

## Animal Care Council Report

2014 NIAA Annual Conference

Wednesday, April 2, 2014



The Animal Care Council met on Wednesday, April 2, 2014, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:50 a.m. during the 2014 NIAA Annual Conference in Omaha, Nebraska, with about 60 people present. Mr. Jim Fraley and Ms. Sherrie Webb served as Co-Chairs.

The council session focused on international animal welfare standards, the etiology of pain, and pain mitigation. The following speakers presented relevant information to these topics:

### **International Animal Welfare Standard Setting: The Role of OIE and ISO**

#### **Betsy Flores, VP, Animal Care, National Milk Producers' Federation**

There are three types of animal welfare standards: government, industry, and private standards. The OIE started to work on animal welfare standards in 2001. They are developed by an *ad hoc* animal welfare working group. They are currently working on dairy and are expected to be completed by 2015. They will then work on pork, then poultry.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies. ANSI and AOCS represents the US. The memorandum of understanding between ISO and OIE states that the ISO standards will not exceed the OIE standards. Many top international food countries approached ISO to work on these animal welfare standards. Even though the US voted "NO" on whether or not the work on animal welfare in food producing animals, the US was outvoted and work has progressed. The most recent vote has been in December 2013, and work continues. The outline that was originally drafted in February 2013 was abandoned, and work started anew. The US contingent (tag) has a very difficult time since it is so diverse. There are 78 participants including Mercy for Animals and HSUS. There are extremist agendas, but it is nearly impossible to gain consensus. After a year of work, there are no tangible outcomes.

### **IFB Animal Welfare Study Tour to the EU**

#### **Deb Moore, Illinois Farmer**

The IFB Animal Welfare Study Tour visited eight countries in ten days. They were able to see many types of livestock operations. One of the first stops was at Mitchells, in the UK. This was a beef feeding operation that fed potato waste. They were also building a new beef feeding facility. The group also visited two dairies in the UK. These farms had to have flat flooring, deep bedding, and access to the outside. EU farmers are very supportive of animal ID. A passport system is utilized. Tail docking and dehorning are not allowed. Antibiotics are restricted and tracked very closely – subtherapeutic use of antibiotics is not allowed. The producers were quite intrigued by the Belgian Blue cattle. These are double-muscled cattle. All calves are born through Cesarean section. A French hog farm was an illustration of open housing for gestation. It was noted that there was some aggression observed with these sows. The Sainsbury Concept Farm in the UK was the most animal welfare "friendly" farm on the tour. They used a significant amount of straw and it required considerable amount of labor. It was noted that these animals were not as clean, and had more injuries than a typical US sow farm. The Rondeel egg farm in Holland is built entirely on consumers' perception of what would make a good egg-

laying farm. It is a round facility, free-ranged, and the birds have access to “grass” (astroturf). These eggs are marketed in a round container that holds seven eggs – one for every day of the week. Antibiotic use in the EU is restricted. The decline in total antibiotic use after the ban has resulted in a gradual increase in total antibiotic use over the past decade. Many of the EU’s animal welfare decisions are based on marketing, not on science. Beef was very expensive in the meat case. The EU animal welfare regulations are completely impractical outside of their climatic region.

### **Pain: Abolishing a Necessary Evil**

#### **Dr. Don Lay, USDA, ARS**

Scientific publications on animal welfare has increased more than five-fold in the last 20 years. In January, Tyson asked their producers to stop using blunt force trauma and to eliminate or reduce pain from all tail docking and castration. Pain is an adaptive evolutionary strategy to protect the body. Non-adaptive pain is pain that persists after the trauma has healed. Humans have conditions that have insensitivity to pain. These people don’t feel a burn, cuts, needle, or even feel uncomfortable in a chair. Pain is a necessary part of life. People with these conditions usually die before three years of age. Currently, there are 17 persons in the US with this condition. Pain has both a physiological and a psychological component. Chickens have similar physiological responses to pain as humans. A human could experience chronic pain in a “phantom” limb. Could an animal experience the same? Bulls castrated without an analgesic (meloxicam) show a greater incidence of Bovine Respiratory Disease.

So why don’t we do it? They need to be:

- Readily available and registered to use
- Easy to administer
- Quick and long acting – may have to do it 30 minutes before procedure
- Short withdrawal period
- Show a return on investment (likely very difficult).

