



Welfare Pulse

Animal welfare in New Zealand and around the world

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Making sense of “One Welfare”

Introduction

The field of animal welfare has come a long way since the publication of the Brambell Report in the UK in 1965. At that time, it was undefined and considered lacking in any scientific rigour, being more concerned with the ethical treatment of animals. Over the past 50 or so years, input from various eminent ethologists, physiologists and veterinarians have helped shape the field of animal welfare through the development of research questions and methodologies. In addition – and most importantly – a definition of animal welfare has been discussed and agreed upon, with recognition that welfare is a characteristic of an animal, which, although challenging, can be empirically assessed. As Professor Don Broom (2011) has previously stated, “animals have always had welfare, but what humans know of it has become modified over time.”

Whilst animal welfare science has created a common language for those immersed in the study of this subject area, as global awareness of animal welfare has grown, so too has confusion regarding what animal welfare is and why it matters. Relevant benefits resulting from investment in animal welfare knowledge creation, fundamental research and improvements, are often difficult to explain and justify, especially in relation to human and environmental welfare.

Most would agree that we don’t need any more confusion, nor any more new fields of study, but there is arguably a need for a new lens through which we can meaningfully integrate knowledge to more

fully explore the connections between animal and human welfare problems, enabling discussion of the potential for positive societal benefits as a result of tackling some of the world’s substantial animal welfare issues.

The global context of animal welfare

Animal welfare has been described as a complex, multi-faceted public policy issue, including important scientific, ethical, economic and political dimensions (OIE 2014). Although traditionally the scientific study of animal welfare, involving measurements of an



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individual animal's quality of life, has been seen as separate from the ethics of animal use and treatment, there is increasing acceptance that both are inter-connected. Public attitudes towards animal welfare vary within and between countries due to a wide range of factors including culture, religion, traditional practice and value. These different beliefs lead to varying degrees of concern for animal welfare, which in turn impacts on developments in policy and legislation in relation to animal use and treatment. David Fraser (1999) has argued that neither empirical information nor ethical argument can by itself answer questions regarding the nature of the relationship humans have with other species.

Until recently animal welfare assessment has traditionally relied upon measures of physical health, alongside changes in animal demeanor, behaviour and physiology related to negative emotional states such as pain and stress. However, more recently it is becoming accepted that good animal welfare does not only equate to the absence of disease or negative experiences, but also includes the possibility of an animal experiencing positive experiences such as pleasure. In many parts of the world, understanding what good welfare is and how it can be assessed across a range of environments is now considered a key priority for ensuring the welfare of animals kept and utilised by humans.

The Burning Platform: Human Welfare needs

Alongside the growth in interest in the field of animal welfare lie some demanding human concerns. By 2050, the world population is predicted to rise to 9.1 billion including 7 billion people living in developing countries such as those within Asia and Africa. It has been estimated that food production will need to double in order to feed such a rapidly growing human population. Alongside this, a shift in consumer expectations, with greater urbanisation and changing food preferences, is leading to an increasing demand for high quality and affordable animal-derived food products.

Although food security is a major global concern, food safety issues cannot be ignored if we are to ensure the health and welfare of an expanding human population. Increasingly emerging health issues are being linked to increased contact between humans and wildlife, intensification and integration of food production and increasing numbers of companion (pet), community or stray animals living in close proximity with humans.

As with human health and welfare, animal welfare involves safeguarding the physical and psychological health of an animal, with good animal welfare practices aimed at minimising stress and suffering. Promoting best practice in animal management goes beyond an ethical obligation, since it is a significant factor in safeguarding public and environmental health. At the level of the individual animal, it has been shown that animals in a poor welfare state do not perform well. Poor health and lowered production are related to substandard animal management, handling, transport and housing conditions. Physically and/or mentally stressed animals are more susceptible to disease, and the resultant indiscriminate use of antimicrobial drugs has facilitated the emergence of drug-resistant microbes, with a greater threat of a spread



of resistance from animals to humans. There is increasing evidence of adverse human health consequences due to resistant organisms resulting from the over or inappropriate use of antimicrobials in the animal production sector. Alongside this is a growing body of evidence that improvements in standards of animal welfare can have both a direct and indirect impact on food safety, as well as on productivity and public health outcomes. In other words, there is an expanding body of scientific evidence demonstrating that animal welfare is intrinsically linked with human welfare.

This is particularly significant in many developing countries, where families may live in impoverished conditions and where their animals play a significant role in supporting livelihoods, yet where owners may be unable to properly provide for animal health and welfare needs, due mainly to lack of knowledge and resources.

Developing an effective approach for bridging the gap between what are often perceived as competing agendas in relation to human society and animal welfare is essential for engaging communities and governments in productive discussions about why animal welfare matters and the need for change. In these

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situations, animal welfare improvement initiatives need to be multi-faceted, taking into account not just scientific, ethical, and economic evidence, but also the religious and cultural context, and other factors such as international trade policy considerations.

Although human welfare, social welfare, and animal welfare have traditionally been viewed as distinct disciplines, a new integrating concept, One Welfare, is suggested as a way forward for exploring and explaining the inter-connectedness of human and animal welfare, and the reliance humans have on healthy, productive animals. A One Welfare approach may help animal welfare to become more accepted as a relevant public policy issue by demonstrating its relevance for positive individual and community outcomes, so providing motivation for improving animal welfare standards in communities where animals and people are reliant upon each other, and where there are significant human health and welfare concerns.

