Time For Reforms In Cattle Welfare

It is time that reforms were introduced for improving the welfare of cattle as the pain and suffering that thousands of stray / ownerless cattle in our country undergo can be changed only if there is strong political and administrative commitment to address this problem at the National level. Why is the need for cattle welfare a priority issue? Because with poor cattle welfare comes the acceptance of the practice of ruthless violence towards the unfortunate and helpless stray cattle that are found to abandon pets including dogs after finding them commercially unviable. Over five hundred pet shops have emerged as a source of civic problems. Source: The Hindu

CBSE Brings Compassionate Citizen to Schools

Kochi: CBSE has written to schools informing them that they are integrating the “Compassionate Citizen” humane-education programme in school Curricula from the next academic year to help children become sensitive towards animals. In a notification to school principals, the CBSE Board has said that it is endorsing the use of “Compassionate Citizen”, a humane-education programme prepared by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals ( PETA), in CBSE-affiliated schools for children aged 8 to 12 years as part of the schools’ curricula. 

Transportation of Animals in Goods Vehicles Banned in Haryana

Chandigarh: The Haryana government has banned the transport of animals to slaughterhouses in goods transport vehicles. The Urban Local Bodies Department, Haryana has also imposed a fine of Rs 2,000 on those found guilty of transporting animals in goods vehicles, an undertaking may kindly be obtained from the Regional Transport Authorities that at the time of passing /registering the goods vehicles, an undertaking may kindly be obtained from the owners that the passed vehicles will not be used to carry animals,". Hopefully, the ban will help reduce the transportation of hundreds of animals transported daily under the most gruesome conditions.

Goa Animal Welfare Trust Wins Godfrey Phillips Bravery Award

Panjim: On 2nd April 2013, Goa Animal Welfare Trust (GAWT), an animal welfare NGO based in Goa was awarded the Social Bravery Special Award for its animal welfare work in Goa. A prestigious award, the award has been given for the first time in 21 years to an Animal Welfare Organization. The Goa Animal Welfare Trust is one of the ten animal welfare organizations set up more than a decade ago in Goa for the welfare of street animals, abandoned animals and those injured in accidents. GAWT has its shelter in Curchorem, a bustling railway town in South Goa. It has two veterinary doctors, like writing the vaccination schedule, looking after the animals and handling the pet products etc. GAWT conducts ABC campaigns in four municipalities in area viz Curchorem, Quepem, Canacona and Cuncim and on the beaches of South Goa. Charman says: “We treat stray dogs at the beach and provide tourists who befriended dogs, with tablets to treat the dogs with mange”. GAWT has an excellent adoption programme and over the years it has succeeded in providing homes to hundreds of homeless puppies and kittens. During the tourist season of September to May, it conducts nearly forty camps in South Goa for anti-rabies vaccinations and adoptions. Among the leading personalities who have contributed to the success of GAWT over the years are Suresh Kakodkar, President, Grace Kare, Shelter Administrator, Carmina Fernandes, Secretary, Charman Byrne, Treasurer, Blanche Moore and Wendy Dansie. Source: PFA, Goa

Pet Shops to Apply for Trade License Fee

Chennai: The Chennai Corporate Council has decided to charge a Trade license fee of Rs 5000/- for pet shops in the city. The pet shops, like those selling pet breeds of dogs, cats, birds and pets etc. The application for trade license will be scrutinised by Corporation officials. A copy of the application for trade license by pet shops should also be sent to the Animal Welfare Board of India. The traders will have to renew the trade license every two years by remitting a fee of Rs.1,000.

After notification by the government, all shops selling food products and other material for pets would also have to remit a trade license fee. A shop with an area of less than 1,000 sq. ft. will have to remit a fee of Rs.2,000 and shops with areas greater than 1,000 sq ft it will need to remit a trade license fee of Rs.5,000.

The inclusion of pet shops in the list of trades will reinforce existing mechanisms of ensuring minimum standards of sanitation, drainage, ventilation, heating, cooling, humidity, special enclosure requirements, nutrition, medical treatment and methods of operation in general.

The unregulated breeding of pets has contributed to the rise in the over-population of street dogs. Many of the breeders are found to abandon pets including dogs after finding them commercially unviable. Over five hundred pet shops have emerged as a source of civic problems. Source: The Hindu

Message From Chairman

Panjim: In a first of its kind, the Goa Government has allocated Rs. 2 crores for “Animal Relief and Animal Welfare through NGOs” in the State’s budget, for the Financial Year 2013-14. This money is for supporting the implementation of a variety of animal welfare schemes undertaken by NGOs in Goa, including the ABC programme, funds for gaushalas to care for abandoned cattle, setting up of animal shelters, purchase of and repairs to ambulances, wildlife rescue and relief, education and awareness programmes and for infrastructure to make the District SPs functional in the State. These schemes were suggested by the NGOs themselves, in a series of wide ranging and unprecedented consultations held by the Hor/ble Chief Minister and his team over the past few months.

