



## WSAVA Animal Welfare and Wellness Committee

### Report to Assembly 2016

#### **AWWC Background and Vision:**

The AWWC was formed in 2009 thanks primarily to the efforts of Drs Roger Clarke of Australia and Ray Butcher, a UK-based veterinarian, who dedicated their careers to advancing animal welfare and had the foresight to ensure that animal welfare was enshrined as one of the WSAVA's four key 'pillars'. We aim to promote advances in animal welfare and wellness around the world through enhanced veterinary care and work closely with other committees within the WSAVA to provide the resources to facilitate these advances. Our vision statement is:

***To make welfare issues an everyday consideration for small animal practitioners and to ensure that WSAVA becomes a proactive and respected partner within international welfare circles providing an opinion that balances compassion with science and practical needs.***

#### **AWWC Strategic Goals**

In January 2016 the AWWC committee convened at the NAVC in Orlando and reviewed the strategic goals. As a result, and in line with a changing committee structure, we modified our goals to state the following:

##### ***EDUCATE:***

To disseminate relevant information on companion animal welfare and wellness to a global audience

- Maintain a digital presence and a media outreach that is current, informative and meets the needs of a global audience
- Provide a physical presence at relevant veterinary and companion animal welfare forums where information on topical issues are presented and debated.

##### ***INFLUENCE:***

To address companion animal welfare issues by partnering with global welfare organisations and WSAVA committees. To provide guidance and opinion on animal welfare and wellness to a global audience

- We will partner with key global organisations in animal welfare to maximise the pace and impact of change.

- Align ourselves with other WSAVA committees to ensure one voice.

### **LEADERSHIP:**

Deliver credible, evidence-based, ethical positions respected by member organisations & the global veterinary community.

- To provide a perspective through contribution to the scientific body of knowledge and state-of-the-art thinking that recognises regional, economic and cultural needs.

## **Members of the AWWC**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Country</b>
<b>Nienke ENDENBURG</b>	<i>Psychologist</i>	<i>Netherlands</i>
<b>Karyl HURLEY</b>	<i>Veterinarian Internal Medicine specialist</i>	<i>USA</i>
<b>Rod JOUPPI</b>	<i>Veterinarian</i>	<i>Canada</i>
<b>Tess KOMMEDAL</b>	<i>Veterinarian Shelter Medicine specialist</i>	<i>Norway</i>
<b>Melinda MERCK</b>	<i>Veterinarian Forensic Veterinary Medicine specialist</i>	<i>USA</i>
<b>John RAWLINGS</b>	<i>Physiologist</i>	<i>UK</i>
<b>Sheilah ROBERTSON</b>	<i>Veterinarian Welfare Science, Ethics and Law specialist</i>	<i>USA</i>
<b>Shane RYAN</b>	<i>Veterinarian</i>	<i>Singapore</i>

Since our last report, John Rossi has resigned from the committee and we thanked him for his excellent contributions to our work and bringing a robust ethical perspective to our deliberations. John has agreed to remain as a consultant to the committee.

Membership and Committee roles were reviewed. Melinda Merck was unanimously voted in as the Chair of the Committee; Nienke Endenburg remains as the Treasurer and John Rawlings as the Secretary to the Committee.

### **WSAVA AWWC Sponsor**

Since its inception the AWWC has been sponsored by WALTHAM®, Mars Petcare who has contributed USD 25,000 annually to enable the committee to fulfil its vision and goals.

### **Declaration of Interests**

Karyl Hurley is the Mars Petcare Sponsor and John Rawlings is an employee of WALTHAM®

### **WSAVA AWWC Achievements during 2015/16**

The committee met face-to-face at WSAVA Bangkok in May 2015 and again in Orlando (NAVC) in January 2016 with the next meeting planned for Cartagena in September 2016. Other meetings to address on-going activities are held on a monthly basis by pre-arranged teleconferences.

A review of the committee membership will take place in May 2015 to ensure that we are representative of WSAVA member organisations across the world and that we maintain the relevant expertise. We recognised that we do not have adequate representation from South America or Asia

and we would attempt to address this through a change in working practice as well as trying to identify relevant experts for full committee membership.

In Bangkok the committee agreed a change in working practice, supporting the concept of establishing working groups that would be led by committee members but could draw upon wider expertise within the veterinary and allied professions.

The main forums for providing educational resources are the NAVC Animal Welfare Lecture Stream, the WSAVA Animal Welfare Lecture Stream, and the WSAVA website. Preparation for the lecture streams and identifying key international speakers takes significant planning and resource commitments. A successful lecture stream was presented in Orlando (NAVC) in January 2016 and in Bangkok (WSAVA) in May 2015. The lecture stream for WSAVA 2016 (Cartagena) is complete and plans for WSAVA 2017 (Copenhagen) are in progress.

The WSAVA Website is populated with key references, links to global and regional welfare organizations, and provides guidance on key topics. Some AWWC webpage stories are currently available in English, Spanish, Chinese and Japanese.

An initiative to provide educational opportunities through hands on experience, which started in South Africa in 2014, was repeated in The Philippines prior to WSAVA 2015 and consisted of a spay / neuter clinic attended by international and local veterinarians. In Thailand a workshop on shelter medicine for local practitioners and experts was held following the WSAVA congress. Organisation involved the local WSAVA representatives with resources provided by MARS Petcare Thailand. Following the same principles, the committee has worked to develop a spay/neuter clinic in Curitiba Brazil and a shelter medicine workshop in Colombia spanning the period of WSAVA 2016 in Cartagena. This is also supported by an Educational Grant that we have funded to provide individuals with an opportunity to attend these activities and the WSAVA Congress.

In 2014 a memorandum of understanding to promote animal welfare globally was signed between WSAVA and World Animal Protection (WAP). AWWC followed this up by developing an educational resource for companion animal veterinarians using the established Concepts in Animal Welfare educational tools developed by WAP. This was launched in early 2016.

A work group has been established to develop animal welfare guidelines that will form a basis for all member associations to follow. The WSAVA Board has approved this project as long as we can fund it. It is likely to be a 3 year programme of work that will involve 3 committee members with a group of external advisors.

AWWC has continued to support WSAVA Congress by developing ethical and welfare standards for acceptance of original research studies to be presented at meetings. A position statement on the use of animals in WSAVA sponsored events was also released. The AWWC strongly recommends that all activities involving the use of living animals at the WSAVA sponsored events are risk assessed for the potential to cause physical or mental suffering to the animals, and that the event respects the dignity of those animals taking part.

The committee members have continued to liaise with other groups on a range of subjects:

- Microchip standards & emerging issues of manufacturer non-compliance with ISO / ICAR

- Attendance at ICAM meetings
- Liaising with the One Health Committee and the CDC on Obesity in 2016.
- Dental task force (starting 2016)