

Animals, Ethics and Trade: The Challenge of Animal Sentience

Edited by J Turner and J D'Silva (2006). Published by Earthscan, London NW1 0JH, UK. 286 pp Paperback (ISBN 184407255) Price £16.99.

This interesting book contains a selection of papers from the successful Compassion in World Farming Trust conference 'Darwin to Dawkins: the Science and Implications for Animal Sentience'. The key feature of this conference and also this book is the diversity of the 25 well-respected contributors including ethicists, religious scholars, academics, international industrialists and regulators. Jane Goodall sets the scene with a discussion of the "blurred line" between animals and humans. The contrast in styles of the authors is well illustrated by the difference between the careful methodical review of scientific literature concerning sentience from James Kirkwood and the "non-traditional essay" from Marc Bekoff, who asks questions such as: "If one loves animals how can she or he eat them...?" There is much discussion of the interaction between science and ethics. Peter Sandøe and others use a great analogy of scientists peering through their narrow windows onto the world whilst applied scientists are "blind people" dependent upon communicating with these basic scientists. We hear about the importance of educating scientists about ethics from Michael Reiss. Chapters from Andrew Linzey, Tom Regan, Steven Wise and Ben Mepham explore the interesting ethical arguments concerning sentience. Fascinating chapters from Song Wei and Peter Li give insight into the growing and potentially very significant welfare debate in China and Mahfouz Azzam highlights the protection of animals as an "integral part of Islamic history".

How these ethical arguments relate to farming in several different countries are discussed by John Webster, Michael Appleby, Ros Clubb and Vandana Shiva. An indication of progress in animal welfare is the surreal juxtaposition of an overview of McDonald's global standards in animal welfare (Keith Kenny) with a discussion of the welfare features of organic farming (Patrick Holden). The recurring theme of many of these articles is the importance of the consumer and the marketplace in bringing about change. Since consumers are also concerned about other issues, Kate Rawles argues that the "sustainability triangle" (social justice, economic development and environmental protection) should now be adapted to a "diamond" by including animal welfare as a fourth dimension.

The international dimension is addressed by optimistic reviews of progress in welfare legislation that has been achieved in Europe (David Wilkins) and an indication of what may be achieved in China (Paul Littlefair). The potentially critical roles of financial institutions and the Office International des Épizooties are discussed by Oliver Ryan and David Bayvel respectively. Finally Tim Lang reminds us of the complexities of achieving access to ethical foods.

The editors Jacky Turner and Joyce D'Silva have done an excellent job in bringing this collection of disparate articles

together in a thought provoking format. This book should be recommended to all those that have either have an *interest in* or, perhaps more importantly, an *influence on* animal welfare standards.

David CJ Main,

University of Bristol, Bristol, UK

The Welfare of Dogs

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Consider the following fact-based imaginary scenario. A team of researchers publishes a series of studies on the reproductive behaviour of the cougar. This stimulates interest from other researchers, who then conduct additional research on the cougars' mating and parenting behaviour, while others study its habitat range and hunting strategies. Additional work by other investigators adds to this body of knowledge, and soon there is a book published on cougar biology and behaviour. While this is all happening, researchers elsewhere have received grant money to study the behaviour and biology of the puma. Numerous publications by additional research teams follow, exploring the pumas' feeding habits, genetics, natural history, and such, and interest in the species expands so rapidly that in a very short time an announcement goes out about the First Annual International Conference on Puma Biology. Meanwhile, over the same period of time there have been a few published journal articles on the mountain lion, but because of several recent attacks by these animals on humans in Southern California there has been a recent explosion of research on this species. Public outcry leads local and state government agencies to rush to form task forces and, because of the human welfare implications, no financial constraints exist as multiple teams initiate studies on the habitat, hunting and feeding behaviour, and population control methods for the mountain lion.

Over the ensuing years some of the puma researchers catch wind of what's going on in the field of cougar research and not long after that the mountain lion researchers start seeing some similarities of their research with that of the puma studies. As time goes on, some astute investigators begin to notice that all of the time, effort, resources, and funding being devoted to these three species has resulted in very similar findings. The pieces begin to come together and in a few more years it becomes clear that all of the research has been looking at a single species – *Felis concolor* – and had each group of researchers known what the others had been doing, the knowledge about the species could have progressed far faster than it had.

Enter animal welfare science. The concepts currently snagged in the wide net of this field are familiar to all: well-being, psychological well-being, subjective well-being, quality of life, happiness, life satisfaction, contentment, peace of mind, living the 'good life,' and welfare itself. The question is, of course: Is *welfare* another *Felis concolor*?

