EU perspective on companion animals' welfare policies

GLOBAL VETERINARY SEMINAR ON ANIMAL WELFARE

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The Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale Abruzzo e Molise “G. Caporale” is a technical-scientific body of the Ministry of Health and Regions, founded in 1941.

Our mission is to ensure human health, providing appropriate response to public health needs, through scientific knowledge and expertise on food safety, animal health and welfare, control and prevention of transmittable animal diseases, including zoonoses.
We work to build a common culture, to assure human-animal-environment safe interactions, and promote animal welfare – animal health – food safety as pillars of a sustainable integrated food production system.
OIE collaborating centre for Veterinary Training, Epidemiology, Food Safety and Animal Welfare
National Reference Centre for veterinary urban hygiene and non-epidemic emergencies
"Companion animals are any domesticated, domestic-bred or wild-caught animals, permanently living in a community and kept by people for company, enjoyment, work (e.g. support for blind or deaf people, police or military dogs) or psychological support – including, but not limited to dogs, cats, horses, rabbits, ferrets, guinea pigs, reptiles, birds and ornamental fish"

www.callistoproject.eu
In Italia 14,5 milioni di quadrupedi domestici contro 8 milioni e 700mila bambini da zero ai quindici anni.

Una tendenza comune al mondo industrializzato. Nei prossimi anni ancora in calo i giovanissimi.

**QUANTI SONO...**

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**QUANTO COSTANO... CANI E GATTI**

- dietro all'anno gli italiani spesano circa 450.000 miliardi di lire per mantenere la propria casa (animali domestici, cibo per animali domestici, accessori, agli, ecc.).
- Spesa media annua di una coppia senza figli: 2.453 miliardi.
- Spesa media annua di una coppia con un figlio: 2.592 miliardi.
- Spesa media annua di una coppia con due figli: 2.791 miliardi.
- Spesa media annua di una coppia con tre o più figli: 2.935 miliardi.

**Fido, sorpasso in famiglia più cani e gatti che bimbi**
“the average time spent choosing a pet was often less than the time spent thinking about buying Christmas presents or a TV, and staggeringly, behind choosing a holiday”

- 42% of pet owners would consider buying a pet from the internet;
- 24% would get a dog from a puppy farm (presumably through a pet shop);
- 23% did no research at all before taking on their pet.

"Attitudes towards dogs and reasons for keeping them vary according to the culture, status, social interests, religious belief and economic activities of the people"

(Matter and Daniels, 2000)
At the same time the human population quadrupled in the last century and increases by 80 to 100 million people each year.

- is relocating from rural to urban areas as one of the most demographic trends in the latter part of the 20th century.

According to the UN the world's urban population was 1.9 billion in 2000 and is expected to reach 5 billion by 2030.
Breakdown in the pet-owner relationship produces millions of unwanted dogs annually (Kass and Hart, 1998)

Economic impoverishment, war or civil conflicts, migration and urban decay often results in the presence of high numbers of poorly supervised animals (Matter and Daniels, 2000)
Stray Dogs

Dog Population
Animal Welfare Definition
(as agreed by 172 OIE members in 2008)

“(…) 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 behavior, 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.(…)”
Don't you see an underlying ethical dilemma?

5 FREEDOMS
Companion animal welfare problems

- Failures of stewardship or duty of care;
- Selective breeding;
- Suboptimal housing /environment/transport;
- Suboptimal nutrition (overfeeding, nutritional imbalances in non-domesticated species);
- Infectious and non-infectious diseases (metabolic, toxic, dental, lameness);
- Failure to meet behavioural needs.
Dogs and cats in the EU

• Today, more than **one hundred million dogs and cats** live in the EU

• Households keeping **dogs** in Europe ranges from 11% for Switzerland to 44% in Hungary and from 9% in Slovakia to 42% in Latvia and Romania for **cats**.

• In 2006, **8,000,000 dogs were owned by French households** and the total turnover generated by the sector, all activities combined, livestock care, food and equipment amounted to **around 4 billion euros**.
In 2006, the number of people employed by the French industry in its various components was estimated at about 27,000.

In 2011, companion animals (mainly dogs & cats) made up 40% of the EU veterinary medicine market, for a total value of 1.6 billion euros.

Throughout Europe, an estimated 550,000 direct and indirect jobs were generated in 2010 by pet ownership, such as veterinarians or breeders or connected supply industries.
Legal basis for animal welfare in the EU

- Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that:

- "in formulating and implementing the Union's agriculture, fisheries, transport, internal market, research and technological development and space policies, the Union and the Member States shall, since animals are sentient beings, pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals, while respecting the legislative or administrative provisions and customs of the Member States relating in particular to religious rites, cultural traditions and regional heritage."
In 2009, the European Commission mandated an external consultant to evaluate EU policy on Animal Welfare.