Viewing human and animal welfare issues through a One Welfare lens

One Welfare has gained in momentum over the past two years, with different groups around the world using the concept to provide a more holistic way to view animal and human interconnectedness. In the veterinary context, this has resulted in key Australian and New Zealand veterinary schools coming together to develop a One Welfare platform, with the sharing of teaching tools and learning resources helping future veterinarians develop their knowledge about animal welfare, and also human and societal well being. Following discussions at the Global Conference on Animal Welfare in Mexico 2016, One Welfare has also been accepted as part of the OIE's global strategy, and various papers on the topic have been presented at international veterinary conferences around the world.

One Welfare also has potential for improving understanding of certain human social conditions. For example research into links between animal abuse and child abuse as well as

domestic violence, have suggested that animal abuse at an early age can be used as a predictor of violence towards humans later in life. In addition, recent work looking at the disturbing issue of animal hoarding suggests that animal hoarders often suffer with psychiatric issues generally linked to socioeconomic and mental illness. The first International One Welfare Conference, held in 2016 in Canada, brought together international experts to discuss the importance of extending One Health beyond physical health into a new integrating concept, One Welfare, to enable collaborative, trans-disciplinary approaches for ensuring the successful resolution of issues related to human physical and mental well-being.

However, whilst One Welfare as a concept has come a long way in a short time, and there are many possibilities for future research, it's important that this does not detract from future development of work in the welfare science area, nor should it be viewed as an alternative or replacement. Instead, One Welfare should be viewed as a valuable extension, providing a way to help "mainstream" animal welfare by improving its relevance to humans. This in turn will aid the inclusion of animal welfare within decision making related to wider national and international policy and legislation, particularly in developing countries, which ultimately leads to improved health and welfare outcomes for animals, and the people who rely upon them.



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The devastating social impact of the donkey skin trade in developing countries

A recent report by the Donkey Sanctuary has highlighted the issue of the donkey skin trade.

Commercial companies in the Chinese medicine industry are creating issues in Africa and other countries because of the greatly increased demand for donkeys. Animals are being killed in their thousands to extract a compound from their skins. The compound, Ejiao, is used in health and beauty products, and to increase sexual performance.



In China, the donkey population has been reduced from about 11 million to an estimated 3.5 to 4 million. But donkeys are also being exported to China from around the world, particularly from Africa and Asia. The social impact of losing donkeys in villages and communities is particularly being felt by women who use the donkeys as working animals. This has resulted in 13 countries now banning the export of donkeys and skins, but wildlife poachers are being used to smuggle the products in a lucrative black market. Women who have donkeys stolen are now unable to replace them as the price of donkeys has trebled in many countries.

Ironically, other Chinese companies are breeding up the Shandong Black Donkey in large feedlots, with up to 10,000 breeding mares and stallions in a single farm. Animals are purchased from small holders for approximately \$2000.

Apparently, seventy percent of the value of the animal will be derived from meat which is a sought after product and available in donkey meat restaurants. Thirty percent of the income will be for the skin. These companies want to work with The Donkey Sanctuary and World Horse Welfare to develop animal welfare standards for farmed donkeys and horses. Other companies carry out transport and slaughter of donkeys but there are no standards or regulation.

The Donkey Sanctuary is leading global efforts to highlight this problem in a report called *Under the skin* available at <https://www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk/under-the-skin/full-report>

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Codes of welfare – update on consultation, development and review since issue 23

Codes of welfare are issued by the Minister of Agriculture under the Animal Welfare Act 1999. Codes outline minimum standards for care and handling of animals and establish best practices to encourage high standards of animal care.

Recommended to Minister

- Temporary Housing of Companion Animals

In post-consultation process

- Dairy housing amendment

A complete list of the codes of welfare can be found on our website: <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/animal-welfare/codes-of-welfare/>.

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Why America cannot stamp out horse soring

“Soring” is an animal welfare issue associated Tennessee Walking Horses, and especially an annual show called The Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration. In these circles a horse is most admired when it has an extremely exaggerated high-stepping gait referred to as “the big lick”. One way to achieve this gait is to cause pain to the horse through the use of corrosive substances, uncomfortable shoes and pads, or heavy chains around the pastern.



Compared to some other welfare issues, horse soring can seem like a niche issue that affects a relatively small population of animals. However it attracts a great deal of opposition because it is obviously painful for the horse, and any benefit to humans appears to be frivolous and limited to a small elite group. As such it is comparable to other infamous practices such as force-feeding ducks to create fatty livers for foie gras or deliberately causing anaemia in veal calves to produce pale meat.

Last year it seemed that effective inspections might finally lead to the disqualification of sored horses from major shows. New U.S. Department of Agriculture regulations had undergone a lengthy development and vetting process and required only one final step, publication in the Federal Register, before being implemented. Before this could occur, the election of President Trump brought about a freezing of actions from the previous administration.

Since the passage of the 1970 Horse Protection Act (1970), soring had been targeted, and defended, in publicity campaigns, media stories, Bills and other legislation, meetings

and negotiations, the creation of competing organizations. It has also been the subject of many expensive law suits. And yet the whole issue has now slipped right back to where it started. We are told that there needs to be research to see whether burns and bruises really cause pain to horses, or even whether soring happens at all – both questions that any objective person could answer just by sitting in the stands for a big lick show.

In the face of such a setback, any animal welfare advocate might wonder: why? The truly difficult task is to ask it with a desire to really know and understand the answer, because it reveals a problem without a single satisfying answer. In highly polarised environments, audiences become immune to the expected effects of objective information, especially when they tune in to partisan news and information sources. Also, the subculture that promotes soring has many advantages: wealth, tradition, and political influence – and is bolstered by the deep anti-authoritarian streak that runs through American society.

