



Animal Welfare Science Centre NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

6TH JUNE 2008

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

OSU	1
Hen welfare methodology	1
Shelter dog assessment	2
Chicken meat standards	2
Seminars	3
Animal companions for life	3
Greg Cronin	4

STOP PRESS

**AAWS International
Animal Welfare
Conference**

**31st Aug - 3rd Sept
2008
Gold Coast**

The conference will bring together animal welfare stakeholders from around the world and will feature national and international speakers from industry, animal welfare groups, government and research.

For details, visit:

[www.daff.gov.au/
animal-plant-health/
welfare/aaws](http://www.daff.gov.au/animal-plant-health/welfare/aaws)

OSU to join the Centre

The Ohio State University is joining the Animal Welfare Science Centre as a formal partner.

The Department of Animal Sciences and the College of Veterinary Medicine at The Ohio State University are excited about becoming a fourth partner of the Centre along with the University of Melbourne, Monash University, and Victorian Department of Primary Industries.

This agreement will facilitate further enhancement of joint educational, research, and outreach engagement endeavours.

Such programs as the OSU Australian Study Abroad, Animal Handlers Educational endeavours, animal welfare surveys, teaching of the Animals in Society, development of under-

graduate animal welfare curriculum, and collaborative research and graduate education endeavours will be further enhanced through the mutual investment of the four partners of the Animal Welfare Science Centre in these ongoing activities.

Collaborative endeavours, particularly with the OSU College of Veterinary Medicine will be enhanced as a consequence the agreement which is particularly timely as a group of young scientists have recently been employed at OSU

For details on OSU Animal Science, please visit:
www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~ansci/

For details on OSU Veterinary Medicine, please visit:
www.vet.ohio-state.edu/



The Columbus Campus at OSU

Chooks Choice

Sonja Laine is undertaking a PhD at the University of Melbourne where she will be examining the experimental methodology of preference behaviour in laying hens

Although welfare-related animal preference tests have been conducted since the 1970's, many aspects of the methodological design of preference tests still appear to be arbitrary factors, as many authors do not

explain how they have come to the decision of aspects of their preference test design.

Her PhD project, (co-supervised by Carol Petherick, QDPI), has received support from the **Poultry CRC** and aims to examine some of these aspects in the methodological design of Y-maze preference tests and investigate their effects on the choice behaviour of laying hens.

The first area that of investigation is the effect of quantity of reward in the Y-maze on choice

behaviour. Findings from this project may have important implications for the design of animal preference test methodology in the future.

A rigorous methodology is necessary to clearly understand animal preferences and these preferences, potentially, may be incorporated into animal housing to improve animal welfare.



Poultry Y-maze at DPI Werribee



Kate Mornement and
"Archie"

Behavioural assessment of adult shelter dogs

Currently there is no scientifically validated behavioural assessment protocol available for Australian shelters to use to assess the adoption suitability of the dogs in their care.

This is a welfare concern if otherwise suitable dogs are wrongly euthanased or if unsuitable dogs are adopted out to the public.

Kate Mornement is a PhD student at Monash University and her research aims to develop a useful protocol called The Behavioural Assessment for Re-homing K9's (B.A.R.K.) protocol.

Part I of the research, (**supported by the Bureau of Animal Welfare, Petcare, Animal Aid Trust and the RSPCA**), is already complete and involved a comprehensive review of current assessment practices used in shelters. This involved a literature review, observations of over 50 shelter dog assessments conducted in shelters around Australia and interviews with the assessment staff.

During the interviews, staff gave details of their current assessment protocol and their opinions about the effectiveness and accuracy of the protocol. They were also asked how the current protocol could be improved.

The results of Part I, together with input from an advisory committee

comprised of experts on canine behaviour including behaviourists, dog trainers, vets and shelter workers, were used to develop the B.A.R.K. protocol.

Part 2 of the research is currently underway and aims to validate the B.A.R.K. protocol. The protocol has been implemented into a Victorian animal shelter and is currently being evaluated for reliability and validity.

The B.A.R.K. protocol will also be tested in several interstate shelters for further validation. It is hoped that the results of this research make a positive difference in the way dogs are assessed for adoption suitability.

"Ten chicken meat industry standards for animal welfare cover the following:"

- planning & contingencies
- maintenance and design of sheds, facilities & equipment
- stockperson competency & training
- general bird management
- humane destruction
- egg management (layer farms)
- egg and chick management (hatchery)
- pick-up and transport
- chick transport
- processing

Welfare Standards for the Chicken Meat Industry

"National Animal Welfare Standards for the Chicken Meat Industry" to be developed.

DPI Victoria was funded under the **Naturally Victorian Initiative** to develop animal welfare components for quality assurance (QA) programs in the chicken meat, pork and dairy industries and the transport and processing sectors of the livestock industries.

A recent driver for implementation of these projects by industry is the development of nationally consistent legislated standards for animal welfare as part of Australian Animal Welfare Strategy.

The DPI projects, by being incorporated into industry QA programs, provide the chicken meat, pork & dairy industries with a mechanism to implement and verify government and customer standards for animal welfare.

