



# Animal Welfare Strategy: The Veterinary Voice for Europe's Animals

## Members

Albania  
Austria  
Belgium  
Bosnia-Herzegovina  
Bulgaria  
Croatia  
Cyprus  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Estonia  
Finland  
France  
FYROM  
Germany  
Greece  
Hungary  
Iceland  
Ireland  
Italy  
Latvia  
Lithuania  
Luxembourg  
Malta  
Montenegro  
Netherlands  
Norway  
Poland  
Portugal  
Romania  
Serbia  
Slovak Republic  
Slovenia  
Spain  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
United Kingdom

## Observers

Armenia  
Ukraine  
Russia

## Sections

UEVP  
Practitioners

EASVO  
State Officers

UEVH  
Hygienists

EVERI  
Veterinarians in  
Education, Research  
and Industry

## Executive summary

Animal welfare is at the core of veterinary activities. Considering and advocating the interests of sentient animals is essential within pressing global policy areas, such as how we reduce the risk of pandemics, how we transition to sustainable production of animal-derived foods, and how we meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Advocating animal welfare in veterinary policy and practice is essential to the profession's reputation, demonstrating our continuing value and relevance to society.

Animal welfare is high on the agenda of the European Union. Eurobarometer surveys have repeatedly confirmed support for pro-animal welfare measures; 82% and 74% of European citizens believe the welfare of farmed and companion animals, respectively, should be better protected than it is now. The EU Platform on Animal Welfare promotes dialogue on animal welfare issues, with FVE having been a member since its inception. Most recently, the Council of the EU issued their Conclusions on animal welfare, emphasising that good animal welfare is "*an integral part of sustainable animal production*". In 2020, the Commission's Farm to Fork Strategy was published with ambitious goals towards improving animal welfare at a European level.

The FVE Animal Welfare strategy clarifies FVE's vision of the European veterinary profession's role in animal welfare, and how to work towards this during the period of FVE's next Strategic Plan. This strategy was developed after extensive consultation with FVE members, Sections, European Species organisations, stakeholder organisations and the International Veterinary Students Association.

The strategy highlights six areas related to veterinarians' animal welfare roles, illustrated by the following consultee responses:

- 1. Animal welfare assessment** "For animal welfare leadership, representative veterinary bodies should ensure they include aspects of positive welfare to deliver a *Good Life* to all animals."
- 2. Ethics** "The veterinary profession ought [to be] animal welfare-focused. In this case improving animal welfare is our explicit aim and motivator"
- 3. Legislation**
- 4. Advocacy** "By taking a position in regard to animal welfare, FVE would be encouraging more vets to also take a stand"
- 5. Education** "FVE should be a platform for disseminating good practice. Analyse works of other countries, evaluate them, publish them and disseminate information to other members."
- 6. International** "The veterinary profession should engage more with climate change, and the link between climate and farming."



# FEDERATION OF VETERINARIANS OF EUROPE

	1 ANIMAL WELFARE ASSESSMENT	2 ETHICS	3 LEGISLATION	4 ADVOCACY	5 EDUCATION	6 INTERNATIONAL
Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To protect, advocate and enhance animal welfare, the welfare of animals must be assessed using contemporary and scientific approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deciding a justifiable way forward on, for example, a treatment intervention or policy decision, requires value judgements and ethical reasoning.</li> <li>Ethical appraisal should take a structured approach that identifies and considers the different interests of stakeholders, including sentient animals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Veterinarians are required to have a working understanding of animal welfare legislation and to play roles in education and enforcement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being leading advocates for animal welfare. Promoting animal welfare for animals under our care, is necessary but not sufficient. The profession must coordinate to advocate animal welfare at the societal level, challenging the status quo of animal use to address the causes of animal welfare problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Veterinarians must receive adequate under-graduate training in AWSEL to fulfil their animal welfare leadership roles. Postgraduate studies and reflective practice should apply and expand AWSEL training.</li> <li>Sharing of approaches to animal welfare contributes to continuing education and levelling up animal welfare standards within and across countries in the profession.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FVE has relationships that assist it with advancing animal welfare leadership globally; e.g., through relations with the WVA, the CVA, the OIE, AVMA and CVMA.</li> <li>The international area considers animal welfare in the context of global priorities, such as climate change, AMR, sustainable food, and the UN SDG's.</li> </ul>
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disseminate information about animal welfare concepts and findings from animal welfare science</li> <li>Ensure FVE policies are informed by animal welfare science</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide veterinary professionals with advice on ethical decision making.</li> <li>Promote animal welfare duty of veterinarians, recognising that ethical duties may conflict.</li> <li>Promote consensus on how to identify and weigh stakeholder interests in policy formation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guide members on EU animal welfare legislation, e.g.:</li> <li>Communicating when legislation is updated and disseminating resources designed to support implementation and enforcement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop policy positions, to raise awareness of animal welfare problems and make recommendations for improvements</li> <li>Policies and campaigns to help ensure animal owners, governments and others understand the animal welfare harms associated with current animal use.</li> <li>Help ensure veterinary leadership and advocacy is recognised by the public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue working to ensure AWSEL is adequately taught in European VEE</li> <li>Act as a focal point for sharing of good animal welfare practices between member associations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with international veterinary associations to advance animal welfare progress and veterinary animal welfare leadership</li> <li>Advocate animal welfare within the SDGs agenda and to assist veterinarians to work towards this through local, national and international One Health partnerships.</li> </ul>
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote quality of life assessment tools to support decision making in practice</li> <li>Promote tools to assist with pain assessment and management</li> <li>Promote <i>The Good Life</i> framework and related resources to assist with interpretation and implementation</li> <li>Facilitate Europe-wide regulation of animal behavioural services to improve standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote tools to assist with ethical decision making in practice.</li> <li>Promote the professions aim to "make the world a better place for animals".</li> <li>Facilitate discussions about ethical issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with EASVO to establish where support for official veterinarians with animal welfare legislation would be beneficial</li> <li>Promote guidance on reporting suspected animal welfare breaches, including suspected non-accidental injury</li> <li>Promote the need for sufficient financial &amp; human resources to be put into control-performing entities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain lists of animal welfare problems in Europe</li> <li>Publish position papers and develop campaigns</li> <li>Develop a communications plan for new position papers</li> <li>Agree approaches to assess the impact of position statements and campaigns</li> <li>Disseminate resources to assist practices developing animal welfare activities</li> <li>Promote public recognition of animal welfare advocacy</li> <li>Clarify status and purpose of FVE policy document types and their target audiences</li> <li>Use language that reflects animal sentience</li> <li>Motivate and assist veterinary associations to develop their own animal welfare strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue work with EAEVE to ensure all European vet schools are covering AWSEL Day 1 competences</li> <li>To work through the ECCVT to enhance training on ethical dilemmas relating to animal welfare in veterinary undergraduate curricula</li> <li>To understand which FVE member associations have a dedicated animal welfare and ethics committee or working group, and to increase communication with those groups, and good practice sharing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with animal welfare committees of global veterinary associations, to increase communication and good practice sharing</li> <li>Develop FVE's position on sustainability problems associated with low-priced meat and dairy, and advocate for economically viable solutions that value foods of animal origin</li> <li>Working with the FVE Sustainability Working Group, to lobby for explicit inclusion of animal welfare as a sustainability goal.</li> <li>Assist the Sustainability Working Group to increase the veterinary profession's actions and visibility on the climate and biodiversity crises</li> </ul>
	<p> <b>EASVO</b> European association of state veterinary officers  <b>AWSEL</b> Animal welfare science, ethics and law  <b>VEE</b> Veterinary Educational Establishments  <b>EAEVE</b> European Establishments of Veterinary Education  <b>ECCVT</b> European Coordinating Committee on Vet. Training  <b>SDG</b> Sustainable Development Goal  <b>AVMA</b> American Veterinary Medical Association  <b>CVMA</b> Canadian Veterinary Medical Association  <b>CVA</b> Commonwealth Veterinary Association         </p>					



# Animal Welfare Strategy: The Veterinary Voice for Europe's Animals

## Introduction

### Members

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France  
FYROM  
Germany  
Greece  
Hungary  
Iceland  
Ireland  
Italy  
Latvia  
Lithuania  
Luxembourg  
Malta  
Montenegro  
Netherlands  
Norway  
Poland  
Portugal  
Romania  
Serbia  
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Animals are kept and used by humans across the world, including for food and clothing, companionship, scientific research, transport, sport and entertainment. Wild animals may be impacted by human activity, such as habitat destruction, population management, hunting and fishing.

