A Chronology of Significant Events, Meetings, and Publications Concerning the Welfare of Laboratory and Farm Animals

Andrew N. Rowan
doesn’t mean that all the facilities involved are “unhealthy,” as the Journal said. Most of the violations we find are minor, and only a small number of them involve unhealthy conditions or inhumane practices. So, while unhealthy kennels exist, they represent a small percentage of the total and most licensed facilities meet our requirements.

APHIS, like other agencies involved in enforcing federal regulations, is strongly affected by the era we are now entering, in which tight limits are being placed on funds available for enforcement activities. We will depend increasingly on help from concerned citizens to improve conditions for animals. Particularly need the active support of both humane organizations and industry groups to raise the standards of dog-breeding kennels.

We stress this point continually in meetings with breeders, wholesalers, transporters, and retailers who make up the marketing chain of puppies sold as pets, as much as Ms. Brown. Some disparaging remarks made by members of the Midwest Professional Dog Distributors Association at the July 10 industry meeting in Kansas City. However, we know these remarks were made in the heat of debate as they are certainly not to be taken as the official policy of this industry group. The leaders of this organization have taken the basically positive approach cited in our article, once they understood that APHIS inspectors are a resource for improving the industry, not an enemy.

The MPPDA has strong leadership from dog brokers—the people who buy puppies in the Midwest and ship them to urban centers. We have had positive assurance from these people that they will work for a steady upgrading of the puppies they buy. They also are working with the owners of retail pet shop owners to educate them against buying inferior or poorly cared-for puppies. We see evidence that the industry is swaying to our support, and this development is a major reason we hope our society will eliminate the substandard breeding kennels that have received and deserved bad publicity.

There are a number of ways in which humane societies also can get involved in improving conditions at dog kennels. First, humanitarians living in urban areas can suggest to pet shop owners that they stop buying substandard puppies. Pet shop owners who see unsatisfactory animals shipped in should insist that their broker eliminate the breeder who supplied them. And pet shop owners also should stop buying animals shipped in without USDA-approved dog tags or ear tattoos, since they are almost sure to come from an illicit source.

The 1976 amendments to the Animal Welfare Act strengthen the retailer’s hand in dealing with brokers. Puppies may not be shipped COD to pet stores without assurance from the shipper that return transportation and interim care will be provided for unacceptable animals. So if puppies arrive sick or in poor condition, they can be refused without fear that the animals will be abandoned. The store owner can call upon the nearest APHIS office to help arrange for the care of unacceptable puppies whose fate seems uncertain.

Humanitarians living near puppy producers also could help us solve another problem, which has not been discussed much in public. Some breeding enterprises are run by elderly people with limited income, who are too infirm to provide proper care for the animals. We are facing the uncomfortable decision of either being inhumane toward these elderly people by cutting off their major source of income or of being inhumane toward them by condoning the substandard treatment they receive. Such cases cry out for volunteers who like to work with animals and would like to provide a double act of charity—toward the hard-pressed aged and to the dogs they keep. We would be extremely pleased to have Ms. Brown and other humanely motivated people in her area volunteer to help alleviate this problem.

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15 January 1981
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Universities have begun to establish courses specifically on the subject of animal rights and its social implications. Among the first in the U.S. were North Carolina State University, Moorhead State College (Minn.) and Colorado State University. The course at Colorado State University is now required for students in the veterinary school and a similar course has been set up for students at the state veterinary school in Michigan. Another significant development was a meeting organized by the Yale University School of Forestry and Environmental Studies in February 1980 to discuss the role of animal welfare in a proposed graduate program on the interaction of society and animals, particularly wildlife. This graduate program has now been funded for the years 1981-1986 by the Geraldine Dodge Foundation.

B. Government Legislation and Regulation

(i) Laboratory Animals

In 1876, the United Kingdom passed the Cruelty to Animals Act, the first bill to regulate the use of animals in experiments. Over the next 100 years, most industrialized countries passed some type of legislation dealing with laboratory animals, but there has been a significant increase in government activity in this sphere over the past fifteen years.

Britain: In 1965, the Littlewood Committee in Britain reported on the workings of the Cruelty to Animals Act, 1876 and concluded that although the legislation had worked in principle, some major changes were necessary. However, only a few changes were made at the administrative level because the U.K. government did not consider the issue to be particularly important. In 1977, a radical change in the attitude of the Labor government was observed. The Prime Minister stated in Parliament at the time in the House of Commons that it was his intention to encourage the rapid development and use of alternatives to laboratory animals. In 1978, this was followed by a letter to all licensed researchers from the Home Office (which administers the British 1876 Act) strongly urging them to use alternatives wherever feasible, to develop new alternatives and to publish the results of such research so that their colleagues might make use of any new developments.

