Reports and Comments

New interactive website on common marmosets

A new open-access internet resource providing information on common marmoset (*Callithrix jacchus*) behaviour and promoting their welfare in captivity has recently been developed. This website is intended for use by a broad audience, including private owners, educators, academic researchers, zoo, laboratory and veterinary professionals. Designed to be welcoming and fun to use, as well as instructive, the site is interactive and illustrated extensively with photographs and over 120 video clips.

The common marmoset is the most-used New World primate in laboratory research and testing worldwide and is also probably the primate that is most frequently kept by private owners. Although the website conveys relevant advice about these animals, the private ownership of marmosets is strongly and persuasively discouraged (a footnote on the first page reads: "Disclaimer: Marmosets should not be kept as pets, given the difficulties of providing for their complex social and physical needs. Their use in laboratory research and testing is controversial and the ethical framework of the 3Rs — Replacement, Reduction and Refinement — must be applied if they are used"). Being able to understand and assess the welfare state of marmosets in captive contexts is essential for ethical reasons, and in laboratory research and testing is important for the quality of scientific output, and to assess the efficacy of planned Refinements to housing, husbandry and procedures (the 3Rs of Replacement, Reduction and Refinement being the principles underpinning humane research).

The three main divisions of the website aim, respectively, to promote: (i) an understanding of the range of behaviour in this species; (ii) placing this behaviour in the context of its natural habitat; and (iii) promoting good welfare in captive environments. Topics covered in the 'care in captivity' section include grouping and breeding, feeding, health, interaction with human caregivers, positive reinforcement training and the vital importance of conspecific companionship. An interactive section demonstrates the features of good housing for common marmosets. Videos illustrate practical examples of cognitive, sensory, food and social enrichment and highlight the welfare benefit of encouraging natural behaviour. In a second section, video footage and a photo gallery show the daily experience of marmosets living 'in the wild'. The third section presents a novel modern, multimedia update of the 'ethogram'; a detailed online database of much of the behavioural repertoire of this species covering calls, behaviours, postures, facial expressions, sensory capabilities and developmental stages. Videos and images supplement and clearly illustrate the text descriptions. Welfare interpretation is also communicated and an interactive quiz invites visitors to test their knowledge.

This website is hosted by the University of Stirling, UK, and the project was funded by the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (http://www.nc3rs.org/), and the Primate Society of Great Britain's Captive Care Working Party. It does not cover veterinary aspects but is an interesting and valuable resource on the biology and care of these animals.

Common Marmoset Care (2011). Website created by CFI Watson and HM Buchanan-Smith and developed by Richard Assar. Available at http://marmosetcare.com/.

BVA AWF publishes tail-docking guidelines for veterinarians

Docking involves removal of part, or all, of an animal's tail and historically the docking of dogs' tails in England became popular when a tax on non-working dogs was introduced in 1796. Working dogs were exempt from taxation therefore their tails were docked to show their working status. The tax on non-working dogs was later repealed but tail docking continued over the years for various reasons, including: aesthetics, to reduce tail injury, and to increase hygiene.

On the 6th April 2007, tail docking in England became illegal under Section 6 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (England). However, particular working breeds of dog (hunt, spaniel and terrier) are exempt from the tail-docking ban providing certain conditions are satisfied. Tail docking must be carried out by a veterinary surgeon when a dog is no more than five-days old and the puppy must be presented with the dam (to prove breed). A statement must also be made to prove that the dog is intended to work in one of the specified areas, as described in The Docking of Working Dogs' Tails (England) Regulations 2007 (eg pest control, emergency rescue, armed forces, police). Similar legislation has also been passed in Wales and Northern Ireland (with some variation in the detail of exemption) and in Scotland (where there is a total tail-dock ban and no exemption).

The official stance of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (the regulatory body of veterinary surgeons in the UK), is that tail docking is an unjustifiable mutilation and unethical unless carried out for therapeutic or acceptable prophylactic reasons.

Tail docking of dogs can be a tricky topic for veterinary surgeons to manage with their clients and it can also be confusing given the slight differences in legislation throughout the UK. In an attempt to make the issues surrounding tail docking clearer, the British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Foundation (BVA AWF) has produced a guidance leaflet entitled: *The Practical and Legal Approach to the Docked Puppy.* The BVA AWF is an animal welfare charity which aims to improve animal welfare through applying the "knowledge, skill and compassion of veterinary surgeons in an effective way".

