

OIE WORKING GROUP ON ANIMAL WELFARE

Report to 74th General Session of the International Committee

Paris, 21 – 26 May 2006

The OIE Working Group on Animal Welfare met for the fifth time from 7-9 September 2005. This meeting was hosted by the OIE Collaborating Centre for Veterinary Training, Food Safety, Epidemiology and Animal Welfare in Teramo Italy. The meeting was also attended by Teramo staff, representatives of the International Meat Secretariat, the International Dairy Federation, and the International Federation of Agricultural Producers. An informal meeting was held, earlier in the year, in May and attended by those members of the Working Group present at the 73rd General Session, Central Bureau staff members and members of the Teramo Collaborating Centre.

The Working Group chair also participates in bi-monthly teleconferences with OIE Central Bureau staff to discuss work programme progress.

At its September 2005 meeting, the Working Group agreed on the following priorities:

- Ongoing revision of guidelines adopted in 2005 for land transport, sea transport, slaughter for human consumption and killing for disease control purposes.
- Development of aquatic animal welfare guidelines for the transport of fish by land, sea, the killing of fish and the slaughter of fish for human consumption.
- Supporting international animal welfare educational initiatives via regional coordination with The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA).
- Ongoing communications initiatives including the promulgation and marketing of “Animal Welfare: Global Issues, Trends and Challenges” in the OIE Scientific and Technical Review Series.
- Further progress with the following new areas of strategic priority agreed at the 2005 OIE General Session:
 - Companion animal welfare – stray animal control (ad hoc group has met)
 - Wildlife and zoo animal welfare – harvesting/ culling (scoping paper commissioned)
 - Laboratory animal welfare – housing, animal use in regulatory testing and alternatives to animal use (October 2006 meeting in conjunction with International Council for Laboratory Animal Science (ICLAS) and involving all major international stakeholders)
 - Terrestrial farm animal welfare – housing/ production (initially generic) (scoping paper completed)
- Monitoring EU Welfare Quality Project (www.welfarequality.net)
- Consolidating, and further developing, relationships with international stakeholders.

Progress made in relation to aquatic animal welfare guidelines, plans for engagement with the international laboratory animal science/welfare community and the establishment of a Stray Animal Control *ad hoc* Group are all of particular note.

The Working Group continues to see active involvement of all OIE member countries as being critical to the further development of OIE activities to date. This involvement requires close liaison and collaboration with academic and research institutions, non-governmental organisations and the private sector. The Working Group recommends active involvement of OIE Regional Commissions in promoting animal welfare educational initiatives, in particular.

The Working Group continues to see communication as a critical priority area, with the OIE website and the OIE Bulletin playing important roles. The Scientific and Technical Review Series publication “Animal Welfare: Global Issues, Trends and Challenges” provides a unique international source of information, and has further emphasised the OIE leadership role.