The Labour Party then issued a policy document on animal protection which contained some wide-ranging proposals on both laboratory animals and farm animals. The British government (The Labour Party, 1978) and both the Conservatives and Liberals have followed suit. In 1979, two bills were introduced into the British Parliament to revise the 1876 Act. The first, introduced by Lord Halsbury in the House of Lords, was subjected to extensive review and revision (House of Lords, 1980). Since the Select Committee contained articulate representatives from both the research and animal welfare communities, the final product represents a workable political compromise. Unfortunately, the current Conservative government is stalling on its election promise to introduce new laboratory animal legislation and is resisting pressure to accept the House of Lords bill. The second bill, introduced by Peter Fry, was talked out in the House of Commons. The Conservative government has, however, given more power to the Advisory Committee to the Cruelty to Animals Act (1876) and also to the Animal Welfare Council.

United States: In 1966, the Animal Welfare Act (PL 890-544) was passed, covering the handling and care of cats, dogs, primates, guinea pigs, hamsters, and rabbits used in experimentation. The Act specifically excludes actual experimental procedures from its jurisdiction although a 1970 amendment (PL 91-579) requires research workers to use anesthetics and analgesics where these will not interfere with the results of the experiment. In addition, all registered laboratories now have to file a report outlining the number of animals used (PL 94-279). At the beginning of 1979, new guidelines for the use of laboratory animals were issued by the National Institutes of Health (1978). These required, inter alia, that scientists make use of statistical, computer and in vitro systems to reduce their requirement for laboratory animals and also that anyone who did (or could) not comply with the new guidelines would not be eligible for an NIH grant. A move to make the NIH guidelines into official regulations was shelved after the personal intervention of senior NIH administrators. However, there is no doubt that there will be further moves in these fields. The U.S. Congressional Clearinghouse on the Future has noted animal legislation as an area of increasing activity over the next few years.

Four laboratory animal bills were introduced into the 96th Congress (1979/80)—three on the topic of alternatives and one (H.R. 6487) seeking to amend the Animal Welfare Act. The first (H.R. 282) called for $12 million for research into alternatives. The second (H.R. 4479) mandated the establishment of a commission to investigate the topic. The third (H.R. 4805) mandated the establishment of a National Center for Alternatives Research and reallocation of 30-50% of animal research funds to the development of alternatives. Members of Congress have received thousands of letters (some individuals have received over 600 letters) pressing for passage of H.R. 4805. The General Accounting Office has produced a report on the subject and pressure has been applied to the National Institutes of Health to initiate some constructive action. Responding to congressional pressure, the NIH is planning to establish a national center for alternatives research.

In 1977, the Animal Welfare Protection Act which decrees, among other things, that animals should only be used if the desired results cannot be obtained by other means not involving animal experiments. In the early 1970’s, the Swedish Medical Research Council empowered a committee (now containing three lay members) to consider the ethical aspects of animal experiments funded by the Council (UFAW, 1977). A more recent law (1979) mandates the establishment of ethical committees at government research institutions to screen proposed research projects involving animals. The Swedish MRC has also established a committee on animal research which has a special subcommittee to review the concept of alternatives and to fund research in this area ($100,000 has been disbursed to date and a symposium on alternatives for DSO test is being planned.) In 1974, Norway passed an animal protection act which included a section regulating animal experimentation (UFAW, 1977). In 1977, the Netherlands passed a new law which specifically mentioned...
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The fourth bill (H.R. 6847) addressed the issue of pain and distress in animal research and set forth proposed mechanisms for regulating experiments which could cause suffering.

Europe: In 1968, France published a Decree (No. 68-139) regulating experiments on animals. More recently, a member of the Chamber of Deputies, Monsieur Pierre Micaux, conducted an investigation of animal welfare issues at the request of President Giscard d’Estaing and produced a report with recommendations for future action (Micaux, 1980). In 1972, West Germany passed an Animal Protection Act which decrees, among other things, that animals should only be used if the desired results cannot be obtained by other means not involving animal experiments. In the early 1970’s, the Swedish Medical Research Council empowered a committee (now containing three lay members) to consider the ethical aspects of animal experiments funded by the Council (UFAW, 1977). A more recent law (1979) mandates the establishment of ethical committees at government research institutions to screen proposed research projects involving animals. The Swedish MRC has also established a committee on animal research which has a special subcommittee to review the concept of alternatives and to fund research in this area ($100,000 has been disbursed to date and a symposium on the D50 test is being planned). In 1974, Norway passed an Animal Protection Act which included a section regulating animal experimentation (UFAW, 1977). In 1977, the Netherlands passed a new law which specifically mentioned...
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(ii) Farm Animals

Farm animals have, on the whole, not been subject to the same attention and consideration accorded to laboratory animals. In Britain, they were protected by the same anti-cruelty legislation which covered other types of animals. However, the development of intensive farming systems involving the close confinement of the animals has led to the drawing up of specific regulations and guidelines in a number of European countries.

