

A Survey on Animal Welfare Attitudes of Veterinary Surgeries, Veterinary Students, Animal Owners and Society in Turkey ^{[1][2]}

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Summary

Public support is a strong influence for the adoption of animal welfare in the social life. Therefore, it was important to introduced what a Turkish society attitudes toward animals and their using. A survey was conducted in a total of 1400 participant, in seven provinces of Turkey, to improve the understanding and sensibility of animal welfare issues. The sample was chosen in a random selection of the veterinarians, veterinary students, animal owners and consumers of animal foodstuff. The result of the study revealed that respondents had great support about animal rearing that considering animal welfare. Veterinary students and veterinarians advocated animal rearing more than animal owners and consumers. More than half of respondents assumed that animal welfare problems arise according to the productivity attempts on the animals. It was also identified the most important five welfare problems unsuitable shelters, care, sickness, hunger and deficient feeding, respectively. Furthermore, the survey highlighted that care (23.7%), health services (13.5%) and shelter (12.8%) were determined to be the most worried problems in livestock's life.

Keywords: *Animal rearing, Animal welfare, Attitudes*

Türkiye'de Veteriner Hekimler, Veteriner Hekimliği Öğrencileri, Hayvan Sahipleri ve Toplumun Hayvan Gönenci (Refahı) Tutumları Üzerine Anket Çalışması

Özet

Sosyal yaşamda hayvan gönenci kavramının benimsenmesi için halkın desteği önemli bir faktördür. Türk toplumunun hayvanlar ve onların kullanımı hakkındaki tutumlarının ortaya konulması bu bakımdan önemlidir. Hayvan gönenci sorunlarının anlaşılmasını ve farkındalığını yükseltmek için Türkiye'nin yedi ilinde, toplam 1400 kişi üzerinde anket uygulaması yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın örneklemini rastgele seçilen veteriner hekimler, veteriner hekimliği öğrencileri, hayvan sahipleri ve hayvansal gıda tüketicileri oluşturmuştur. Sonuç olarak, gönenc dikkate alınarak yapılan hayvan yetiştiriciliğine önemli bir desteğin olduğu belirlenmiştir. Veteriner fakültesi öğrencileri ve veteriner hekimlerin, hayvan sahipleri ve tüketicilere göre desteklerinin daha fazla olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Katılımcıların yarıdan fazlasının hayvanlar üzerinde verimliliği arttırmaya yönelik yapılan girişimlerin gönenc problemlerine yol açtığına inandıkları tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca, hayvanlardaki en önemli beş gönenc problemi sırasıyla; uygun olmayan barınaklar, bakım, hastalık, açlık, yetersiz besleme olarak belirlenmiştir. Bununla birlikte, bakım (%23.7), sağlık hizmetleri (%13.5) ve barınaklar (%12.8) çiftlik hayvanlarının yaşamında en çok kaygı duyulan konular olarak öne çıkmıştır.

Anahtar sözcükler: *Hayvan yetiştiriciliği, Hayvan gönenci, Tutum*



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INTRODUCTION

A growing concern for animal welfare has been obvious in worldwide ¹⁻³, which may result from advanced economic development ⁴, the industrialisation of livestock rearing, using animals in experimentations and increased concern for importance of companion animals compared to livestock's ⁵. Furthermore, sufficient feeding, water, be healthy and acceptable environment conditions ⁶⁻⁸ may likely to reached the animals to the welfare.

It was observed that consumers' valued judgements, attitudes and expectations towards animal welfare have rapidly changed over the years. Specifically, feeding and transportation of animals and their welfare have aroused emotional communal and political issues worldwide ^{7,9-11}.

In this study, it was discussed some of the part of the survey that is relevant to animal welfare and farming issues. An improved understanding of the attitudes of people in Turkey towards the animals may facilitate the constitution of minimum standards of animals and ensure the opportunities of livestock's for international trade.

MATERIAL and METHODS

The survey was conducted Afyon, Elazığ, Hatay, İstanbul, Kayseri, Samsun and Şanlıurfa provinces which have veterinary faculties. One province was selected from each of the seven geographical regions of Turkey. The sample in each province was also chosen in a random selection of the veterinarians, veterinary students, animal owners and consumers of animal foodstuff.

