

Compliance to OIE animal welfare standards in beef cattle production systems within east Africa

Eva Musyimi

Introduction

According to the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Animal Welfare is defined as “*how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives. An animal is in a good state of welfare (as indicated by scientific evidence) if it is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, able to express innate behaviour, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear, and distress*”. [1]

The internationally recognized ‘*Five Freedoms*’ (freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition; freedom from fear and distress; freedom from physical and thermal discomfort; freedom from pain, injury and disease; and freedom to express normal patterns of behaviour); and ‘*three Rs*’ (for animals used in science; reduction in numbers of animals, refinement of experimental methods and replacement of animals with non-animal techniques) together with the OIE recommendations provide valuable guidance and foundation for national animal welfare legislations and legal framework for the activities of humane societies in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

Extension services for promotion of animal welfare awareness

The extension means employed by the competent Authorities to sensitize and upgrade general animal welfare among the relevant stakeholders in the three countries include; use of mass media such as radio, newspapers, television and pamphlets, certificate trainings, farmer field days and vaccination campaigns led by district veterinary officers. [Bahari M., Kiconco D., and Kariuki J., personal communications, June 2013]

Efforts to promote animal welfare in East African countries also receive a great deal of support from animal welfare societies standing for prevention of cruelty to animals such as; the *Tanzania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals* (TSPCA), *Kenya Society for the Protection and Care of Animals* (KSPCA), *Uganda Society for the Protection and Care of Animals* (USPCA) and the *World Society for Protection of Animals* (WSPA) among others.

Current activities in enforcing animal welfare policies

The commonality of animal welfare issues and widespread animal welfare abuse in Africa has led to the development of an ‘*African Declaration for Animal Welfare*’ (ADAW) in a workshop titled the “*Africa Animal Welfare Workshop*” in September 2009 in Nairobi. The declaration was preceded by the OIE endorsing the ‘*Universal Declaration for Animal Welfare*’ (UDAW) in 2007) [2]. The aim of the declaration is to push African governments to put animal welfare at the top of their agenda. In line with this, Animal welfare experts, organizations and other stakeholders in East Africa and countries in the region, plan on attending the *Pan-African Animal Welfare Alliance-PAAWA* conference (1st - 5th September 2013). The agenda of the conference will be to reduce the gap between Animal welfare standards and Human development/livelihood in the region.

In Kenya animal welfare stakeholders such as (KENDAT, the Brooke, KSPCA, Department of Veterinary Services, Kenya Veterinary Association, Kenya Veterinary Board, Africa network for Animal Welfare) meet in a platform known as AWAKE (*Animal Welfare Action Kenya*) in which they undergo workshops, training and discuss animal welfare issues, animal welfare policy formulation and review

of Cap 360 legislation - *The Prevention to Cruelty of Animals Act*. [Kariuki J., personal communication, June 2013]

Legal framework in support of animal welfare

The Kenyan 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act' Cap 360 (1963, revised 1983) is outdated and out of touch with current contemporary needs of the animal sector, with policies only addressing intensively reared livestock. [3] Hence a ministerial task force was appointed in 2012 to review outdated animal welfare legislations and address the challenges in regulation and enforcement of the current welfare laws. [Kimwele C., Brooke launch, 3rd July 2013]

In Uganda the 'Animals (prevention of Cruelty) Act' Cap 39 (1964) was revised in 2000 [4].

In Tanzania the 'Animal Welfare Act' Cap 154 of 2008 (revised in 2010) includes more comprehensive regulations on humane management and care of draught animals as well as transport of live animals. Furthermore, the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development in Tanzania is a step ahead with appointment of 80 animal welfare inspectors in 2011. The inspectors have the responsibility of ensuring animal welfare standards in relation to transport, handling, slaughter and general management is maintained, with steady improvements seen especially in live animal transport [5]. Whereas in Kenya and Uganda, district veterinary officers (DVOs) and field veterinary officers double as animal welfare extension agents.

Table 1: Evaluation of whether existing animal welfare legislation incorporates selected recommendations of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code.

Country Legislation	OIE Animal Welfare recommendations				
	Humane slaughter (pre slaughter stunning/religious slaughter)	Emergency slaughter for sick / injured animals	Inspection and enforcement	Transport of live animals	Physical environment (Housing)
<i>Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act' Cap 360</i> (Kenya)	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*
<i>Animal Welfare Act' CAP 154</i> (Tanzania)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Animals (prevention of Cruelty) Act' Cap 39</i> (Uganda)	Yes*	Yes*	No	No	No

(*) The Animal Welfare laws in Kenya and Uganda are reactive rather than proactive with more emphasis on punishment of Law breakers. Animal welfare policies in these two countries are inadequate and incomprehensive, unlike in Tanzania where the Legislation is more detailed and incorporates most of the major OIE animal welfare standards.

Animal welfare in beef production systems

In East Africa the broad classes of livestock production systems are:

- Pastoral-range livestock production system (extensive systems)
- Crop-livestock production systems found in the more humid areas and the highlands.
- Ranching systems (semi-intensive system)
- Landless livestock production systems which are largely independent of the specific prevailing ecological conditions (intensive systems)[6]

The key stakeholders in the beef industry are livestock farmers/producers, livestock transporters, slaughter house owners, flayers, traders of livestock, hides and skins, butchers, meat processors, tanners and leather goods manufacturers and other animal health service providers.

The Competent Authorities (Veterinary Services) in the respective countries are aware of the new OIE welfare standards on beef production systems, however they are yet to apply and enforce these recommendations to the beef industry stakeholders, majority of whom are not only uninformed on these new standards but are unaware on the basic freedoms of animals [Bahari M. *et al*, Personal communication]

Some efforts have been observed with regards to animal welfare in major slaughterhouses and export abattoirs in East Africa with regards to beef cattle awaiting slaughter. Major slaughter facility authorities in Kenya and Tanzania attest to their observance of animal welfare standards, including; ensuring that animals rest in spacious lairages which allow free movement, provision of water in the holding pens, well designed alleys free of sharp protrusions, Inspection of animals by a competent veterinarian for health and welfare problems and emergency slaughter for those found sick or injured.