The move to develop government regulation began (as is often the case) with a trail-blazing book by Ruth Harrison (1964) which described the development of confinement systems in Britain. As a result, the government set up a committee which produced the Brambell Report (1965), which has become a standard reference for those discussing farm animal welfare. In 1968, the Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act was passed in Britain which made “unnecessary distress” as well as “unnecessary pain” an offense in the treatment and husbandry of farm animals. Although this theoretically includes the idea of behavioral stress, in practice only observed physical suffering is taken into account by the enforcement officers. However, behavioral stress is taken into consideration by at least two other European statutes and treaties. The West German Animal Protection Act (1972) specifies that the Act shall serve to protect the well-being of the animals, and “well-being” is defined as including behavioral factors. The maintenance of normal behavior is one of the goals of the Council of Europe’s Convention on the Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes (1976). This Convention has been ratified by many European countries.

Other significant government actions in Europe include Sweden’s regulations requiring that new husbandry equipment be properly tested for both effectiveness and humaneness before it can be marketed, as well as initiatives elsewhere calling for the banning of battery cages and moves to label eggs which have been produced in “humane” systems. Recently, a suit seeking the abolition of battery cages for laying hens was brought under the 1972 West German Act and the judge found battery cages to be illegal. The ruling has been appealed, but in the meantime, the West German Minister of Agriculture has asked the EEC to ban battery cages throughout the Community. Egg producers throughout the EEC are naturally very concerned about these developments.

C. Scientific Publications and Activities

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In the early 1900’s, the Research Defence Society was formed in the United Kingdom to defend the use of laboratory animals by biomedical researchers. In 1946, a similar organization was established in the United States (in response to the perceived antivivisection stance of the powerful Hearst publishing group) under the name of the National Society for Medical Research. Apart from the work of the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare, established in 1926, there was little scientific counterbalance to either of these groups, most of the opposition coming from antivivisection groups consisting primarily of non-scientists. In 1959, UFAW sponsored a book by Russell and Burch (1959) on The Principles of Humane Experimental Technique which enunciated the principle of Replacement, Reduction and Refinement (the 3Rs) to reduce the amount of stress suffered by laboratory animals. UFAW has also held a number of meetings on the subject of animal experimentation and has published a standard handbook on the humane care of laboratory animals (UFAW, 1976). Recently, there has been significant and rapid growth of scientific interest in the subject of laboratory animal use and in the idea of alternatives. An abstract service on alternatives to laboratory animals (ATLA Abstracts) was started in 1973 by a U.K. advocate group, and for the Replacement of Animals in Medical Experiments (FRAME), and about 100 scientific libraries now subscribe to it.

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The subject of animal rights is also being considered. For example, at the 1978 annual meeting of the American Association of Laboratory Animal Science, one of the researchers speaking on nonhuman primate availability directed his audience to pay attention to the topic of animal rights as it would increasingly impinge upon its activities. In April 1979, the College of Medicine in Cincinnati held a meeting on animal rights, alternatives to laboratory animals and other ideas (The Cincinnati group holds a laboratory animal science meeting every year which is always well-attended as they have a reputation for selecting topical
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subjects.) In 1980, the topic has been the focus of several scientific meetings, including one organized by the Association for the Study of Animal Behavior (U.K.) and the American Psychological Association. An analysis of some of the issues and a code of ethics resulting from a closed conference in France have just appeared in the Journal of Medical Primatology (9:1, 1980). Scientific journals in general are beginning to carry more articles on the topic of animal research and animal rights (e.g., New England Journal of Medicine 302:115, 1980). There are now two academic publications available which deal specifically with animal welfare topics: Animal Regulation and Studies and this journal. In October 1977, the Federation of American Scientists published a newsletter devoted to a report which castigated scientists for taking so little interest in animal welfare issues. The EAS report led to the formation of the Scientists’ Center for Animal Welfare. This organization and the Institute for the Study of Animal Problems (established by the Humane Society of the United States in 1975) together provide a nucleus of technical expertise as well as a platform for debate by concerned scientists.

(iii) Farm Animals

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Some of the recent publications on this subject include Kiley-Worthington (1977) on behavioral problems of farm animals and Folsch (1978) on ethology and the ethics of farm animal production. Singer and Mason (1980) have produced a popular book examining farm animal production systems, while a more detailed analysis by Fox (1981) is due out shortly.