At present there is no way to be sure. The welfare pumas, cougars, and mountain lions not only have their own researchers, but have their own journals, textbooks, conferences, and charity organisations. Indeed, some writers have proposed that two of the welfare creatures appear to be the same animal, but in so doing frequently leave out the third (and fourth, fifth, and on). And the large majority of writings on welfare that include more than one of the welfare concepts (this includes writings in the human welfare literature) use the different terms interchangeably, leaving the reader to surmise the meanings of each term themselves.

Kevin Stafford, in his superb book *The Welfare of Dogs*, stands guilty of this offence. As indicated by the title, Stafford's preferred term for this area of concern is welfare. So far, so good. Now, what is welfare? Inexplicably, he doesn't tell us. The closest he comes to a definition is on the first page of the preface, where he states: "The welfare of an animal relates to its subjective experience of life." Yes, but this description applies equally to suffering. Nowhere in the book does the author provide a definition or theoretical model for welfare.

This is a problem. Throughout the book the author frequently equates terms, uses terms interchangeably, and uses descriptors that breakdown the undefined term (eg making reference to physical and mental well-being when well-being itself is not defined). As we encounter the interchangeably-used terms we are able, with a little detective work, to deduce some key-points: quality of life appears to equal well-being (pp 109, 141); there is physical and mental well-being as well as well-being and overall well-being (and, like the scientific literature's own jumbled terminology, we even see well-being in both 'well-being' and 'wellbeing' forms); welfare and well-being are the same (terms used interchangeably throughout book); psychological well-being is part of welfare (p 216); and, because health presumably refers to physical well-being, the use of the phrase "health and well-being" (p 20) essentially equates well-being with psychological well-being. Conflictingly, we also deduce that quality of life (QOL) is the equivalent of welfare (pp 109, 141) but then by the use of the phrase "quality of life and health" (p 96) it appears that health and QOL are independent of one another. Even more confusing is the statement that "quality of life therein impacts directly on their welfare" (p 179), which clearly establishes that QOL and welfare are not the same thing and that welfare is *influenced* by QOL. Hence, the problem is not simply a matter of definitional omission, but also that descriptions of some of the welfare-related concepts are self-contradictory. Such incongruities are not unusual in the scientific literature (eg Vitale [2004] uses welfare, well-being, and QOL interchangeably; Jones [2004] states that welfare is the European term for well-being; yet Morton [2004] proclaims that well-being does not equal welfare), however, such contradictions certainly shouldn't occur in the same volume.

The lack of a definition or model for welfare creates not just confusion but also substantial practical problems. Many readers of the book would undoubtedly be seeking guidelines, either explicit or implicit, for maximising the welfare of dogs in their care. Unfortunately, they are likely to be disappointed. Stafford routinely uses phrases that, in the absence of a theoretical model of welfare, do not provide information that can be applied in practical animal care situations. For example, the author routinely refers to various factors that "impact on canine welfare," and some that have "serious implications for their welfare," (pp 14, 132, 225) and "severe welfare implications" (p 74). Lacking a QOL model to work from, how, other than resorting to fallible intuition, is the reader going to know what makes something have serious or severe implications as opposed to just implications? How does something become the "most significant" (p 31) or "most important" (p 83) welfare issue of dogs? What is it that makes something "of possible welfare significance" (p 89) rather than of certain significance? Stafford writes throughout about welfare being compromised, improved, affected in positive and negative ways, and varying, but without any explanation as to how or why these happen.

Now, of course, I know what he means by "welfare," and you know what he means. Why, *everybody* knows, of course. But do we agree? It's highly unlikely that we will, and we therefore will assuredly have different ideas and methods for how to improve any one dog's "welfare." As it stands, the reader seeking guidance for welfare decisions will need to bring his or her preferred model of welfare to convert the book's wealth of information into practical applications.

For all of the importance definitions and models have in discourse on welfare science, can it be possible for a book on welfare that contains such an error of omission to be viewed positively? The answer is a resounding yes. The author has set a goal for himself to evaluate the wide array of issues germane to canine welfare and to assess for each the experience of suffering (pain, anxiety, fear, distress) using physiological, immunological and behavioural parameters. With the exception of one chapter, the author has emphatically succeeded. The book is exhaustively researched and is so comprehensive in scope it might well be titled 'The Encyclopedia of the Welfare of Dogs'. Irrespective of the book's shortcomings, the author has produced an exceptionally valuable and highly useful reference source on canine welfare. It covers many of the subjects examined in James Serpell's 1995 volume *The Domestic Dog*, but includes much new material. It will be of value to animal welfare scientists and scholars as well as to all workers in the animal welfare fields. And while it doesn't have the engaging readability that, say, the books of Stanley Coren or Jon Katz have, it is an excellent reference book for the mainstream dog lover to learn about the issues that affect the happiness of dogs in all types of conditions and settings throughout the world.

