USA COMMENTS

TERRESTRIAL ANIMAL HEALTH STANDARDS
COMMISSION - FEBRUARY 2017 REPORT

CHAPTER 7.1.

INTRODUCTION TO THE
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

Article 7.1.X.

Guiding principles for the use of animal-based measures to assess animal welfare

1) For the OIE animal welfare to be applicable globally, the basis comparing animal welfare standards, as stated in Article 7.1.2.8., they should put more emphasis be on good outcomes for the animals rather than on prescribe specific conditions of the animals' environment and management. Outcomes are generally measured assessed by assessing animals' enjoyment should strive to minimize negative experiences or states, as described in the "five freedoms" described in Article 7.1.2. and optimize the positive experiences or states for the animal animal-based measures such as low mortality rate, low prevalence of injuries, ability to move freely, positive human-animal relationship, and a low incidence of aggression and stereotyped behaviour.

Rationale:
- The idea for the global applicability of the OIE's standards is already addressed within the “Foreward” section of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code.
- Guiding Principles for Animal Welfare are established in Article 7.1.2.
- "Enjoyment" is an affective state; not all animal-based measures used for assessments will accurately quantify that state. Alternative word considerations to “enjoyment” (if the decision of the TAHSC is to retain the original sentence) would be to exchange "enjoyment" with "realization" or "fullfillment".
- Minimizing and optimizing positive and negative experiences was discussed at the 4th OIE Global Conference on Animal Welfare in Guadalajara, Mexico, December 2016; Plenary Session 1: updating animal welfare thinking (D. Mellor), and in an opinion published in Animals 2016, 6, 21; doi:10.3390/ani6030021 www.mdpi.com/journal/animals by D. Mellor; “Updating Animal Welfare Thinking: Moving beyond the “Five Freedoms” towards “A Life Worth Living”.

2) For each principle listed in Article 7.1.4., the most relevant measures criteria, ideally animal-based measures, should be included in the standard. Any given animal-based measure may be linked to more than one principle.

3) End Users of the standard should select the most appropriate animal-based measures for their farming system or conditions, from among those listed in the standard. Outcomes can be measured by an assessment of individuals or animal groups, or a representative sample of those, using data from establishments, transport or slaughterhouses/abattoirs.

4) Standards should, whenever possible, define explicit targets or thresholds that should be met for animal-based measures. Such target values should be based on available relevant science and experience of experts. To guide end users, Competent Authorities should collect data that can be used to set locally relevant target values.
4) **Standards Users** should, whenever possible, define explicit targets or thresholds that should be met for animal-based measures. Such target values should be based on available relevant science and experience of experts or consider relevant databases with comparable information for the given context. To guide end users, Competent Authorities should collect data that can be used to set locally relevant target values.

**Rationale:**

Sentence 1: The OIE should not define thresholds for animal-based measures within the TAHC Standards. The TAHC Standard has defined the valid, reliable and usable animal-based measures that should be used to assess animal welfare. Users of the standard should define appropriate thresholds for their production system and work towards continual improvement of the threshold over time (ISO, 2016).

Sentence 2: Data should be collected to set locally animal-based measure thresholds. Many regional or national livestock industries or academia collect and report data which can be used as a comparable benchmark for users of the Standard (ISO, 2016). The Competent Authority should not be the only entity recognized to do so.


5) **In addition** when compared to animal-based measures, resource-based measures and management-based measures can be defined on the basis of science and expert experience in cases where it showing that a welfare outcome is clearly linked to a resource such as adequate space, or to a management procedure such as pain mitigation.

**Rationale:** Guiding Principles for Animal Welfare are established in Article 7.1.2.