When a situation like the showing of sored horses seems obviously unreasonable and immoral, those who are outraged by it pile on more pressure to make it stop. Sometimes this produces results – at least for a while – but it may also entrench the opposition in an unassailable bunker of political resistance and psychological denial. There follows a war of attrition where big lick activities lose a great deal of general public support and patronage, but actual elimination of the abusive activity becomes essentially impossible.

For supporters, soring is no longer just an arbitrary show standard, but symbolic of their autonomy and identity. This creates a resistance movement that, in a reactionary political climate, always has the potential to force itself back into the mainstream. In the US, now more than ever, there is an undercurrent that declares: resistance is heroic, regulations are

unnecessary, and truth is relative.

The discourse around soring is now well entrenched, the abusers resist, the animal welfare advocates persist, the horses suffer. This same unproductive spiral will continue to be repeated and aligned to toxic divides in the political, economic and religious landscape. Climate change, the national animal identification system, confederate flags and statues, gun control – dichotomies and disrespectful discourse dominate the airwaves and internet.

And yet it is at this time, of all time, that mainstream American culture finds itself able to be outraged at the sexual harassment and abuse by Hollywood elites, and seeks to stamp out this stain not only in the entertainment industry but across many different industries. It just goes to show that blights that endure for a long time can, at any moment and under any regime, begin to be overthrown.

Animal welfare activism will always have its publicity-driven aspect and its legal aspect, but as the situation changes other skills may become more critical. Like the ability to work anonymously and respect the dignity of those who disagree. Or the role of scientists as honest brokers who can cross ideological lines without being treated as traitors. Or the ability to align our goals with other people's morals and motivations and seize any opportunity that arises.

It is natural to be frustrated, but frustration is a sign that what we are doing is not working, and so we must draw back from pointless persistence at failed strategies, and try doing things differently and embrace a diversity of agents and approaches. The task of ending soring is not over. It has begun again, and we must embark upon it again, wiser and more determined.

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Maintaining social licence in animal research – get your house in order and then show it

People who use animals in research have had a particularly avid set of “supporters”. Threats, defaced and damaged property, bombs, liberated animals, even exhuming the mother of someone who bred guinea pigs. Not surprisingly, researchers and their institutions have become defensive and reluctant to engage with the wider community. So imagine what a university staff member thought when three postgraduate students began openly discussing their animal research on a crowded train heading into London recently, only to be amazed at the spontaneous applause they received as they left the train.

A shift has occurred, or is occurring, in the UK – public discussion of animal use in research is becoming more informed, widespread and civilised. Roger Morris, Professor of Molecular Neurobiology at the University of King's College London, argues that the most important things those using animals in research can do is to get their house in order (closing laboratories if necessary), have someone who can discuss contentious research in public before that research is undertaken, and open up facilities, especially to opinion formers such as journalists and MPs.

Speaking at the Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching annual conference, Morris noted that many factors had driven that change including:

- The arrest and jailing of illegally violent anti-vivisectionists;
- Ethical review, and collaboration between Government inspectors and researchers to provide public justification for animal experiments;
- Research being guided by the 3Rs, the principles of replacement, refinement and reduction of animals used in research;
- New paradigms and technologies seeing scientists and clinicians collaborating to undertake real experiments with humans;

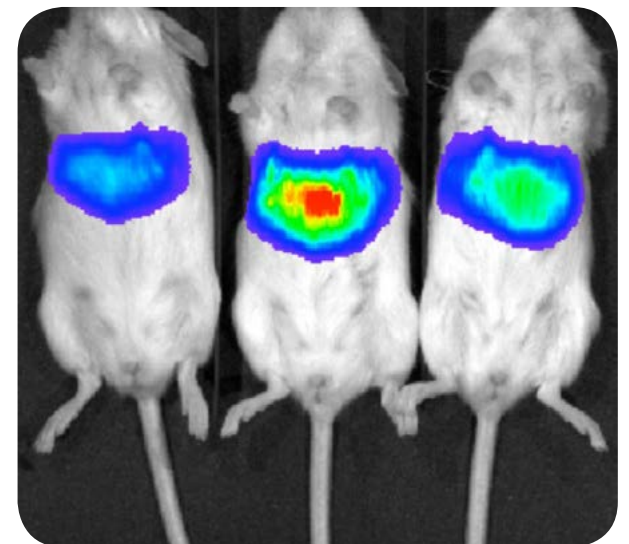
- Science Media Centre and Understanding Animal Research initiatives helping researchers explain their results to the public;
- Scientists being open to and welcoming the media, politicians and public groups into animal facilities to understand what is happening and why;
- The Concordat on Openness in Animal Research setting out how to be open about what animal research involves and the part it plays in science and medicine.

The need to show what is happening, and why, is crucial so that uninformed claims can be considered in context. Openness negates exposés, showing there is nothing to hide. Interestingly, one of the barriers to this sort of change was institutional – people with guts are required, rather than those who get to senior positions by not making mistakes.

A good example of the need to provide the context was the small number of fully anaesthetised pigs ‘shot’ in New Zealand to determine the pattern of bone and blood spatter. Drawing comments in the media such as “Shooting a living being to watch blood spatter is appalling, indefensible and just bad science”, the work helps forensic investigators understand how material is ejected following a gunshot, ensuring expert opinion relied upon to convict or free people is based on sound evidence.

