

AABP POSITION STATEMENT

AABP PRINCIPLES OF ANIMAL WELFARE



Bovine veterinarians are in key positions to promote humane treatment and welfare of cattle. Practical application and assessment of cattle welfare must consider biological function, affective state (mental state including fear and distress), and natural living. (Fraser et al., 1997)

By following these guiding principles, veterinarians will encourage the livestock community to provide the best care and welfare for their cattle and help ensure that cattle are treated with dignity and respect.

Guiding Principles:

1. The AABP supports the humane use of cattle for the benefit of society through food, fiber, recreation, research, and teaching. The AABP recognizes our ethical obligation to strive for optimum animal welfare in all these situations.
2. The AABP promotes the humane care and handling of cattle from birth to slaughter through advocacy and education. This should be the hallmark of the veterinary profession.
3. The AABP supports the World Organization for Animal Health (2008) definition that an animal is in good welfare if it is:
 - Healthy
 - Comfortable
 - Well nourished
 - Safe
 - Able to express innate behavior
 - Not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear, and distress
4. The AABP believes that management systems, medical practices and surgical procedures should minimize pain, discomfort and distress, utilizing current scientific and expert opinion where available.

The Role of the AABP as an Organization in Promoting Animal Welfare:

1. Provide members with opportunities and resources to become informed and remain current on issues of cattle welfare
2. Represent bovine practitioners through the development of policies and position statements related to cattle welfare
3. Identify issues in bovine practice and husbandry that could benefit from additional research and seek input and expertise of those trained in animal behavior, animal welfare, neuroscience, and pharmacology.
4. Facilitate education of the general public including students, producer groups, agricultural groups, and other professional organizations, on methods to optimize the welfare of cattle.
5. Contribute to the development and implementation of codes of practice for the humane care and handling of cattle.

The Role of Individual AABP Members in Promoting Animal Welfare:

1. Always consider the welfare of cattle when practicing veterinary medicine, including management, surgical and medical procedures, and euthanasia
2. Remain current regarding the science and understanding of animal welfare
3. Provide cattle owners and handlers with advice, information and technology necessary to optimize the welfare of cattle in their production systems.
4. Recognize, correct, and prevent cruelty, abuse or neglect of animals.
5. Improve understanding between those with conflicting views and values regarding the use of animals.

References:

Fraser, D., D. M. Weary, E.A. Pajor, and B.N. Milligan. 1997. A scientific conception of animal welfare that reflects ethical concerns. *Anim. Welf.* 6:187-205.

World Organizations for Animal Health. 2008. Introduction to the recommendations for animal welfare. Article 7.1.1. Pages 235-236 in *Terrestrial Animal Health Code 2008*. World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), Paris, France.

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