Shri Parrikar is a self-confessed animal lover. At the recent international conference on animal welfare held in Goa in November 2012 by the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations (FIAPO), Shri Parrikar – who was the Chief Minister and who also delivered the inaugural address – explicitly stated that he would make Goa the most animal-friendly State in the country.

Shri Parrikar has indeed made an impressive beginning by providing ample funds for animal welfare in the State’s budget, to ensure that every activist-NGO programme for animal welfare becomes a reality. It is time other States are encouraged by their animal welfare NGOs to emulate the example set by the Goa Government and make animal welfare an integral part of the state’s welfare programme and to allocate funds through the planned budget for its implementation. Only then can our constitutional mandate to show compassion to living creatures become a reality. Source: PFA Goa

Goa Government Shows the Way

The Animal Welfare Board of India is an autonomous body set up by the Government of India to enforce the provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. The Animal Welfare Board of India has Connection with the Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India. It is an autonomous body set up by the Government of India to enforce the provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.

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Are you listening to your Dogs?
Basics of Canine Behaviour & Communication

Steve Goward, Deputy Head Canine Behaviour & Training, Dogs Trust

There are many opinions on dog training and behaviour. I have developed my own opinions based on my experience working in a variety of environments and with a large number of dogs of all shapes and sizes. My approach to training and behaviour has been largely based on the most recent research findings. Besides, I also apply a good scientific understanding of learning theory, evolution and ethology, physiology and a certain amount of common sense. I do not believe we need to rule over our dogs as if we were the alpha in a pack and I am not alone in my views. Most well informed and forward thinking behaviourists are aware of the somewhat flawed research on the hierarchy of wolves and the erroneous assumption that dogs though closely related genetically have the same social structure as wolves.

Dogs do have many traits that herald back from their ancestors but the social aspect and how they interact with humans is a product of a much more recent history. To understand dogs is a journey of discovery and by keeping an open mind we are more likely to adopt an approach that aims to do no harm and that promotes good welfare.

The language dogs have been known about in many books and scientific papers but to be able to interpret the language of dogs in a meaningful way, you simply must spend time with them. When I advise staff of our centres to do observational assessments of the dogs in our care, I give them very clear indicators to look out for. This observation is a skill and like most skills it needs to be practised and information regarding what to look out for needs to be passed on to the student.

Appearance and displacement behaviours are often good indicators that all is not well with an interaction either between two dogs or a dog and a person. By paying attention to the more subtle signals that dogs give off, we are able to reduce the potential conflict by giving the dog a little time or space to assess our intentions. Dogs base their behaviour on a number of factors and one of these is their previous learning and associations with situations. If a dog has had a number of negative experiences with people, they are more likely to arrive at a situation involving a person – with caution and even a pessimistic outlook.

The ladder of aggression (see diagram above) developed by Kendal Shepherd is a way of looking at how dogs might escalate their behaviour in order to make their fear or anxiety known. At the base of the ladder, there are behaviours like yawning, nose licking and stretching. If these are ignored or missed, the dog may move up the intensity and use more obvious signs that he is bothered by your intentions. If we are able to identify our dog’s low level signals of fear, we can avoid pushing them into an aggressive response. Take a look at the ladder and ask yourself “when would you realise the dog in front of you was showing a fear or anxiety driven behaviour?”. Most people would say “growling” and this as you can see is high up the ladder and a short step away from a bite.

At Dogs Trust, we teach all our staff and volunteers to identify low level appeasement behaviours, so we can keep them safe and reduce the fear of the dogs in our care. The reduction of fear and anxiety is directly linked with an improvement in welfare. When we train our dogs, we focus on using positive reinforcement to improve the relationship between handler and dog. The use of punishment and aversive training only serves to suppress behaviour and reduces trust.

I have always tried to understand and behind undesirable behaviour so I can put in place a behaviour modification programme that takes into account the reason for the behaviour and does not just focus on how to stop the dog doing that particular behaviour. Generally, people who are intent on stopping a behaviour get pushed into using an aversive approach or punishing the dog which at best will suppress the behaviour – as long as the punisher is present. This approach does not teach the dog an alternative but just that, in the presence of the punisher, the best not to do the punished behaviour.

