Animal Welfare in the Veterinary Profession Field

M. Prieto Laport¹,², P.E. Bobadilla¹,², S.M. Huertas Cánen¹,²

¹Facultad de Veterinaria, Universidad de la República, Lasplaces 1550, CP 11600, Montevideo, Uruguay
²Centro Colaborador OIE en Bienestar Animal y Sistemas de Producción Pecuarios.
Chile-Uruguay-México.
www.bienestaranimal.org.uy  bienestaranimaluy@gmail.com

OBJECTIVE
Obtain information about the knowledge of veterinarians on Animal Welfare during the practice of their professional duties.

INTRODUCTION
Training and diffusion of good handling practices are key points in reducing animal abuse. Three aspects are considered in the development of education in Animal Welfare (AW): a) introduction of AW in curricular education, b) promotion of permanent education for graduates and c) development of plans for diffusion, follow up, assessment and continuous improvement on AW affairs.

METHODOLOGY
In September 2016, we sent an on-line questionnaire to the veterinarians who were in Educación Continua database. The questionnaire had 4 sections, a general one gathering information on the year of entry to the faculty, the number of AW courses taken, knowledge of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code and the Regional Animal Welfare Strategy for the Americas (RAWS). Three additional sections where included, one for each work area (large animals medicine/production, small animals health and food industry).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
From 1804 questionnaires sent 388 answers were obtained 69% attended at least one AW course, 89.9% are willing to attend again, 63.5% considered the information received to be very useful for their daily activities. 95% considers that AW should be included in the veterinary studies curriculum. 53.3% declared not having knowledge about the RAWS.

CONCLUSIONS
The majority of the veterinarians considered the acquired knowledge very useful and are eager to obtain more information. On the other hand, there is a lack of knowledge about the RAWS. It is necessary to keep working to include AW in the veterinary studies curriculum as well as continuing with the diffusion of good practices and AW principles, based on the national and international norms.