



Codes Phased Out in Favor of Livestock Welfare Standards and Guidelines in Australia

In Australia, there has been a noteworthy shift regarding animal welfare codes, guidelines, and standards development. Australia's 'Model Codes of Practice' are being phased out in favor of 'Australian Standards and Guidelines for the Welfare of Animals'. It was seen as desired to have "national objective (science based) standards of animal welfare that are consistently mandated and enforced in all states and territories."¹

National animal welfare standards and guidelines are seen as the cornerstone of Australia's new Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS), which was endorsed by Australian Agriculture Ministers in 2004.²

Australia has 22 existing Model Codes of Practice that have been developed over the last 20 years. The reason for the shift offered within a new business plan for standards/guidelines development: "*As community values and expectations have changed and our international trading partners have placed greater emphasis on animal welfare, the usefulness and relevance of these Codes has been called into question, as has the process by which these Codes have been revised and developed.*"³

The Land Transport Standard is the first to be developed under the new process and is currently open for public consultation until May 27, 2008⁴. An associated Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) is also open for public consultation. The RIS is a government requirement of the standards development process and is used by decision makers to assess the impact of any changes to regulation/legislation.⁵

Each *Standard and Guideline* will have two parts:

- Welfare Standards – minimum welfare standards referenced in State and Territory legislation
- Industry guidelines – industry best practice, meeting industry quality assurance requirements

The re-formatting of all existing welfare codes into *Standards and Guidelines* is anticipated to be complete by December 31, 2010. The cost of developing standards and guidelines is to be shared between the Australian government, state/territory jurisdictions and relevant industry sectors in a 1/3:1/3:1/3 split.

Animal Health Australia (AHA)⁶ is leading the process for replacing Codes with Standards and Guidelines, in liaison with Australia's Animal Welfare Working Group (AWWG)⁷. A business plan has been developed to guide the process, and the development of the Land Transport

¹ Regulation and Management of animal welfare in Australia, Business Plan, April 5, 2006, <http://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/fms/Animal%20Health%20Australia/Animal%20Welfare/AW%20Standards%20Business%20Plan.pdf>.

² AAWS website: www.daff.gov.au/animal-plant-health/welfare/aaws.

³ Regulation and Management of animal welfare in Australia, Business Plan, April 5, 2006.

⁴ The Land Transport Standard and RIS can be found at: www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/

⁵ Personal communication, Scott Turner, Manager, Welfare Standards Section, Animal Welfare Branch Product Integrity Animal & Plant Health, Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry, May 1, 2008.

⁶ A not-for-profit public company established by the Australian, state and territory governments and major national livestock industry organisations (www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/programs/ahsp/livestock-welfare.cfm). The Canadian



Standard was used as a test pilot for the process.⁸

The Australian Government is responsible for the implementation of the AAWS and has invested 6 million dollars in its development and implementation. The Strategy is for the entire Australian community including animal owners, the veterinary profession, livestock producers, processors, transporters, animal welfare bodies, researchers, consumers and government agencies.

The standards and guidelines initiative is a direct result of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy that aims to guide the development of nationally consistent policies and enhance existing animal welfare arrangements in all Australian states and territories.

Animal Health Coalition (CAHC) is the closest comparison for a similar organization in Canada. AHA manages animal health programs that are comparable to the animal health projects that CAHC manages.

⁷ A government body made up of federal, state and territory government representatives, along with AHA (www.daff.gov.au/animal-plant-health/animal/committees/ahc/awwg).

⁸ See footnote #1 for web link.