Poultry Health and Welfare
What is Animal Welfare?

• Is defined as providing animals with environments and management to meet their intrinsic physiological and behavioral needs.

• The avoidance of abuse and exploitation of animals by humans by maintaining appropriate standards of accommodation, feeding and general care, the prevention and treatment of disease, and the assurance of freedom from harassment, and unnecessary discomfort and pain.

(Saunders Comprehensive Veterinary Dictionary, 2007)
What is Animal Welfare?

• Decisions regarding animal care, use, and welfare shall be made by balancing scientific knowledge and professional judgment with consideration of ethical and societal values.
• Animals must be provided water, food, proper handling, health care, and an environment appropriate to their care and use, with thoughtful consideration for their species-typical biology and behavior.
• Animals should be cared for in ways that minimize fear, pain, stress, and suffering.
• Procedures related to animal housing, management, care, and use should be continuously evaluated, and when indicated, refined or replaced.
• Conservation and management of animal populations should be humane, socially responsible, and scientifically prudent.
• Animals shall be treated with respect and dignity throughout their lives and, when necessary, provided a humane death.

– American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Animal Welfare Principles (Approved by AVMA Executive Board November 2006)
Who is Responsible for Health and Welfare?

• 3 main parties involved:
  1. Owner (individual or multiple parties)
     A. Includes Manager/Operator of Facility
  2. Veterinarian
     A. Additional health care and disease prevention
  3. Government/Professional Association or Organization
     A. State/National
        • State Poultry Associations, Farm Bureau Federation, National Poultry Improvement Plan, U.S. Poultry & Egg Association, National Chicken Council, National Turkey Federation, United Egg Producers
     B. Federal
        • U. S. Department of Agriculture
Who is Responsible for Health and Welfare?

- Qualified animal agriculture professionals are those educated, and trained to be the best care takers of the animals.
  - Veterinarians
  - Farmers and Ranchers
  - Animal Scientists
  - United States Department of Agriculture
    - All work together to provide for the well-being of the animals.
Current Issues in Poultry Industry

• Trends and technique issues:
  – Induced molting
    • Physically causing birds to start molting
  – Bird density and spacing
  – Availability of food and water
  – Ventilation of housing
  – Types of housing
  – Health Care
    • Antibiotics
    • Vaccinations
    • Biosecurity
  – Beak and toe conditioning
  – Handling and treatment during transportation and harvesting
National Regulations

• National Poultry Improvement Plan
  – Main objective of program is to effectively improve poultry and poultry products throughout the United States.
    • Department of Agriculture Veterinarian inspects premises and records to ensure good sanitation, and data keeping.
  – Provides certification that poultry and poultry product shipments are disease free.
  – NPIP certifies that producers are free from the following diseases:
    • Pullorum-Typhoid (P-T)
    • Mycoplasma gallisepticum (MG)
    • Mycoplasma Synoviae (MS)
    • Mycoplasma Meleagridis (MM)
    • Salmonella Enteritidis (SE)
    • Avian Influenza (AI)
National Regulations

• United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
  – No Federal Laws or Acts establish guidelines for animal welfare for the poultry industry.
    • Hatcheries -- Mechanical Chick Handling Devices
    • Poultry Grower Farms
      – Ammonia level not over 25ppm.
      – Backup available for mechanical ventilation systems.
      – Birds should be able to move at least 1 meter away as a person walks through them.
      – Birds must be able to lie down in cages without having to be below or on top of another bird.
    • General Care
      – No throwing or stepping on birds.
      – No disposal of live birds in the trash.
National Plans/Guidelines

• Egg Laying Hens

In 2002, the United Egg Producers (UEP) adopted guidelines for animal welfare.
  – Developed by an independent third party Scientific Advisory Committee.
  – Animal Husbandry Guidelines for Egg Laying Flocks provides science-based guidelines for all aspects of egg production, including the following:
    - Cage configuration
    - Handling
    - Beak trimming
    - Transportation and slaughter
    - Cage space per bird
    - Molting
    - Cage free guidelines

[Image of United Egg Producers Certified logo]
National Plans/Guidelines

• Broiler Chickens

The National Chicken Council (NCC) developed The NCC Animal Welfare Guidelines and Audit Checklist.

