



Veterinary Associations Unite to Advocate for Animal Behaviour and Training Welfare in New Position Paper

FVE, FECAVA, FEEVA and WSAVA call for universal guidance to ensure the lifetime welfare of companion animals under human care.

A coalition of veterinary associations, led by the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) and including the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (FECAVA), the Federation of European Equine Veterinary Associations (FEEVA), and the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA), has come together to address key issues in animal welfare. Together, this coalition has produced a comprehensive Joint Position Paper, presenting 14 key recommendations aimed at enhancing companion animal behaviour and training welfare.

The Joint Position Paper addresses key aspects of animal behaviour and training welfare throughout the lifespans of companion animals, including cats, dogs, and horses. It provides universal guidance to ensure good welfare for animals in canine, feline, and equine breeding and training establishments. This includes recommendations for creating complex, species-appropriate environments, facilitating opportunities for species-specific behavioural expression, and promoting appropriate social interactions.

The veterinary associations emphasize the critical role and responsibilities of veterinarians in promoting animal welfare. Among the 14 recommendations, they call for veterinary education to equip professionals with a comprehensive understanding of welfare-friendly animal handling techniques to minimize stress, fear, anxiety, and pain during veterinary procedures. Additionally, veterinarians should develop a strong foundation in learning theory to accurately interpret behaviour, body language, and facial expressions across various species. This knowledge will also enable them to advise clients, trainers, and animal caretakers on the advantages and drawbacks of different training methods.

This Joint Position paper on the animal welfare implications of animal behavioural modifications, training methods and ability to express species-specific behaviours, also calls for a harmonised ban on and enforcement of medically unnecessary and painful procedures, such as those performed for cosmetic reasons, as well as a complete ban on the sale and use of electric pulse training devices, such as electric shock collars for dogs.

In the Joint Position Paper, the coalition also emphasise the importance of interdisciplinary working to progress good animal welfare with recognition of the importance of suitably qualified and ethical animal behaviourists and animal trainers, working collaboratively with veterinary professionals to help protect animal welfare and the human-animal bond, but calls for regulation of animal behavioural and training services, to ensure those working as animal behaviourists and trainers adhere to minimum standards and are using humane, evidence-based techniques, as is done in the field of veterinary behavioural medicine at specialist level.

The Joint Position Paper can be viewed here: <https://fve.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/FVE-FEEVA-FECAVA-WSAVA-Behaviour-and-training-position-ADOPTED.pdf>



Tuesday Dec 17th
2 pm CET

JOINT WEBINAR

Training and behaviour of cats, dogs and horses

Recommendations to improve welfare
through evidence-based behavioural
practices

REGISTER NOW

FVE FEDERATION OF VETERINARIANS OF EUROPE
FECAVA Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations
FEEVA Every horse matters
WSAVA

This Joint Position Paper will be launched during a webinar on 17 December, 14h00 - 15h00 CET.

The webinar aims to explore and discuss the joint papers recommendations and advocate for better training methods, prevention of behavioural problems, and the need species-specific behaviours.

Register [HERE](#)

Note to editors:

WSAVA – The [World Small Animal Veterinary Association](#) represents more than 200,000 veterinarians worldwide through its 113 member associations and works to enhance standards of clinical care for companion animals. **For further information:** Cecilia.westerdahl@wsava.org

FEEVA - The [Federation of European Equine Veterinary Associations](#), was created in Strasbourg in 1998 by veterinary practitioners from different EU countries to discuss with European Parliament members the issue of medicine regulations. **For further information:** info@feeva.org

FECAVA – The [Federation of Companion Animal Veterinary Associations](#) represents more than 25,000 companion animal veterinarians in 40 European countries. **For further information:** info@fecava.org

FVE – The [Federation of Veterinarians of Europe](#) is the umbrella organisation of veterinary organisations from 39 European countries representing a total of around 300 000 veterinarians, striving to promote animal health, animal welfare and public health across Europe. **For further information:** info@fve.org