

## Livestock of Animal Welfare

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### Description

Animals destined for meat production are usually exposed to many stressful conditions during production and particularly during preslaughter operations. Handling animals on farm, loading into and unloading from vehicles, transportation, passing through livestock markets, fasting, lairage and stunning can all affect their welfare. How badly welfare can be affected will depend on both the intrinsic factors of the specific type of animal involved and the extrinsic factors of the environment where those animals live or are being handled, including the animal handlers. In South America (SA), it has been part of a strategy for improving Animal Welfare (AW) to address not only ethical aspects, but to emphasize the close relationship existing between handling ruminants preslaughter and the quantity and quality of the meat they produce.

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This has resulted not only in improvements in AW, but has also brought economic rewards to producers which in turn can lead to higher incomes for them and hence better human welfare. For producers with a high number of animals, considering AW during production and preslaughter operations can determine the possibility of exporting and/or getting better prices for their products. At small farmer level, particularly in some less developed countries, where human welfare is impaired, using this strategy together with education has also been relevant.

It is important that education and training in AW are done not only considering global knowledge, but also including specific geographical and climatic characteristics of each country and the cultural, religious and socio-economical characteristics of its people; therefore, research within the context of each country or region becomes relevant. The aim of this review was to show the results of research dealing with AW of ruminant livestock in Chile and some other SA countries. Some of the main problems encountered are related to lack of proper infrastructure to handle animals; long distance transport with high stocking densities in the larger countries; long fasting times due to animals passing through livestock markets and dealers; bad handling of animals by untrained personnel in these and other premises; and finally the lack of knowledge and skills by operators in charge of stunning procedures. Interventions at

these stages have considered training animal handlers and transporters by showing them the consequences of bad handling with audio visual material prepared on site. Research results have helped to improve AW and support the development of new legislation or to make changes in the existent legislation related to AW.

The mission of the companion animals multi sectorial inter professional interdisciplinary strategic think tank on zoonosis project was to provide an overview of the current situation on the role of companion animals as a source of infectious diseases for people and food animals. It also aimed to identify knowledge and technology gaps for the most important zoonosis and propose targeted actions to reduce the risk of zoonotic diseases transmitted via companion animals. After a 3-year study, its members have developed practical recommendations for improved data collection on companion animal numbers and the mechanisms for disease surveillance in companion animals. They highlight the importance of introducing a system for the unique identification of dogs and other companion animals with an implanted microchip transponder and storage of the details it contains on an internationally accessible online database. Their report also emphasises the need for balanced communication with the public on the risks and benefits of pet ownership and the value of the 'one health' concept to encourage closer collaboration between veterinary and human medical professionals.

Animal cruelty is a known behavior of psychopaths, and although the serial killing of humans is widely acknowledged worldwide, this type of crime against animals is seldom discussed. This report describes the necropsy and toxicological findings of 37 dogs and cats, which were found dead in plastic bags in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The animals had all been in the care of an alleged animal rescuer and were to be referred for adoption before being found dead. In the necropsy, the animals showed varying degrees of putrefaction, indicating different periods of death, as well as single or multiple perforations on the thorax. The perforations reached the heart, lungs or large thoracic vessels, culminating in hemo pericardium and hemo thorax that led to death by circulatory failure and cardiac tamponade. Blood from the heart and thoracic cavity was analyzed by gas chromatography coupled with mass spectrometry (GC-MS) and tested positive for ketamine, a dissociative anesthetic. The suspect declared that she had killed only five of the animals and

that they had all been fatally sick. The necropsy proved that all 37 animals were killed in the same way, that none of the animals had any terminal diseases and that a restricted drug was used. The suspect was sentenced to 12 years, 6 months and 14 days of prison for the killing of the 37 animals. This was the first

conviction for the crime of animal cruelty in Brazil. The combined role of police, forensic veterinary pathologists and prosecutors were essential to the conviction, which was a great historical occasion in the fight against animal cruelty.