



SVME Newsletter

Newsletter of the Society for
Veterinary Medical Ethics

Summer 2013

President's Message Summer 2013

Hi Everyone,

I hope you can join us in Chicago as the SVME once again hosts the Ethics Plenary Sessions at the AVMA Convention on July 20th. The Ethics Plenary Sessions will run all day in Room W187c at the McCormick Place West Building.

Our goals are to encourage persons from all professions to engage in cross-disciplinary discussions and increase the understanding of the philosophical, social, moral and ethical values encountered by the veterinary profession.

The morning sessions will be incredible as our panel of experts, including Robert Miller, Tom Lenz, Dennis Lawler, Andrew Rowan and Bernie Rollin will host our Unwanted Horse Forum from 7:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Lunch will take place from noon -1:00pm and then we will have a session from Dr. Bernie Rollin entitled: *The "Unwanted Horse" – A modest proposal.*

The afternoon SVME Plenary Sessions deal with more interesting and controversial issues including breeders, guidelines for private practice research and the future of veterinary medical ethics.

The full schedule follows this message. I would like to highlight that at 3:40 PM we will have a short awards ceremony where Dr. John Albers will be accepting the SVME Shomer Award for Dr. John McCarthy (posthumously presented). Immediately following that, we will have the SVME-WALTHAM Student Essay Contest Awards and the winning students will present

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her essay, and who knows, there might be something else fun to experience.

Following the plenary sessions we will go right into the SVME Annual General Meeting at 5:00 to 5:45 PM and then will continue with the Annual Board of Directors Meeting at 5:45.

As you can see this will be an action packed and full day to meet with your old friends, make new friends and have various opinions presented for open discussion. The SVME Ethics Plenary Sessions are open to all AVMA attendees who want to engage in ethics discussions with varying opinions in an attempt to understand important issues which face us in our fantastic profession.

I look forward to meeting every one of you and getting to know you better and hope you will make it a point to attend this exciting session. You will leave a different person!

Tom



Thomas M. Edling, DVM, MSpVM, MPH

SVME Ethics Plenary Sessions (in conjunction with the AVMA convention, Chicago)

July 20, 2013, McCormick West Convention Hall

Ethics Plenary Sessions:

7:00 am – 2:00 Unwanted Horse Forum

7:00 am – 12:00 Unwanted Horse Panel Discussion

Moderator: Alice Villalobos DVM, FNAP

Panelists: Dennis Lawler DVM, FNAP

Tom Lenz, DVM, MS, DACT

Robert Miller, DVM

Bernard Rollin PhD

Andrew Rowan PhD

12:00 – 1:00 pm LUNCH

1:00 pm The “Unwanted Horse” – A modest proposal

Bernard Rollin PhD

2:00 pm Good Breeders vs Puppy Mills

Marthina Greer DVM, JD

3:00 pm SVME Guidelines for Clinical Research in Private Practice

Dennis F. Lawler DVM, FNAP

3:40 pm SVME AWARDS CEREMONY

SHOMER AWARD

Student Essay Contest Winner

Special presentation

4:00 pm The Future of Veterinary Ethics in Veterinary Teaching Facilities

Bernard Rollin, PhD

5:00 pm SVME Annual General Membership Meeting

5:45 pm SVME Annual (face-to-face) Board Meeting

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SVME Ethics Plenary Sessions

Session Descriptions:

1. **Unwanted Horse Forum:** (Dr. Alice Villalobos, moderator, expert panel)

