

REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Analysis of Major Areas of Concern for Animal Welfare in Europe

In July 1983, the Members of the European Parliament who took part in the inaugural meeting of the Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals requested that, to help them in their considerations, an analysis should be undertaken of major areas of concern for animal welfare in Europe. This task was taken on by the Eurogroup for Animal Welfare, which published the first such analysis in 1984. This review has been revised regularly and the sixth edition was published in July 1999.

The purpose of the document is to provide a guide to the main aspects of animal welfare which are, or could be, affected by European Community legislation and to suggest ways in which areas of concern might be addressed. A copy has been distributed to every member of the European Parliament.

The book is divided into seven sections which cover: farmed animals; wild animals; companion animals; animal experimentation; animals in sport, entertainment and exhibitions; animal welfare and the European Treaty system; and animal welfare and the world trade system. Within each section there is a series of essays of various length outlining particular fields of concern. For example, in the farmed animal section, in addition to pieces on particular farmed animals (eg cattle, pigs, laying hens, poultry kept for meat, farmed fish, farmed deer) there are also reviews on transport and humane slaughter. These are valuable little introductions to the issues covered and to the state of relevant European legislation, or lack of it. The format may be ideal for briefing politicians, but scientists and others who may wish to delve deeper into the subjects, and question how well various points (at times somewhat sweeping) can be substantiated, will be frustrated by the absence of references.

The compilation of this book clearly represents a great deal of work. The effort is justified – it is a useful review of, and introduction to, animal welfare issues of current concern in Europe.

Analysis of Major Areas of Concern for Animal Welfare in Europe, 6th edition. July 1999. Eurogroup for Animal Welfare. 154pp. A4 paperback. Available in English or French from the publishers, Rue Boduognat 13, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium. Price 1500 Belgian Francs/37.5 Euros.

World Zoo Organization code of ethics

On 22 October 1999, at its 54th Annual Conference, the World Zoo Organization (WZO; previously the International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens) ratified a draft code of ethics. This lists the following eight basic principles for the guidance of all members of the WZO:

- i) to assist in achieving the conservation and survival of species must be the aim of all members of the profession. Any actions taken in relation to an individual animal, eg euthanasia or contraception, must be undertaken with this higher ideal of species survival in mind;
- ii) to promote the interests of wildlife conservation, biodiversity and animal welfare to colleagues and to society at large;
- iii) to cooperate with the wider conservation community including wildlife agencies, conservation organizations and research institutions to assist in maintaining global biodiversity;
- iv) to cooperate with governments and other appropriate bodies to improve standards of animal welfare and ensure the welfare of all animals in our care;
- v) to encourage research into, and dissemination of achievements in, biological conservation, animal husbandry, veterinary technology, architecture, exhibit design, management practices, etc;

- management practices, etc;
- vi) to deal fairly with members in the dissemination of professional information and advice;
 - vii) to promote public education programmes and cultural recreational activities of zoos and aquaria;
 - viii) to work progressively towards achieving all professional guidelines established by the WZO.

The code further specifies that at all times members will act in accordance with all local, national and international law and will strive for the highest standards of operation in all areas, including the following:

- i) animal welfare – whilst recognizing the variation in culture and customs within which the WZO operates, it is incumbent upon all members to exercise the highest standards of animal welfare and to encourage these standards in others. Training staff to the highest level possible represents one method of ensuring this aim;
- ii) acquisition of animals – all members will endeavour to ensure that the source of animals is confined to those born in captivity and this will be best achieved by direct zoo to zoo contact. This will not preclude the receipt of animals resulting from confiscation or rescues. It is recognized that there is a legitimate need for conservation breeding programmes, education programmes or basic biological studies to obtain animals from the wild. Members must be confident that such acquisitions will not have a deleterious effect upon the wild population.

The WZO has members in zoos from all parts of the world. It acts to help coordinate and promote links between the regional associations of zoos and aquaria (which cover Europe, North and South America, Africa, southeast Asia, and Australia and New Zealand). The agreement of this new code of ethics, which emphasizes commitment to animal welfare, is a good foundation for further work by the WZO in encouraging developments and improvements in zoo animal husbandry around the world.

World Zoo Organization Code of Ethics. 1999. World Zoo Organization Ethics Group. 2pp. A4. Available from: World Zoo Organization, c/o ISIS International Secretariat, 12101 Johnny Cake, Apple Valley, MN 55124, USA (E-mail: secretariat@wzo.org).

New Zealand's new Animal Welfare Act

On 1 January 2000, New Zealand's new animal welfare legislation – the Animal Welfare Act 1999 – came into force. The Act itself, with its accompanying schedules, is 121 pages of, to the non-legal eye, somewhat dense and demanding text. Fortunately, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has published a useful accompanying guide (see below for details) which helps to introduce the Act and explain its rationale, scope and layout. The Act, so the guide tells us, '*is a clear statement to New Zealanders and the rest of the world that animals in New Zealand have a right to expect proper and sufficient care*'.

The new Act was required because, although New Zealand has had balanced and comprehensive legislation on the protection of animals for over 100 years, it was considered that the existing legislation (the Animals Protection Act 1960) no longer met the expectations of New Zealanders or international consumers. The law was reviewed in response to changing practice, advances in scientific knowledge and shifts in society's values. The new Act has a much wider scope than its predecessor. It applies to most animals capable of feeling pain, whether domesticated or wild, and its primary focus has moved from reacting to cases of cruelty to the positive obligations of animal keepers: the prevention of ill-treatment and the responsibility for meeting physical, health and behavioural needs (the five freedoms).