

CONSCIOUSNESS ABOUT ANIMAL WELFARE PRACTICES AMONG THE ANIMAL TRADERS

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ABSTRACT

The study was carried out in Bareilly and Aligarh districts of Uttar Pradesh, to ascertain the consciousness of animal traders about animal welfare practices. A total of 100 animal traders, 25 from each selected animal markets, as respondents were selected. The findings indicated little concern among animal traders about animal welfare practices.

KEY WORDS: Animal welfare, traders, consciousness, animal market

INTRODUCTION

The lack of consciousness about animal welfare standards among the animal traders affects not only the quality of livestock products but also health of livestock. Various guidelines have been formulated and laws have been enacted to give proper protection to animals against cruelty, for which various agencies such as Animal Welfare Board of India, People for Action (PFA), Blue cross, People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), Societies for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCAs), Beauty without Cruelty (BWC) are working for welfare of animals (Rahman 2005). The agencies concerning to animal welfare have formulated five freedoms for animals and these have been accepted world wide such as, freedom from pain, injury and disease; freedom from hunger and thirst; freedom from discomfort; freedom from fear and distress and freedom to express normal behavior (Bayvel, 2004). Irrespective of using the animals, they suffer a great abuse because of lack of care and consciousness among animal traders about welfare practices for meat animal which is very much essential for safe and nutritious animal origin food production. Therefore, the present study was undertaken to ascertain the consciousness of animal traders about the animal welfare practices, since there are many factors contribute to a great extent for production of safe and nutritious animal origin food, among them health and handling of livestock are of vital importance. In view of these facts, it is most important that animal traders should have knowledge about the animal wellbeing and its welfare.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To collect the data, 25 respondents, involved in trading of animals, were selected randomly from four selected animal markets of Bareilly (Rithora and Bhairpura) and Aligarh (Quarsi and Naron), to make the sample size of 100 respondents. The data were collected personally with the help of pre-structured interviews schedule.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Regarding the consciousness about animal welfare practices, majority of animal traders (95%) were conscious that meat animal should have freedom from thirst, whereas, 95 per cent of respondents reported that animal should have freedom from hunger, injury and disease and in this regards Blosser (1987) reported that people have started to focus attention on human treatment to animal. Further, it was found that majority of animal traders were having high level of consciousness about basic freedom of animals like freedom from pain and discomfort and freedom to express normal behavior and freedom from fear and distress, respectively. The basic freedom of animals known to the animal traders were not on the scientific ground but on humanity ground. Seventy percent of respondents in Bareilly district and 60 percent in Aligarh district were in favour for calm handling of animals. Albright (1983) reported that most important factor in determining stress in herd is the behaviour, attitude and consistence of the caretaker for proper welfare of animals. Further, Appleby and Hughas (1997) have also reported that meat consumers are increasingly demanding that animals be reared, handled, transported and slaughtered using humane practices.

Overall 80 per cent of respondents in both the selected districts were not knowing about good care of animals on ethical ground, whereas, 97 per cent of respondents were not knowing about animal welfare agencies like SPCA and PETA in both the districts (Bareilly and Aligarh). It may be because of their low educational level and poor implementation of government policies on animal welfare. Appleby et al.(1992) reported that public pressure for protection and welfare of animal comes primarily and largely from urbanized population. Only 6 per cent of animal traders were not knowing that a goods vehicle should carry maximum six animals. Thus, it indicates the poor knowledge about the number of animals to be transported in a goods vehicles. Regarding the transportation of animals, Tarrant (1990) reported that common hazard on moving vehicle is overloading which greatly increase animal injury and damage to carcass and meat quality and the same has also been reported by Broom (2000). Majority of respondents (81%) were also not aware about the pregnant animals to be transported. It indicates that they were also transporting the animals those were in advance stage of pregnancy. Majority of the respondents (52%) from Bareilly district were more conscious in comparison to the respondents (36%) of Aligarh district, regarding the punishment to be given to the person causing cruelty to animals. Whereas, 87 per cent of the respondents were also not conscious that person should be punish who fail to provide food, drinking water and shelter to animals. Likewise in case of selling the animals suffering from pain, starvations and thirst, 88 per cent of the respondents were not having the consciousness that owners of these animals is liable to be punish.

The findings indicate little concern among animal traders about animal welfare, they were having poor knowledge about standards of animal welfare and the agencies concerning animal welfare. In view of globalization, the animal traders should have more concern and should be more attentive regarding proper animal welfare to reduce the cruelty to animals, since it also affect the quality of animal origin food. It has rightly been mentioned by Sundrum (1993) that to put animal welfare in practices, it requires the consumers willingness to pay higher prices for food produced according to the need of animals needs. This study also indicates poor knowledge among the animal traders about various standards setforth for the animal welfare and also about the agencies responsible for animal welfare. On the basis of the findings of the study, educational programmes need to be formulated and implemented for the stakeholders involved in animal trading to educate them about significance of animal welfare so as to reduce cruelty and stress on animals during handling and transportation and to improve the interaction between animals and animal traders.

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