



Global standards of animal welfare in veterinary education

► Survey report

We were known as **WSPA**
(World Society for the
Protection of Animals)



Here at World Animal Protection, we strive to create a world where animal welfare matters and animal cruelty has ended. We have been moving the world to achieve this goal for more than 50 years and our work always starts with people. People such as veterinary graduates and those who educate them.

Animal producers, governments, consumers and the public increasingly expect high standards of animal welfare, and veterinary graduates are expected to advise on this in their professional capacity. Furthermore, animal health is a key part of animal welfare, and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) recommends that all new veterinary graduates must have a good understanding of animal welfare as a Day 1 competency. And that's where we come in.

Making animal welfare central to veterinary education

World Animal Protection works globally with veterinary educators to provide authoritative and trusted educational and teacher training materials in animal welfare. With the support of the World Veterinary Association, we are working on an initiative to establish a system recognising good practice in animal welfare across veterinary education globally.

Our initiative aims

- 1 Develop a consensus on ten key standards of excellence through which veterinary schools can demonstrate good animal welfare practices.
- 2 Embed these standards in all veterinary schools.
- 3 Influence future vets to have a thorough grounding as advocates for animal welfare.

Gaining consensus within the profession

To establish our ten key standards of excellence, we launched a global consultation with the veterinary profession on World Vet Day - 26 April 2014 - until October 2014.

Survey responses:

Male	1110	43%
Female (plus 33 undisclosed)	1471	57%
Educators	455	17%
Students	1308	50%
Vets in private practice	323	12%
Vets in business	94	4%
Government staff	194	7%
NGO staff	88	3%
Researchers	98	4%
Other professionals	54	2%
English	611	23%
Chinese	1069	41%
Spanish	360	14%
Brazilian / Portuguese	402	15%
Other languages	172	7%
TOTAL	2614	100%

“The World Veterinary Association (WVA) welcomes these findings, which reflect the commitment of the veterinary profession to animal welfare. WVA supports the work of World Animal Protection to promote standards of excellence in animal welfare for veterinary schools.”



Executive summary

Our survey was conducted online and made available in nine languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese, French, Korean, Bahasa, Thai and Vietnamese. By 9 October 2014 we had received 2,614 responses from 97 countries and territories. The breakdown of responses by region was as follows: 56 from Africa and the Middle East (2%), 1,431 from Asia Pacific (55%), 256 from Europe (10%), 749 from Latin America (29%) and 122 from North America (5%).

The sample was made up of 455 educators, 1,308 students, 323 veterinarians in private practice and 528 individuals working in business, government, NGOs, research and other animal professions. More than half of respondents were female (57%) reflecting the changing gender balance of the profession.

The survey investigated four key topics to help us develop our standards of excellence in veterinary education. The remainder of this report examines the responses we received for each topic in turn. The topics were:

- the benefits of improving animal welfare education
- the criteria for welfare standards of excellence
- how to assess the standards, and
- the name for schools meeting the criteria.

For each of these topics, responses were first analysed in terms of the global average, after which they were broken down by region and socio-demographic variables where relevant.

This survey showed strong support for animal welfare education from the veterinary profession, motivated primarily by the desire to ensure better treatment of animals. The response was consistent across professional groups (vet educators, students, practising vets and other professionals) and regions of the world.

Our proposed standards of excellence were drawn up in consultation with the veterinary profession in the countries we work in. The response from the wider profession was very positive. More than 80% of respondents supported each of the ten standards and more than 50% were in strong agreement.

There was no preference for any of the proposed methods for assessing the standards. We are developing tools to help vet educators with self-assessment and peer-assessment.

Thirty eight percent of respondents preferred the name 'Centre of excellence in animal welfare education' for veterinary schools and faculties that achieve best practice according to our standards. This name was favoured by more than two thirds of respondents in Europe and North America. However, respondents from the Asia Pacific region preferred 'Model vet school in animal welfare'. It may be appropriate to use this term in this region.

Our next step is to hold workshops with veterinary schools to develop the standards of excellence in practice. We have already run workshops in Chile and the Philippines. We will use these to feed into the development of the standards, which will be published in early 2015.

