Bioethics Symposium: Bioethical Challenges in Education: New challenges and opportunities

319 Challenges and opportunities in teaching agricultural animal bioethics. C. C. Croney*1, W. R. Stricklin2, and D. Scott3, 
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Decisions about acceptable agricultural systems and use and treatment of animals are ultimately based on personal and societal ethics. Thus, it can be argued that there is a growing need to create curricula that address the ethical foundations of animal agriculture. Yet, many people in animal agriculture either do not fully understand or appreciate this need, and contend that “science alone” should dictate standards of animal care and welfare. Certainly, science is necessary to make informed decisions. However, the field of ethics, rather than science has traditionally been viewed as the appropriate domain to address questions pertaining to “what should be.” Despite the significant and increasing role of ethics in formulating public opinion about animals, students and professional animal scientists typically receive little or no formal ethics education. Additionally, most animal science curricula either lack an emphasis on animal welfare or include it only as a current issues topic with minimal or no specific emphasis on ethics. Faculty from 5 universities have been funded by a USDA NIFA Challenge Grant to address bioethics education in animal agriculture. The major objectives of the grant include: 1) developing teaching modules and pedagogical strategies that will facilitate fruitful student discussions instead of debate, and 2) extending the educational material and information to other animal science educators. Student participation is a necessity when including ethics in animal welfare courses. Ideally, animal science students learn even more when interacting with students from other majors who may hold differing opinions and values. Thus, it is critical that the instructor create a classroom environment in which students feel safe and free to express their opinions. Well-planned discussion questions and case studies combined with rules regarding respect for the views of all persons are as critical as a properly prepared and informed instructor. This presentation will cover factors conscientious animal scientists and veterinarians struggling to evaluate animal welfare and to facilitate responsible discussions on the topic should consider when welfare priorities collide. The Ethical Matrix (Mepham, 2000), Ethics Assessment Process (Campbell and Hare, 1997) and the Four-Box Method (Jonsen et al., 1992) will be described and discussed in light of an ethic of outcomes and an ethic of responsibility. Limitations and strengths of each will be exposed, and a philosophical basis that is steeped in virtue and narrative ethics will be proposed to guide the ethical assessment process. The philosophical basis of animal welfare assessment that will be articulated is motivated by the context of moral evaluation that recognizes that animal welfare is typically understood as ‘feeling well, functioning well, and having the ability to perform species characteristic behaviors.’ Decision-making should be integrated into habits that promote the human-animal bond and with an eye toward being a steward for the environment. Humane slaughter and euthanasia of animals will be discussed as examples of the animal welfare philosophy and how to incorporate them into animal production.

Key Words: animal welfare, animal welfare assessment, bio-ethics

320 Assessing the merits of animal welfare assessment tools: A philosophical framework from virtue ethics and narrative ethics. R. Anthony,* University of Alaska, Anchorage.

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Key Words: extension, bioethics, communication