



Animal Welfare Science Centre

Newsletter

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3 17TH SEPTEMBER 2008

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

AAWS Conference	1
Who's for cats?	1
Horse welfare	2
ISAE, Dublin	2
Animal companions for life	3
Seminar 22 October	3
Canine Science Forum	4

AAWS International Animal Welfare Conference

The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy, (AAWS), is an initiative of the Australian Government which aims to guide the development of new, nationally consistent animal welfare policies and enhance existing animal welfare arrangements in all Australian states and territories.

350 delegates from Australia and overseas attended the first AAWS conference which was

held on the Gold Coast at the beginning of September.

The conference provided an excellent opportunity to discuss further collaborations between the AWSC and other organisations including the Centre for Animal Welfare & Ethics at Queensland University, CSIRO's Animal Welfare Unit, AgResearch of New Zealand and Massey University's Animal Welfare Science & Bioethics Centre. Several scientists from the AWSC contributed papers at the conference:

1. Public perceptions of animal welfare—an international perspective. Coleman.

2. Ethical stockmanship and management of animals. Hemsworth.

3. Improving canine welfare by characterising the perfect pet dog for Australia. Bennett.

You can find out more information regarding AAWS at their website:

<http://www.daff.gov.au/animal-plant-health/welfare/aaws>

Who's for cats?

Research shows that each year in Victoria, around 50,000 cats are impounded, and 35,000 of these have to be euthanased.

The cat overpopulation problem is due to a number of factors, however a survey conducted by the AWSC has found that a major contributing factor to this problem is people feeding unowned cats but not taking full ownership or responsibility for them (e.g. they don't desex or identify them, or keep them on their property).

Feeding unowned cats helps regenerate cat colonies by keeping cats strong enough to reproduce.

www.whosforcats.com.au

Research shows that people feed unowned cats because they feel sorry for them. They think they are helping these cats, and don't realise they're doing anything wrong.

These people need to be informed about the consequences of their actions and the impact that it is having on the overall unowned cat population.

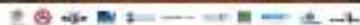
In order to address this problem, a number of organisations in Victoria have come together to pool resources and implement a media campaign.

The "Who's for cats?" campaign involves TV, radio, print advertisements and other education activities. Neva Gladman from the Bureau of Animal Welfare is managing the campaign and says

that initial results are encouraging with a 42% increase in calls about cats to RSPCA Inspectorate and more than 50 newspaper articles published about the campaign since November.

Participating organisations are: the Animal Welfare Science Centre, Australian Veterinary Association, Cat Protection Society, Department of Primary Industries, Lort Smith Animal Hospital, Monash University, Municipal Association of Victoria, Pet Industry Association of Australia, RSPCA, The Lost Dogs' Home, and Victorian Animal Aid.

Toukhsati, S.R., Bennett, P., Coleman, G.J., (2007) Behaviours and Attitudes towards Semi-owned cats, *Anthrozoos*, 20, 2, 131-142





Eva and Lauren

Welfare of Recreational Horses

The welfare of horses, particularly those used for recreation, has become an increasingly important issue.

Since 1997, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) in Victoria has investigated more than 1200 cases of horse welfare per year, second only in number to dog welfare investigations (RSPCA Annual Report, 2001/2002).

A considerable proportion of the welfare problems that occur are believed to involve horses that are used primarily for non-competitive recreational purposes.

While little is known about the extent and seriousness of welfare problems in horses used in such a capacity, a view shared widely among animal welfare groups, horse owners and equine welfare researchers is that horse owners are primarily responsible for their horse's welfare.

Lauren Hemsworth is a PhD student at Monash University and her research project, (funded by The Bureau of Animal Welfare), consists of two parts and aims to

(a) randomly sample inner and outer suburban areas and regional areas of Victoria to estimate the recreational horse population and collect details on horse ownership, and

(b) to examine the relationship between the extent of welfare problems in horses and owner characteristics and circumstances, as well as housing and husbandry standards.

Horse owners/primary carers are primarily responsible for their horse's welfare, therefore owners/primary carers' attitudes towards their horses, horse ownership and interactions, their characteristics, demographics and the management and husbandry techniques they implement all have the potential to impact on their horse's welfare.

Further research on the impact of human-horse interactions on horse welfare is essential, as information on owner knowledge, attitudes and demographic and horse management characteristics can be utilized in developing and implementing education programs and government policy and/or legislation aimed at preventing horse welfare problems.

Owner characteristics as well as circumstances surrounding horse ownership need to be understood in order to develop targeted educational programs that address the main owner factors associated with horse welfare problems.

Furthermore, an understanding of the attitudes to horse identification and the implications of horse identification may lead to the introduction of compulsory horse identification/registration on a state-wide basis.

For more information, please contact Lauren by email at: Lauren.Hemsworth@med.monash.edu.au



42nd Congress of International Society for Applied Ethology

Scientists from the AWSC have recently presented papers at this key international conference in Dublin.