By its very nature, the Unwanted Horse Forum is a difficult topic that ultimately becomes controversial in many respects. Beliefs are passionate, though not always well-founded. No one can deny that horse welfare overall in America has declined since the slaughter ban, the recession, and the drought. Dr. Robert M. Miller laments that the horse is stuck in two worlds. In one world, the horse is a companion animal; in the other, the horse remains as livestock. Millions of horses are bred, raised, worked, and treated as livestock in America. Worldwide, 5 million horses were eaten by humans last year. There has been approval of plans for horse processing plants for human consumption in Oklahoma and New Mexico but provision of inspectors is still on hold. It will be interesting to see how and what the opposition does to counter these facilities. To date, very little impact has been made on America's unwanted horse problem. Well intended but cost-limited rescue efforts are maintaining horses, but with what purpose? This problem is manifested by the BLM's maintenance of some 30-40,000 wild mustangs in corrals. Between 120,000 and 150,000 unwanted horses were trucked and slaughtered north and south of American soil each year since the ban went into effect in 2007. The consequence at this point is that Unwanted Horses are suffering and some action needs to be taken to alleviate and prevent their suffering from neglect and starvation. The SVME plans to generate a white paper presenting both sides and some viable solutions to the Unwanted Horse Problem.

The impressive group of panelists have a wide array of expertise and perspective including: expertise in the human-animal bond and quality of life assessment tools (Villalobos), research into the natural biology of animal populations and involvement with the Los Angeles Found Animals Foundation (Lawler), equine medicine and involvement with the unwanted horse coalition (Lenz), equine medicine and animal behavior (Miller), veterinary medical ethics and animal ethics (Rollin), and expertise in animals and public policy as well as involvement with the worldwide Humane Society (Rowan).

The “Unwanted Horse” – A modest proposal (Dr. Bernie Rollin)

Dr. Rollin presents the perspective that the basis of this problem is not the “unwanted horse” but the failure of the owner to fulfil their obligation to provide for the animal. Solutions such as increasing horse slaughter will only perpetuate the problem by allowing irresponsible animal owners to abrogate responsibility without sanction. He proposes that society should mandate that people should not be allowed to own an animal unless they can provide proof that they have resources sufficient to care for the animal, come what may.

SVME Ethics Plenary Sessions

Session Descriptions:

2. Good Breeders vs Puppy Mills (Dr. Marty Greer)

This will be a lively discussion about the controversy of intentionally bred dogs, comparing different kinds of breeders and sources of dogs in the US. It will include AVMA and NAIA data, information about humane relocation, and the ethics of breeding, and health screening.

3. SVME Guidelines for Clinical Research in Private Practice (Dr. Dennis Lawler)

The discussion will focus on ethical and procedural aspects of conducting research and clinical trials in private practice settings, ethical considerations for research with animals to benefit humans, and data management.

4. The Future of Veterinary Ethics in Veterinary Teaching Facilities (Dr. Bernie Rollin)

Dr. Rollin reviews the short history of Veterinary Medical Ethics education in North America and provides a gloomy forecast for this discipline in the near future despite its obvious importance. He points out the limits of science alone in addressing ethical issues and the number of apparently scientific issues that are revealed to be ethical in nature when examined closely. A failure of our veterinary educational programs to cultivate the ability of future veterinarians (and future scientific researchers) to think and reason logically will distance them from an understanding of evolving societal values and decrease the profession's power to shape its own future. He proposes that there is a good cost/benefit balance in incorporating philosophy into the pre- veterinary or undergraduate veterinary medical education programs

Is the Keeping of Endangered Exotic Animals in Zoos the Most Ethical Way to Preserve, Conserve, and Educate People About These Animals?

Kendra L. Bauer
DVM Candidate
School of Veterinary Medicine
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Winning Student Essay

Introduction

To discuss the ethical considerations of zoos, we must first define a zoo. A place where exotic animals are housed on display is too broad a definition, as there is no practical way to go about discussing institutions that may vary from a person's backyard to a multi-million dollar animal park. A total of 221 institutions have earned accreditation by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). According to the AZA, accreditation is defined as "official recognition and approval of a zoo or aquarium by a group of experts."¹ For the purpose of this paper, I will define a zoo as an AZA accredited institution.

