

# Education and training on Animal Welfare

## Global Webinar on Animal Welfare



From left to right: Daniela Battaglia, Anton Pijpers, Jan Vaarten, Zeev Noga, Andrea Gavinelli, Ian Murdoch and Joe Anzuino

Celebrating World Veterinary Day in 2014, the World Veterinary Association (WVA) together with the European Commission (EC) organised a Global Webinar (online seminar) on Animal Welfare. The webinar followed the 1st Global Seminar on Animal Welfare which took place in Prague in September 2013.

Through the webinar, the WVA and the EC connected veterinarians around the world in order to discuss different tools available for

veterinarians in the different fields of animal welfare. More than 300 veterinarians and veterinary students from 56 countries registered for the webinar. The panel consisted of representatives from international bodies such as OIE and FAO, Animal Welfare NGOs, Global Veterinary Associations (such as FVE and WVA), the Veterinary Student Association and representative from regions of Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

The webinar allowed participants to comment on presentations, exchange ideas and information via an open chat and reply to poll questions on various issues. The poll questions related to common animal welfare problems in aquaculture, veterinary education and the implementation of OIE's standard on animal welfare.

The webinar turned out to be a useful, easily manageable and cheap tool to exchange veterinary knowledge and expertise with veterinarians around the world. It was agreed that future follow up webinars should be organised to develop further areas of animal welfare with veterinarians from the different parts of the world. The WVA and EC are preparing the 2nd Global Seminar on Animal Welfare that will take place in Istanbul in September 2015 during the 32nd World Veterinary Congress.

## Animal Welfare e-Learning Modules

An e-learning pilot project has been launched on a number of sanitary and phytosanitary subjects in order to increase the spread of BTSF training material and allow trainees to study at their own convenience. Animal welfare is one of the topics.

The e-learning system will improve the quality of the BTSF courses by clarifying the technical focus and will facilitate the selection of participants for more advanced classical types of BTSF workshops and courses, where a more tailor-made approach can be given.

The first e-learning pilot project was launched in 2010 and consists of two main stages:

First phase – five e-learning modules in English, French and German:

- Food contact Materials,
- Animal welfare at slaughter and killing for disease control,
- Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP),
- Control and eradication of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE),
- Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASSF).

Second phase– five e-learning modules in English, French, German, Spanish and Portuguese:

- Animal nutrition,
- Animal health prevention and controls for Aquaculture animals,
- Animal welfare at slaughter and killing for disease control for poultry,
- EU plant quarantine regime for imports,
- Food hygiene and control on fishery products and Live Bivalve Molluscs.

The e-learning module on "animal welfare at slaughter and killing for disease control" was launched in March 2014 and it is open



to National Competent Authorities from European Union Member and non-Member States. It is available in English, French and German and will also be translated into Spanish and Portuguese. The purpose is to transfer basic knowledge on this topic to our 5000 participants annually, of which around 80% will be from the EU. The second e-learning module on animal welfare at slaughter and killing for disease control for poultry should be made available for the 2nd quarter 2015.

If you are interested, you can check it out for yourself at [www.btsf-elearning-campus.eu](http://www.btsf-elearning-campus.eu). You can also contact your national contact point or alternatively contact the BTSF team for any further questions, [SANCO-TRAININGFORSAFERFOOD@ec.europa.eu](mailto:SANCO-TRAININGFORSAFERFOOD@ec.europa.eu).

## Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) workshop on animal welfare in Thailand

From 25 to 28 March 2014

The first regional workshop on animal welfare took place under the new BTSF-WORLD programme. Thailand hosted the event and around 50 representatives from all ASEAN countries attended as well as from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Bhutan.

Contrary to what one may think, animal welfare is high on the agenda of many non-EU countries. Implementing animal welfare standards makes their meat exports more attractive for foreign markets, including the EU. It also provides additional marketing opportunities locally as consumers' awareness and requirements increase.

