Evaluating the Success of Animal Welfare Teaching Activities

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Outline

• What are we trying to achieve?
• What measures of success could we be evaluating?
• Some examples from recent animal welfare education research
• Barriers to success
• Implications for teaching undergraduates about farm animal welfare
• Some final thoughts
What are we trying to achieve?

• Good standards of animal welfare
• Education as a means to achieve this
• Different groups with different routes to impact
Education: what are we trying to achieve?

- Looking after or in contact with animals directly: legislated
- Human behaviour directly impacts animals
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- Few people many animals (e.g. stockpersons)
Education: what are we trying to achieve?

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  - Few people many animals (e.g. stockpersons)
  - Many people each few animals e.g. owners – harder to teach.

Direct impact on animals

Animal Welfare

Husbandry

Animal care professionals

Owners
Education: what are we trying to achieve?

- Looking after or in contact with animals directly: legislated
- Human behaviour directly impacts animals
  - Few people person many animals (e.g. stockpersons)
  - Many people each few animals e.g. owners – harder to teach.
- Vets & nurses may educate others – facilitate this in training
Education: what are we trying to achieve?

- Demand of products of certain welfare provenance: choice
- Requires correct knowledge & product labelling

Animal Welfare

Consumerism

Indirect impact via demand on product standards
Education: what are we trying to achieve?

- Behaviour at a individual and societal level: choice
  - acknowledge & implement consideration of animal welfare
  - Questioning of practices
Different outcomes

Veterinarians & veterinary nurses

Husbandry

Direct impact on animals

Animal care professionals

Owners

Consumerism

Indirect impact via demand on product standards

Citizenship

Indirect impact via societal level action/ responsibility

Animal Welfare
How do we know we have achieved it?

Veterinarians & veterinary nurses

Husbandry

Direct impact on animals

Consumerism

Indirect impact via demand on product standards

Citizenship

Indirect impact via societal level action/ responsibility

Animal Welfare

Animal measures

Animal care professionals

Owners

Animal care professionals

Owners

Indirect impact via societal level action/ responsibility
How do we know we have achieved it?

- **Animal care professionals**
- **Husbandry**
- **Veterinarians & veterinary nurses**
- **Owners**

**Direct impact on animals**

**Animal measures**

**Consumerism**

**Indirect impact via demand on product standards**

**Human measures**

**Citizenship**

**Indirect impact via societal level action/ responsibility**

**Human measures**

**Animal Welfare**
What human indicators could we evaluate?

- Knowledge
  - ‘awareness’; facts; critical thinking / reasoning etc

- Attitude
  - learned tendencies to evaluate in a specific way
  - Various components: e.g. like/dislike, empathy; belief in animal sentience; importance of welfare consideration, moral responsibility; etc

- Behaviour (proxy: behavioural intention)
  - husbandry, consumer, citizen, education of others etc
Assume attitudes (caring) & knowledge (understanding) drive behaviour e.g. Hemsworth (2003) stockperson attitudes

Attitudes & welfare knowledge vary
  • e.g. phylogenetic hierarchy, animal use etc

Behaviour difficult to measure & dependent on additional variables
  • e.g. motivation/intention
Examples from recent UK animal welfare education research

1. Belief in animal sentience and animal welfare knowledge in veterinary students
   
   N Clark, D Main, E Paul (University of Bristol)

1. Knowledge, attitudes and behaviour regarding farm animal welfare in adolescents

   J Jamieson (RVC), MJ Reiss (Institute of Education), D Allen (Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), SM Abeyesinghe (RVC)
Animal Welfare Education Research
1. Veterinary students

N Clark, D Main, E Paul

• Tested students’ (2010) knowledge of 8 core animal welfare topics (using 16 MCQs)
  • animal welfare science,
  • welfare assessment and the Five Freedoms,
  • group assessment and management of welfare,
  • animal welfare ethics,
  • legislation,
  • human-animal interactions
  • the role of the veterinarian in animal welfare

• 5th years > 1st years overall but only for 5/8 core topics
Animal Welfare Education Research

1. Veterinary students

N Clark, D Main, E Paul

• Belief in Animal Sentience (BIAS) as students progressed through course (longitudinally 2001-2011)

• no difference years 1 vs 5 except for

  • species rank order followed phylogenetic hierarchy

  • females > males

• but very large variation in mean scores between cohorts
Animal Welfare Education Research

2. Adolescents as future consumers

J Jamieson (RVC), MJ Reiss (Institute of Education), D Allen (RSPCA), SM Abeyesinghe (RVC)