In a 2007 survey, 131 of 136 zoos accredited by the AZA included education as a theme in their mission statements, and 118 mission statements included conservation as a theme.² Today, AZA accreditation guidelines state that both education and conservation must be at the heart of every zoo's mission and must be featured prominently in the mission statement.³ In this paper, I argue that despite the challenges zoos face, they are the most ethical method to accomplish Education and conservation goals for endangered animals.

Zoos and Animal Welfare

To evaluate the ethics of zoos serving a certain purpose, we must first discuss the ethics of the zoo's very existence. Essentially, is it ethical to house endangered exotic animals on public display? Zoologist Marian Dawkins argues that this issue can be addressed by answering two key questions: "Is the animal physically healthy?" and "Does the animal have what it wants?"⁴

To comply with AZA accreditation guidelines, a zoo must employ or contract with a veterinarian to oversee the health of the collection's animals. In addition, the

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guidelines state that zoos should adopt the Guidelines for Zoo and Aquarium Veterinary Medical Programs and Veterinary Hospitals developed by the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians (AAZV).³ The AAZV's guidelines include an emphasis on preventative medicine and standards for facilities and surgical and medical care.⁵

While providing for animal health is clearly a priority in zoos, defining physical health comes with gray areas, especially when it comes to measuring animal stress. Physiologic measures such as corticosteroid levels are difficult to interpret because of confounding factors, including that some level of stress is usually involved in the blood draw often necessary to collect this information and that there are many causes of increased hormone levels, both normal and pathologic.⁴

Stress may also be expressed in abnormal behavior or stereotypies, where an animal performs a behavior repetitively for no apparent reason.⁴ Enrichment in zoos helps to address these stereotypies. Enrichment can range from the use of puzzle feeders, which require an animal to overcome minor obstacles in order to obtain its food, to novel scents or perfumes placed in an animal's environment. Response to enrichment varies widely both across species and by individual animal. In a review of enrichment research, Swaisgood and Shepherdson failed to determine what makes enrichment work in some situations and not in others. They suggested that future research should use larger sample sizes and should evaluate only one enrichment method at a time. Ultimately, with more data, they anticipate being able to predict situations where stereotypies will occur and to identify the type of enrichment needed to treat them.⁶

It is less straightforward to determine whether an animal has what it wants than it is to address its physical health. An animal's daily life in the wild clearly differs from its life in captivity. In the wild, the amount of space an animal has far surpasses what is available to it in captivity. In the wild, it uses this space to search for food and other resources, such as shelter, and to avoid predators. In captivity, neither of these pursuits is necessary, as the animal is provided with a balanced diet and is protected from predators. Without introducing too much anthropomorphism, we can assume that an animal wants to eat when it is hungry and would rather not be eaten. Zoos fulfill both of these wants. Dawkins suggests behavioral research and analysis is the best way to move forward in evaluating these and other wants.⁴

Currently, zoos are very conscientious of animal welfare and guidelines are designed accordingly. Veterinary care is cutting edge and new research is in constant pursuit of the most humane ways to house and care for animals.

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Conservation Roles of Zoos

Addressing the health and wants of an animal in a zoo is important when considering individual animal welfare. However, individual animal welfare is not the only factor that should be considered when evaluating the keeping of animals in zoos. Conservationists give priority to the welfare of the population of a species as a whole.⁷

According to the 2011 AZA annual report on conservation science, accredited institutions spent approximately \$160 million on more than 2670 conservation projects in over 100 countries. These projects range from local projects such as lake sturgeon restoration in the Genesee River, funded by the Seneca Park Zoo, Rochester, New York, to international efforts such as the Southern Africa Elephant Conservation Program, funded by the San Diego Zoo.⁸ These programs can also be classified into two categories: ex situ projects, including captive breeding projects involving animals outside of their natural habitat, and in situ projects, such as preservation of the animal's natural habitat.⁸