Animal welfare<sup>1</sup> is a prominent and rapidly evolving global social ethic. Questions of how we ought to keep, use and interact with animals have been the subject of moral concern since at least Ancient Greece. Historically, such questions relied solely on philosophy; now, the ethical questions benefit from insights from animal welfare science, which is elucidating how animals experience the world and what they need and want from their perspectives.

Findings from animal welfare science have underpinned the recognition of animals as sentient beings, capable of feeling pleasure and pain, which is enshrined in the European Union's Lisbon Treaty. Sentient animals have interests (such as an interest in avoiding pain and suffering, or performing highly motivated behaviour), but rely on humans to advocate their interests. Such advocacy is undertaken by bodies including Governments, charitable animal welfare organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions.

Considering and advocating the interests of animals is essential within pressing global policy areas, such as how we reduce the risk of future pandemics, how we transition to sustainable production and consumption of animal-derived foods, and how we meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, including our responses to the climate and ecological emergencies. Visibly advocating animal welfare in veterinary policy and practice is essential to the veterinary profession's reputation, demonstrating our continuing value and relevance to society.

## Animal welfare and the European Union (EU)

The aims, principles and scope of the EU animal welfare policy derive from Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (the Lisbon Treaty), which recognises animals as sentient beings.

Eurobarometer surveys (the EU's official instrument for measuring public opinion) have repeatedly confirmed pan-European support for pro-animal welfare measures across the EU. For example, 94% of EU citizens believe that it is important to protect the welfare of farmed animals; 82% and 74% of Europeans believe the welfare of farmed animals and companion animals, respectively, should be better

protected than it is now; and 64% of EU citizens would like more information about the conditions under which farmed animals are treated in their respective countries<sup>2</sup>.

In 2012, the European Commission adopted an EU Strategy for the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2012-2015, which followed the 2006-2010 Community Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals. The Commission published the Evaluation of the Strategy and its implementation on 31st March 2021.

EU Animal Welfare Reference Centres aim to improve enforcement of animal welfare legislation, provide technical support to EU countries in carrying out official animal welfare controls and contribute to dissemination of good practice. Reference Centres on pig, poultry and ruminant and equine welfare were designated in March 2018, October 2019 and May 2021, respectively.

The EU Platform on Animal Welfare promotes dialogue on animal welfare issues amongst competent authorities, businesses, civil society and scientists, with FVE having been a member since its inception in 2017.

Most recently, EU animal welfare commitments have been prominent in the context of sustainability. In 2019, the Council of the European Union issued their Conclusions on animal welfare, emphasising that good animal welfare is “an integral part of sustainable animal production”. In May 2020, the Commission’s Farm to Fork Strategy was published, laying out a plan for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system. In her speech to the 7<sup>th</sup> Animal Welfare Platform meeting, Commissioner Kyriakides said:

*“Animal welfare is an essential element of the Strategy. It is a vision that can lead us to sustainable livestock production and to a much-needed change of our current farming system. I believe that proper reform of animal welfare legislation will support this goal. It will bring about positive change both in accordance to our ethical values as well as in respecting our citizens’ calls.”*

As a first step, the Commission has launched a “fitness check” of EU legislation on the welfare of farmed animals, to be concluded by the end of 2021. FVE has responded to the associated consultations.

### **The veterinary profession’s role**

The veterinary profession is central to delivering the high standards of animal welfare desired by citizens across Europe and to stimulating further societal awareness and demand through leadership. Veterinarians are embedded within many areas of animal use (e.g., animals kept and used for companionship, research, food, sport etc), giving them unique insights into the context of animal welfare within society. Through One Health and One Welfare partnerships and interprofessional working, veterinarians are ideally placed to recommend how animals’ interests can be promoted alongside other important societal goals, such as food safety and environmental stewardship; both as a route to advancing these goals and as an important goal in its own right. Animal welfare is a shared responsibility and an interdisciplinary field, requiring inputs from lawyers,

economists, animal welfare scientists, politicians, industry, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), citizens, consumers and others. Veterinarians must, and do, engage with all of these stakeholders, in order to have positive influence within the animal welfare movement and to demonstrate our awareness and empathy towards animal welfare as a social issue. As trusted, scientifically trained professionals with mandatory ethical and professional standards, and direct contact with animal owners, the opportunity and responsibility for veterinarians to advocate for animals' interests may be the greatest of all.

This responsibility is conveyed in several recent veterinary professional statements.

In 2012 the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) wrote: *“Veterinarians should be the leading advocates for the welfare of all animals [and]...provide leadership to society on ethical considerations involved in the use and care of animals by humans.”*

In 2014, the World Veterinary Association (WVA) and OIE statement issued a joint statement: *“The societal expectation from the veterinary profession regarding animal welfare now expands well beyond simply individual veterinary daily practices.”*

In 2017, Vet Futures Europe stated amongst its ambitions for the European veterinary profession that: *“Veterinarians must be confident in their role as experts in the fields of animal health and welfare...They need to take a pro-active stance and speak out as one voice”*

Veterinary leadership in animal welfare and “respect for the animal” as an emerging value have similarly been highlighted by national Vet Futures projects, such as in the UK and France. In response, the British Veterinary Association (BVA) developed its animal welfare strategy, ‘Vets Speaking Up for Animal Welfare’, which FVE has been able to utilise and adapt in developing the present strategy.

In 2020, FVE, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) – together representing 430,000 veterinarians from 41 countries – issued a joint statement on the roles of veterinarians in promoting animal welfare<sup>3</sup>, including the following: *“There are both societal and professional expectations for veterinarians to provide leadership in animal welfare through actions that stimulate and contribute to public discourse, build community trust, and support community consensus regarding appropriate animal use, care, and treatment. Veterinarians are, and must continually strive to be, the leading advocates for animal welfare in a continually evolving society.”*

### **Animal welfare and FVE**

FVE’s animal welfare activities are led by the Animal Welfare Working Group, created in 2014 on the initiative of FVE and UEVP. The Group was renewed in 2016 and 2019, and its work has led to the adoption of several FVE position papers, often collaboratively with other European veterinary associations. The Group enjoys good working relations with other European veterinary bodies and the European institutions. In November 2018, all respondents to a survey about the Working

Group (FVE members from 13 countries/organisations) said they were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the Group’s work to date.

