

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL WELFARE

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Vice Chair: Belinda Thompson, NY

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The Committee met on October 22, 2014 at the Sheraton Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri, from 8:00 am until noon. There were 77 attendees, including 50 members and 27 guests. After the Chair called the meeting to order at 8:00 am, the final agenda was approved, actions on resolutions submitted in 2013 were reviewed, activity during the past year was summarized, and operational procedures were reviewed. Members were referred to the website to review other 2013 resolutions and responses. The Chair introduced the first speaker for the session.

Presentations

An Introduction to Veterinary Forensics

Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM; Animal Rescue League of Boston

Societal impacts of, and relationships between, animal cruelty and neglect were reviewed, and animals were recognized as sentinels for people at risk. What contributes to careful and successful identification and resolution of cases was described, and the importance of veterinary contributions was recognized. Basic information about forensic assessments, evidentiary requirements, and veterinarians as expert witness was provided. Included in forensic assessment was discussion of body condition scoring, the importance of documentation and chain of evidence, and the increasing importance of DNA and other laboratory testing in successful prosecution of cases.

Beyond Reasonable Doubt: An Equine Humane Case Review from the Corral to the Court

Grant Miller, DVM; President, Sonoma County CHANGE Program

An overview of the basics of an animal law enforcement investigation was presented, including terminology and the common legal process for criminal animal cases. An equine humane case was used as an example, starting at the onset of the investigation (corral) and finishing with the legal outcome (court). While an equine case was described, the information presented was broadly applicable across species. Attendees were cautioned about state-to-state variability, as well as commonalities.

Personality Typologies of Animal Hoarding Disorder

Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM; Animal Rescue League of Boston

Several animal hoarding cases were described in the context of 3 described categories of personality types of hoarders. The speaker emphasized that understanding people who hoard animals can help professionals involved in interventions better grasp why changing behavior or improving circumstances can be so difficult.

Committee Business

The business meeting followed the last presentation and the presence of a quorum was confirmed. No recommendations or resolutions were proposed by the Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 am.