Animal Welfare: A Complex Domestic and International Public-Policy Issue—Who Are the Key Players?

A.C. David Bayvel ■ Nicki Cross

ABSTRACT
Animal-welfare issues are usually portrayed in the media in a black-and-white fashion, with simple, single-perspective solutions proposed for what are often, in fact, complex policy issues. In this article, we argue that animal welfare is a multifaceted international and domestic public-policy issue that must take account of not only scientific, ethical, and economic issues but also religious, cultural, and international trade policy considerations. Management of animal welfare at a government policy level also requires an approach based on incremental change. Such change must be both science based and ethically principled, and the rate of change must recognize both the expectations of society and the constraints on the animal user. Ideally, such change should involve full ownership and buy-in from the affected animal user group. The range of stakeholders involved in the animal-welfare debate includes industry and producer groups, science bodies, and animal-welfare non-governmental organizations and professional groups, including the veterinary and legal professions. The veterinary profession, in particular, is expected to play an animal-welfare leadership role, and we discuss expectation versus reality at both a national and an international level. This latter discussion includes specific reference to the role of the World Organisation for Animal Health (the OIE) as an intergovernmental organization representing 175 countries and details some of the major achievements since the OIE assumed its international animal-welfare standard-setting role in 2002. We also address the role of the veterinary profession at national, regional, and international levels.

Key words: animal welfare, public policy, leadership

INTRODUCTION
Over the past 50 years, there have been dramatic increases in agricultural productivity as a result of general advances in agricultural and veterinary science; specific improvements in genetics, nutrition, and disease control and prophylaxis; and the impact of agriculture support programs. There has also been an inexorable and substantial move to more intensive systems of production, especially in the more densely populated nations of Europe, Asia, and North America and particularly with pigs, poultry, and beef cattle. More extensive systems of production continue to be used in New Zealand, Australia, South America, and Africa for grazing species, and there is a strong public perception that more extensive management systems are synonymous with better welfare.

Seminal texts by authors including Harrison, Singer, Regan, Rollin, and Webster, plus the UK Brambell report (all cited in Appleby and Hughes1), the concept of the “five freedoms,” and the influence of behavioral science have all had a significant impact, particularly in Europe and North America, on the attitudes toward animal welfare of scientists, the public at large, and, through them, politicians. Welfare aspects of animal agriculture, and associated consumer preference behavior, have also attracted increasing attention from some agricultural economists2,3 and agricultural ethicists.

In their article “Animal Welfare and Product Quality,” Jago et al.4 emphasized the importance of science-based animal-welfare standards by stating,

Most concepts of animal welfare include avoidance of undue suffering, optimising animal health and vigour and are aimed at achieving practices and environmental conditions which are fair and reasonable for the animal. Although the concept of animal welfare is widely regarded as being important, currently there is no single definition of animal welfare that has met with universal approval. People’s beliefs and understanding of what is meant by “welfare” and what is optimal or sub optimal welfare will vary, depending on such factors as their cultural, scientific, religious and political backgrounds.

According to Kellert,5 the attitudes people have toward animals can be classified into nine categories—naturalistic, ecologistic, humanistic, moralistic, scientific, aesthetic, utilitarian, dominionistic, and negative—and differences exist between countries in the predominant attitude. Despite these differing attitudes toward animals, there is a biological basis for evaluating animal health and welfare and widespread acceptance that decisions about animal welfare should be based on good scientific evidence.
The Council of Europe has played a key role in developing standards for Europe, which are taken note of internationally. These standards are based on both scientific evidence and practical experience and also emphasize the importance of the relationship between animal health and animal welfare.

It is helpful to have basic guidelines or rules to refer to when making decisions that may have an impact on an animal’s welfare. The most widely used set of guidelines is the five freedoms.6 These state that for an animal’s welfare not to be compromised, it must have freedom from thirst, hunger, and malnutrition; freedom from discomfort; freedom from pain, injury, and disease; freedom to express normal behavior; and, finally, freedom from fear and distress. Sometimes slight modifications are made to these basic freedoms (e.g., fear is sometimes omitted from the final freedom); however, they generally serve as a set of goals toward which animal owners and handlers should strive. The five freedoms have been used by many legislators and frequently appear as the basis on which animal-welfare codes and practices have been established.

