



Housekeeping

- The webinar will be recorded
- The slides will be shared with all participants
- Please pop your questions for the speakers into the Q&A box

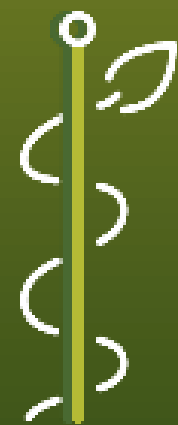


Federation
of Veterinarians
of Europe

Training and behaviour of cats,
dogs and horses:
Recommendations to improve
welfare through evidence-
based behavioural practices

Joint FVE FECAVA FEEVA WSAVA webinar

17 December 2024





THE FEDERATION OF VETERINARIANS OF EUROPE

The FVE Network

Members Observers



46 national associations (1 observer)

39 European countries

- 4 Sections
- UEVP (*Practitioners*)
 - UEVH (*Hygienists – Public Health Officers*)
 - EASVO (*Veterinary State Officers*)
 - EVERI (*Education, Research, Industry*)

FVE's mission

The European veterinary profession, embodied by FVE, enhances animal health, animal welfare, public health and protect the environment by promoting the veterinary profession.

Together with its members, FVE supports veterinarians in delivering their professional responsibilities to the best possible standards and ensures that veterinary expertise is recognised and valued by society.



FVE structure

General Assembly



FVE Board and Section Boards



Working Groups and Task Forces



- ✓ Animal Health & Welfare
- ✓ Public Health
- ✓ One Health
- ✓ Professional responsibilities
- ✓ Veterinary Education

Support by FVE Office





Background and scope



The ability to perform certain behaviours is important for achieving good animal welfare and is a necessary part of an animal's psychological wellbeing.



Recognising sensitive time periods and supporting normal and natural behaviours can result in positive emotional experiences and good welfare.



Recognising emotional states in animals, such as their ability to feel positive and negative emotions offers a means of allowing the expression of cognitive abilities.



Veterinary responsibilities to animal behaviour and training



Preventative behavioural medicine:

The prevention of animal behaviour problems by provision of education and advice

Pre-purchase consultations, for people thinking of acquiring an animal, provide a good opportunity for giving this advice



Behavioural first aid:

First-opinion practitioners often need to recognise the potential risks of problem behaviours, check for possible underlying causes (e.g. pain) and offer reliable and practical first aid advice.

Referral to a veterinary behaviour specialist or an accredited clinical animal behaviourist may follow



Clinical behavioural expertise:

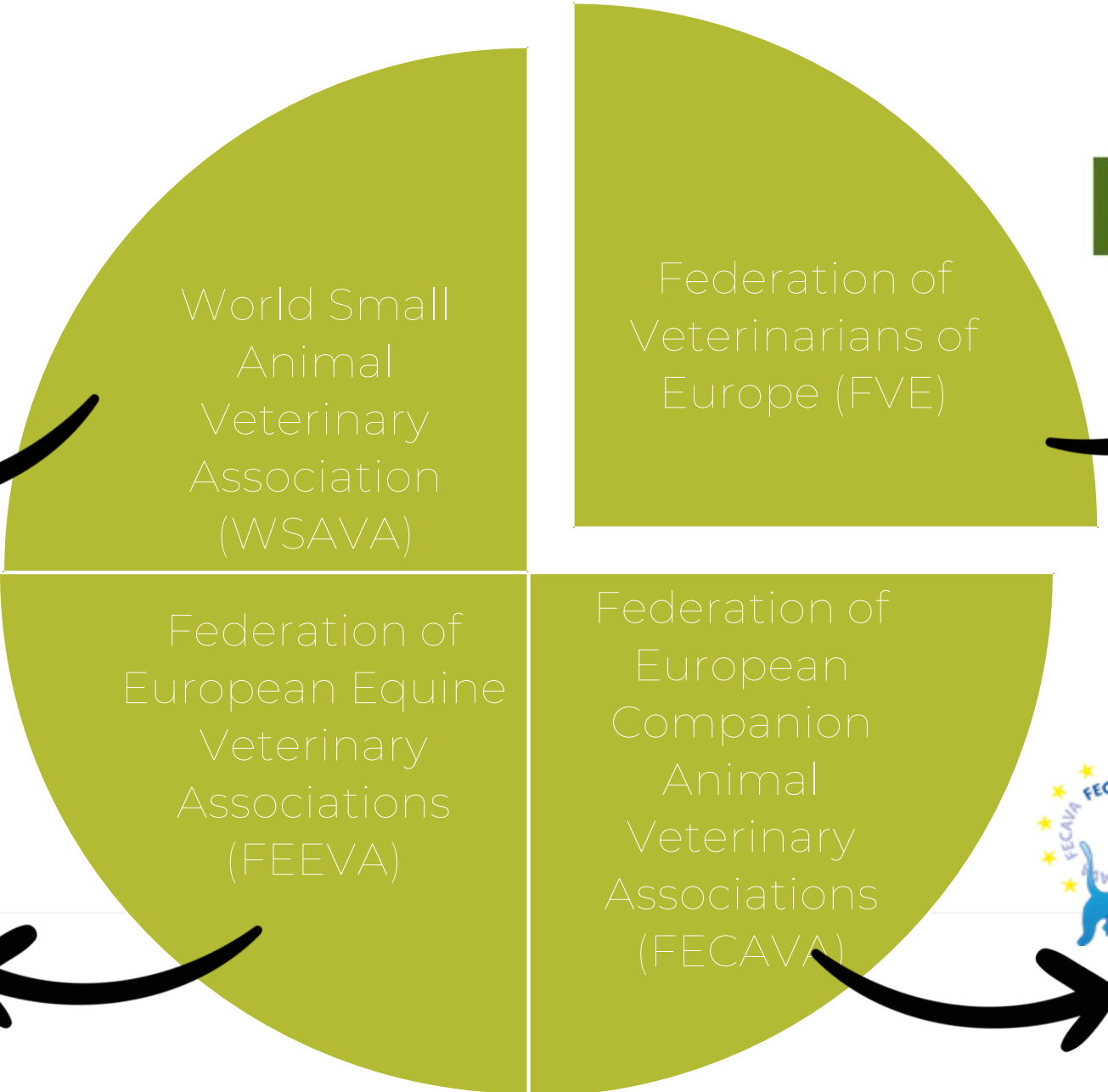
The analysing and interpreting of behaviours to identify triggers of problem behaviours and develop strategies for the long-term to modify and manage behaviour problems.



