

Veterinarians and animal welfare—A New Zealand perspective

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Abstract

Veterinarians are involved in, and contribute to, animal welfare policy and practice in New Zealand. Professional obligations for veterinarians in New Zealand are given in a *Guide to Professional Conduct*. Veterinary involvement in animal welfare is described. The New Zealand Veterinary Association has taken several initiatives and the contributions of the veterinary profession to various animal welfare activities are detailed with examples such as financial support, policy development, representation, international contacts and continuing education. Educational initiatives have been made, and educational support for veterinarians is available. New Zealand veterinarians have interacted with other animal welfare agencies, the public (both farming community and companion animal owners), and animal rights groups. A sample of the results of a public (including farmers and veterinarians) attitudes survey to animal welfare carried out in New Zealand in 1994 is presented. The paper concludes with a definition of animal welfare, and a description of the training of a veterinarian appropriate to the optimisation of animal welfare.

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