There is an unfortunate tendency to underestimate the importance of animal health in relation to animal welfare. The prevention and control of disease in all species makes a major contribution to animal welfare, and veterinarians, in general, and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), in particular, play a vital role in this regard.

Adams,7 in reviewing the publication “Livestock to 2020: The New Food Revolution,”8 emphasized the opportunity for veterinarians to act locally but think globally about animal welfare. This joint publication of the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington, DC; the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations; and the International Livestock Research Institute in Nairobi, Kenya, provides detailed information on the dramatic increase in the world’s consumption of food derived from animals over the past 30 years. Expanding human populations, urbanization, and income growth are expected to continue, and even accelerate, the trend, and Adams has asked, “Is it time to rejuvenate the science of animal husbandry to ensure that animals are better protected?” The importance of knowledgeable and caring animal husbandry is recognized as an essential prerequisite to maximizing animal welfare.

Fraser9,10,11 has also emphasized the importance of the linkage between animal ethics and animal welfare and their vital relationship in terms of public and societal opinion and between historical cultural attitudes to animals and their use in modern agricultural systems. He argued that there is an urgent need to create a new consensus regarding the use of animals in agriculture. The veterinary profession is well positioned to make an important contribution to this debate.

DEFINITIONS OF ANIMAL WELFARE
A number of definitions for animal welfare have been proposed over the past 20 or so years, but no single definition has gained universal international acceptance. To help guide its international role as an intergovernmental policy and standard-setting body, the OIE has, however, developed the following definition of animal welfare from a policy perspective:

Animal welfare is a complex international public policy issue, with important scientific, ethical economic, cultural, religious and political dimensions and which also raised important international trade policy considerations.12

This policy definition is complemented by a second definition based on a scientific perspective:

Animal welfare means how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives. An animal is in a good state of welfare if (as indicated by scientific evidence) it is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, able to express innate behaviour, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear, and distress. Good animal welfare requires disease prevention and veterinary treatment, appropriate shelter, management, nutrition, humane handling and humane slaughter/killing. Animal welfare refers to the state of the animal: the treatment that an animal receives is covered by other terms such as animal care, animal husbandry, and humane treatment.13

Unfortunately, when animal welfare is debated, individuals and organizations are often arguing from quite different definitional orientations and change management paradigms. Acceptance, or at least awareness, of the above definitions has helped to ensure broad support for the OIE international initiative since it commenced in 2002. The concept of incremental, evolutionary change with a commitment to continuous improvement as individual organizations and countries proceed along an animal-welfare “journey” is equally important. Likewise, acceptance of the need for, rather than resistance to, such incremental change with full ownership and buy-in from affected animal user groups is the policy approach inevitably adopted by governments.

PLAYERS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL: THE NEW ZEALAND EXAMPLE
New Zealand is fortunate in having a “One Minister, One Act, One Ministry” situation in relation to animal-welfare policy and practice; that is, the Minister of Agriculture is responsible for a single piece of legislation covering the use of animals in agriculture, in science, as companions, and for recreational and entertainment purposes and for other purposes. The Ministry of Agriculture, in turn, has responsibility for the administration of the Animal Welfare Act 1999, which is recognized internationally as a comprehensive and progressive piece of animal-welfare legislation. All the leading key players are shown in Figure 1.

We briefly describe the roles played by these key players.

Minister of Agriculture
The Minister of Agriculture is responsible for a single, all-embracing piece of legislation, the Animal Welfare Act 1999. The minister is supported by the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC), the National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee (NAEAC), and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF).
National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee
The primary role of NAWAC is to provide independent advice on animal-welfare matters to the Minister of Agriculture. The committee advises on the content of codes of welfare, including specification of minimum standards (which can be used in a court of law to support a prosecution under the Animal Welfare Act or, conversely, used as a defense to prosecution); the declaration of surgical procedures that are classified as significant, restricted, or prohibited; and recommendations for best practice that are contained within the codes of welfare. In addition, NAWAC provides advice to the minister on the issue, amendment, suspension, revocation, or review of codes of welfare for any purpose.