Veterinary Associations Unite to Advocate for Animal Behaviour and Training Welfare in New Position Paper

JOINT POSITION PAPER ON THE ANIMAL WELFARE IMPLICATIONS OF ANIMAL BEHAVIOURAL MODIFICATION, TRAINING METHODS, AND ABILITY TO EXPRESS SPECIES-SPECIFIC BEHAVIOURS

Adopted unanimously by the FVE General Assembly on June 14th 2024





Joint position paper on animal welfare implications of animal behavioural modification and training methods

The paper was opened four times for consultation

1 st consultation	15.02.2022 to 15.04.2022	29 sets of comments received from 24 delegations
2 nd consultation	22.09.2022- 05.10.2022	6 sets of comments from 5 delegations
3 rd consultation	31.03.2023-02.05.2023	6 sets of comments from 6 delegations
4 th consultation	16.08.2023-29.01.2024	3 sets of comments from 2 delegations





Key Points of the Joint Position Paper on Animal Welfare Implications of Behavioural Modification and Training



Importance of Animal Behaviour in Veterinary Practice:

- Behavioural signs are critical for assessing animal welfare.
- Supporting natural behaviours can enhance wellbeing

Preventative Behavioural Medicine:

- Veterinarians should provide education on normal behaviour and species-specific welfare needs.
- Socialisation and habituation of young animals are essential to prevent behavioural problems.

Training Methods:

- Training should be humane and evidence-based, avoiding techniques that cause pain, fear, or distress.
- Call for a ban on electric pulse training devices



Key Points of the Joint Position Paper on Animal Welfare Implications of Behavioural Modification and Training



Opportunities for Normal Behaviour

- Animals should be allowed to express species-specific behaviours crucial to their psychological well-being.
- Highly restrictive environments that prevent natural behaviours should be banned, except temporarily for medical reasons.

Undesirable ('Problem') Behaviour:

- Problem behaviours can indicate stress or other welfare issues
- Veterinarians should work to identify and address the underlying causes of such behaviours.

Accreditation and Training of Behaviourists:

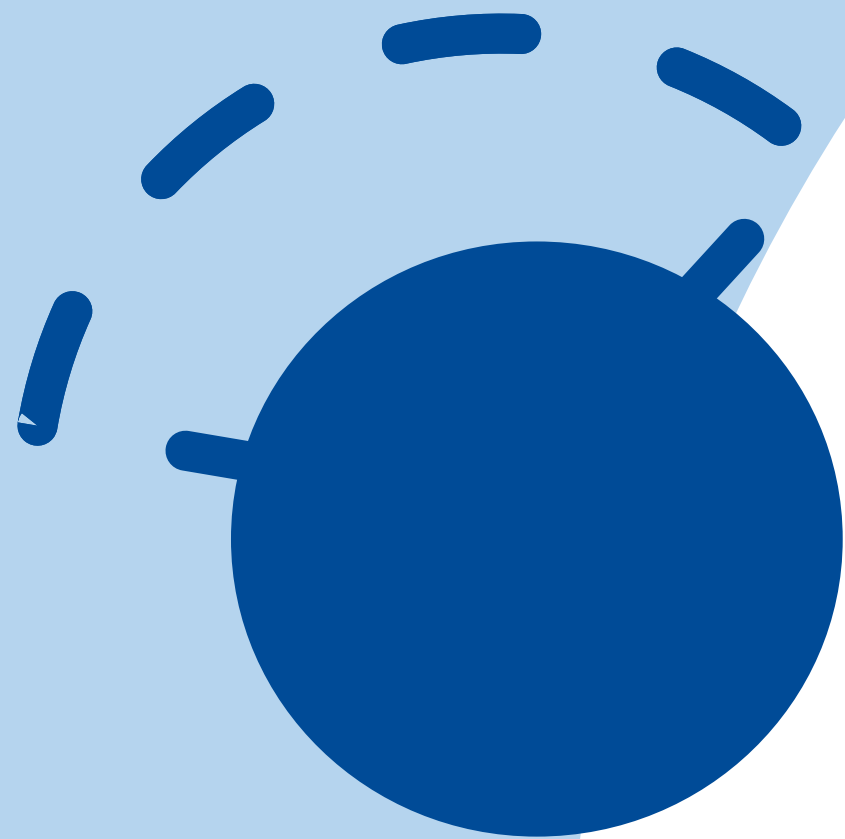
- Professional qualifications and ethical standards for animal behaviourists and trainers should be established.



