

SCIENTIFIC BASIS FOR ANIMAL WELFARE IN PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

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The approach to animal welfare taken by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) builds on a half-century of scientific research designed to promote the welfare, health and productivity of animals. The research has led to ten principles for the welfare of animals in production systems:

1. Genetic selection should take account of the health and welfare of animals, and breeds should be introduced only into environments to which they are suited.
2. The physical environment and substrate should be suited to the species and minimise risk of injury or transmission of diseases or parasites.
3. The physical environment should allow comfortable resting, safe and comfortable movement including normal postural changes, and the opportunity to perform types of natural behaviour that animals are motivated to perform.
4. Social groupings should be managed to allow positive social behaviour and minimise injury, distress and chronic fear.
5. Air quality, temperature and humidity in confined spaces should support good animal health and not be aversive to animals, and animals in extreme conditions should not be prevented from using their natural methods of thermo-regulation.
6. Animals should have sufficient suitable feed and water to maintain normal health and productivity and to prevent prolonged hunger, thirst, malnutrition or dehydration.
7. Diseases and parasites should be prevented and controlled through good management practices, and animals with serious health problems should be isolated and treated promptly or killed humanely.
8. Where painful procedures cannot be avoided, the resulting pain should be managed to the extent that available methods allow.
9. The handling of animals should foster a positive relationship between humans and animals and not cause injury, panic, lasting fear or avoidable stress.
10. Owners and handlers should have sufficient skill and knowledge to ensure that animals are treated in accordance with these principles.

The presentation will briefly review the science behind the principles.

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