The book is divided into 12 chapters, each devoted to a specific welfare issue. The first chapter presents a thorough overview of the welfare implications of the domestication of the dog, including diverse issues such as the use of dogs in entertainment, guard duty, hunting, assistance, fighting, and dogs as food. The author concludes the chapter with an insightful observation that even with the colossal changes forged by domestication, our expectations for dogs have outpaced the dogs' abilities to meet those expectations – with important welfare consequences being the inevitable result.

Chapter 2 offers an exhaustively researched look at the welfare of free-living dogs in countries all over the world. Here the author pointedly reminds us that the developed world's view of the dog as a housed pet animal is a skewed view; free-living dogs comprise an estimated 75% of the Earth's dog population. In the third chapter the author provides a wealth of facts on the different dog breeds, their behaviour, heritable diseases, and breeding issues, and chapter 4 examines the welfare aspects of nutrition, including issues of underfeeding and overfeeding. Health care and pain are covered in chapters 5 and 6, and the author does an excellent job of hitting all of the relevant areas using the most current references. Chapter 7 on training methods and chapter 8 on canine athletes are both well researched and comprehensive in their scope. I found chapter 8 particularly informative and learned quite a bit about the welfare issues of greyhound racing and sled dogs of which I had not been aware.

Shelter dog welfare is given a well deserved chapter in which the author again treats the reader to a full depiction of the care dogs receive in shelters – not just in the UK and USA but also in Japan, New Zealand, Australia, and Northern Ireland. The discussion is highly informative, covering the history of shelters, re-homing decision-making, success of re-homing, and early neutering. Amidst the impressive compilation of information we learn that there is good news to be had: the number of unwanted dogs and dogs entering shelters is on the decline in many European countries, the USA, Japan, and possibly worldwide.

Chapter 11 on behavioural problems and chapter 12 on pet dogs contain some of the most useful material pertaining to dog care in developed countries. The behaviour chapter starts with a good discussion about normal behaviour, but the real value is in the look at behavioural “problems” (a term that should be killed off and unceremoniously buried – it's not the *animal's* problem any more than if your husband had a habit of talking too loudly to your liking would you tell your friends that he had a behavioural problem). Here the author does a much needed job of not simply reiterating commonly discussed behavioural issues – which focus primarily on the pet owner's welfare – but discussing how the underlying emotional components of many unwanted behaviours powerfully impact the pet's welfare. The chapter on the pet dog is another superbly researched chapter with an expansive scope that includes discussions on neutering,

euthanasia, abuse, and hoarding. In addition, I strongly commend the author for using this chapter to put a loud exclamation point on a welfare issue that he stresses throughout the book, which is the immense emotional suffering dogs may endure when socially isolated from humans. On this point he goes further than most welfare discussions to make clear that, probably as a result of the domestication process, canine companionship does not replace human companionship in meeting dogs' social needs. As he aptly puts it: “The motivation in dogs to play with humans is not reduced by playing with other dogs... (which) suggests that dog-human play is important for dogs regardless of the opportunity to play with other dogs.” As many of us who have worked with dogs for many years have seen innumerable times, the common advice to help lonely dogs by ‘getting the pet a pet’ is very rarely successful in providing relief for the lonely dog's emotional deprivations.

In contrast to the comprehensiveness of all of the other chapters in the book, chapter 9 – The Dog As a Research Animal – glaringly misses the mark. The reason opponents claim that the use of animals in research is immoral has very little to do with the animals' experiences before and after the experiment – the food, water, housing, and such – and everything to do with the animals' compromised welfare during the experimentation itself. Unfortunately, the focus of this chapter is overwhelmingly on everything *except* the experience of the experiment. Of a chapter spanning 16 pages, the author devotes exactly two paragraphs (p 163-4) to the welfare of dogs during the experiment and its effects. I am not referring here to the moral issue; it matters not whether one supports or opposes the use of animals in research. It is simply a statement of fact that what is done to the lab animal has a virtually unlimited capability to affect its welfare. The author seems to acknowledge this, as here when he is discussing the lab environment: “(Lab) facilities... may actually provide dogs with a better quality of life than many dogs living with their owners, *at least for the time before they are used for invasive research*” (p 177, italics added). Elsewhere he writes about the risk of aggression when reintroducing a dog back into a cage with other dogs, and notes that “This is a particular problem for dogs returning after being used for research which may debilitate them” (p 171). One would think that something capable of debilitating an animal would be at least of equal, if not far greater, welfare significance than the risk of interdog aggression.

