including pain assessment, 4-month neutering of kittens, approved accreditations for pet behaviourists and trainers, and euthanasia of small pets (e.g. rodents). Additionally, the champions have helped gather patient case studies to support awareness-raising media stories and collaborative campaigns with other animal welfare charities and veterinary associations. To support their role, the champions are encouraged to undertake animal welfare CPD, including webinars and massive open online courses (MOOCs).

Developing and auditing animal welfare policies and activities at the practice level has benefits for animal welfare, client satisfaction, staff morale and the professional reputation of veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses. The PDSA-trialled approach has potential applicability in other veterinary practice settings, including private practice.

References available on request.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understanding how veterinary practices can help ensure animal welfare is improved on their premises and in local communities, for the benefit of animals, clients, practice staff and the profession
- How to take a practical approach to developing and auditing animal welfare-focused policies and activities within a veterinary practice
- Understanding latest thinking from veterinary and veterinary nursing bodies on how veterinary professionals can maintain their reputation for leadership in animal welfare and ethics

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. In 2016, what percentage of UK pet owners were familiar with the UK Animal Welfare Acts and the five welfare needs?
   (A) 31%
   (B) 26%
   (C) 65%
   (D) 35%
2. In 2016, what percentage of UK owners did no research before acquiring their pet?
   (A) 5%
   (B) 97%
   (C) 24%
   (D) 18%
3. In 2016, what percentage of UK pet owners took advice from a veterinary professional before taking on their pet?
   (A) 5%
   (B) 21%
   (C) 52%
   (D) 30%

Is it time? Euthanasia

Franck Meijboom

Making decisions about the end of animal life is common practice, yet it is not morally neutral. The end of animal life is related to many societal and ethical questions and concerns. Questions such as how long should we continue to treat an animal before killing it? Or whether it could be legitimate to kill individual animals for the survival of future generations. The end of animal life is characterised by many complex questions and concerns. Some are mainly technical in nature, but most of them have a clear ethical component. This lecture explores and analyses these ethical dimensions of the problems and concerns that arise at the end of animal life.

This confronts us with well-known questions such as, ‘Why do some pet owners try to keep their animals alive at all costs, while others opt for euthanasia rather quickly?’ And ‘Why are members of the same animal species killed at different moments in their life, with different methods and for different purposes depending on the environment they live in?’ To understand and explain these differences a mere reference to the alleged ignorance of animal keepers or the general public will not suffice. The differences have an ethical background: we lack a standard moral evaluation of animals and there is no univocal relationship between humans and animals. Also within the veterinary profession there are genuine differences in the view about euthanasia. To deal with this situation, a better understanding of the ethical background of killing animals is essential. This entails more than an ethical evaluation of specific killing methods or treatments to keep animals alive. With this lecture, there is a double aim. The first aim is to look beneath the surface of the practice in which animals are killed or in which we try to keep animals alive. We take the current practice as a start and try to trace and explicate its ethical background and show that killing animals often comes with a moral intuition that attention to animal welfare does not fully cover the problems raised by the killing of an animal. Second, the aim is to deal with the practical question of defining humane endpoints as a tool to improve decisions at the end of animal life. In this context, the responsibility of the animal owners and veterinary professionals plays a central role. Furthermore, the discussion about what argument can function as a justification for the killing of an animal has to be addressed. In order to support veterinary professionals in practice to make and justify decisions at the end of animal life, the possibilities of assessment models are analysed and some proposals are presented.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Killing animals is never a neutral act
- Veterinary professionals can play a key role in the debate on killing animals: perfect combination of relevant knowledge and expertise with ability of ethical reflection
- We need improved standards with regard to humane endpoints

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following statements about killing animals is most correct?
   - **(A)** Is forbidden by law because of the dignity of the animal
   - **(B)** Should be free to the owner. They know the animal best
   - **(C)** Asks for professional reflection and discretion in each case
   - **(D)** Is a matter of taste: you never can make the right decision
2. Why are humane end points necessary?
   - **(A)** We care about animals and professionals need practical support
   - **(B)** Otherwise professionals lack the knowledge to make decisions
   - **(C)** We care about animals and individual owners are always against euthanasia
   - **(D)** We care about human welfare and individual owners always suffer in cases of euthanasia
3. Why should veterinary professionals play a central role in discussions about defining a humane endpoint?
   - **(A)** They should not, they lack the knowledge
   - **(B)** This should be done by vets only. No other veterinary professional should play a role
   - **(C)** They should not; these professionals should stick to objective evidence
   - **(D)** Veterinary professionals together have the relevant knowledge and practical expertise