SECTION 7.

ANIMAL WELFARE

CHAPTER 7.1.

INTRODUCTION TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

Article 7.1.1.

General considerations

Animal welfare means the physical and mental state of an *animal* in relation to the conditions in which it lives and dies.

An *animal* experiences good welfare if the *animal* is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear and distress, and is able to express behaviours that are important for its physical and mental state.

Good *animal welfare* requires disease prevention and appropriate veterinary care, shelter, management and nutrition, a stimulating and safe environment, humane handling and humane *slaughter* or *killing*. While *animal welfare* refers to the state of the *animal*, the treatment that an *animal* receives is covered by other terms such as animal care, animal husbandry, and humane treatment.

Article 7.1.2.

Guiding principles for animal welfare

1) That there is a critical relationship between animal health and *animal welfare*.

2) That the internationally recognised "five freedoms" (freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition; freedom from fear and distress; freedom from physical and thermal discomfort; freedom from pain, injury and disease; and freedom to express normal patterns of behaviour) provide valuable guidance in *animal welfare*.

3) That the internationally recognised "three Rs" (reduction in numbers of *animals*, refinement of experimental methods and replacement of *animals* with non-animal techniques) provide valuable guidance for the use of *animals* in science.

4) That the scientific assessment of *animal welfare* involves diverse elements which need to be considered together, and that selecting and weighing these elements often involves value-based assumptions which should be made as explicit as possible.

5) That the use of *animals* in agriculture, education and research, and for companionship, recreation and entertainment, makes a major contribution to the wellbeing of people.

6) That the use of *animals* carries with it an ethical responsibility to ensure the welfare of such *animals* to the greatest extent practicable.

7) That improvements in farm *animal welfare* can often improve productivity and food safety, and hence lead to economic benefits.

8) That equivalent outcomes based on performance criteria, rather than identical systems based on design criteria, be the basis for comparison of *animal welfare* standards and recommendations.

Article 7.1.3.

Scientific basis for recommendations

1) Welfare is a broad term which includes the many elements that contribute to an animal's quality of life, including those referred to in the "five freedoms" listed above.

2) The scientific assessment of *animal welfare* has progressed rapidly in recent years and forms the basis of these recommendations.

3) Some measures of *animal welfare* involve assessing the degree of impaired functioning associated with injury, disease and malnutrition. Other measures provide information on *animals*' needs and affective states such as hunger, pain and fear, often by measuring the strength of *animals*' preferences, motivations and aversions. Others assess the physiological, behavioural and immunological changes or effects that *animals* show in response to various challenges.

4) Such measures can lead to criteria and indicators that help to evaluate how different methods of managing *animals* influence their welfare.

Article 7.1.4.

Guiding principles for the use of measures to assess animal welfare

1) For the OIE *animal welfare* standards to be applicable globally, they should emphasise favourable outcomes for the *animals*, although, in some circumstances, it may be necessary to recommend specific conditions of the *animals*' environment and management. Outcomes are generally measured by assessing the extent to which *animals* experience the "five freedoms" described in Article 7.1.2.

2) For each principle listed in Article 7.1.5., the most relevant criteria (or measurables), ideally comprising animal-based measures, should be included in the standard. Any given animal-based measure may be linked to more than one principle.

3) Recommendations should, whenever possible, define explicit targets or thresholds that should be met for animal-based measures. Such target values should be based on relevant science and experience of experts.

4) In addition to animal-based measures, resource-based measures and management-based measures may be used and should be defined on the basis of science and expert experience showing that a welfare outcome is clearly linked to a resource or to a management procedure.

5) Users of the standard should select the most appropriate animal-based measures for their farming system or environment, from among those listed in the standard. Outcomes can be measured by an assessment of individuals or animal groups, or a representative sample of those, using data from *establishments*, transport or *slaughterhouses/abattoirs*. *Competent Authorities* should collect all data relevant for the users to set target and threshold values.

6) Whatever the basis of the measure, if outcomes are unsatisfactory, users should consider what changes to resources or management are necessary to improve outcomes.

Article 7.1.5.

General principles for the welfare of animals in livestock production systems

1) Genetic selection should always take into account the health and welfare of *animals.*

2) *Animals* chosen for introduction into new environments should be suited to the local climate and able to adapt to local diseases, parasites and nutrition.

3) The physical environment, including the substrate (walking surface, resting surface, etc.), should be suited to the species so as to minimise risk of injury and transmission of diseases or parasites to *animals*.

4) 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.

5) Social grouping of *animals* should be managed to allow positive social behaviour and minimise injury, distress and chronic fear.

6) For housed *animals*, air quality, temperature and humidity should support good animal health and not be aversive. Where extreme conditions occur, *animals* should not be prevented from using their natural methods of thermo-regulation.

7) *Animals* should have access to sufficient *feed* and water, suited to the *animals*' age and needs, to maintain normal health and productivity and to prevent prolonged hunger, thirst, malnutrition or dehydration.

8)   Diseases and parasites should be prevented and controlled as much as possible through good management practices. *Animals* with serious health problems should be isolated and treated promptly or killed humanely if treatment is not feasible or recovery is unlikely.

9)   Where painful procedures cannot be avoided, the resulting pain should be managed to the extent that available methods allow.

10) The handling of *animals* should foster a positive relationship between humans and *animals* and should not cause injury, panic, lasting fear or avoidable stress.

11) Owners and handlers should have sufficient skill and knowledge to ensure that *animals* are treated in accordance with these principles.

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NB: FIRST ADOPTED IN 2004; MOST RECENT UPDATE ADOPTED IN 2019.