ANIMAL WELFARE FOUNDATION

AWF research summary

Academic support: placing animal welfare at the heart of veterinary teaching

- When Colleen Macleod left money that enabled the BVA to found the Animal Welfare Foundation her action had a beneficial impact on the lives of millions of animals.

  One of the first actions of the newly formed Foundation was to fund the Professorship of Animal Welfare in Cambridge University Veterinary School and in 1986 Professor Donald Broom was appointed as the first Professor of Animal Welfare in the world.

  Animal welfare has developed rapidly as a scientific discipline since 1986. The number of papers per year on the subject in scientific journals has increased during this period twenty-fold. There are now 30 professors of animal welfare in the world and 40 other professors who work principally in this area. The general public in the UK, in Europe as a whole and in many countries of the world have become much more aware of scientific studies of animal welfare.

  Prof Donald Broom, St Catharine's College, Cambridge April 2013

- In 2005 the Animal Welfare Foundation went on to create AWF lectureships at the Universities of Glasgow, Bristol and Liverpool. This further impacted on the inclusion of animal welfare within the veterinary curriculum both in the UK and internationally and provided an essential platform to raise the profile of animal welfare and ethics in the undergraduate veterinary curriculum. The response from students has been overwhelmingly positive.

  Dr David Main (Bristol), Dr Jennifer Duncan (Liverpool) and Dr Dorothy McKeegan (Glasgow) worked together to devise an informal model curriculum during the first year of their lectureships and this became a critical resource in promoting a wider update of animal welfare education.

  …..Perhaps most importantly, students now recognise welfare and ethics as subjects in their own right and consider their impact throughout their whole veterinary training.

  Dr Dorothy McKeegan, BSc MSc PhD AWF Senior Lecturer, Institute of Biodiversity, Animal Health and Comparative Medicine, College of Medical, Veterinary & Life Sciences, University of Glasgow , April 2013

  Previous to this appointment there had been no formal animal welfare curriculum at Liverpool Veterinary School. Through their support for these posts the AWF has made a substantial contribution to undergraduate veterinary animal welfare education in the UK.

  Dr Jennifer Duncan, BVM&S BSc PhD MRCVS, Senior Lecturer in Livestock Health and Welfare, School of Veterinary Science, University of Liverpool , April 2013

- As well as the lectureships themselves, the AWF supported a joint project between Glasgow and Bristol to fund PhD research into novel educational tools (combined in the 'Welfare and Ethics Awareness via Experience', or 'WEAVE' package) which are now part of the curriculum at Glasgow and Bristol, and are available to other vet schools. The on-going impact of the lectureship at Glasgow is to promote welfare and ethics teaching beyond the veterinary undergraduate curriculum and the lectureship has made a major contribution to the development

and delivery of other programs such as a BSc Veterinary Bioscience degree and a new taught MSc in Animal Welfare, Ethics and Legislation

- In addition to the direct influence on UK veterinary schools, the papers and presentations have also had a clear influence on the interest in animal welfare outside the UK, highlighted by two groups working on the content of a model curriculum in Europe and the USA.

- The AWF lectureships provided a new focus for development of welfare research with major funding attracted in all three institutions for work involving farm animals on wide ranging topics. This research has led to a number of significant impacts beyond academia including direct influence on government policy (e.g. Glasgow work on the welfare consequences of beak trimming in laying hens was used by DEFRA as a primary source of evidence in the decision to delay the ban on the practice.) By the end of 2013 over 90% of UK non-cage laying hen, dairy and pig farms will participate in a formal welfare assessment at least once per year as a result of the Assurewel project, a major implementation programme run by Dr Main at Bristol.

- AWF support for the current collaborative project with the University of Glasgow on maximising the value of Extra Mural Study (EMS) placements has already had a further direct impact on veterinary teaching with the teaching tools being adopted directly by Bristol, Glasgow and Liverpool. The evaluation of the tools has demonstrated a significant teaching benefit with better knowledge and understanding of the practical application of welfare assessment. (This work has been submitted for publication.)

> *I am extremely grateful for the opportunity afforded by the AWF lectureship at Glasgow….Given the central importance of welfare and the ethical challenges faced by vets, I have felt privileged to be able to enhance learning in this vital area. As a non-vet, I also think that the lectureship has had a key role in building links between veterinary and (traditionally non-veterinary) welfare research.*
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> Dr Dorothy McKeegan, PhD

> *The BVA AWF supported lectureship position has enabled me to pursue key welfare improvement research interests, accessing significant additional funding to carry out a number of studies….. It has also enabled me to develop a major implementation programme on welfare outcomes – turning animal welfare science into practical measures.*
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> Dr David C. J. Main BVetMed PhD CertVR DWEL DipECAWBM(AWSEL) MRCVS BVA Animal Welfare Foundation Reader in Animal Welfare; RCVS Recognised Specialist in Animal Welfare Science, Ethics and LawDepartment of Clinical Veterinary Science, University of Bristol, April 2013

AWF's role in promoting welfare education and debate in the veterinary profession has been very considerable, and the achievements of the BVA-AWF lectureships have played a very important part in this.

Their legacy is enhanced welfare education, novel collaboration and increased capacity for high quality welfare research.