The Working Group will continue supporting FVE and the European veterinary profession in achieving their strategic aim of promoting veterinary leadership in animal welfare. This strategy, developed through consultation with members and stakeholders, and incorporating the Working Group’s existing commitments, clarifies FVE’s vision of the European veterinary profession’s role in animal welfare, and how FVE will work towards this during the period of FVE’s next Strategic Plan. As well as covering specific animal welfare problems, it will facilitate sharing of good practice, highlight successful approaches, promote further partnership working with other veterinary associations and foster profession-wide consensus on our principle ethical responsibilities and our roles in animal welfare leadership and advocacy.

## **How the strategy has been developed**

The proposal to develop an FVE animal welfare strategy was approved by the FVE Board in September 2019. The FVE General Assembly and Sections were informed of the proposal in November 2019, with opportunities to comment. Surveys were used to elicit stakeholder views on what the strategy should include. Relevant questions were identified in FVE’s survey of member organisations and external stakeholders, which ran in December 2019 – January 2020 to inform development of FVE’s 2020-25 strategic plan. A separate survey, adapted from a survey used by BVA to create their animal welfare strategy, “*Vets Speaking Up for Animal Welfare*”<sup>4</sup>, was sent to European veterinary associations and the International Veterinary Students Association. This survey explored these groups’ views on: (1) what the profession currently does well to promote and lead on animal welfare; (2) what the profession could do even better to promote and lead on animal welfare; (3) what FVE could do, specifically, to improve its support and leadership on animal welfare.

## **Priority areas and priority problems**

The consultation underscored six *priority areas*<sup>4</sup> related to veterinarians’ animal welfare roles, in which support for the profession would be valuable:

- 1. Animal welfare assessment**
- 2. Ethics**
- 3. Legislation**
- 4. Advocacy**
- 5. Education**
- 6. International**

The ultimate aim for FVE, through this strategy, is to assist the European veterinary profession to contribute to solutions to real-world *animal welfare problems*, as part of promoting a *Good Life* and humane death for all animals kept and used by humans. FVE has agreed a long list of animal welfare problems affecting more than 10 species or species groups (e.g. exotics) and a shorter list of animal welfare problems that FVE has prioritised for policy development.

## Priority areas

### 1. Animal welfare assessment

#### Principle:

To protect, advocate and enhance animal welfare, the welfare of sentient animals must be assessed, using up-to-date concepts and scientific approaches.

#### Aim:

For FVE to assist in disseminating information about contemporary animal welfare concepts, animal welfare assessment frameworks and findings from animal welfare science to member associations, policy makers and the public. To ensure FVE animal welfare policies are informed by available animal welfare science.

#### What we heard:

Animal welfare relates to an animal's physical health and mental wellbeing. It was noted that, traditionally, the veterinary profession has tended to overemphasise an animal's physical health and productivity above other important determinants of overall welfare, but that this is being recognised and addressed. It should be continually borne in mind that good physical health is a necessary, but not sufficient, component of animal welfare, with consultees recommending that FVE does more to promote awareness about the mental health of animals.

*"We should be doing more, as individuals, practices and associations, to raise awareness about the mental health of animals"*

*"Species-specific needs have to be recognised (from the viewpoint of the animal and not the species-specific needs of the human)"*

One area that relates closely to the mental wellbeing of animals is animal behaviour, which FVE recognises as important, both as a welfare indicator and a welfare determinant (see box 1). For example, the FVE position, *Veterinarians' Contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (2016)* states that animals should be kept "in environments with which they can cope...be able to express important behaviours and not suffer from frustration and boredom."

**Box 1 - Examples of the relevance of animal behaviour to animal welfare<sup>3</sup>:**

- 1) As an animal welfare indicator, for example stereotypic behaviour, sustained/inescapable aggression, pain-related behaviour or play.
- 2) As a welfare determinant: the ability to perform certain behaviours can be important for achieving good animal welfare, and frustrating highly motivated behaviour can result in compromised welfare.
- 3) As a determinant of a good human-animal bond: undesirable animal behaviour that is problematic for animal owners can result in a breakdown of the human-animal bond, with negative impacts on animal welfare. Problem behaviour should be prevented through appropriate early life experiences and dealt with competently, humanely and safely using accredited animal behaviour practitioners.

A key conceptual shift in recent years has been towards the promotion of positive animal welfare states (e.g., comfort and pleasure), rather than simply the avoidance of negative states (e.g., pain, fear and frustration). The *Good Life* framework proposes that animals kept and used by humans should have, at least, a life worth living, with a growing number having a good life<sup>5,6,7</sup>.

*“For animal welfare leadership, representative veterinary bodies should ensure they include aspects of positive welfare to deliver a Good Life to all animals.”*

Consultees highlighted that veterinary associations play a valuable role in promoting the importance of positive welfare and *Good Life* opportunities (see box 2), and that the profession at all levels should increase their communications on what a *Good Life* requires for different species.

**Box 2 - Providing animals with a Good Life and a humane death<sup>2</sup>**

*“The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) recognize that sentient animals are capable of experiencing positive physical and emotional states (or feelings), including but not limited to comfort and pleasure, as well as negative states, such as pain, fear, and frustration. Accordingly, animals deserve appropriate care, consideration, and respect; that is, animals should experience both a Good Life and a humane death.”*

FVE/AVMA/CVMA 2020

Animal welfare, wellbeing and quality of life may be considered as synonymous terms. In clinical veterinary practice, reliably assessing quality of life is important for informing ethical decision-making; in particular, for informing discussions of what *should* be done, rather than what *can* be done, particularly as available veterinary treatments and procedures become more advanced. Similarly, quality of life assessment tools are valuable for assisting with end-of-life care and decision-making. Consultees highlighted the importance and veterinary privilege of having

the option to euthanise animals, as a way of serving their best interests in certain circumstances.

Pain assessment and management was also highlighted by consultees as an area in which the profession has a critical role and should continue to improve in line with increased understanding.

Scientific understanding of animal cognition and sentience, and how to objectively assess animal welfare, continues to grow. Where technology is used to assist with animal health and welfare assessment, it should be subject to appropriate testing and validation prior to being authorised for widespread use. Consultees felt that FVE should help keep members updated about latest findings from animal welfare science; promote the use of evidence-based, outcome-based welfare indicators and assessment protocols; promote further research into practical welfare assessment; and should continue to emphasise the importance and relevance of animal sentience to the veterinary profession and wider society.

#### **FVE actions:**

- ✓ Promote quality of life assessment tools to support decision-making in clinical veterinary practice and other veterinary settings
- ✓ Promote tools to assist with pain assessment and management
- ✓ Promote the *Good Life* framework and related resources to assist with interpretation and implementation through veterinary work
- ✓ Facilitate Europe-wide regulation of animal behavioural services (e.g. services provided by animal trainers and animal behaviourists) to improve standards

## **2. Ethics**

#### **Principle:**

Science tells us what *is* (e.g., indicating an animal's current welfare state), but it doesn't tell us what *should be*. Deciding a justifiable way forward on, for example, a treatment intervention or veterinary policy decision, requires ethical reasoning. Ethical appraisal should take a structured approach that identifies and considers the interests and values of different stakeholders (i.e., those whose interests would be affected by decisions made, including sentient animals). Animal ethics relates to questions about how we ought to keep, use and interact with animals. Veterinary ethics relates to decisions prompted by our duties to animals, veterinary businesses and clients, which are sometimes conflicting.

#### **Aim:**

For FVE to provide veterinary professionals with advice, guidance and support on ethical decision-making - to improve the quality and consistency of decisions, and help improve veterinary wellbeing through reducing the stress associated with ethical dilemmas.

For FVE to promote the principal animal welfare-focused ethical duty of veterinarians, recognising that veterinarians' duties to animals, clients and the businesses they work for may sometimes conflict.