National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee
The primary role of NAEAC is to provide independent advice to the Minister of Agriculture on ethical and animal-welfare issues arising from procedures related to research, testing, and teaching (RTT). Any person or institution in New Zealand that wishes to perform experimental manipulations on animals for the purposes of RTT is required to operate according to an approved code of ethical conduct, which requires that all potential projects are scrutinized by an animal ethics committee (AEC) before the project receives approval for commencement of the study. NAEAC advises on the development, review, and specification of standards contained in these codes of ethical conduct and provides information and advice to the AECs situated within research institutions in New Zealand. In addition, NAEAC makes recommendations to the minister in relation to the approval, amendment, suspension, or revocation of any codes of ethical conduct.

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MAF works closely with, and provides support to, NAWAC and NAEAC in developing codes of welfare and reviewing codes of ethical conduct and other activities related to animal welfare in New Zealand. MAF provides support by guiding policies through the consultative process and ensuring that animal-welfare policy is science based. In addition, the MAF liaises with other animal-welfare stakeholders within New Zealand, works closely with these organizations to identify research priorities and emerging animal-welfare issues, and is active in developing a New Zealand policy position in relation to animal welfare and international trade. In addition, MAF has a national team of animal-welfare investigators who oversee and manage offenses committed or suspected to have been committed under the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

New Zealand Veterinary Association
Approximately 80% of New Zealand veterinarians belong to the New Zealand Veterinary Association (NZVA). The NZVA acts as a collective force to keep the veterinary profession connected to people working in the animal-based industries and to other veterinarians via conferences, workshops and seminars, online courses, and publications. The NZVA has established an animal-welfare group within the organization whose role is to promote animal welfare within the veterinary profession. This group is actively involved in such activities as developing NZVA animal-welfare policies, liaising with MAF during the development of NAWAC codes of welfare, and lobbying in NZVA campaigns on animal-welfare matters. In addition, this group is involved in identifying areas in the veterinary profession in which problems are
currently occurring, or may potentially occur, to enable a proactive approach toward improvement in these areas.

**Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals**
The Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RNZSPCA) acts at a district level to investigate complaints of animal cruelty and neglect and to undertake prosecutions where necessary (in addition to the similar role played by the MAF investigations team). The RNZSPCA has established a large number of animal sanctuaries throughout New Zealand where neglected animals are provided with food, water, shelter, and medical treatment and are subsequently rehomed if possible. The RNZSPCA is coordinated at a national level, where the activities of the RNZSPCA shelters throughout New Zealand are monitored, major prosecutions are handled, and inspector training, promotional programs, and fundraising efforts are coordinated. Representatives of the national office sit on government committees and liaise with government during the development of codes of welfare.

**Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching**
The Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching (ANZCCART) addresses concerns in both the scientific communities and the wider audience about the use of animals in RTT. The main objectives of this organization are to promote the care of animals used in experimental procedures by addressing, in a balanced and considered way, the distinctive scientific, ethical, and social issues associated with this area.

**Federated Farmers of New Zealand**
Federated Farmers is an organization that promotes sound farm-management and animal-welfare practices in the farming community. This organization has links with NAWAC and the SPCA and acts to encourage farmers to adhere to animal-welfare legislation by encouraging effective training of staff, promotion of humane management practices, and selective breeding of livestock to improve their welfare.

**Producer Boards and Industry Organizations**
A close working relationship has been established and maintained between the government and industry organizations such as Meat & Wool New Zealand, the Meat Industry Association of New Zealand, and Fonterra. During development of a code of welfare, the code is distributed for consultation to all industry organizations that are likely to be affected by any new or modified legislation. Many industry organizations encourage programs of research and development within their own organization. Close links with government ensure that results obtained as a result of relevant research performed in these institutions is used to improve standards in animal-welfare policy.

