

ANIMAL WELFARE

Title: Perceptions among college students about food safety and animal care and ethics in food animal production. Implications for veterinary medicine and the swine industry. – **NPB# 99-137**

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ABSTRACT:

This project presents the results of a college student survey regarding opinions about utilization of animals in medical research, food and byproducts, farm-thru-slaughter food safety issues, food animal production methods and routine surgical procedures, as well as animal wellbeing and ethics in animal agriculture.

The survey was conducted from October 1999 to March 2000. It totaled 2377 college students distributed on 1373 veterinary students at 6 US universities and student chapter members of the AASP (Amer. Assn. of Swine Practitioners), plus one veterinary school in each of Canada, Mexico, UK, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand, two schools in Australia, and 3 schools in Japan. At the 6 US universities, 489 animal science and 515 non-ag students (sociology course) were also surveyed similarly.

Results varied greatly between the US veterinary schools and between college majors at the same universities. Among US veterinary students, species interest (companion animals vs food animals) was strongly correlated to student opinions, with companion animal oriented students being much more critical about animal agriculture systems and practices. Overall, "companion animal students" were similarly or even more critical than non-ag college students, while "food animal students", in particular "AASP" students, were similarly or even more positive about animal agriculture than students majoring in animal sciences. The impact of species interest on student opinions was much less pronounced among veterinary students in the other countries.

Overall, veterinary students in the EU schools were more critical about food animal production systems and practices than veterinary students surveyed in Canada, Australia and Japan, and those students were more critical than the US students. The veterinary students in Thailand, Taiwan and Mexico were the most supportive of animal agriculture systems and practices.

Faculty resources and programs on specific swine topics varied greatly between veterinary schools in the USA. Seven of 27 schools funded swine programs with more than one full-time (FTE) faculty, five with one FTE, and 17 with less than one FTE or no swine faculty at all. Similarly, core and elective courses varied greatly. Overall, swine programs were funded by more faculty and teaching resources in the international schools.

These research results were submitted in fulfillment of checkoff funded research projects. This report is published directly as submitted by the project's principal investigator. This report has not been peer reviewed

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