal health, protection of psychological well-being, and provision of natural living conditions. The OIE held its first conference on animal well being in Paris, France in 2004, and a second conference is planned for Cairo, Egypt in 2008. Dr. David forecasts that the acceptance and implementation of the guidelines in international trade will be slow and gradual.

Gail Golab, Interim Director, Animal Welfare Division, American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), provided an update on the organization's activities. Since 2004, the AVMA has been strategically restructuring its animal welfare efforts. Between 2004 and 2006, AVMA restructured its Animal Welfare Committee with 18 members, various practice and species representations, developed the overarching AVMA Animal Welfare Principles, and created the Animal Welfare Division, including five approved positions.

In June of 2007, the AVMA Executive Board prioritized five strategic goals for the Association. One goal is that "AVMA is a leading advocate for, and an authoritative, science-based resource on, animal welfare." To meet this goal, and in conjunction with a directive that animal welfare policy decisions and actions concur with the principles that animals may be ethically used for human purpose; that science, professional judgment, ethics, and societal values should all be considered in animal welfare decision-making; and that veterinarians should offer their time and expertise to efforts that promote the welfare of animals, the AVMA is now engaged in animal

welfare-specific strategic planning to position the AVMA to be more effective scientifically and in internal and external communications.

AVMA's animal welfare policy discussions since the last USAHA meeting have focused on unwanted horses, castration and dehorning of cattle, trapping (including use of steel-jawed leg/toe hold traps), foie gras, and animal fighting. AVMA continues to work to engage stakeholders in its policy development process with the intent of bringing as much pertinent information to the table as possible. Lastly, Dr. Golab described two awards presented by AVMA to ensure that individuals significantly contributing to the betterment of animal welfare are appropriately recognized for their contributions. The AVMA revamped its Animal Welfare and Humane awards, bringing their coordination under one roof in the Animal Welfare Division. One award goes to a veterinarian, and the latter to a non-veterinarian.

Cathy Liss, President, Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), reviewed the background and goals of the AWI. The AWI was founded in 1951 and seeks to reduce the sum of total pain and fear inflicted on animals by people. Their goals include a ban on use of steel jaw leghold traps, preservation of species threatened with extinction, reform of intensive confinement of farm animals and an end to inhumane slaughter, strict regulation of animal transport conditions, and humane treatment of laboratory animals. Many publications addressing these goals are available from AWI. One current specific issue that AWI is actively pursuing is the development in the technology of remote trap monitors that are effective in the capture or monitoring of animals such as coyotes, bears, skunks, or feral pigs. Additionally, AWI is supporting a ban on the practice of shark "finning" that provides the pectoral and dorsal fins as the main ingredient for the delicacy of the Asian shark fin soup.

Joy Mench, Professor, Department of Animal Science, University of California-Davis presented a science-based discussion on caged and caged-free housing of laying hens. Dr. Mench gave an overview of the progress of housing of laying hens from small backyard flocks to the conventional battery cages that house most layers in today's commercial operations. However, due to the European Union (EU) ban on conventional cages in 2012 and the criticisms of conventional cages including the restriction of movement with associated reduction in bone strength and the lack of nest boxes, perches and dust bathing substrates, other alternative systems are being investigated in many different scientific studies. These alternative systems include floor systems, aviaries, systems with range access, furnished cages, and improvement in conventional cages. However, the transition to non-cage systems would be associated with significant health challenges as noted in the EU. These are related to parasites, wounding due to cannibalism, disease control, litter and range management issues, and the ability to maintain cleanliness. Advantages and disadvantages of laying hen systems are reviewed in the following two references: European Food Safety Authority (2005), "Welfare Aspects of various systems for keeping laying hens;" and Laywel Project (<http://www.laywel.eu>).

Alice Green, Veterinary Epidemiologist, Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH), VS-APHIS-USDA, reviewed the findings on the factors associated with the occurrence and recovery of non-ambulatory livestock in the U.S. The study was part of a larger epidemiological survey investigation from The Farm and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) request to the Secretary of Agriculture to investigate the scope, causes, and humane treatment of non-ambulatory livestock in the United States. The data showed that there are an estimated 270,000 cattle, 500 lb or more, that became non-ambulatory on-farm in the U.S. in 2004. One objective of the study was to compare characteristics of U.S. dairy operations that had one or more non-ambulatory cows with operations that had no non-ambulatory cows during 2004. The statistical analysis using odds ratios showed that the probability that cows became non-ambulatory were greater in herd sizes of more than 100 cows, facilities that fed a total mixed ration, herds with a rolling herd average of greater than 20,000 pounds of milk, and facilities with flooring for lactating cows of either concrete or dirt as compared to pasture. There are animal and treatment characteristics that appear to increase the likelihood of recovery, which include cows with hypocalcaemia and treatment with Calcium, Phosphorous, or Potassium, cows with recumbency of less than 24 hours, and cows with no prior history of health problems.