**Animal Behaviour and Welfare Research Centre**
The Animal Behaviour and Welfare Research Centre (ABWRC) conducts a large number of undergraduate and post-graduate studies in the area of behavior and welfare, particularly in the area of farm-animal welfare. The main areas of focus are animal production and the development of efficient, low-stress, and humane handling procedures. The center also has a role in the development of humane pest control systems. Data obtained from the performance of this research is used to improve animal-welfare policy in New Zealand.

**Animal Welfare Science and Bioethics Centre**
The Animal Welfare Science and Bioethics Centre (AWSBC), located at Massey University, is internationally recognized for its scientific research in the areas of animal welfare, husbandry, and veterinary and wildlife sciences. The AWSBC plays a major role, along with the ABWRC, in providing expertise to the OIE to support the development of international standards and guidelines in animal welfare, and both groups are members of the OIE Collaborating Centre for Animal Welfare Science and Bioethical Analysis.

The AWSBC is also involved in a number of research programs in animal welfare, in particular, the management of pain and the development of new techniques for husbandry procedures used in farming. The AWSBC also takes a leading role in education and the development of alternatives for the use of animals in teaching and research programs in schools, universities, and other training venues.

**Foundation for Research, Science and Technology**
The Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FRST) is a government-funded organization that invests in programs of research and development in the area of science and technology. FRST is currently supporting a portfolio of research and development related to improving and ensuring the viability of primary industry production in New Zealand. The aim of this portfolio is to ensure that animal-welfare standards in New Zealand primary production systems are internationally accepted, resulting in ongoing access to, and success in, key markets.

**Animals in Schools Education Trust (AISET)**
The Animals in Schools Education Trust (AISET) works to provide resources to promote the inclusion of animal topics, including animal welfare, in schools throughout New Zealand. AISET endorses and encourages the addition of balanced material relating to animals in all roles in society, including working animals, those kept in the farming sector, companion animals, and those used in RTT. AISET believes that teaching young people about the importance of animal welfare will positively affect their long-term development and relationships with animals and one another.

**New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA)**
The New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) verifies that meat, seafood, and other animal products and byproducts meet both the New Zealand standards and the additional standards of importing countries. The Verification Agency (NZFSA VA) is a subgroup within
the NZFSA that operates in a range of locations throughout New Zealand in which meat, seafood, and other primary products are processed and stored. The NZFSA VA examines relinquished livestock, both ante- and post-mortem, and the subsequent meat products to ensure that they are of a quality that indicates that the animals are being managed in a manner such that their welfare is satisfactory.

PLAYERS AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

Moving the animal-welfare policy debate from the national (or regional) stage to the international stage significantly increases the complexity of the debate; Figure 2 includes those agencies seen, at this point in time, to be the key players.

Again, we briefly describe the roles played.

Society, Including Civil Society

Animal welfare is becoming an increasingly important issue in today’s civil society. Hegel and Marx stated that human beings develop and define their culture by having needs, and in working to satisfy those immediate needs, they create new secondary needs that require very different types of thoughts and actions to meet satisfactory outcomes.24 These new needs are not directly related to material goals; they are more concerned with cultural and social needs and how these can be satisfied.24

Animal welfare may be classified as one of these secondary needs and is becoming increasingly important in today’s civil society. As an increasing number of the population are able to meet their primary needs by being able to meet their materialistic requirements (in that they are able to comfortably obtain sufficient food and material goods to survive), civil society is becoming increasingly focused on meeting secondary requirements, of which animal welfare is one—ensuring that animals do not suffer in the process of ensuring primary needs. Animal welfare is being increasingly considered by consumers when making a decision to purchase any specific product. This increase in awareness by consumers requires that policy makers and legislators respond accordingly.

International Industry Organizations

The International Dairy Federation (IDF) is active in providing science-based information through programs of research and development for the benefit of the dairy sector. The IDF cooperates with other international organizations, notably the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. Much of the research performed by the IDF focuses on increasing health and welfare in the dairy industry by targeting research at improving management practices and preventing and reducing disease in dairy cattle. An IDF Animal Welfare Good Practice Guide has been developed.
The OIE is the international body responsible for the health and welfare of animals. It is a reference organization for the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). An IMC Animal Welfare Committee specifically addresses animal-welfare issues.

