

Creating a culture within veterinary education to achieve Day 1 Competencies in animal welfare

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Animal welfare requires critical thinking and a multi-disciplinary approach to bring together scientific, ethical, economic, cultural and political elements in order for veterinarians to advocate effectively for animal welfare. World Animal Protection conducted an online survey from April to October 2014, which investigated what a culture of promoting and demonstrating good animal welfare within veterinary education might look like. This survey in particular examined:

1. The benefits of improving animal welfare education
2. The criteria for a welfare standards-of-excellence award scheme
3. How to assess veterinary schools against the award standards

Respondents included 2,614 individuals involved in veterinary education or the larger veterinary profession from 97 countries. More than half of respondents were female (57%). Responses were analysed in terms of the global average, after which they were broken down by region and socio-demographic variables. Strong support for animal welfare education was evidenced from within the global veterinary community (veterinary educators, students, practising veterinarians and other veterinary professionals working in industry and governmental departments), motivated primarily by the desire to ensure better treatment of animals. More than 80% of respondents supported the proposed criteria for a welfare standards-of-excellence award scheme. Overall, a system for recognition of excellence in good animal welfare within veterinary education was, in principle, supported by veterinary schools and veterinary associations such as the World Veterinary Association (WVA) and World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

Survey results and the impact of implementation of the standards through a pilot project at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Bogor Agricultural University, Indonesia in ensuring achievement of Day 1 Competencies in animal welfare will be further discussed.

World Animal Protection proposes that veterinary schools work towards implementation of these standards in order to develop a global holistic and cultural approach to animal welfare training at schools and colleges of veterinary medicine. This will help future veterinarians comply with OIE intergovernmental animal welfare standards.

Keywords: veterinary education – animal welfare