FECAVA

Federation of European Companion
Animal Veterinary Associations

www.fecava.org



Preventative behavioural medicine

FECAVA – the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations

- **WHO WE ARE**

We represent the National Veterinary Association for Companion Animals in Europe.

- **WHAT WE DO**

- Promote best practices through practical guidelines (<https://www.fecava.org>)
- Influence policies and regulations that support animal welfare, our profession
- Support the One Health principle
- Lead working groups on key areas

- **FECAVA MEMBERS:**

- 25,000 companion animal veterinarians
- 39 European countries



FECAVA
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Animal Veterinary Associations

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Animal origins and acquisition

Influence on Future Behavior:

- Genetics, life experiences, and early-life experiences shape an animal's future behavior.
- Temperament traits like confidence and anxiety have some heritability and impact later behavior.

Prenatal and Perinatal Influences:

- A mother's experiences during pregnancy and the perinatal environment affect offspring behavior.
- Stressful maternal experiences during pregnancy can lead to offspring with increased pain sensitivity, anxiety, and abnormal behaviors (e.g., in horses and prey species).

Early-Life Environment:

- Aversive early-life experiences (e.g., stress, pain, early weaning, or poor environmental complexity) negatively affect development and behavior.
- Harmful neonatal procedures like tail docking or ear cropping can increase lifelong pain sensitivity.

Importance of Breeding and Rearing:

- Animals from temperamentally stable parents and reputable breeders tend to develop better behaviors.
- Proper rearing in a positive environment is crucial for healthy behavioral development.



Animal origins and acquisition

Recommendation 1

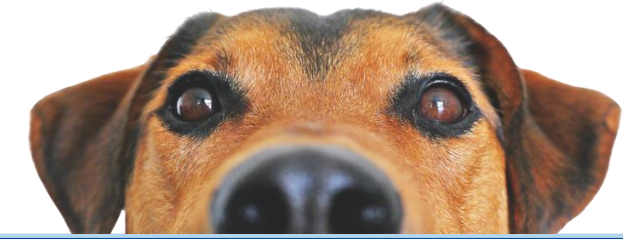
FVE, FECAVA, FEEVA and WSAVA call for universal guidance to ensure the welfare of animals in canine, feline and equine breeding establishments, including the provision of complex, species-appropriate environments; opportunities for species-specific behavioural expression; opportunities for appropriate interspecific interactions, including good relationships with humans; and individual limitations on number of permitted pregnancies.

Recommendation 2

We call for a harmonised ban on and enforcement of medically unnecessary and painful procedures, such as those performed for cosmetic reasons. As well as being painful, such procedures, may have long-term effects on future health and behaviour, particularly if performed during the neonatal period.



Socialisation and habituation



Consequences of Deprivation:

- Lack of proper socialization and habituation increases the risk of problem behaviors.
- Problem behaviors harm psychological wellbeing, strain the human-animal bond, and may lead to relinquishment or euthanasia requests.

Developmental Periods:

- All young animals have critical periods for development, where socialization (with people and other animals) and habituation (to objects, sounds, and experiences) shape future reactions to similar situations.

Gradual Exposure:

- Gradual exposure to various stimuli, such as household sights, sounds, people, and animals, supports sociable and well-adjusted adult behavior.
- Sudden or intense exposure can provoke fear responses.



Socialisation and habituation

Species-Specific Periods:

- Dogs and cats:
 - Sensitive period marked by curiosity and approachability.
 - Ends when fear-related responses to novel stimuli appear.
- Foals:
 - Born with neophobia, ready to flee from threats soon after birth.
 - Socialization starts at 2–3 months with play, but the end of this period is less defined than in cats and dogs.

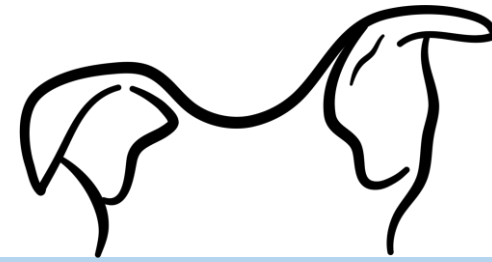
Tailored Approaches:

- Socialization, habituation, and familiarization should be species-specific and tailored to individual preferences.
- Supervised exposure prevents overwhelming less confident animals.