Knowledge FAW
• Species welfare issues
• Product labelling

Surveyed all UK secondary schools 2010

Attitude (AFAWS)
4 themes on which students based views when discussing FAW
1. Importance of no pain/suffering
2. Importance of provision space for behavioural freedom
3. Perceived responsibility/ability too improve FAW
4. Perceived general importance FAW as a concern

Behavioural Intention (consumer) ‘to identify the welfare standards of the farm animals that are used to produce the food (eggs, meat, and dairy) the respondents consumed’ assessed using Theory of planned behaviour
http://people.umass.edu/aizen/tpb.diag.html
Current status in UK adolescents

Knowledge FAW issues/ product labels **LOW**

**Attitude**
- 65% cared about and 49% had concerns for FAW.
- 93% agreed with absence of pain & suffering
- 92% agreed with provision of space
- **78% held a weak or negative belief in personal responsibility / ability**

**Behavioural Intention** ‘to identify the welfare standards of the farm animals that are used to produce the food (eggs, meat, and dairy) the respondents consumed’ **WEAK**
Influences on intentions to identify welfare standards

\[ R^2 = 0.596 \]

**Attitude towards the behaviour**
\[ \beta = 0.230^{***} \]

**Subjective Norm**
\[ \beta = 0.274^{***} \]

**Perceived Behavioural Control**
\[ \beta = 0.149^{***} \]

**Knowledge**
\[ \beta = 0.068^* \]

**Residence**
\[ \beta = 0.030 \]

**Gender**
\[ \beta = 0.075^* \]

**AFAWS Space / Behavioural Freedom**
\[ \beta = -0.060 \]

**AFAWS Pain and Suffering**
\[ \beta = -0.021 \]

**AFAWS Responsibility / Ability**
\[ \beta = 0.219^{***} \]

**AFAWS Importance**
\[ \beta = 0.264^{***} \]

\[ \text{rho} = 0.184^{***} \]

\[ r = 0.429^{***} \]
Evaluating existing educational methods

• Evaluated a sample on these outcomes (surveys, interviews, observations)
  • one external voluntary event
  • one resource produced by an external body (RSPCA) but used within school
  • one integrated within a curriculum

• Overall none were particularly effective?

• Why?
Common barriers to behaviour

- Shifting responsibility elsewhere
- Accepting current practice as normal and impossible to change
- Limited belief in personal relevance or power/ability
Common barriers to behaviour

Shifting responsibility elsewhere

Accepting current practice as normal and impossible to change

Limited belief in personal relevance or power/ability

Cognitive dissonance (discomfort from conflicting beliefs) and strategies to reduce this

- functional ignorance
- objectification
- devaluing
- distancing & distraction
Common barriers to behaviour

Shifting responsibility elsewhere
Accepting current practice as normal and impossible to change
Limited belief in personal relevance or power/ability

Cognitive dissonance (discomfort from conflicting beliefs) and strategies to reduce this

Social norms
Silent/hidden curriculum

reluctant to invite discussion
trivialising subject importance
expressing strong views
derision of others’ beliefs
rewarding conformity
Common barriers to behaviour

- Shifting responsibility elsewhere
- Accepting current practice as normal and impossible to change
- Limited belief in personal relevance or power/ability

Cognitive dissonance (discomfort from conflicting beliefs) and strategies to reduce this

- Social norms
- Silent/hidden curriculum
- Teacher confidence
- Focus on formally assessed material
Teaching undergraduates animal welfare?

Theory: practice gap. Linking what they learn in the classroom to the practical setting.

Integration throughout the curriculum.

What promotes learning?
EMS evaluations: Animal welfare assessment in practice

Picture courtesy of Angela Wright, RVC
Teaching undergraduates animal welfare?

- Integration throughout the curriculum
- Theory: practice gap. Linking what they learn in the classroom to the practical setting
- Empowerment: do they feel they can evoke change?
- What promotes learning?
- Conflicts: dilemma between professional and personal beliefs
- Lecturers beliefs & behaviour
Final thoughts on evaluation

Evaluation and monitoring in practice

• What outcomes do we desire?
• How do we measure (quantitative and/or qualitative)? Do we need to measure anything else?
• What constraints are there?
• How do students integrate information and apply their learning?
Thank you
Sources of help

Novice
http://www.noviceproject.eu/pg/wikicontent/54/about_sidemenu,,about_footer

Aswelva
http://www.awselva.org.uk/resources