The guidance leaflet informs veterinarians, using a question/answer format and an easy flow chart, of their options if they are presented with a puppy that has been

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0962728600003730 Published online by Cambridge University Press

illegally docked and also about what to check for if a client brings in a docked puppy that meets the criteria for exemption. Suggestions are also given about sources of further information and there is a brief round-up of the relevant legislation in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Although tail docking of working dogs meeting the criteria is permissible, some veterinarians are not comfortable with carrying out the procedure and the guidance leaflet advises veterinarians that "regardless of new laws you are NOT obliged to dock exempt dogs. This remains at your discretion as a veterinary surgeon".

The BVA AWF guidance will provide a useful starting point for veterinarians when confronted with the issue of tail docking in dogs.

BVA Animal Welfare Foundation Guidelines: The Practical and Legal Approach to the Docked Puppy (November 2011). A4, 7 pages. Guidance leaflet produced by the British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Foundation (BVA AWF). Available at the following BVA AWF webpage: http://www.bva-awf.org.uk/about/BVA_AWF_Tail_docking_guidance_Nov2011.pdf.

E Carter,
UFAW

The use of animal-based measures to assess the welfare of pigs and dairy cattle

Following a request by the European Commission, the Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) Panel of the European Food Standards Agency (EFSA) has recently investigated the use of animal-based measures to assess the welfare of pigs and dairy cattle, the findings of which were published in January in the form of two Scientific Opinions. The EFSA AHAW Panel provides independent, scientific advice on all aspects of animal health and welfare (predominantly farm animals) to the European Commission, the European Parliament, and Member States. Its Scientific Opinions focus on helping risk managers identify methods to reduce unnecessary animal pain, distress and suffering and to increase animal welfare where possible. The advice given by EFSA is frequently used to support policy decision-making, such as adopting or amending European legislation.

The EFSA AHAW Panel considers animal welfare to encompass both the physical health and emotional state of an animal and it states that animal-based measures are increasingly being used to assess an animal's welfare rather than resource (environment) or practice (management) measures. Animal-based measures seek to evaluate the welfare status of an animal directly and to encompass any impact that environmental and management factors may have.

On reviewing previous EFSA Scientific Reports (that consider pig and dairy cattle welfare), and the EU-funded project, Welfare Quality® (which published protocols for assessing the welfare of pigs, and dairy cattle using predominantly animal-based measures in 2009), the Panel considered that animal-based measures can be used effectively to evaluate the welfare of pigs and dairy cows and, where possible, these should be used in preference to resource or practice measurements. The majority of animal-based observations and measures are made on a sample of individual animals and these results may then be interpreted at the farm or group level. It is suggested that non-animal-based measures may be used when the association between them and a welfare outcome is strong and when they are more efficient to use than animal-based measures.

Certain animal-based measures were identified by EFSA as addressing the largest number of poor welfare outcomes as identified by EFSA's previous recommendations and hazards. In pigs, these measures were: health (sneezing, coughing, scouring, mortality); behaviour (both positive social behaviour and negative, eg tail-biting); and general appearance (wounds on the body and body condition score). In dairy cattle, the following animal-based measures were found to be important: lameness; hock, knee and skin lesions and swelling; colliding with equipment when standing or lying; teat injuries; evidence of mastitis; and body condition score.

A large part of both Opinions is taken up with a multitude of tables that list the welfare recommendations from previous EFSA Scientific Opinions along with suitable animal-based and non-animal-based measures. The lists put forward are extensive and the Panel note that it is not necessary to measure all things on all occasions. It is intended that the lists are thought of more as a 'tool-box' of possible measures and the selection of measures chosen will depend on the welfare outcome to be assessed and the reason for wanting to assess them, eg whether as part of a management/breeding programme or to comply with legislation.

In both Opinions, it is stated that although a number of animal-based measures are fully developed, eg stereoptypies in sows, and gait scoring in dairy cattle, they are not always widely used in commercial practice and, conversely, some animal-based measures are in regular use, eg somatic cell counts in dairy cattle, but they are not fully utilised as an indicator of animal welfare. It is recommended that automatic data-recording systems for animal-based measures are further developed and more widely implemented. Additionally, herd monitoring and surveillance programmes should be employed within both the pig and dairy industries using a range of suitable 'benchmark' animal-based measures to show changes in welfare over time.

It is expected that, following suitable training, the measures put forward may be used by a farmer, veterinarian or inspector when evaluating animal welfare on-farm, and also at the slaughterhouse for ante and post mortem checks. It is hoped that the Scientific Opinions on pigs and dairy cattle are the first in a series and, in time, that all farm species will be covered. The Opinions support the implementation of the recently adopted European Union Animal Welfare Strategy 2012-2015.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0962728600003730 Published online by Cambridge University Press