The International Egg Commission (IEC) provides a forum for the egg industry to share ideas. It is the only organization that represents the egg industry on a worldwide scale, enabling the sharing of ideas on production, nutrition, marketing, and animal welfare between different countries and cultures.

The International Poultry Council (IPC) has a role similar to that of the industry organizations above in that it enables the sharing of ideas between different organizations involved in the area of poultry meat production. The IPC is also recognized by the OIE as the official organization responsible for representing the world’s poultry meat producers and has a role in providing information on poultry health and welfare to the OIE when developing global animal health initiatives.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) is responsible for setting regulations on how animals are transported by air. IATA provides guidelines and scientifically based recommendations to the airline industry on issues such as animal welfare and safety, identification, and animal behavior. IATA’s Live Animals Regulations are designed to apply to the transport of all animals, from companion animals to zoological and agricultural animals, and are the standards used by commercial airlines worldwide for transporting live animals.

The Animal Air Transportation Association (AATA) provides a forum for individuals and organizations to discuss issues, research, and key developments related to the transport of animals, with the aim of improving conditions for animals in transit. The AATA also supports and encourages uniform and effective international regulations to ensure the safe and humane handling of live animals.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) provides a setting where governments can meet to compare policy knowledge and experience, identify good practice, and use this to coordinate future domestic and international policies in relation to the economy. The OECD shares information and exchanges views with more than 100 different countries and aims to bring together governments from different countries to sustain economic growth and contribute to growth in world trade. OECD is currently considering animal welfare as one of a number of strategically significant societal concerns.

The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) currently focuses its efforts on encouraging veterinary services to become increasingly involved in animal welfare, to encourage teaching of animal welfare–related subjects in veterinary degree courses, and to help veterinary services, especially those in developing countries, to put current standards into practice.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is responsible for negotiating the rules of trade between nations and acts to aid producers, exporters, and importers in conducting business and agreements. All negotiations are centered around two main WTO agreements that have been signed by most of the world’s trading nations. These agreements do not specifically refer to animal welfare.

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) is a subgroup of the WBG and provides investments and advisory services to the private sector in developing countries to enable recipients of funding to develop resources, generate jobs, and obtain financial independence. IFC has developed specific policies to link animal welfare with its funding criteria.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) provides a setting where governments can meet to compare policy knowledge and experience, identify good practice, and use this to coordinate future domestic and international policies in relation to the economy. The OECD shares information and exchanges views with more than 100 different countries and aims to bring together governments from different countries to sustain economic growth and contribute to growth in world trade. OECD is currently considering animal welfare as one of a number of strategically significant societal concerns.

The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) aims to improve animal welfare worldwide, with particular emphasis on companion animals, commercial exploitation of wildlife, and welfare issues related to production animals. WSPA also plays a major role in providing care to animals during natural and man-made disasters. WSPA conducts campaigns to influence governments and decision makers to change or introduce policy that
will improve the welfare of animals and has consultative status at both the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

**International Fund for Animal Welfare** The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)\(^39\) is concerned with improving welfare by acting in three main areas: reducing commercial exploitation of animals, protecting the habitats in which they live, and providing assistance to animals in distress. IFAW is active in using promotional campaigns to educate audiences about animal-welfare issues that exist worldwide. IFAW has a large base of supporters and uses this support to influence governments and other organizations worldwide to achieve an improvement in animal welfare.

**Humane Society International** The Humane Society International (HSI)\(^40\) is the global arm of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). The HSI performs and supports field activities and programs in more than 35 countries and works with various treaties and international agreements, including the United Nations, WTO, and FAO to improve the welfare of animals in their natural habitats. In particular, HSI places emphasis on the protection of biodiversity and programs aiming to prevent the extinction of those species most at risk, but this organization also works to address animal-welfare issues in intensive farming practices and plays a major role in disaster relief management.

