THE ROLE OF DIVERSE PLAYERS IN DELIVERING ANIMAL WELFARE

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In considering how we deliver animal welfare effectively, we need to consider a wide range of options and delivery partners. Historically, we have tended to resort to regulations as the way to improve welfare. However, evidence shows that other tools (e.g. social and economic motivators) are often more effective in pioneering improved standards, and that regulations often follow change rather than leading good practice. Furthermore, regulations without effective enforcement can even have a negative impact on the development of good practice.

In this presentation, I will examine lessons learnt by legislators, policy makers and activists in using these diverse tools, considering examples of successes and failures. I will examine how government advisory committees as well as local ethical committees can bring balanced or unbiased expertise to policy development and to finding practical solutions. Often players other than government employees can act as very effective agents for delivering improved welfare. I will consider the international nature of animal welfare, and ways in which public and peer pressure can be used to make progress. Increasingly we are seeing ways in which animal owners and users can be nudged into adopting good practices through education and providing access to information such as healthcare advice.

Internationally, policy makers are becoming increasingly professional in learning how to make use of all the available expertise and potential drivers. The players may differ in different fields of welfare such as companion animals, food production, working animals and those used in research. However, I will demonstrate that many of the principles of effective welfare delivery are the same.
When applying for an animal experiment, not only the experimental intervention, but also dispositions for the use of the animals after the trial should be taken into consideration. In many cases, the humane killing of animals is unavoidable, because organs have to be removed for further examinations, the keeping outside a genetic engineering facility is not allowed or, according to Directive 63/2010/EU, the survival would be associated with more than minor pain, suffering or damage. For numerous surplus animals and untreated animals from control groups the utilization as feed animals for predators or raptors may represent a hygienically high-quality and ethically acceptable alternative to commercial breeding of feed animals. Those animals, whose complete restoration of health has been confirmed by a veterinarian, can live on. They can either be re-used in an additional trial, if none of which is categorized as “associated with severe pain or suffering” or rehoming can be taken into account. For the latter purpose animal facilities should provide programs, whose development should be supported by the institutional animal welfare body. Such a program should include the careful selection of both appropriate animals as well as their preparation for the future life circumstances and suitable owners who provide adequate housing, nutrition and veterinary care. The new owners should be informed about the animal’s lifetime experience. In this concern it is also possible to collaborate with institutions experienced in the rehoming and adoption of animals. However, it has to be sure, that the animals do not pose any threat to other animals or humans.

In addition, when animals are released whose products may enter the food chain, the legal requirements for the safety of food and products derived from them must be considered and it has to be proven concerning other animals, humans, and the environment. Otherwise, arrangements have be made to ensure that no products deriving from these animals enter the food chain.

In summary it can be said that not all experimental animals necessarily have to be killed at the end of a trial. Physically speaking, death is the end of all suffering, but in ethical terms it means the greatest possible harm to the animal, namely the loss of its life. So, if survival after an animal experiment seems possible with a reasonable quality of life, a meticulous decision has to be made concerning the fate of these animals, based on clinical and behavioural observations. Quality of life in this context means a balance between positive and negative physiological, emotional and behavioural states that make life worth living for the individual animal - beyond just being healthy or unhealthy, resulting from the animal’s experiences and depending rather on a qualitative than a quantitative perspective. In the case that death seems to be unavoidable, it should at any rate lead to maximum benefit.
A recent study identified that 84% of the ewes on 32 farms in Victoria, Australia had tails too short despite research linking health and welfare issues in sheep with tails shorter than the length of the vulva, or equivalent. Two focus groups were conducted with the aim to collect qualitative data on the opinions, knowledge and attitudes that underpin tail docking practice and decisions of tail length.

The discussions ran for approximately 60 mins, followed a semi-structured agenda and comprised of 13 and 10 sheep farmers respectively, ranging from 26 to 70 years of age, 21 males and two females. Voice recordings were collected, and qualitative content analysis was conducted in NVivo software using a thematic framework.

Overall, it was consistently acknowledged that tail docking was a method of flystrike prevention. Sixty percent of participants docked using rubber rings, which were described as ‘easier’ and ‘quicker’. The remaining participants used the gas knife and those from the first group shared comments around the reduced stress of this method, one stating ‘[they] run away a lot happier’ comparatively. Regardless of method, the procedure was described as ‘basic’, often given less priority than other procedures at marking and is commonly carried out by labourers and farmers without formal training. In general, farmers were aware of the standards and guidelines regarding tail length; however, in most cases tail length was determined visually without measurement, based on experience and having ‘your eye in’.

Some participants in the second group agreed there is ‘[a lot] of variation’ between farms ‘everywhere’ in Victoria. Health concerns related to tail length were not viewed as common; in fact, most participants were aware of research around short tails being a risk factor of perineal cancers, prolapses and/or arthritis, although most were sceptical of the associations. Potential factors determining choice of tail length included recognised breed conventions and ease of shearing. Farmers agreed ‘it’s easier to crutch’ sheep with shorter tails, some reporting shearer complaints regarding tail lengths equivalent to the length of the vulva.