"I wish to express the support of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) for the efforts of World Animal Protection relating to the global survey on suitable standards of excellence in applying animal welfare principles in veterinary education institutions.

"The ability of the graduating veterinarian to identify animal welfare problems, participate in corrective actions, know where to find current and credible information regarding regulations and standards, and to explain the responsibilities of those responsible for the care of animals is fundamental to the practice of veterinary medicine at both private and public level."

Bernard Vallat
Director General
World Organisation for Animal Health



The benefits of improving animal welfare education

'What do you see as the main benefits to vet schools of improving animal welfare education?'

Respondents were presented with a list of ten perceived benefits of improving animal welfare education in vet schools. The benefits were ranked order of importance on a scale of 1 - 10 (where 1 is least important and 10 the most important). The results were as follows.

Mean rank*	Benefit
7.9	It reduces harm and suffering of animals.
7.7	It creates a culture of animal welfare practice in the veterinary profession (for both students and professionals).
6.1	It ensures that all students achieve OIE Day 1 vet competencies.
6.0	It improves the quality of veterinary education through animal welfare science.
5.7	It provides a model of animal welfare principles in practice.
5.4	It will increase knowledge of animal welfare science.
5.4	It ensures graduates with greater understanding of animal welfare have better employment opportunities.
4.9	It makes the school more attractive to students.
4.5	It improves status and respect for the school.
1.5	Other

1 = least important 10 = most important

Respondents ranked the intrinsic benefits for animals as the two most important factors. Sixty percent of respondents ranked, 'It creates a culture of animal welfare practice in the veterinary profession' as one of their top three perceived benefits, and 62% put 'It reduces harm and suffering of animals' in their top three.

This shows that professionals who work with animals value the ethical outcomes of animal welfare education more than extrinsic or anthropocentric factors such as employability and institutional reputation.

Key respondent comments

Five percent of survey respondents made additional comments about the benefits of improving animal welfare education, some of which include:

"If taught well, it prepares students to integrate animal welfare in practice to fulfil their vet oath, basic vet duty and work towards a humane society."

"[It] will reduce conflict between animal rights fanatics and ethical professionals in definitions, requirements, concepts, criteria, procedures, decision making, animal husbandry, etc."

"[It] integrates animal welfare into mainstream thinking."

