

VOLUME 25 NO. 12 MAY 2023

Dear EurSafe members,



It is a pleasure writing this editorial for the Spring edition of the EurSafe newsletter. In the Netherlands, spring was late this year, but has finally started. So I am writing this editorial while I am enjoying the sunny

weather and a nice view on the fields. My neighbour's dairy cows are grazing and ruminating in pasture. Our own three sheep are also grazing, while their lambs alternate between grazing, playing and suckling milk from their mothers. The chickens are clucking while scratching and foraging. It is such a pleasure to own some of animals. Animals make me happy; every day I look at them, feed them, pet them and talk to them. They on their turn react on me when they see or hear me. So, in our backyard human—animal interactions occur several times a day.

I am not the only one who enjoys interacting with animals. Scientific research confirms that animals positively influence both physical and mental human wellbeing. Because of this effect, animals are involved in human health care, under the umbrella of animal assisted interventions (AAI) in different ways. The field of animal assisted interventions (AAI) is relatively young and has predominantly focused on the positive effect of animals on humans. However, the interactions with humans could affect also the welfare of the animals. It is important that in AAI the welfare of the animals is considered and ethical con-



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cerns are addressed and therefore the theme of this newsletter is Animal assisted interventions.

The contribution of Richard Griffioen explains by means of the animal welfare model of Mellor that human – animal interactions influence animal welfare. He proposes to use an interdisciplinary approach of One Health to practice AAI responsibly and protect the health and well-being of all humans and animals involved. Richard offers some advices for the responsible setting up of AAI. Above that, he claims that in case human or animal welfare is compromised, ethical reflection is needed. Kathalijne Visser explores in her paper the concept of social licence to operate (SLO) and its relevance to animal assisted intervention. It is challenging to study animal behaviour in this field, and practitioners in AAI may not have had any education in animal behaviour and animal welfare. AAI seems to lacks legitimacy regarding the welfare of the animal. Moreover, Kathalijne raises the ethical question corning the level of discomfort for the animals is acceptable when they are involved in AAI. Both papers make clear that work has to be done in the field of AAI. By choosing this theme for newsletter,

I hope attention is drawn for the work to be done. Also in this newsletter you can find an update from the executive committee by Franck Meijboom, the EurSafe president. In the save-the-date section you can read the announcement for the Vienna Doctoral School of Philosophy Summer School 2023 for students working in all areas of philosophy and neighbouring disciplines. The deadline to apply has been extended to the end of May.

Furthermore, you can read a short review of the recently published book Animal Ethics & livestock farming – in Dutch Dierethiek & Veehouderij – by Bart Gremmen. Although the book is written in Dutch, it is interesting to introduce. It might encourage Bart to translate the book in English. At last, this newsletter provides an overview of some upcoming events that might be of interest for you. Enjoy reading.

Mariska van Asselt

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The ethics of animal assisted interventions

Richard Griffioen



According to the definition of the International Association of Human Animal Interaction Organizations (IAHAIO, 2018), Animal-Assisted Interventions (AAI) can be divided into four categories: 1) Animal-Assisted Activities (AAA), usually performed

on a volunteer basis by humans using (own) animals that have followed at least an introductory training; for example, a dog visiting program at a children's hospital or nursing home for the elderly. 2) Animal Assisted Pedagogy (or: Education) (AAP/E), can be performed by a regular teacher or a specially trained remedial teacher; for example, a reading program in which children learn to read in the presence of a dog or other animal or for the relaxation of individual students. 3) Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT), a targeted intervention delivered by a licensed therapist (healthcare professional) to improve a patient's cognitive, emotional, or physical functioning. 4) Animal Assisted Coaching/Counseling (AAC), a targeted intervention guided and/or delivered by professionals who are qualified as a coach or advisor. By means of experiential techniques, clients are stimulated to self-reflect and to actively look for their own solution to the problem.

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Animal welfare

In recent years there has been a large increase in the number of animal-assisted interventions in medical and paramedical care and various health environments. In animal-assisted interventions, involved professionals should consider the safety and well-being of all participants and should be aware that the participating animal is not just a tool, but a sentient being. Ensuring the well-being of animals involved in AAI is crucial. Animals should be treated with respect, and their physical, psychological, and social needs should be met. This includes appropriate housing, nutrition, exercise, and healthcare, as well as regular assessments to ensure suitability for their role. Animal-assisted interventions should only be performed with the assistance of animals that are in good physical and emotional health (Peralta, 2021). In addition, it is necessary that the handlers (animal supervisors) are familiar with the individual animal that participates in an intervention, to always guarantee the welfare of the animal.