For FVE to promote consensus on how to identify and appropriately weigh stakeholder interests (including sentient animals) in policy formation; for example, through the use of ethical frameworks.

## **What we heard:**

### Ethical positions on using animals

Animal sentience imposes ethical duties to consider how, or if, animals are kept and used for human benefit. If using animals in a particular way is deemed ethically justifiable, then sentience requires that we have regard for their welfare and respect their intrinsic value.

When deciding if using sentient animals is ethically justifiable, there are, broadly speaking, two ethical perspectives. An animal rights-based view generally proscribes animal use, advocating that animals have the right not to be exploited by humans as, for example, food, pets or tools for sport and entertainment. An animal welfare-based view states that it is acceptable for humans to use animals for human benefit, so long as the animals have a good quality of life and a humane death.

In working with animal owners and animal-using industries to improve animal welfare during life and at the time of death, the veterinary profession largely adheres to an animal welfare-based view. Within that framework, the profession is clear that there is a limit to acceptable animal welfare compromises associated with each area of animal use. If these limits are reached and cannot be adequately addressed, then the profession will oppose that use or practice; the animal welfare and ethics committees of veterinary associations are well placed to help judge these limits. FVE's position against the use of wild animals in travelling circuses gives an example. It is also recognised that some veterinarians may have personal ethical perspectives that are different to the prevailing profession-wide perspective (e.g. an animal rights-based view). These views should be respected by FVE and other representative veterinary associations as part of the consultative process to build consensus on our use and treatment of animals within the profession.

Ethical dilemmas also arise, and should be addressed, when considering the veterinary profession's roles in One Health, One Welfare and sustainability.

### An animal welfare-focused veterinary profession

Enhancing, protecting and securing the health and welfare of animals is the fundamental purpose of the veterinary profession. The veterinary profession has a responsibility to advocate for animals' best interests at the individual level (e.g. veterinary professionals having direct contact with animal keepers and owners), community level (e.g. veterinary practices providing animal welfare expertise and advocacy through local media, to local politicians and other outreach activities), national level (e.g. veterinary associations formulating and advocating animal welfare policies) and international level (through policy formulation and advocacy, and effective partnerships between national and international veterinary associations, and other international bodies and institutions)<sup>3,10</sup>.

Overall, the veterinary profession has a dual duty: to advocate for the best interests of animals under the care of individual veterinarians (at individual level), as well as to advocate for changes and solutions to address the root causes of animal welfare problems (especially at community, national and international levels)<sup>3,10</sup>. In this way, the profession's overall primary aim can be said to be "to help make the world a better place for animals".

Veterinarians have multiple ethical duties, including towards animals, clients, and the veterinary businesses they work for, which sometimes conflict. Veterinarians also serve society in ways that are additional (though may be related) to their animal welfare responsibilities, such as protection of food safety and public health. Recognising our principal duty to promote animal welfare, it is helpful to consider the concept of an *animal welfare-focused profession* (Box 3).

### **Box 3 - An animal welfare-focused profession\***

Conceptually, being animal welfare-focused is distinct from being client-focused or vet-focused. It is a question of our primary motivation. If we are *client-focused*, we make our decisions (whether clinical or on animal welfare policy) *in order to* further or protect the interests of our clients (for example, withholding advice on obesity because it might offend a client); i.e. that is our primary motivator. If we are *vet-focused*, we make our decisions *in order to* further or protect our own interests (for example, recommending a treatment because it will make us more money than a reasonable alternative, or recommending a surgical procedure because it would be professionally interesting to perform).

The veterinary profession ought, instead, to be *animal welfare-focused*. In this case, improving animal welfare is our explicit aim and motivator, which then requires us to work with our clients (which in many cases also furthers their own interests and wellbeing) and to be economically viable and rewarded (in order that we can continue in business and remain satisfied and motivated). But working with our clients and being economically viable are *enablers* for us to improve animal welfare.

The veterinarian's trilemma (arising from our duties to animals, clients and our employers) will never be far away but FVE, in considering veterinarians' primary motivation, will provide leadership on the principle of the veterinary profession being animal welfare-focused.

\*Source: *Vets Speaking Up for Animal Welfare (BVA 2016)*<sup>4</sup>; after Yeates 2013<sup>13</sup>

### Ethical decision-making and veterinary wellbeing

Veterinarians frequently encounter stressful ethical dilemmas, which can contribute to moral stress<sup>8</sup> and poor veterinary wellbeing. Examples of common ethical dilemmas rated as highly stressful include<sup>9</sup>:

- Convenience euthanasia (healthy animal euthanised because they are no longer wanted)
- Excessive treatment requested by owner (that may cause prolonged suffering)

- Financial limitations to treatment (where a client cannot, or does not want to, pay for optimal treatment)

Consultees stated that FVE support for veterinary practitioners with ethical decision-making would be valuable, such as the use of ethical tools coupled with reflective practice and provision of ethical safe spaces.

#### **FVE actions:**

- ✓ Promote the concept of an animal welfare-focused veterinary profession and the profession's aim "to make the world a better place for animals"
- ✓ Facilitate discussions about ethical issues & dilemmas affecting veterinary professionals
- ✓ Promote tools and approaches to assist with ethical decision-making in clinical veterinary practice, veterinary policy-making and other veterinary settings

### **3. Legislation**

#### **Principle:**

Certain practices associated with animal keeping, use and treatment are regulated by legislation. Veterinarians are required to have a working understanding of animal welfare legislation and to play roles in education and enforcement.

#### **Aim:**

For FVE to support and guide members on European animal welfare legislation; for example, communicating when legislation is updated and disseminating resources designed to support implementation and enforcement.

#### **What we heard:**

Some veterinarians with animal welfare enforcement responsibilities would benefit from additional resources, tools and training. Such veterinarians should be provided with sufficient resources, guidance and guidelines to implement and enforce animal welfare legislation; this should be coupled with an expectation that prosecutions for animal welfare breaches will be pursued when appropriate.

The value of employing veterinarians in government policy departments should be promoted. National veterinary associations should be supported in fostering relationships between veterinary practitioners and Official Veterinarians.

Guidance on reporting suspected animal welfare breaches, including non-accidental injury and the link between abuse of animals and abuse of people, would be beneficial.

FVE should lobby for changes to legislation that is no longer adequate in promoting good animal welfare, for animal health and welfare legislation to be drafted in consultation and collaboration with veterinarians, and for the allocation of sufficient resources to authorities to enable proper implementation and enforcement.

Actions for improving animal welfare should be incorporated within the regular veterinary visits required under the European Union Animal Health Law (Regulation 2016/429).

#### **FVE actions:**

- ✓ Work with European Association of State Veterinary Officers (EASVO) to establish where support with animal welfare legislation for Official Veterinarians would be beneficial
- ✓ Promote guidance on reporting suspected animal welfare breaches, including suspected non-accidental injury
- ✓ Promote the need for sufficient financial and human resources to be put into national legislative and control-performing entities relating to animal welfare

#### **4. Advocacy**

##### **Principle:**

Being “the leading advocates for animal welfare”, as urged by FVE, AVMA and CVMA, requires that veterinarians promote and prioritise animal welfare at all times in both veterinary practice and policy-making. Advocacy should be respectful and motivating, emphasising mutual benefits to animals and wider society and fostering partnership working (e.g. with farmers and others) whenever possible.

Promoting animal welfare for the animals under our care, in practice (including via telemedicine), is necessary and essential, but not sufficient for fulfilling the profession’s animal welfare leadership role. Additionally, the profession must coordinate (e.g. through our representative associations) to advocate animal welfare at the societal level, challenging the status quo of animal keeping and use to address the root causes of priority animal welfare problems.

