



ANIMAL WELFARE  
SCIENCE CENTRE

# Animal Welfare Science Centre

## Newsletter

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4 15TH DECEMBER 2008

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## ARC Discovery Project Funding

**In the recent round of ARC Discovery Project funding, AWSC scientist Professor Alan Tilbrook was successful in obtaining a \$390,000 to study the impact of stress on reproduction.**

Professor Tilbrook of the Department of Physiology at Monash University will be working alongside colleagues Professors Iain Clarke and Paul Hemsworth on the three year project titled "Dissecting the impact of stress on reproduc-

tion: Novel peptide mediates inhibitory effects of stress on female reproduction".

This research proposal offers a pioneering opportunity to develop treatments that overcome the negative impact of stress on reproduction.

Specifically, knowledge generated in this project will be vital in the development of strategic defences against the impact of stress on reproduction.

This project fundamentally addresses the National Research Priority 2: "Promoting and

maintaining good health".

Given that suppression of reproduction by stress occurs in all mammalian species including humans, domestic animals and wildlife, being able to prevent or overcome stress-induced reproductive dysfunction will generate significant health, social, economic and ecological benefits.



Alan Tilbrook

## UAE Animal Welfare Training

**The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is developing animal welfare legislation and the necessary infrastructure to enforce the legislation within its Ministry of Environment and Water (MofEW; Department of Animal Wealth). The UAE is the first Middle East country to introduce such legislation and it may form a model for adoption by the Gulf Cooperation Council.**

DAFF, at the request of the UAE, sought DPI Victoria's interest in delivering training in animal welfare competencies and standards. Dr. Lloyd Klumpp from the Department of Primary Industries Victoria and A/Prof John Barnett AWSC, University of Melbourne delivered a 3-day course at the end of October to about 20 ministry veterinarians. The course, (which was based on training developed by Dr Mariko Lauber), was to provide a basic level of understanding in:

handling, practices and principles

- Animal welfare practices and principles
- Humane slaughter practices and principles
- Animal welfare enforcement including collection of evidence.

The enthusiasm for the information provided in the course and at the subsequent meetings demonstrated a very real desire for the further development of the UAE's animal welfare and biosecurity arrangements.

- Livestock animal



Lloyd Klump & John Barnett  
with course participants

## National research, development and extension framework

Commonwealth and state agriculture ministers, industry funding bodies and universities have recently agreed to develop a National Framework for Agricultural R,D&E, including animal welfare with the aim of improving collaboration between R&D organisations, industry and other funding bodies, to avoid wasteful duplication of effort and to ensure that the national R&D effort is focused on national priorities.

The Victorian Department of Primary Industries has been asked to lead the development of National R,D&E strategies for dairy and

animal welfare. Both strategies are being developed in close consultation with industry, R,D&E provider organisations and other major stakeholders.

Work on the National Animal Welfare R,D&E strategy has commenced, and will be completed during 2009. The strategy will build on the work already undertaken by the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS), but will focus on farm, companion and pest animals only, reflecting the interests and responsibility of state Agriculture Ministers.

Major activities that will be undertaken include the identification of national priorities for animal welfare R,D&E over the

next 20 years, and the science capability required to deliver on these. A detailed audit of existing capability will be conducted, and this will be compared with future requirements to highlight capability gaps. These data sets will then form the basis for negotiating the capability and funding agreements that will be needed to ensure that the nation builds and retains the animal welfare R,D&E capability required for the future.

For more information, please contact Geoff Kroker by email at: [geoff.kroker@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:geoff.kroker@dpi.vic.gov.au)



## Dog Owner Research

A current research project being conducted at Monash University aims to explore the factors that have a role in attachment of people to their dogs and to develop some personality norms for the different breeds of dogs.

Researcher Dr Jacqui Ley says that the research may help identify factors important for retention of dogs in homes.

This two year project, titled *Factors affecting the Dog-Owner Relationship*, was generously funded by the Petcare Information and Advisory Service and is being conducted as an on-line survey.