The questionnaire was designed of five sections and 60 questions, initially. There were utilised some of the items of the papers ^{5,12,13} at the preparation stage of the survey. A pilot survey was practiced to 30 people at the beginning of the study, to increase understanding of the statements and to introduce the reliability coefficient. Cronbach's α (alpha) was used to test for this aim. Reliability coefficient (α) was promoted to 61.39% and it was included into confidential value after eight questions were took out ¹⁴.

The survey was realised to the participants between 4 January 2007 and 19 April 2007. Furthermore, sample was consisting of each province; 25 first-year veterinary students, 25 final year veterinary students, 25 official veterinarians, 25 self-employed veterinarians, 25 pet owners, 25 livestock owners, 50 consumers of animal foodstuff. Consequently, the survey was applied to 1400 participants. SPSS (10.0) program was used to analyse the collected data and their frequencies and percentages were calculated.

It was aim to introduce the attitudes of people concerning animal welfare in Turkey who were consisting of the different level of society. In this study, it was only mentioned similar questions of the survey particularly about the livestock welfare, for the purpose of data integrity.

RESULTS

There was a great support towards the item of "animal rearing which is proper to animal welfare" from the all of the respondents with 80% (Table 1). However, veterinarians and veterinary students were greatest

Table 1. The participation level of the items of "I am finding true the animal rearing which is proper to animal welfare"

Tablo 1. "Gönence uygun olarak yapılan hayvan yetiştiriciliğini doğru buluyorum" ifadesine katılım düzeyi

| Agreement Level | | Veterinary Students | Veterinarians | Animal Owners | Consumers | Total * |
|------------------------|---|---------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|---------|
| I agree | n | 204 | 226 | 189 | 173 | 792 |
| | % | 58.3 | 64.6 | 54.0 | 49.4 | 56.6 |
| I agree with partly | n | 85 | 63 | 86 | 91 | 325 |
| | % | 24.3 | 18.0 | 24.6 | 26.0 | 23.2 |
| I am not sure | n | 28 | 25 | 42 | 43 | 138 |
| | % | 8.0 | 7.1 | 12.0 | 12.3 | 9.9 |
| I disagree with partly | n | 21 | 14 | 15 | 23 | 73 |
| | % | 6.0 | 4.0 | 4.3 | 6.6 | 5.2 |
| I disagree with | n | 12 | 22 | 18 | 20 | 72 |
| | % | 3.4 | 6.3 | 5.1 | 5.7 | 5.1 |
| Total | n | 350 | 350 | 350 | 350 | 1400 |
| | % | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Total * n: the total response for each row

Total * %: the average percentage for each row

supporter of this item with the 83%, followed by the animal owners with 79% and then consumers with 75%.

Almost 3 out of 5 respondents indicated that animal welfare issues arise according to the attempts of increasing the productivity on animals (Table 2). Furthermore, responses were found considerably close to each others. The greatest acceptance of this item was in veterinarians by 62%, then animal owners by 61% and consumers by 60%. Finally, veterinary students predicated the lowest acceptance with 59%.

The participants were asked the most important five welfare problems. So, five responses were marked by each participant (Table 3). It was therefore given only the f values of the responses. The order of welfare problems from the highest to lowest was unsuitable shelters, care, sickness, hunger, deficient feeding.

The overall order of responses relevant livestock welfare problems from the highest to lowest was care (23.7%), health services (13.5%), sheltering (12.8%), slaughter (12.7%), euthanasia (12.5%), transportation

Table 2. The participation level of the items of "The studies on animals about the productivity causes animal welfare problems"

Tablo 2. "Hayvanlar üzerinde yapılan verim artışına yönelik çalışmalar, hayvanlarda gönenc problemlerine yol açmaktadır" yarışına katılım düzeyi

| Agreement Level | | Veterinary Students | Veterinarians | Animal Owners | Consumers | Total * |
|------------------------|---|---------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|---------|
| I agree | n | 84 | 84 | 102 | 89 | 359 |
| | % | 24.2 | 24.0 | 29.1 | 25.4 | 25.7 |
| I agree with partly | n | 120 | 132 | 110 | 120 | 482 |
| | % | 34.6 | 37.7 | 31.4 | 34.3 | 34.5 |
| I am not sure | n | 68 | 43 | 69 | 76 | 256 |
| | % | 19.6 | 12.3 | 19.7 | 21.7 | 18.3 |
| I disagree with partly | n | 31 | 41 | 31 | 33 | 136 |
| | % | 8.9 | 11.7 | 8.9 | 9.4 | 9.7 |
| I disagree with | n | 44 | 50 | 38 | 32 | 164 |
| | % | 12.7 | 14.3 | 10.9 | 9.1 | 11.8 |
| Total | n | 347 | 350 | 350 | 350 | 1397 |
| | % | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Total * n: the total response for each row, Total * %: the average percentage for each row

