


RAWS-News
Regional Animal Welfare Strategy Newsletter
February 2013

Note from the Chair



The Regional Animal Welfare Strategy – Asia, the Far East and Oceania continues to be a strong mechanism for member countries in the region to participate in animal welfare developments. Countries are able to come together to share information, put together new ideas and produce improved frameworks for animal welfare in the region.

One of these key developments includes the revised RAWS (2012-2015), a revised strategy that aims to lead animal welfare improvements in the region and identify further areas of change. To facilitate the distribution of the revised strategy, a fifth meeting of the RAWS coordination group will take place on 26-27 March 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand. This meeting will focus on finalising agreement of the revised strategy, updating the RAWS Action Plan and providing members with an opportunity to provide an update of animal welfare activities in the region.

Upon conclusion of the fifth RAWS meeting, the revised RAWS (RAWS Edition 2) will be presented to the Regional Commission upon final agreement by the RAWS coordination group in preparation for the meeting of The OIE World Assembly of Delegates in May 2013 in Paris, France. This will mark a considerable achievement for the Regional Strategy, reflecting the strength of collaboration between regional countries in improved animal welfare outcomes.

Gardner Murray
Chairman
RAWS Coordination Group

Introduction

The RAWS-News February 2013 edition focuses on updating members about country animal welfare activities and initiatives as well as progress of the RAWS. The Secretariat encourages RAWS participants to contribute to future editions of RAWS newsletter. For your contribution to future editions of RAWS newsletter, please provide your input to Ms Lee-Ann Swift via email at animal.welfare@daff.gov.au.

Outcomes of the 4th RAWS meeting, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The fourth meeting of the Regional Animal Welfare Strategy – Asia, the Far East and Oceania Coordination Group (RAWS CG) was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 9th November 2012, in conjunction with the OIE 3rd Global Conference on Animal Welfare held in Malaysia from 6th to 8th November 2012. At the meeting, RAWS CG members reviewed the updated revised Regional Strategy that was edited following the RAWS CG Meeting 3 in Bangkok, in April 2012.

The meeting also reviewed and updated the RAWS Action Plan taking into account the recommendations of the 3rd OIE Global Conference and member reports of regional animal welfare activities and featured presentations and discussions about animal welfare issues, developments and priorities at organisation, national and international levels.

OIE 3rd Global Conference, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The OIE 3rd Global Conference on Animal Welfare was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 6-8 November 2012. This follows two successful OIE global conferences on this topic (2004, Paris and 2008, Cairo, Egypt).

The theme for the conference 'Implementing the OIE standards – addressing regional expectations' saw the focus placed on the challenges faced by Members when implementing the animal welfare standards set by the OIE. It also demonstrated the willingness of the OIE to provide support within the framework of its global capacity building initiatives.

Members from around the world were able to present presentations relating to stakeholder perspectives and experiences in implementing the OIE standards and participate in working groups covering different topics.




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Informal OIE focal points for animal welfare meeting

A small group of members met in November 2012 to discuss National Focal Points for Animal Welfare from the Asia, Far East and Oceania, following the successful OIE Third Global Conference on Animal Welfare. A joint session with the coordination group for the OIE Regional Animal Welfare Strategy for Asia, the Far East and Oceania also took place. The main purpose was to meet informally, share experiences and consider the outcomes of a previous OIE training seminar held in Tokyo, Japan in November 2011.

It was established that Kate Littin, OIE National Focal Point for Animal Welfare, New Zealand, would update a summary paper developed at the training seminar and make it available for all regional animal welfare focal points. It was also agreed that members make the effort to share information with each other through the RAWS newsletter and arrange more frequent meetings for focal points, including joint sessions with the RAWS Coordination Group where possible. A list of OIE National Focal Points can be found at: www.rsia.oie.int/countries/Focal%20Points/index.html.



Focal points and RAWS coordination group members at the joint meeting, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 9th November 2012

Development of ISO Technical Specification on Animal Welfare

The International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) and the OIE have initiated efforts to incorporate farm animal welfare into ISO Technical Specifications based on the OIE animal welfare principles and guidelines. The ISO produces similar standards for Codex food safety standards and other international government based organisations. The ISO is developing technical specifications consistent with the OIE animal welfare principles and guidelines to apply to farm animals (primary production, transport, slaughter) whose products are intended for human consumption.

The process aims:

- to encourage the operators of the food chain to conform with the OIE animal welfare principles and guidelines in relation to international trade in foods of animal origin;
- to encourage governments to implement the OIE animal welfare principles and guidelines in relation to international trade in foods of animal origin;
- to promote international harmonisation of animal welfare standards for food-producing animals; and
- by providing global ISO specifications based on OIE principles and guidelines, to help to prevent the multiplication of private schemes and certification systems, with their associated costs and potential trade restrictive impact.

Country Highlights

Reforms take place across the Australian Livestock Export Trade

A number of reforms have taken place across Australia's live animal export trade following the *Independent Review of Australia's Livestock Export Trade* by Mr Bill Farmer AO.

The Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS) is now effective in all markets that receive Australian Livestock. The last group of export markets to be included required an ESCAS as of 1 January 2013. Under the revised system, the exporter must demonstrate that they have control of the movement of livestock up until the point of slaughter and that animals will be handled in accordance with the OIE guidelines for animal welfare.

AAWS co-hosts workshop with WSPA

The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy and the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) recently co hosted a two-day workshop, Building Resilience: Animals and Communities Coping in Emergencies in Sydney, Australia in October 2012. Bringing together 45 delegates from governments, animal and humanitarian organisations, the workshop focused on Australia's preparedness to care for animals during emergencies.



At the end of the workshop, participants agreed that a national strategy for managing animal welfare in emergencies that aligns with the current Commonwealth of Australian Governments natural disaster resilience policy was needed. To address this matter, a national steering committee was formed to assist planning in all jurisdictions. The committee met on 26th February 2013 and an Action Plan was developed in line with the outcomes of the workshop.

OIE Collaborating Centre 2012 annual report available

The New Zealand/Australia OIE Collaborating Centre on Animal Welfare Science and Bioethical Analysis has recently submitted their annual report for 2012 activities to OIE Director General. A partnership between the New Zealand and Australian Governments and internationally recognised research institutions in both countries, the OIE Collaborating Centre was formed in 2009 to formalise the relationships between researchers and increase the pool of experienced scientific staff available to support the OIE's global animal welfare mandate and the RAWS in particular. The 2012 annual report can be found at:

http://www.australiananimalwelfare.com.au/app/webroot/files/upload/files/Aust_NZ%20OIE%20Collab%20Centre%20AW%20Science%20Bioethics%202012_pmt%2025-1-13.pdf

17th FAVA Congress takes place in Taiwan

The 17th Federation of Asian Veterinary Associations (FAVA) Congress was held in Taipei, Taiwan on the 4th of January, 2013. Attended by over 1,000 delegates from around the world including 13 FAVA council member countries, the Congress saw the exchange of reports and presentation's of each country's veterinary professions, including education, numbers, structure and current issues. From these presentations, the vital role of the veterinarian in agriculture and aquacultures industries was emphasised as well as the issue of animal welfare in regards to production animals.



Attendees of the 17th FAVA Congress, Taipei, Taiwan

Thailand investigates electrical stunning parameters

The Department of Livestock Development (DLD) in collaboration with the Department of Biomedical Engineering of Mahidol University and the Department of Veterinary Public Health of Kasetsart University is currently analysing the electroencephalograms (EEGs) of stunned poultry in commercial slaughterhouse to determine appropriate electrical stunning parameters (currents, waveforms and frequencies) that meet both the requirements of animal welfare and Halal slaughter whilst still ensuring good meat quality.

The Thai poultry industry has experienced that the minimum current for poultry stunning using high frequencies recommended by the OIE compromises the Halal slaughter process and the quality of the meat. It is thought that this may be due to the complexity of the multiple bird electrical water bath stunning systems, the prolonged stunning time (> 10 sec) and the stunning of wet birds (birds are sprayed to prevent heat stress during transportation).

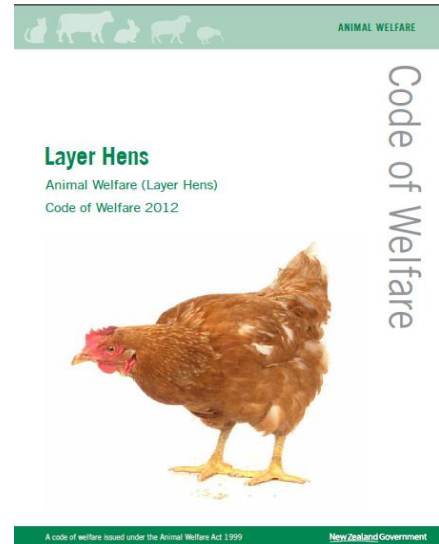
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New Zealand's revised code of welfare for layer hens

The most commonly used cages for housing layer hens will be phased out in New Zealand by 2022 under a new code of welfare issued in December 2013. The new code arose from the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee's review of the previous code. It contains minimum standards and best practices for layer hens kept in all situations, from the time chicks are in the last half of development before they hatch through to the catching and transport of hens at the end of the laying cycle. It applies to all hens kept for laying eggs, plus roosters and hens kept where eggs are not sold.

The main change is the phasing out of current cages over 10 years. Farmers will be able to keep hens in barns, with or without access to the outdoors, or in colony cages. These are bigger than cages normally referred to as "battery cages" typically housing 40-60 birds, and include a secluded nesting area, perches and a scratching area.

The code is available online at:
www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare/codes/layer-hens/index.htm.



Key Dates

Event	Date	Location
RAWS coordination group meeting	26-27 March 2013	Bangkok (Thailand)

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