By observing your dog’s behaviour and considering the dogs’ point of view, we are more likely to understand even the undesirable behaviours. This understanding leads to compassion and an ability to develop training programmes that tackle the issue without confrontation. When we identify a dog who may be fearful of approach or touch, we will often build their confidence through games and simple training. One of the games we use is called “the round robin recall” game. With two or three people armed with tasty treats, we start by simply calling the dog over and without touching the dog reward his approach with a piece of food. As soon as he receives that food, the next person calls the dogs over and repeats the reward for approach and so on. This game is simple to do and if repeated regularly, the dogs’ confidence of approach is improved quickly.

Another training exercise that can be useful for improving associations between the human hand and the dog is target training. Target training basically involves teaching the dog to touch the target (the hand) to receive a reward (food) I usually teach them to touch the hand with the tip of the nose or the pads of the hand. As the dog touches the hand you say “yes” or “touch” and give the reward. After a number of repetitions, the dog learns to touch the target wherever you put it. Target training can be very useful for moving fearful dogs without being forceful.

Whatever training you do with a dog you must always aim to improve the relationship between handler and dog. By planning our training sessions, we are more likely to succeed as we will have considered what we want to achieve and how we are going to get there. Training and behaviour is a huge subject and the more we understand, the greater impact we can have on the dog’s welfare.

References for further reading:
2. Barbara Handelman – Canine behaviour – a photo illustrated handbook

With best wishes,
Maj. Gen. (Retd) Dr. R. M. Khamb, AVSM
Chairman, AWBI
Street Clinic for Dogs in Bengaluru’s Slums

Bengaluru: Lets Live Together in partnership with IPAN held a week long free (door to door) Street Clinic for owned/community dogs. The street clinic based in Sirirampuram and Goripalaya that was started on April 1st 2013 was conducted for a week. Around 200 dogs were vaccinated while 250 dogs were treated for severe mange, scabies, open wounds and injuries. A team of three skilled Finnish vets from IPAN and Dr Vinatha from Bangalore assisted the Street Clinic teams. Besides, volunteers from Lets Live Together also participated in the Street Clinic. Says Achala Paani, Founder of Lets Live Together, “The slums have a large number of dogs with owners here who cannot afford regular medical care, Lets Live Together’s Street Clinic campaign aims to provide free medical treatment for the dogs who need medical attention”.

Policy & Proactive Steps for Better Cattle Welfare

Key Points from Policy Paper to Secretary, Animal Husbandry, Tamil Nadu Government.

1. No livestock to cross state borders, no livestock to enter state borders.
2. No meat out of the state, no meat into the state will stave off problems like contaminated meat and beef coming into Tamil Nadu from Andhra Pradesh or any other state. This will also ensure that whatever meat is produced inside Tamil Nadu will be consumed only within Tamil Nadu.
3. A study to be undertaken to enumerate the percentage of Tamil Nadu's meat eating populace to be cross-referenced by what kind of meat is eaten.
4. The report of this study can enable the government to decide upon the number of slaughter houses, quantum of meat to be produced for consumption only. (e.g. so many kgs. of goat meat, chicken meat, pig meat, buffalo meat, fish etc). Slaughterhouses may not slaughter animals in excess of the limit determined by the government for different kinds of meat.
5. To discourage meat eating as fast – like ostrich farming, emu farming. Traditionally, meat eating is not a part of animals that were locally available and locally raised. This ensured that any disease through livestock or meat was curtailed and restricted to a specific radius of fewer than five villages.
6. For facilitate either by way of land grants to grow fodder or for the government to supply goshalas with adequate fodder and oil seeds. To usher in fresh thinking that the government should fund, facilitate in whatever manner possible, and encourage setting up of self-reliant and self-sustaining goshalas as the ethical way for Tamil Nadu to treat its cattle which includes cows, male progeny of cows, buffaloes, male progeny of buffaloes, and oxen.
7. To consider large scale power generation through cow dung and buffalo dung. Just as vegetables and fruits are collected from the growers to be taken to mandis and markets, to think of a mechanism to separately collect cow dung and buffalo dung - for agriculture, for power, and for other uses.
8. To consider use of male progeny of cows and buffaloes for oil-pressing. Cold pressed oil is a fashionable new word for how we have always been producing oil) like organic grains and fruits and vegetables is a growing market. The oil seed mass after oil has been extracted is has been given as a traditional nutritional supplement to cattle besides fodder. (This may be done if the Tamil Nadu government will give Cattle Card to every cattle-holding family. This card may be used to buy fodder and oil-seeds at subsidized rates from ration shops just like the PDS. This government can also create a scheme whereby cattle-holding families can surrender the male calves to the government in return for additional fodder. No money will be given for the calves. The cattle card will ameliorate distress selling of male calves citing inability to feed and maintain and the male calves can be moved to shelters for use of cow dung. This will also tangentially discourage illegal slaughter houses where - every meat shop is a clandestine slaughter house)
9. The State Government must consider setting up goshalas inside prisons as another productive way to engage the people inside these correctional facilities and this must be linked to productive use of cattle dung also. Ideally, if temples can be delegated to take care of cows and its male progeny, the State Government must look for avenues to run goshalas for buffaloes and its male progeny.
10. To consider allocating sufficient lands in each district and taluk only to raise fodder and oilseeds specifically for the cattle population. It would be also useful to consider providing fodder and oilseeds for goshalas at subsidised costs to encourage return to traditional ways of doing agriculture and as a boost for organic farming.
11. The condemned and old animals which have lived and toiled for humans until their death. To make a policy that animals that gave us milk and toiled for us should not be slaughtered when they are old.
12. Tamil Nadu should show the way to the rest of the country by initiating a healthy, environment-friendly and dharmic attitude to cows and all cattle which will have a positive and lasting impact on agriculture, power generation, niche market economy and transport. Shifting our focus from meat to dung from cattle will be the first step in this direction.