Table 3. The rank of animal welfare problems (5 items selected for each person)

Tablo 3. Hayvan gönenci problemlerinin sıralaması (Herbir kişi tarafından 5 madde seçilmiştir)

| Animal Welfare Problems | Veterinary Students (f) | Veterinarians (f) | Animal Owners (f) | Consumers (f) | Total (f) |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------|
| Unsuitable shelters | 207 | 232 | 176 | 197 | 812 |
| Care | 178 | 193 | 165 | 170 | 706 |
| Sickness | 164 | 136 | 149 | 165 | 614 |
| Hunger | 131 | 137 | 146 | 123 | 537 |
| Deficient feeding | 130 | 126 | 116 | 105 | 477 |
| Inadequate health services | 138 | 94 | 108 | 101 | 441 |
| Pain | 115 | 109 | 96 | 98 | 418 |
| Ventilation | 68 | 96 | 70 | 72 | 306 |
| Inability to walk comfortably | 80 | 62 | 78 | 74 | 294 |
| Inability to exhibit normal attitudes | 50 | 74 | 75 | 77 | 276 |
| Transportation | 67 | 62 | 56 | 62 | 247 |
| Slaughter | 55 | 49 | 64 | 63 | 231 |
| Stress | 61 | 67 | 40 | 52 | 220 |
| Using at the scientific experimentations | 44 | 40 | 55 | 55 | 194 |
| Fear | 52 | 47 | 41 | 40 | 180 |
| Thirsty | 28 | 46 | 50 | 47 | 171 |
| Physical and heat distress | 33 | 44 | 41 | 46 | 164 |
| Ache | 37 | 31 | 39 | 44 | 151 |
| Not enough place to lie down | 33 | 25 | 52 | 38 | 148 |
| Marketing | 23 | 31 | 52 | 36 | 142 |
| Injury | 25 | 19 | 34 | 43 | 121 |
| Euthanasia | 26 | 23 | 25 | 24 | 98 |
| Anxiety | 6 | 6 | 20 | 20 | 52 |

f*: the number of response for each item (5 items selected for each person)

Table 4. The rank of welfare problems in the livestock's**Tablo 4.** Çiftlik hayvanlarının gönenc problemlerinin sıralaması

| Animal Welfare Problems | | Veterinary Students | Veterinarians | Animal Owners | Consumers | Total * |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|---------|
| Care | n | 77 | 77 | 104 | 74 | 332 |
| | % | 22.0 | 22.0 | 29.7 | 21.1 | 23.7 |
| Health services | n | 59 | 31 | 46 | 53 | 189 |
| | % | 16.9 | 8.9 | 13.1 | 15.1 | 13.5 |
| Sheltering | n | 49 | 59 | 37 | 34 | 179 |
| | % | 14.0 | 16.9 | 10.6 | 9.7 | 12.8 |
| Slaughter | n | 40 | 54 | 39 | 45 | 178 |
| | % | 11.4 | 15.4 | 11.1 | 12.9 | 12.7 |
| Euthanasia | n | 36 | 55 | 33 | 51 | 175 |
| | % | 10.3 | 15.7 | 9.4 | 14.6 | 12.5 |
| Transportation | n | 38 | 28 | 33 | 41 | 140 |
| | % | 10.9 | 8.0 | 9.4 | 11.7 | 10.0 |
| Feeding | n | 27 | 26 | 28 | 25 | 106 |
| | % | 7.7 | 7.4 | 8.0 | 7.1 | 7.6 |
| Marketing | n | 24 | 19 | 28 | 24 | 95 |
| | % | 6.9 | 5.4 | 8.0 | 6.9 | 6.8 |
| Total | n | 350 | 349 | 348 | 347 | 1394 |
| | % | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Total * n: the total response for each row, Total * %: the average percentage for each row

(10.0%), feeding (7.6%) and marketing (6.8%). Participant responses exhibited variety with the wide range to each issue. For example; veterinarians indicated lowest concern to health services although veterinary students displayed the highest to health services (Table 4).