**Compassion in World Farming** Compassion in World Farming (CIWF)\(^41\) focuses its activities on improving animal welfare in intensive farming. This organization is active in campaigning and lobbying to enhance recognition of the practices involved in the livestock production industries. CIWF has influenced decision makers in the European Union to have certain practices, for example, the keeping of “battery” hens in barren cages and the use of narrowveal stalls outlawed and the use of gestation crates restricted.

**International Coalition for Farm Animal Welfare** The International Coalition for Farm Animal Welfare (ICFAW) is an independent association made up of representatives of a number of national and regional colleges of veterinary associations. This organization also works to address animal-welfare issues in intensive farming practices and plays a major role in disaster relief management.

**Animal Welfare Institute** The Animal Welfare Institute (AWI)\(^42\) was established with the intent of reducing pain and suffering for animals used for experimental purposes but has since widened its scope to encompass other areas. Today, the AWI concentrates on a range of global animal-welfare issues, including cruelty in animal agriculture, issues surrounding traps and snares, promotion of the “Three Rs” in RTT, and protection of threatened and endangered species.

**World Animal Forum** The World Animal Forum (WAF)\(^43\) is an independent association made up of representatives of a number of animal protection societies as well as those representing civil society, government, and business. The WAF acts as a catalyst for new thoughts and an exchange of ideas and strategies to enhance and propel the animal protection movement.

**Retailers, Food Marketers, and Accreditation and Certification Bodies**

**Retailers** The recent increase in consumer concern for animal welfare has been noted by many large retailers, who have acted to redefine their purchasing preference to more animal-welfare-friendly suppliers. One such example is Burger King, which has introduced changes in its egg purchasing preference away from laying hens housed in battery cages and toward cage-free hens, the purchase of pork from producers that do not confine breeding sows in gestation crates, and producers that use controlled atmosphere killing of chickens, in preference to the conventional method of slaughter. Other companies, such as McDonald’s, Wolfgang Puck, Smithfield Foods, and Ben & Jerry’s have reassessed their purchasing preferences and made the transition to producers that use systems that enable their animals to experience higher standards of welfare.

**Food Marketers** Many of the large food marketers, for example, Whole Foods, Sainsbury’s, and Tesco’s supermarket chains, have now introduced schemes within their marketing strategy to address animal-welfare issues. These marketers work closely with suppliers, scientists, and veterinarians to improve the health and welfare of livestock in their supply chain and to specify standards for animal welfare that suppliers are required to meet. Sainsbury’s food marketers have, in conjunction with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), introduced their own audited assurance and independent food labeling scheme titled “Freedom Foods” into its supply chain. Foods labeled with the Freedom Foods assurance are required to meet specific welfare standards as specified by the RSPCA.

**Accreditation and Certification Bodies** GLOBALGAP\(^44\) is a private-sector body that specifies voluntary standards for the certification of agricultural products on a worldwide scale. The aim of this scheme is to establish one standard that can cover all processes within the agricultural chain; more than 100 independent and accredited certification bodies in more than 80 countries worldwide currently comply with this scheme. The development of this scheme ensures that farmers are required to meet only one set of standards. The scheme is business-to-business only and so is not directly visible to consumers.

**International Veterinary Organizations**

**World Veterinary Association** The World Veterinary Association (WVA)\(^45\) consists of national and international veterinary associations and associations of veterinary specialists. The WVA has a role in developing policies, consulting with members, and finally circulating formally adopted policies covering a wide variety of topics including animal health and welfare.

**International Association of Colleges of Laboratory Animal Medicine** The International Association of Colleges of Laboratory Animal Medicine (IACLAM)\(^46\) is made up of a number of national and regional colleges of laboratory
animal medicine. The organization is focused on providing a platform for, and assisting communication between, these colleges to promote responsible use of animals in the laboratory through education, information sharing, and certification procedures.

International Animal Welfare Science Organizations

International Society for Applied Ethology. The International Society for Applied Ethology (ISAE) is a globally recognized organization that covers all aspects of ethology and the behavioral sciences, such as the interaction between humans and animals in farming, wildlife management, or the keeping of companion and laboratory animals. The ISAE has an international structure with representatives of the organization located worldwide. The appointed council for the ISAE provides technical advice to government during the development of animal-welfare legislation in the United Kingdom and the European Union.

