Working Within and With the AVMA

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Who are we?

- **Mission**—To improve animal and human health and well-being and advance the veterinary medical profession
- **Objective**—To advance the science and art of veterinary medicine, including its relationship to public health, biological science, and agriculture.
- >70,000 member veterinarians representing virtually every species emphasis and every type of practice
What do we do?

- Identify and research issues related to veterinary practice and animal care
- Develop positions and policies
- Make recommendations
- Help find workable solutions
- Advocate
How do we work?
Volunteers

Members

House of Delegates (legislative)
- President, President-Elect, Vice President

Executive Board (administrative)
- Treasurer

Councils

Committees/Task Forces
How do we work?
Staff

Executive Vice President

Assistant Executive Vice President

Executive

Communications

Education and Research

Membership and Field Services

Scientific Activities

Business

Convention and Meeting Planning

Governmental Relations

Publications
Managing Issues

Executive Board ➔ House of Delegates

Councils/Committees/Task Forces

Issues Staff

Comms/Pubs Staff

Govtl Relations Staff

Members, Govt/Nongovt Agencies, Public
“Crunching” Issues

Council/Committee

Yes

Expertise Available?

No

Task Force/Working Group

Research

Discussion

Identification

Investigation

Reports/Recommendations
Good Decision-Making

- Most issues have multiple components
  - Science
  - Clinical experience
  - Practical application
  - Public policy
- Most outputs benefit from multiple inputs
- Transparency
Examples of Multidisciplinary Efforts

Task Force on the Housing of Pregnant Sows

- July 2002—AVMA position on gestation housing established
- July 2003—Resolution passed by House
  
  *That the AVMA conduct a thorough and objective review of the scientific evidence relating to impacts on the health and welfare of keeping breeding sows in gestation stalls.*
- November 2003—Multidisciplinary task force created at the request of the Animal Welfare Committee
  - Clinicians
  - Researchers (DVMs/PhDs)
  - Economist
  - Producers/Industry
  - Advocates and Ethicists
  - Statistician
Examples of Multidisciplinary Efforts

- Task Force on Canine Aggression and Human-Canine Interactions
  - Multidisciplinary task force
    - DVMs
    - Behaviorists
    - Humane community
    - Insurance Industry
  - Governmental interactions—CDC
  - Outcome—Report that has positively influenced public policy
Cooperativity in Science and Policy—Key to Animal Well-Being

- Animal (and human) welfare requires consideration of
  - Animal well-being
  - Professional ethics
  - Producer concerns and economics
  - Consumer expectations

- Consideration of these factors requires input from a range of stakeholders
Cooperating in the Science of Animal Well-Being—DVMs and PhDs

- **DVMs**
  - **Training**
    - Broad clinical focus
    - Health, physiology, and production
    - Limited exposure to behavioral and animal welfare science
    - Practical application
  - **Responsible to**
    - Patient
    - Client (animal owner, producer, consumers)

- **PhDs**
  - **Training**
    - Narrow focus (the details)
    - Physiology, production, behavior
    - May have limited opportunity for practical application (extension possible exception)
  - **Responsible to**
    - Peers
    - Institution/agency/grant provider
Cooperating in the Science of Animal Well-Being—DVMs and PhDs

Clinical application
Physiology
Production
Practical application
Public trust

Good science, application, and acceptance

Peer-reviewed data
Physiology
Production
Behavior
Welfare science
Catalyzing Cooperation in the Science of Animal Well-Being

- Within the AVMA
- Between AVMA and USDA
- With other stakeholders
  - Academics
  - Industry
  - Other nonprofits
Catalyzing Cooperation—Well-Being Efforts Within the AVMA

Animal Welfare Committee

- **Charge**—To study animal welfare issues of importance to the veterinary profession, develop related positions, and identify areas in which the AVMA should call upon its resources and influence to cause action to be taken.

- **16 Members**
  - Species expertise (companion animal [dog, cat, bird], equine, food animal [cattle, swine, poultry, sheep and goats], laboratory animal)
  - Practice expertise (private, industry, government service)
  - Education
  - Humane organization
  - Public member (currently AVMA auxiliary representative)

- **Consultant**—USDA-APHIS-AC Deputy Administrator
Catalyzing Cooperation—Well-Being Efforts Within the AVMA

- Task Forces and Working Groups
  - Task Force on the Housing of Pregnant Sows
  - Task Force on the Legal Status of Animals

- The Veterinarian’s Role in Animal Welfare—AVMA’s current position statements on animal welfare issues

- Annual Awards
  - Animal Welfare Award—To a veterinarian
  - Humane Award—To a nonveterinarian
Catalyzing Cooperation—Well-Being Efforts Within the AVMA

- Backgrounders on critical issues
- Bibliographic database—*Humans & Other Species*
- Continuing education programs
- International Relationships
  - International Veterinary Officers Council
  - PanVet
  - World Veterinary Association
Catalyzing Cooperation—Well-Being Efforts Within the AVMA

Animal Welfare Week and Forum

- Annual event for past 15 years
- Subject changes
- Week—Series of media releases (print and audio) highlighting veterinarians’ roles in ensuring the welfare of animals
- Forum
  - Day-long event
  - Multiple perspectives
  - Open to the public
  - Proceedings published in the Journal of the AVMA
Catalyzing Cooperation—Between AVMA and USDA

- Liaison with USDA/APHIS-AC through representation on the Animal Welfare Committee
- Future Trends in Animal Agriculture
- OIE Global Animal Welfare Standards Initiative
Catalyzing Cooperation—OIE Global Animal Welfare Standards Initiative