To increase implementation within the chicken meat industry, John Barnett, (DPI Vic, AWSC) and Michelle Edge, (Symbio Alliance) have been involved, (with funding from the **Poultry CRC**), in revising the initial 2001 documentation into new 'National Animal Welfare Standards for the Chicken Meat Industry'.

These industry standards have been developed as a single industry policy document and accompanying background information for industry training and separate manuals that cover the individual industry sectors: meat chicken farming, the hatchery, breeders, pick-up and transport and processing.

The final phase of the project, training of industry trainers, is almost completed, with the last of 3 training workshops planned for early June. The workshops are designed to assist industry participants (both broiler growers and company personnel) to inte-

grate the information into their farm or company daily practices.

The workshops covered animal welfare legislation, public attitudes, customer requirement, the standards, recording, auditing and application of the standards and QA on farm. About 40 participants from at least 6 companies will have undertaken the training by the end of the project. These participants will then conduct further training within the companies.



For details, visit: www.rirdc.gov.au/reports/CME/03-093.pdf

Seminar Series 2008

All Seminars will be held at the DPI Lecture Theatre, 475 Mickleham Road, Attwood, (Melways Map5 K2)



Alistair Lawrence

You are able to access speakers presentations for our first half 2008 seminars.

- Clive Phillips: "Live export of sheep and cattle"
 Alistair Lawrence: "Improving public attitudes and behaviour to animals"
 Grahame Coleman: "Public Education"
 Ian McCauley: "Remote Monitoring of Livestock: Wireless and the Wii - Improving Livestock Welfare"
 Andrew Bubb: "Remote management of cattle in central Australia. Current applications and opportunities"
 Tim Stockman: "The physical limitations of wireless sensing technologies to monitor livestock"
 Greg Cronin: "Using machine vision (automatic video image analysis) to monitor hens in cages"
 Please visit: <http://www.animalwelfare.net.au/comm/comm01.html>

Tuesday 8th July 1.45pm – 3.15pm

(inc afternoon tea)

Dairy Cow Welfare: Solutions for current problems

Prof. John Webster, *Bristol University, UK*

John Webster is Emeritus Professor of Animal Husbandry at the University of Bristol and has been involved in the science and promotion of animal welfare for over 30 years.

He was a founder member of the Farm Animal Welfare Council and the original proponent of the 'Five Freedoms'. His current major activities include the development of animal-based systems for assessing the welfare of farm animals and the problem of lameness in dairy cattle.

This exciting seminar will cover current UK and Bristol programs of action to address Welfare-based Quality Control, lameness and the fate of calves surplus to the needs of the dairy industry.

All these examples will illustrate the impact of pressure from retailers and consumers.



John Webster

RSVP before 27th June, jskuse@unimelb.edu.au

Animal Companions For Life

Thursday August 21st. DPI Lecture Theatre, 475 Mickleham Road, Attwood, (Melways Map5 K2)

Registration: 9.15am

Program Commences: 10.00am

Program Concludes: 4.30pm

The Centre will be presenting a full day program at Attwood in August which will highlight current companion animal research being undertaken at the Centre.

The day will commence with presentations which will focus on research being conducted on animals in a shelter environment and will then move on to address current research which is examining welfare issues surrounding companion animals in the home and paddock. Later in the day participants will be

given the chance to provide feedback on current research and to give their suggestions on priority areas for future companion animal research.

This event will be an important contributor to our research planning for 2009—2010.

The day is likely to be very popular event and numbers will be restricted so please register your interest at the earliest opportunity.

Please contact Jeremy Skuse before August 7th for full details and registration.

jskuse@unimelb.edu.au





CONTACT DETAILS:

Faculty of Land & Food Resources
The University of Melbourne
Parkville
Victoria 3010
Australia

Phone: +61 (0) 3 8344 8933

Fax: +61 (0) 3 8933 5037

E-mail: awsc-info@unimelb.edu.au

If you have any comments, questions or suggestions, please contact our Executive Officer, Jeremy Skuse at our Parkville Offices.

Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to those who may be interested.

If you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please send an email to:

awsc-info@unimelb.edu.au

Quoting "remove" in the subject line.

Greg Cronin off to Sydney

Greg Cronin has recently left the Department of Primary Industries to take up a position at the University of Sydney



Greg has been involved in animal behaviour and welfare research at the DPI for over 25 years. His research included investigating stereotypic behaviour in pigs housed in intensive farming systems, and the effects of the physical and

social environment around parturition on sow behaviour and welfare and the role of maternal behaviour on piglet survival.

Two developments from his basic research in the area of porcine maternal behaviour have been the Werribee Farrowing Pen and a computerised audio system for stimulating nursing behaviour in sows and litters leading to increased piglet growth.

Recently Greg was focusing his efforts on developing systems which could be used to improve animal welfare by remotely sensing changes in animal behaviour and the environment.

Greg's enthusiasm and scientific rigour will be missed by members of the Centre but he will be continuing research in the area of animal welfare and the Centre looks forward to continuing close collaboration.



The Werribee Farrowing Pen

Greg can be contacted at the University of Sydney by email:

g.cronin@usyd.edu.au

Or by phone at the Camden Office:
(02) 9351 1629