Veterinarians are trusted, credible professionals and society expects us to speak up for animals and advocate improvements in the way animals are considered and treated. We have direct experience of human-animal interactions and should help citizens understand how animals are kept and used, and guide on the societal changes and policies required to improve the treatment and care of animals. Representing around 300,000 veterinarians from 39 European countries, FVE has considerable opportunity and responsibility to assist the profession in Europe with ensuring this happens.

##### **Aim:**

For FVE to continue developing evidence- and ethics-backed policy positions, in order to raise awareness of priority animal welfare problems and make recommendations for improvements. For animal welfare policy positions, and associated campaigns (including e.g. awareness-raising and human behaviour change campaigns), to be developed and delivered collaboratively with European species-specialist veterinary associations whenever possible.

For FVE to use these policies and campaigns to help ensure animal owners, governments and others understand the animal welfare harms associated with

different types of current animal use, to inform ethical appraisal and stimulate societal and political debate.

For FVE to assist European veterinarians to be effective animal advocates.

For FVE to help ensure veterinary leadership and advocacy is recognised by the public.

### **What we heard:**

Echoing the Vet Futures Europe ambition, consultees want FVE and the veterinary profession across Europe to have courage and to speak up on animal welfare, taking a clear and strong leadership role to stimulate and inform public debate.

Being animal welfare-focused (see Ethics section) applies in both veterinary practice and in veterinary policy-making.

In clinical contexts, a comparison with paediatricians is relevant: we do not expect a doctor to approach questions of a child's health and welfare with a parent's wishes, or the doctor's career development, as the focus of decision-making. We expect a paediatrician to prioritise the best interests of their young patients, enabled by the child's parents/guardians and the doctor's skills and resources.

Being animal welfare-focused prevents overtreatment (treatment that isn't in an animal's best interests); a requirement which has become increasingly important as available veterinary medical and surgical techniques have advanced.

*“Just because we can does not mean we always should! Euthanasia should be seen as an option in certain situations in the interest of the animal(s)”*

Practices should cooperate and collaborate with each other, and with local authorities, to improve animal welfare in their communities. Examples were given of coordinating care provided to stray animals, wildlife and to the pets of people on low incomes. Such coordination can prevent the problem of one practice implementing an animal welfare policy, while a nearby practice does not and accepts displaced cases. FVE should assist veterinary practices to promote animal welfare, e.g. in the following ways:

- For practices to develop animal welfare policies (e.g. on pain assessment and management, reduced stress handling and hospitalisation, ethical decision-making), which can be audited and implemented through appointed staff champions and a practice taskforce<sup>10</sup>
- For design of new practices to reduce patient stress (e.g. species-separated waiting areas)
- For practices to offer pre-acquisition consultations for people and families considering getting a pet
- For practices to provide credible, evidence-based information on animal welfare for the public, e.g. companion animal practices providing veterinary-led waiting room information on welfare of farmed animals
- For practices to give talks on animal welfare to local schools and societies

In veterinary policy-making, being animal welfare-focused ensures that improving animal welfare is the central goal. It is relevant to consider factors other than animal welfare when developing veterinary animal welfare policy, such as economics and impacts on animal-using industries, but only in the context of how these factors will help or hinder animal welfare improvements; that is, as enablers to improve animal welfare. For such factors to be the primary consideration would be inconsistent with an animal welfare focus.

*“Veterinary associations have not provided enough leadership on animal welfare. But times are changing rapidly.”*

*“Veterinarians and FVE should take stronger positions in the field of animal welfare.”*

*“Veterinary associations should have better visibility and strength in media, and in political life, on animal welfare.”*

*“Animal wellbeing must take precedence over the economic aspects for effective veterinary advocacy”*

*“It is paramount that veterinarians do not compromise their role as animal advocates - veterinarians should not downplay, or deny, welfare issues to defend current practices”*

*“Veterinary associations should collaborate, discuss together and speak out on animal welfare”*

*“By taking a position in regards to animal welfare, FVE would be encouraging more vets to also take a stand”*

*“FVE must be more courageous and determined to express its views, taking into account above all the social interest in relation to animal health and welfare and public health, and not only lobby groups from the food or pharmaceutical industries.”*

*“In some cases, veterinarians place themselves too much in the shoes of the animal owner and prefer not to suggest animal welfare improvements thinking they will be too expensive and not wanted by the animal owner.”*

*“Veterinary associations must talk and work with all organisations concerned with animal welfare and protection”*

*“FVE has true leaders in animal welfare”*

Where these broader factors could hinder animal welfare improvements, it is legitimate to focus on how they could be overcome through veterinary actions. To do so remains consistent with animal welfare-focused practice and the profession's aim of helping make the world a better place for animals. For example, it is consistent with an animal welfare focus to advocate policies that challenge the drive for cheap meat and dairy products, and that call for acceptable (but not excessive) implementation periods for new husbandry approaches, to enable industries to adjust to necessary changes. Veterinary communication strategies should help citizens understand the relationship between improvements to animal welfare (i.e. good physical health and the ability to express important behaviours), the

(moderate) increase in production costs and different ways these costs can be met (e.g. public money, retailers absorbing costs, citizens choosing clearly labelled higher-welfare products).

As emphasised previously, at the policy level this strategy's aim is for FVE to advocate solutions to real-world animal welfare problems, through directly lobbying and influencing European decision-makers (including for legislative change), and through motivating and supporting national veterinary associations to lobby in their own countries. Examples of ways that veterinary associations can strengthen their animal welfare leadership are given in Appendix 1. Consultees stated that FVE plays a valuable role in agenda-setting at national level, through identifying priority animal welfare problems, stimulating debate, building consensus, and making recommendations to resolve them. Policy positions, by reflecting profession-wide consensus, support individual veterinarians to advocate for animal welfare when they might otherwise be afraid to speak up. Policy positions are used by veterinary students to stimulate and inform student debates.

FVE maintains a long list, and prioritised short list, of key animal welfare problems which the veterinary profession in Europe should take a leadership role in highlighting and addressing. These lists (Appendix 2 and 3) are adopted by the General Assembly and are working documents, recognising that priorities will evolve over time.

Once FVE policy positions are agreed, consultees stressed the importance of communicating them to national veterinary associations, the public and policy-makers; of FVE providing supporting resources to promote implementation; and of monitoring impacts. Proposed impact measures included:

- European or national policy or legislative change
- Media coverage
- Inclusion in national veterinary association communications
- Click-through and download rates from FVE digital communications and website (e.g. FVE Newsletter and uploaded policy statements)
- Resulting political events

*"I think they should be much more on social media...as a European-based association, social media, LinkedIn, Facebook or at least tweeting very regularly is essential."*

*"Hire a full-time social media person"*

European species-specialist associations should be motivated and assisted to drive grass-roots policy implementation through their members, which should follow from their close involvement with FVE policy development. Consultees highlighted the importance of working collaboratively with other partners with aligned goals, such as

*“FVE has its finger on the pulse of the EU and the mechanics of the EU machinery...they are able to lobby, represent and influence effectively”*

*“We feel confident that FVE has a strong voice in the EU system”*

animal welfare NGOs. Doing so does not imply alignment with all of another organisation’s aims but helps ensure that aligned messages are effectively delivered and amplified to the public and decision-makers.

