

STATEMENT OF POLICY

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The Statement of Policy should be read together with the Animals Protection Act No. 71 of 1962.

Any reference to "The SPCA" in this document should be taken as meaning the Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), South Africa.

A position statement for each policy statement is available and intended to clearly set out the views of the SPCA on key animal well-being issues.

1. PREAMBLE

The SPCA believes that every living creature has intrinsic value and is a sentient being. Our primary and motivating concern is the prevention of cruelty to all living creatures and the promotion of the humane treatment of animals through leadership, education and law enforcement.

All SPCAs in South Africa are governed by the Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty Act No. 169 of 1993 (SPCA Act No. 169 of 1993) which is administered by the National Council of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NSPCA). The NSPCA is a statutory body which deals with national issues and, like all SPCAs, enforces the Animals Protection Act No. 71 of 1962 (APA) throughout South Africa. In addition, the Constitutional Court (ConCourt) of South Africa ruled in favour of the NSPCA on the 8th of December 2016, confirming that the NSPCA has the statutory power to institute private prosecutions in terms of section 6(2) (e) of the SPCA Act No. 169 of 1993 read with section 8 of the Criminal Procedure Act No. 51 of 1977.

Attitudes of individuals, as well as those of communities and societies, change as more information becomes available. Thus, what is considered to be an accepted practice to one generation may be condemned by the next. Accordingly, the following statements should be viewed as representing current thinking, subject to change as further information becomes available. They do not seek to derogate either from the SPCA Act No. 169 of 1993, or any court rulings, but instead seek to amplify them by providing the practical guidance necessary for their implementation. Further, the subsections listed hereunder are not exhaustive and should not be construed as a lack of concern in regard to matters not specifically mentioned; rather they represent a summary of broad areas of concern most commonly encountered by an organisation which is committed to the prevention of cruelty to animals, and the promotion of the humane treatment of animals by man.

Although these issues are considered in the South African context, the SPCA provides guidance and information to other countries whenever possible, and also provides support for international campaigns which further its objectives.

The SPCA believes that an animal's well-being should be considered in terms of the Five Freedoms which form a logical and comprehensive framework for the assessment of animal welfare:

- Freedom from hunger and thirst – by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour;
- Freedom from discomfort – by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area;
- Freedom from pain, injury or disease – by prevention, rapid diagnosis and treatment;
- Freedom to express normal behaviour – by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind; and
- Freedom from fear and distress – by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

2. DEFINITIONS

"Animal" means any live, non-human vertebrate, including fertilised eggs, foetuses and embryos (once they have progressed beyond half the gestation or incubation period of the relevant species, or they become capable of independent feeding, whichever comes first); which includes fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, domestic animals, feral animals, purpose-bred animals, farm animals, wildlife and higher invertebrates, such as advanced members from the *Cephalopoda* and *Decapoda* animal groups.

"Suffering" refers to negative feelings and/or emotions experienced by an animal, and may include pain, distress or hardship, whether directly or indirectly caused to the animal, and may be physical, physiological and/or psychological.

"Well-being" refers to positive feelings and/or emotions experienced by an animal, and includes the physical, physiological and/or psychological state of the animal and the ability to achieve successful biological functions, have positive experiences, express innate behaviours, respond to and cope with potentially adverse conditions, and/or a positive mental state.

3. GENERAL

3.1 TRANSPORT OF LIVE ANIMALS

The SPCA is opposed to all forms of transportation which compromise the well-being of all animals or which causes or may cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

Animals are transported nationally and internationally for various reasons and purposes such as farm animals destined for sale, breeding or slaughter; wildlife industry operations; animals used for scientific purposes; animals moved to sporting events; legal and illegal pet trade; and travelling companion animals. The methods of transporting animals vary greatly from species to species and animals are transported via road, air and sea.

Regardless of the animal being transported and the purpose thereof, individuals have a legal responsibility to ensure that transportation procedures do not result in any pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm of any animal. This includes compliance with relevant legislation, including local and international codes, standards and regulations.

The transportation of animals has known risks to animals and general animal well-being issues prior to, during and after transportation include but may not be limited to pain; suffering; distress; injuries; hunger; dehydration; heat stress; cold stress; diurnal variation; exposure to noxious gases; incorrect handling; risk of disease; unsuitable vehicles; long distances; unpredicted travelling durations; exposure to the elements; and death.

3.2 LIVE ANIMALS AS PRIZES

The SPCA is opposed to the award of live animals as prizes.