Two years ago, a major meeting in Madrid on ethological and economic considerations of farm animal production generated an initiative to establish a world committee on farm animal welfare (British already has a Farm Animal Welfare Committee, as does the European Economic Community.) The Association for Animal Science held a special session at its annual meeting in Tucson, Arizona (1979) on the regulation of farm animals used in research and followed it up in 1980 with a seminar on behavioral research and farm animal welfare. In Europe, a major meeting on the welfare of farm animals under intensive systems was held in Amsterdam in April 1978 (Elsevier, 1980). This meeting was sponsored by all the leading veterinary, animal science and animal protection societies, and demonstrates the extent of dialogue existing in Europe at present. Dialogue in the U.S. between animal science and animal protection groups is now beginning to develop as shown by the growing interest among professional groups in questions relating to farm animal welfare. A recent issue of the agribusiness newspaper Feedstuffs (September 8, 1980) contained an editorial and several articles with the message that farm animal welfare would be a major issue for the 80’s. Since those articles appeared, the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology, a prestigious policy analysis group, has set up a task force to examine the issue, and the U.S. Animal Health Association has decided that the topic deserves serious consideration after all.

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Conclusion

One aspect of the animal welfare movement which has not been touched upon in the chronology is the growth of activist groups who see themselves as defenders of animal rights. Many of the people involved in these groups have either graduated from the civil rights, women’s rights, and peace movements, or have studied their tactics and are adopting some or all of their methods. Groups in New York City have played significant roles in halting a cat sex research project in New York (Wade, 1976), getting Amnesty International to drop their support for a research project investigating the effects of electric shocks (simulated torture episodes) on pigs, and having the Metcalf-Hatch pound seizure law in New York state repealed.

A more ambitious project, aimed at effecting a major change in toxicity testing approaches, has also been very successful. The goal of a coalition of over four hundred groups to end the Draize eye irritancy test in rabbits has almost been achieved in that both government and industry are re-evaluating the test to see if it is really necessary and in the meantime, attempting to modify the test to make it more humane. In addition, Revlon has given a $750,000 grant to Rockefeller University to seek a nonanimal alternative to the Draize (See News and Review).

In the United Kingdom, there have been numerous raids on laboratory facilities by a group known as the Animal Liberation Front. In general, their activities have not received wide press coverage, but the problem was considered serious enough for the Research Defence Society to issue a booklet advising their members on how to improve laboratory security. An activist element within the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is seeking to radicalize the policies of that organization (Wilkins, 1980). Networks of activists have been established such as Co-ordinating Animal Welfare in the U.K. and Animal Rights Network in the U.S. Both organizations perceive the animal liberation struggle as part of a wider political movement to defend all exploited beings (Mason, 1981) and to challenge modern institutions responsible for perpetuating such exploitation.

While it is unclear what the next ten years will produce for animals, one thing is certain: Animal welfare groups, be they perceived as activist or establishment, will become increasingly sophisticated in the methods employed to highlight the plight of animals, and more effective in securing change.

References


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For a long time, UFAW was the only organization dealing specifically with farm animal welfare. It held a number of symposia on the topic and produced a handbook on farm animal welfare which has become a standard reference text (UFAW, 1971). It also sponsored Ruth Harrison's work, which led to her publication of Animal Machines (1964). However, greater interest in farm animal welfare is now being shown by others who deal directly with farm animals or who study animal production science.

Some of the recent publications on this subject include Kiley-Worthington (1977) on behavioral problems of farm animals and Folsch (1978) on ethology and the ethics of farm animal production. Singer and Mason (1980) have produced a popular book examining farm animal production systems, while a more detailed analysis by Fox (1981) is due out shortly.

Two years ago, a major meeting in Madrid on ethological and economic considerations of farm animal production generated an initiative to establish a world committee on farm animal welfare (Britain already has a Farm Animal Welfare Committee, as does the European Economic Community.) The Association for Animal Science held a special session at its annual meeting in Tucson, Arizona (1979) on the regulation of farm animals used in research and followed it up in 1980 with a seminar on behavioral research and farm animal welfare. In Europe, a major meeting on the welfare of farm animals under intensive systems was held in Amsterdam in April 1978 (Elsevier, 1980). This meeting was sponsored by all the leading veterinary, animal science and animal protection societies, and demonstrates the extent of dialogue existing in Europe at present. Dialogue in the U.S. between animal science and animal protection groups is now beginning to develop as shown by the growing interest among professional groups in questions relating to farm animal welfare. A recent issue of the agribusiness newspaper Feedstuffs (September 8, 1980) contained an editorial and several articles with the message that farm animal welfare would be a major issue for the 80's. Since those articles appeared, the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology, a prestigious policy analysis group, has set up a task force to examine the issue, and the U.S. Animal Health Association has decided that the topic deserves serious consideration after all.

