Animal Welfare Institute
900 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20003

August 12, 2021

Ms. Dorothy Pelanda, Director of Ohio Department of Agriculture
Dr. Dennis Summers, Interim State Veterinarian
Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board
Ohio Department of Agriculture Division of Animal Health
8995 E. Main St.
Reynoldsburg, OH 43068

Re: Ohio Livestock Care Standards – chapters to be reviewed at 8-17-2021 meeting - 901:12-5 (veal); 901:12-6 (dairy); 901:12-7 (beef); 901:12-8 (swine); 901:12-12 (sheep); and 901:12-13 (goats)

Dear Ms. Pelanda, Dr. Summers, and other members of the Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board:

The Ohio Livestock Care Standards (OLCS) exist largely because the citizens and livestock producers of Ohio recognize the importance of animal welfare and want animals raised for food to be treated humanely. When they were written in 2011, the OLCS rules included requirements that reflected these values and were often stricter than industry standards at the time. However, in the intervening years, many of the factors that are required under Section 904.03 to be considered in rule adoption have evolved considerably, including best management practices for the care and well-being of livestock and generally accepted veterinary medical practices.[1] Thus, the current OLCS rules need to be updated to remain consistent with their intended purpose.

In reviewing the current OLCS, we compared them with: (1) recommendations of research published in peer-reviewed scientific and veterinary journals, (2) the four major third-party animal welfare certification programs (TPAWCPs) in the US, whose standards are based on scientific research and the advice of species animal health experts,[2] (3) position statements put forth by veterinary associations, and (4) international standards, such as those promulgated by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). In order to remain current, we recommend the OLCS rules be updated in the areas of animal housing and painful procedures.

Animal Housing

With regard to housing, the OLCS rules unfortunately fall short in the areas of contemporary dairy and veal calf housing requirements and minimal space requirements for numerous species. For example, the rules for veal calf housing and for dairy calf housing do not take into consideration research by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) showing the benefit to animal welfare, and lack of detriment to production or health, of socially housing calves from the age of 3 days.[3] The rules fall short of the requirements of all applicable TPAWCPs, which mandate social housing at an age younger than 10 weeks. They fail to consider the position statement of the Dairy Cattle Welfare Council recommending calves be socially housed starting from 1 to 4 days of age.[4]

For adult dairy cattle, the OLCS rules still permit the use of tie stalls and stanchions, which prevent cows from walking and socializing, and restrict their ability to lie in comfortable positions.[5]

Routine confinement to stanchions is prohibited by all four of the TPAWCPs; these programs also all prohibit or require phasing out routine use of tie stalls. Numerous recent studies emphasize the importance to cattle health and welfare of several hours of outdoor access per day. [6, 7, 8] Research on public perception also shows that the majority of Americans oppose these confinement methods and would be willing to pay a price premium were they to be banned.[9]

Finally, with regard to space allowances, the OLCS rules for pigs, goats, and sheep are inadequate. They require a minimum area equivalent to the group's *lying area*, or the area required for all animals to "easily lie down fully on their side at the same time without having to lie on each other and be able to easily stand back up at all stages of production." All TPAWCPs require at least 1.5 times the minimum lying area and often much more. This reflects the importance of animals having access to separate areas for lying and for elimination, as required for pigs by the OIE Terrestrial Code.[10]

Painful Procedures

With regard to painful procedures and pain management, the standard of care in veterinary medicine has changed since the OLCS were first written. In the past ten years, entire issues of peer-reviewed scientific and veterinary journals have been dedicated to the topic of pain in farm animals.[11] The OIE recommends use of the internationally recognized "three Rs" when it comes to painful procedures: replacement (changing practices to eliminate use of painful procedures), reduction (only performing painful procedures when necessary), and refinement (providing analgesics or anesthesia during painful procedures).[12] Many countries now legally mandate pain control for painful surgeries on farm animals; for example, in Germany, castration of piglets can occur only under general anesthesia and with the provision of post-operative pain control.[13]

When they were written in 2011, the OLCS seemed to acknowledge the importance of minimizing pain in animals raised for food. At that time, the rules were forward-thinking in terms of requiring pain management for disbudding/dehorning after horn eruption. However, this requirement is weak by today's standards: veterinary groups such as the American Association of Bovine Practitioners[14] and the American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners[15] both recommend multimodal pain management for *all* dehorning and disbudding procedures.

