



## Module 9

# Assessing Welfare in Practice

## Student Activities

### Questions

**1. Why do we do welfare assessments?**

**(3 marks)**

- To ensure standards of animal welfare are being met
- Animals are sentient, and we do not want them to suffer. We want animals to feel and function well, and perform species-specific behaviours.
- To prevent 'bad becoming normal'

**2. List the three recognised types of animal welfare standards**

**(3 marks)**

- OIE standards
- national standards
- private standards

**3. The Welfare Quality® project has four areas that it looks at: Good feeding, good housing, good health and appropriate behaviour. Can you list the four welfare criteria that are assessed within Appropriate Behaviour?**

**(4 marks)**

- Positive emotional state
- Expression of social behaviours, as appropriate to the species
- Expression of other species-typical behaviours
- Good human–animal relationships

**4. Name three elements that are covered in a farm health plan and give an appropriate example for extensive sheep farming for one of them.**

**(4 marks)**

- Nutrition – Freedom from hunger and thirst, and better disease resistance, growth rate etc.
- Housing – Protection from extremes of weather, especially after shearing in the example of lambs
- Biosecurity – Lessen risk of introducing disease to the flock
- Routine disease prevention health treatments – e.g. vaccinations for clostridial disease, and therefore less risk of endemic disease outbreaks
- Intervention strategy during parturition – less peri-natal suffering and loss of ewes or lambs
- Intervention point when a risk factor reaches a specified level – early relief/reduction in suffering, e.g. when weather becomes very dry, or cold

**5. Give an example of one naturally occurring risk factor that you can include in a farm health plan.**

**(1 mark)**

Any one of the following:

- Weather
- Parturition

**6. If you were auditing welfare in a slaughterhouse, and you saw one of the handlers holding an electric goad, would you...?**

**(2 marks)**

1. Tell the owner that the facility had failed to meet the minimum standard required
2. Check the carcasses concerned for bruising
3. Calculate the percentage of animals that the handler moved using the goad
4. Calculate the overall percentage of animals that were moved with an electric goad
5. Ignore it

*Answer:* (3) or (4). The audit depends on (4). However, the action of the individual handler may affect the welfare of the animals concerned, and the goad should only be picked up when an animal refuses to move.

## In-class activity

### Role play

Allow 35 minutes for this activity.

This role play will focus on the incidence of inhumane slaughter in an abattoir/slaughterhouse.

*Notes to lecturer:*

Students should be divided into pairs for this activity. All pairs should have a chance to perform and comment on other scenarios. Once half of the groups have performed you could change the context of their performance, by suggesting that the manager of the abattoir has begun to become responsive to the vet's claims and is willing to work towards making changes. However, he/she is going to need the vet's guidance to make this a reality.

*Notes to students:*

Imagine you have just completed an abattoir assessment. You have found a high incidence of inhumane slaughter methods, which contradict the audits that you had completed previously, and you are preparing to report back to the abattoir manager. Prepare a brief role play in which one person plays the vet reporting back, and another plays the abattoir manager who is initially unresponsive to your findings.

### Welfare presentation

Research and present on the welfare assurance schemes that operate in your country. Choose two and compare their assessment tools, e.g. do they monitor welfare inputs or outputs or both, is the wording unambiguous, etc.? Do the tools indicate the same standard of welfare? If not, why do you think this is and how would you adjust the tools concerned?

Length of presentations will vary according to which area is chosen, the size of the class and the amount of time available. Where possible, students should be encouraged to present using PowerPoint or another similar presentation tool.

Lecturers are advised to use their discretion in the awarding of marks and in the feedback given to students regarding their presentation skills. A good presentation contains typical sections such as:

- Introduction (describing the purpose of the research or task)
- Main content (the outputs from the options listed below)
- Summary/conclusion (rounding up all the findings and making concluding statements, linking back to the purpose outlined in the introduction).

A good presenter speaks clearly and slowly, and doesn't engage in distracting habits such as clicking a pen while speaking, or jangling change in his or her pockets. They should remain relatively still and not move about too much which can also be distracting to the audience.

PowerPoint slides should also contain a minimum amount of text and the presenter should know the subject well enough (or read from additional notes) so that the slide works as a prompt rather than the presenter simply reading the entire slide to the audience and adding nothing extra.

## Applied Learning Opportunity

### Review the Practice Standards Scheme for a local clinic

Students will first need to find a local veterinary association that operates a Practice Standards Scheme. They should review the standards and the assessment method in terms of how well they cover animal welfare. Emphasis is on learning about the scheme and its implementation rather than judging the clinic. If the scheme is lacking in welfare inclusion then the student should make recommendations in their report which they should consider as they move into professional practice (they may wish to follow these up with the clinic).

#### *Notes to students:*

List all the areas of animal welfare that you think should be included. Specify the standards required and create an assessment tool that incorporates welfare inputs and welfare outputs. Then, after getting permission, use your tool to assess the standards of welfare in the clinic (there may be one at your vet school).

One example of a veterinary practice standards scheme is in the UK: you can read about on the website of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, at [www.rcvs.org.uk/practice-standards-scheme/](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/practice-standards-scheme/)

You will be expected to produce a brief report that includes the standards, descriptions of their implementation and your interpretations of their effectiveness of inclusion of good animal welfare principles. Where appropriate, the report should conclude with your recommendations for improvements.