Animal welfare has everything to do with humans, the empathy, relationship and commitment individuals bring to bear when we have a duty of care during production, transport, marketing, stunning, slaughter or killing.

Substantial knowledge, skill and experience is required to ensure humane treatment of animals at any level of production.

The ‘construct’

Where animals are destined for food production, the inclusion of welfare as a subject for consideration still provokes a wide variety of responses worldwide, not all of them demonstrating an acceptance of the direct relevance to livestock that will inevitably be stunned, slaughtered or killed.

Scientific research has provided an insight into the impact of production systems with respect to animal welfare. The behavioral sciences have described a basic set of provisions for consideration in the ‘Five Freedoms’. Meat science has led to a greater understanding of the process of converting muscle to a range of different products. Welfare research continues to improve both our understanding of processes in the food production chain as well as assisting in the development of more humane systems on farm, during transport and at the abattoir.

Even if it is accepted that there is a link between animal welfare and the final product, it cannot be easily described using simple criterion. Increasingly the international thirst for understanding the significance of welfare is largely driven by the implementation of standards embedded within which are requirements to improve all aspects of production, including welfare. The application of standards at present can be frustrated by intractable differences in geography, climate, culture, religion, knowledge and resources to name but a few. Providing a greater understanding of the issues relating to animal welfare during production that will be sympathetic to indigenous problems leading to indigenous solutions requires an alternative approach. AWTraining, when providing international training in animal welfare have developed courses and programs that accommodate both the similarities and fundamental differences between production systems and the countries within which they operate.

In order to ensure relevance, transparency and sustainability within the training programs running internationally, AWTraining have developed ‘The Construct’. The construct is a matrix containing agreed principles of animal welfare as well relating directly to legislation, codes of practice, standards and company policy. Because welfare issues can rarely be understood using a single criterion, say ‘quality’, the construct requires the consideration of other agreed principles in order to place the issue in context with other competing factors eg. cultural, political, physical, economical. In this way, AWTraining have been successful in developing programs sympathetic to local knowledge and resources in Europe, Asia, Indonesia, Central, and South America leading to indigenous solutions to indigenous problems in welfare and quality during production. Application of the construct does not seek to impose standards that can not be immediately realized, but rather facilitate dynamic programs of training that will enable future standards to be met.
Training trainers program - Red meat

Module 0. Fact finding, investigation and media collection. (Minimum 1 week)
This initial module of the program does not constitute formal training. It is however an essential component of the program, which provides opportunities to orientate subsequent modules to indigenous knowledge and resources. As well as providing a ‘first contact’ opportunity with AWT staff and professionals in the relevant sectors of government, academia and the meat industry with whom AWT will subsequently develop and deliver the program, at a practical level it facilitates the collection of relevant data, media and first-hand experience of key welfare issues that will subsequently be authored into a bespoke program of training for the recipient country. A training needs analysis is conducted to outline the program structure and the target audience.

Module 1. Understanding Welfare and Quality
(3 days, lecturing and discussion groups)
Detailed introduction to concepts, moral and ethical arguments of Animal Welfare during production, transport, stunning & slaughter and its direct effect on carcass, meat quality and assurance. This module seeks to explain the concept of welfare and its application to farm animals. It is a necessary starting point especially in countries where the concept is misunderstood or absent through lack of knowledge and understanding.

Module 2. Understanding Stockmanship & Restraint
(2 days, lecturing and discussion groups)
Probably the most important area of animal welfare for food production is the relationship between man and animal. This is generally described as 'Stockmanship'. The true significance of stockmanship as well as the knowledge and skill required to protect animal welfare is now much better understood. This module seeks to explain and reinforce the requirement for ‘better practice’ during food production. It also leads into the complex but practical aspects of pre-slaughter restraint leading to stunning and/or slaughter.

Module 3. Understanding Unconsciousness, Stunning and Slaughter
(2 days, lecturing and discussion groups)
Detailed introduction to understanding unconsciousness as well as the definitions of stunning, slaughter and killing. This module will clearly demonstrate the complex nature of the stunning, slaughter or killing process. It draws on modules 1 and 2 to demonstrate the requirement to provide for humane stunning, slaughter or killing as well as technical aspects of equipment, simple physiology and/or requirement for 'religous slaughter'.

Module 4. Abattoir Welfare Assessment
(2 days, lecturing and discussion groups, abattoir visit required as practical component)
Introduction to the assessment process of welfare within the abattoir. This module is authored to accommodate both commercial and traditional practices. Drawing from tool kits 1, 2 and 3, the abattoir welfare assessment module seeks to include both moral / ethical as well as technical and procedural aspects of assessment. Objective and subjective assessments can be made which are sympathetic to local knowledge and resources.