Similarly, the OLCS were progressive in phasing out tail-docking of dairy cattle unless medically necessary. Unfortunately, they did not address routine tail-docking of piglets, a practice that has been banned in the European Union since 1994 and is prohibited by all four TPAWCPs in the US. In fact, painful procedures and pain management for swine are not mentioned in the OLCS at all, even though piglets are often subjected to numerous husbandry procedures that cause acute and chronic pain, including tail docking, teeth clipping, ear notching, and castration. Based on its own research, the USDA currently recommends producers consider "avoiding those procedures that might be unnecessary or using a degree of analgesia or local anesthesia."[16]

Tail docking and teeth clipping are painful surgeries that are performed in piglets to decrease injurious behaviors such as tail-biting and facial/teat wounding, respectively. The OIE and the

international FareWellDock research project, in which the USDA is a partner, recognize that tail biting is often caused by management factors, such as lack of environmental enrichment, overcrowding, and nutritional deficiencies.[17, 18] As such, the OIE and all TPAWCPs require environmental enrichment for pigs,[19] a recommendation echoed by the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe.[20] Teeth clipping of piglets has been shown to cause long-term pain and often infection through exposure of the sensitive pulp chamber of the teeth.[21, 22] Both the American Veterinary Medical Association and the American Association of Swine Veterinarians recommend changing management practices to reduce reliance on teeth clipping.[23, 24] The American Veterinary Dental College, the body that confers specialty certification in veterinary dentistry, recommends that any procedures which are invasive of the tissues of the oral cavity be performed by a licensed veterinarian.[25]

As the above examples demonstrate, given the significant changes that have occurred in the past ten years regarding the care and well-being of livestock, the current rules of the OLCS fail to consider many of the factors that are legally required. Evidence-based developments in best management practices, disease prevention, animal morbidity/mortality research, AVMA-established ethical standards, and generally accepted veterinary medical practices necessitate updating the rules developed by the OLCS board. We respectfully request that the Board commit to allocating sufficient time to meaningfully examine and update the standards slated for review at this meeting and update them as appropriate to reflect the current state of science and ethics regarding livestock care.

Sincerely,

Gwendy Reyes-Illg, DVM, MA
Veterinary Consultant, Animal Welfare Institute

Jim Reynolds DVM, MPVM, DACAW
Professor, Large Animal Medicine and Welfare
Western University of Health Sciences College of Veterinary Medicine

Barry Kipperman, DVM, DACVIM, MSc, DACAW
Instructor, Veterinary Ethics
University of California at Davis School of Veterinary Medicine

Bernard E. Rollin, PhD
University Bioethicist and Distinguished Professor
Professor of Philosophy, Animal Sciences, and Biomedical Sciences