References


Conclusion

One aspect of the animal welfare movement which has not been touched upon in the chronology is the growth of activist groups who see themselves as defenders of animal rights. Many of the people involved in these groups have either graduated from the civil rights, women's rights, and peace movements, or have studied their tactics and are adopting some or all of their methods. Groups in New York City have played significant roles in halting a cat sex research project in New York (Wade, 1976), getting Amnesty International to drop their support for a research project investigating the effects of electric shocks (simulated torture episodes) on pigs, and having the Metcalf-Hatch pound seizure law in New York state repealed.

A more ambitious project, aimed at effecting a major change in toxicity testing approaches, has also been very successful. The goal of a coalition of over four hundred groups to end the Draize eye irritancy test in rabbits has almost been achieved in that both government and industry are re-evaluating the test to see if it is really necessary and in the meantime, attempting to modify the test to make it more humane. In addition, Revlon has given a $750,000 grant to Rockefeller University to seek a nonanimal alternative to the Draize (See News and Review).

In the United Kingdom, there have been numerous raids on laboratory facilities by a group known as the Animal Liberation Front. In general, their activities have not received wide press coverage, but the problem was considered serious enough for the Research Defence Society to issue a booklet advising their members on how to improve laboratory security. An activist element within the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is seeking to radicalize the policies of that organization (Wilkins, 1980). Networks of activists have been established such as Co-ordinating Animal Welfare in the U.K. and Animal Rights Network in the U.S. Both organizations perceive the animal liberation struggle as part of a wider political movement to defend all exploited beings (Mason, 1981) and to challenge modern institutions responsible for perpetuating such exploitation.

While it is unclear what the next ten years will produce for animals, one thing is certain: Animal welfare groups, be they perceived as activist or establishment, will become increasingly sophisticated in the methods employed to highlight the plight of animals, and more effective in securing change.
NEWS and REVIEW

COMpanion ANIMALS

Progress in Sheltering and Control

The Humane Society News (2011)46, 1981 reported the following examples of progress in animal sheltering and control, measured by a reduction of the reported number of homeless animals turned into shelters in various communities.

The Humane Society of Huron Valley (Ann Arbor, Michigan) handled almost 19,000 animals in 1975, and reduced that amount to 12,000 in 1979. The number of animals sterilized annually was cut almost in half, dropping from 12,573 to 9,986. The society credits four surrounding counties had increases in both categories in the same period. The difference is that HSHV started programs in public education and law enforcement and opened a spay-neuter clinic in 1975. The clinic performed 4,200 surgeries in 1979.

The Tarrant County Humane Society (Fort Worth, Texas) opened a spay clinic in a low-income neighborhood in October 1978 and has sterilized more than 6,000 animals there. The number of puppies and kittens coming into the shelter has been reduced by 50%.

At the Peninsula Humane Society (San Mateo, California), the number of dogs handled dropped from 21,000 in 1974 to 12,000 in 1979; the number of cats decreased from 15,000 to 9,000. The society’s self-supporting spay/neuter clinic sterilized 20,000 animals between 1973 and 1979.

The Vancouver Regional Branch of the British Columbia SPCA euthanized 21,000 animals in 1979 compared to 80,000 in 1976. Again, a program of sterilization and education seems to have made the difference since nearby municipalities without such a program reported an increase in animals euthanized in the same time period.

The number of animals sheltered annually by the Western Pennsylvania Humane Society (Pittsburgh) decreased by 2,288 dogs and 4,234 cats between 1970-71 and 1978-79. The society credits the decrease to more adoptions, better education programs, improved shelter facilities, and a neutering program through which 21,000 animals have been sterilized since 1966.

Only two states have laws making sterilization of animals adopted from shelters mandatory. California requires all adopted cats to be neutered, while Florida extends the requirements to all animals adopted from shelters.

LAB ANIMALS

AAALAC Chairman Deplores Lack of Controls on Animal Research

Professor Harold Feinberg of the University of Illinois School of Basic Medicine called for an end to cosmetics testing and all painful research on animals at a conference held at the Anti-Cruelty Society in Chicago in November 1980. Feinberg, who is also the current chairman of the American Association for the Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC), declared that "there must be rules [governing animal experimentation]." One of the things that is not permissible is to inflict 'pain.' Since AAALAC is one of the major pro-