LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Balance in Animal Welfare

Congratulations on the standard of quality set by the first issues of your new Journal. I was especially impressed with the balanced approach taken by the authors of the review articles as well as the editorial content you have provided.

While conducting research on livestock bruising, I became quite aware that much of the conflict that matters of animal welfare generate result from different perspectives of the participants. Animal “wel-farists” often criticize the dehorning of cattle. They are correctly upset at the suffering and pain which attend the bruising of cattle prior to slaughter. Both events are separated in space and time, but a tradeoff occurs between them. Dehorning cattle reduces bruising. From the perspective of the farmer, the balance is in favor of horn removal in spite of the criticism, because his loss can be most acute at the time of slaughter.

Since bruising is still one of the few objective measures of food animal abuse, it is hoped that further research will identify more factors where the balance of suffering and pain tilts in favor of the long-term welfare of the animal and its farmer. The review by Temple Grandin in the second issue of your Journal (1(2):121-137, 1980) does much to place the suffering and pain which attend the slaughtering of race horses is just another example of the empirical veterinary medicine which is so prevalently employed by racetrack practitioners.

Sincerely,

Robert O. Baker
411 N. 7th St.
St. Louis, MO 63101
10 April 1980

Dr. Maylin was referring to general claims by representatives of the American Association of Equine Practitioners that clinical trials have yielded evidence in support of furosemide therapy for equine epistaxis. The quotation was misleading in that it falsely implied that knowledge of and or participation in such trials by Dr. Maylin. We apologize. — Ed.

Efficacy of Furosemide in the Equine

An article appearing in the Int J Stud Anim Prob 1(1):53, 1980 entitled “Horse Racing and Drug Abuse” quotes Dr. George Maylin of Cornell University as stating that “in clinical trials, some, but not all ‘bleeders’ respond to furosemide therapy.”

I have recently completed an extensive literature search on the use of furosemide in the equine and am unaware of any clinical trials which have been conducted to determine the efficacy of furosemide in preventing epistaxis in the horse. Not only has there been a lack of experimental evidence of furosemide’s efficacy in preventing epistaxis, there seems to be no objective rationale for using a diuretic, such as furosemide, as a prophylaxis against epistaxis (pulmonary hemorrhage).

Unfortunately, furosemide treatment of race horses is just another example of the empirical veterinary medicine which is so prevalently employed by racetrack practitioners.

Sincerely,

H.R.C. Meischke MVSc, PhD, MRCVS, MASM
“Strath Allan”
Gundaroo NSW 2681
AUSTRALIA
30 April 1980

Although Temple Grandin cites the Australian studies as evidence for the significant role of horns in livestock bruising, she also states: “The number one cause of bruises on all types of livestock is rough, abusive handling which may account for up to 50% of all bruises” (p. 125). Clearly, this is a highly debatable subject, and we encourage letters as Dr. Meischke’s to help the Journal maintain a balanced approach — Ed.

EDITORIALS

The Journal and its Organization

Andrew N. Rowan, Editor-in-Chief

Five issues of the Journal have now appeared and it is perhaps appropriate at this juncture to share some of the comments we have received and to explain the different Journal departments and their intended functions.

Almost without exception, the general tenor of the comments received has been favorable. There was a certain amount of adverse reaction to the ‘boxiness’ of the first issue’s layout, and this, we hope, corrected in subsequent issues. The layout of the cover masthead will be changed for the second volume to accentuate the subject matter elements of the title rather than “International Journal.” We also intend to change the color of the cover page with the first issue of every new volume so that subscribers can discriminate between volumes with greater ease.

The initial issues of the Journal have depended heavily on solicited articles from selected authors, but this is beginning to change as more unsolicited articles being received for consideration. We hope that this trend will continue to gather momentum, especially now that the Journal is scheduled to be included in Current Contents. (Current Contents publishes article titles and authors’ addresses, its very wide circulation ensures that an article in a journal covered by Current Contents will get maximum exposure.) In addition, we hope that more dialogue will take place in the pages of the Journal. Much of the material that has appeared so far has had an animal welfare bias or has been prepared by authors with such a bias. It is important that the Journal not be perceived merely as a means of preaching to the converted, but rather as a forum for debate. However, it is not always easy to draw the line between mere difference of opinion or perception and factual error. Anyone who deals in controversial issues — and animal welfare topics certainly qualify for this label — recognizes that there can be very different perceptions of what is factually correct. It is therefore important for the readers to recognize our different approaches to different departments in the Journal.

Editorials are written by members of the editorial staff and editorial advisory board and are subject to only minor editorial changes. If the editors recognize a statement as blatantly incorrect, we will call it to the attention of the author, but will not change it without permission.

News and Review items are prepared by the editorial staff, and every effort is made to ensure their accuracy. Such items cover stories and articles of interest in a concise and informative manner with brief references as required. Occasionally, the News and Review format will expand to accommodate special features such as the Focus on Live Animals in Car Crash Studies in issue #4. These features, which can be written either by a member of the editorial staff or other qualified journalists, are meant to be analytical, as distinct from the straight reporting of News and Review, and will therefore carry a byline.

Comment articles are written by a very diverse group, including editorial staff. Such articles vary from an examination of a particular issue in some depth to an outline of an organization’s goals and policies to the development of a personal viewpoint. These articles are not necessarily refereed although this section