

WOAH Chapters 7.1. Introduction to the recommendations for animal welfare and for the welfare of farmed fish (Section 7)

Regional Training Seminar for WOAH National Focal Points for Animal Welfare

Leopoldo Stuardo Escobar

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Scientific Coordinator - Animal Welfare - Standards Department



World Organisation
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Founded as OIE



- TERRESTRIAL CODE -

First adopted in 2004; most recent update adopted in 2019.

Chapter under revision.

Article 7.1.1.

General considerations

Animal welfare means the physical and mental state of an animal in relation to its environment. An animal experiences good welfare if the animal is healthy, comfortable, well housed, free from unpleasant states such as pain, fear, distress, and is able to express behaviours that are important for its physical and mental state.

Good animal welfare requires disease prevention and appropriate veterinary care, shelter, management and nutrition, a stimulating and safe environment, humane handling and humane slaughter or killing. While animal welfare refers to the state of the animal, the treatment that an animal receives is covered by other terms such as animal care, animal husbandry, and humane treatment.

Good animal welfare is not only about avoiding negative experiences to animals, but also providing them with positive experiences



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Article 7.1.2.

Guiding principles for animal welfare

1. That there is a critical relationship between animal health and [animal welfare](#).
2. That the internationally recognised five freedoms (freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition; freedom from fear and [distress](#); freedom from physical and thermal discomfort; freedom from [pain](#), injury and disease; and freedom to express normal patterns of behaviour) provide valuable guidance in [animal welfare](#).
3. That the internationally recognised three Rs (reduction in numbers of [animals](#), refinement of experimental methods and replacement of [animals](#)) provide valuable guidance for the use of [animals](#) in science. These three elements which need to be considered together, and that the underlying assumptions which should be made as explicit as possible. The use of [animals](#), and for companionship, recreation and entertainment, makes it possible to ensure the welfare of such [animals](#) to the greatest extent possible. This will improve productivity and food safety, and hence lead to economic growth. The use of [animals](#), rather than identical systems based on design criteria, be the basis for the development of new products and technologies.

The 'five domains' (nutrition, environment, health, behaviour, and mental state) support the systematic scientific assessment of animal welfare



– TERRESTRIAL CODE –

Article 7.1.3.

Scientific basis for recommendations

1. Welfare is a broad term which includes the many elements that contribute to an animal's quality of life, including those referred to in the five freedoms listed above.
2. The scientific assessment of [animal welfare](#) has progressed rapidly in recent years and forms the basis of these recommendations.
3. Some measures of [animal welfare](#) involve assessing the degree of impaired functioning associated with injury, disease and malnutrition. Other measures provide information on [animals'](#) needs and affective states such as hunger, [pain](#) and fear of pain, and aversions. Other measures assess the physiological, behavioural and psychological responses to various environmental conditions.

...including its physical and mental states those referred to in the “five freedoms” listed above.

of the Terrestrial Code for animal welfare. Welfare assessment can be either at a point in time or over a period of time such as a lifetime. There is value in using the ‘five freedoms’ and ‘five domains’ models. The ‘five domains’ model allows consideration to be given to both the degree and cumulation of positive and negative experiences over the duration of the animal's life.

defined as an evaluation of a response of an animal or as an effect on an animal used to assess its welfare

defined as an evaluation of a feature of the environment in which the animal is kept or to which is exposed

management. Outcomes are generally

2. For each principle listed in Article [7.1.5.](#), the most relevant criteria (or measures), ideally comprising animal-based measures, should be included in the standard. Any given animal-based measure may be linked to more than one principle.

3. Recommendations should, whenever possible, define explicit targets or thresholds that should be met for animal-based measures. Such target values should be based on relevant science and experience of experts.

4. In addition to animal-based measures, resource-based measures and management-based measures may be used and should be defined on the basis of science and expert experience showing that a welfare outcome is clearly linked to a resource or to a management procedure.

5. Users of the standard should select the most appropriate animal-based measure among those listed in the standard. Outcomes can be measured by an assessment of a representative sample of those, using data from [establishments](#), transporters and [Authorities](#) should collect all data relevant for the users to set target and thresholds.

6. Whatever the basis of the measure, if outcomes are unsatisfactory, users should ensure that management are necessary to improve outcomes.

defined as an evaluation of what the animal handler does, and with which management processes or tools, may be used



– TERRESTRIAL CODE –

Article 7.1.5.

General principles for the welfare of animals in livestock production systems

1. Genetic selection should always take into account the health and welfare of [animals](#).
2. [Animals](#) chosen for introduction into new environments should be suited to the local climate and able to adapt to local diseases, parasites and nutrition.
3. The physical environment, including the substrate (walking surface, resting surface, etc.), should be suited to the species so as to minimise risk of injury and transmission of diseases or parasites to [animals](#).
4. The physical environment should allow comfortable resting, safe and comfortable movement including normal postural changes, and the opportunity to perform types of natural behaviour that [animals](#) are motivated to perform.
5. Social grouping of [animals](#) should be managed to allow positive social behaviour and minimise injury, [distress](#) and chronic fear.
6. For housed [animals](#), air quality, temperature and humidity should support good animal health and not be aversive. Where extreme conditions occur, [animals](#) should not be prevented from using their natural methods of thermo-regulation.
7. [Animals](#) should have access to sufficient [feed](#) and water, suited to the [animals](#)' age and needs, to maintain normal health and productivity and to prevent prolonged hunger, thirst, malnutrition or dehydration.
8. Diseases and parasites should be prevented and controlled as much as possible through good management practices. [Animals](#) with serious health problems should be isolated and treated promptly or killed humanely if treatment is not feasible or recovery is unlikely.
9. Where painful procedures cannot be avoided, the resulting [pain](#) should be managed to the extent that available methods allow.
10. The handling of [animals](#) should foster a positive relationship between humans and [animals](#) and should not cause injury, panic, lasting fear or avoidable stress.
11. Owners and handlers should have sufficient skill and knowledge to ensure that [animals](#) are treated in accordance with these principles.



– AQUATIC CODE–

- First adopted in 2008
- Future revision considered under the WOAH Aquatic Animal Health Strategy.

Article 7.1.1.

Guiding principles

1. Considering that:

1. the use of fish in harvest or capture fisheries, in research and for recreation (e.g. ornamentals and aquaria), makes a major contribution to the wellbeing of people; and
2. there is a critical relationship between fish health and fish welfare; and
3. improvements in farmed fish welfare can often improve productivity and hence lead to economic benefits.

2. WOAH will develop recommendations for the welfare of farmed fish (excluding ornamental species) during transport, slaughter, and destruction for disease control purposes. In developing these, the following principles will apply:

1. The use of fish carries with it an ethical responsibility to ensure the welfare of such animals to the greatest extent practicable.
2. The scientific assessment of fish welfare involves both scientifically derived data and value-based assumptions that need to be considered together, and the process of making these assessments should be made as explicit as possible.



– AQUATIC CODE–

Article 7.1.2.

Scientific basis for recommendations

- 1.The basic requirements for the welfare of farmed fish include handling methods appropriate to the biological characteristics of the fish and a suitable environment to fulfil their needs.
- 2.There are many species of fish in farming systems and these have different biological characteristics. It is not practicable to develop specific recommendations for each of these species. These WOAH recommendations therefore address the welfare of farmed fish at a general level.

Thank you!

Merci

Gracias

12, rue de Prony, 75017 Paris, France
T. +33 (0)1 44 15 19 49
F. +33 (0)1 42 67 09 87

woah@woah.int
www.woah.org

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