DISCUSSION

According to Franklin ¹⁵, 93% of the people who participated to the survey accepted the eating of meats which are rearing and slaughtering in the humane conditions. In USA ¹⁶, 90% of respondent supported the standard rearing types of the "milk calf, pigs and chickens". Nonetheless, the 93% of the participants emphasized that "the suffering and distress of the livestock's must be minimize in the possibility". On the other hand, Bennett et al.¹ found 76% of the participants believe that animals can be in suffer in the nowadays rearing systems and 83% them expressed that the practice which are emerge "suffer, injure and distress at the animals" are wrong. In the present study, 80% of the participants supported the item of "I am finding true the animal rearing which is proper to animal welfare" and the findings were similar to the above studies. According to our study and the other studies that mentioned above, people were not in opposite attitudes to the animal rearing, they support animal rearing which is appropriate to the welfare and they approve the eating of meat and animal products. Furthermore, veterinary students and veterinarians supported more about animal rearing

than animal owners and consumers. Generally, people understand humans needs to animal rearing; they also believe that rearing systems must be suitable in terms of animal welfare.

Animal welfare problems are seen with the working of high productivity and the using of biotechnology, such as; attempts to increase the milk efficiency cause high incidence mastitis and result decreased in animal welfare. Weight rise, increase in the difficult birth rate and long pregnant are seen about sheep's and cattle's arising from their offspring that the embryos developed from the in vitro methods. As a result, this situation decreases the welfare of both mother and young animals. It was seen that less than 1% of the embryos remains alive and serious abnormalities were experienced from these animals ¹⁷. In this study, 60% participants expressed animal welfare issues appear according to the attempts of productivity on the animals. This result is likely demonstrates that people have awareness to this issue. It was also introduced that the responses of the four groups were relatively similar to each others. However, veterinarians were display a lowest indecision in response to this question by the 12%. It was possible to associate veterinarians' knowledge regarding the topic.

Heleski et al.¹⁸ found that the percentage of people that support the basic principles of the animal welfare such as "animals must be free from the fear and stress" is 90%. The 98% of the participants expressed that "animals must be free from thirst, injured and illness", 97% of them said that "animals must be free from

unnecessary pain and distress”, 92% of them said that “animals must be free from hunger”, 89% of them said that “animals must be free from fear and distress”. In our study, it was indicated that the most important welfare problems are in turn “unsuitable shelters, care, sickness, hunger and deficient feeding” from the 23 issues related to animal welfare. It can be expressed that the survey findings are mostly similar with Brambell Commissions five freedom¹⁶ concepts and the conclusion of the Heleski et al.¹⁸.

The study which was practiced on 2000 person, 43% participants were said that they were “very worried” about suffered to the livestock’s. They ranked the most concerned points about the livestock’s by the order of “shelters, feeding, health services, transportation, marketing and slaughtering”¹⁶. In the study conducted by Smith⁹ was found the most anxiety about the animal welfare is “chickens are rearing in the cages” with the 41%. In the present study, it was predicated “care, health services and sheltering” are the most concerned issues in livestock’s life. Veterinarians are giving importance to animal welfare in Turkey¹⁹ even though they were likely associate the lack of health services with welfare less than others in this study. However, health services and sheltering were the most important issues related to livestock’s welfare in terms of whole groups responses which were found similar conclusions with the studies of Smith⁹ and Rowan et al.¹⁶.

The results showed that people although believe animals must be rear for human interest, the life conditions of animals improved in order to welfare. Sheltering was one of the most concerned points related to animal welfare issues. This will be beneficial in terms of animal welfare if the conditions of the sheltering can be improved. Furthermore, veterinarians had less concern about health services than the other three groups. In addition, animal owners were less concern about the conditions such as shelters and care than the others. It may be therefore predicated that veterinarians and animal owners do not overrate the issues relevant to themselves compared to other groups. Consequently; this study demonstrates people are generally sensitive concerning the animal welfare issues and approach the animal rearing with anthropocentric attitudes.

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