The impact, or potential impact of animals on the physical and emotional health of humans has received more attention in recent decades. The human-animal interaction that results from the use of animals in various interventions is one of the aspects that has an impact on animal welfare. By

looking at animal welfare using the Five Domains model by Mellor (2020), attention is not only drawn to the general needs of an animal such as adequate nutrition (domain 1) and optimal health (domain 3) as well as access to a comfortable environment (domain 2) that enables the animal to exhibit natural behaviour (domain 4), but also to the subjective experiences arising from these domains; the mental state of the animal (domain 5). Potential disruptions to general needs can arise within each of these 5 domains.

This model offers a systematic method to determine how our actions affect the welfare of the animals kept. The latest insights into animal welfare are no longer based only on the absence of a negative state of mind, but also on the presence of a positive emotional state.

The current Five Domains model (Mellor 2020), which has been purposefully modified provides an explicit way to effectively address the animal welfare implications of a wide range of human-animal interactions. It contains specific guidelines for evaluating the negative and/or positive effects of human behaviour on animal welfare.

The domain of 'behaviour' in the latest version of the model has been expanded with interactions with other animals and interactions with humans (behavioural interactions). Here, too, the circum-

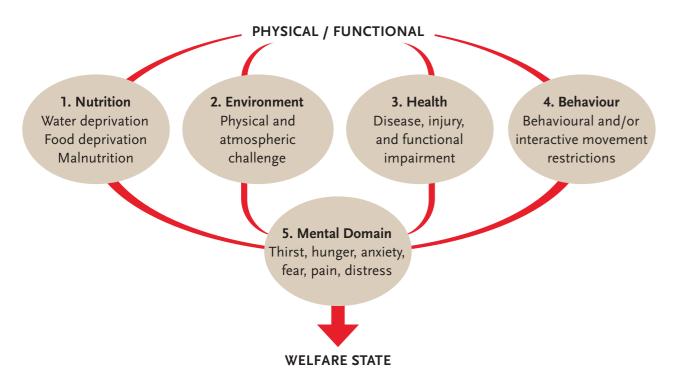




Photo: R. Griffioen

stances in each domain influence the subjective experience of the animal, the 5th domain: mental affect. It emphasizes the ability of animals to engage in conscious self-directed behaviour when interacting with their environment, other non-human animals, and humans.

Situations in which interactions between humans and animals can have negative consequences for welfare include when animals have previously had little or no human contact and are now expected to do so, when human actions cause unintended harm or when human actions are immediately unpleasant, threatening and/or harmful.

Situations where human-animal interactions can have positive effects on welfare include when the presence of humans requires companionship and feelings of security, when people provide preferred foods, tactile contacts, and/or training reinforcements, when the presence of familiar people is soothing in threatening circumstances, and when

people act to end periods of deprivation, inhibition, or harm.

Where the Five Domains model has already been specifically adapted regarding AAI and thus links animal welfare to human interactions, the One Health concept immediately shows that animal and human welfare are inextricably linked and that there is a reciprocal influence, also with the environment. In the context of animal-assisted interventions, One Health is especially important to look at, for example, the natural behaviour of the animal. The interaction must yield something for both parties. It must be enriching for the animal and certainly include play and play activities that are close to the natural behaviour of the animal. For humans, the low threshold of interaction with an animal gives a positive impulse to make contact.

By addressing these ethical concerns, AAI programs can be conducted in a responsible and

compassionate manner, benefiting humans, animals, and the environment while adhering to the principles of One Health.

Responsible practice of animal-assisted interventions requires ensuring that adequate facilities and best practices are in place to continuously monitor and protect the health and well-being of all involved. The emotional bond between humans and animals is an important aspect of AAI. Ethical concerns arise when this bond is disrupted, such as when an animal is removed from the program, or when the intervention is terminated. Care should be taken to minimize any potential negative effects on both human and animal participants.

Both humans and animals give signals that may indicate that they do not feel at ease. If they are not noticed in time, stressful situations can arise for both humans and animals. Animals experience their environment in a different way than humans, their senses are often more sensitive and perceive more details than humans can. This makes some conditions seem good to humans while this can cause a lot of stress or anxiety in animals.

