

OPENING SPEECH

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Ladies and gentlemen, in this International Congress on Applied Ethology in Farm Animals which is now beginning, we shall be considering the behaviour of farm animals. Why should we study this?

- Firstly because farm animals are very good subjects for investigating fundamental mechanisms of behaviour.
- Secondly because behaviour studies have, for many years, helped to improve livestock farming efficiency.
- Thirdly because behaviour assessment is a basic tool in veterinary diagnosis, in studying disease transmission and in teaching animal handling.
- Fourthly because behaviour is one of the important ways of providing scientific evidence about animal welfare.

Examples illustrating these reasons for studying behaviour will be apparent from presentations at this Congress.

This last reason for studying farm animal behaviour is topical because the recent Swedish animal welfare law makes Sweden one of the world leaders in welfare legislation. Many here will watch with interest to see if the specific regulations following from this law take full account of behavioural, physiological and animal disease data. This is important as regards new developments in biotechnology as well as for existing farming systems. Where new products, like bovine somatotropin, and new procedures, like the production of transgenic animals and embryo transfer, are developed it is essential that the welfare of the animals should be considered. Chemical or genetic engineering procedures must not be allowed for general use unless they are proven harmless to animals thus treated, by studies of their health and welfare carried out throughout their longest normal commercial life.

This Congress is the second of its kind, the first having been held in Kiel, Federal Republic of Germany in 1984. Four Societies are involved in its organisation and I speak on behalf of all of them. First I shall say a few words about each of them. You will already know about the International Society for Animal Hygiene, which organises regular international veterinary meetings, for this day is shared between the I.S.A.H. meeting and this Congress.

The European Association for Animal Production is also well known to you as it organises many animal production meetings in Europe. It is the Commission on Animal Management and Health which is concerned with this meeting.

The Applied Ethology Section of the Deutsche Veterinärmedizinische Gesellschaft has held regular meetings in Freiburg, F.R.G. for many years, organised by Dr. Klaus Zeeb. The meeting in 1988 will be its twentieth. These meetings have been a forum for the exposition of many ideas like those which you will hear about here.

The Society for Veterinary Ethology has members from many countries and meetings in recent years have been held in Tänikon in Switzerland; Zeist and Wageningen in the Netherlands; Tours in France; Dublin in Ireland; Edinburgh, Reading and Cambridge in the United Kingdom; and, if we go back far enough, here in Skara, Sweden.

Other important applied ethology meetings have been held in: Madrid, Spain; Gödöllő, Hungary; Armidale, Australia; Davis, USA and Montreal, Canada. Valuable sessions on farm animal behaviour have been held at International Ethological Conferences and American Society of animal Science meetings, whilst many specialist meetings on farm animal management, health and welfare have been organised by the Commission of the European Communities.

This Congress has been organised by a scientific committee of Dr. Gerrit van Putten, Professor Dr. Jürgen Unshelm and Dr. Klaus Zeeb and two local organisers Dr. Bo Algers and Professor Per Jensen. We thank them for all of their hard work. We also thank the following for financial support:

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Ladies and gentlemen we have 190 people attending this Congress from 24 countries and 6 continents. I look forward to many exciting papers, posters and discussion. I am happy to declare the Congress open.