Live animals are sometimes awarded as prizes in competitions or at public events. Such animals may range from domestic farm animals and companion animals to both indigenous and exotic wild species. These awards completely disregard the ability of the recipient to care for the animal appropriately and raise many concerns relating to the well-being of the animal, which include not only the impact of the recipient's ability to respond to the animal's physical, physiological and psychological needs upon the animal but also such issues as the transportation methods employed to take the animal home and the recipient's long-term care of the animal. In the case of farm animals, these concerns may also include the methods of slaughter used.

The SPCA considers this marketing strategy to be irresponsible, and unnecessary commercial exploitation of animals, which has severe implications for the animal.

3.3 LIVE ANIMALS USED AS FOOD

The SPCA is opposed to the feeding of live animals to other animals.

The practice of live feeding involves placing one animal into the immediate environment or close proximity of a predator, typically within a captive environment, with the intention of the predator killing and/or eating the prey animal. This practice is illegal and a contravention of the Animals Protection Act No. 71 of 1962. It not only causes distress and suffering to the prey animal but also presents the risk of injury to the predator. There are humane alternatives in most cases, but where there are none then the predator should not be kept in a captive environment.

3.4 CONSUMPTION OF LIVE ANIMALS BY HUMANS

The SPCA is opposed to the preparation and eating of live animals.

The SPCA believes that the consumption of live animals is a cruel and inhumane practice. Animal suffering is not limited to the act of being eaten alive, but some dishes involve additional mutilation of the animal as part of the preparation process or specific culinary practice, thus prolonging animal suffering. The handling, preparation and eating of live animals exclude suitable and species-specific procedures necessary to ensure that these animals are insensible to pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

As an emerging trend, there is a danger that this practice can become more popular and acceptable by society. It promotes and exploits animals and causes cruelty, including directly contradicting the ethical, moral and scientific animal well-being principles of the modern world.

3.5 HUMAN-ANIMAL CONFLICT

The SPCA is opposed to the manufacture, sale and use of all snares, traps, trapping devices, substances or forms of animal control which causes or may cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

The SPCA acknowledges that animal control may be necessary for various purposes, including but not limited to damage-causing animals; feral population management; disease control; conservation purposes and invasive species control. The SPCA also recognises that the trapping of animals may be necessary for various other management and animal well-being purposes, including but not limited to disease control and monitoring; relocation; rescue; treatment; rehabilitation; scientific purposes; and population management and control. Regardless of the reasons and circumstances, any method, technique or equipment used must at all times be humane and competently applied, including that all animals deserve the same level of consideration for their well-being.

The SPCA is opposed to any device, trap, method or form of animal trapping or restraint that is inhumane by design and use such as drowning, glue traps, snares, pitfalls, gin traps and body grip traps. Snaring and trapping carry significant risks of pain, suffering, distress, injury and/or lasting harm and is indiscriminate by nature.

3.6 GENETIC MODIFICATION

The SPCA is opposed to the manipulation of the genetic constitution of animals which causes or may cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

Regardless of the fact that genetic engineering may possibly hold legitimate value in applications such as science, medicine, agriculture or conservation, including improvements from an animal well-being perspective, the SPCA believes that the production of genetically modified animals for various

applications has serious ethical and animal well-being implications. The creation and use of genetically modified animals does not only challenge the 4 Rs Guiding Principles, including issues pertaining to considerations of animal health and well-being but also raises numerous ethical concerns relating to animal integrity and dignity.

Accordingly, all animals that are used for scientific purposes must be undertaken based upon the 4 Rs Guiding Principles - replacement (where possible alternatives to live animals are employed), reduction (ensuring that only the minimum number of animals necessary are used), refinement (ensuring that the research is refined so that the least invasive methods are used on the animals), and responsibility (the researcher must accept moral and ethical responsibility for the well-being of the animals in his/her care. The SPCA strives to ensure where genetic modification or associated work occurs, that full consideration and concern are afforded to the ethical and animal well-being aspects of producing and using genetically modified animals.

3.7 COMMERCIAL FISHING

The SPCA is opposed to inhumane or environmentally unsound fishing methods and seeks the development of more environmentally friendly and eco-sensitive fishing techniques. The SPCA is opposed to fishing equipment or methods which are inhumane and the indiscriminate use of any fishing equipment or methods, which catches non-target species. The SPCA is opposed to fishing processing methods which cause or may cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

Commercial fishing is the activity of catching fish and other marine species for the production of food, and commercial profit derived from wild populations globally.