Papers presented included:

1. Visual human contact during rearing and adulthood reduces fear of humans in caged layer hens. Edwards, Hemsworth P., Coleman, Botheras.

2. Effects of an isolation period in an animal shelter on dog behaviour and subsequent re-housing opportunities. Hemsworth L., Barnett.

3. A reappraisal of lying down behaviour as a welfare indicator in dairy cows. Chaplin.

4. Effects of feed restriction and social isolation on female growing pigs. Stevens, Hemsworth, P., Barnett, Tilbrook.

5. Do cats adapt to living indoors? Jongman.

6. The relationships between handling prior to slaughter and stress in sheep and cattle at abattoirs. Hemsworth, P., Rice, Calleja, Karlen, Coleman, Barnett.

7. The effects of quantity of reward on the choice behaviour of laying hens in a Y maze preference test. Laine, Cronin, Hemsworth, P., Petherick.

If you would like to receive abstracts of any of these papers, please contact Jeremy Skuse, email:

jskuse@unimelb.edu.au

The 43rd Congress of ISAE will be hosted by Australia in 2009.



The congress will take place in Cairns between July 6th and 10th. For further information, please visit the congress website at:

<http://www.isae2009.com/>

Seminar Series 2008

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



Around 70 people attended our Companion Animal Research Day at Attwood in August. Enthusiastic presentations from Centre scientists and students gave the audience a clear insight into current companion animal research within the Centre. In general discussion following the formal presentations, some priorities for future research were suggested:

- Develop tools to measure AW in companion animals
- Develop welfare indices for dogs and cats as a tool to measure welfare
- Public education programs covering moral obligations to animals through to basic requirements for feed, health, space, exercise, socialisation etc. Include behavioural indicators of welfare.



Pauleen Bennett

For abstracts, please visit our website at:

<http://www.animalwelfare.net.au/comm/download/AnimalComps4Life.pdf>

Scientific Seminar

Wednesday 22nd October 2.00pm – 4.30pm

(inc afternoon tea)

DPI Lecture Theatre, 475 Mickleham Road, Attwood, (Melways Map5 K2)

“Physiological aspects of humane killing in animals”

Dr. David Adams, *Member, NHMRC Animal Welfare Committee*

David graduated from Sydney Vet School in 1964 and his career has included stints in farm animal practice, CSIRO, and with DAFF in the Bureau of Resource Sciences and the Office of Chief Veterinary Officer.

David has published widely in the fields of parasitology, immunology, behavioural psychology, animal production and public health.

He has a continuing preoccupation with good animal husbandry.

“The role of electroencephalography in animal welfare research”

Dr Craig Johnson, *Associate Professor of Veterinary Neurophysiology, Massey University*

Craig qualified from Liverpool Vet School in 1989. After a spell in small animal practice, he moved to the Animal Health Trust in Newmarket, UK as Resident in Veterinary Anaesthesia.

After a time lecturing in Pretoria, south Africa, he returned to the UK where he gained a PhD from Cambridge University. He lectured in Veterinary Anaesthesia at Bristol University for 5 years and then moved to Massey where he is Senior Lecturer in Neurophysiology.

PLEASE RSVP before 8th October, jskuse@unimelb.edu.au

www.animalwelfare.net.au



ANIMAL WELFARE
SCIENCE CENTRE

CONTACT DETAILS:

Faculty of Land & Food Resources

The University of Melbourne

Parkville

Victoria 3010

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.

Canine Science Forum—Budapest

Pauleen Bennett and Kate Mornement recently attended the 2008 Canine Science forum in Budapest, Hungary.

They presented 2 papers:

1. Young adults' familiarity with, and perceptions of, common dog breeds in Australia. Bennett, Mornement. This paper explored the familiarity of young adults with a range of dog breeds and their perceptions of these breeds. Results indicated that breed stereotypes do exist in the Australian community even amongst young adults who describe themselves as being very unfamiliar with specific breeds. Perceptions about some breeds were at odds with descriptions in popular books and in published breed standards. Since breed

perceptions may influence the purchasing behaviour of dog owners, it will be important in future to target this sector of the population with appropriate educational material.

2. Assessing shelter dogs for adoption suitability—an Australian perspective. Mornement, Coleman, Toukhsati, Bennett. Here, the authors aimed to: a) review existing behavioural assessment protocols and b) develop a standardized and scientifically validated protocol to assess adoption suitability in Australian shelters.

The results indicated that there is a lack of standardisation in content and methodology in the protocols used to assess canine behaviour to determine suitability for adoption. Results from the review were used to develop a

standardised shelter dog assessment protocol: "Behavioural Assessment for Re-homing K9's, (B.A.R.K.).

B.A.R.K. has been implemented in several Australian shelters and is being evaluated for its acceptability, ease of use, test-retest, inter-rater reliability and concurrent and predictive validity.

If you would like to receive abstracts of these papers, please contact Jeremy Skuse by email: jskuse@unimelb.edu.au



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE



MONASH University



Department of
Primary Industries