

REPORTS AND COMMENTS

The IAHAIO Prague Guidelines on Animal-Assisted Activities and Animal-Assisted Therapy

In September 1998, the International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organisations, IAHAIO, held its 8th international conference in Prague, Czechoslovakia entitled 'The Changing Roles of Animals in Society'. Eight hundred delegates from 42 nations attended this three-day event. At its annual business meeting, just prior to the congress, IAHAIO national members unanimously passed the *IAHAIO Prague Guidelines on Animal-Assisted Activities and Animal-Assisted Therapy* (reproduced below), designed to protect the persons receiving such services, the programmes offering them and, in particular, the animals involved.

Preamble

There is much research now available to prove that companion animals can add to the Quality of Life of the humans to whom they may provide practical assistance or therapy.

IAHAIO members believe that those who train the animals and deliver the service to others must ensure the Quality of Life of the animals involved. Programmes offering animal-assisted activities or animal-assisted therapy for the benefit of others should be governed by basic standards, regularly monitored, and be staffed by appropriately trained personnel.

IAHAIO members have therefore adopted four fundamental guidelines at their General Assembly held in Prague in September, 1998. IAHAIO urges all persons and organisations involved in animal-assisted activities and/or animal-assisted therapy, and all bodies governing the presence of such programmes in their facilities to consider and abide by the following points.

Guidelines

1. Only domestic animals which have been trained using techniques of positive reinforcement, and which have been, and will continue to be, properly housed and cared for, are involved.
2. Safeguards are in place to prevent adverse effects on the animals involved.
3. The involvement of assistance and/or therapy animals is potentially beneficial in each case.
4. Basic standards are in place to ensure safety, risk management, physical and emotional security, health, basic trust and freedom of choice, personal space, appropriate allocation of programme resources, appropriate workload, clearly defined roles, confidentiality, communication systems and training provision for all persons involved.

Organisations adhering to the above four guidelines will be invited to join IAHAIO as Affiliate Members.

Copies of the document are currently available in the following languages: English, French, German, Japanese and Czech from AFIRAC, 7 rue du Pasteur Wagner, F-75011 Paris, France.

The welfare of broiler breeders

In August 1998, the UK's Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) published its most recent report: addressing the welfare of broiler breeders. Some 780 million broiler chicks are produced annually in the UK and at any one time the national population of broiler breeder hens that produce these chicks is about 6 million. Professor Sir Colin Spedding in his letter (reproduced on page iii of the report) introducing the report to the Minister of Agriculture Fisheries and Food, points out that broiler breeders are relatively valuable birds and that there is a strong commercial incentive to ensure they receive careful husbandry. However, commercial forces do