Current commercial fishing practices result in non-sustainable fishing practices, with associated adverse impacts on fish stocks and other marine species unable to effectively recover due to overfishing, including illegal, unregulated or unreported catches, known as IUU catches. In addition, the current commercial fishing practices are destructive and threaten the ocean's ecosystems and the species dependent on it for survival.

The SPCA is opposed to current commercial fishing practices that implement inhumane slaughter techniques.

3.8 SEXUAL OFFENCES

The use of any animal for human sexual acts is illegal.

All forms of sexual acts between humans and animals are illegal in South Africa and can result in severe penalties and imprisonment.

The suffering of the animals against whom such acts are perpetrated is often extremely severe. Research has also shown that the perpetrators of sexual acts upon animals are commonly linked to other sexual offences and can be a predictor of future violence against vulnerable people.

3.9 INFANTILE OR DEPENDENT ANIMALS

The SPCA is opposed to the sale, use and/or removal of animals who are not capable of independent physiological and behavioural functioning, except for bona fide conservation purposes or reasons based on animal well-being.

The practice of removing offspring from parents occurs in a wide number of species for various purposes including but not limited to farming practices and systems of both domestic and wild animals; falconry; wildlife interactions; wildlife exhibitions; domestic companion animals; indigenous and exotic animals for the pet trade; illegal trade in wildlife; poaching; and for bona fide conservation purposes.

When puppies and kittens are removed too early, there is often an increased risk of contracting diseases. This practice also deprives the young animals of the necessary social and behavioural development opportunities, often significantly and negatively impacting upon their long-term well-being and resulting in behavioural problems as an adult.

In the intensive dairy industry, calves are removed from their mothers shortly after birth. Cattle have well developed maternal instincts, and this is distressing for the cow as well as the calf who is deprived of maternal care, nurturing and social contact. Male calves are typically sold at saleyards at a very young age, before they can drink from a trough or eat by themselves. There is generally no provision made for the calves to drink at the saleyards and they suffer from dehydration and stress, including their compromised well-being leads to increased health risks and mortality rates.

The SPCA believes that it is cruel and inhumane to remove offspring from parents for commercial purposes and viewed as an unnecessary practice. The removal of young from parents holds serious animal well-being and ethical concerns.

The SPCA recognises that care and rearing of young animals for bona fide conservation purposes does occur, such as the rehabilitation of orphaned animals (e.g. rhino calves due to poaching). However, the SPCA believes that strict protocols and procedures should be followed in accordance with the species and only be carried out by skilled, trained and experienced staff, which collectively ensures that the well-being of these animals is not compromised.

3.10 PHYSICAL ALTERATIONS

The SPCA is opposed to the physical mutilation and/or alteration of any animal unless it is undertaken for therapeutic veterinary reasons, bona fide conservation or security reasons, where there are no other options available. Any procedures undertaken should be for the benefit of the animal, using methods that do not cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

Physical mutilation and/or alteration involves the modification, removal or destruction of a part of an animal.

Physical alteration of farmed animals is predominately carried out in an attempt to "adapt" animals to inappropriate husbandry systems or to overcome problems associated with inappropriate husbandry systems. Such responses include the castration of piglets, calves and lambs without the administration of pain relief, de-beaking of laying hens, tail amputations, and teeth nipping of piglets.

The commercialisation of wildlife and the consequent growth of the wildlife industry, the legal and illegal trade in wildlife, tourism and the keeping of wild animals as companion animals has resulted in the physical alteration of wildlife to make them compatible with their exploitation. Examples include declawing of felid wild species kept as exotic pets and pinioning that enables birds to be kept in open camps for exhibition purposes.

With the increase in both wildlife crime and poaching, some physical alterations may be necessary to protect the animal – as is the case with the dehorning of rhino. Even in such cases, the alterations should only be undertaken by experienced wildlife veterinarians using approved protocols.

Physical alteration procedures performed on companion animals include but are not limited to tail myotomy, declawing, tongue myotomy, devocalisation, ear cropping and tail docking. These procedures are extremely painful and can permanently cripple the animal. Often these procedures are done for convenience or cosmetic purposes and provide no medical benefit to the animals. Many practising veterinarians refuse to perform these procedures if not for therapeutic purposes.