[1] Ohio Rev. Code. §904.03. (2010). https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-904.03
[2] These include: American Humane Certified, Certified Humane, Certified Animal Welfare Approved, and Global Animal Partnership
[3] Abdelfattah, E. M., Karousa, M. M., Lay, D. C., Jr, Marchant-Forde, J. N., & Eicher, S. D. (2018). Short communication: Effect of age at group housing on behavior, cortisol, health, and leukocyte differential counts of neonatal bull dairy calves. *Journal of dairy science*, *101*(1), 596–602. https://doi.org/10.3168/jds.2017-12632; see also: Abdelfattah, E. M., Schutz, M. M., Lay, D. C., Jr, Marchant-Forde, J. N., & Eicher, S. D. (2013). Effect of group size on behavior, health, production, and welfare of veal calves. *Journal of animal science*, *91*(11), 5455–5465. https://doi.org/10.2527/jas.2013-6308
[4] Dairy Cattle Welfare Council. (2021). Social Housing of Dairy Calves. https://www.dcwcouncil.org/node/4017
[5] Beaver, A., Weary, D. M., & von Keyserlingk, M. (2021). Invited review: The welfare of dairy cattle housed in tiestalls compared to less-restrictive housing types: A systematic review. *Journal of dairy science*, S0022-0302(21)00717-7. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.3168/jds.2020-19609
[6] Arnott, G., Ferris, C. P., & O'Connell, N. E. (2017). Review: welfare of dairy cows in continuously housed and pasture-based production systems. *Animal : an international journal of animal bioscience*, *11*(2), 261–273. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1751731116001336
[7] Smid, A. C., Weary, D. M., & von Keyserlingk, M. (2020). The Influence of Different Types of Outdoor Access on Dairy Cattle Behavior. *Frontiers in veterinary science*, *7*, 257. https://doi.org/10.3389/fvets.2020.00257
[8] Smid, A., Burgers, E., Weary, D. M., Bokkers, E., & von Keyserlingk, M. (2019). Dairy cow preference for access to an outdoor pack in summer and winter. *Journal of dairy science*, *102*(2), 1551–1558. https://doi.org/10.3168/jds.2018-15007
[9] Robbins, J. A., Roberts, C., Weary, D. M., Franks, B., & von Keyserlingk, M. (2019). Factors influencing public support for dairy tie stall housing in the U.S. *PloS one*, *14*(5), e0216544. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0216544
[10] OIE. (2021). Article 7.13.13 *Terrestrial Code Online Access - OIE - World Organisation for Animal Health*. https://www.oie.int/en/what-we-do/standards/codes-and-manuals/terrestrial-code-online-access/?id=169&L=1&htmfile=chapitre_aw_pigs.htm.
[11] See, for example:
- 2011 Issue 3 of *Applied Animal Behaviour Science* (https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/applied-animal-behaviour-science/vol/135/issue/3)
- 2013 Issue 1 of *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Food Animal Practice* (https://www.vetfood.theclinics.com/issue/S0749-0720(13)X0002-7)
- 2014 Issue 3 of *Advances in Animal Biosciences* (https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/advances-in-animal-biosciences/issue/F9F850B302E936D32E46A8A6C0802CF5) 2013 Issue 1 of Veterinary Clinics: Food Animal Practice (https://www.vetfood.theclinics.com/issue/S0749-0720(13)X0002-7)
- 2021 Volume 11 of *Animals* (https://www.mdpi.com/journal/animals/special_issues/Pain_mitigation)
[12] OIE. (2021). Article 7.13.8 *Terrestrial Code Online Access - OIE - World Organisation for Animal Health*. https://www.oie.int/en/what-we-do/standards/codes-and-manuals/terrestrial-code-online-access/?id=169&L=1&htmfile=chapitre_aw_pigs.htm.
[13] Van Asten, A., Gäckler, S., Häuser, S., Heckmann, S., Kühling, J., Lambertz, C. Richter, A., Streuff, B. (2020). Ferkelkastration unter Injektionsnarkose: Wie optimiere ich meinen Arbeitsablauf? [Piglet castration under injection anesthesia: How do I optimize my workflow?]. Deutsche Landwirtschafts-Gesellschaft [German Agricultural Society]. https://www.dlg.org/de/landwirtschaft/themen/tierhaltung/schwein/dlg-merkblatt-453
[14] American Association of Bovine Practitioners. (2019). Dehorning Guidelines. https://www.aabp.org/Resources/AABP_Guidelines/Dehorning-2019.pdf
[15] American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners (2020). Goat Kid Disbudding. http://www.aasrp.org/about/guidelines/debudding2020.pdf

[16] USDA Agricultural Research Service. (2021). Title: Postnatal piglet husbandry practices and well-being: the effects of alternative techniques delivered in combination. https://www.ars.usda.gov/research/publications/publication/?seqNo115=205088. Regarding the following research: Marchant-Forde, J. N., Lay, D. C., Jr, McMunn, K. A., Cheng, H. W., Pajor, E. A., & Marchant-Forde, R. M. (2014). Postnatal piglet husbandry practices and well-being: the effects of alternative techniques delivered in combination. *Journal of animal science*, *92*(3), 1150–1160. https://doi.org/10.2527/jas.2013-6929

[17] OIE. (2021). Article 7.13.11 *Terrestrial Code Online Access - OIE - World Organisation for Animal Health*. https://www.oie.int/en/what-we-do/standards/codes-and-manuals/terrestrial-code-online-access/?id=169&L=1&htmfile=chapitre_aw_pigs.htm.

[18] FareWellDock. (n.d.). Tail docking & biting. http://farewelldock.eu/info/factsheets/tail-docking-biting/

[19] OIE. (2021). Article 7.13.10 *Terrestrial Code Online Access - OIE - World Organisation for Animal Health*. https://www.oie.int/en/what-we-do/standards/codes-and-manuals/terrestrial-code-online-access/?id=169&L=1&htmfile=chapitre_aw_pigs.htm.

[20] Federation of Veterinarians of Europe. (2019). FVE & EAPHM position on preventing tail docking and tail biting. https://www.fve.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/062_Final-EAPHM-FVE-position-on-pig-tail-docking.pdf

[21] Hutter, S., Heinritzi, K., Reich, E., & Ehret, W. (1993). Auswirkungen verschiedener Methoden der Zahnresektion beim Saugferkel [Effects of different methods of tooth resection in suckling piglets]. *Tierarztliche Praxis*, *21*(5), 417–428.

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[23] AVMA. (n.d.) Tail docking and teeth clipping of swine. https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/avma-policies/tail-docking-and-teeth-clipping-swine

[24] American Association of Swine Veterinarians. (2021). AASV Position Statement: Tail Docking and Teeth Clipping of Swine. https://www.aasv.org/aasv/position-taildock-teethclip.php

[25] American Veterinary Dental College. (2019). Position on Large Animal Dentistry. https://avdc.org/about/#pos-stmts