International Council for Laboratory Animal Science. The International Council for Laboratory Animal Science (ICLAS) is an internationally recognized organization working to improve the welfare and ethical care of animals used in RTT worldwide. This organization aims to promote international recognition of the issues surrounding the treatment of animals in the laboratory through promotion of international collaboration and dissemination of information relating to animal-welfare science and the humane treatment of animals in RTT.

International Producer Organizations

International Federation of Agricultural Producers. The International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) is the world farmers’ organization, consisting of members from 120 national organizations in 79 countries. The IFAP is a global network in which farmers exchange knowledge and information in relation to concerns and priorities in the farming community. IFAP has recently adopted a formal policy position on animal welfare.

Elected Governments and Individual Politicians. Individual politicians and regional and national governments are becoming increasingly aware of the strength of community feeling toward animal-welfare issues and, hence, of the necessity to consider and address these issues when elected to a governmental position.

ANIMAL-WELFARE LEADERSHIP AND THE OIE

The OIE has played an international animal-welfare leadership role since the inclusion of animal welfare in its third strategic plan for the period 2001 to 2005. Its mandate is to improve animal health and animal welfare worldwide, and it operates with staff based at its Paris headquarters and at regional and subregional offices in the five regions of Europe, the Middle East, Africa, the Americas, and Asia, the Far East, and Oceania.

It has a well-established modus operandi involving standing commissions, permanent working groups, and ad hoc groups established to address specific issues. Strategic plans are agreed on every four years, and animal welfare has now been accepted as OIE “core business” since its inclusion in the 2001–2005 strategic plan. Achievements over the relatively short eight-year period have been, by any standards, impressive, with global conferences held in 2004 and 2008 and seven standards adopted to date covering air, land, and sea transport and transport of farmed fish, slaughter for commercial purposes, and killing for disease control purposes and stray dog control. Current standard development priorities include laboratory animals, broiler chicken production, and beef cattle production.

In assuming its international animal-welfare leadership role, the OIE has emphasized the importance of consultation and communication with all international animal-welfare stakeholders, including industry groups, non-governmental organizations, and science and professional organizations. The input from non-veterinary scientific specialists is also seen as critical to the operations of the permanent animal-welfare working group and the ad hoc groups established to date.

ANIMAL-WELFARE LEADERSHIP AND THE VETERINARY PROFESSION

Although sometimes criticized for not being seen to take an overt leadership role on animal-welfare issues, there is every indication that veterinary associations at the national, regional, and international levels, through the WVA, are recognizing the strategic importance of this challenge if the expectations of society are to be met. Policy makers in veterinary education are also recognizing the need for greater emphasis on animal welfare and ethics at both the undergraduate and post-graduate teaching levels.

The establishment of the British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Foundation, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Post Graduate Certificate and Diploma qualifications, the formation of an Animal Welfare Chapter within the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists, and the proposed American Veterinary Medical Association American College of Animal Welfare are some selected initiatives that will undoubtedly influence the leadership role assumed by the veterinary profession.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The development of public, political, media, and scientific interest in animal welfare over the past 30 or so years has been exponential and, because of its public-policy complexity, the subject area will continue to provide strategically important challenges and opportunities. A science-based, ethically principled policy approach, complemented by an incremental change management paradigm, will ensure continuous improvement along the animal-welfare journey. It is vital that all stakeholders be actively engaged in the policy debate, and it is envisioned that the veterinary profession and individual veterinarians will play a more active leadership role in the years and decades ahead.

REFERENCES


AUTHOR INFORMATION

A.C. David Bayvel, BVMS, MRCVS, DTVM, MACVSc, MPP, is the Director of Animal Welfare, at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Biosecurity New Zealand, PO Box 2526, Wellington 6140, New Zealand. E-mail: david.bayvel@maf.govt.nz.

Nicki Cross, PhD, MSc, BSc (Hons), is a Technical Adviser for the Animal Welfare Directorate at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Biosecurity New Zealand, PO Box 2526, Wellington 6140, New Zealand. E-mail: nicki.cross@yahoo.co.nz.