Recommendation 3

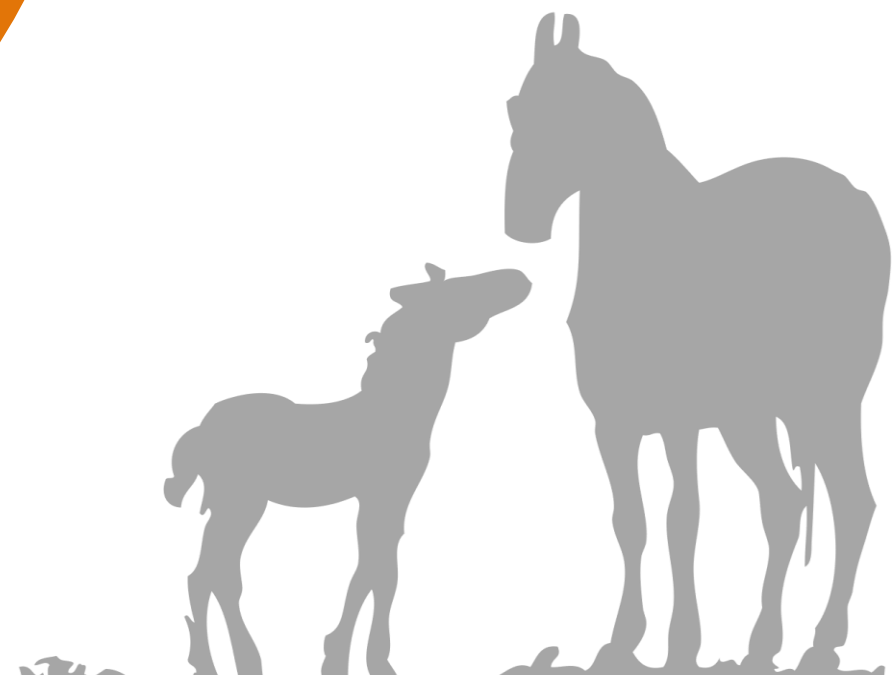


All those with responsibility for young animals, e.g., breeders, retailers and animal caretakers, should ensure that the animals are gradually exposed to sights, sounds, scents and experiences (including handling) that they are likely to encounter as adults. This exposure should be done with consideration given to the species concerned, individual responses, and ensuring the experience is positive and enjoyable for the young animal. Animals should be relaxed, and not be unnecessarily stressed or fearful.

It is recommended to implement gradual exposure in a structured way; for example, by using a socialisation plan. Companion animal veterinary practices should provide education about socialisation and, when possible, offer socialisation classes for vaccinated puppies and familiarisation visits for kittens, as part of their preventive medicine service. Equine practitioners should ask caretakers about their plans for handling and socialisation of foals and young horses.



Training



FEEVA

Federation of European Equine Veterinary Associations

• WHO WE ARE

The Federation of European Equine Veterinary Associations (FEEVA) is a non profit association, an umbrella organization that represents the interests of equine veterinarians across Europe. FEEVA brings together 23 national equine veterinary associations from 22 European countries and represents about 8600 Equine vets practitioners.

• WHAT WE DO

FEEVA aims to promote the highest standards of veterinary care for Equines and to advance the field of equine medicine through collaboration, education, and research. It serves as a platform for sharing knowledge, exchanging ideas, and fostering cooperation among equine veterinarians throughout Europe. FEEVA also plays a role in influencing policy and advocating for the welfare and health of Equines at a European level. FEEVA members can contribute to shaping policies and regulations that affect their profession and the welfare of animals in their country and across Europe