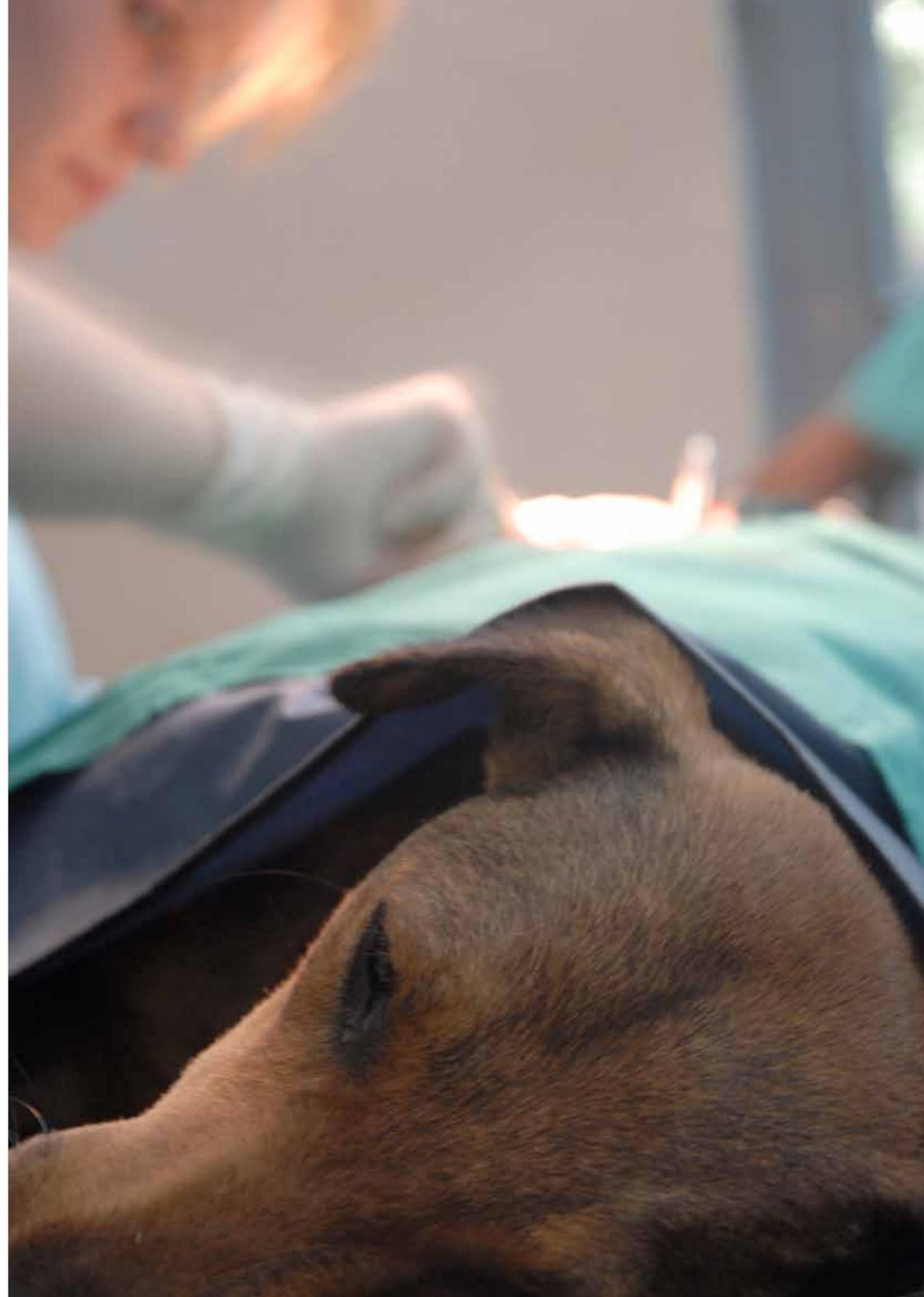
"The science of animal welfare promotes the values of all other forms of life, including the environment and plant life (bioethics) and the environmental problems faced by the new generations, [giving rise to] a more holistic view."

"Since the science of animal welfare is growing tremendously, its teaching must be improved by expert faculty members. It is urgent that the subject be properly taught and given greater importance in the world of veterinary medicine."

Many comments stressed the need to promote an awareness of and a commitment to animal welfare, both within the veterinary profession and within wider society, through education.

Analysis by profession

The results showed a general consensus across all groups: educators, students, vets in private practice, vets in business, government and NGO staff, researchers and other professionals.





Mean ranking	It reduces harm and suffering of animals.	It creates a culture of animal welfare practice in the veterinary profession (for both students and professionals).	It ensures that all students achieve OIE Day 1 vet competencies.	It improves the quality of veterinary education through animal welfare science.	It provides a model of animal welfare principles in practice.	It will increase knowledge of animal welfare science.	It ensures graduates with greater understanding of animal welfare have better employment opportunities.	It makes the school more attractive to students.	It improves status and respect for the school.	Other
Educators	7.7	7.5	6.2	6.0	5.9	6.0	5.1	4.8	4.3	1.5
Students	8.0	7.6	6.3	5.8	5.5	5.1	5.8	5.0	4.5	1.5
Private practice vet	8.1	8.2	5.5	6.2	6.1	5.5	4.9	4.5	4.3	1.7
Vets in business	7.0	8.2	6.2	5.6	5.5	5.0	5.8	5.1	4.7	1.8
Governments	7.5	7.8	5.8	6.0	6.0	5.5	5.3	4.8	4.6	1.7
NGO	8.4	8.7	4.6	6.8	6.9	5.9	4.3	3.9	4.1	1.5
Research	7.8	7.9	5.6	6.6	5.8	6.2	4.9	4.7	4.3	1.2
Other	7.4	7.3	5.9	6.6	5.7	5.3	5.0	5.1	4.9	1.8

The criteria for animal welfare standards of excellence

'To what extent would you agree or disagree that these are good criteria to measure best practice in animal welfare education?'