Cannibalism in poultry will increase when you provide them more space. Is some pain to debeak a chicken, better than allowing the cannibalism? Infrared beak trimming is an alternative to hot-blade trimming. It does seem to show a lower response to pain. Productivity was not impaired in a study that compared infrared debeaking, hot-blade debeaking, and a control group. When you look at an aviary system for egg-laying, on necropsy up to 90% of the hens had keel bone fractures. This is caused by the birds flying around and jumping off or on perches.

In routine piglet processing needle teeth are resected, tail docking, castration, ear notching or tagging, and given iron shots. When looking at alternative methods of each of these practices, it came down to accuracy and speed to do these procedures. If you can do it quickly, with accuracy, it causes less stress to the animal. CO<sub>2</sub> is their recommended method of euthanasia, but pigs have a strong aversion to euthanasia gases. Nitrous Oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) was used and pigs showed no aversion. The best solution to cause the least amount of stress may be to anesthetize them, then smother them with CO<sub>2</sub>.

The hypothesis is that an exercised sow will have increased bone density, an increase in osteoblastic activity, and improved the conditions of hooves and joints. The science shows us that lameness occurs with increased movement. Loose housing of sows will likely exacerbate this problem as the increase in movement will provide opportunity for torn cartilage to worsen. One reason for this is that the genetics of the animal is to grow so quickly that bone growth can’t catch up. The next step is slow the growth down on animals to see if bone growth improves.

Tail docking in dairy cattle is also perceived to be a painful process. Docking causes pain, but it causes less pain in an older cow as compared to a young animal. This is counterintuitive to what we do as

producers. Docked cows have more flies and avoidance behaviors, docked tails do show signs of neuromas (sensitive to heat or cold), and docking did not reduce somatic cell count.

Life without pain does not exist.

### **Mitigating Pain in Livestock: What Options are Available**

#### **Craig Lewis, DVM, US FDA**

There are several types of pain: most involve a surgical pain or pain from a disease. Analgesics, locals, barbiturates, opioids, anesthetics can all be used to mitigate pain. Extralabel drug use is allowed for certain *approved* animal and human drugs. The veterinarian is responsible when the drugs are used outside of their approvals. Aspirin, for example, is used, but unapproved for animal use. Banamine (flunixin) is approved for use in animals, but many times it is used in applications where it was not intended. Lidocaine is not approved in use in animals either, but it has been used. Extra-label use of products are restricted only to those products that have been approved by FDA and have an NADA or NDA number.

**Old Business:** There was no old business.

#### **New Business:**

- There were two resolutions allowed to sunset: ACC1 and ACC3; two resolutions reaffirmed: ACC4 and ACC5; and one new resolution adopted: ACC8. It will ask NIAA staff to develop an educational forum on animal abuse investigations and develop a white Paper by 2014.
- Consensus Points for NIAA White Paper Development
  - 1) The US is very involved in the development of ISO standards for animal welfare, but consensus is difficult to achieve.
  - 2) Illinois farmers found their EU Study Tour on animal welfare issues to be very informative, but they found it frustrating to see that many of the animal welfare regulations are not based in any science and do not necessarily improve animals' welfare.
  - 3) It is difficult to measure and assess an animal's pain, but several studies provide insight into how animals respond to some typical management practices. These studies provide key direction on how to reduce the amount of pain an animal may experience.
  - 4) Extra-label drug use is allowed for certain approved animal and human drugs. Extra-label use of products are restricted only to those products that have been approved by FDA and have an NADA or NDA number.

#### **General Discussion:**

The new resolution generated a great deal of discussion, and was ultimately adopted with a vote of six-to-four. There were several concerns noted during the discussion:

- The NIAA may lose money and place itself in financial risk.
- Ohio hosted a session like this and they found it difficult to get participants from two counties away. Many couldn't come up with a budget for a \$15 meal.
- Perhaps we could get sponsors to bring people to the session?
- Should a survey be sent to state veterinarians to gauge the interest in an event like this?
- Some expressed concern over the timing of the proposed session and any possible outcomes that may be developed. Could it be possible to host a meeting like this after the NIAA 2015 Meeting?
- Buy-in to the conference may be an issue. One thing is for certain: HSUS will be in attendance.
- It needs to be done right.

Council Session adjourned at 11:50AM.