The programme featured a wide variety of topics and information on EU animal welfare standards at farm level, during transport as well as the slaughter of poultry and pigs. Dr Gavinelli, the Head of the animal welfare Unit in the European Commission, introduced the different international organisations involved in animal welfare such as FAO and OIE. Speakers touched upon many subjects of direct



importance to the audience and videos illustrated good and bad practices.

The lectures were complemented by site visits that allowed participants to have the opportunity to match theory and practical problems. The site visits gave rise to interesting discussions on how best to overcome local issues.

The famous Thai hospitality made the stay in Bangkok very worthwhile and the friendly atmosphere has surely created bonds between many participants. A similar event is planned in Brazil from 18-21 November 2014.

Isabelle Rollier, Better Training for Safer Food, DG SANCO DDG 2, G4

From 31 March to 4 April

Dr Mohan Raj carried out a BTSF Technical Assistance Mission in Thailand. The objective of the mission was to support the establishment of poultry welfare standards that are appropriate to the climatic conditions of Thailand, which could also be applicable to other ASEAN countries. The specific objective addressed two main welfare concerns:

- Effects of spraying water on chickens before transport on welfare (thermal stress) and meat quality
- How to improve poultry welfare and meat quality under the existing electrical water bath stunning systems.

During the mission, officers from the Department of Livestock Development of the Thai Ministry of Agriculture were trained on electrical water bath stunning for poultry. Training and subsequent discussions also involved the complexity of assessing recovery in birds following electrical water bath stunning to fulfil Halal requirements.

On the last day of the mission there was a workshop on factors affecting Dead on Arrival (DOA) poultry; how to identify causes of DOA poultry and how to collect data on DOA poultry in order to identify risk factors, find solutions or put in place relevant mitigation measures.

Mohan Raj BVSc MVSc PhD, Visiting Fellow, School of Veterinary Science, University of Bristol

## Vet workshop in Warsaw, Poland, 10-12 April 2014

We talked with Dr. Maciej Klockiewicz



### 1) What are your reflections on the Welfare workshops?

I attended a workshop in Budapest (2011) and I wanted to have a similar event for Polish vets. I presented my opinion to the board of Polish National Veterinary Chamber and the idea was very welcomed. A few months later I met Nancy de Briyne (FVE) and we started working on it. At the very beginning, I knew that Polish vets would be very interested in welfare issues of horses and shelter animals, so it was presented to DG SANCO and fortunately accepted.

### 2) Why have you included horse and shelter animals' welfare issues?

It was clear to us that those two subjects were very important. We have a lot of horses in Poland and the welfare of horses interests many people. Another fact is that public opinion follows the role of veterinarians in improving shelter animals' welfare. Thus it would be a great opportunity for Polish vets to get a chance to be trained in that field.

### 3) How were the workshops organised in Poland?

On the first day, we had a plenary session followed by several interesting lectures and speeches from people representing different institutions responsible for animal welfare. A very substantial speech by Janusz Wojciechowski, Polish member of the European Parliament, and a very affirmative lecture by the Dean, Marian Binek. The afternoon seminars were on four particular subgroups: cattle, horses, pigs and wildlife in captivity. The next day was field training where participants could take the ideas from the protocol assessments learned the day before to the sites. Thanks to County Veterinary Officer of Płock, Jacek Gruszczyński, we organised a visit to a dairy farm, a piggery, the horse group went to a State Stallion Depot in Łąck and visited the museum of carriages whilst the wildlife group went to the Zoological Garden of Płock.

### 4) What was the view from the participants?

I had a chance to meet many participants and I received very positive feedback. Simply, they liked it. There was more interest than we could accept with some double-bookings especially in the cattle and pig subgroups. During the first day, many students from both English and Polish streams of veterinary studies attended. It was nice that some guests from the Faculty of Animal Sciences, governmental institutions and private companies attended. This shows the scale of interest in animal welfare issues in Poland.