3.11 END OF LIFE

a) The SPCA is opposed to the use of inhumane methods to kill any animal.

An animal must either be killed instantaneously, or stunned and killed by a method that they do not detect, or stunned by a method that they do not detect and then killed without recovering consciousness; or stunned by a method that they detect but that is not aversive and then killed without recovering consciousness. Stunning is the initiation of unconsciousness and should be instantaneous, not detected or not aversive. Handling prior to slaughter should promote the animal's well-being.

Regardless of the circumstances, purpose and use of animals, the SPCA believes that the death of any animal should be done in a humane manner, which includes but is not limited to:

- Slaughter of farmed animals: The SPCA is opposed to any form of slaughter that does not kill an animal instantaneously, or render an animal unconscious and insensible to pain through pre-stunning. Pre-stunning procedures differ in respect of the species concerned and may be electrical, gaseous or mechanical. While the SPCA acknowledges and respects the traditions, cultures and religions of South Africa, there is no acceptable reason for handling or slaughtering an animal in an inhumane manner;
- Use of aversive substances: The SPCA is opposed to the use of aversive substances to pre-stun as well as to kill any animal. The opposition to the use of such substances is not limited to slaughter, but also extends to the control of animals regarded as problem or damage-causing animals. The aversive qualities of many gases result in significant suffering, cause pain and a feeling of suffocation.
- Recovering consciousness: Any method that does not kill an animal instantaneously, but instead renders an animal unconscious and insensible to pain, requires a secondary suitable method to ensure the death of an animal before it regains consciousness.
- The SPCA advocates that the death of any animal should only be carried out by a skilled, trained and competent person exercising great compassion.

b) The SPCA advocates that any animal for consumption be slaughtered as close to the point of production as possible.

Animal well-being concerns arise when animals are transported to abattoirs throughout South Africa or to other countries to be slaughtered for consumption. During transportation, animals risk pain, suffering, distress, injury, hunger, dehydration, heat stress, incorrect handling, risk of disease, unsuitable vehicles, exposure to the elements, long distances, and unpredictable travelling conditions and durations. Accordingly, they should be slaughtered as close to the point of production as possible. The duration of the transportation should be as short as possible, and the means of transport should endeavour to reduce any unnecessary stress to the animal.

c) The SPCA advocates that any animal for consumption which has to be emergency slaughtered should be promptly euthanased on site and appropriately disposed of.

While the SPCA concedes that the cost of farmed animals lost due to injury can be substantial, the SPCA can neither condone nor ignore the pain involved in the transportation of injured animals to the abattoir in the interests of economics. It is unethical and illegal to prolong the suffering of any animal.

A well-being assessment must be conducted on all animals prior to transportation. No animal shall be transported unless it is fit for the planned journey. Animals that are unfit for transport should be euthanased or treated by a veterinarian or appropriately qualified professional, and not be subjected to the additional stress of transportation.

If animals have to be emergency slaughtered, this must be undertaken by a skilled, trained and competent person with great compassion, using the appropriate equipment.

4. FARM ANIMALS

4.1 FARMING PRACTICES / SYSTEMS

The SPCA is opposed to forms of farming, farming systems and animal husbandry practices which causes or may cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

Currently, most animals produced for consumption are farmed in intensive farming systems. Many of the facilities/systems and management methods implemented compromise the well-being of the animals, in that they are kept in confined spaces, surgically mutilated as a management tool, behaviourally deprived and/or are given feed containing additives such as growth stimulants, antibiotics and hormones to boost production. Methods of inspecting and providing humane care for individual animals is rendered virtually impossible given the existing management and housing structures.

The SPCA firmly believes that the systems employed should suit the needs of the animals and that advanced technology and knowledge in the agricultural sector have made it possible to implement farming practices and systems to ensure that the well-being of farmed animals is not sacrificed in the interests of production.

4.2 SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

The SPCA is opposed to the development of farming systems which causes or may cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

Farming systems in South Africa have changed radically in recent years and currently vary from sophisticated commercial enterprises to subsistence farming. Various types of animals are now being farmed in South Africa, and these include apiculture (beekeeping), heliciculture (snail farming), aquaculture (farming of aquatic fauna), and livestock and poultry production.

Each type of farming implements a specific farming system. Since the SPCA believes that many of the farming systems employed hold serious animal well-being and ethical implications, the SPCA strives to ensure that consideration and concern for the well-being of the animals farmed is incorporated into such farming systems.

