

Short Communication

Animal Welfare II: Types and Extent of Cruelties Commonly Inflicted on Farm Animals

MUHAMMAD QAMAR BILAL, MUHAMMAD IQBAL MUSTAFA, MUHAMMAD SARWAR†, ASHFAQ AHMED MAAN‡ AND S. AHMAD

Departments of Livestock Management, †Animal Nutrition and ‡Rural Sociology, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad-38040, Pakistan.

Farm animals are valuable living creatures and need stress free environment for better performance. They have feeling like human beings but cannot express so vividly. Cruelty to animals is not only inhumane but also makes difficult to achieve the desired objectives. During early times, cruelty to animals was not considered a crime. However, now many countries have established societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals and humane law enforcement where torturing or tormenting animals has been declared a criminal offense. During recent years, animals welfare received a lot of importance, especially in European and North American countries. Therefore, the present study was planned to determine the types and extent of cruelties commonly inflicted on farm animals in Faisalabad, Pakistan.

Observations were recorded on the cruelties on donkeys, bullocks, mules, buffaloes, cattle, sheep, goats and camels in urban and suburban (12-15 km around the city) areas of Faisalabad. The survey was carried out in peak winter (December-January) and summer (May-June). Data were collected either through interviews of the owners or by personal witnessing (standing by the road side) the cruelties on animals working/moving on or along the road, at farm houses, grazing in the fields, at slaughter house and those being transported and/or in market. The observations included a) use of goad on draught animals, b) induced fighting and teasing/beating of animals and c) wandering (without any attendant) animals.

Use of goad (spiked stick), induced fighting and/or teasing/beating and wandering were observed to be the most common offences. Use of goad was observed in city) and 10.5% (n=2/19; suburbs); 2.8% (n=1/36; city) 5.8% (n=7/121; overall) bullocks being 4.7% (n=2/43;

and 8.7% (n=2/23; suburbs) in summer and winter, respectively. In mules, it was 2.7% (n=3/110; overall) being 2.7% (n=1/37; city) and 2.7% (n=1/37; suburb); and not found and 2.8% (n=1/36; suburbs) in summer and winter, respectively. It was found that goad was used only in animals which worked for carriage purposes particularly those at the brickfields because of heavy load and long distance from the city areas. The use of goad results in pain and lameness of animals, therefore, its use has been severely restricted (Stedfeder, 1940), strictly supervised (Zernecke, 1940) and a punishable offense.

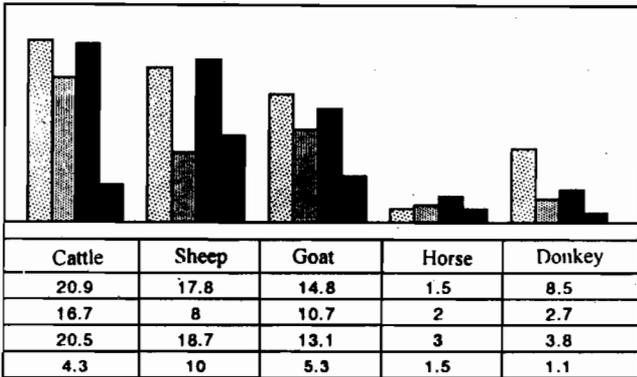
The cases of induced fighting and teasing/beating of the animals were 4.8% (n=5/103), 8.9%(8/89), 7.2%(7/97), 2.2%(4/183) and 1.1%(2/171) in buffaloes, sheep, goats, donkeys and camels, respectively being 3.17%(2/63) and 7.5%(3/40); 7.5%(4/53) and 11.1%(4/36); 9.1%(5/55) and 4.8%(2/42); 2.6%(3/114) and 1.4%(1/69); and 1%(1.1/91) and 1.2%(1/80) in city and suburban areas, respectively. Children were found to beat the animals using small sticks or stones or teasing/beating them by riding sheep/goat or by chasing donkeys. The higher victimisation of sheep and goats by the children compared with other species of animals may be attributed to their smaller size and relatively harmless nature.

The data revealed that the highest wanderer among all the species of animals was cattle (15%; n=18/121) followed by sheep (13.6%; n=12/89), goats (11.3%; n=11/97), donkeys (3.27%; n=8/244) and horses (1.4%; n=3/214). A higher percentage of such animals was found during summer than in winter and also in city than in suburb areas except sheep where there was no much difference in city and suburb areas (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Per cent wandering animals in different seasons in city and suburbs of Faisalabad

SC=summer/city; WC=winter/city;
SS=summer/ suburbs; WS=winter/suburbs

□ SC ▨ WC ■ SS ■ WS



It has been observed that there is no perfect implementation of the existing legislature resulting an unchecked increase in such crimes. The offence like unattended animals has also been reported by Lall (1948) in India, who has suggested humane killing/slaughtering of wandering animals to prevent cruelty to animals like thirst, starvation and accidents.

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