



Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri

NATIONAL BIOETHICS COMMITTEE

BIOETHICS AND VETERINARY SCIENCE

ANIMAL WELL-BEING AND HUMAN HEALTH

(30th November 2001)

abstract

In this document, explicitly requested by the College of veterinary surgeons, the NBC has sought to initiate reflection on the relationship between bioethics and veterinary science, considered primarily in terms of conservation of animal well-being and its relationship with human health.

It is the NBC's opinion that a veterinary surgeon should be considered a "global consultant" in a more comprehensive project of partnership between man and animal, assuming the role of spokesperson in an act of visioning that recognizes the animal as an alterity possessing specific value, its own dignity, and, in some cases, an "active subjectivity" in the relationship, so as to contrast the two opposing and unacceptable perspectives of anthropomorphism and reification.

As regards domesticated species that have acquired a state of anthrodependency, the NBC urges veterinary surgeons, in respect of the ethological and physiological characteristics of the animals, to assume responsibility for "care" in providing them with an adequate habitat even promoting, in breeding, "ethical food chains" from production to consumption.

Lastly, this document hopes for: the creation of multidisciplinary bioethics committees representing animals; the encouragement of research on alternative methods to animal testing, animal well-being, bioethical issues linked to zootechnics, the possible use of biotechnologies for the repopulation of animals facing extinction; the inclusion in curricula of the teaching of bioethics; the integration and understanding of the competent Ministries to work on training and raising awareness on the subject of bioethical issues regarding the correct treatment of non-humans and the pursuit of a harmonious and respectful relationship with all living beings.