Understanding Perspectives

The Roles of Social Choice, Science and Standards on Animal Welfare Policy

Southern Legislative Conference

July 11, 2016

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How difficult can making recommendations on animal welfare really be?
Housing Laying Hens

Three Different Environments

- Caged at 67 in²/hen, movement restricted
- No nest box or litter for dust bathing
- Easy access to feed trough and water
- Aggressive interactions infrequent, cannibalism minimal
- Individual birds easily observed
- Eggs protected and easily collected

- Floor-raised in barn
- Nest boxes, litter for dust bathing
- Evidence of aggression, cannibalism, flighty (easily startled)
- Nest box gregariousness, floor laying
- Old bone breaks evident at end of lay
Housing Laying Hens

- Large space, freedom of movement
- Enclosures for sleeping and nesting
- Natural substrates, multiple opportunities for expression of natural behaviors
- Aggression and cannibalism moderate
- Exposed to elements, pests, predators, and soil-borne disease
Which Environment Is Most Welfare Friendly?

Which would these people choose?
- Those in business to produce animals and their products
- Your neighbor
- Animal protection activists
- Public officials
- Veterinarians

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Three Concepts of Animal Welfare

The BODY
Health and Biologic Function

Measures of health, growth and productivity

The MIND
Affective State

Measures of affective states (pain, suffering, contentment)

The NATURE
Behavioral Integrity

Quantitative and qualitative comparisons to wild or free-living counterparts
...our choices are also conditioned by our experiences

- Animal use industries
- Members of the public
- Animal protection activists
- Public officials
- Veterinarians
Science—The Five Freedoms

• Freedom from thirst, hunger, malnutrition
• Freedom from discomfort
• Freedom from pain, injury, disease
• Freedom to express normal behaviors
• Freedom from fear and distress


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For Laying Hens...

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cages</th>
<th>Barns</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nutrition</strong></td>
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Ethics Drive Animal Welfare Science

• The science of animal welfare emerged because people were concerned about how animals were treated

• Different from other scientific disciplines where curiosity about how things work is the driving force

• Example—Laying hens in cages
  – Public expresses concern about the effects of overcrowding/insufficient space on hen welfare
  – Scientists study effects of crowding on hens and recommend space allowances based on their findings
Values Shape Solutions

- Regardless of the findings, how those findings are valued will determine which are given priority and which are implemented.

- Animal welfare science is important, but also just part of a much bigger picture.
Science is Informative, But Values Can Shape Solutions

- For laying hens
  - Behavioral measures
Policy Creation: How and Why
Societal Assurance

• Concerns about animal welfare are generally accompanied by a need to do something
• That “something” often ends up being public policy
• Public policy solutions can include
  — Voluntary processes (often market-driven [e.g., retailers’ social responsibility initiatives, brand/product differentiation])
  — Legislative/regulatory processes and can be
    — Local, regional, national or international in scope
• Assurance = confidence in the effectiveness of the solution
Typical Path to AW Policy Solutions

Precipitating event

Contrasting agendas

Research (science, opinion)

Debate

Preferred solution

Cultural characteristics
AW Assurance in the United States—Regulatory (Involuntary)

- Federal—limited regulation
  - Non-agricultural animals/uses
    - Animal Welfare Act (commercial pet production, exhibitors, research animals [exemptions for certain types of agricultural research])
    - Horse Protection Act ("soring")
    - Conservation Acts
  - Agricultural animals/uses
    - Twenty-eight Hour Law (transport)
    - Humane Methods of Slaughter Act (poultry not currently included)
    - Regulations—Transport of Horses to Slaughter
  - Provisions sometimes appear in amendments to other legislation
AW Assurance in the United States—Regulatory (Involuntary)

- State
  - Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Acts
    - Provide basic animal care expectations
    - Identify unacceptable practices
    - Assign inspection/regulatory responsibilities
    - Euthanasia requirements
  - Animal entertainment (horse and greyhound racing; circuses, carnivals, zoos, rodeos)
  - Retail pet stores, boarding/grooming facilities, veterinary clinics
  - Veterinary practice acts
- Local = animal control
AW Assurance in the United States—Voluntary

• Have emerged to fill gaps (e.g., coverage, resources)
• Players
  – Animal protection organizations
  – Retailers
  – Industry

Drivers
  – Meet consumer demands
  – Avoid/mitigate regulation
  – Prepare for/facilitate regulation

• Usual approach
  – Expert input → guidelines/standards
  – Assurance process
  – Consumer awareness/education
Benefits and Challenges for Voluntary Programs

Benefits
- Flexibility
- Consumer choice

Challenges
- Quality
  - Robustness
    - Data limitations
    - Details versus “must be treated humanely”
  - Bias toward perspectives of those creating; number of people involved small
  - Consistency
- Verification
  - Type (first- through third-party audits)
  - Multiple audits if supplying multiple customers
- Consumer awareness and understanding
- Choosing language
  - unintended consequences
When Voluntary Becomes Regulatory

• “Freedom to operate” depends on public trust

High trust → Complete autonomy

Low trust → Government regulation

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• US attitude(s)/philosophies
  – Priority on freedom to operate
  – Republican (conservative) versus Democrat (liberal)
Drivers—Voluntary to Regulatory

High trust → Complete autonomy

Low trust → Regulation

Cumulative impacts
- Activism (raises awareness, creates different expectations)
- Economics (high animal use costs)

Triggering events
- Bad actors/incidents, failure to condemn
- Perceived or real voluntary program failures
Another Scenario
Mounted Police Horse

- Housed in 12’x12’ stall with automatic waters
- Fed twice a day with Timothy Grass hay, dixie feed
- Work 10 hours/day; 4 days/week
- Patrol downtown area of Portland, combating street crime. May also be used for special events, crowd control and park problems
- Monitored weekly for injuries during grooming
- Kept current on vaccinations and de-worming protocols
- Voluntary regulation
Carriage Horse

- Housed in 12’x12’ box stall with automatic waters; pastured on days off
- Fed oats and alfalfa cubes
- Works no more than 6 of 7 day week; must not be in harness for more than 8 successive hours; must receive a 10 minute break after 2 successive hours of labor; may only work between temps of 25-90°F
- Works in downtown Asheville providing 20-20 minutes tours at a sedate pace
- Monitored daily for injuries during grooming
- Animals and facilities must be inspected buy a veterinarian yearly
- Involuntary regulation
Leisure Horse

- Housed on pasture with access to pond
- Fed oats and hay seasonally
- Works primarily on the weekends in a variety of environments ranging from large arenas to parades
- Health is monitored weekly when caught for events
- Yearly veterinary care
- No regulation
# Horses

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Things to Consider with Animal Welfare Policy

• Impacts on animals and people
• Educate yourselves
  • Science (ALL of it!)
  • Practical experience—speak with your colleagues
  • Caution—”Haven’t” doesn’t mean “shouldn’t” or “couldn’t”
    – Engage with stakeholders
• Consider implementation
  – Voluntary or regulatory?
  – Resources available (personnel, funds)?
  – Impacts on stakeholders?
• Aim for model of continuous improvement
Some Resources

• Visit the animal welfare section on the AVMA Website at:
  www.avma.org/animalwelfare
  – there you will find:
    • AVMA animal welfare policies
    • Animal welfare backgrounders, factsheets, FAQs, videos
      ...and more.
Thank You for Your Time and Attention

“Problems are the price of progress. Don't bring me anything but trouble. Good news weakens me.”

―Charles F. Kettering

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