The proceedings of the conference are available at <https://anzccart.org.nz/anzccart-conference/>; details of the blood splatter from gunshot wounds from the International Journal of Legal Medicine 130, 985-994; and the photograph, luminescence from hepatitis in mice, courtesy of Understanding Animal Research www.understandinganimalresearch.org.uk

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Changes come to *research, testing and teaching* in New Zealand on animals under the Animal Welfare Act 1999

In 2015, the Animal Welfare Amendment Act made a number of changes to the research, testing and teaching (RTT) system under the Animal Welfare Act 1999. Changes included a ban on using animals to test cosmetic products, and a requirement that animal ethics committees (AECs), established to consider and assess new RTT activities, must now expressly consider non-sentient alternatives to using animals.

The final changes took effect on 1 January 2018. These expand on the activities that will now require specific approval and oversight from AECs, and also how animals are accounted for to increase transparency. The definition of “manipulation” (an activity which is considered to be RTT) will be expanded to include:

- the killing of an animal in order to undertake RTT on its body or tissues; and
- the breeding or production of offspring with, or at greater risk of, compromised welfare.

Organisations holding codes of ethical conduct (CECs) will now require AEC approval for these activities. They will also have to grade each case and report it to MPI in annual statistics returns.

In December 2016, MPI consulted affected stakeholders on an additional proposed regulation that requires CEC holders to record offspring which are bred for, but not used in RTT. The policy for this proposal remains subject to approval by the new Government as part of a wider Animal Welfare Regulations package. If approved, it would take effect in 2019. The changes will ensure greater transparency over what happens to offspring involved in breeding animals for RTT.

MPI, with the assistance of the National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee, is currently updating guidance material and statistics forms to reflect these changes. This guidance will address what to count and how to grade in regards to the incoming changes. New material was sent to AECs and organisations holding CECs in November 2017.

Simon Tomkins

MPI Animal Welfare Policy

If you have any questions about these changes, please contact animalwelfarepolicy@mpi.govt.nz

Inaugural Victoria University Three Rs award

In July 2017, Victoria University celebrated its Staff Excellence Awards. Vice-Chancellor Grant Guilford said what the recipients had in common was “a shared willingness to think about the world in new ways and to experiment with how we pass on this knowledge to our students and the broader public”. Professor John Miller received the inaugural Victoria 3Rs Award (Refinement, Reduction, Replacement) for his long-standing commitment to animal welfare at Victoria University of Wellington. His citation read:

“Professor John Miller has been the executive officer of Victoria’s animal ethics committee since its inception in 1985, winning a prestigious National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee service award in 2014 for his outstanding leadership. In addition, Professor Miller has acted as chief adviser on animal welfare issues for the Schools of Biological Sciences and Psychology, the Malaghan Institute of Medical Research, Zealandia and Wellington Zoo. Professor Miller’s current research investigates cultured-cell models of disease as an alternative to animal research”.



Photo: Professor John Miller with Vice-Chancellor Professor Grant Guilford (left) and the Hon Paul Goldsmith, then Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (right). Credit: Robert Cross, VUW Image Services

Animal Welfare Infringement Notices – a game changer for compliance

Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) Animal Welfare Inspectors respond to just over 1,000 complaints from the public per year. Almost all complaints are followed up with an inspection of the animals and farm involved. In over 50 percent of cases no animal welfare offence is detected. While well meaning, what the complainant is observing is part of normal farming practice. Approximately 30 prosecutions are taken per year when offending of a more serious nature is detected. Penalties are relatively severe. At the lowest end of the scale, an individual on conviction is liable to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 12 months or to a fine of \$50,000. The highest level of fine for wilful ill treatment is 5 years' imprisonment or a fine of \$100,000. The highest penalty achieved so far by the MPI was a case in 2015, when a farm manager was sentenced to 4½ years' imprisonment for gross acts of cruelty, which included shooting cows in the legs with a shotgun. Thankfully cases like this are very rare in the farming sector.

Often lower level offences are dealt with by providing education as it was believed a criminal conviction was too harsh a penalty for a minor offence. Unfortunately this educational approach was often not achieving the desired change in behaviour and the low level offending continued.

In 2015 the Animal Welfare Amendment Act was enacted.

This amended the Animal Welfare Act to give MPI the ability to create regulation offences which have lower level fines, typically in the range of \$2,000 to \$5,000 with no custodial sentence. Some regulation offences can be dealt with by an Infringement Notice, often referred to by the public as an instant fine. Infringement Notices have a monetary penalty but there is no criminal conviction imposed.

MPI has 200 veterinarians working at export meat plants throughout New Zealand. These veterinarians are also animal welfare inspectors and will often detect lower level animal welfare offences such as lameness, ingrown horns, cancer eye, and small numbers of animals in an unacceptable body condition.

For many years the condition of bobby calves arriving at meat companies was of concern. Calves were being transported too young or had conditions like blindness, contracted tendons or scouring, making them unfit to be transported. Few if any prosecutions were put before the court.

Over the past 10 years, MPI has worked with stakeholder organisations such Dairy NZ, the Meat Industry Association, New Zealand Veterinary Association, Road Transport Forum,

and Federated Farmers to achieve improvement. It was, however, believed that further gains could be made with the introduction of regulations and lower level fines.

The Animal Welfare (Calves) Regulations were enacted in 2016. An interesting regulation was the requirement to have a loading facility on the farm which would enable a young calf to walk onto a truck by its own action. Failing to have a loading facility from August 2017 could result in an infringement. MPI veterinarians and animal welfare inspectors visited 379 dairy farms to inspect loading facilities. The vast majority were compliant which was pleasing.

For this 2017 bobby calf season, 152 infringement notices attracting a \$500 penalty have been issued to farmers for transporting unfit calves to meat companies.