For endangered populations of animals, creating sustainable captive populations is challenging. However, a captive population kept in a zoo is able to retain a higher level of genetic diversity than a much larger wild population.⁹ The AZA has developed over 300 Species Survival Plans to manage critical populations cooperatively.¹⁰ In the cases of the Przewalski's horse (*Equus przewalski*), Scimitar-horned oryx (*Oryx dammah*), and Siberian tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*), sufficient levels of gene diversity were captured at the founding and growth stages to allow for a sustained level of gene diversity for the future of these animals.¹¹

Successful programs for all species are not possible or practical given the limited space and funds of zoos.^{7,9,11,12,13} Targeting keystone species has been suggested in order to prioritize resources. These keystone species would not only garner support for their own species but ultimately would also benefit less popular species living in the same habitat or niche.^{9,14}

There are many conservation benefits to maintaining ex situ zoo populations when caring for a dwindling population of an endangered species. The zoo populations allow for advances in areas such as basic research, professional training, and technology development.^{9,13} Basic research may include determining dietary needs or reproductive cycling patterns. Professional training helps to prepare the next generation of wildlife biologists and veterinarians. Technology development may include testing methods of affixing satellite transmitters and cameras to marine mammals in captivity that will be later used to track movements of their wild counterparts. All of these advances can then be used to benefit the wild populations because the more we know, the better equipped we are to protect them.

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Zoos as Educators

One of the main arguments against zoos is that they still function more for entertainment than for education. In fact, most visitors define their main goal in visiting a zoo as entertainment in some form, such as a pleasant day outing or a means of entertaining children.^{15,16} However, education comes in many forms.

One of the sources of educational information in zoos is signage. In a study of visitors to the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, relatively few people were observed reading the signage.¹⁵ However, other forms of learning such as live presentations and demonstrations had a larger impact on visitors.¹³

Additionally, emotional connections are formed between people and animals when people are allowed to observe the animals up close. This connection correlates with a visitor's desire to help the animal and its species.¹⁵

Although learning to understand a zoo animal's basic characteristics and needs is ideal, in reality a person does not need to know that a chimpanzee is a great ape and not a monkey in order to feel a connection to the animal and want to contribute something to help alleviate its strife in the wild. Even if a trip to the zoo does not teach basic animal facts about chimpanzees, the opportunity for this education is not lost. Visitors gain a desire to learn more by visiting a zoo¹⁶ and if cultivated properly, this desire to learn and the desire to help can foster public support for conservation efforts.

Apart from a connection with individual animals, zoo visitors also have been shown to reconsider their role in conservation efforts, redefining themselves as part of the solution. They also gain a stronger connection with nature.¹⁶

Alternatives to Zoos for Conservation and Education

While zoo missions focus on conservation and education,³ some suggest there is a better way to accomplish the same goals for animals in the wild without keeping these animals in captivity.

From a strictly conservation perspective, keeping *ex situ* populations of animals in zoos is extremely beneficial to *in situ* conservation goals. Examples of these strides, such as basic research and technology development, were discussed previously in this paper. Zoos are also uniquely able to support efforts in the wild by providing help with fundraising.^{7,9}

Possible alternative ways to educate the public about animals and thus gain support for conservation include television programs or films and visiting the animals in the wild. While there are many

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excellent educational television programs and films related to animals, the direct contact that can be achieved in zoos is more effective in changing a visitor's attitude about an animal than merely observing them or learning about them on television.¹⁴ Without the connection provided by more direct contact, support for conservation would be stifled. Seeing animals in the wild is ideal, but one must consider that most zoos house animals from multiple continents. Visiting even a small subset of the equivalent animals in the wild is impractical at best.