Consultees recommended that animal welfare advocacy should be explicitly incorporated within an FVE communication strategy, covering aspects including the following:

- Clarify the status and purpose of different types of FVE policy document (e.g. reflection paper, position paper), and their target audiences
- Use of appropriate language, e.g:
  - Tone - position papers will usually be professional in tone and suitable for non-specialist audiences; press releases may be more urgent or demanding to fulfil a lobbying function
  - Not referring to sentient animals as “it” (which is appropriate for inanimate objects) – where the sex of a subject animal is known, they should be referred to as “he” or “she”. Where the sex is unknown, “they” is appropriate, even if referring to a single animal
  - Not labelling sentient animals according to their use by humans; e.g. “farmed animal” is an appropriate descriptive term, whereas “farm animal” implies a type of animal, defined by their instrumental value to humans
  - Referring to social animals (e.g. pet rabbits) in the plural, to reinforce positive norms about how their social needs are considered and met
- Using social and digital media, including shareable videos, infographics, webinars and waiting room materials, to communicate animal welfare positions and advice to the public, politicians and the profession
- Continuing to select certain priority animal welfare problems for campaigns (e.g. as was done with the FVE/Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (FECAVA) joint campaign on extreme breeding in companion animals) or to support NGO-led campaigns (or the principles behind them), when appropriate

Veterinarians should be recognised for their work to improve animal welfare across society and FVE will continue to highlight examples of animal welfare-focused veterinary practice as part of emphasising the profession’s societal value and relevance.

*“FVE has really helped us with our national advocacy on antimicrobial resistance and animal welfare”*

*“FVE position papers are very important, they help us at national level”*

*“We really like it when FVE does a survey (e.g. the one on PMSG) and uses the results to create an overview. It’s really useful for us to use those in our work to influence politics at home.”*

*“Send templates of handouts and posters that are easy for us to translate.”*

*“Provide direct tools and assistance to member organisations to undertake PR campaigns at national level.”*

*“Promote (through articles or communication, holding an award, or something) what good ideas specific clinics have already had to improve animal welfare. This might inspire other clinics to put these measures in place.”*

#### FVE actions:

- ✓ Maintain a long list and shorter prioritised list of animal welfare problems in Europe, developed and agreed through consultation with key stakeholders
- ✓ Continue to develop and publish position papers on priority animal welfare problems in Europe and develop veterinary campaigns on selected problems, jointly with European species-specialist veterinary associations whenever possible
- ✓ Develop a communications plan to launch new position papers, with supporting resources such as shareable infographics, videos and webinars when possible
- ✓ Agree approaches to assess impacts of FVE animal welfare position statements and campaigns
- ✓ Disseminate resources to assist veterinary practices with developing their activities in animal welfare and ethics
- ✓ Promote public recognition of animal welfare advocacy by veterinarians
- ✓ Clarify the status and purpose of different types of FVE policy document and their target audiences, and use appropriate language that reflects animal sentience and the meeting of animals’ needs
- ✓ Motivate and assist national veterinary associations to develop their own animal welfare strategy, if they have not already done so

## 5. Education

### Principle:

For veterinarians to fulfil their animal welfare leadership roles they must receive adequate undergraduate training in animal welfare science, ethics and law (AWSEL). These topics ensure that veterinarians are equipped to competently assess animal welfare using evidence-based methods within contemporary assessment frameworks; that they can use information about animal welfare states to formulate and advocate ethical judgements about how animals should be kept,

treated and used; and they understand legal frameworks relevant to current animal uses and veterinary practice.

Postgraduate studies and reflective practice should be promoted and should apply and expand AWSEL training. Additionally, good practice sharing of approaches to animal welfare, across the veterinary profession, contributes to continuing education and levelling up of animal welfare standards within and between countries.

### **Aim:**

For FVE to continue working to ensure AWSEL is adequately taught in European Veterinary Educational Establishments.

For FVE to act as a focal point for proactive sharing of good animal welfare practices between member associations.

### **What we heard:**

In 2012, FVE partnered with the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) to examine animal welfare in European veterinary education<sup>11</sup>. In 2013, both associations agreed on a model curriculum in AWSEL which adopted six Day-1 competences. The model curriculum is part of the EAEVE/FVE evaluation and accreditation system that ensures that the agreed benchmark educational levels are met.

Two surveys were conducted in 2012 to inform the Day-1 competences. The first mapped the under- and post-graduate teaching of animal welfare in veterinary and animal science faculties in 26 European countries. The second was carried out to specifically evaluate the teaching practices in AWSEL, and the support and feasibility of the draft model curriculum. The second survey, answered by 33 veterinary faculties, showed general support for the draft model curriculum. Fifty-five percent of schools did not meet the suggested model curriculum, with most respondents saying they could meet it within 5 years.

In 2019, a follow-up survey was done to assess the progress of AWSEL teaching in European veterinary schools, including whether the 2013 model curriculum was still able to cover the Day-1 competences in animal welfare. It found that, overall, AWSEL teaching has increased, but with at least one quarter of European schools still only partially meeting the 2013 Day-1 competences. Inclusion of contemporary animal welfare concepts in undergraduate curricula, such as promotion of positive welfare (see Point 1, Animal welfare assessment), has increased substantially (98% of veterinary schools who covered this topic in their curriculum in 2019, compared with 59% in 2012). Ethics teaching fares worse than animal welfare science and law, with 37% of veterinary schools only partially meeting, or not meeting, the Day-1 competences. There were calls for the European Coordinating Committee on Veterinary Training (ECCVT) to place a larger emphasis on ethical dilemmas regarding animal welfare in the veterinary curriculum and for veterinary schools, overseen by appropriate national regulatory bodies, to promote continuing education on AWSEL for all teaching staff, including those responsible for delivering AWSEL content.

Consultees highlighted FVE's opportunity to foster harmonisation of veterinary approaches to animal welfare advocacy and leadership, through using their relationships with member associations to establish and share how veterinarians and veterinary bodies are taking positive actions. FVE's reports on emerging issues, such as horse welfare during production of equine chorionic gonadotropin (also called PMSG), are appreciated. Sharing successes and good practice examples contributes to education and inspiration for veterinarians in other regions, in order that they may adopt and improve similar approaches. It was emphasised that different European countries have different priority animal welfare problems and differing degrees of cultural support for animal welfare, so FVE should continue providing support, guidance and leadership in ways that allow for regional implementation. In line with FVE's position paper, *Provision of education for professional animal owners and animal handlers*<sup>12</sup>, FVE should continue to encourage the European institutions to make minimum training compulsory in all areas where animals are handled professionally, by creating an appropriate legal basis. The training should include animal welfare assessment. FVE member associations should liaise with their national governments and owner organisations to provide and promote such training.

*"FVE should be a platform for disseminating good practice. Analyse works of other countries, evaluate them, publish them and disseminate information to other members."*

*"FVE should be the link between members having the same discussions so we can benefit from each other."*

*"FVE could hold workshops or debates around animal welfare, to inform and promote sharing of information on this topic."*

*"A focus on animal welfare, starting with education, should be a key FVE goal for the next 3-5 years. Working with the European Coordinating Committee on Veterinary Training could help with having a larger emphasis on ethical dilemmas regarding animal welfare in the veterinary curriculum."*

*"Education in ethics and soft skills like discussing and presenting skills should be included in the veterinary curriculum to ensure future veterinarians can adequately form and voice their opinion, inform the public and advocate for the position of the animal"*

#### **FVE actions:**

- ✓ Continue work with EAEVE to ensure all European vet schools are covering Day-1 competences in animal welfare science, ethics and law, with a particular focus on ethics teaching
- ✓ To work through the ECCVT to enhance training on ethical dilemmas relating to animal welfare in veterinary undergraduate curricula
- ✓ To understand which FVE member associations have a dedicated animal welfare and ethics committee or working group, and to increase two-way communication with those groups, and good practice sharing, on priority animal welfare topics

## 6. International

### Principle:

As well as its role in supporting veterinary animal welfare leadership across Europe, FVE has relationships and opportunities that enable it to similarly assist with advancing veterinary animal welfare leadership globally; for example, through its relationships with the World Veterinary Association (WVA), the Commonwealth Veterinary Association (CVA), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the American and Canadian Veterinary Medical Associations (AVMA, CVMA).