Since the introduction of the calf regulations there has been a dramatic improvement in the condition of young calves arriving at meat plants. It is hoped next bobby calf season will see a reduction in the number of infringements issued as farmers come to realise it's not worth the risk of a fine for transporting a young or unfit calf.

Wide ranging regulations related to animal welfare are currently under development and, all going to plan, should be in force by October 2018. Many of these regulations will be able to be dealt with by

an infringement notice. It is anticipated this will significantly improve the outcome for animals and further enhance New Zealand's reputation as a leader in animal welfare.

Peter Hyde

Team Manager Animal Welfare Compliance Liaison and Co-ordination



Animal Welfare Inspector Helen Doughty inspects a calf loading facility.
Credit: West Hill

The National Cat Management Strategy

In September, the National Cat Management Strategy Group (NCMSG) released the finalised National Cat Management Strategy document. This was the culmination of three years' work after embarking on this important journey in August 2014, and included two rounds of consultation.

Whilst the issue of cat management provokes strong and disparate responses, the current status quo is not in the best interests of animal welfare, biodiversity and the community. The options were, and are, to do nothing, or, to take the brave step and collaboratively tackle this highly complex and emotionally charged issue and demonstrate collective leadership in the absence of positive progress in this area. The NCMSG chose to act, embarking on what has been a challenging journey. Unfortunately, there is no easy silver bullet solution, but what has been produced is an evidence-based, critically analysed, detailed discussion document around the options currently available to ensure that cats are responsibly owned and cared for and that any potential negative impacts are mitigated.

The key principle of the strategy is that all cats are sentient, should be treated with respect and compassion, and are entitled to a "life worth living"; and that our unique native biodiversity warrants protection.

The strategy contains 16 key recommendations including (1) responsible cat ownership, involving pre-pubertal desexing, microchipping, and containment in wildlife sensitive areas whilst also ensuring their welfare; (2) best practice humane killing methods used for feral cats; (3) the creation of a national database of statistics relevant to cat management to allow for benchmarking in order to evaluate effectiveness of initiatives as well as transparent reporting. These may include number of shelter intakes, cats desexed, cats trapped and killed, and cats involved in managed-targeted-trap-neuter-return; (4) mandatory desexing and microchipping of cats at the point of sale or transfer of ownership; (5) education programmes on the value of cats, the cat-human bond, and the need for management in certain circumstances; (6) the need for more research; and (7) the establishment of a multi-agency national cat management steering group.

Further information on the strategy can be found in the 208-page document which is available here:

<http://www.nzcac.org.nz/images/downloads/nz-national-cat-management-strategy-discussion-paper.pdf>

The NCMSG looks forward to New Zealanders working together to improve cat welfare and responsible cat ownership, as well as the mitigation of any potential impacts on wildlife through humane and effective cat management.

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Obituary: Neil Wells

The animal welfare community lost a great champion with the death of Neil Wells in August 2017. With qualifications in law, arts (history and political studies) and quality systems, Neil Wells worked as a barrister specialising in animal law from 1984 to 2015. His career spanned many different fields within the animal welfare sphere. He held various positions (National President, National Director, Advisory Director) in the Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals between 1975 and 1993, and was also Regional Director (South Pacific) for the World Society for the Protection of Animals (now World Animal Protection) from 1989 to 1993. He held membership in both the National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee, and the forerunner to the current National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. He wrote the Hodgson Animal Welfare Bill in 1997, and was then engaged by Parliament to advise the Primary Production Select Committee on detail of both the Hodgson Bill and the Government Animal Welfare (No 2) Bill, which was subsequently enacted as the Animal Welfare Act 1999. From 1998 to 2005, he was principal lecturer in law and Associate Head of School in Unitec's School of Natural Sciences. He established new qualifications in animal welfare investigations and animal control and was co-writer of the Bachelor of Applied Animal Technology programme. He is the author of *Animal Law in New Zealand*, published by Thomson-Reuters in 2011. Although he had retired to live on a life-style block just out of Te Kuiti with his wife Christine, he was still undertaking consultancy work in the area of animal law, policy and practice, and was writing a second edition of the book mentioned above at the time of his death.

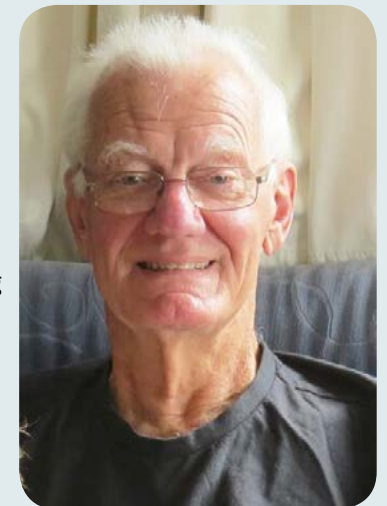


Photo: Ben Wells

Sow welfare and housing in the New Zealand Pig Industry

The 7th International Conference on the Assessment of Animal Welfare at Farm and Group Level (WAFL), held in The Netherlands in September 2017, highlighted some research into welfare issues relevant to breeding sows. This offered an opportunity to compare the status of sow welfare in New Zealand's small and unique pig industry.

The New Zealand Pig Industry

The New Zealand pig industry is a small one by international standards, made up of 28,000 breeding sows spread across approximately 100 commercial farms. Describing a "typical" pig farm is challenging, as a diverse range of housing systems are used. There is an added uniqueness to commercial pig farming in New Zealand, given that 45 percent of the sow herd is outdoors.



Farrowing pen with sow and piglets (Credit: K. Chidgey).

