

AnS 495 and 496A: European Perspectives on Farm Animal Welfare in England and Scotland

A.S. Leaflet R2576

Anna K. Johnson, assistant professor;
Lee H. Kilmer, professor, Department of Animal Science

Summary and Implications

Concern about the welfare of domesticated animals has increased dramatically in the United States and across many other industrialized countries. The issues involved are complex, and there is widespread disagreement both as to the extent of human responsibilities toward animals and how those responsibilities should be carried out. It is imperative that undergraduate students are aware through international educational endeavors to be able to tackle and work on these issues in their professional career. Therefore faculty in the Department of Animal Science at Iowa State University has created a new AnS 496 course to be held in the summer titled; European Perspectives on Farm Animal Welfare in England and Scotland.

Introduction

Concern about the welfare of domesticated animals has increased dramatically in the United States and across many other industrialized countries. The issues involved are complex and there is widespread disagreement both as to the extent of human responsibilities toward animals and how those responsibilities should be carried out. The Department of Animal Science offers one undergraduate course; AnS 336 Domestic Animal Behavior and Well-being. However, it is important to allow students the interaction with producers, customers, consumers, researchers and advocacy groups in other countries, for them to be able to truly understand the complex nature of assuring farm animal welfare. Therefore, the objective of this new travel abroad program was to provide students with an interactive learning experience that focuses on farm animal welfare in the United Kingdom.

Program Goals

To explore how views on farm animal welfare have changed over time, what (or who) are the driving forces behind changes in how farm animals are cared for, how producer and consumer attitudes toward the care of farm animals have changed over time, the effect of these changes on producer profits and consumer food prices, and how farm animal welfare is assured through codes, assessments, audits and legislation.

Learning Outcomes

1. Understand and appreciate differing views on farm animal welfare and how these views have changed over time
2. Become aware of how farm animal welfare is being assured in the UK
3. Understand the differences between codes, assessments, audits and legislation
4. Garner how the legislative and marketing process for farm animal welfare works
5. Know who the researchers are working in the field of farm animal welfare in the UK, what areas are being addressed, how to locate their work and how their work is being used in codes, assessment, audits and or legislation
6. Interact with progressive farmers and be able to compare and contrast different welfare farming methods

Student Requirements

Basic student information required for the online application (name, ISU ID, e-mail address and local phone number). In addition the students major, second major or Minor if any and expected date of graduation is required. The level of educational completion is needed (total credits earned prior to current semester [must have completed 30 credits by the end of spring 2010 semester], total credits by the Fall 09 semester, GPA (minimum 2.0) and their official or unofficial transcript. Furthermore to enlist a diversity of students (background, experience with farm animals, ethics and philosophies) several essay questions have been created. These are as follows;

What involvement or experience have you had with farm animals?
How do you define farm animal welfare?
How do you feel farm animal welfare should be assured?
I believe the difference between a “factory” farm and a “family” farm is.....
I believe the difference between Animal Welfare and Animal Rights is.....
Identify a farm animal welfare challenge which occurred in the US in the past 12 months, describe the issue(s) involved, and comment on how you feel it should be handled.
Why are you interested in participating in this class?

AnS 495 Agriculture Course Travel Preparation

In the spring semester (2010) the selected students (n = 15) will begin meeting to prepare for the travel course abroad. Assignments will be set at the beginning of the

Iowa State University Animal Industry Report 2010

spring semester (Table 1), along with the grading rubrics (A – F).

AnS 496A Agriculture Travel Course

Departure date is May 21st and students may return June 6th 2010. The group will travel to Edinburgh Scotland. Whilst in Scotland visits with Advocates for Animals and the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) will occur. At Advocates for Animals, students will understand the role of humane groups in campaigns, their mission / philosophies, who their organization is and what roles they play in farm animal welfare committees. At SAC, researchers will talk in depth on transportation of farm animals, cognition, ethics and sheep / laying hen welfare. In addition a sheep and laying hen farm will be

visited. Next the group will travel into England and will visit; Lincoln University, Harper Adams College, Bristol University, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) and then into London to wrap up with a supermarket and World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA). The aim of these stops are to provide the students with a blend of view points on how farm animal welfare can be researched, assured (education, assessments, audits and law), utilized and implemented from conception to slaughter. Species that will be discussed in England will include dairy, beef and pigs.

Table 1. List of topics to be covered during the pre-departure orientation.

1st hour	2nd hour	Fun, Facts & Trivia
Getting to know you - meet your travel companions & instructors Discussion of course objectives & outcomes Expectations of students	Vaccinations or other personal health precautions – Ag Travel Office (ATO) personnel Pre-departure assignments	Weekly student reports on: current weather in Scotland, current weather in England, unique foods,
What is the UK – Political, monetary systems	Culture and history of the UK	words, customs or habits, recreation & sports,
Overview of itinerary including individuals & organizations we will meet	Student reports on farm animal welfare related organizations in the UK - mission, how funded, current leader, who/when founded	trivia, “headline of the week in England”, “headline of the week in Scotland”, Agricultural facts,
Conduct while in the UK	Health, safety precautions	“While in
Farming in the UK	Livestock production in the UK	Edinburgh/Bristol/London, you’ve
Packing / Travel regulations	Bio-security precautions	just got to get off the beaten path and
Student presentations on pre-departure assignment	Student presentations on pre-departure assignment	see this”