4.3 CONSUMER AWARENESS

The SPCA advocates that the consumer should know how all animal products (including non-food products) are produced and that products should thus be labelled with the method of production.

Many producers advertise methods of farming, such as "free-range", "sow friendly", "organic", "barn", and "free to roam", to promote their products and increase sales by indicating animal-friendly production. As many of these labels are factually inaccurate and deliberately misleading, there should be specific criteria before such labelling is permitted to assure the consumer of authenticity. The same applies to slaughter methods.

When making their purchases, consumers have the right to make informed decisions in accordance with their moral and belief systems, and be assured that the labelling is independently verified and verifiable.

4.4 UNNATURAL ENHANCEMENT PRACTICES

The SPCA is opposed to husbandry management practices intended to enhance the production, performance or growth of an animal, which causes or may cause pain, suffering, metabolic or skeletal defects, inhibit normal activity or other health conditions.

The primary objective of intensive farming systems is to increase production, which is achieved by manipulation and additives such as hormonal implants, growth stimulants, selective breeding and genetic engineering. These measures result in abnormal growth and associated health conditions and risks from heart attacks, skeletal defects and immobility to metabolic diseases.

Where animal bodies grow unnaturally as a result of unnatural enhancement practices, skeletal systems are often unable able to support the increased body mass. Vital organs become abnormally large, causing undue stress and suffering.

Since the accelerated growth and unnatural enhancement of production animals cause suffering, the SPCA condemns such practices and advocates the use of scientifically evaluated alternatives which take into account the well-being of the animal.

4.5 ELECTRO-IMMOBILISATION

The SPCA is opposed to the electro-immobilisation of animals.

Electro-immobilisation passes a pulsed, low-voltage electrical current through the body of the animal, usually along the spine, resulting in the contraction of the muscles supplied by the nerves of that segment of the spine, thereby preventing the voluntary movement of the animal. Since the electrical current does not reach the brain, the animal remains conscious and sensitive to the pain induced during the procedure.

Accordingly, the SPCA is opposed to this method of immobilisation, whether used during animal husbandry or surgical procedures or as a method of holding or restraining animals.

It is illegal to perform any surgical or any other procedure on any animal that is immobilised using electro-immobilisation.

4.6 ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION

The SPCA is opposed to all forms of animal identification which causes or may cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

The SPCA recognises the requirements of the Animal Identification Act No. 6 of 2002 but believes that more humane methods of permanent identification exist, but until such time as the legislation changes, advocates for the most humane methods of branding, tattooing, tagging, or attachment of other monitoring devices as far as possible.

5. COMPANION ANIMALS

5.1 RESPONSIBLE GUARDIANSHIP OF COMPANION ANIMALS

The SPCA is opposed to the keeping of domestic animals by those who do not have the facilities, time, financial means or level of interest to ensure optimal standards of care and husbandry for their companion animals. The SPCA is opposed to the keeping of indigenous wild or exotic species as companion animals.

The SPCA recognises that many people seek the company and emotional attachment with animals, particularly domestic animals, and they encourage a bond between them. However, after adopting an animal, the guardian must act responsibly and provide basic medical care, protection, shelter, good nutrition, appropriate companionship, affection, training, socialising, behavioural and environmental enrichment.

Where a guardian is not in a position to fulfil these needs, the SPCA encourages him/her to surrender the animal to the local SPCA or another bona fide animal welfare organisation before the well-being of the animal is compromised.

The SPCA is opposed to the keeping of indigenous and exotic wild species as companion animals. Wildlife should remain and roam freely in their natural habitat, as it is inhumane to condemn wild animals to a life in captivity where their species-specific needs cannot be addressed.

5.2 POPULATION CONTROL

The SPCA advocates the permanent sterilisation of all companion animals where surgically possible. The SPCA promotes the early sterilisation of dogs and cats at eight weeks, and other companion animals as soon as possible unless there are overriding medical justifications to the contrary.

While domestic animals continue to be euthanased due to the shortage of suitable, responsible and caring owners, deliberate breeding of domestic companion animals must be dramatically reduced to contribute to population control. Until such time that stricter control measures are put in place to prevent indiscriminate breeding, overpopulation will continue to result in animal cruelty and euthanasia. Overpopulation of domestic pets and uncontrolled breeding results in an influx of animals that end up in animal shelters, resulting in a large number of animals to be unfairly euthanased on a weekly basis. There is a lesser interest from society to adopt from animal shelters compared to purchasing a companion animal from a breeder. Especially when it comes down to adopting an adult dog compared to a puppy. Some animals end up in no-kill shelters, which exposes these animals to a life in captivity and in many instances, also to cruelty for the sake of avoiding euthanasia.