• FEEVA MEMBERS

Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK



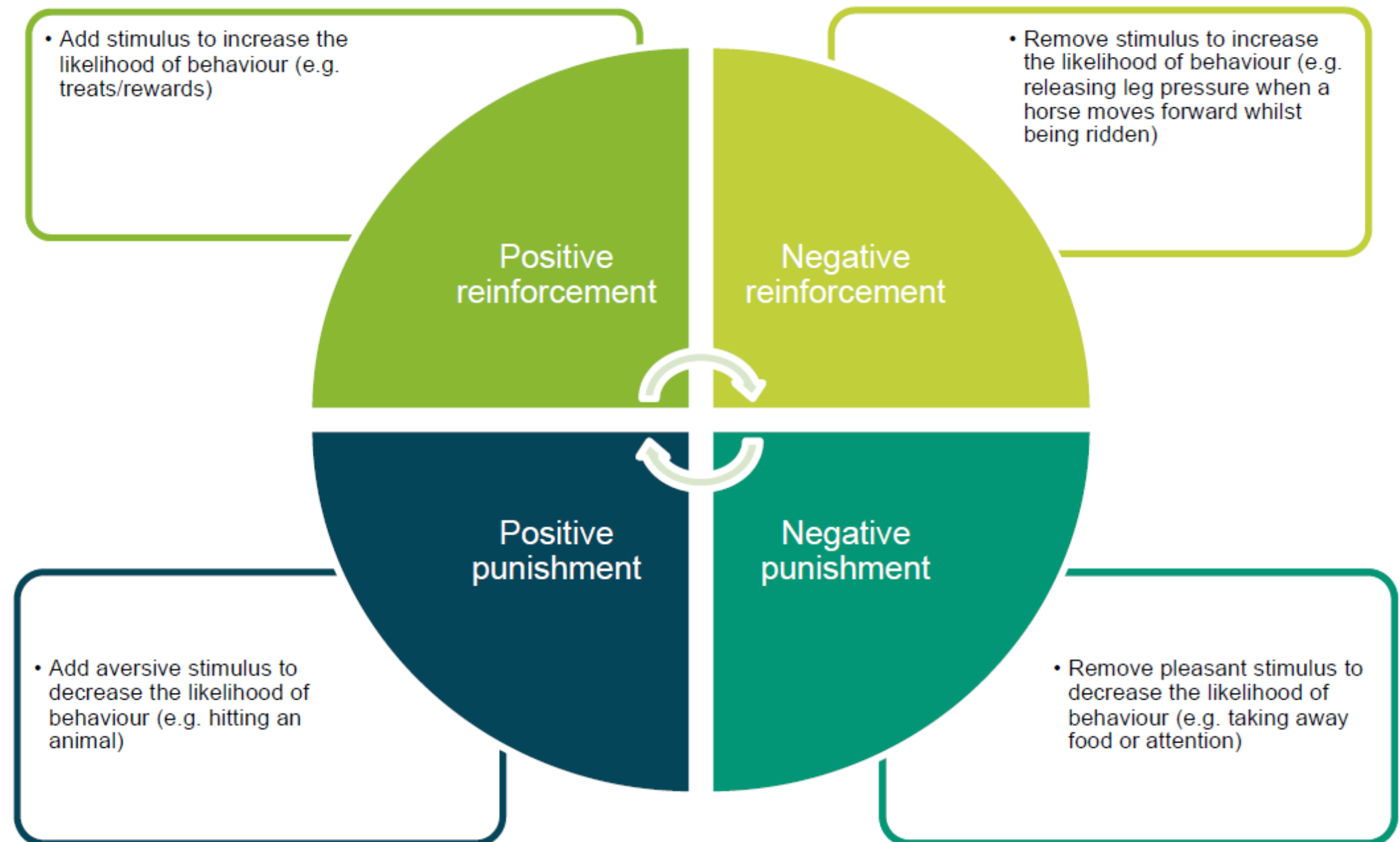


Associative learning

Classical conditioning

Operant conditioning

- reinforcing desired behaviours (Positive Reinforcement and Negative Reinforcement)
- stopping unwanted behaviours from recurring (Positive Punishment and Negative Punishment)





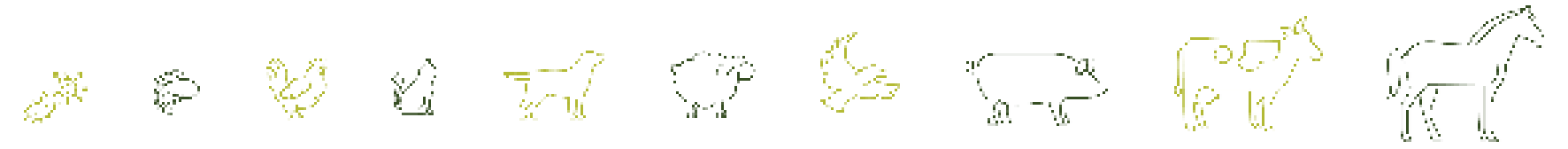
Contemporary training

- Focus on reward-based training that pairs desired behaviors with carefully timed rewards.
- Avoid positive punishment, which can inhibit learning and reduce quality of life.
- Discourage outdated, inhumane methods justified as "traditional" or based on discredited dominance theories.



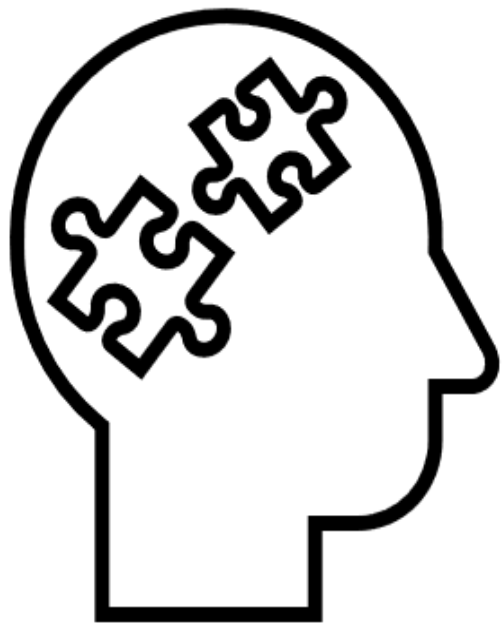
Training methods should contribute to animal welfare, enhance human-animal interactions, and ensure safety for both.





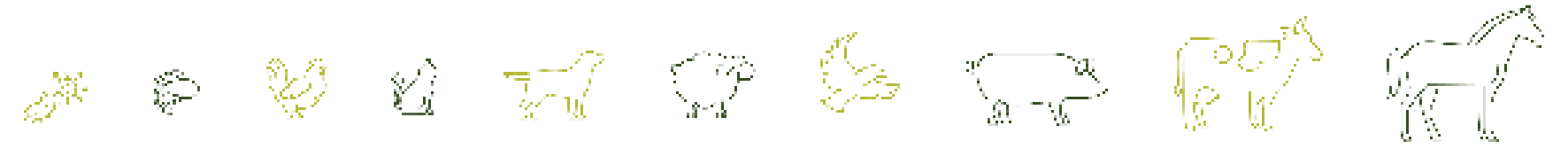
Recommendation 4

Veterinary education should ensure veterinary professionals are competent in a range of welfare-friendly animal handling techniques to minimise stress, fear, anxiety and pain during veterinary procedures; have a solid understanding of learning theory; are able to interpret behaviour, body language and facial expression of a range of species appropriately and are able to advise clients, trainers and animal owners on the pros and cons of different training methods. The developing use of objective assessment of animal behavioural markers, for example in the form of ethograms, is encouraged.



Recommendation 5

Training methods used for animals should be evidence-based, behaviourally appropriate for the species and grounded in an understanding of learning theory. Veterinary professionals should apply and advocate the use of humane, effective training methods that support good animal welfare, and ensure these methods are used by trainers they recommend to their clients. We do not support the use of positive punishment training techniques for any animals, or the application of outdated dominance theories.



Recommendation 6

Equipment and techniques used for training purposes should not cause an animal pain, fear, stress or distress, and should not put animals into unnatural body postures.

