

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



July 21, 2008

NEW ORLEANS

— The American Veterinary Medical Association House of Delegates (AVMA-HOD) voted today to pass a groundbreaking policy on veal calf housing that promotes both animal health and welfare. The resolution passed by a landslide 88.7 percent vote.

This new policy states "that the AVMA supports a change in veal husbandry practices that severely restrict movement, to housing systems that allow for greater freedom of movement without compromising health or welfare."

"This is encouraging on two levels," explains Dr. Ron DeHaven, AVMA chief executive officer. "First, we are proactively seeking to improve the welfare of veal calves, and second, the resolution still affords the AVMA Animal Welfare Committee the opportunity to do a comprehensive analysis of the science and to consider all relevant perspectives of veal calf production."

The AVMA-HOD referred a second veal housing resolution to the AVMA Animal Welfare Committee, which is currently studying all aspects of the welfare of veal calves, not just housing. The AVMA-HOD anticipates future resolutions that will even further enhance the health and welfare of all animals.

"By approving this policy, the AVMA is encouraging innovation in design and implementation of animal care systems. Equally important, the new policy acknowledges that a multitude of factors, including, but not limited to, housing contribute to veal calf welfare and need to be considered conjointly," says Dr. Gail Golab, director of the AVMA Animal Welfare Division. "To ensure we are meeting the physiological and psychological needs of calves, we need to look at systems that may not be as confining, but still maintain the benefits of the systems we currently employ."

Another key policy passed by the AVMA-HOD urges that a coordinated network of microchip databases with the ability to communicate be created to help identify lost pets.

"This resolution just makes good sense when it comes to improving the chances of reuniting pets with their owners," Dr. DeHaven says.

Currently, information on animals with implanted microchip identifications are maintained in separate databases, creating gaps that can frustrate efforts to reunited pets and their owners.

"The AVMA is very pleased to help encourage all microchip companies to cooperate to develop a means by which microchipped animals can be easily reunited with their owners," explains Dr. Rosemary LoGiudice, AVMA representative to the Coalition for Reuniting Pets and Families.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Tom McPheron

Phone: 847-285-6781

Cell: 773-494-5419

e-mail: tmcpheron@avma.org