The study concluded that the animals outside the scope of current EU legislation, such as pets, would benefit from harmonised EU legislation to achieve higher standards of welfare.

In November 2010, the Council called the Commission

• to study the differences between the measures taken by the Member States regarding the breeding of and EU trade in dogs and cats;

• to study and propose if justified, options for facilitating compatible systems of identification and registration of dogs and cats;

• to restrict the exhibition at public events of dogs and cats having undergone a non-curative surgical intervention and the trade in these animals;

• to promote and support education concerning responsible dog and cat ownership.

In 2012, the European Parliament called the Commission for the establishment of an EU legal framework for the protection of pets and stray animals

- rules for the **identification and registration** of animals;
- **stray animal management strategies**, including vaccination and sterilisation programmes,
- measures to **promote responsible ownership**;
- the **prohibition of unlicensed kennels** and shelters;
- the prohibition of the **killing of stray animals without medical indication**;
- **information and educational programmes in schools** on animal welfare;
- severe **sanctions to be imposed on any Member State** which fails to comply with the rules.
Within this framework, the Commission has committed itself to perform a study on the welfare of dogs and cats involved in commercial practices.

In the light of the results of this study, the Commission will consider if further action is necessary in this field, provided that there is sufficient evidence that the matter has an impact on the primary objectives of the European Union.
The European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals - 1987

First international legal contractual basis for "responsible pet ownership".

Introduces the duty of care principle and provisions on keeping, training, breeding, boarding, trade, humane killing, information and education.
Whilst acknowledging **human health is a priority** including the prevention of zoonotic diseases, the OIE recognises the **importance of controlling dog populations** without causing unnecessary or avoidable animal suffering.

**Therefore OIE in 2005, decided to address the issue of humane methods for the control of dog populations.**

An **Ad hoc group** was set up in order to produce science based **guidelines**, containing a set of measures, both **effective and humane** in limiting stray dog population and **preventing zoonotic diseases** in communities.
Art. 7.7.3 Dog population control programme objectives

- Improve health and welfare of dogs;
- Reduce numbers of stray dogs to an acceptable level;
- Promote responsible ownership;
- Assist in the creation and maintenance of a rabies immune or rabies free population;
- Reduce the risks of zoonotic disease other than rabies;
- Manage other risks to human health (e.g. Parasites);
- Prevent harm to the environment and other animals;
- Prevent illegal trade and trafficking.
Art. 4 Responsibilities and competencies

- **Veterinary Competent Authority** (public health issue, enforcement of legislation)
- **Other Government Agencies** (public health agency, environment protection, public safety)
- **Local Authorities** (legislation enforcement & control, subsidised neutering schemes)
- **Private vets** (key role in disease surveillance plans, diseases notification, animal abuse or mistreatment, responsible ownership promotion)
- **NGOs** (public awareness and understanding, responsible ownership promotion & education, competency & skills in shelter management)
- **Dog owners** (responsible ownership -> animals needs, identification & registration, birth control)
Dog population management expert meeting – Banna (Italy), 2011

"The call for improved stray dog population management is driven by the need to ensure the welfare of animals while reducing the health and safety risks that dogs may present to people. To achieve this, it is necessary to address the whole dog population and not only stray animals"
"A principle of animal welfare that owners have a duty to provide sufficient and appropriate care for all their animals and their offspring. (....) Owners also have a duty to minimize the potential risk their dog may pose to the public or other animals. In some countries this is a legal requirement"
Message of the project

If every dog can be identified and has a visible, responsible and well informed owner, there will no longer be any unwanted dogs, the existence of stray animals will cease, and with it their suffering resulting from illegal dog breeding and trade, and problems of dog aggression.

The CAROdog Website is a concrete attempt to provide, generate and disseminate reliable knowledge about dogs in Europe, focusing on canine overpopulation and its consequences on all recuring animal welfare problems.

What does CAROdog stand for?

Veterinary associations have hailed the introduction of compulsory microchipping for all dogs in England as a giant leap forward for dogs and their owners.

Defra has announced that from 6 April 2016 all dogs will be required to have a microchip, giving owners over 3 years...

Monday 07 January 2013

Your science and fact based contribution is very Welcome
Please contact us by e-mail at info@carodog.eu
Please take home this message

• The challenge for the EU is to ensure that widespread positive sentiment toward animals, which the human-animal bond generates, is translated into human behaviour and actions that are conducive to good animal welfare.

• The success of any current and future EU actions for the protection of companion animals will depend on the efforts and cooperation of all the interested parties, within and beyond the EU by promoting and implementing the existing set of rules, sharing lessons learned and closely engaging communities that are the ultimate beneficiaries.

“Everyone is responsible”
.....and see you soon in Brussels!!

Conference on the welfare of dogs and cats in the EU

Brussels, 28 October 2013

Building a Europe that cares for companion animals