



Commonwealth Veterinary Association

AUDIT OF ANIMAL WELFARE RESEARCH CENTRES AT PONDICHERRY AND BANGALORE

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COMMONWEALTH VETERINARY ASSOCIATION & OPEN PHILANTHROPY

-A REPORT

Background

The Commonwealth Veterinary Association (CVA) has an MoU with the Karnataka Veterinary, Animal & Fisheries Sciences University, India (KVAFSU) since 2020 for the establishment of a KVAFSU-CVA Animal Welfare Research Centre (AWRC) at the Department of Livestock Production Management, (LPM) Veterinary College, Bangalore, Karnataka, India, with the objective of carrying out research in animal welfare, behaviour and ethics. The AWRC has also organized Animal Welfare Workshops and Webinars in collaboration with the Jeanne Marchig International Centre for Animal Welfare Education (JMICAWE), The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, University of Edinburgh. CVA has also funded the upgradation of research and training facilities at the Dept. of LPM, Veterinary College Bangalore, and the research of various postgraduate students.

- A. Animal Welfare Training at JMICAWE:** To strengthen the technical expertise on animal welfare at the AWRC, Dr. S. Abdul Rahman, Executive Director, CVA, sought the assistance of the JMICAWE to train the staff at the Centre. Prof. Cathy Dwyer, Director, JMICAWE, designed a two-week training programme focused on acquiring knowledge and skills regarding the latest developments in animal welfare. Two faculty members, Dr. Vivek M. Patil, and Dr. Mahadevappa D. Gouri, of the Department of LPM, Veterinary College Bangalore, India, were sponsored by the CVA with financial assistance from Open Philanthropy. The training was organized from 31st November to 11th December 2022.
- B. Animal Welfare Training at AWSC:** To strengthen the technical expertise on animal welfare at the AWRC, Dr. S. Abdul Rahman, Executive Director, CVA, sought the collaboration of the Animal Welfare Science Centre (AWSC), University of Melbourne, Australia to train the staff at the Centre. Prof. Andrew Fisher, Director, AWSC, designed a two-week training programme focused on acquiring knowledge and skills regarding the latest developments in animal welfare. Three faculty members, Dr. Vivek M. Patil, Dr. Mahadevappa D. Gouri and Dr. H.C. Indresh, of the Department of LPM and Poultry Science, Veterinary College Bangalore, India, were sponsored by the CVA with financial assistance from Open Philanthropy. The training was organized from 29th October to 10th November, 2023.
- C. Animal Welfare Centre at Pondicherry:** With the expertise available at the Animal Welfare Centre at Bangalore, it was envisaged to expand its activities to other colleges in India and Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Veterinary Education and Research (RIVER), Puducherry, India expressed a keen interest to establish a similar centre at its premises. The CVA has an MoU with RIVER and established the RIVER-CVA Animal Welfare Research Center (RIVER-AWRC) at the Department of LPM, RIVER, Puducherry, India, on 30th January 2024 with the objective of carrying out research in animal welfare, behavior and ethics in farm animals.
- D. Animal Welfare Training at JMICAWE:** To strengthen the technical expertise on animal welfare at the RIVER-AWRC, Dr. S. Abdul Rahman, Executive Director, CVA, sought the assistance of the JMICAWE to train the staff of LPM department of RIVER at the Centre. Prof. Cathy Dwyer, Director, JMICAWE, designed a 5-day training programme focused on acquiring knowledge and skills regarding the latest developments in animal welfare.

Two faculty members, Dr. A. Varun of the Department of Livestock Production and Management and Dr. M.V. Silpa, of the Department of Animal Genetics and Breeding, RIVER, Puducherry, India, were sponsored by the CVA with financial assistance from Open Philanthropy. The training was organized from 20th May 2024 to 24th May 2024.

Activities at the two Centres

A.KVAFSU-CVA Animal Welfare Research Centre (AWRC)

1. With the knowledge and skills obtained by the training at JMICAWE and AWSC, Melbourne the Centre at Bangalore has incorporated better design of research projects for assessing and enhancing livestock welfare.

Some of the research projects involving welfare parameters undertaken at the Animal Welfare Research Centre (AWRC) are:

- a. Assessment of dairy cattle welfare in Karnataka – A comparison across species, farm sizes and regions
 - b. Comparative study of the welfare implications of hand milking and community machine milking systems
 - c. Evaluation of Body Condition Score and basic behavioural patterns in lactating dairy buffaloes in North Karnataka
 - d. Assessment of welfare parameters and formulation of ethogram of Kenguri sheep reared in intensive and extensive systems, as per the AWIN (UK) welfare assessment protocol
 - e. Amelioration of heat stress with modified microclimate in lactating dairy cattle
 - f. Evaluation of the constraints faced by sheep farmers in Yadgir district of Karnataka, India
 - g. Approaches to improve the welfare of dairy cows through alleviation of lameness
 - h. Morphometric characteristics and management practices of non-descript cattle of Karnataka
 - i. Economics of milk production in Karnataka: A comparative study
 - j. Morphological characteristics and management practices of indigenous goats in Karnataka
 - k. Characterization and performance evaluation of indigenous Kakkera chicken of Yadgiri district
 - l. Pet dog management practices in Bengaluru city
2. Incorporating of new techniques and best practices for teaching animal welfare concepts and clinical skill training in vet schools of the University.
 3. Supported the establishment of Animal Welfare Research Centre at Puducherry Veterinary College.
 4. Organized International Animal Welfare Workshops in January 2023 and January 2024 at AWRC, Bengaluru, and in August 2024 at RIVER Puducherry for dissemination of animal welfare related information and practical demonstrations for participants from across India and many other countries.
 5. Faculty are actively providing expert advice to livestock farmers and Gaushalas (shelter homes for dairy cattle) for promoting animal welfare as a means to enhanced profitability. Free-range and organic poultry production is also being promoted.
 6. Faculty are also closely coordinating with civic authorities and Non-Government Organizations for enhancing the welfare of street (stray) dogs.
 7. Faculty are part of the Institutional Animal Ethics Committees of various vet schools and ensure that welfare aspects are adequately considered while approving research projects involving animals.