To practice AAI responsibly, therapists and counsellors must ensure adequate facilities and protocols are in place to continuously monitor and protect the health and well-being of all patients, clients, therapists, counsellors, staff, animals, and visitors involved. An interdisciplinary approach of One Health will make this objective possible. Examples of conditions and advice for the responsible setting up of AAI in the context of a One Health approach are:

- 1. A clear description of the objectives and activities of the AAI program.
- 2. Screening/intake procedures to match people, animals, and a suitable environment (if relevant) to maximize benefits for all.
- 3. Trained human health care professionals who can assess the conditions, progress, and suitability of program participants to work with animals
- 4. Animal professionals who can select appropriate animals for the program, and work with healthcare professionals to define care and treatment programs and to continuously assess animal welfare.
- 5. Facilities and resources (animal and peo-

- ple-friendly areas and good play and play materials) that support program participants throughout the duration of the interventions.
- Collaborative networks that allow for comprehensive advice and support in areas not covered by the program, e.g., other therapists, counselors and institutions.
- Organizations and institutions (Colleges and Universities) that can help systematically analyze and record data to contribute to evidence-based interventions and best practices (Pinillos, 2018)

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Photo by E.K.Visser

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Social Licence and its relevance to animal assisted interventions

Kathalijne Visser



A social licence to operate (SLO) is defined as an intangible, unwritten and non-legally binding social contract with society. Traditionally, the concept has been applied to a practice whose practitioners seek legitimacy due to the perception that

those practices or actions may cause harm to environments or individuals. Examples where the SLO has played or still plays an important role are the mining industry, wind industry, forest management and farming. Nowadays, the concept of SLO is increasingly being brought to our attention when animals are involved in sports, recreation or work. This contribution explores the concept of SLO and its relevance to the area in which animals are involved in human health care: animal assisted interventions (AAI). In the field of animal assisted interventions one can distinguish animal assisted therapy (AAT), animal assisted coaching (AAC), animal assisted education (AAE) and animal assisted activities (AAA).

There is no doubt that a positive interaction between humans and animals benefits the physical and mental health of humans. Whether the animals (i.e. dogs, horses) are actively involved in a therapy session or brought to classrooms or nursing homes for support or keeping company, most humans experiencing these interactions will benefit a better mental health. Also the

beneficial side effects on human physical health of having pets, especially dogs, have been documented since the last century. Despite the increasing evidence of the positive effects of AAI on mental and physical human health, the impact of this interaction on the welfare of the animals has been only scarcely studied. Some practitioners and clients in AAI themselves, animal welfare scientists and governmental bodies question how animals perceive the interaction and what the impact is on the welfare of the animals involved. As research in animal welfare has progressed, today it is commonly agreed upon that animal welfare does no longer implies only making sure the animals do not suffer, but indeed we need to provide such care and environment that the animal can experience positive emotions. This is conceptualized with the Five Domains Model of David Mellor, in which the four functional domains (nutrition, physical environment, health and behavioural interaction) all have their impact on the fifth domain, the mental state. Notably, domain 4 (behavioural interactions, focuses on evidence of animals seeking specific goals when interacting behaviourally with (1) the environment, (2) other non-human animals, and (3) humans. Consequently, animal welfare is nowadays seen as the quality of life and the possibilities to adapt and cope as perceived by the animal itself. In AAI, there is very little documented about the environmental and nutritional needs of the animals involved. Presumably, these needs are met for general health reasons. Changes in behaviour on the other side might be noticed at an early stage, since this is where the practitioners in AAI will focus on in their sessions. However, it is guestionable whether practitioners have the knowledge and expertise to interpret the animals' signals correctly and are able to take action if needed. Most practitioners are schooled in human physical and mental health and are lacking education in animal behaviour and animal welfare.

A broad range of factors are critical to maintain a social license. Thrust is viewed as the overarching factor for maintaining or losing a social license as an industry or sector. Moreover, thrust is dependent on other critical factors such as legitimacy, transparency, competence, shared values and credibility.

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The field of AAI is relatively young and lacking (inter) national regulations. Except general animal welfare rules that apply to all animal handlers and keepers, no specific regulations regarding the frequency or length of the sessions exist. However, practitioners develop guidelines based on own experiences to warrant the welfare and health of their animals. Moreover, as stated above, there is no obligation for practitioners in AAI to have had education in animal behaviour and animal welfare. Hence, it is questionable if the welfare of the animal involved can be monitored carefully. A handful of studies in dogs and horses state that there is no harm for the animals involved, however the methodology and interpretation of the results in these studies is open to discussion. It is utmost challenging to study animal behaviour in this field because of the variable circumstances and the human factors involved. More insight is needed in how the animals experience the AAI sessions, how often and for how long animals are used in the sessions, how this is balanced with other activities and rest during the day and how good practices are substantiated. Additionally, an ethical question needs to answered: what level of discomfort for the animals do we accept when they are involved in the sessions?

