

Summer 1997

APHIS' Animal Care Report

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

With summer upon us, staff members in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Animal Care (AC) program are moving forward to make ours a topnotch Federal activity. Current initiatives include restructuring the headquarters office to improve efficiency and effectiveness, carrying out key strategic-direction objectives, mounting field outreach activities, and much more.

This edition of our AC Report gives you an update on these projects, as well as information on our just-revised policies under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), a new pet travel brochure, and other timely information. The report aims to promote two-way communication between our program and representatives of key industry and interest groups like you. We want to know if you find the report helpful, and we welcome your comments. Call (301) 734-5175 to share your ideas.

W. Ron DeHaven
Acting Deputy Administrator

Meet the Staff

AC's headquarters office has some new faces. To bring you up to speed on the latest personnel developments, the list below describes both new and veteran AC staff officers in Riverdale.

- *Dr. Bettye Walters* joined us in March 1997 and is currently a staff expert on research and farm-animal welfare. She also is the staff contact for the Doris Day Animal League petition (described later), AC's new policy on so-called pocket pets (see the spring 1997 Industry Report), and our efforts to develop screening guidelines for the routine tuberculosis testing of elephants. Before joining AC, Dr. Walters worked with APHIS' Center for Veterinary Biologics for 7 years, reviewing license applications and helping to develop policies on regulating the biologics industry. She earned her Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.) from Tuskegee University.

- *Dr. Barbara Kohn* has been with AC since June 1993 and is currently the program's staff expert on exhibition animals (including zoo animals and marine mammals). Before joining us, she was a veterinarian in private practice, specializing in small-animal medicine. She earned her D.V.M. from the University of Minnesota in 1984, specializing in medicine for marine mammals and zoo animals. She also completed a postdoctoral fellowship in marine-mammal pathology.

- *Steve Smith* has been with the program since it began in 1989 and is now the staff expert on issues involving animal transporters and breeders/dealers. Before coming to APHIS headquarters in 1993, he was AC's field inspector for western and central New York and northern Pennsylvania. He joined USDA in 1984 after operating a family dairy farm in New York.

- *Dr. Jerry DePoyster* has been with us since 1991 and is currently a staff expert on issues involving the use of animals in research. He also manages AC's home page on the Internet's World Wide Web. Earlier, he worked as a veterinarian with both USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Food and Drug Administration. He also owned a private practice specializing in small-animal medicine. He earned his D.V.M. from Auburn University.

- *Dr. Glenn Cherry* joined APHIS in 1994 and currently serves as a confidential assistant to the APHIS Administrator, working on animal welfare issues. Prior to joining APHIS, he was a veterinarian at the National Institutes of Health and a biologist at the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. He received his D.V.M. from Tuskegee University.

- *Dr. Richard Watkins* has been with AC since 1990 and is the coordinator for our many strategic-direction initiatives. Before coming to APHIS headquarters in 1996, he was regional director for AC's former Southeast Region. He also was a supervisory official in the former North Central Region in Minneapolis, MN, and a field veterinary medical officer in that State. He earned his D.V.M. from the University of Minnesota.

USDA–APHIS–Animal Care

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Strategic-Direction Update

AC's strategic-direction efforts continue to move forward on several fronts.

- The program's risk-based inspection system began a 3-month field test in early June. This system will help us concentrate our efforts on facilities not in compliance with the AWA. AC will evaluate test results to assess the system's effectiveness, with full implementation scheduled for early 1998.
- AC's new computer system is targeted for completion in December 1997. The system will provide industry with easy-to-read, comprehensive, computer-generated inspection reports. Several facilities may have a chance to experience this new format when it is field-tested later this summer.

- As part of the new strategic direction for horse protection, this summer inspectors will begin auditing the records of selected horse industry organizations to assess compliance with the Horse Protection Act. These are the first extensive audits on the horse industry.

Doris Day Animal League Petition

The Doris Day Animal League, an animal protection organization based in Washington, DC, petitioned the USDA to amend its definition of "retail pet store" and require that dealers of dogs intended for hunting, breeding, and security be regulated under the AWA. APHIS published the petition in the Federal Register for public comment in late March, with the comment period ending on May 27. APHIS officials estimate that, to date, they have received a whopping 36,000 comments! After reviewing those comments, AC will determine how to proceed on this issue.

Tuberculosis (TB) and Elephants

To protect the health of elephants exhibited in America, USDA plans to publish guidelines for routine TB screening of these animals. These guidelines would become part of the "adequate veterinary care" standard under the AWA and would specify acceptable testing methods, minimum treatment regimens, and restrictions on travel for elephants that test positive.