Housing pregnant sows in groups

In many European countries, sows may still be confined individually in stalls for 4 weeks after mating. After this period, sows must be kept in groups. In New Zealand, however, sows may only be housed in individual stalls during the week between weaning and mating. Following mating, sows are housed in groups. Pigs are social animals with a strong hierarchical social structure. When sows are first introduced, they establish this hierarchy through aggressive interactions, which typically last 2 days. Ongoing aggression in the gestation housing area may be a problem if space allowance



Group housed pregnant sows (Credit: NZ Pork).

is not adequate, and/or in the event that sows are not able to be fed with protection from their group-mates. Reducing sow aggression in group housing systems is still an active area of research in Europe, where lesion scoring, behavioural observations (attack/avoidance behaviour), and cortisol levels are common parameters used to assess sow welfare during and after mixing into groups. In New Zealand, many farms use a designated mixing pen to house a newly formed sow group for the first few days. Some features of a mixing pen include extra space for a "flight zone", visual barriers to break up areas of the pen into zones, or cubicles within the pen that offer semi-enclosed retreat areas. The mixing pen concept was designed and refined on-farm, and farmer expertise and experimentation have been integral to the successful transition into group housing in New Zealand. In addition, careful management and skilled stockpersons who recognise behavioural signs of distress in submissive group members have been critical to minimising welfare compromise at mixing.

Housing of sows and piglets: farrowing and lactation

In New Zealand, sows may be housed in farrowing crates within a pen from 5 days before farrowing, for a maximum of 28 days following parturition. These crates restrict sow movement in the interests of preventing accidental piglet crushing, one of the main causes of pre-weaning piglet mortality. A few farms use alternatives to crates such as farrowing pens, while some may use crates temporarily, or not at all. The pens provide more space and allow sows to turn around and interact with their piglets. However, piglet mortality is higher in pen-based farrowing systems, generally due to a greater incidence of piglet crushing. These systems are more common in Europe where they were originally developed. To date, no country has completely banned farrowing crates. Whilst the confinement of sows for the entirety of lactation is not permitted in Sweden, Switzerland or Norway, provisions in each of these countries allow temporary confinement of sows in some circumstances.



Sow and piglets in farrowing pen with crate (Credit: NZ Pork).

continued...

For example, in Switzerland, sows with limb problems (which may prevent careful lying behaviour), and sows displaying aggressive behaviour towards piglets may be confined in early lactation. With a comparatively large proportion of sows outdoors, we are in a position to compare the welfare of sows and piglets housed in farrowing systems with varying levels of sow confinement. The challenge going forward is to continue refining reduced-confinement farrowing systems that improve the welfare of the sow across many facets of welfare, without compromising piglet welfare.

Animal welfare accreditation schemes and welfare assessment toolkits were discussed at the Welfare at Farm and Group Level (WAFL) conference. The importance of balancing the measurement of on-farm inputs that may impact welfare, with animal based measures that indicate welfare status, was emphasised. Incidentally, New Zealand is the only country with an on-farm welfare assurance programme (PigCare™), spanning the whole commercial pig industry, with product labelling of the 'born and raised in New Zealand' trustmark. It is clear that the small and dynamic nature of New Zealand's pig industry has enabled rapid change when it comes to improving pig welfare.

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Assurance programmes – Showing that we care

In recent years New Zealand has seen the emergence of a number of animal welfare assurance programs, a trend that is mirrored throughout the developed world. Public awareness and concern regarding the care of farmed animals is increasing and food manufacturers are wishing to differentiate their products and provide their customers with confidence that their food is produced ethically.

As with all assurance programs their success is based on the rigour and transparency with which they are applied, and that is where the role of the auditor comes in.

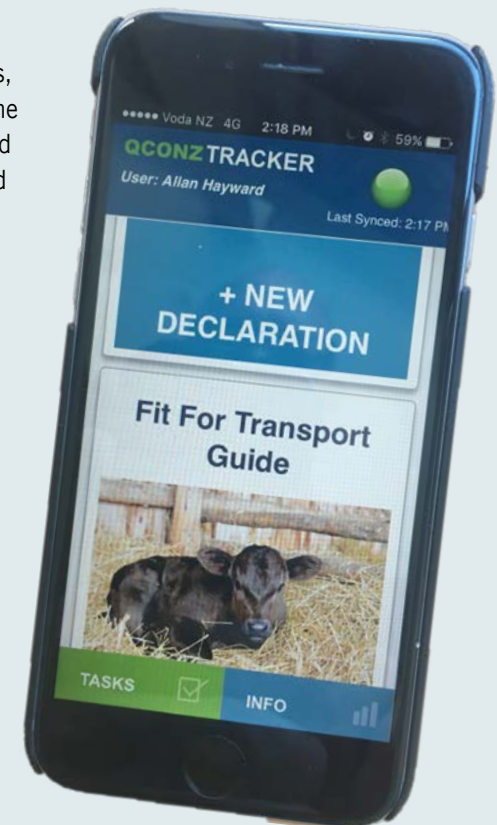
QCONZ is a Hamilton based company, best known for their food safety work in the dairy industry and for their development of innovative e-learning training resources.

QCONZ has been working with the pork industry not only auditing producers against the standards required under the PigCare program but by also supporting producers to meet the required standards through the development of innovative on-line training packages. Likewise, QCONZ works alongside the RNZSPCA and the poultry industry as the auditing body for the Blue Tick® programme.

