

Editorials

Reader Survey

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As many of our American readers know, we recently polled 600 subscribers to find out what they think of the *Journal* to date and how they feel we should develop in the future. We received an excellent response — 26% (156) returned completed questionnaires and data from these are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

In general, we believe that these results indicate that the *Journal* is moving in the right direction. However, eight respondents gave the *Journal* a "poor" rating, and there was definitely less enthusiasm among scientists than among animal welfare advocates. Of those who graded the *Journal* as being poor, the major criticism was one of bias. Thus, one respondent noted "While the *Journal* may try to present a spectrum of opinions, I feel that it does not. The *Journal* appears to be essentially an organ for pro-animal welfare views." It is certainly true that the bulk of our *published* articles favor animal welfare, but this is merely a reflection of the fact that most of the articles submitted for publication tend to be written from an animal welfare perspective. When we have had articles that do not fit this mold (e.g., Lindsey, *IJSAP* 1:229-233; Turner and Strak, *IJSAP* 2:15-18; and Hutchins *et al.* in this issue), we have usually had to solicit them ourselves.

Perhaps it was unrealistic of us to hope to receive articles arguing opposite points of view, given our sponsorship and the known interests of the editors. However, we are disappointed that some individuals who hold different views have

reportedly decided not to submit articles to the *Journal* because "they do not want to give us any legitimacy." Under such circumstances, we feel that the admittedly biased context of the *Journal* is more the result of a lack of trust and dialogue in the past, than of any hidden agenda on our part. We hope that those of our readers who would like to see more debate will either contribute their own thoughts or else encourage their colleagues to submit articles.

One interesting suggestion was that we should follow the example of *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. This is a periodical, recently brought to my attention, in which a paper is distributed to a range of respected academics in the field who then comment on it. The author is given a chance for a final rebuttal. We may be able to adapt this idea to our *Journal*, although we will probably have to publish the original article and comments in successive issues because of space constraints.

We were also intrigued by the comments of several that there was too much of a vegetarian slant in the *Journal*. There have undoubtedly been occasions when the question of ethical vegetarianism has been discussed, but we are surprised that we have been perceived by some (including an animal activist) as having too much of a vegetarian slant.

Comments on Subject Matter

Many of our respondents wanted to see more hard data on farm and laboratory animal issues and, to be frank, so

TABLE 1 Rating of Journal's Impact*

	Excellent	Good	Moderate	Poor
Institutions	7	15	2	1
Individuals				
a) Res. Scientists & Veterinarians	13	19	8	3
b) An. Welf. Professionals & Activists	32	15	5	1
c) Other (e.g., attorneys, farmers)	9	10	3	2
TOTAL	61 (42%)	59 (40%)	18 (12%)	8 (6%)

*Only 146 returns contained information on identity of respondent

TABLE 2 Does the Journal Need More or Less Objectivity

	More	Less	Stay the Same
Institutions	15	—	7
Individuals			
a) Res. Scientists & Veterinarians	34	—	8
b) An. Welf. Professionals & Activists	23	3	25
c) Other (e.g., attorneys, farmers)	12	3	14
TOTALS	84 (58%)	6 (4%)	54 (38%)

would we. Up until now, most of the hard data has appeared in the *News and Analysis* section with the rest of the *Journal* given over to opinion and review articles. However, we will have a number of original articles appearing in future issues, which will help to mitigate some of this criticism.

We have also had many requests for articles on animal population control, ranging from problems of urban strays to predators to rodent pests. We admit that we have had far too little material on this topic but hope to improve next year. For example, we have accepted a paper on feral dog control in Cyprus and have solicited two articles on the impact of spay/neuter programs on urban animal populations. We hope that this will stimulate a more detailed examination of animal control and shelter operations.

Behavior and ethology was another area that produced many requests for

more articles. Respondents asked for material on the usefulness of ethological data in addressing animal welfare problems and the whole issue of sentience. In that regard, the Focus piece on pain and anxiety in animals in this issue of the *Journal* may be of interest. We do not have any plans to seek out contributions on animal behavior, but it is obviously a research area of great importance to the *Journal*, and, as such, will receive high priority.

There were many other topics which were mentioned by the respondents. Space precludes a discussion of all of them, but we would like to assure our readers that we have made a list of their requests and will use that list to establish priorities in the future. We would like to thank our readers for all the support we have received and urge you to continue to communicate your concerns and interests.