Recommendation 7

We call for a complete ban on the sale and use of electric pulse training devices, such as electric shock collars for dogs or goads used to deliver an electric shock.

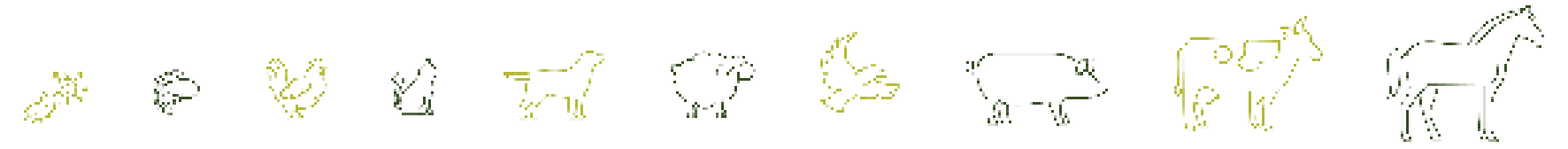
Recommendation 8

We call for regulations and guidance that safeguard animal welfare and promote humane training techniques and welfare-friendly handling, applicable to all types of sport, showing or competing of animals where training has been required.



Opportunities to perform normal behaviour

- Behavioral Needs and Welfare:
 - Certain behaviors, known as "behavioral needs," are essential for an animal's well-being (e.g., horses grazing and socializing).
 - Ensuring opportunities for natural behaviors improves mental and physical welfare in captive animals.
- Behaviors Contributing to Well-Being:
 - Positive behaviors such as play, grooming (allogrooming/allopreening), and the ability to make choices enhance animal welfare.
 - Providing options (e.g., indoor vs. outdoor access, resting locations) contributes to a "Good Life" for kept animals.
- Consequences of Unmet Behavioral Needs:
 - Preventing these behaviors leads to stress, frustration, and poor welfare.
 - Frustration can result in behavioral pathologies or abnormal behaviors.
 - Examples include stereotypic behaviors or excessive inactivity.



Recommendation 9

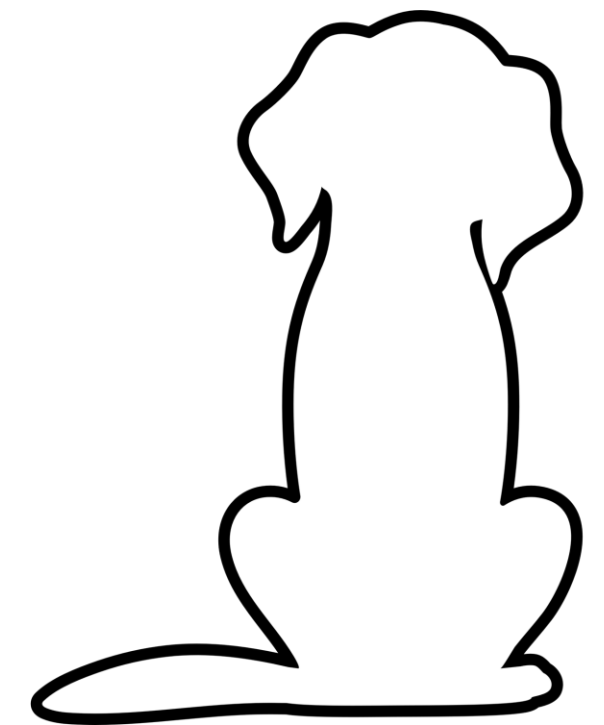
Animals under human care should experience a Good Life with opportunities for positive welfare experiences, such as comfort, pleasure, interest, confidence and the ability to make choices, alongside excellent health outcomes.

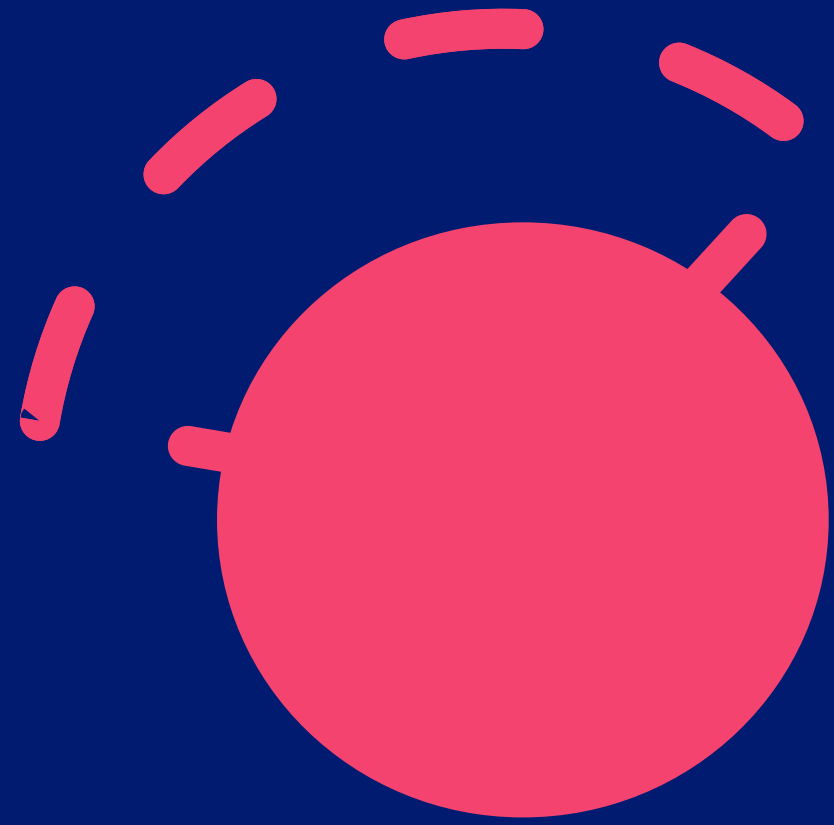
All living environments that animals are kept in should allow for the performance of highly motivated species-specific behaviours; this includes, for example, in horses regular turn out to pasture, adequate grazing time and species-appropriate social contact, unless a veterinarian has advised against this temporarily on medical grounds. To this end, we support the '3Fs' of equine welfare: Freedom, Friendship and Forage .