Participants are asked to give details about their dog, its behaviour, the research they did before acquisition, their expectations of their dog and if these expectations have been met. They are also asked to complete the Monash Canine Personality Questionnaire- revised, the Monash Dog-Owner Relationship Survey, an activities with dogs survey and a 10-item human personality questionnaire.

For a link to the survey please visit <http://coldfusion.its.monash.edu.au/med/spppm/questionnaires/jley/>

and if your dog is 18 months you are encouraged to take part.



## Farm Animal Research Planning

Scientists differ as to how animal welfare should be judged according to AWSC Director, Paul Hemsworth.

Some argue that it should be by an assessment of biological functions, some by measuring animals feelings, others by observing the expression of "normal" behaviours and still others by a combination of all three.

Given that governments, livestock producers, animal welfare organisations, consumers and the general public need an objective, evidence based assessment of animal welfare, further research into animal welfare methodology is of the highest priority.

Noel Maughan, (AWSC Advisory Committee), writes that this was one of the conclusions to come out of the AWSC farm animal research planning day held at Attwood on 5th December which was attended by a wide cross section of representatives from the production industries, government, animal welfare organisations and AWSC researchers.

Short presentations were given on current and recently completed research as well as on research projects currently under consideration.

Other areas that were considered high priority for further research related to the importance of good stockmanship and how it can be measured, the care and transport of bobby calves and the identification and assessment of community attitudes and consumer responses to animal welfare initiatives. For further information, please contact Jeremy Skuse, [jskuse@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:jskuse@unimelb.edu.au)

## Seminar Series 2008

Our seminar series for 2008 was been extremely well supported and the seminars covered a very wide range of topics pertinent to **Animal Welfare**.

We have been extremely fortunate to have been able to experience expert, interesting and provoking presentations delivered by locally and internationally recognised leaders in the field.

Please find listed below a full list of our seminars along with links to presentations and proceedings.

### **December**

#### **AWSC Farm Animal Research Planning Day**

##### **Proceedings:**

[AWSC Farm Animal Research Planning Day](#)

##### **Presentations:**

[Animal Welfare Science Centre](#)

[Australian Wool Innovation](#)

*Meat and Livestock Australia (no written presentation)*

[Dairy Australia](#)

[Australian Egg Corporation Ltd](#)

[Australian Pork Ltd](#)

[Bureau of Animal Welfare](#)

[Animals Australia](#)

[RSPCA \(Vic\)](#)

### **October**

##### **Presentations:**

Craig Johnson, Massey University

["The role of electroencephalography in animal welfare research"](#)

David Adams

["Physiological aspects of humane killing in animals"](#)

### **August**

#### **Animal Companions for Life**

##### **Proceedings:**

[Animal companions for life](#)

### **July**

#### **Dairy cow welfare: Solutions for current problems**

##### **Presentation:**

John Webster, Emeritus Professor of Animal Husbandry, The University of Bristol, UK

["Dairy cow welfare: Solutions for current problems"](#)

[www.animalwelfare.net.au](http://www.animalwelfare.net.au)



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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](mailto:awsc-info@unimelb.edu.au)

Quoting "remove" in the subject line.

## Seminars (cont)

### **May**

#### **Remote sensing**

##### **Presentations:**

Ian McCauley, DPI Victoria

*["Remote monitoring of livestock: Wireless and the Wii - improving livestock welfare"](#)*

Andrew Bubb, Desert Knowledge CRC

*["Remote management of cattle in central Australia. Current applications and opportunities for the future"](#)*

Tim Stockman, Stockman Electronics

*["The physical limitations of wireless sensing technologies to monitor livestock"](#)*

Greg Cronin, DPI Victoria (now University of Sydney)

*["Using machine vision \(automatic video image analysis\) to monitor hens in cages"](#)*

### **March**

#### **Theme: Duty of Care**

##### **Presentations**

Alistair Lawrence Head of Animal Welfare, Scottish Agricultural College

*["Improving public attitudes and behaviour to animals"](#)*

Grahame Coleman, Animal Welfare Science Centre, Monash University

*["Public education"](#)*

#### **Livestock export**

##### **Presentation:**

Prof Clive Phillips, Centre for Animal Welfare & Ethics

*["Welfare aspects of the live export of sheep and cattle"](#)*