Paul Sundberg, Vice President, Science, Technology, National Pork Board (NPB), presented a overview of the NPB's history of swine welfare issues. In 2004, NPB introduced Swine Welfare Assurance Program (SWAP) to commercial swine producers that was based on science and was an education or assessment program with no formal audit component. In 2005, the Pork Welfare Industry Coalition was formed and the SWAP and Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) programs were merged to create the PQA Plus program. Producer and premise certification were available. The Coalition made recommendations on issues for PQA including sow stalls that were based on credible, workable, and affordable criteria in order for the solutions to be sustainable. Science supports management as the biggest factor affecting sow well-being. The NBP funded seven research projects in 2006 totaling \$403,013. Dr. Sundberg noted that pork producers will work to take advantage of marketing opportunities, such as the Smithfield Foods, Inc. decision in January 2007 to begin phasing out over the next ten years individual gestation stalls for sows and replacing them with group housing in its company owned farms. Another notable decision was Burger King's announcement to buy from suppliers who do not confine their pigs.

Debra Duncan, Director, Animal Facilities Inspection Program, Kansas Animal Health Department, recounted her experience with the Greensburg Project that was the result of a disastrous tornado destroying 95 percent of the town of Greensburg, Kansas on May 4, 2007. There was no disaster plan for the care of small animals at the time of the disaster. Much was learned from the experience and recommendations were presented including a workable record keeping system for each animal, an inventory for supplies, supervision and training of volunteers, on-site security issues, and the challenges in the return of the animals to the owners. As a result of the Greensburg Project, state responders are becoming credentialed and there are regulations being developed for emergency shelters such as basic standards of care, credibility of staff and volunteers, and standard record keeping procedures.

Tim Cordes, Equine Programs Coordinator, VS-APHIS-USDA, updated the Committee on the transport conditions of horses to slaughter. The goal of the Slaughter Horse Transport Program (SHTP) was established and remains constant to this day as follows: If a horse must be transported commercially to slaughter, then it will travel in a safe and humane fashion. The program is often cited as a model for the future development of humane transport programs for other species. The final rule on humane transport of horses to slaughter was published in the Federal Register on December 7, 2001. All USDA-inspected horse slaughter plants are currently closed. It is anticipated that unwanted U.S. horses intended for slaughter will be transported to and processed in plants in Canada and Mexico. The USDA-APHIS-VS, SHTP will remain active in the field and at headquarters. Although the U.S. plants that process horses will be closed and therefore not staffed by SHTP, USDA will visit regularly the Canadian and Mexican border crossings and Canadian plants. SHTP Owner/Shipper Certificates (VS Forms 10-13) will continue to be received at headquarters from Canadian plants and the Mexican border. The slaughter horse industry divides horses into "killers" (slaughter horses) and "riders" (non-slaughter horses or all others). It is likely that most horses will move through the standard channels as killers with SHTP owner/shipper certificates and backtags. However, in an attempt to circumvent program regulations (9 CFR 88.4), an increasing number may move as riders with Coggins tests for equine infectious anemia (EIA). The SHTP has no jurisdiction over riders moved in compliance with interstate or international animal health regulations. Currently there are two Canadian plants, with a three more opening in the immediate future, and two Mexican plants that process horsemeat for human consumption.

Dr. Susan Trock gave a short summary on the 1981 New York State regulations for vehicles transporting more than seven horses in which the vehicle's interior compartment must have no more than one tier. Any constable or police officer can enforce this New York regulation.

The business meeting followed the last presentation. The Committee considered one Resolution calling for State governments to enact and enforce regulations that are consistent with the ban on double-deck trailers in the commercial transport of horses to slaughter, depending upon the State, such regulatory agencies might include commerce, consumer affairs, transportation, or the state police. The resolution passed with a quorum vote and was referred to the Committee on Nominations and Resolutions.