Source: email sent by Mrs Radha Rajan

AWOs Unite for Global Meatout March

March 20, 2013, Delhi: Animal Rights International (ARI) in support with many other vegetarian advocates and animal activists aimed to reach a goal of convincing people to take the vegetarian pledge on March 20th! Their objective, to save the animals, protect the environment, and improve health has been supported by many like-minded organisations like Lord Mahavira Vegetarian Society, Compassionate living, PSS movement and many more who joined them for a peace march for “Global Meat Out” at Jantar Mantar on 20th March’13. Meat Out is an international observance and has grown explosively since its inception in 1985. This movement has helped individuals to adopt a wholesome, compassionate and non-violent diet.

Speaking about the objective of the Meatout March, Mrs. Kritika Sharma, Executive Director ARI said, “Our aim is to educate the society about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Every 1% drop in national meat consumption prevents the needless suffering and death of billions of animals per year. Our objective is not to preach but to educate and create awareness. Kicking the meat habit holds lasting benefits for consumer health, world hunger, resource conservation, environmental preservation and animal protection.”

Speakers at the event included, Dr. Chizanjee Lal Bagra, Vivek Muni ji, Prof Ratan Jain and Sunil Yogacharya. List of Organisations that participated in the Global Meatout March included, Lord Mahavira Vegetarian Society, Bharatiya cattle Resource Development Foundation, Compassionate living, Pyramid Spiritual Societies Movement, Federation of Animal Protection Organisations, Holy Cow, Walk for Animals & Habitat (WAH Team), PETA, FARM, USA, PFA, Nagpur, AGV ALFAB, Hotel Silverton, Fauna Police, Yaatra India, Gau Gyan Foundation, Vegan Society – Delhi, Rashtriya Ahimsa Manch, Vishwa Ahimsa Sangh, Youth Fraternity Foundation, Indian Federation of Ahimsa Organisations, Baal Re, Ahimsa, Desiditional, Delhi, Pranav Urja and Pranam Foundation.

CBEC Issues New Guidelines On Import of Pets

The Central Board of Excise and Customs has issued a circular on April 8th, 2013 (Circular No. 15 / 2013-Cus – F. No. 495/16/2012-Cus VI) that reads as below:

1. Attention is invited to Board’s Circular No. 94/2002-Cus dated 23.12.2002 on the above cited subject wherein it was provided that import of pets upto two numbers per passenger may be allowed at one time subject to the production of the required health certificate from the country of origin and examination of the same by the concerned Quarantine Officer.
2. Board has re-examined the present policy of import of two pets by passengers in view of representations received in this regard. Accordingly, it has been decided to allow import of two pet animals as baggage only to persons transferring their residence to India after two years of continuous stay abroad in terms of Baggage Rules 1998 subject to production of the required health certificate from the country of origin and examination of said pets by the concerned Quarantine Officer at this end. This new dispensation shall come into force with effect from 15th April 2013. Import of animals (pets) in general would continue to be governed by DGFT policy.
4. These instructions may be brought to the notice of the trade/airlines/carriers by issuing suitable Trade / Public Notices. Suitable Standing orders/instructions may be issued for the guidance of the field officers.

The circular was issued by Shri S.C.Ganger, Under Secretary (Customs). For more info please refer to the link http://www.cbic.gov.in/customs/cs-circulars/cs-circ13/circ15-2013-cus.htm.
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