



6th African Animal Welfare Conference

The Camel's Nose is already Inside the Tent: Animal Welfare & Sustainable Development

by

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Talk Outline

- Animal Welfare Science: a Brief History
 - The Brambell Report (1965) – intensification prompts inquiry
 - Farmed animal welfare – 1980-2000
 - WOAHA – takes on the animal welfare issue in 2002
 - University degree programs and centers (15+ in North America)
- Definition of Animal Welfare – still a major challenge
- The (Botswanan) Elephant in the Room
 - an example of animal welfare science
- The Politics of Animal Welfare
- Conclusion



Animal Welfare Science History

- 1964 – Ruth Harrison to the Brambell Report (1965) to FAWC
- Brief Hiatus and then Farmed Animal Conference in 1981 in the Netherlands
- Europe funds research into animal welfare, Canada too
- USA began addressing animal welfare science in 1980s
- University animal welfare centers began popping up – mainly at veterinary schools
- Degree programs in animal welfare science began to appear – 1995 Edinburgh, Tufts
- Academic journals appeared – e.g., Animal Welfare, Anthrozoos, J. Applied Animal Welfare Science, Society and Animals (all post 1985) – now around 20 journals
- Publishing Houses begin publishing book series on animals and animal welfare science – e.g., Reaktion, CABI, Temple University Press, Wiley-Blackwells, Elsevier, Iowa University Press
- A professional group of “Animal Welfare Scientists” becomes established



Definition of Animal Welfare

- This is still a challenge – hard to pin down relevant (and useful) measures of animal welfare
- Not that different to the concept of human welfare/well-being
- New measures of Human Well-being rely on surveys – not easy to ask animals what they are feeling
- Behavioral measures are now favored (e.g., preference tests) because measures such as blood corticosteroid levels are problematic – measure level of stimulation rather than well-being itself
- We are getting better but current approaches leave room for disagreement as regards what is being measured and how important it might be



Botswanan “Elephant in the Room”

- There were two mentions of the Botswana elephant population yesterday and it prompts me to address the issue today.
- Human-elephant conflict is a big issue in Africa and not easily managed
- Botswana has a lot of elephants – estimated around 130,000
- Maybe 220,000 in Kavango-Zambesi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KZTCA) – around half the total estimated African population
- There are approximately 2.5 million people living in the KZTCA.
- What to do? In other places, contraception shown to be an effective alternative to culling – too many elephants in the KZTCA for the approach to be practical.
- Nevertheless, animal welfare science has identified useful alternatives to culling for smaller elephant populations (in hundreds/thousands?).



Elephant Fertility Control

- PZP Vaccine – “immunizes” female so eggs are not fertilized
- In seven reserves/conservancies in SA, 1200+ elephant vaccinations – only 2 failures.
- Cows continue to calve for 2 years after vaccination but none after that (intercalving interval normally around 4 years)
- Post vaccination (108 elephant cows)
 - Year 1 – 38 calves
 - Year 2 – 24 calves
 - Years 3-6 – Zero calves**
- Science delivers non-lethal elephant population control





Animal Welfare Politics

- Animal welfare has been a significant and growing political concern in Europe, Australasia and North America since the 1960s.
- See, for example, recent decision by British Government to include cephalopods and decapods (crabs & lobsters) as sentient beings (no longer just vertebrates)
- China has seen an explosion of animal welfare advocacy in past twenty years. No animal protection legislation yet but likely soon.
- India (with its tradition of Ahimsa) has long been sympathetic to animal welfare concerns - still movement has grown substantially in last decade.
- In Africa, also see substantial growth – illustrated by this meeting



Conclusions

- Barring major global catastrophe – animal welfare is not going to go away as an issue
- Europe is talking about eliminating caging for farmed animals
- Animal welfare is a growing political issue in the Pacific rim countries
- Human (mis?) treatment of animals is intimately connected with many current environmental crises
- Morally and Politically – addressing animal welfare now rather than later will be viewed in the coming years as the best decision!