Most recently, QCONZ has been contracted by the Meat Industry Association (MIA), DairyNZ and MPI, to develop a digital solution to help track movements, and demonstrate regulatory compliance across the bobby-calf supply chain. The system combines mobile, cloud and web technology to replace the paper-based system. Farmers and transporters are able to use their mobile phones to record the calves last feed on farm, their fitness for transport, loading, transport and plant arrival. The information is synced automatically to the cloud, where it is used to populate web-based dashboards for the farmer, transporter and meat processor, and, in so doing, provides real time visibility of the calves' movements from farm to processing plant.

The system, called "Bobby Calf Tracker", has been successfully trialled in the Waikato this season and welcomed by farmers. It removes the need for the current paper-based system. Further functionality is planned for the next version which will enable farmers to book their calves in ahead of the day of transport, providing transporters and processors with an opportunity to introduce far greater efficiency into their scheduling and thus help reduce transport times for calves. The system is scheduled to be made available to farmers, transporters and processors ready for the 2018 autumn calving season.

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The Three Rs: New resources highlight innovative ways to replace, reduce and refine the use of animals in research

New booklets to help people replace, reduce and refine the use of animals in research have been developed by the New Zealand arm of ANZCCART, the Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching.

The principles of replace, reduce and refine are known as the 3Rs:

- **Replacement:** Where possible, replacing animal use with alternative techniques
- **Reduction:** using the least number of animals possible while still getting useful, reliable data
- **Refinement:** minimising potential suffering and improving animal welfare.

The booklets, which have been produced in collaboration with the Ministry for Primary Industries, will be provided to animal ethics committees, the research community, and to schools around New Zealand.

ANZCCART Committee member and University of Auckland microbiologist Dr Siouxsie Wiles, who co-wrote the booklets, said that under New Zealand's Animal Welfare Act, animal ethics committees must take the 3Rs into account when they are considering proposals for research, testing or teaching.

"This means that animals should only be used when there are no alternatives, and that any harm to animals must be weighed up against the benefit to humans or other animals, and those harms must be minimised."

The eight titles set out innovative ways to follow the 3Rs in many areas of scientific research in accessible and non-specialist language.

One booklet explains how to use a chemical analysis technique rather than testing on mice to detect the presence of toxins in shellfish – an example of replacement.

Another outlines how the light produced by fireflies (known as bioluminescence) can be used to non-invasively track the location and numbers of bacteria within infected animals without having to euthanise them – an example of reduction.

A further booklet explains that animal suffering can be reduced by using blood-sucking insects to collect blood from wild birds rather than needing to catch the bird, which is stressful to the animal. The insects can be smuggled into a bird's nest and then collected later to extract the blood from – an example of refinement.

"We hope the booklets will enable researchers to think creatively about how they can follow the principles of replace, reduce and refine in research they are involved with," says Dr Wiles. "We also hope that the booklets will show school children and the wider public the techniques being used to reduce, refine and replace the use of animals in research, teaching and testing."

The booklets are available on the ANZCCART website:
<https://anzccart.org.nz/>



Lifestyle blocks and animal welfare

There are over 140,000 lifestyle blocks (small holdings) in New Zealand. The lifestyle block sector is complicated in terms of the mix of animals and ownership. MPI set out to learn more about this sector and its animal welfare challenges through a mix of surveys, interviews and case file analysis.

More than 80 percent of the lifestyle farming community is located in three main areas – the top half of the North Island (Northland, Auckland and Waikato), Wellington/Manawatu and Canterbury/Otago. The number of animals kept on a lifestyle block can range from a few to well over a hundred. The most common animals kept are poultry (73 percent), cats (70.1 percent), dogs (67 percent), cattle (59.1 percent) and sheep (57.7 percent). The lifestyle block sector offers significant economic and intrinsic value to New Zealand. However, it is not supported by an industry-good group that can engage with government or promote issues on its behalf.

Both the Ministry for Primary Industries and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals receive a significant number of animal welfare complaints about lifestyle blocks. As in other areas, approximately a third of complaints are unfounded. The SPCA currently takes the lead in enforcing lifestyle block compliance with the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

The majority of animal welfare cases on lifestyle blocks concern sheep, beef cattle and horses. Most MPI lifestyle block cases

analysed in this study (with animal welfare issues or risks) were in Canterbury, Wairarapa and Otago. This may not be representative of where the lifestyle block animal welfare issues really are, just where they are reported to MPI.

There is a diverse range of lifestyle farmers in New Zealand, from the ex-commercial farmer downsizing due to age, to the ex-city dweller looking for more space and privacy, to those looking to live completely off-grid. There is also a large range in the type and quality of facilities on lifestyle blocks. Regardless of background, experience or facilities, however, lifestyle farmers want, and try, to look after their animals properly.

Unfortunately, and usually due to inexperience or ignorance, some struggle to provide appropriate and sufficient food and water, and to perform necessary animal husbandry procedures such as hoof trimming and shearing. Our study found that lifestyle farmers have a mixed relationship with their vet and often first seek information on the internet, through online communities, or from their neighbours. In the cases reported to MPI, farmers want to know how to do better, and verbal or written advice from Animal Welfare Inspectors is often sufficient to rectify the issue or risk.

MPI's *Safeguarding our Animals, Safeguarding our Reputation* programme is focused on raising voluntary compliance with animal welfare requirements. This study was conducted under the Safeguarding programme, recognising the need for further information from MPI and the SPCA in the lifestyle block sector.



There is already a lot of good animal welfare information available, but support is needed to keep it up to date and to help promote its existence.

General information about owning a lifestyle block can be found at <https://www.lifestyleblock.co.nz/>.

For information on animal welfare requirements, please visit <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/animal-welfare/>.