Perimeter Fencing Proposal

On May 6, APHIS published a proposed rule on perimeter fencing requirements for animals covered under the AWA, with emphasis on wild and exotic animals. The proposal does not apply to nonhuman primates, which are already covered under subpart D of the AWA regulations. In general, the proposed rule requires a perimeter fence of at least 6 feet in height for most animals and 8 feet in height for dangerous animals, such as elephants and large cats. For marine mammals, the proposal's fencing requirements pertain only to the land, not water, portions of any enclosures. All requirements are designed both to better contain the animals and to keep out unwanted animals. The comment period on the proposal closed July 7.

Training and Handling Potentially Dangerous Animals

AC is preparing a Federal Register notice on the training and handling of potentially dangerous wild and exotic animals. Among other provisions, the notice will likely seek input on suggested experience and training requirements for animal handlers and trainers, as well as contingency plans for the recapture of escaped or uncontrollable animals.

AC will use comments on the notice to aid in developing future guidelines or rules on this issue. A publication date for the notice has not yet been set.

New AC Policies Published

Our program published its new AWA policies in late May. The 20 new policies replaced all previous AC memoranda and response letters. The policies are intended to increase the quality and uniformity of AWA reports, inspections, and enforcement. The policies also are the first part of our effort to develop a program manual with workable, comprehensive, and user-friendly guidelines. AC's policies explain, clarify, and interpret existing AWA standards and regulations. Although primarily for the use of AC inspectors, the new policies are available to all program stakeholders upon request and via AC's home page on the World Wide Web.

Survey Says...

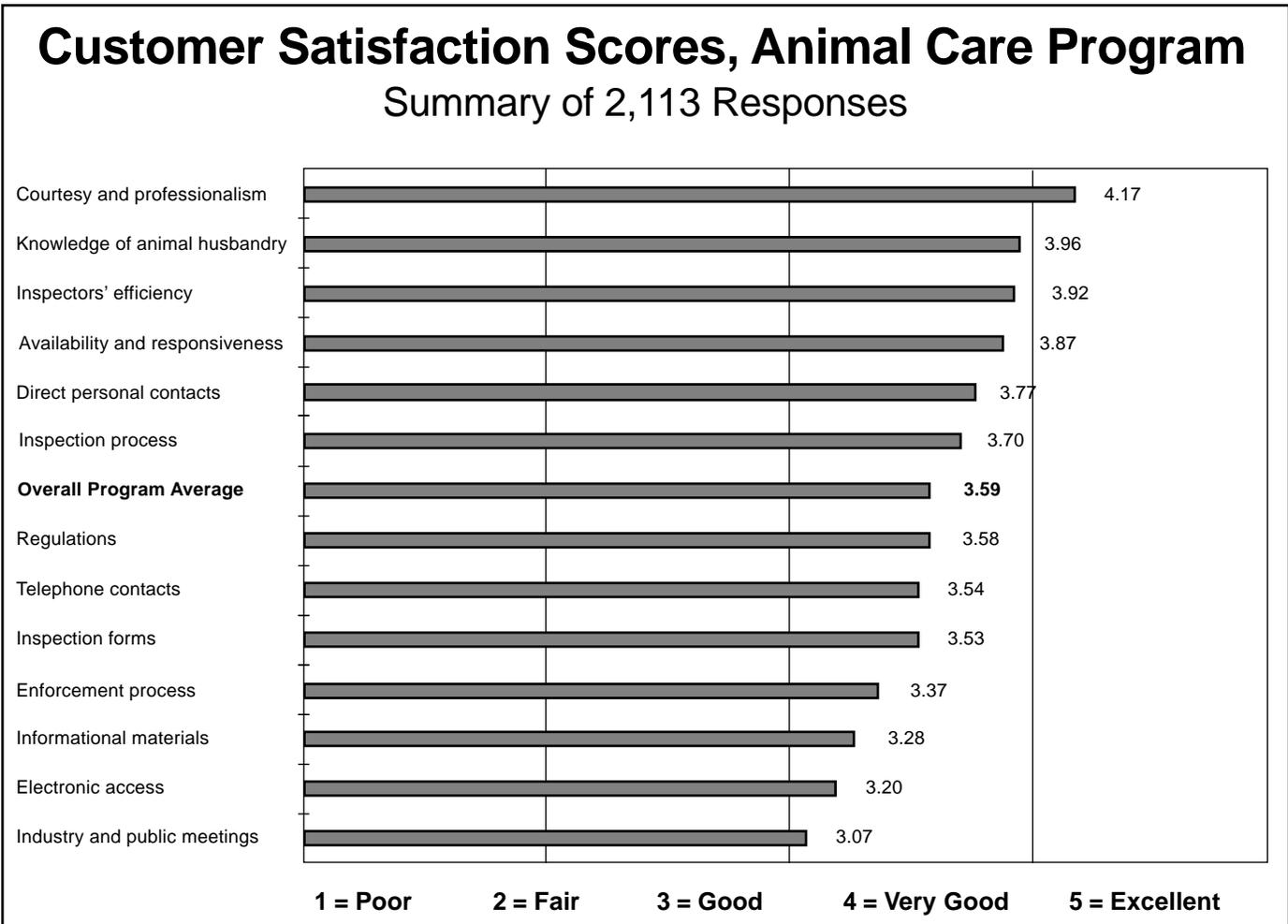
More than 2,100 people responded to AC's customer service survey, which was mailed to about 3,700 randomly selected AWA licensees and registrants in February. The survey asked respondents to rate our program in terms of 13

