

Public attitudes, social science & community

Perceptions and attitudes

- What are public perceptions?
 - Nature of attitudes
 - Affect – emotional response
 - Conation – behavioural disposition
 - Cognition – beliefs or “subjective facts” i.e. perception
- Thus public perceptions are things that people believe to be true but in fact are part of their attitudes – the belief part.

Relevant behaviours

- Consumer behaviour
- Citizen behaviours
- Farmer/stockperson behaviour

These behaviours may lead to

- Large numbers of companion animals being killed because of large numbers of strays
- Compromised welfare and production in farm animals
- Retailer demands regarding welfare practices,
- Changes in consumer purchasing behaviour,
- Changes to regulation/legislation/codes of practice, and
- Changes to industry husbandry practices

Topic 1

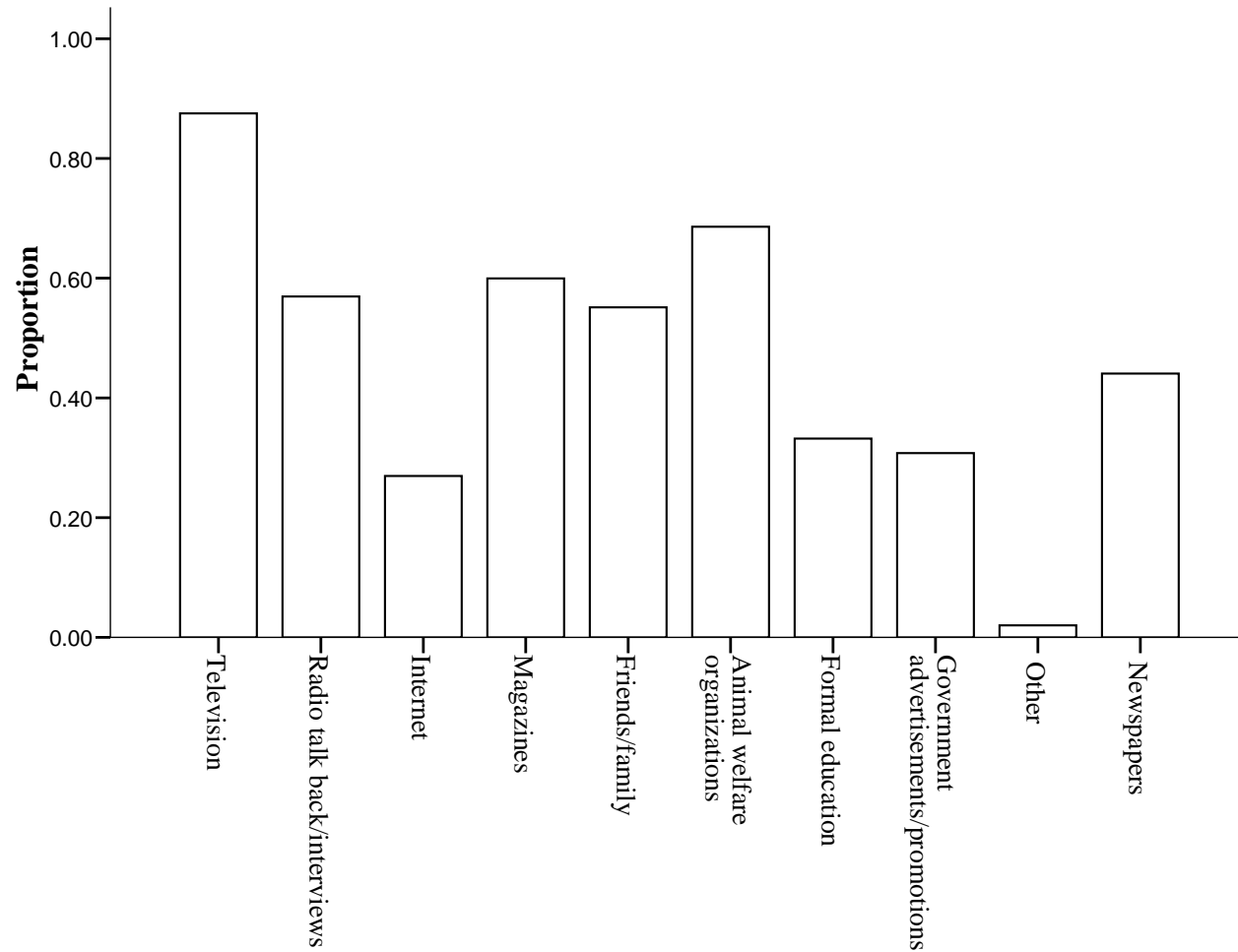
Develop a public attitude monitoring scheme (ie monitoring public attitudes to inform animal welfare policy development, similar to Eurobarometer).

Community knowledge of husbandry practices

Table 1. Proportion of respondents who identified the correct description of a husbandry practice from two alternatives. Probability of being correct by chance =0.5

Husbandry procedure	Proportion correct
What does the procedure mulesing involve?	.66
What does the procedure crutching involve?	.63
What does the procedure induced moulting involve?	.28
What does the procedure dehorning involve?	.87
What does the procedure pre-slaughter stunning involve?	.66
What does the procedure curfew involve?	.35
What does the procedure confinement involve?	.86
What does the procedure tail docking involve?	.94
What does the procedure feedlotting animals involve?	.66
What does the procedure beak trimming involve?	.70
What does the procedure clipping teeth involve?	.69
What does the procedure hot iron branding involve?	.96
What does the procedure growth hormones involve?	.90
What does the procedure captive bolt stunning involve?	.81
What does the procedure lairage involve?	.56

Sources of information



Why are we interested in public knowledge?