MPI is eager to build networks within the lifestyle farming sector and would love you to get in touch. If you are interested in being involved please contact us at animalwelfare@mpi.govt.nz.



China declares the importance of animal welfare in livestock farming

The International Cooperation Committee of Animal Welfare (ICCAW) convened a World Conference on Farm Animal Welfare in the beautiful city of Huang Zhou, China, on 12 & 13 October 2017. The conference was supported by the Chinese Government, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, RSPCA UK, Compassion in World Farming and a strong contingent of commercial organisations.

Mr Yu Kangzhen, Vice Minister of Agriculture, opened the Conference, which also included the Fifth China Animal Welfare Forum on Quality and Safety of Meat and Poultry Products. The Minister said that the continuous improvement of human civilization was reflected in an increasing concern for life, resources and environment, as well as the growing importance attached to the harmonious development between humankind and nature. He said that promoting animal welfare has become not only an important choice for the green development of agriculture and a significant measure to ensure food safety and healthy consumption, but even more as an embodiment of humane caring in modern society. He cited the current thinking that an animal's psychological health and free expression of its natural behaviour have been gradually included as components of animal welfare.

However he stressed that animal welfare should not surpass a country's current stage of economic and social development. "Animal welfare does not mean opposing the use of animals, but rather using animals more scientifically, more safely and more humanely, thus bringing better benefits for human development".

He cautioned that a single standard or model should not be used to evaluate animal welfare conditions in different nations, countries and regions. More importantly, animal welfare cannot be elevated to "an unconditional or unprincipled status that is above the welfare of humans, beyond the prevailing socio-economic stages, without regard for the realities of resource availability, cultural environment or other factors".

The Minister said that China was committed to the development of green agriculture. At the heart of this, was the improvement of both animal health and the quality and safety of livestock products. Systematic arrangements and considerations for animal welfare promotion had been developed and the concept of animal welfare had been fully reflected and implemented in production development and related policies and laws.

He said that it was a core task for all the stakeholders in the Chinese animal husbandry industry to promote animal welfare, and also that there is a need to accelerate work on technical standards, legislation and regulations, and to highlight farm animal welfare as an approach to promote the green and sustainable development of the farming industry. He also committed to enhancing international communication and cooperation.

Much of the leadership in animal welfare is being driven by Madame Xi Chunling, President, International

Cooperation Committee of Animal Welfare and her team <http://www.iccaw.org.cn/plus/list.php?tid=71>. The Minister and ICCAW realise that while the livestock companies are publicly committing to and improving animal welfare, there is much work to be done to improve the transport and slaughter sector.

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Madame Xi Chunling in the centre with key people from The Donkey Sanctuary and World Horse Welfare, UK. Credit: Peter Thornber

Codes of ethical conduct – approvals, notifications and terminations since issue 23

All organisations involved in the use of live animals for research, testing or teaching are required to adhere to an approved code of ethical conduct.

Codes of ethical conduct approved

- South Pacific Sera Ltd
- University of Auckland
- University of Canterbury
- University of Otago
- Victoria University of Wellington
- Waikato Institute of Technology

Notifications to MPI of arrangements to use an existing code of ethical conduct

- Aroa Biosurgery Ltd (to use University of Otago's code) (renewal – arrangement expired)
- Arotec Diagnostics Ltd (to use Victoria University's code) (renewal – arrangement expired)
- Auckland University of Technology (to use University of Auckland's code) (renewal – arrangement expired)
- Caledonian Holdings Ltd (to use PharmVet Solutions' code)
- Eurofins Agrosience Services NZ Ltd (to use AgResearch Ltd's code)
- Karori Sanctuary Trust (to use Victoria University's code) (renewal – arrangement expired)
- Keane, S (to use the University of Waikato's code)
- Life Technologies NZ Ltd (to use University of Auckland's code) (renewal – arrangement expired)
- Malaghan Institute of Medical Research (to use Victoria University's code) (renewal – arrangement expired)
- New Zealand Agriseeds Ltd (to use Lincoln University's code)
- Otago Polytechnic (to use University of Otago's code) (renewal – arrangement expired)
- Practical CPD Ltd (to use University of Auckland's code) (renewal – arrangement expired)

- Southern Institute of Technology (to use University of Otago's code)
- Trinity Bioactives Ltd (to use University of Otago's code) (renewal – arrangement expired)
- Unitec Institute of Technology (to use AgResearch Ltd's code)
- Unitec Institute of Technology (to use University of Auckland's code) (renewal – arrangement expired)
- Vet Nurse Plus (to use University of Auckland's code) (renewal – arrangement expired)
- Waikato Regional Council (to use University of Waikato's code)
- Wellington Zoo Trust (to use Victoria University's code) (renewal – arrangement expired)

Amendments to codes of ethical conduct approved by MPI

- Nil

Minor amendments to codes of ethical conduct notified to MPI

- Massey University

Codes of ethical conduct revoked or expired or arrangements terminated or lapsed

- Airway Ltd
- Eurofins Agrosience Services NZ Ltd
- Grace, Neville
- Institute of Environmental Science and Research Ltd
- Knowles, Garry & Rohloff, Brent
- SPCA College

Linda Carsons, Senior Adviser, Ministry for Primary Industries
linda.carsons@mpi.govt.nz

Your feedback

We look forward to hearing your views on *Welfare Pulse* and welcome your comment on what you would like to see more of, less of, or something new that we have yet to cover.

Please send your feedback to us by emailing animalwelfare@mpi.govt.nz

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Welfare Pulse

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The articles in this magazine do not necessarily reflect government policy. For enquiries about specific articles, refer to the contact listed at the end of each article.

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