Conclusions

In the year 2013, the ethics surrounding zoos is constantly changing. Even over my short lifetime, I have seen changes in zoos such as how animals are housed and what animal programs are offered that reflect the changing times and attitudes surrounding what is appropriate and ethical. As a child visiting the zoo, I rode elephants. Now, AZA accredited zoos are working toward minimizing even keeper contact with elephants without a protective barrier.¹⁷

The current goals of conservation and education in zoos are of utmost importance, and I believe that zoos are the best medium to carry out these goals. By caring for animals in captivity, zoos are able to manage captive populations, advance technologies, and increase knowledge about the species, all activities that benefit wild populations. Additionally, zoos provide a forum for the public to learn about conservation and forge a connection with the animals. These connections help to garner support for conservation efforts in the wild, and the zoos themselves provide a means for fundraising for these efforts.

I believe strongly that standards are necessary to ensure the welfare of the animals in zoos. The AZA currently provides these standards, and I urge the AZA to continue to critically evaluate zoos into the future, constantly adapting and challenging zoos to meet higher standards. In this way, we can provide an ethical backbone central to the care of all zoo animals.

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Spotlight on SVME Board Members



Marty Greer DVM, JD

Dr. Greer received her Bachelor of Science in 1978 and her DVM in 1981 from Iowa State University in Ames Iowa. She established the Small Animal Clinic in Brownsville in 1982 and then in 1988, moved the practice to Lomira. In 2010, she received her JD from Marquette Law School. She has a special interest in Pediatrics and Reproduction.

In 2002, she opened a Canine Semen Freezing Center, International Canine Semen Bank – Wisconsin (ICSB-WI) and became Penn-Hip Certified. Dr. Greer has contributed to pharmaceutical and nutritional research as an investigator for

Abbott Laboratory, Deprenyl Animal Health and Hill's Pet food Corporation. She has also been featured in articles in Veterinary Economics.

She is active in the community, holding offices with the Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association (Education Committee, Animal Welfare Committee), the American Veterinary Medical Law Association, the Society for Veterinary Ethics and the Society for Theriogenology (animal reproduction). She is President of the National Animal Interest Alliance (The good guys who want you to still be able to own dogs and eat meat). She was on the Wisconsin Veterinary Examining Board of the Department of Regulation and Licensing for 8 years. She is also a member of the AVMA, NEWVMA, ASVBP, APDT, AAFP, ACSMA, Fond du Lac Kennel Club, Kettle Moraine Kennel Club, Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America, Lakeshore Pembroke Welsh Corgi Kennel Club, and Lomira Area Chamber of Commerce. She also practices law at Animal Legal Resources LLC with Sheila Kessler JD.

Marty practices small animal veterinary medicine at Veterinary Village LLC and International Canine Semen Bank-WI in Lomira WI with her husband Dr. Dan Griffiths, also a veterinarian and her amazing staff. They have a daughter, Katy (husband Tim Anderson), who was a parasitologist at UW-OshKosh and is now at Purdue and son Karl (wife Kelly), who has a degree in physics. Both Karl and her daughter-in-law Kelly work at a nursing home supply company. Her son-in-law Tim is a PhD entomology student at Purdue.

Marty and Dan raise Pembroke Welsh Corgis and Bernese Mountain Dogs. They also have cats, rescue dogs, a horse, 4H dairy heifers, llamas and sheep. Her family has raised five puppies for Canine Companions for Independence, a service dog organization.

She is a serious foodie, loves cooking and photography.

Spotlight on SVME Board Members

Dr. Dennis Lawler

Dr. Dennis Lawler holds a DVM degree from the University of Illinois, 1974. His research and clinical experience includes animal reproduction, gerontology, and the natural biology of animal populations.

He was a co-principal investigator for a landmark study in which effects of lifetime reduced energy intake were evaluated in dogs. This study was the first of its kind to be completed in larger animals, allowing the benefits of reduced energy intake to be compared to a considerable volume of similar research in smaller animals.

Dr. Lawler also was part of an international research team that explored the genetics of size in dogs, headed by scientists at the National Institutes of Health. This group identified a single gene that codes for the IGF-1 a growth factor in dogs. This gene accounts for one-half of the size variation among dog breeds of today.