History

- Identified as priority in 2001-2005 OIE Strategic Plan and Ad hoc Group on Animal Welfare convened
- May 2002—Ad hoc group’s recommendations unanimously adopted
- International Committee determines focus to be animals used in agriculture and aquaculture
  - Transport
  - Humane slaughter
  - Other uses (e.g., research, entertainment, companions) to be addressed later and as resources permit
  - Killing for disease control
  - Housing and Management
History (continued)

- October 2002—Permanent Working Group established and holds first meeting; develops work plan
- May 2003—Working Group’s work plan adopted
- February 2004—Global Conference on Animal Welfare held to solicit stakeholder input
- May 2004—Guiding Principles adopted
- Current—Comments being requested on reports of ad hoc groups on
  - Slaughter of animals for human consumption
  - Humane killing of animals for disease control purposes
  - Land transport of animals
  - Transport of animals by sea
Catalyzing Cooperation—OIE Global Animal Welfare Standards Initiative

AVMA’s Involvement

- Member of US Delegation to the OIE (liaison—Dr. Lyle Vogel)
- Participated in Global Conference on Animal Welfare (liaison—Dr. Gail Golab)
- Provide input to USDA to assist in formulation of US response to proposals
Catalyzing Cooperation—OIE Global Animal Welfare Standards Initiative

“Take homes” from the Global Conference on Animal Welfare

- Wide variation in emphasis and “progress” of member countries on animal welfare
  - Expectations
  - Guidelines
  - Educational emphasis
  - Stakeholder roles
- Differences in philosophy on voluntary vs regulatory approaches
- Differences in philosophy on what role animal welfare standards should play in trade negotiations
Catalyzing Cooperation—With Other Stakeholders

- Food Marketing Institute/National Council of Chain Restaurants (FMI/NCCR) Animal Welfare Program
  - Designed to be a cooperative Retailer–Producer–AW Expert project
    - Basis is producer-created guidelines
    - Iterative review by expert panel (representation includes veterinarians [AVMA], animal welfare scientists/researchers, ethicist, humane representative)
  - Outcome—third-party audit process for retailers
  - Challenges
    - Economics
    - Fear/resistance
Catalyzing Cooperation—With Other Stakeholders

  - AVMA is one of the founding members (2 representatives on the NCPPSP Board of Directors)
  - Mission
    - To gather and analyze reliable data that further characterize the number, origin, and disposition of pets (dogs and cats) in the United States
    - To promote responsible stewardship of these animals
    - To recommend programs to reduce the number of surplus/unwanted pets in the United States

- Other activities
  - Scientific review committees, panels, and work groups
  - Coalitions
Cooperating in the Science of Animal Well-Being—An AVMA “Wish List”

• **Data**
  - Scientific (real world and US operations)
  - Economic
  - Information about ongoing studies in “hot” animal welfare areas

• **Help in obtaining/disseminating information**
  - Appropriate governmental agencies
  - Networking between AVMA, governmental agencies, academic research centers
  - Public (extension?)
Animal Welfare

- Assessment
  - Science
    - Physiology, production
    - Behavior (affective states?)
  - Ethics
  - Consumer perspectives
- Animal rights vs animal welfare (activism)
- Pain, stress, and distress
Animal Welfare

- **Food Animals**
  - Housing of pregnant sows
  - Induced molting (resolution introduced to HOD by petition)
  - Foie gras (resolution introduced to HOD by petition)
  - Downed animals

- **Companion Animals**
  - Elective surgical procedures (declawing, ear cropping, tail docking)
  - Puppy mills
  - Management of abandoned and feral cats
Animal Welfare

- Horses
  - Slaughter (HR 857/S 2352)
- Laboratory animals
  - Pain and distress
  - Sources (e.g., class B dealers)
  - Medical records
- Zoo and exotics
  - Elective surgical procedures
  - Appropriateness for captivity and ownership
- Aquatics
  - Principles unique (poikelothermic, invertebrates)
Other Issues of Interest

- Food supply veterinary medicine
  - Number of food animal practitioners declining
  - Roles changing
  - Food Supply Veterinary Medicine Coalition
    - Will examine all aspects of veterinary medicine’s involvement in food supply systems (production → consumption)
    - First project—Comprehensive study
      - Demand and availability
      - Education (student recruitment, retention, and training)
Other Issues of Interest

- Antimicrobial resistance—Support a science and risk-based response (e.g., FDA change in approval process to add evaluation of resistance risks)

- Vaccination
  - Customization of vaccination programs
  - Improved labeling of biologics (cooperative efforts with USDA/Center for Veterinary Biologics)
  - Improved system for adverse effects reporting

- Compounding
Other Issues of Interest

- National Veterinary Accreditation Program Revision
- US Animal Identification Plan
- National Response Plan
- Biosecurity and priority disease responses (National Animal Health Emergency Response Corps [NAHERC])
- Mass euthanasia and carcass disposal
- CAFOs, including net-pen aquaculture (environmental issues)
Other Issues of Interest

Research

- National Needs for Research in Veterinary Science—NAS study
- Research, Education, and Economics Task Force (Agricultural Research Service)
- Working to encourage
  - Continued funding for National Research Initiative Federal Grants Program
  - Continued support for Coordinated Agricultural Project (CAP) programs
Other Issues of Interest

Legislation and Appropriations

- Minor Use and Minor Species (MUMS) Animal Health Act (S 741/HR 2079)
- Federal funding for the National Veterinary Medical Services Act (PL 108-161)
- Horse Slaughter Prevention Act (HR 857/S 2352)