In consultation with veterinary professionals around the globe, World Animal Protection drafted ten criteria for standards of excellence in applying animal welfare principles in veterinary education. Using a five-point Likert scale, we asked survey respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that each standard was a good measure of best practice in animal welfare education.

Analysis by profession

A further breakdown of the ratings based on employment group revealed no significant differences in attitudes between educators, students, vets in private practice and other animal professionals.

The response showed strong support for all ten criteria, with 80% or more of participants expressing a positive response of 'somewhat agree' or 'strongly agree'. The results were as follows.

Ten standards of excellence in applying animal welfare principles in veterinary education	'Somewhat agree'	'Strongly agree'	Total agree
1 Faculty shows competency in animal welfare All faculty staff (lecturers, animal handlers, post-grad students, administrative staff) show competency in animal welfare as identified by the OIE Day 1 competencies.	30%	55%	85%
2 Effective ethics committee An independent ethics committee exists to review research and teaching that uses animals to ensure the humane use of animals.	30%	56%	86%
3 Humane use of animals The use of animals in teaching and research is humane. Harmful use of live animals is replaced by use of videos, models and software, and ethically-sourced cadavers. Animal facilities, housing and care offer school animals a good quality of life.	24%	63%	87%
4 Animal welfare is taught across the curriculum The principles of animal welfare are taught to all students and can be identified throughout the curriculum.	26%	58%	84%
5 Senior team commitment to animal welfare The mission and vision of the school demonstrate commitment to animal welfare and the senior team creates a culture of animal welfare throughout the school.	28%	56%	84%
6 Continuous professional development The school sponsors, supports, or conducts animal welfare education and training for their staff and practicing vets.	26%	59%	84%
7 Extension / community programmes The school, professors and students are involved with the community to enhance the welfare of animals in the community.	28%	57%	85%
8 Student involvement There is active involvement of students in animal welfare in the school.	26%	60%	86%
9 Research in animal welfare The school offers research opportunities in animal welfare science with a competent supervisor.	28%	56%	84%
10 Effective quality assurance of animal welfare across all provision There is effective monitoring and evaluation of animal welfare throughout the school.	27%	55%	83%

Assessment methods

'What kind of assessment process would help veterinary schools to improve animal welfare standards?'

We asked survey respondents to rank three methods of assessing the standards in order of usefulness. The global data showed no preference for any of the methods of assessment.

Analysis by profession

There was a slight variation between groups based on profession. Educators preferred integrated assessment; students preferred peer assessment, and vets in private practice preferred assessment by independent consultants. World Animal Protection is producing guidelines on assessment of the standards.

Assessment method	Ranked no. 1
Peer assessment: Animal welfare experts from different schools visit another school and make an independent assessment, which is compared to reach a joint assessment.	34%
Integrated assessment: The assessment process is made part of existing processes of accreditation by veterinary statutory bodies.	31%
Independent consultants: Trained and accredited consultants make an independent assessment.	35%

What do we call schools meeting the criteria?

'What would you call a vet school which has best practice in animal welfare according to these criteria?'

The final question asked what a veterinary school that meets these standards of excellence should be called. Respondents were asked to rank four options in order of preference, with the option to add a comment. The results were as follows.

Overall, the data showed a preference for 'Centre of excellence for animal welfare education' (38%). This name was favoured by more than two thirds of respondents in Europe and North America. Respondents from Asia and the Pacific showed a slight preference for 'Model vet school in animal welfare'. Analysis by profession reflected a similar pattern to the full sample.

	Centre of excellence for animal welfare education	Model vet school for animal welfare	Animal welfare friendly school	Animal welfare beacon school
Ranked no. 1	38%	36%	16%	10%
Median rank	2	2	3	4