The SPCA encourages cooperation between welfare organisations, veterinarians and pet owners, whereby sterilisation is promoted and becomes a cost-effective solution to the overpopulation of domestic pets.

5.3 BREEDING

The SPCA is opposed to private and commercial breeding of all animals for the pet trade, including indigenous wild and exotic species. The SPCA is opposed to the breeding of all animals that causes or may cause detrimental changes to an animal's physical, physiological and psychological well-being.

The SPCA condemns the practice of selective breeding of companion animals for cosmetic purposes, genetic dispositions or to enhance specific characteristics. These practices pay little to no regard for the well-being, health or longevity of the animals, and in many cases result in health and behavioural issues. The health problems which have emerged as a result of such breeding include brachycephalic obstructive airway syndrome, hip dysplasia, blindness, deafness, heart defects, skin problems, epilepsy, spina bifida and spinal issues, feline hyperesthesia syndrome, kidney stones in the urinary tract, and other more general respiratory and digestive problems.

The private and commercial breeding of companion animals reduces the chances of adoption of shelter animals. Sterilisation is the only guaranteed method of preventing uncontrolled breeding.

The SPCA is opposed to the breeding of indigenous and exotic wild animals as companion animals. It is important that wild animals should remain and roam freely in their natural habitat. The SPCAs opposition to the breeding of wild animals as companion animals is based on the fact that it is inappropriate and inhumane to force a wild animal to live a captive life where their species-specific needs cannot be addressed. Wild animals are not domesticated and are often denied their Five Freedoms, and are forced to endure a life in captivity.

5.4 EUTHANASIA

The SPCA is opposed to the euthanasia of fit and healthy animals but accepts the reality that euthanasia is necessary. Euthanasia must be carried out by qualified personnel using approved and humane methods and with great compassion.

The SPCA lives for the day when healthy animals are no longer euthanased owing to the lack of suitable homes. However, as a result of the current overpopulation of domestic animals caused by indiscriminate breeding, the dumping of unwanted animals, irresponsible guardianship of companion animals, lack of sterilisation and inadequate enforcement of legislation, the SPCA accepts with great reluctance that euthanasia is necessary.

The SPCA believes that unwanted companion animals deserve a dignified, painless death rather than risk suffering resulting from animal cruelty such as malnutrition, disease, trauma, physical abuse – all commonly associated with unwanted or neglected animals.

Euthanasia is a humane release for many suffering, injured, traumatised, sick or homeless animals. However, healthy animals may also require euthanasia due to behavioural reasons, such as where they are very aggressive, and where the animal would have to endure long-term suffering through the deprivation of basic needs in incarceration. The long-term housing of individual animals that does not cater to their physical, physiological and psychological needs is not an acceptable alternative.

5.5 FERAL CATS

The SPCA advocates the humane and responsible management of feral cat colonies.

A feral cat is unapproachable in its free-roaming environment and is capable of surviving with or without direct human intervention. It may also show fearful or defensive behaviour when exposed to human contact.

Feral cats may be tolerated or even welcomed as rodent catchers or for the interest and companionship they provide, but as numbers increase, they may become a public nuisance or health risk.

Although some see feral cats as problematic and want them removed, the removal of an entire colony is difficult from a practical perspective and some cats will inevitably evade capture. Unless food sources are controlled, other strays may move in and the survivors will recreate the colony.

One of the most effective and humane methods for dealing with groups of feral cats is population control through sterilisation. Research has shown that Trap-Neuter-Release Programmes (TNR programmes) are far more successful as a control measure than removal and euthanasia programmes. The SPCA supports TNR programmes where the cats are protected on sites and their well-being is safeguarded.

5.6 COMPANION ANIMAL TRADERS

The SPCA is opposed to the trade in companion animals.

A wide variety of animals are sold as companion animals, including domestic, farm, equine, indigenous and exotic wild species. Members of the public are encouraged to buy these animals without any consideration for their physical, physiological and/or psychological well-being.

Animals are often housed in unsuitable, unhygienic and inhumane conditions, and suffer from insufficient diets, isolation of social animals, lack of enrichment, overcrowding, spread of zoonotic diseases, feeding of live prey, lack in expressing natural behaviour, and lack of veterinary treatment and care.