### 5) What was interesting about the third day of the workshop - welfare of shelter animals?

The Veterinary Inspection has faced many difficult situations about shelters and that was one of the most sensitive, from the public opinion point of view, issues of animal welfare in Poland. At the same time the General Veterinary Inspectorate was interested in presentations of the regulations which are going to be implemented in this field. The audience had a chance to find out more about behavioural problems associated with shelter animals during the lecture from Joanna Iracka (animal behaviourist) and there were lectures by speakers talking about their achievements in that field. I was particularly impressed by the Croatian Vets presentation who showed newly reconstructed shelters in Zagreb.

### 6) How could you summarise the welfare workshops in Poland?

The participants reacted positively to ideas of welfare assessments which most of them were not familiar with. Many liked the improved welfare assessments protocols and were going to share this knowledge with colleagues. It was also important that English speaking and Polish students had a chance to confront these topics with study courses. Nearly 300 participants joined all three days of the workshops and it showed we need to train more Polish vets on the animal welfare. I am ready to start organising the next workshop!

## Coordinated European Animal Welfare Network (EUWelNet)

The European Union's strategy for the protection and welfare of animals 2012-2015 mentions the establishment of a network of reference centres for animal welfare.

The role of the network should ensure that the competent authorities receive coherent and uniformed technical information on the way EU legislation should be implemented, especially in the context of outcome-based animal welfare indicators.

The EUWelNet project was supported from a grant by the European Commission and looked to study the possibility of a coordinated European animal welfare network. The project addressed four main objectives:

1. establish and coordinate a network of experts;
2. identify difficulties in implementing a few examples of EU legislation on animal welfare;
3. develop and test knowledge transfer strategies to overcome bottlenecks;
4. analyse and make recommendations on the feasibility and conditions for a coordinated network.

The EUWelNet consortium consisted of 26 partners in 16 countries and the independent Advisory Board ensured two-way dialogue with important stakeholders.

EUWelNet identified relevant public and private actors, difficulties in implementation of selected legislations (with particular attention to problems related to knowledge gaps), and the measures taken to address non-compliance. The project also developed and tested different strategies (training, e-learning, educational material, improved SOPs) designed to transfer knowledge to competent authorities and other stakeholders to improve the level of understanding and implementation of animal welfare legislation.

EUWelNet clearly demonstrated that a coordinated network of knowledge providers can work successfully together and deliver extremely useful support for the implementation of European legislation on animal welfare. It proved possible to effectively identify difficulties and bottlenecks and to create innovative knowledge strategies to overcome them. In short, the results of this brief pilot project provided firm proof of principle for a functional Coordinated European Animal Welfare Network.

Prof Harry Blokhuis, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences,  
Coordinator of EUWelNet

## Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) workshop in Brazil:



There has been a huge improvement on animal welfare in the past 20 years, especially linked to new scientific knowledge on stunning procedures, animal transportation and behaviour. It is also possible to observe the increasing importance of this matter for society in general, not only in Europe but also in Brazil.

As part of a strategy to improve official controls in slaughterhouses and the protection of animals, the European Commission supports training for official veterinarians through the BTSF programme. European and Brazilian authorities are working together to organise a BTSF event in Brazil from 18 to 21 November 2014.

The BTSF event in Brazil will promote the discussion on scientific knowledge, industry procedures and facilities, handling, transportation and official controls to improve animal welfare. Ritual slaughter, which is an important topic for Brazil due to the characteristics of its multicultural society, and the export of animal products, will also be discussed at the event.

The participants will be tutors (researchers and professors) and official veterinarian authorities from Latin America countries. They will be able to exchange experiences and knowledge about animal welfare and learn how to apply the new requirements of Regulation EU 1099/2009. Participants will also visit slaughterhouses to facilitate discussion and gain practical experience on animal welfare during slaughter.

There are high expectations about the BTSF event in Brazil and certainly the experience will help Brazilian and South American officials improve their skills for a better understanding of European and other legislation on animal welfare, ensuring animal protection at time of slaughter.

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