The International priority area considers animal welfare in the context of other global societal priorities, such as the global climate change emergency, biodiversity loss, antimicrobial resistance, sustainable food production and consumption, and the overarching United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

### Aim:

For FVE to collaborate, coordinate and exchange knowledge with other international veterinary associations, to advance animal welfare progress and veterinary animal welfare leadership globally.

For FVE to advocate animal welfare advancement within the Sustainable Development Goals agenda – both out of respect for the intrinsic value of animals and in recognition of the contributions that healthy, content animals make to human society - and to assist veterinarians to work towards this through local, national and international One Health and One Welfare partnerships.

### What we heard:

In November 2016, FVE published its reflection paper, “Veterinarians’ Contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)”, which highlighted how animal health and animal welfare, and the contributions of the veterinary profession, are central to achieving the SDGs. The themes were repeated by consultees within the present consultation.

The paper notes that in the next 3 to 4 decades, if current trends continued, the global demand for animal protein is estimated to triple. It highlights that the breeding and raising of farmed animals in large numbers can have serious environmental consequences, including those linked to climate change and biodiversity loss, and that sustainable animal husbandry needs to mitigate these environmental consequences, as well as being economically viable and ethically acceptable.

It states that animal production systems will need to be significantly modified over the coming decades, including the following necessary aspects:

- Responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials is critical, and antimicrobials are never used to replace good husbandry practices
- Animal husbandry systems for all kept animals should allow for a good quality of life, offering opportunities for positive welfare such as contentment, play, and comfort, and allowing expression of important (highly motivated) behaviours
- Mutilations as routine practice must be avoided

- Breeding programmes must be balanced and not focus on productivity alone, to avoid harmful unintended consequences for animal health and welfare

The paper raises the economic and public health implications of production systems aiming for large amounts of relatively low-priced meat and the importance of consumers understanding that food prices must be realistic and based on real costs. Subsequent FVE position papers have highlighted that national veterinary associations can signpost citizens to assurance schemes (where available) that improve the health and welfare of farmed animals, and can lobby national governments to recognise the health and welfare of farmed animals as a public good to be allocated public funding support (e.g. via the Common Agricultural Policy).

FVE should continue to proactively share such policy recommendations with other global veterinary and animal welfare bodies, to help influence animal welfare policy across the world, and to similarly receive and disseminate ideas and resources from those bodies. This will be facilitated by ongoing strong relations and through regular contact with other associations' animal welfare personnel and committees in particular. The FVE Animal Welfare Working Group will also work closely with the FVE Food Safety and Sustainability Working Group on these topics.

*“The veterinary profession should engage more with climate change, and the link between climate and farming.”*

*“Veterinarians and FVE need to bridge animal welfare with environmental protection, food security, food safety with respect to farm animals but also health protection of the human owner and the community with respect to other animal species under human care.”*

#### **FVE actions:**

- ✓ To liaise with the animal welfare committees and working groups of other global veterinary associations, to increase two-way communication and good practice sharing on priority animal welfare topics
- ✓ To further develop FVE's position on the sustainability problems associated with low-priced products of animal origin, and how the veterinary profession should advocate for economically viable solutions that properly value foods of animal origin
- ✓ Working with the FVE Sustainability Working Group, to make and take opportunities to lobby for explicit inclusion of animal welfare as a sustainability goal
- ✓ Assist the Sustainability Working Group to increase the veterinary profession's actions and visibility on the climate and biodiversity crises

## **Appendix 1**

### **Ways that national veterinary associations can develop their animal welfare leadership and advocacy**

1. Create a proactive animal welfare strategy as part of your association's overall strategy
2. Identify and prioritise animal welfare problems in your country
3. Collaborate and cooperate with other veterinary associations in your country/region, to ensure buy-in to policies and profession-wide action on recommendations
4. Run joint animal welfare campaigns with other veterinary associations, based on agreed policies
5. Learn and ask for help from other associations; use all the possible guidance and tools that have been created
6. Work together with local authorities (including the veterinary authorities) and aligned animal welfare NGOs. This is done extremely well in some countries, but a problem in other countries
7. Work well with your national stakeholders (e.g., farmers, breeders, pet associations, NGOs)
8. Give more guidance to members on animal welfare and other sensitive topics. It is easier to take the same stance together than to do it as individual veterinarians
9. Set up a charity branch and frameworks on how veterinarians can contribute more to the local communities
10. Set up a taskforce/working group/committee to guide your organisation on animal welfare and ethics - working internally (e.g., informing and supporting members and providing advice to the association board) and externally (e.g., a voice in society and in collaborative fora)
11. Organise CPD on animal welfare and ethics
12. React on animal welfare issues, especially in cases of crisis
13. Reach more veterinarians and more of the general public with your work. Find the best ways to promote and market
14. Give guest lectures on veterinary animal welfare advocacy in vet schools. Involve students and recent graduates in your association's animal welfare activities and policy-making
15. Liaise with veterinary educational establishments to advocate adequate inclusion and assessment of animal welfare science, ethics and law in undergraduate curricula
16. Promote the establishment of an Animal Welfare and Ethics Council in your country and participate in the Council's work

## Appendix 2

FVE priority list of animal welfare problems by sector (working document) – adopted by the General Assembly, 2019

### Dogs

1. Irresponsible production and selling of puppies (e.g. illegal importation, puppy farms, online trade, breeding guidelines)
2. Inappropriate training (including electronic pulse training aids) and unregulated behaviourists
3. Housing conditions, husbandry practices in shelters, including euthanasia by animal keeper (and not by a vet)

### Cats

4. Chronic pain recognition and management/ old cat issues
5. Enforced indoor group living with other cats
6. Exaggerated conformation
7. Stray cat management (feral/stray) - Inappropriate TNR programs
8. Housing conditions, husbandry practices in shelters, including euthanasia by animal keeper (and not by a vet)

### Pet rabbits

9. Lack of pre-purchase research & owner education: low understanding of care requirements leading to e.g.:
  - a. Solitary living
  - b. Inappropriate living environment (e.g. small hutch, no run)
  - c. Inappropriate diet
  - d. Fear of handling (link to inappropriate socialisation)
  - e. Undesirable animal behaviour

### Companion animal root cause problem

10. Lack of pre-purchase research

### Equids

11. Inappropriate stabling/turnout (owner education/single housing/permanent tethering)
12. Training methods/Tack fit (e.g. bits, nosebands, saddles)

### Cattle

13. Housing: housing design; Permanent housing/zero grazing/ Housing for beef cattle/Tethering
14. Transport & slaughter of pregnant animals
15. Transport of unweaned calves
16. Pain assessment and management for routine procedures in calves

### Sheep

16. Lameness
17. Lamb mortality

### Goats

18. Lameness
19. Pain assessment and management for disbudding
20. Permanent housing of dairy goats/environmental enrichment