Supply and demand for the pet trade directly and indirectly, contribute to the legal and illegal trade and continues to threaten the survival of many wild populations on a national and international scale. Many

wild animals, whether exotic or indigenous, are forcibly removed from their natural environments and social dynamics, and confined for the remainder of their lives.

6. ANIMALS USED FOR SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES

6.1 PAIN AND SUFFERING

The SPCA is opposed to all animals used for scientific purposes or in procedures which causes or may cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

Animals are used for various scientific purposes in South Africa ranging from research, education, teaching, product testing, diagnosis, validation, to conservation and observation. In addition, existing legislation and regulations such as the Medicines and Related Substances Act No. 101 of 1965 and the Fertilizers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act No. 36 of 1947 require testing of products to be conducted on animals before the product can be shelved.

The SPCA believes that all measures should be put in place to ensure that the most appropriate, current and humane practices are followed to alleviate any pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm when animals are used for scientific purposes.

6.2 UNNECESSARY USE OF ANIMALS FOR SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES

a) The SPCA is opposed to the use of animals for scientific purposes which are repetitions, scientifically trivial or which involve techniques for which satisfactory humane alternatives have already been developed.

The SPCA believes that any use of animals for scientific purposes requires justification and that using animals for research is a privilege and not a right. Weighing up the harm done to animals versus the benefit for the species involved and/or scientific objective should be the focus when determining whether or not animals should be used. The SPCA believes that animals used for scientific purposes should only be used when it is absolutely necessary.

The 4 Rs Guiding Principles, i.e. replacement, reduction, refinement and responsibility (as described under Statement of Policy 6.4 – The 4 Rs Guiding Principles) should be implemented to avoid the unnecessary use of animals. Evidence to support the use of animals must be demonstrated and projects must have scientific and educational merit. Evidence must also be provided to show that suitable alternatives are not available. Proof must be provided to ensure that the adverse impact upon the well-being of the animals involved is minimised.

b) The SPCA is opposed to the use of animals in the testing of non-essential substances.

The SPCA considers that testing substances such as cosmetics, non-medical products and food additives is not essential.

Currently, there is no legal requirement that cosmetics be tested on animals in South Africa, and cosmetic companies may rely on scientific literature, non-animal testing, raw material safety testing, or controlled human-use testing to substantiate their product safety. Although the SPCA is not aware of any companies in South Africa that test cosmetic products on animals, some companies and/or franchises are selling products tested on animals in other countries. The SPCA is committed to promoting legislation which bans the use of animals for cosmetic testing.

c) The SPCA is opposed to the use of wild-caught animals of any species regardless of their conservation status.

Many wild species are used for scientific purposes, and they are studied both in their natural environment and in captivity. Since the SPCA believes that wild animals belong in the wild, they should not be used in captivity unless it has a bona fide conservation benefit for the survival of the species involved or improving animal well-being. Non-human primates, in particular, should not be caught from the wild and placed in captivity for biomedical research for the benefit of humans.

6.3 ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEES

The SPCA is opposed to the use of animals for scientific purposes without ethical approval by a properly constituted animal ethics committee.

An animal ethics committee is mandated with the ethical review, monitoring and approval of animal care and use, and its membership consists of those membership categories stipulated in the South African National Standards for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (SANS 10386:2008). The SPCA advocates that all institutions using animals for scientific purposes (including training and teaching) should have an effective and functional animal ethics committee to scrutinise all project applications and ensure that there is sufficient justification for the use of animals. The members of this committee must be without a vested interest.

6.4 The 4 Rs GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The SPCA supports the development of the 4 Rs guiding principles, namely replacement, reduction, refinement and responsibility when using animals for scientific purposes.

The SPCA regards as an advance any technique that will completely replace the use of animals, reduce the numbers used and refine scientific techniques to reduce suffering.

The SPCA supports the use of alternatives which render the use of animals unnecessary. Where the total replacement of animals is not possible, partial replacement should be considered.

Reduction includes methods minimising the number of animals used, either by enabling researchers to obtain similar quantities of information from fewer animals and/or to obtain more information from the same number of animals, thereby avoiding repetition. Reduction should, however, not be implemented when it results in greater suffering by individual animals.

Any method that will minimise pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm to any animal is seen as refinement. Addressing the behavioural and physiological needs of the animals including housing, husbandry and appropriate environmental enrichment will aid in refinement.