The *Kenya Meat commission* (KMC) which currently exports mutton and goat meat to Angola, Egypt, Oman and the United Arab Emirates, only accepts animals brought to the facility in vehicles to maintain animal welfare and to ensure disease free-livestock are brought to the facility. The animals don't come into contact with other livestock along the way, hence wholesome animal products are produced. Livestock transporters are advised on proper ferrying methods of animals to the facility, in terms of vehicle design, space allowance and driving speed of the transporting vehicles to reduce unfavourable outcomes such as animal deaths, injuries and resultant downgrading of carcasses due to blemishes [Mbuvi. J., Personal communication, 29th August 2013].

However smaller slaughterhouses and rural slaughter facilities (slabs) disregard animal welfare in terms of poor lairage designs, lack incentives for humane slaughter of injured/sick animals and general inhumane handling of animals destined for slaughter. As a result the livestock ministries in Kenya and Tanzania are making efforts to construct modern slaughterhouses and upgrade the widely used slaughter facilities in towns and rural areas to meet basic operational design standards to support welfare of animals. [Kariuki. J. and Omolo D., Personal communications, June & August 2013].

Table 2 : Estimated compliance of slaughter facilities in east Africa to recommended OIE animal welfare standards [7]

Type of slaughter facility	Inspection by a veterinarian	Lairage design	Emergency slaughter of sick / injured animals	Proper transport to slaughter facility (vehicle/trekking)	Resting of animals before slaughter
Export abattoirs	Yes	Good	yes	yes	Yes
Slaughter house	Yes	Below average to average	some	some	Yes
Slaughter slabs	No	poor	No	Are trekked cruelly	No

Gaps in compliance to animal welfare standards

Notwithstanding efforts to promote and enforce international animal welfare by veterinary authorities and animal welfare advocacy groups, there is still a gap in compliance by the relevant stake holders in the beef cattle industry. This is due to fixed mindsets and attitudes towards animals as most are not aware that animals are sentient creatures needing consideration in their well-being, which they consider as unnecessary western influences.

Enforcement of national animal welfare regulations to law breakers by police officers and animal health inspectors is subdued, perpetuating cruel injustices to animals in the respective countries. The low level of enforcement is also contributed by inadequate funds to employ enough competent personnel, veterinary officers and police officers to man checkpoints along stock routes.

In Uganda, quarantine stations and animal holding grounds along stock routes, ports and borders where animals are kept for a specified period of time with the intention of isolation, observation, screening, vaccination and treatment, do not meet the standards stipulated by *Uganda National Bureau of Standards* (UNBS)[8] leading to adverse animal welfare outcomes. Usually nearby farms are improvised as animal holding grounds [Kiconco D., Personal communication, July 2013]

Despite authorities promoting internationally recommended standards of appropriate designs for facilities, containers and vehicles used in live animal transport, there are difficulties in adopting these recommendations by the local relevant stakeholders (cattle traders and producers when transporting their animals).The proposed designs are expensive to implement with some requirements such as inclusion of pens with adequate space in transporting vehicles, being unreasonable to them as this would greatly reduce their monetary gains from transporting fewer number of animals as opposed to ferrying the maximum number of animals for maximum profit. Animal welfare is not a major priority to them [Bahari M. *et al*, Personal communication]

In Tanzania, increasing economic growth has contributed to animal welfare concerns being compromised due to high demand than what supply can offer in live animal transportation. Overcrowding of animals in ill-equipped transport vehicles if not checked by regulatory authorities and animal welfare activists becomes rampant with detrimental effects on production. Animals die during transportation and suffer from pain, hunger, poor ventilation, deprivation of water and harsh treatments. [9]

Conclusion

There is a major gap in implementation of the OIE animal welfare standards in beef production systems and general international animal welfare standards within the East African local setting due to poor animal facilities, funds, technical expertise and limited training of the relevant stakeholders in the beef production industry. There ought to be intensive training on benefits of upholding animal welfare, push for prioritization of animal welfare in teaching institutions and in husbandry practices, employment of adequate animal health inspectors, law enforcers and proper financial plans to ensure sustainability and longevity of animal welfare projects/programmes in East Africa.

References

- [1] OIE, 2012, Animal Welfare, *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (Vol.1,) Section 7, p.305
- [2] Wikipedia, 2013, *Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare*,
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_Declaration_on_Animal_Welfare (Accessed 6th September 2013)
- [3] Kenya Law reports, Chapter 360, *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act*
http://www.kenyalaw.org/kenyalaw/klr_app/frames.php (Accessed 19th August 2013)
- [4] Uganda Legal Information Institute, *The animals (prevention of Cruelty) Act 1964*
<http://www.ulii.org/ug/legislation/consolidated-act/39> (Accessed 19th August 2013)
- [5] The united Republic of Tanzania, 2010, Animal Welfare Act (CAP.154) p.2-3, 15-16, 21-22
- [6] Wanyoike.M.,2010, lecture notes, *Beef cattle production Systems*.
- [7] OIE, 2012, Animal Welfare, *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (Vol.1,) section 7, p.324-325,353-355,374
- [8] UNBS,2007, *Requirements for animal stock routes, check points and Holding grounds*, sections 4.2, 4.3
<https://law.resource.org/pub/ug/ibr/us.778.2007.html> (Accessed 3rd September 2013)
- [9] Bahari.M., *Live Animal Transportation Study in Tanzania*, p.2