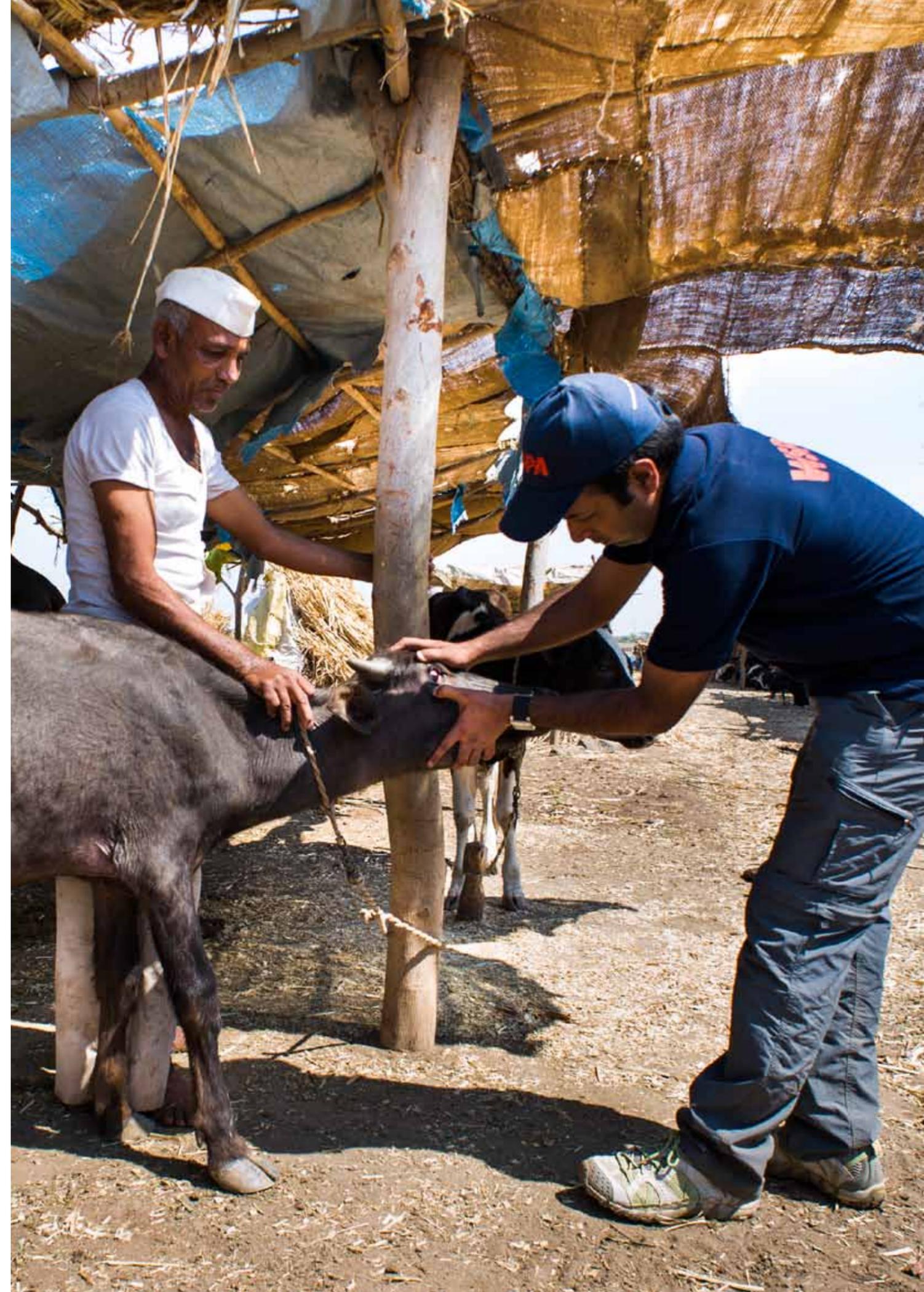


World Animal Protection support for animal welfare in veterinary education

World Animal Protection provides educational materials and teacher training in animal welfare across the world. Our **Concepts in Animal Welfare** materials are widely recognised by veterinary organisations, including the OIE, WVA, CVA, FAVA, COPEVET.

These materials can be accessed free of charge at animalmosaic.org/education/tertiary-education/

For more information, please contact Nancy Clarke nancyclarke@worldanimalprotection.org



We are World Animal Protection.

We end the needless suffering of animals.

We influence decision makers to put animals on the global agenda.

We help the world see how important animals are to all of us.

We inspire people to change animals' lives for the better.

We move the world to protect animals.

Contact us



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