

TERRESTRIAL ANIMAL HEALTH STANDARDS COMMISSION

SEPTEMBER 2011 REPORT

CHAPTER 7.1.

**INTRODUCTION TO THE
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANIMAL WELFARE**

Article 7.1.1.

Animal welfare means how an *animal* is coping with the conditions in which it lives. An *animal* is in a good state of *welfare* if (as indicated by scientific evidence) it is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, able to express innate behaviour, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear, and distress.

Good *animal welfare* requires *disease* prevention and veterinary treatment, appropriate shelter, management, nutrition, humane handling and humane *slaughter/killing*. *Animal welfare* refers to the state of the *animal*; the treatment that an *animal* receives is covered by other terms such as animal care, animal husbandry, and humane treatment.

Article 7.1.2.

Guiding principles for animal welfare

1. That there is a critical relationship between animal health and *animal welfare*.
2. That the internationally recognised 'five freedoms' (freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition; freedom from fear and distress; freedom from physical and thermal discomfort; freedom from pain, injury and *disease*; and freedom to express normal patterns of behaviour) provide valuable guidance in *animal welfare*.
3. That the internationally recognised 'three Rs' (reduction in numbers of *animals*, refinement of experimental methods and replacement of *animals* with non-animal techniques) provide valuable guidance for the use of *animals* in science.
4. That the scientific assessment of *animal welfare* involves diverse elements which need to be considered together, and that selecting and weighing these elements often involves value-based assumptions which should be made as explicit as possible.
5. That the use of *animals* in agriculture, education and science, and for companionship, recreation and entertainment, makes a major contribution to the wellbeing of people.
6. That the use of *animals* carries with it an ethical responsibility to ensure the *welfare* of such *animals* to the greatest extent practicable.
7. That improvements in farm *animal welfare* can often improve productivity and food safety, and hence lead to economic benefits.
8. That equivalent outcomes based on performance criteria, rather than identical systems based on design criteria, be the basis for comparison of *animal welfare* standards and recommendations.

Article 7.1.3.

Scientific basis for recommendations

1. *Welfare* is a broad term which includes the many elements that contribute to an *animal's* quality of life, including those referred to in the 'five freedoms' listed above.
2. The scientific assessment of *animal welfare* has progressed rapidly in recent years and forms the basis of these recommendations.
3. Some measures of *animal welfare* involve assessing the degree of impaired functioning associated with injury, *disease*, and malnutrition. Other measures provide information on *animals'* needs and affective states such as hunger, pain and fear, often by measuring the strength of *animals'* preferences, motivations and aversions. Others assess the physiological, behavioural and immunological changes or effects that *animals* show in response to various challenges.
4. Such measures can lead to criteria and indicators that help to evaluate how different methods of managing *animals* influence their *welfare*.

Article 7.1.4.**General principles for the welfare of animals in livestock production systems**

1. Genetic selection should promote the health and *welfare* of *animals*. Breeds of *animals* should be introduced only into environments to which they are genetically suited.
2. The physical environment, including the substrate (walking surface, resting surface, etc.), should be suited to the species so as not to cause injury or transmit *diseases* or parasites to *animals*.
3. The physical environment should allow comfortable resting, safe and comfortable movement including normal postural changes, and the opportunity to perform types of natural behaviour that *animals* are motivated to perform.
4. Social grouping of *animals* should allow positive social behaviour and not cause injury or chronic fear.
5. Air quality in confined spaces should support good animal health and not be aversive to *animals*. The temperature and humidity of the environment should be within the *animals'* ability to adapt. Where extreme conditions occur, *animals* should not be prevented from using their natural methods of thermo-regulation.
6. *Animals* should have access to sufficient food and water, suited to the *animals'* age and needs, to maintain normal health and vigour and to prevent serious or prolonged hunger, thirst, malnutrition or dehydration.
7. *Diseases* and parasites should be prevented as much as possible through good management practices. *Animals* with serious health problems should be isolated and treated promptly or killed humanely if treatment is not feasible or recovery is unlikely.
8. Where painful procedures cannot be avoided, the resulting pain should be managed as much as available methods and economic constraints allow.

9. The handling of *animals* should foster a positive human animal relationship and should not cause injury, panic, lasting fear or avoidable stress.

10. Owners and handlers should have sufficient skill and knowledge to ensure that *animals* are treated in accordance with these principles.