Module 5. Understanding Codes of Practice and Assurance
(2 days, lecturing and discussion groups, resulting in authoring Codes of Practice)
Introduction to the basis for and the authoring of Animal Welfare Codes of Practice within red meat production. The basis for legislation and the relationship between legislation and COPs. Introduction to Assurance within red meat production. Drawing on modules 1, 2, 3 and 4, the COP module includes and accommodates both moral / ethical as well as technical and procedural aspects of production sympathetic to local knowledge and resources.

Module 6. Welfare Program Development 1
(2 days, lecturing and discussion groups)
Detailed introduction to Animal Welfare program development. Drawing on the knowledge and experience of modules 1-5 this module explains the process of identifying the criteria for simple vocational course development. The course includes initial discussions on tutor team requirements and course requirements leading to the construction of a short program of training sympathetic to the trainees and resources available.

Module 7. Welfare Program Development 2
(2 days, lecturing and discussion groups)
Continuing from Welfare Program Development 1 this module explains the process of identifying the criteria for more detailed course development aimed at more senior staff within the plant / management / veterinary or government position. The course includes initial discussions on tutor team requirements and course requirements leading to the construction of a short program of training sympathetic to the trainees and resources available.

AWTraining, University of Bristol, School of Clinical Veterinary Science, Division of Farm Animal Science, Langford House, Langford, Bristol, BS40 5DU, UK.
Module 8. Welfare Program Assessment
(2 days)
This module provides for assessment of the indigenous tutors and the delivery of the resulting training course or program. AWT staff conduct the assessment of the course in association with the indigenous tutor team to assist in course development and quality assurance of the resulting program.

Program delivery
The AWT red meat Training trainers program comprising modules 1 - 8 is delivered over a maximum of 30 months in the host country. A maximum of 40 delegates is allowed from the start of the program.

NB: Single/multiple species programs are available on request.

Module 1 is 3 days since the initiation of the program requires delegates to consider issues of training and preparation before embarking on the course material. This initial preparation is essential since the course focus is on 'how to train' rather than 'being trained' and so delegates must reorientate themselves from being students to being potential tutors.

Modules 2 - 8 run over 2 days each. An important aspect of the program structure is that detailed presentations relating to key welfare issues are delivered within modules 1 - 5 (see info above). These modules can be taken by delegates that require more detailed understanding of welfare and quality during primary processing but do not necessarily wish to become tutors. Modules 6 - 8 constitute 'core skill' modules for delegates wishing to progress to delivering authored courses in red meat animal welfare.

Certification / Accreditation
Each module is certified by AWT Training, University of Bristol, UK. Successful completion of all modules results in final certification as a trainer. For certification of resulting courses with AWT accreditation (EU/UK requirement), indigenous courses must be assessed annually by AWT staff (licence fee).

AWT do not substantially provide completed course material for delegates at the end of the program since the whole point of the course is to facilitate and enable indigenous trainers to author their own courses sympathetic to their requirements. However, the information/media obtained by AWT staff from module 0 (fact finding and training needs analysis) are presented to delegates within modules 6 & 7 to enable the immediate authoring and subsequent delivery of training courses.

The outcome of the program is the establishment of indigenous trainers and training courses in red meat animal welfare & quality during primary processing within any country, organisation or company.

Between each module AWT require intercalated projects to be undertaken by delegates groups or individuals. These small projects subsequently place genuine data into subsequent modules thus adding value to the delegate understanding of the industry and the issues being discussed.

A 2 day module typically constitutes:

Day 1:
8:30 - Introduction
9:00 - Review of previous module (where required)
10:30 to 11:00 - Coffee/tea
11:00 - Module presentation & discussion groups
12:30 to 13:30 - Lunch
13:30 - Module presentation & discussion groups
15:15 to 15:45 - Coffee/tea
15:45 - Module presentation & discussion groups
17:30 - End

Day 2:
8:30 - Module presentation & discussion groups
10:00 to 10:30 - Coffee/tea
10:30 - Module presentation & discussion groups
12:00 to 13:00 - Lunch
13:00 - Module presentation & discussion groups
14:45 to 15:15 - Coffee/tea
15:15 - Module presentation & discussion groups
17:00 - End

Modules 1 - 7 are certified by AWT. Successful completion of the program leads to certification as trainers (module 8).

For further information, course fees and availability please contact AWT Training by email - enquiries@awtraining.com

The 2006 BSAS/RSPCA award was presented to AWT Training for:
"Outstanding contributions to scientific research, information transfer and training in the area of farm animal welfare at stunning and slaughter".