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## MEETING REPORT

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### Conference on the Human-Animal Bond: CENSHARE

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A two-day conference on the Human-Animal bond convened in Minneapolis June 13-14, 1983, sponsored by the Center to Study Human-Animal Relationships and Environments (CENSHARE), the College of Veterinary Medicine and the School of Public Health, University of Minnesota. The conference was coordinated with help from the Latham Foundation of California and the Delta Society in conjunction with a similar program being held at the University of California, June 17-18, 1983.

The conference format emphasized current scientific research in two areas: companion animals and people; and management, behavior, and well-being of farm animals. Posters and educational exhibits were displayed as well as film and video tape productions. Over sixty reports were presented representing the truly multidisciplinary approach needed to study the human-animal bond.

Ronald Kilgour criticized the antagonism between animal welfare groups and farmers because that degree of polarization puts animals at risk. He suggested that to adequately examine the welfare of animals, one must first know

the natural history, evolution, and behavior of individual species. He stressed the need to: 1) design livestock systems to fit the animal; 2) use knowledge of behavior and indicators of distress to identify areas of concern; 3) precondition stock to housing and husbandry; 4) select strains/breeds to match farm conditions; and 5) prevent disease and accidents.

Stan Curtis reviewed current research in swine behavior and commented that swine ethology is not being applied as fast as he anticipated because of a gap between behavioral scientists and farmers. To bridge that gap, overtures must be made to farm management specialists in order to package new systems attractively. This may involve minor changes in existing systems as well as major new ones. Reproductive management was one area mentioned where major changes are needed; the use of boars discriminating anestrus and estrus sows haven't been incorporated into mating schemes and designs.

Increasing the welfare of laying hens involves changes in the physical environment (pen design), social environment (group size, debeaking) and genetic selection for hysterical resistant stock, according to J.V. Craig. Beak trimming with a hot blade is presumed to be temporarily painful, but when done properly it can actually enhance the well-being of laying hens. It may increase nesting

time, decrease fear and agonistic behavior, decrease pain of dominant hen on subordinate, decrease mortality, increase eggs laid and decrease cortisol levels.

W.B. Gross characterized the chicken's response to stressors in its environment as an allocation of resources based on genetic potential and life long environmental experiences. Stress indicators include ratio of heterophils to lymphocytes (H/L), vocalizations, and feed efficiency. A high level of social stress resulted in increased H/L ratios and feed consumption; increased resistance to mites, and bacterial infection; decreased resistance to Marek's tumors and viral infection; decreased weight gain and feed efficiency. Highest feed conversion and efficiency levels were obtained with 4-8 birds/cage. An important component of the bird's response is human exposure. Socialized birds (hand-held, spoken to) showed increased feed efficiency, growth rate, uniformity of responses to all tests, resistance to stressors, antibody response to antigen and increased resistance to a wide variety of infectious agents.

The companion animals and people sessions were organized according to: Perspectives on animal awareness and interspecies communication; Developing curriculums of Human/Animal relationships for children K-12; Research reports on interactions of people and companion animals; Horseback riding for the handicapped; Research reports on pet-facilitated therapy—long-term care; Research reports on behavior and temperament; Workshop—how to improve behavior of pets and the quality of companionship. The premier showing of *Intimate Companions*, an Adelphi Productions film, was featured. The film recreates Dr. Aaron H. Katcher's blood pressure experiments in which he compared people interacting with people, and people interacting with their pets.

S.R. Kellert presented the results of a study of over 250 children in the 2nd, 5th, 8th, and 11th grades. A battery of tests were used to examine children's knowledge and attitudes toward animals, species, preferences, and behavioral

contacts with animals. It identified three stages of development in children's relationships to animals. Six to nine years of age involved changes in affective, emotional relationships; ten to thirteen showed an increase in awareness and cognitive understanding; thirteen to sixteen was marked by the development of an ethical concern and abstract conceptual understanding of animals.—*Scott Sanderson*