

Attitudes of Turkish veterinary students towards farm animal welfare

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Abstract

People's awareness of livestock welfare has increased in recent years and veterinarians have a critical role to play in maintaining and improving these standards. The aim of this study was to explore the attitude of veterinary students to livestock welfare and an online questionnaire was utilised to gauge the opinions of students from the Bursa Uludag University Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Turkey. A five-point Likert scale covered judgments ranging from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree.' Female students were found to have a higher score for questions related to the welfare of livestock than males. It was also found that students yet to undertake courses in clinical science and animal welfare, ie first and second years, gave higher scores than third, fourth and fifth years who had completed both of these. Moreover, students having owned or dealt previously with livestock provided lower animal welfare scores than their counterparts who had done neither. Seemingly, the sensitivity of veterinary students decreases during the latter stages of their education. To conclude, we suggest further investigation into the extent to which veterinary medicine education influences students' attitudes to animal welfare as they progress through the course.

Keywords: animal welfare, attitudes, broiler, dairy cattle, laying hen, veterinary education