

# POSITION STATEMENTS

## AABP Principles of Animal Welfare

Bovine veterinarians recognize our profession's unique and integral role in the welfare of farmed cattle. Bovine veterinarians are expected to simultaneously represent the individual and herd welfare, the economic and production interests of producers and consumer concerns. We take this role seriously and it is the professional duty of the members of the American Association of Bovine Practitioners to implement only necessary procedures and to perform them humanely, educate and work with livestock owners to incorporate welfare concerns into all management decisions, and to prevent, recognize, and correct cruelty, abuse or neglect of animals. By applying the following principles, veterinarians will help the livestock community provide the optimal and appropriate care and wellbeing to their cattle and insure that cattle are treated with dignity and respect.

The AABP believes that:

1. Humane care and handling of all animals is a key commitment made by the veterinary profession. This includes both treating animals humanely and ensuring that other do so also.
2. Determining what is humane and appropriate animal care is based on science. However, philosophical and ethical considerations are recognized and may be incorporated in the decision making process.
3. The AABP supports the meaningful use of animals for the benefit of society through food, fiber, recreation, research, and teaching.
4. The essence of animal welfare lies with the animal handler.

AABP Individual members role:

1. Perform all procedures humanely
2. Provide the advice, information and technology required by the livestock owner to incorporate animal welfare concerns into all management decisions.
3. Recognize, correct and prevent cruelty, abuse or neglect of animals.
4. Provide information and correct misinformation about animal agriculture.
5. Improve understanding between those with conflicting views and values regarding the use of animals.

AABP Organization Role:

1. Provide members with opportunities to become informed about animal welfare issues.
2. Represent bovine practitioners in co-operation with national, regional and local veterinary organizations.
3. Identify areas requiring more research and support such research.
4. Seek opportunities to work with agricultural groups educating the public about modern agriculture.
5. Contribute to the development and implementation of codes of practice by the cattle industries.
6. Work with the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) to review and improve position statements.

(Approved by the AABP Board of Directors, February 1992.)  
(Amended on recommendation of the Animal Welfare Committee  
by the AABP Board of Directors, September 2004)  
Amended on recommendation of the Animal Welfare Committee  
by the AABP Board of Directors, September 2005)

## **AABP Position Statement on Disabled Cattle**

The AABP recommends that disabled cattle be handled humanely in all situations.

- **Ambulatory Cattle**

If an otherwise healthy bovine animal has been recently injured, and the animal is ambulatory, it should be treated, shipped directly to a state or federally inspected slaughter plant, humanely slaughtered on the farm (where state laws permit) or euthanized. Injured ambulatory animals should not be commingled with other animals during transport.

Care should be taken during loading, unloading, and handling of these animals to prevent further injury or stress.

- **Non ambulatory Cattle**

Non-ambulatory animals must not be dragged while alive.\*

*If a bovine animal is down on a farm*

If the animal is not in extreme distress and continues to eat and drink, the producer should contact a veterinarian for assistance and provide food, water, shelter, and appropriate nursing care to keep the animal comfortable.

If the animal is in extreme distress and the condition is obviously irreversible, the animal should be euthanized immediately or humanely slaughtered on the farm (where state laws permit).

*If a bovine animal is down at a nonterminal market (e.g., sale yard or auction)*

If the animal is not in extreme distress, but is disabled, treatment measures should be initiated. If and when it becomes apparent the animal will not recover, it should be euthanized.\*

If the animal is in extreme distress or the condition is obviously irreversible, the animal should be euthanized immediately.

*If a bovine animal is down at a terminal market (e.g., slaughterhouse or packing plant)*

The animal should be euthanized immediately.

(Endorsed and accepted by Board action on recommendation of the AABP Animal Welfare Committee, September 2002)

(\*Additions approved by Board action on recommendation of the AABP Animal Welfare Committee, September 2005)

(Position statement limited to cattle on recommendation of the AABP Animal Welfare Committee, September 2006)

## **AABP Position Statement on the Care of Down/Disabled Animals**

(Superseded by acceptance and endorsement of the AVMA Position Statement on Disabled Livestock, September 2002)

In situations involving down and disabled livestock, one or more of the following conditions may exist: the

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animal has a chronic condition: the animal has recently received an animal health product; conditions for humane loading of the animal are not available; location of animal does not allow quick transport to a veterinary medical or processing facility; facilities at the veterinary clinic do not allow the animal to be humanely unloaded or treated on the vehicle; facilities at the processing plant do not allow antemortem inspection and stunning prior to unloading or human unloading.

If any of these conditions exist, the animal should be humanely euthanitized and disposed of in accordance with federal, state and local regulations.

If an animal becomes down or disabled, early veterinary intervention to obtain an accurate diagnosis and prognosis, before treatment is initiated, can improve treatment response or prevent the loss of the salvage value of the animal.

If the following criteria are met, transport may be considered.

In the case of transport for veterinary care, the animal:

- can be humanely loaded and transported to a veterinary facility and
- can be humanely unloaded or treated on the vehicle.

In the case of transport for marketing purposes, the animal:

- is known to be free of conditions that would make it unfit for human consumption, including violative residues;
- can be humanely loaded and transported directly to a processing facility; and
- can be inspected antemortem and stunned prior to unloading or humanely unloaded.

In all other situations, the animal should be humanely euthanitized and disposed of in accordance with federal, state and local regulations.

(Approved by the AABP Board of Directors, September 1994.)

(Superseded by Board endorsement and acceptance of AVMA Position Statement on down/disabled livestock, September 2002.)

