



Farm and Companion Animal Welfare: Global Issues and Challenges

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Abstract

Animal welfare is an issue that currently takes different dimensions. On one hand, animals are poorly managed and increasingly exposed to a wider array of diseases. These calls for more intervention works and keeping welfare. On another hand, by the name of animal welfare, some unethical practices are ongoing on the globe.

Keywords: Animal; Companion; Farm; Welfare

Introduction

Animal welfare is the well-being of a non-human animal as one sentient thing. Well-being is in terms of overall health including physical, physiological, psychological, behavioral, and healthy handling and treatment by humans. Since all animals particularly farm and companion animals are mostly under the control of humans their welfare either positively and negatively influenced by a human being. Human beings put themselves as an animal advocate while they are the primary cause of violation of the animals' welfare. If not intentionally they practically do so. In another way, some humans put animal welfare issues to its wrong extreme giving them more value than other human beings in their vicinity. This makes those individuals undeserved and immoral to talk about animal welfare. Humans put their own interest on animals and treat them differently according to the value they give them which is wrong.

Positive dimension about animal welfare

It is good to see human beings concerned with the health of animals particularly veterinary professionals. Animals are endangered by natural and human-made causes. Veterinarians and other animal health workers are at the forefront to restore the well-being of these animals. Not only the restoration of health but also the

protection of animals from factors that can harm the health of animals is the primary responsibility of veterinarians. This is just the routine practice of all veterinarians and other animal health workers. They do their best to keep the health of animals by whatever option available and suited for each case at hand. Veterinarians also have played a role in creating awareness among the whole public about the importance of keeping animal health and different options available for animal disease prevention. These are all about complementing animal welfare which should be credited. On top of these veterinarians are also engaged in activities related to human health through their interference to block transmission of disease from animal to human though this does not get much credit particularly in my country, Ethiopia.

Negative dimension about animal welfare

Beyond the positive impacts of veterinary professionals and other animal health workers on the welfare of animals, some extreme blind views about the welfare of animals by animal welfare activists put the issue to a more negative distorting dimension. I argue that an individual who does not value human beings from whatever nation, race, ethnic group, or view does not deserve to be an animal welfare advocate. This is why I said 'blind view' because an individual, a society, a nation, or a world that fails to understand

how much he, the human being is valued can't talk about the value of animals. Because the one who does not know about himself can't talk about what others are and for that matter about non-human animals. But if he tries, surly end up in wrong views, unaccepted and not passively disseminated among the public except forced by a different method of enforcement. Let us look at these from a different angle.

Farm animal welfare

Farm animals are those that are primarily kept to benefit human beings through their products and byproducts. Their fate is dependent on the economic benefit they provide to humans. But in the meantime, their health and overall welfare should be kept. Blaming that human has no right over those animals and considering animals as a sentient thing, some individuals, organizations, and a class of society put the animal welfare issue to its more extreme. What is surprising is that as I have already mentioned, these contesters maybe those that do not give any value to a class of people that I have listed above. The ideas originated from these classes of society are no more winning rather put veterinarians under ethical dilemmas whenever confront some cases on which those extreme viewers crate problems.

Contrary to these, some animal owners wish and practice and tries to implement unethical and completely against the welfare of animals. They are self-centered, immoral, and unable to lead themselves on the right track who consider themselves as a boss and want to accomplish everything they want on their animals. These people tend to even mislead veterinarians to respond only to their will. These misleaders want to get rid of their animals whenever they want that they have to do. They are not open to take ideas from others.

Through the practices of intensification of farms, modernization of human life, advancing research and technology, factory-farming and so on, human beings brought persistent problems to veterinarians and the welfare of animals. To mention some of these: Confinement of animals in small areas in barn, pen and the like which can't allow them even to turn and let down, densely stocking animals where they can develop abnormal behaviors of fighting each other and other complications like respiratory diseases and communication of these diseases amongst easily, genetic engineering, crossing, cloning, stem cell technologies and the like which widely and deeply complicated the health and well being of animals and expose the animals to life challenges for existence and also put

their unreserved hands in human welfare are some among the top priorities. These are all originated from the human mind and their effect bounce to humans particularly veterinarians.

There may be no one to deny that all these attempts of human have impacted his life positively by providing quantity and quality animal products and by-products let him have a sustainable life. But the then unpredicted or undermined negative impacts put human life and welfare of animals under challenges that now out bulge and enforce human beings to seek urgent solutions.

Companion animal welfare

As the name indicates these are animals kept to accompany humans in their life. Look! the idea is wrong from its very beginning. Companionship in its very nature is mutual, entered passively by a drive of common interest of all parties in an association. This is not the case in human-companion animal companionship which is entered based on the sole interest of humans. This tends to give human full right on the manipulation of the companionship. This case may be aggravated by the weak thought of the human owner. At one time the owner may let his companion animal exercise extraordinary life more than a value he gives for other human beings by the weak personal value he gives for others. At another time he wants to throw them out the same animal he gave extraordinary virtue as if those animals are a 'use and through' material forgetting them a sentient thing. Again what is surprising is that those class of human beings who put themselves as animal advocates tend to keep silent, revealing their failure to say the rights right and wrongs wrong.

Pet owners and other companion animal owners sometimes develop an interest to keep some breed of animals which are maybe results of gene modification. As these animals become aged or encounter health complications usually deformities, these owners refrain from helping these animals and don't want to stand by their side. Their selfish and unpredictability is then pushed to veterinarians challenge, a case which continuously put veterinarians in an ethical dilemma in decision making.

The case in Ethiopia

As I have indicated earlier in the text, the veterinary profession has given lesser attention in the country mostly originated from the lesser value given to health and above this to the welfare of animals. In a country where more valued human beings do not get due attention, how could one get moral to talk about animal

welfare than about himself, humanity? As a result of this complex yet unsolved situation widely prevailing in the country, the animal welfare issue is untouched except for some small trials. Struggling with the so far mentioned problems, veterinarians in the country particularly peculiar ones do their best to keep the health of animals. In terms of farm animals the major breach of animal welfare in the country is in terms of poor housing, feeding, watering, and individual animal treatment. Poor transportation to and from different market channels is another common problem in the country where animal welfare is breached.

Concerning companion animals, it is an emerging problem in the country influenced by the global shift of attitude of individuals toward elementary thought. Entangled in it there is also an inclination toward using companion animals as an indicator of 'civilization'. Without any rational reason some citizens possess companion animals investing huge money without knowing how to handle these animals. These companion animals particularly pets are suspected to be the primary sources of different potential exotic and zoonotic diseases recently becoming a problem to the nation and animals nationwide [1-11].

Conclusion and Recommendations

Animal welfare is a global issue and almost complex to the present thought and mindset of the world society. It may easily be twisted to its wrong dimension. Unless some corrective measures will be taken, animal welfare issues may escape out of its real track and may follow some wrong unreversed line.

Here are some of my recommendations as a remedy solution for the future:

- Reform and better mindset among animal advocates should be sought to put animal welfare issue on its right track.
- Animal welfare, right and ethics should properly be defined avoiding exaggeration to lay a foundation for the next generation which can put them out of the dilemma.
- World society should be thought not to keep companion animals without convincing reasons and quit the companionship again without any convincing reasons.
- All relevant legislation should be designed and be internationally harmonized to protect the well being of animals and the integrity of humans.

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