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Farmers’ and academia’s views”

Capacity building and education for animal health professionals through training materials to improve animal welfare

MARIA VICTORIA LARRATEGUY¹, CAROLIN BREITENBACH²

¹ *Welttierschutzstiftung, Argentina*

² *Welttierschutzstiftung, Vets United, Germany*

Abstract

The veterinary profession, including veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals (assistants, veterinary technicians), plays a leading role in animal welfare. OIE describes their duty in recognising and managing animal welfare (AW) issues, as well as advising animal keepers, owners, care-takers and policy makers in AW related issues.

Unfortunately, the topic has often been neglected in veterinary education. According to a survey performed by Welttierschutzstiftung (WTS) in 2014 among veterinary training institutions and NGOs, 58 % of respondents expressed a lack of AW education in veterinary curricula and 44 % said especially veterinarians lacked AW knowledge.

WTS aims to address this issue and supports the integration of animal welfare in animal health related courses and CPD programmes by offering free training materials with focus on applied animal welfare. The foundation works in close cooperation with educational institutions in the animal health sector, veterinary associations, local government departments and NGOs to accomplish the mission: to increase the animal welfare awareness among professionals and thus in their communities and among relevant stakeholders. In the direct scope of the WTS VETS UNITED projects the training materials are currently used at 11 academic institutions and in 2 CPD programmes in 7 African countries.

This year, a small team of professionals from Africa, South America and Europe, in collaboration with peer reviewers from countries world regions are updating the training materials. The new version will reflect the latest developments in animal welfare science and include new topics on emerging challenges like antimicrobials resistance and One Welfare, in order to make teaching animal welfare easy, effective and fun.

Keywords: Animal health professionals, animal welfare, capacity building, training materials