different performance measures, using a 5-point scale with 5 being excellent and 1 being poor. The average response for each measure is listed in the chart below, along with the average for all of the measures combined.

Based on survey responses, AC officials have established baseline performance levels for the program and are now setting goals for improvement in each of the areas measured. AC also plans to do a followup survey of licensees and registrants in 1999 to assess its progress in meeting its goals. We thank everyone who participated in the survey and will keep all of you informed of future developments in this area.

Pet-Travel Brochure Ready For Takeoff

A new brochure on safe pet travel is at the printer. Slated to be distributed in August, the brochure will give airline passengers an overview of both AC and airline requirements for transporting animals on commercial airplanes. It also will offer a wealth of hints to ensure that companion animals reach their destinations safely. The brochure will be available from AC's headquarters and regional offices upon request. It also will be posted on AC's home



page on the World Wide Web. We encourage you to take a look at this valuable publication.

Research Preceptorship '97 Begins

The American Society for Laboratory Animal Practitioners now has a training program that includes onsite training at volunteer university, pharmaceutical, and toxicology facilities. Drs. Ellen Magid and David Sabala, AC supervisory animal care specialists, began the most recent session on April 28. They will spend a total of 6 weeks in different facets of the training program, ending with attendance at the American Laboratory Animal Society meeting in Anaheim, CA, in November.

Regional News

- In April, AC conducted a 1-day inspection-training session for Federal and State inspectors in Missouri. At the same time, AC met with Missouri Department of Agriculture officials to update the current Memorandum of Understanding between Missouri and APHIS.

- AC participated in the Missouri Pet Breeders annual meeting. AC personnel staffing our exhibit booth provided handouts and answered questions from current and potential licensees. Staff members from the Central Region office also were on the meeting agenda and explained AC policies to more than 200 attendees.

- In May, AC's Betty Goldentyer, Kurt Hummel, and David Smith attended a conference on disaster planning and risk management sponsored by the National Institutes of Health's Office of Protection from Research Risks, the Ohio Scientific Education and Research Association, and Case Western Reserve University. The conference, which took place in Cleveland, OH, focused on reducing the risks associated with both human-caused and natural disasters. In attendance were several hundred laboratory animal managers and caretakers and emergency response personnel. AC personnel were on hand to learn the latest in disaster planning and to offer our perspective on caring for animals during emergencies.

- AC participated in the California Laboratory Animal Medicine meeting in March, a joint a training effort with the Western International Walking Horse Association in April, and in May, a University of California at Davis meeting that dealt with alternatives in animal research.

- Recent efforts in AC's Western Region have focused on elephants and the licensing of pocket-pet dealers. Several inspectors throughout the region have been involved with verifying the exposure of elephants to tuberculosis. As expected, inspectors in the northwest part of the region have been deluged with potential licensees arising from the new policy on pocket pets.

Regulatory News

The items listed below are either under consideration and not yet published in the Federal Register, published in the Federal Register and open for comment, or previously open for comment and now under review by the Department.

Notices

Doris Day Animal League Petition (under review)

Notice of Intent to Regulate Pocket Pets (under consideration)

Handling and Training of Potentially Dangerous Wild and Exotic Animals Used for Exhibition (under consideration)

Proposed Rules

Perimeter Fencing (under review)

Standards for Animal Auctions (under consideration)

Exotic Canids and Felids: Minimum Age for Transport (under consideration)

Standards for Farm Animals (under consideration)

Standards for Marine Mammals (under consideration)

Rules for the Importation of Dead Animals (under consideration)

Humane Treatment of Dogs and Cats: Licensing and Consignment (under consideration)

Require Responsible Adult During Inspections (under consideration)

Veterinary Medical Records (under consideration)

Final Rules

Humane Treatment of Dogs and Cats: Wire Flooring (under consideration)

Humane Treatment of Dogs and Cats: Tethering (under consideration)

Humane Treatment of Dogs and Cats: Temperature (under consideration)

Swim-With-the-Dolphins Human Interactive Programs (under consideration)