### Pigs

21. Farrowing crates

22. Euthanasia of pigs

Fish – farmed, wild and in research

23. Technology and fish welfare (“tech vs biology needs to work hand in hand”)

24. Predation

Poultry

25. Cages for layers

26. Selection for rapid growth – link to e.g. lameness, heart disease

27. Broiler breeder hunger

Welfare at slaughter

28. Group stunning pens

29. Poultry water bath stunning & ineffective stunning

Non-traditional companion animals (NTCAs) and wildlife impacted by people

30. Wild rodent control, e.g. glue traps, anticoagulant rodenticides

31. Exotic animal trade (acquisition and disposition) including wild-caught animals

Priority problems with existing positions/activity –

Delayed euthanasia/End of life

Cattle lameness

Live transport, cattle

Unwanted male goat kids

Pig tail biting and docking

Non-stun slaughter

## Appendix 3

FVE long list of animal welfare problems by sector (working document) – adopted at General Assembly, 2019

### Companion animals - dogs

- Inherited disease & exaggerated conformation
- Irresponsible production and selling of puppies (e.g. illegal importation, puppy farms, online trade)
- Inappropriate socialisation
- Undesirable animal behaviour
- Unrecognised or undertreated disease
- Obesity
- Inappropriate training (including electronic pulse training aids) and unregulated behaviourists
- Social isolation & separation-related behaviour
- Inadequate exercise
- Inappropriate TNR programs
- Cross-border transport and sales (including adoption) of dogs (greyhounds, and others)
- Breed-specific legislation

### Companion animals – cats

- Chronic pain recognition and management/ old cat issues
- Enforced indoor group living with other cats
- Exaggerated conformation
- Stray cat management (feral/stray) - Inappropriate TNR programs
- Euthanasia of convenience (responsible ownership)
- Obesity
- Inappropriate socialisation
- Undesirable animal behaviour
- Cat cafes
- Inappropriate environment (e.g. number & type of key resources – litter trays, scratching posts, food and water bowls etc)
- Toxicity (e.g. permethrin, lilies)

### Companion animals – rabbits & guinea pigs

- Solitary living
- Inappropriate living environment (e.g. small hutch, no run)
- Inappropriate diet
- Fear of handling
- Undesirable animal behaviour
- Inappropriate socialisation
- Unrecognised or undertreated disease (e.g. dental, ocular, flystrike)
- Exaggerated conformation

### Companion animals – root cause

- Lack of education and pre-purchase research: low understanding of costs and legal responsibilities

### Greyhounds

- Euthanasia of healthy animals no longer required for racing
- Inadequate kennelling facilities
- Injuries (would be good to access to injury statistics)
- Poor prize money leading to insufficient investment in facilities

## Equids

- Inappropriate stabling/turnout (owner education/single housing/permanent tethering)
- Delayed euthanasia/End of Life
- Training methods/Tack fit (e.g. nosebands, bits, saddles)
- Availability of medications
- Obesity/inappropriate nutrition
- Unresolved stress/pain behaviour
- Fly grazing/neglect
- Welfare at slaughter (long distance transport e.g. at BIPs, CCTV)
- Regulation of paraprofessionals
- Biosecurity and disease surveillance
- Animal establishment licensing

## Cattle

- Lameness
- Mastitis
- Cubicle design
- Live transport
- Calving management & bull selection (e.g. breeding oversized calves)
- Longevity/Life expectancy and links to welfare
- Veal calf housing
- Cow/calf separation
- Transport and slaughter pregnant animals
- Transport on unweaned calves -) ATG
- Delayed euthanasia
- Pain relief for routine procedures in calves
- Unwanted male calves
- Permanent housing/zero grazing/ Housing for beef cattle/Tethering
- Calf management & mortality
- BVD & Johne's control

## Sheep

- Lameness
- Lamb mortality
- Castration
- Tail docking
- Parasites & parasiticide resistance
- Predators attacking sheep (dogs and wolves)
- Dystocia
- Pregnancy toxaemia, nutrition, mastitis
- Lamb price

## Goats

- Disbudding -) pain relief
- Unwanted male goat kids -) existing FVE position
- Vet undergraduate training on goats
- Longevity/Life expectancy (welfare problem?)
- Parasite control
- Ear tagging
- Foot lameness
- Permanent housing dairy goats/environmental enrichment
- Early separation of kids from mothers
- Morbidity/mortality of goat kids

## Pigs

- Tail biting & docking -) work in progress but needs continued attention
- Pig castration
- Provision of appropriate environmental enrichment
- Farmer education -) link to existing FVE paper
- Farrowing crates
- Euthanasia of pigs
- Piglet mortality
- Pneumonia due to fully slatted floors
- Weaning age
- High number of piglets
- Lameness
- Aggression
- Endemic disease

## Fish – farmed, wild and in research

- Water quality
- Sea lice infestation/parasites
- Predation
- Technology versus biology needs to work hand in hand
- Handling & transport
- Skin damage/fin erosion/gill health
- Viral disease
- Saprolegnia
- “Cleaner fish” welfare
- Feed deprivation pre-slaughter
- Water quality
- Stocking density
- Laboratory fish welfare, esp. zebra fish
- Catch and release fisheries (e.g. repeated catch in angling)
- Commercially caught fish
- Crustacean welfare, e.g. market stalls, slaughter methods

## Poultry

- Leg health & lameness, broilers (+ ducks & turkeys)
- Cages for layers
- Selection for rapid growth (link to e.g. lameness, heart disease)
- Broiler breeder hunger
- Food pad dermatitis
- Mortality
- Transport: heat and cold stress
- Thinning of broiler flocks
- Feather pecking/ cannibalism & beak trimming (layers & turkeys)
- Keel bone fractures & osteoporosis
- Open water access - ducks
- Stocking density
- Provision of appropriate environmental enrichment
- Disease and parasitism (e.g. E.coli, avian ‘flu, red mites)
- Medicines availability

## Welfare at slaughter

- Non-stun slaughter
- Group stunning pens
- Welfare during transport
- Poultry water bath stunning/ In-effective stunning poultry
- CO2 pig slaughter

- On-farm emergency slaughter
- Thinning of broiler flocks
- Crustacean slaughter

Non-traditional companion animals (NTCAs), captive deer, zoo and wildlife

- Wild rodent control, e.g. glue traps, anticoagulant rodenticides
- Exotic animal trade (acquisition and disposition) including wild-caught animals
- Inappropriate diet and housing (including social isolation)
- Husbandry and welfare of NTCAs
- Welfare of animals killed for exotic pet food
- Lack of control and inspection of pet shops
- Abnormal & problem behaviour, e.g. parrots
- Performing animals, e.g. circuses, children's parties
- Lack of zoo licensing and inspections/ inappropriate zoos
- Training of veterinary undergraduates in NTCAs and wildlife
- Free shooting badgers, bTB control
- Poisoning of wildlife from lead ammunition
- Inadequate winter feeding of park deer
- Smallholder reindeer management
- Chronic wasting disease (CWD)
- Need for fit-for-purpose TB test
- Lack of education of hunters
- Drug availability, e.g. for tranquilising unhandled animals

Horizontal items

- Mass culling
- Euthanasia
- All animals are equal, but some more equal than others/speciesism
- Owner education
- Vet education
- Long distance transport especially of vulnerable animals
- Disaster management
- Heat stress
- Genetics, new technologies
- Extreme breeding (all animals)
- Age of weaning (also for lab animals)
- How to ensure to keep vets on farms
- Link animal cruelty and human
- Technology versus biology needs to work hand in hand (PLF, etc)
- Lack of medicines
- Standardization of all animal protection directives and regulations on the following points:
  - mandatory designated vet (employee or consultant) in all facilities
  - mandatory ethics committee with support of designated vet
  - mandatory animal welfare body with support of designated vet

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