

Veterinary Students Surveyed at SAVMA on AR Issues

AVAR conducted a survey of veterinary students who visited the AVAR exhibitor's booth at the 2007 SAVMA Symposium on a variety of animal rights issues. While this is obviously not a scientific survey and the responses were limited (35 total), we wanted to share the findings and hopefully generate additional discussion among veterinary students on these important issues. AVAR's position on most of these issues can be found on our Web site at www.avar.org. (Go to the "About AVAR" button and click on "Position Statements.")



Dr. Kelly Farrell, an AVAR veterinary member, delivers a presentation on early-age sterilization at the 2007 SAVMA Symposium.



Students complete a survey on animal rights issues at the AVAR booth at the SAVMA symposium.

1. Do you attend a veterinary school that requires students to perform terminal procedures on animals?

Yes – 69% No – 31%

2. If yes, are you aware that it is possible to obtain a veterinary education without harming or killing animals?

Yes – 88% No – 12%

3. Would you choose an alternative to a terminal surgery or other procedure harmful to animals if it provided you with the same learning opportunities and your faculty approved it?

Yes – 80% No – 20%

4. Do you support early-age or prepubertal sterilization of cats and dogs?

Yes – 86% No – 14%

5. Will you perform cat declaws as a veterinarian?

Yes – 60% No – 37% Not sure – 3%

6. Will you perform dog ear crops or tail docks as a veterinarian?

Yes – 29% No – 71%

7. Do you think veterinarians have a role in promoting the rights of nonhuman animals?

Yes – 94% No – 3% Not sure – 3%

8. As a veterinarian, would you be willing to euthanize a healthy animal if requested by your client?

Yes – 17% No – 74% Not sure – 9%

9. Do you support a ban on horse slaughter in the United States?

Yes – 52% No – 37% Not sure – 11%

10. Will you encourage your clients to sterilize their cats and/or dogs should they tell you they want to breed them and ask for your opinion about that?

Yes – 86% No – 9% Not sure – 5%

AVAR-Commissioned Article on Alternatives in Veterinary Education Published in JAVMA

A review article commissioned by AVAR and entitled "Alternatives to harmful use of animals in biomedical education: a systematic review of comparative studies" was published in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, January 1, 2007, issue.

AVAR approached Gary Patronek, DVM, an adjunct professor at Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine and a co-author of the article, about the need to write a comparative analysis of the use of alternatives to harming and killing animals in veterinary education versus traditional animal use. He agreed and commissioned Annette Rausch, DVM, also of Tufts University, to co-author it. Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine is among the few U.S. veterinary medical schools which have taken steps to stop harmful and fatal uses of animals in its training programs, so both authors are well aware of the alternatives currently being used in veterinary education.

The authors evaluated the performance of alternatives in controlled studies where alternatives were formally compared against traditional teaching methods involving the harmful use of animals in life sciences education. They searched Medline and reviewed all of the cited references in retrieved papers to identify additional trials.

As a result, they were able to identify 17 pertinent studies. Five studies involved veterinary medical students; three involved human medical students; six involved university undergraduates; and three involved high school biology students. In all 17 studies reviewed, the alternatives method of instruction was either not significantly different from, or superior to, the conventional educational method. The results support more widespread adoption of alternatives to the harmful use of animals in medical and life sciences education. If you would like to read the review article, go to www.avar.org/whatsnews_alternatives.asp.