

Study on animal welfare measures experienced by field veterinarian

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Abstract

To have an empirical data about welfare measures as experienced by field veterinarians to protect the animals from cruelty, 61 field veterinarians as respondents were used. Majority of the respondents opined that livestock owners overlooked health problems of livestock and used diseased animals continuously in agriculture operation and in getting milk production (78.68% diarrhoea, 75.40% string halt, 60.05% mastitis, 54.09% FMD). Regarding ethical care of animals, they reported about comfort (60.65%), transport (57.37%) and proper feeding (42.62%). Euthanasia was practiced mainly in rabid dog.

Keywords: Animal welfare, Diarrhoea, FMD, Mastitis.

The livestock have significant contribution in Indian economy and animal health care, prevention and treatment of diseases, as well as culling of animals have serious and direct welfare implication on economy of livestock owners, as 1.97 billion people, in world, depend on livestock wholly/partially for their livelihood (Bonney, 2006). So far, little attention has been paid to animal welfare and more emphasis has been given on management and health to get maximum production. At time, the animals suffer with painful conditions and die at the doorstep of livestock owners and they do not know about the procedure to take a legal advise in case of cruelty to their animals.

The present study was undertaken in four districts of Rohilkhand region of Uttar Pradesh to have an empirical data about animal welfare measures as experienced by field veterinarians to protect the animals from cruelty. Data were collected personally by implementing pre-structured interview schedule from 61 field veterinarians serving in the region.

Majority of the veterinarians reported that livestock owners overlooked health problems of livestock and used diseased animals in agriculture operation and in milking. Diarrhoea (78.68%), string halt (75.40%), mastitis (60.05%) and FMD (54.09%) were

common diseases. A person is liable for punishment under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 if he is taking work from diseased animals. Broom (2001) has also reported similar findings in dairy cows. Regarding ethical care of animals, the response of veterinarians was 60.65% about comfort in transport, 57.37% painless slaughter and 42.62% proper feeding. Only 36.06% of the veterinary officers attended the case of maiming. Archer (1982) has reported maiming is an act of violence by the maimer on animals like breaking the forelegs, etc. which is an offence under the section of Indian Penal Code (IPC) 428 and 429. The cases of maiming were fracture of bone (54.54%), using a pointed *arai* to make the animals to work fast (81.81%) and punctured wound (23.0%) as reported by the respondents.

The respondents reported colouring of white patched on the body (45.90%), clipping of mane and tail (42.60%) and udder related frauds (31.14%) in animal marketing. About bishoping (animals are made to appear younger than it is) the veterinary officers reported that livestock owner/traders practice, colouring the horn (75.40%), trimming the hooves (62.29%), air blow in body (34.42%) and pumping of air in udder (29.50%). Similar type of the fraud practices are also reported by Sharma *et al.* (2003). All these practices are followed widely during marketing and livestock shows to get

the higher price of their animals and to attract the prize/reward during show.

Regarding issue of the certificates in support of animal welfare standards, field veterinarians issue certificate of insurance (88.52%), vaccinations (40.0%), soundness 39.34%, illness (31.14%) and sound health for slaughter (27.86%). Euthanasia practice was performed mainly in rabid dog as this disease is causing such an agony or pain that it is cruel to keep animal alive and 75.0% of field veterinarians were practicing it. Further, 41.66% respondents did euthanasia in case of fracture of long bone, 29.16% in case of paralysis and 20.83% in case of pelvic fracture. The respondents (73.77%) performed post-mortem examination, 57.77% had performed to detect the poisoning, 46.66% in veterolegal cases and 35.55% to diagnose the disease. Majority of veterinarians (60.65%) were the members in different committees (disease outbreak control, animal birth control, use of oxytocin control and avian influenza control committees) constituted pertaining to animal welfare measure. The cases dealt by field veterinarian about the substances/drugs given willfully and unreasonably to the livestock, majority of them reported local application of used mobil oil on body of animals (29.62%), drenching local wine (19.51%), pesticide/insecticide/rodenticide poison (22.95%) and

plant poison (21.95%). All these type of cases were attended by the veterinarians.

Most of the respondents were distributing literatures on animal disease control and awareness about cruelty (33.33% each), animal feed and fodder (27.77%) and animal management (16.66%). There is need of training for field veterinarians in subject of animal welfare, so that they can get acquainted and update themselves about the measures of animal welfare to further educate to the livestock owners.

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