- Beliefs are treated as facts by people eg “fish are insensitive to pain”
- Knowledge can be seen to comprise a combination of more-or-less formally learned facts and beliefs
- Beliefs form part of attitudes
- Our attitudes can impact on behaviour

Attitude monitoring

- Will permit trends to be identified
- Will identify issues to be addressed in both industry and the community
- Many suitable items are already available from earlier MLA, APL and AECL projects – these can be selected and built on.

Approach

- Cross industry collaboration to identify key information required
- Cross industry development of targeted reporting requirements for stakeholders

Topic 2

- Public attitudes: Understand public perceptions of farm animal welfare issues to develop strategies for managing public perception in the broader community and inform government, industry and welfare groups on animal welfare.

Background

- A Eurobarometer-style tool will permit issues and trends to be identified
- Responding to theses is complex and multifaceted
- Nevertheless, values do change both in the general community and in the livestock industries. There is a need to get as good a convergence amongst all stakeholders as is possible

Background

- Community perceptions based on limited direct knowledge and experience
- People attribute the media with having a significant influence
- Perceptions tend to be polarised
- Community knowledge may be mediated by opinion leaders

Education

- As a method for distributing information to the general community and to livestock farmers, several levels of contact can be adopted so that the content and technical content of communications suit the particular level. Examples of contact levels and the material to be disseminated to each level are given in the table below

Changing perceptions

- Who to target
- What to say
- How to say it

Who to target

- General population
 - Adults
 - School children
 - Farming community
 - Legislators

What to say

- This is a moveable feast, but some things probably stand out:
 - Current codes and legislation
 - Current knowledge about animal welfare
 - Methods of management and husbandry that improve welfare
 - Ethical standards in managing animals

What to say

- To this point the focus has been on attitudes because of their role in influencing the behaviour in the general community and that of decision makers.
- Duty of care is a value that underpins attitudes
- Duty of care may provide a mechanism for obtaining some convergence in attitudes between the general community and the various stakeholder groups
- Duty of care is a principle that can underpin national legislation about good practice that can operate in parallel with the POCTAs

Education strategies:

Individual vs community change

- Generic mass media is a long-term approach – but has a significant role in changing values
- Opinion leaders provide a more targeted approach
 - Do they exist and who are they?
- Individual the most effective for relatively rapid change
 - Extension activities or outreach from veterinarians
 - Who's for cats campaign
 - Prohand
- Education in schools
 - Alignment with curricula

Target group	Distribution Level	Content	Comments
Farmers Hobby farmers	Stock and station agents	Animal welfare awareness Basic husbandry matters Welfare monitoring Codes of practice Contact details of regulatory agencies Contact details of Advisory agencies	A one-page glossy document¹ with dot points covering the major issues and relevant contacts
Farmers Hobby farmers Companion animal carers	Veterinary clinics	Animal welfare awareness Basic husbandry matters Welfare monitoring Codes of practice Contact details of regulatory agencies Contact details of Advisory agencies	A one-page glossy document with dot points covering the major issues and relevant contacts

<p>Hobby farmers Companion animal carers</p>	<p>Councils</p>	<p>Animal welfare awareness Basic husbandry matters Stock transport Welfare monitoring Disposal of animals and euthanasia Codes of practice Contact details of regulatory agencies Contact details of Advisory agencies</p>	<p>Small handbook² covering the material in a little more detail with references to detailed source material. Sent out with rate notices?</p>
<p>General community Hobby farmers Companion animal carers</p>	<p>Schools</p>	<p>Elementary issues in welfare codes of practices, managing livestock</p>	<p>Develop material to fit in with the relevant curriculum</p>

Farmers Hobby farmers Companion animal carers	Field days/shows	Animal welfare awareness Basic husbandry matters Stock transport Welfare monitoring Disposal of animals and euthanasia Codes of practice Contact details of regulatory agencies Contact details of Advisory agencies Advertising technical training sessions	Seminars covering a number of the main issues. Distribution of the handbook covering the material in some detail with references to detailed source material
Farmers Hobby farmers Legislators/regulators	Technical training	1. Legislation 2. Codes of practice 3. Species-specific management issues - Housing and stocking density - Food and water - Predators - Managing health and disease - Disposal of animals and euthanasia - Transport and sale of livestock - Economics of small rural businesses	Scheduled workshops dealing in-depth with specific topics and delivered by extension and DPI officers.

Remember

- It is desirable to attain, as far as possible, a convergence of attitudes held by
 - the community,
 - livestock industries,
 - legislators and regulators,
 - research groups and
 - those who actively support or oppose the uses and management of animals in the livestock industries and in animal experimentation.

Conclusion

- It is important for livestock industries to carefully analyse community views and to develop both short term and long term responses. These responses would include
 - the use of scientific information to brief regulators and legislators and the community on welfare relevant practices in the livestock industries
 - informing the livestock industries of these results as a mechanism for instituting changes where appropriate
 - seeking opportunities to provide education to the community from early school age onwards about food sources, best practice and the role of the livestock industries in providing economical and quality food for the community.

Approach

- Cross industry collaboration to identify particular target groups and content.
- Cross industry collaboration to identify clear desired outcomes.
- Development of the communication strategy with a clear outcome evaluation component

Thank you!