In summary, although tail docking is considered a simple procedure, there is apparent deviation from the recommended length, significant length variation and a failure to consider health and welfare issues when deciding tail length. This study will be used to develop a survey that will be delivered to 32 Victorian sheep farmers with the aim to understand key drivers behind farmer choice of lambs’ tail length.
Wildlife crimes are often argued to be victimless, due to the anthropocentric view of crime which dominates policy and policing discourse. Falling outside the normative criminal justice lens, wildlife crimes are not frequently brought to court and lack of expertise in policing and prosecuting cases impairs their recognition as serious crime. Where charges are laid, these tend to focus on the conservation value of the animals concerned, in accordance with principles of international conventions, such as CITES. Evidence offered by prosecutors rarely considers welfare harms. The tendency to try cases in the magistrates’ courts compounds problems with lack of judicial exposure to this specialised form of crime and limits development of judicial expertise in the field. The traditional punishments utilised for wildlife crimes have also tended to follow the trajectory for mainstream offences, focussing exclusively on the liability of the defendant (through considerations of deterrence, incapacitation and rehabilitation) or on the remedying of harms to the environment (via restoration and compensation). Lacking legal standing in the court process, welfare harms caused to endangered animals have been marginalised from consideration in sentencing decisions. Recognised only as legal property, they may be forfeited or returned to their lawful owners, in accordance with the court’s findings.

Focusing on recent developments in Scotland and Hong Kong, this paper argues that a more effective justice response to wildlife crime permits recognition of the interests of animals, as victims, in wildlife offences. While victim impact statements for pollution offences are received by the courts in many jurisdictions, with the notable exception of Scotland, they have not been formally recognised for animals in wildlife offences. In Scotland, prosecutors and the judiciary are now provided with expert evidence as to the wide range of harms caused by wildlife offending. Armed with knowledge of the welfare harms to animals, sentences may be passed which take appropriate regard of wild animal suffering in poaching and trade.

In Hong Kong, the nature of wild animals as victims of crime has also begun to be recognised in the use of victim impact statements for wildlife offences. Victim impact statements for 32 of the most commonly smuggled animals traded into and through Hong Kong are now utilised by prosecutors in their presentation of wildlife cases at court. The use of these statements is allowing for better informed sentencing decisions in individual cases and improved environmental justice for animal victims in the region.
Using quantitative and qualitative approaches to develop an educational intervention of cat pain and welfare in clinical practices

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Veterinarians are more concerned about improving animal welfare when they are well-informed and well-equipped. Our research has shown that Malaysian and UK veterinarians show similar levels of concern about pain management in cats. In both countries, there is good awareness of the impact of pain on cats’ welfare, and the possible treatment options. 98.2% UK and 87.1% Malaysian veterinarians agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘Pain compromises quality of cat life’. However, survey results do not always correspond to what is happening in practice. Direct observation of post-surgery care for cats differ between countries, with Malaysian cats often being housed with a lack of comfort post-surgery. There may be many factors involved in poor post-operative environments. The current study details a mixed methods approach to investigate what barriers Malaysian veterinarians experience to providing good post-operative care for cats in the practice.

In the first methodology, an online survey was developed to ascertain what veterinarians provided cats’ post-surgery, the survey consisted of 14-question survey in three different sections. The three sections of the survey were:

1. Demographic details (e.g.: field of practice, availability of clinical protocol in the clinical practice)
2. Attitudes to cat welfare
3. Basic management and barriers to providing good care for cat in practices.

The survey was developed in the Bristol Online Survey (BOS) tool and available for eight-weeks in Malaysia. Of 150 small animal practitioners, 48 successfully completed the survey. Most respondents were senior veterinarians (54.2%, n=26) and 95.8% (n=46) were aware of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) within their clinical practice. Most respondents were aware of the basic provisions that cats need post-surgery, there were a number of barriers to that provision. The majority of respondents highlighted cost (45.5%, n=15) as the highest restriction to good care provision.

In the second methodology, interviews were carried out with 20 Malaysian veterinarians (selected from the survey sample). They recognised that comfortable post-surgery environments help recovery, but they did not describe the relationship between reduced stress and pain assessment. They also identified a lack of management skills as the other main reason for not providing better post-surgery recovery environments for cats. Therefore, any educational intervention should illustrate the tactics to improve cat welfare by suggesting cost-effective ways to have good cat care in the clinic. An online educational video intervention will be tested among veterinarians before being introduced to veterinary students in Malaysia.
INTER SPECIES ANIMAL WELFARE INTERACTIONS AND THE OUTBREAK OF FREE ROAMING DOGS IN LATIN-AMERICA

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The Anthropocene epoch is characterized by an exponential fast human population growth turning *H. sapiens* into a dominant evolutionary force. Domestic dogs, many of which are free roaming, have thrived as part of this process and have populated the world (currently ~1,400 million dogs). An increasingly urban population has contact with animals that are pets, and has little to do with wildlife that inhabit rural areas. Several studies have measured quality of life of companion and kennelled dogs. However, little is known about the growing impacts of free roaming dogs on the welfare of other species and in their own welfare. We analyzed the impact of dogs on wildlife in South America and, in particular, Chile by reviewing reports of dogs attacks to wildlife and expert opinions. Reported wild animals, either harassed or hunted by dogs, were classified according to their body size, conservation status, taxonomic origin and ecosystem role. We sampled 86 free roaming dogs in two regions of Chile nearby protected areas. We found that many protected areas are reporting impacts of dog on wildlife in the region. Body size of prey varies from a few grams (lizards) to large animals like sea lions. In our empirical study we found that almost all terrestrial vertebrates, including endangered species, have been predated, injured or harassed by dogs. Despite the magnitude of this conservation problem, the dominant attitudes of urban people tend to ignore the effects of free roaming dogs on wildlife, resulting in a clash between rural and urban perceptions about dogs. We propose that animal welfare principles based on the protection of individual well-being should take into account the impact of dogs over other species. Extinction is not reversible and the right of a dog to roam freely cannot be more important than environmental, economic and sanitary consequences. Animal welfare priorities should be combined with social-ecological approaches to involve stakeholders from rural areas, as well as from cities, before new policies for facing this increasing problem are implemented.