

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL WELFARE

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The Committee met on October 23 at the Town and Country Hotel, San Diego, California, from 8 am until noon. There were 59 members and 40 guests present. After the Chair called the meeting to order at 8:00 am, the final agenda was approved, activity during the past year was summarized, and operational procedures were reviewed. Members were referred to the USAHA website to review the 2012 resolutions and responses. The Chair introduced the first speaker for the session.

Coalition for a Sustainable Egg Supply Research Project Update

Joy Mench, PhD, Professor, Department of Animal Science and Director, Center for Animal Welfare, University of California—Davis

The Coalition for a Sustainable Egg Supply project was initiated by a diverse group of stakeholders to provide science-based information about the sustainability of three different types of egg production systems: conventional cage, aviary and enriched colony. Data on food affordability, egg quality and safety, hen health and well-being, worker health and safety, and environmental impacts were collected on a commercial farm in the Midwest that has these three systems. Preliminary results from the first flock cycle of the project were presented.

Why Foals Don't Gallop in Utero: Studies in Transition of Fetal Consciousness with Potential Implications for Animal Welfare and Human Neonatal Health

John Madigan, DVM, MS, DACVIM, Professor, Department of Medicine and Epidemiology and Director, International Animal Welfare Training Institute, School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California—Davis

The transition of consciousness at birth has important welfare implications for late-stage pregnancy and the neonatal period. Maternal- and fetal-derived neurosteroids affect pain perception, behavior, and adaptation to extra-uterine life. We recently discovered failures of transition of consciousness in ill neonatal foals. The potential implications for the health and welfare of the equine and other species including (possibly) human infants were discussed.

How Do We Know They Hurt? Nonverbal Cues and Pain Scales for Animals

Sheilah Robertson, BVMS(Hons), PhD, DECVAA, DACVAA, DECAWBM (WSEL), DACAW, Assistant Director, Animal Welfare Division, American Veterinary Medical Association, Schaumburg, IL

Pain can only be treated if we look for it and recognize it. In animals, pain is what we say it is and because animals are non-verbal and cannot self-report, it is our duty to understand how they express pain. Research studies indicate that the most accurate way to measure pain in animals is based on behavior. In many species detailed ethograms have been developed comparing normal behavior with that seen during a painful event and these can be assigned numerical values. These pain scoring tools remove the influence of opinion, bias and subjectivity that have been used in the past.

Update on the ISO Animal Welfare Initiative

Craig Morris, Deputy Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA

Recent activity and decisions regarding ISO TC 34/WG 16 efforts toward an ISO technical standard on animal welfare applied to food producing animals were described. On July 15, 2013, a NWIP was approved and that NWIP is now being considered by the entire TC with voting to close on November 22, 2013.

Committee Business:

The business meeting followed the last presentation and the presence of a quorum was confirmed. Two resolutions were introduced.

After discussion, the first resolution was approved by the Committee to be transmitted to the Board of Directors that "The United States Animal Health Association supports passage of the Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act, H.R. 1518/S. 1406." The concern prompting the resolution was that 40 years after passage of the Horse Protection Act in 1970, and its amendments in 1976, soring continues. As USDA's ability to detect it has improved, methods used to sore horses have become more creative and deceptive. The PAST Act seeks to eliminate the soring of horses by improving USDA's enforcement capabilities and strengthening penalties against violators. Specifically, H .R. 1518/S. 1406:

- Makes the actual act of soring, or directing another person to cause a horse to become sore, illegal, whereas the original HPA only bans showing, transporting or auctioning/selling a horse that is sore, not the actual practice.
- Prohibits the use of 'action devices' (e.g., boots, collars, chains, rollers, or other devices that encircle or are placed on the lower extremity of the leg of a horse) on any leg of Tennessee Walking Horses, Spotted Saddle Horses, or Racking Horses at horse shows, exhibitions, sales or auctions and bans weighted shoes, pads, wedges, hoof bands, or other devices (often referred to as 'performance packages') that are not used for protective or therapeutic purposes. These devices may facilitate soring (action devices) or may assist in avoiding its detection (performance packages). The American Association of Equine Practitioners and the American Veterinary Medical Association jointly called for a ban on the use of action devices and performance packages in the training and showing of Tennessee Walking Horses in 2012.
- Increases civil and criminal penalties for violations, and creates a penalty structure that requires a horse to be disqualified for increasing periods of time based on the number of violations.
- Allows for permanent disqualification from the show ring after three or more violations.
- Requires the USDA (rather than the current structure of horse industry self-regulation that has proven unsuccessful for more than 40 years) to license, train, assign and oversee inspectors to enforce the HPA.
- Amendments to the HPA proposed in the PAST Act are consistent with recommendations made by the AAEP in its 2008 white paper, "Putting the Horse First: Veterinary Recommendations for Ending the Soring of Tennessee Walking Horses," and are supported by the AAEP, the AVMA, and the American Horse Council, as well as numerous other horse industry, veterinary, and animal protection organizations, and horse industry professionals. As of October 16, 2013, the House bill had more than 200 cosponsors and the Senate version had 18.

Resolution two, that "The United States Animal Health Association opposes the roping or lassoing of any equine by the legs ('horse tripping') during sport or entertainment, and during training and practice for such events. The Association calls on all public officials, as well as leaders within the rodeo industry, equine industry, veterinary medicine, and animal protection to find effective ways to eliminate this activity in the United States," was likewise approved for transmission to the Board of Directors after discussion

and an amendment (amended verbiage is provided). The concern prompting the resolution is the practice of roping the front or hind legs of a galloping horse, on foot or horseback—causing it to trip and come crashing to the ground—for the purposes of entertainment or sport. This inhumane activity is practiced in 3 of the 9 events typically held in a charreada or Mexican-style rodeo. Tripping is intentional and points are awarded for dropping the horse. The three events that include horse tripping are:

- Piales en lienzo—roping of the hind legs of a horse
- Manganas a pie—tripping or felling of a horse from on foot
- Manganas a caballo—tripping or felling a horse from horseback.

The intentional tripping of horses for sport or entertainment has been prohibited by the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) and the National Professional Rodeo Association at their sanctioned events, and by the film and television industries, as monitored by the American Humane Association (“No Animals were Harmed”). Horse tripping differs from the popular rodeo event of calf roping because the high center of gravity of horses, and their longer legs and faster speed, creates more potential for injury, whereas the center of gravity for cattle is lower, they move more slowly and have sturdier limbs. Reported injuries include lacerations, dislocated joints, fractured bones and teeth and neck and shoulder injuries. Additional concerns have been expressed that the horses used for these rodeos are underfed and overused, repeatedly roped until lame, sometimes with rope burns down to the bone.

Horse tripping has been banned in eleven US states. Other states have chosen to address this activity through the use of existing, less specific animal cruelty statutes. Unfortunately, this activity continues.

The resolution expresses opposition to horse tripping and calls on those with potentially the greatest influence to act to get this activity stopped. The resolution further respects variation by locale, organization and stakeholder need(s) by allowing flexibility in selecting the approach that may be most effective for each situation.

The Committee on Animal Welfare adjourned at 12:00 pm.