His publications include subjects as diverse as reproduction, pediatrics, gerontology, arthritis, nutrition, and genetics. He has been a textbook section editor three times, a co-editor once, and recently has worked with Found Animals Foundation, Los Angeles, CA, and with the Alliance for Contraception in Cats & Dogs (ACCD), as a grant reviewer in reproductive biology.

His principal academic interest at this time involves two areas: (a) the genetics of late-life diseases, and their relationships to the evolutionary biology of aging; (b) the paleopathology of joints of nondomestic mammals.



SVME Board member elected to National Academies of Practice

Dr. Dennis F. Lawler, present member of the SVME Board of Directors, was elected to the National Academies of Practice (NAP) in 2012, with formal induction in April, 2013, at the NAP Forum in Washington D.C.

According to an NAP statement, "Being selected as a Distinguished Fellow of the National Academies of Practice (NAP) gives recognition to your contributions and accomplishments. It recognizes your interest and desire to be an integral part of collaborative interdisciplinary health care. It also reflects your commitment to rise above your individual discipline and be an equal partner in delivering total health care without boundaries."

The National Academies of Practice

The National Academies of Practice was founded in 1981, as a non-profit organization, with the goal of advising governmental agencies on matters concerning the structure and function of the nation's health care system, particularly health care delivery. The NAP is made of 10 health profession Academies that include dentistry, medicine, nursing, optometry, osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, podiatric medicine, psychology, social work, and veterinary medicine. Plans are being developed at present to establish new Academies in Speech Pathology and Audiology.

The NAP belief and action system revolves around the premises that all Americans should have affordable quality health care, beginning with preventive medicine and extending through all of the physical, behavioral, and social aspects of human health. In veterinary medicine, these goals include zoonoses and community health, as well as the human-animal bond in an extended format, encompassing pet ownership and issues, food production and agriculture, and wildlife. NAP members have prepared and provided information about inter-disciplinary topics in health care for the US Congress, for health care planners, and for other public agencies. NAP seeks to actively support inter-disciplinary contributions by leading health care practitioners in developing, discussing, and disseminating information about practice models, educational curricula, and public policies.





Events & Announcements

2013 AVMA Annual Convention in Chicago, IL July 19-23

(SVME Ethics Plenary Sessions - see “Ethics track” - on July 20)

February 7-9, 2014, Princeton University will host the third Ivy League conference dedicated to exploring plant-based diets and bioethics.

PRIM&R’s 2014 IACUC Conference will be April 2-3, 2014, in Denver, CO.

The 2014 AAALAC International Conference: The Path to Success Under AAALAC’s New Standards will be held in conjunction with the 2014 IACUC Conference on April 1



SVME Mission Statement

The Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics was founded in 1994 by a group of veterinarians, biomedical researchers and academics to promote discussion and debate about ethical issues arising in and relevant to veterinary practice. The SVME publishes a newsletter, provides a listserv, holds an annual meeting at the AVMA convention, sponsors an annual student essay contest and honors an individual annually with the Shomer Award for outstanding contributions to veterinary medical ethics.

Individuals interested in information or in joining the SVME can visit the SVME website below to learn more about the organization.

www.svme.org/

APPLICATION FORM

SOCIETY FOR VETERINARY MEDICAL ETHICS

NAME: _____

BUSINESS

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HOME

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PLEASE SEND MAIL TO: _____ Office _____ Home

Phone: _____

Business: _____

Fax: _____

OCCUPATION AND PRESENT POSITION:

PROFESSIONAL DEGREES:

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS:

INTERESTS IN VETERINARY ETHICS:

I WOULD LIKE MY NAME & STATE OF RESIDENCE TO BE INCLUDED ON

THE SVME WEBSITE yes _____ no _____

I hereby make application to the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics

(Signature of Applicant)

(Date)

c/o

John S. Wright, DVM, SVME Treasurer
 Dept. of Veterinary Clinical Sciences
 University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine
 1352 Boyd Avenue
 St. Paul, MN 55108

SVME Board of Directors member list:

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