## **Aminoglycoside Use in Cattle**

The American Association of Bovine Practitioners, being cognizant of food safety issues and concerns, encourages its members to refrain from the intramuscular, subcutaneous, intravenous or intramammary\* extra label use of the aminoglycoside class of antibiotics in bovines.

Approved by the AABP Board of Directors, December 1994.

\*Updated and approved by the AABP Board of Directors, September 2005

## **Antimicrobial Susceptibility Position Statements**

### **AABP POSITION ON NEW ANTIMICROBIAL APPROVAL**

WHEREAS the AABP is aware that the FDA-CVM is a public health organization that has as its highest priority the safety of food originating from animal sources, and

WHEREAS the AABP is committed to assuring beef and milk safety and encourages the safe and wholesome production of beef and milk, and

WHEREAS the AABP believes that the prudent use of antimicrobials in beef and dairy cattle is necessary to relieve animal pain and suffering, and

WHEREAS the prudent use of antimicrobials promotes livestock health and may minimize the shedding of zoonotic bacteria in the environment and ultimately the food chain, and  
WHEREAS the AABP is fully committed to prudent drug use in compliance with AMDUCA and developing guidelines to promote this prudent drug use, and recognizes the continued obligation to educate AABP members and their clients regarding prudent drug use,

BE IT RESOLVED that the AABP encourages the FDA-CVM to adhere to the principles of The Drug Availability Act and supports the approval of new antimicrobials for use in cattle that have been evaluated as safe and efficacious through a science based, peer review process.

#### **AABP POSITION ON MONITORING ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE**

WHEREAS the AABP is committed to assuring beef and milk safety and encourages the safe and wholesome production of beef and milk, and

WHEREAS the AABP believes that the prudent use of antimicrobials in cattle is necessary to relieve animal pain and suffering, and

WHEREAS the relationship of antimicrobial usage in cattle and decreased antimicrobial susceptibility in human pathogens has not been established, and

WHEREAS the AABP recognizes the need for the development of baseline data through a national antimicrobial resistance monitoring program to augment the research on what constitutes antimicrobial resistance, and

WHEREAS the AABP agrees that antimicrobial resistance should be addressed in the drug approval process through reasonable and scientific procedures,

BE IT RESOLVED that the AABP encourages the FDA-CVM to establish a working group that includes external expertise from a broad range of fields, including veterinary epidemiology, pharmacology, microbiology, the pharmaceutical industry, and veterinary practice groups (including those in production medicine), to evaluate methods for determining the potential for antimicrobial resistance development in human pathogens due to the use of antimicrobials in food animals. The goals of the working group should include:

To identify factors contributing to emergence and selection for antimicrobial resistance.

To determine acceptable methods for use by FDA-CVM to conduct pre-approval risk assessments and post-approval susceptibility monitoring.

To determine what shifts in MIC breakpoints for a particular zoonotic pathogen constitute a threat to public health.

(Approved by Board action March, 1999)  
(Prepared and presented by Bob Smith)

## **TAIL DOCKING POSITION STATEMENT**

The AABP opposes the routine tail docking of cattle. Current scientific literature indicates that routine tail docking provides no benefit to the animal.

(Approved by the AABP Board of Directors on March 13, 2010)  
(This statement supersedes all previous statements)

The AABP is not aware of sufficient scientific evidence in the literature to support tail docking in cattle. However, if tail docking is deemed as necessary for proper care and management of production animals in certain conditions, veterinarians should counsel clients on proper procedures, benefits, and risks.

(Approved by the AABP Board of Directors on recommendation  
of the AABP Animal Welfare Committee, September 2005  
this statement supersedes all former statements)

The AABP Animal Welfare Committee recognizes that tail docking in cattle is an increasingly common management practice. The Committee is not aware of information, clearly supporting or condemning tail docking, that is based on well-designed and executed research studies that use scientifically valid methods with clinically relevant outcomes reported in peer-reviewed publications. The Committee encourages AABP members to collaborate with scientists to generate such information. The Committee reached consensus that if the procedure is carried out, it should be done as young as practical using appropriate techniques.

(Draft submitted to the AABP Board of Directors, September, 1997)  
(Final approval 12/15/98 following comment period by membership)  
(Submitted by Mike Anderson, Chair, Animal Welfare Committee)

## **AABP POSITION STATEMENT ON DISCLOSURE OF BVD PI ANIMALS**

The cattle industry has a moral, ethical and potentially legal obligation not to sell known diseased or damaged animals to other parties without full disclosure. Responsible disposition of animals persistently infected with BVDV (PIs) is an important component of BVD control.

The dilemma of how to deal with known PI cattle becomes more critical as BVD testing becomes more widespread. Appropriate disposition of known PI cattle must take into account the adverse impact these cattle have on the health, welfare, and the economic return of other cattle and cattle operations they may expose to BVDV.

It is widely recognized that a PI animal is defective and once confirmed, the PI status should be thereafter disclosed – as exposure to these cattle has health ramifications for all cattle, especially those intended for reproductive purposes. The American Association of Bovine Practitioners strongly opposes marketing or movement of BVD PI animals in any manner that potentially exposes at-risk cattle.

(Board approved on recommendation of ad hoc BVD Committee, Scott Smith, chair -September 2006)

## **AABP POSITION STATEMENT ON PRODUCTS APPROVED FOR USE IN CATTLE**

AABP supports the use of products or procedures that positively impact food safety as well as the health, well being and productivity of the animal. These products or procedures must be based on sound science and must have been reviewed and approved by the appropriate regulatory agencies.

(Board approved -April 2007)