These behavioural opportunities are necessary for an animal's psychological wellbeing and are necessary provisions for animal-using activities (such as keeping and using animals for companionship or sport) to retain their social licence.

Recommendation 10

Highly restrictive living environments and practices that preclude most movement during an animal's life (such as long-term tethering of single horses and dogs – i.e., trying to restrict their movement) should be banned. The only exception may be if such an environment is a necessary and temporary part of an individual animal's treatment by a veterinarian.





Behavioural first aid



About the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA)

What We Do

WSAVA aims to advance the health and welfare of companion animals and to advocate on behalf of companion animal veterinarians – and, increasingly, the wider veterinary team – globally.

Vision: All companion animals worldwide receive veterinary care that ensures their optimal health and welfare.

Mission: To advance the health and welfare of companion animals worldwide through an educated, committed, and collaborative global veterinary community.

+117 Member Associations

+200.000 Veterinarians



www.wsava.org





Undesirable ('problem') behaviour

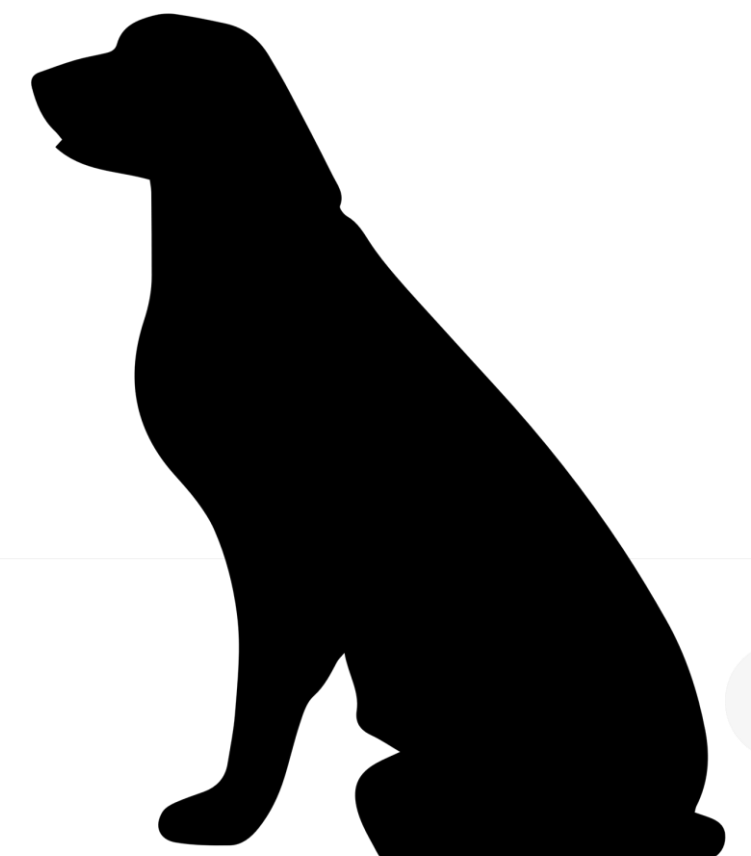
Animals may display behaviors that caretakers find problematic, which can impair the quality of life for both the animal and caretaker.

Problematic behaviors include

- Normal behaviors: Barking, scratching, or fear of new objects.
- Abnormal repetitive behaviors: Crib-biting in horses, often stemming from frustration, stress, or medical issues.

Addressing Undesirable Behaviors:

- Investigate causes, starting with medical evaluation by a veterinarian as
- behavioural indicators of stress and pain may not be recognised
- Avoid simply preventing behaviors (e.g., declawing or using crib collars),
- as this can increase stress and worsen welfare.





Recommendation 11

Veterinary undergraduate training should foster the recognition of normal and abnormal behaviour (including the widespread use of validated pain assessment tools and behavioural signs of positive and negative emotional states in animals) across a range of species and the provision of behavioural first aid.

Additional optional teaching should be available for those streaming in relevant fields on how to counsel and communicate with caretakers on behaviour issues; and when to seek referral, and to whom.