As becomes clear from the above, the relatively young field of AAI lacks legitimacy regarding the welfare of the animals, probably also lacks professionals educated in animal behaviour and welfare, and lacks transparency on what discomfort is acceptable and how this is evaluated. But what are the shared values between practitioners and society regarding these animals' welfare and how does society regard the validity and trustworthiness of AAI? These are important questions for this relatively young field to explore in the near future.

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EurSafe Executive Committee

Update May 2023



First things first: we are pleased to announce the Call for Abstracts for the EurSafe 2024 conference and the launch of the website https://eursafe2024.org. The conference will be held in Ede, the Netherlands (11-14 September 2024). The theme is

'Back to the Future: Sustainable innovations for ethical food production and consumption. Celebrating 25 years of EurSafe Conferences'. We cordially invite you all to submit abstracts (before 1 December 2023).



In the meantime, we have interesting 'EurSafe interim events' such as the *Veterinary Ethics Conference in Vienna* (27-29 September 2023) and the *Nordic Environmental Ethics Symposium on Food and Water Ethics* (Trondheim). Please check this newsletter and our website for further events.



On 9 March, we gathered as a Board for our annual local meeting. This year we decided to hold the meeting in Ede (NL) in order to visit the 2024 conference venue. The main items on the agenda were the next conference, finances and membership and the EurSafe strategy.

Regarding finances and membership, we explored ways to make membership of EurSafe more attractive to a wider group of ethics professionals, such as those specialising in environmental ethics and policy, for example by partnering with existing organisations in these fields, such as ISEE in environmental ethics. We also aim to broaden the regional background of our members (link to upcoming conferences). We are also looking at ways to make payment easier, e.g. through an instant payment option on the website. The membership fee was discussed. The current membership fee of 30 € will be maintained until the new strategy is up and running, so that EurSafe has 'more to show' in terms of membership benefits.

Discussing the next conferences, the board agreed that it would be good to have the 2026 conference outside the Northern/Western Europe (South, Balkans, Baltic region) to broaden the community and ensure inclusiveness to lower-income European countries. If you have ideas for this, we would be happy to hear from you.

In order to make the existing 5 year strategy more operational, we discussed the issues of interdisciplinarity, community strengthening and member engagement. As a result we decided to consider practical steps for a more explicit link with environmental ethics and plan a survey of early career colleagues to get a sense of their preferences and how EurSafe could support this group. We also concluded that EurSafe is an ethics society but that most if not all of our issues require input from different disciplines. This has been reflected in EurSafe meetings from the beginning, but we need a more substantial discussion on how we see interdisciplinarity and how professionals from these disciplines can be involved in our society.

Finally, I would like to announce that before the summer break you will receive an invitation to an online General Assembly to discuss the financial report and the first results of the strategy implementation.

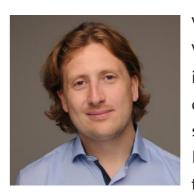
Best regards,

Franck Meijboom
On behalf of the Executive Board, 15 May 2023

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Vienna Doctoral School of Philosophy Summer School 2023 Konstantin Deininger



We are pleased to announce that the Vienna Doctoral School of Philosophy is extending the deadline for its upcoming summer school. This year's summer school – Inclusivity and Ethics – is a three day event that will take place at the University of Vienna

from 10-12 of July.

A brief description of the topic

Ethical theorists often take positions, whether by accident or on purpose, that entail strong divisions in who (or what) counts as having moral status. Whether in respect of marginalized groups, future generations, or impersonal entities (like the environment), concerns of inclusivity are at the forefront of contemporary ethical discussions. These discussions may take place on the more abstract level of meta-ethics, as certain theories may distribute moral agency on the basis of rational capacities that non-human animals – and some humans (e.g., very young children) – arguably lack. They may take place on the level of normative theories that only grant moral status to conscious entities that can be made more or less well-off, a consideration that means it is not possible to act in morally wrongful ways towards non-conscious entities. And perhaps paradigmatically, theories can fail to be inclusive by omitting or trivializing the concerns of marginalized groups, often because they are left out of the institutions and knowledge-making processes that set the agenda for academic debates. To reflect on 'inclusivity' as a philosophical theme is not only to reflect on the abstract commitments that make a moral theory more or less inclusive, but also to reflect on the specific concerns and applied cases that our discussions have failed to include.