The author, however, has instead chosen to emphasise two other welfare-related issues. The first, as mentioned, regards the animal husbandry practices. Indeed, the points made on this issue are important – stress, social needs, and environmental enrichment – and the author covers them admirably. The second focal issue to which much is written is what causes the chapter to diverge most from the rest of the book. The author repeatedly points out that an important justification for assuring good welfare for laboratory dogs is because not doing so has “serious implications for the

quality of the research work” and is “bad for science” (pp 176-177). This point is made at five additional places in the chapter (pp 161, 166, 167, 168, 173), and there is in addition mention made of the importance to maintain good health because “these dogs are valuable.” And while I disagree with none of this (and the author does make one mention that good welfare is important “for the dog’s sake” [p 161]), I regard this, as a welfare issue, as being conceptually equivalent to a concern about improving veal calf welfare because it results in tastier meat, or improving zoo animal welfare because happier looking animals increase attendance and revenue for the zoo. In other words, the improvement in animal welfare as a means to another end is irrelevant, and even potentially harmful in that the same reasoning would justify *lowering* welfare if it better served that same end.

Despite the book’s shortcomings I find this a very impressive, important, and valuable book. Its encyclopedic scope attests to the author’s skills of thorough research and deep understanding of his subject. This book should be on the shelves of any person – scientist or nonscientist – who seeks knowledge of the vast array of things that can affect a dog’s enjoyment of life, whether you want to call that enjoyment welfare, well-being, quality of life, or happiness.

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F McMillan,

Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles, USA

Psychoactive Herbs in Veterinary Behavior Medicine

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Veterinary behavioural medicine seems often to fall into the fringes of veterinary care, which is itself a cause for concern. There is a lack of full integration of the subject into practice and at times a complete disinterest by practitioners, so it is not surprising that the field in the UK has been embraced and promoted in a large part by non-veterinarians. There are a number of licensed drugs of proven efficacy for many problems, but still many clients are often resistant to their use, preferring ‘natural’ remedies. Many lay practitioners also use this as an opportunity to promote alternative or complementary therapies due to legislative restrictions on the use of medicines by non-veterinarians. There is often a false perception that such alternatives are safer, but if they

are effective, then they will have side-effects and the lack of information and research concerning their activity may in fact make them more risky. Herbalism is an area with a sound scientific basis and of growing interest both within and outside of the profession, so I was very excited by this new text by Stefanie Schwartz. Dr Schwartz is a well-respected veterinary behaviourist who is board certified in the discipline in the USA, she therefore writes with an authority which is almost unique within the profession, given her dual interest. The foreword, written by another respected herbalist, Dr Susan Wynn, makes it clear from the outset that “psychoactive herbal medicines are not, in fact, substitutes or alternatives to conventional psychoactive drugs” (p xix). I only wish this part were written in bold or larger print as I think this message will be overlooked to the possible detriment of both patients and the discipline.

The text is divided into five broad sections relating to different geographic/cultural areas of development of herbalist philosophy: Western, native American, Ayurvedic, Oriental and Miscellaneous (including Bach Flower remedies and the cannabis). The sections on Ayurvedic and Oriental herbalism are prefaced by an introduction to the philosophy underpinning these practices, which is useful but which some traditional practitioners might find off-putting as it stretches into unfamiliar territory, but as Dr Schwartz points out (p 220), the aim is to present “the central beliefs... (to) help the reader appreciate the impressive knowledge that is necessary for the practice of... (this form of) healing”. These sections are followed by a section on suggested application of psychoactive herbs and advice on the broad approaches used in dealing with behavioural problems in cats and dogs. There are also 3 appendices: One listing psychopharmaceutical preparations, one examining traditional Jewish medicine and one listing online resources.

Each of the five substantive herbology sections describes a range of herbs in a similar way, reviewing the botany and history of the species, sub-species or genus, its recognised or putative active constituents, their effects and adverse effects, availability and its potential application in veterinary behavioural medicine, together with a reference list. This makes the text very easy to delve into for reference purposes and while there are pictures of some of the plants, the book is not aimed at being a field guide, but rather an aid to the practitioner. It allows a quick education of the potential implications of the use of different plants, which, in my own experience, may often have been initiated by a client. It is essential that all working in the field of veterinary behaviour medicine, recognise this and establish whether owners are using such self-help remedies, as they will often not volunteer such information until the potency of some of these preparations is explained and the potential for catastrophic interactions if such information is not to hand. This caution and line of enquiry will be increasingly necessary in general practice and especially when considering surgery as behaviour problems are common and many herbal interventions freely available to the public. For this