The role of the International Society for Applied Ethology (ISAE) in the global development of animal welfare science and its relationship with the OIE; strength through partnership

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The objective of this presentation is to introduce the International Society for Applied Ethology (ISAE) and to highlight members’ roles in the development and implementation of World Organisation for Animal Health’s (OIE) animal welfare standards. Animal welfare science is a young discipline. Originally, welfare science was heavily focused on animal behavior (ethology), but it is now interdisciplinary, encompassing ethology, physiology, pathology, health, immunology, endocrinology, neuroscience, and ethics. The first academic organization devoted to the scientific study of applied ethology was established in 1966 as the Society for Veterinary Ethology (SVE). In 1991, the SVE became the ISAE; recognizing its spread and evolution from veterinary medicine. It now has 670 members across 36 countries on 6 continents and is acknowledged as the principal society for those working in animal welfare science. All members have a scientific background in animal behavior, and are active in research, teaching and outreach. ISAE holds an international congress and many regional meetings every year, and its official journal is Applied Animal Behaviour Science. The Society provides independent animal welfare science experts for governments, international bodies, industry and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). OIE and ISAE share many common goals and ISAE members are very active directly and indirectly within the OIE framework. For example, ISAE members are: 1) participants in the OIE Animal Welfare Working Group and the ad hoc groups on specific welfare issues, 2) members of OIE Collaborating Centers that include an animal welfare component, 3) authors of many chapters in the OIE publication – Animal Welfare: Focusing on the Future, 4) serving as OIE National Focal Points for animal welfare, 5) authors and contributors in national responses to OIE draft documents, and 6) establishing and delivering courses to meet OIE-mandated competencies in animal welfare for veterinarians. OIE activities surrounding animal welfare are stronger through the expert input of ISAE members and ISAE would welcome greater formal collaboration.

Key words: applied ethology – animal welfare science – collaboration – ISAE – partnership – standards.