Recommendation 12

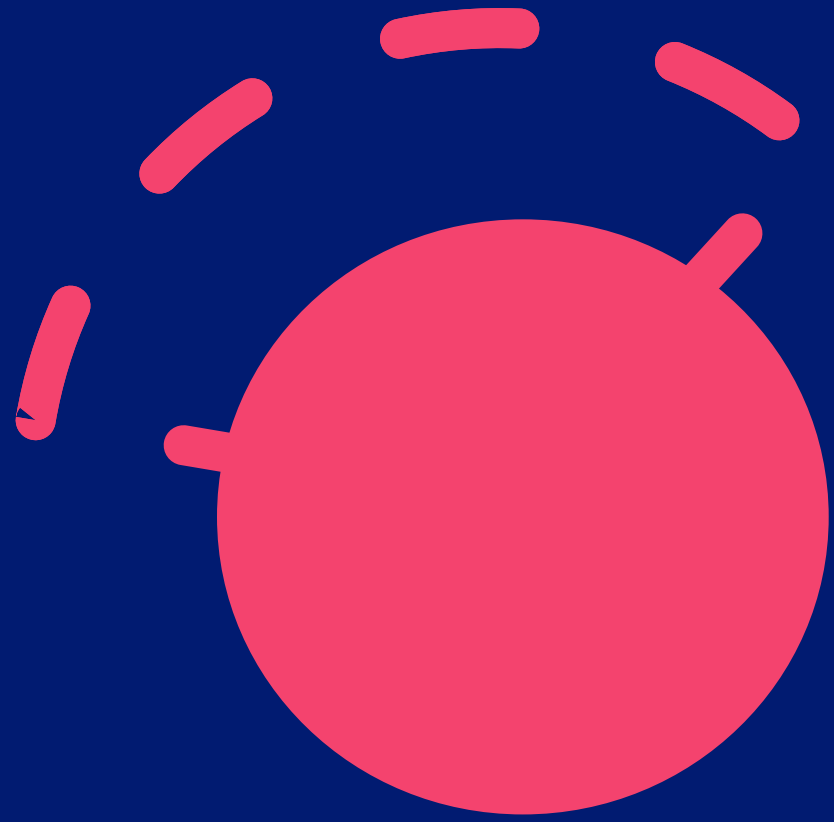
All those with responsibility for animals should receive training (ideally compulsory and prior to acquiring an animal) to understand and provide for species-specific needs (including behavioural needs), recognise normal and abnormal behaviours and know where to seek ethical, evidence-based advice (such as from veterinary professionals) to address it.



Recommendation 13

Animals of any species showing behavioural indicators of stress and pain or repeatedly displaying any kind of recognised conflict behaviours should not be used for further training, showing or competing until the cause is resolved.

The veterinary profession should advocate that the presence of such behaviours should not be accepted as “normal” within an animal using industry and may be indicators of clinical pathology. Equally, care should be taken to acknowledge and raise awareness that animals can also suffer from stress and pain with subtle recognisable indicators, such as in a proportion of horses with gastric ulcers .



Clinical behavioural expertise

Accreditation of animal behaviourists and trainers



Accreditation of animal behaviourists and trainers

Professionalisation Efforts:

- Behavior modification services are being professionalised in some countries.
- This ensures better animal welfare and builds confidence among owners and veterinarians.
- Need for interdisciplinary work to progress good animal welfare with recognition of the importance of suitably qualified and ethical animal behaviourists and animal trainers
- The EBVS© Veterinary Specialist College of Animal Welfare and Behavioural Medicine (ECAWBM) offers expert referral services, including medical management of behavioural issues.

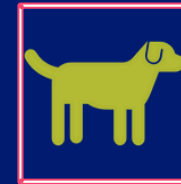




Recommendation 14



We recognise the essential services offered by EBVS Specialists in Animal Behavioural Medicine as well as Behavioural Medicine Specialists recognised by national bodies (for example the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) Specialist Register). In addition, we recognise the importance of suitably qualified and ethical animal behaviourists and animal trainers, working collaboratively with veterinary professionals to help protect animal welfare and the human-animal bond.



We call for regulation of animal behavioural and training services, to ensure those working as animal behaviourists and trainers adhere to minimum standards and are using humane, evidence-based techniques, as is done in the field of veterinary behavioural medicine at specialist level.



Accreditation of animal behaviourists and trainers who work in association with or on referral from veterinarians, based on competency assessments, continuing education, registration and supported by a transparent disciplinary system, should be progressed internationally.



Conclusions and the coalition's way forward



Areas for Improvement



Ban on Painful Training Devices: Calling for an EU-wide ban on the use of electric pulse training devices and other tools that cause unnecessary pain or discomfort.



Cosmetic Mutilations: Advocating for a ban on non-medically necessary procedures, such as tail docking and ear cropping, across all EU countries.



Problem Behaviour: Encouraging more research into the causes of problem behaviours, such as fear, anxiety, and frustration, to develop better treatment strategies.



Conclusion

The FVE, FEEVA, FECAVA, and WSAVA joint position paper emphasizes the importance of addressing behavioural issues in a way that enhances the welfare of companion animals.

By advocating for better training methods, prevention of behavioural problems, and the need for species-specific behaviours, this paper aims to set a standard for animal care across the EU and beyond.

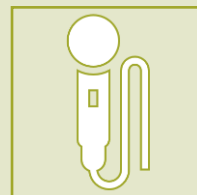




Resources and helpful links



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Question will be answered in writing if we dont have time during the webinar



[FVE Position Paper](#)

[FECAVA Position Papers](#)

[FEEVA Position Papers](#)

[WSAVA position statements](#)

[European College of Animal](#)

[Welfare and Behavioural](#)

[Medicine](#)



Federation
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FEEVA
Every horse matters



FECAVA
Federation of European Companion
Animal Veterinary Associations



Thank you
for your
attention!

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WHERE WE ARE

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