8. Faculty have published many research papers and leaflets on animal welfare issues. Research findings have also been presented in Conferences and Workshops
9. Dr. Vivek Patil as Chief Editor of the Indian Journal of Animal Production and Management has released a Special Issue on “Behaviour and Welfare of Native Livestock Species” in October 2024.

B. RIVER-CVA Animal Welfare Research Center (RIVER-AWRC)

The Centre at Pondicherry is encouraging research activities pertaining to animal welfare and has started working with the expertise available, especially after the two staff members undertook their training at JMICAWE. Animal welfare research topics have been assigned to post graduate students of LPM department to undertake research on “Welfare issues of goats reared in and around Pondicherry region” and “Assessing the Animal Welfare status of an organised goat farm and understanding the influencing factors”.

AUDIT OF THE TWO CENTRES

To evaluate the work of AWRC, Bangalore and RIVER-AWRC, Pondicherry, after the training obtained by staff at these two centres, the CVA decided to have an audit of the two centres and help plan future strategies and do a SWAT analysis. This was done with financial support from Open Philanthropy.

Two Animal Welfare experts Dr. Peter Thornber from Australia and Dr. Kate Littin from New Zealand were invited to do the audit.

Dr. Peter Thornber has extensive animal health and welfare policy experience and has worked closely with national governments and Industry, international governments, and non-government organisations for many years. Dr. Thornber wrote Australia’s Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS) in 2003 and was Director of the AAWS, leading its national implementation for 10 years. He coordinated activities and in-kind contribution across approximately 150 governments, industry organisations, welfare organisations and animal rights groups.

Dr Kate Littin is an animal welfare scientist and experienced leader in animal welfare, agriculture and food safety policy and regulation. Dr. Littin is the past Chair of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) Asia Pacific Collaborating Centre for Animal Welfare Science and Bioethical Analysis: the David Bayvel Consortium.

The audit was held from 1st February to 6th February, 2025.

1. Audit of RIVER-AWRC, Pondicherry.

The experts along with Dr. S. Abdul Rahman, Executive Director of CVA visited RIVER at Pondicherry between 1st to 3rd February, 2025 and had an initial meeting with Dr. V. Sejjian, Dean of RIVER and discussed the activities of the Animal Welfare centre. The experts visited the RIVER-AWRC situated in the Department of LPM and were briefed of the activities of the centre by the staff Dr. Shilpa, Dr. Raghee and Dr. Venugopal. The experts also had in-depth discussion with the postgraduate students of LPM who are undertaking animal welfare as their research topics. The experts inspected the facilities of the centre.

The experts later had an interactive session with the staff and post graduate students of RIVER presided over by the Dean Dr. Sejjian



The audit team at River” L-R Dr. Raghee, Dr. Kate Littin, Dr.V. Sejian, Dr. Peter Thornber, Dr.S. Abdul Rahman, Dr. Venugopal and Dr. Silpa



Experts at the Centre





Dr.S. Abdul Rahman interacting with postgraduate students of LPM Dept.



Dr. Kate Littin inspecting the poultry sheds at the RIVER poultry unit



Dr. Peter Thornber interacting with the postgraduate students of LPM Department



At the interactive session



Dean, Dr.V. Sejian welcoming the guests



Section of the audience

2. Audit of AWRC Bangalore

The experts along with Dr.S. Abdul Rahman, Executive Director of CVA visited AWRC, Bangalore between 4th to 6th February,2025 and had an initial meeting with Dr.N.K.S. Gowda, Dean of Veterinary College, Bangalore and discussed the activities of the Animal Welfare Research Centre.



Dr. Peter and Dr. Kate with staff of Veterinary College



Meeting with the Dean. L-R. Dr. Vivek Patil, Dr.S. Abdul Rahman
Dr. Peter Thornber, Dr.N.K.S. Gowda, Dean, Dr. Kate Littin and Dr. Gouri

The experts visited the AWRC situated in the Department of LPM and were briefed of the activities of the centre by the Coordinator of the Centre Dr. Vivek Patil, Dr. Prasanna, Head of Department of LPM, Dr. Mahadeveppa Gowri, Asst Prof LPM. The experts also had in-depth discussion with the postgraduate students of LPM who are undertaking animal welfare as their research topics. The experts inspected the facilities of the centre.



Dr. Vivek Patil explaining the research activities of the Centre



Dr. Mahadevappa Gouri explaining the research work at the Centre



Dr. Peter Thornber interacting with staff and postgraduate students at the centre



Dr. Peter Thornber and Dr. Kate Littin with staff of the Centre

The experts later had an interactive session with the faculty of Animal Sciences Division and post graduate students presided over by the Dean Dr.N.K.S. Gowda.



Interactive session presided by the Dean Dr.N.K.S.Gowda

The experts later had an interactive session with the faculty of Animal Sciences Division and post graduate students presided over by the Dean Dr.N.K.S. Gowda.

The experts visited the Banerghatta National Park and Zoo which is being used by AWRC for wildlife animal welfare issues and met the Pathologist Dr. Manjunath Reddy and had discussions with him regarding wildlife welfare issues. They also met the Director of the Park Dr. Sen and discussed future collaboration between AWRC and the National Park.

The visit of the experts was concluded on 7th February,2025.

-The audit report and Swot Analysis of the two centres is attached herein.