NIG, Neues Institutsgebäude Vienna (Austria). Photo: Georg Herder

We strongly encourage students working in all areas of philosophy and neighbouring disciplines (e.g., empirical ethics (such as veterinary ethics), gender studies, sociology, queer theory, or medicine) to apply.

The format of this year's summer school will consist of three days of peer presentations. Applicants are asked to submit a short abstract for a presentation on the above-mentioned theme that they will deliver in the presence of their peers and esteemed instructors for feedback and advice. Each day of the school will include presentations and assigned readings from the school's instructors.

Instructors for the school

- Dr. Martin Huth (University of Vienna, Austria)
- Dr. Paul*A Helfritzsch (University of Vienna, Austria)
- Dr. Luz Ascarate (University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, France)
- Professor Edwin Etieyibo (University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa)

Further instructors to be announced shortly.

Structure & Dates

- The school will take place (in-person) at the University of Vienna from 10-12 of July, 2023.
- Students will be assigned readings in advance and expected to attend all three days of the event. 4 ECTS credits will be provided to students who present and fully attend the school.

Application

Applicants are asked to prepare a short academic CV and (in a separate document) an abstract for a ten minute presentation (approx. 150 words) that does not contain your name or any identifying information. Please send the completed application to summerschool.philosophie@univie.ac.at.

Diversity

We especially encourage (and actively welcome) applications from underrepresented or disadvantaged groups within the profession and the academic community at large.

More information

DOOK FeView

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Dierethiek & veehouderij

Animal ethics & livestock farming
Bart Gremmen

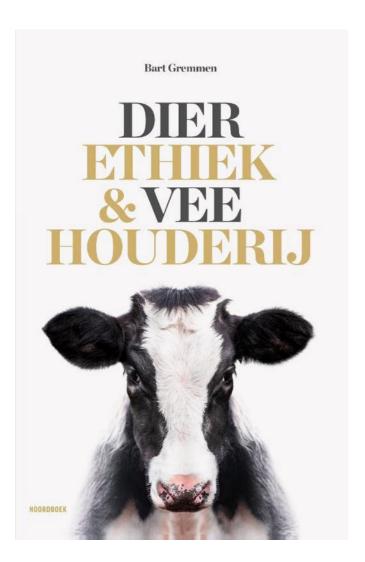


Bart Gremmen's book Animal ethics & livestock farming has been published in February 2023. The book is written in Dutch, which is for Dutch people, among others students in agricultural education, a nice opportunity to read about animal ethics in their mother

tongue. Although it is now only available Dutch - Bart might consider translating it to English – it is an interesting book to introduce to the EurSafe community.

In his book, Bart Gremmen looks for a moral compass for livestock farming. He discusses several ethical theories - contract ethics, utilitarianism, rights theory and eco-ethics - and looks at how they can be applied to livestock farming. According to these approaches, animal husbandry is morally unsustainable, although elements of these approaches are used by the government, civil society organizations and activist groups. For that reason, he switches to a general ethical compass, in which all approaches play a role and are connected by the ethics of care. It forms a structured framework for reflection in which different values from different ethical theories are taken into account. It also shows the complexity of problems in livestock farming.

Another question that the book deals with is whether technological innovations could provide solutions to the moral problems in livestock farming, such as problems with animal welfare, animal diseases, the killing of surplus animals, and environmental problems. At the end, he presents five scenarios for the future of livestock farming in 2050. No livestock farming, extensive livestock farming, intensive livestock farming, high-tech livestock farming, and extensive livestock farming with the use of smart precision livestock farming. The latter scenario seems to gain his approval.



In the book, Bart draws on various studies he has done in recent years, and it thus provides a nice overview of his work. Bart makes complex ethical discussions accessible to a general audience. He does this through a clear way of explaining, with many examples that may appeal to people. You can also clearly see how much teaching experience Bart has gained over the years, by the clear and concise way in which he explains various ethical theories. This makes certain chapters from the book useful for education that introduces ethics - and animal ethics in particular.

Bernice Bovenkerk and Mariska van Asselt

events

Conferences, symposia and workshops

15-18 OF JUNE 2023

International Society for Anthrozoology (ISAZ) Conference University of Edinburgh (Schotland) website

10-12 OF JULY 2023

Vienna Doctoral School of Philosophy summer school - Inclusivity and Ethics

University of Vienna (Austria) website

27-29 OF SEPTEMBER 2023

Veterinary Ethics Conference University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna (Austria) website

11 - 14 SEPTEMBER 2024

EurSafe conference - Back to the Future
Sustainable innovations for ethical food production and consumption
Ede (the Netherlands)
website



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