– To assist companies in ensuring and verifying a high level of welfare exists.
  • Has been widely adopted within the industry.
– The physical well-being of animals is very important to the broiler chicken industry.
  • Only healthy animals can be utilized for human food.
– Science Based guidelines cover every phase of the chicken's life and offers recommendations for proper treatment. Among other things, it includes chapters on:
  - Education, training and planning
  - Best practices on the farm
  - Appropriate comfort and shelter
  - Proper nutrition and feeding
  - Catching and transportation
  - Health care
  - Processing
The National Turkey Federation (NTF) developed Humane Production Guidelines have been in place in the industry since the late 1980s.

– The most recent guidelines identify control points in turkey production and processing, and provide recommendations to ensure animal welfare standards in the following areas:
  - Farm safety and security
  - Hatching
  - Facilities and equipment
  - Feed and water supply
  - Maintenance
  - Bird comfort
  - Training
U.S. Poultry & Egg Association

- The world's largest and most active poultry organization.
  - Formed in 1947, the association has affiliations in 27 states and member companies worldwide.
  - Represent the entire industry as an “All Feather” association.
    - Membership includes producers and processors of broilers, turkeys, ducks, eggs, and breeding stock, as well as allied companies.
    - Provide assistance and guidance with all aspects of raising and processing poultry and eggs.
Facts to Consider

- Poultry Industry produces sales of an average of $60.0 billion annually.
- Provides jobs for over 400,000 people.
- One of the largest agriculture industries in U.S.
- Only healthy, well taken care of birds will provide meat and produce eggs.
Impact of Current & Future Laws

- California Proposition 2 – Standards for Confining Farm Animals
  - Passed on November 4th, 2008
  - Adds a chapter to California Health and Safety Code to prohibit the confinement of certain farm animals in a manner that does not allow them to turn around freely, lie down, stand up, and fully extend their limbs.
  - Covers three types of confinement: egg laying hen cages, veal crates, and sow gestation crates.
  - Farmers must implement new housing systems by January 1, 2015.
Positive or Negative Effects?

• What are the effects laws like these, passed by the general public, have on the well-being of the animals?
  – Are they really the best for the health and welfare of the animals?
  – Are the chickens really better off?
  – What about the economy?
  – Who should be deciding what is best for the well-being of the animals?
    • Veterinarians
    • Farmers/ranchers
    • Urban public
Prop 2 Facts to Consider

- 99% of all California Egg Laying Hen Farms are family owned and run.
- 19 million egg laying hens (99% of Farms Family owned and run).
- California Farms produce 5 billion eggs annually.
- California farms produce 2/3 of the eggs consumed by Californians.
- United States – One of Safest Food Supplies in the World.
  - Eggs shipped from other countries;
    - May be less safe and carry more disease.
Animal Welfare Effects of Prop 2

• In the early 1930’s, Egg Laying Hens were moved indoors into modern housing facilities with cage systems.

  • Protected from outside predators.
  • Biosecure environment, safe from other animal/bird disease.
  • Easily heat and cool, comfortable environment.
  • Protected from outside parasites, disease.
  • More labor efficient and sustainable.
  • Better for the environment.
  • When new law takes effect, the current cage system designs will no longer be usable.
Possible Economic Effects of Prop 2

- 95% of the California $648 million egg industry and accompanying economic output could be lost by 2015. (*Source: UC Davis Economic Impact Study.*)
- Includes a significant loss of the three and half thousand jobs the egg industry employs.
- Family farmers will have to build many more henhouses.
- Egg production costs will increase.
Where Can I Learn More About Health and Welfare?

- www.ConversationsOnCare.com

- Where America’s farmers have put together factual information about how they care for the animals they raise.
  - Simply put, they care because healthy animals mean healthy food for you and your family.
  - See the steps every American farmer and rancher takes to ensure that their animals receive the best possible care, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year.
Where Can I Learn More About Health and Welfare?

- www.animalagalliance.org

- The Alliance also works with animal producers to promote compliance with its “Principles of Animal Care.”

**What are the Principles of Animal Care?**

- To promote animal well-being and produce animal food products of the highest quality.

- The Animal Agriculture Alliance includes individuals, companies, and organizations who are interested in helping consumers better understand the role animal agriculture plays in providing a safe, abundant food supply to a hungry world.