Any person involved in the care and use of animals for scientific purposes should take responsibility and accountability for all aspects relating to the well-being of the animals. Clear lines of responsibility must be in place.

7. ANIMALS FOR EXHIBITION, ENTERTAINMENT OR SPORT

The SPCA is opposed to the use of any animal for exhibition, entertainment or sport which causes or may cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

7.1 HUNTING AND FISHING

The SPCA is opposed to the hunting and fishing of any animal for exhibition, entertainment or sport.

The SPCA is opposed to any pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm caused to any animal in the name of sport or human entertainment.

The SPCA recognises that hunting is entrenched in South Africa as part of sustainable wildlife utilisation but is also aware of the shortcomings regarding ethical and humane practices within the industry. The SPCA accepts that a "clean kill" may be the intention of hunters shooting for sport, but believes that this does not often happen. Wounded animals are not always tracked and their suffering ended, and prohibited hunting practices ranging from the use of traps, snaring, poison, luring with the use of sound, drugging to shooting an animal whilst in a capture cage are some of the methods used and holds various animal well-being concerns.

Although it has been scientifically proven that fish experience pain, the continued use of inhumane fishing equipment and inhumane capture, handling and slaughter methods pay this fact scant regard. The use of tackle and the fishing event itself exerts physical strain on fish which can affect their survival when released, and may also cause stress, impaired respiration, impaired vision, impaired reproduction ability, impaired ability to acquire and consume food, impaired ability to socially interact with species of the same kind, infection, oesophagitis, gastritis, hepatitis, vulnerability to predation, forced displacement from territory, damaged cardiorespiratory systems, suppressed immune systems, impaired growth and reduced fitness and survival rates. Some recreational anglers also use live bait, which is illegal.

7.2 SPORTING DISCIPLINES

The SPCA is opposed to the use of any animal in a sport which causes or may cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm, whether during training, the performance or otherwise.

The use of animals in sporting events is generally for the benefit of people with little or no benefit to the animals involved.

The concerns with the well-being of the animals relate, inter alia, to such aspects as unsuitable transport, the use of inhumane tack and equipment, training methods, the use of substances to enhance the performance of the animals, the use of drugs to mask pain and to hide any underlying ailments or injuries, excessive breeding for the sport, the disposal of unsuited, non-competitive, injured or aged animals, and unsuitable living conditions that do not provide for the physical and behavioural needs of the animals concerned.

There are also other concerns, which relate to the events themselves, which include myotomy, the inadequacy or lack of rules to protect the animals, inadequate monitoring of the events, unsuitable pre- and post-care, and the training and rehabilitation of the animals concerned.

7.3 ANIMAL RACING

The SPCA is opposed to animal racing in any form.

Animal racing as a sport is a multi-million rand industry. The competitive nature of the sport and the mass turnover of animals is extremely detrimental to the well-being of the animals. The greatest concerns are usually evident before or after a race and occur away from the public view.

Although dog racing is illegal, horse and pigeon racing are currently legal in South Africa. Large numbers of animals are purpose-bred, kept and trained for this industry, but only a very small percentage of

animals are successful, and racing careers are short. This results in the often unacceptable disposal of large numbers of unsuited, non-competitive, injured or aged animals.

Typical animal well-being concerns include the excessive breeding of animals, inhumane training methods, inhumane handling, excessive use of the animals, doping and other forms of cheating which impact negatively on the well-being of the animals, housing and management practices that do not meet the physical and behavioural needs of the animals, unsuitable transportation and inhumane and/or unethical disposal methods.

7.4 ANIMAL FIGHTING

The SPCA is opposed to the use of animals in any form of fighting, whether against man or animal.

Animal fighting, which includes both animal on animal contests such as dog fighting, rooster fighting and horse fighting, as well as animal on human contests such as bullfighting, is illegal and can result in severe penalties, including imprisonment. These bloodsports require animal suffering for human entertainment and gambling and are cruel and inhumane. The animal combatants often die during the fights or sustain severe injuries.

The suffering of the animal is not limited to the fight itself since these animals often endure a lifetime of cruelty where they receive minimum care, are kept in compromised living conditions, endure inhumane training methods and are exploited for breeding and trade.

7.5 ANIMALS USED IN MEDIA

The SPCA opposes the portrayal of any action depicting or suggesting irresponsible or harmful behaviour towards animals in any form of media.

Media is a communication outlet or tool used to reach a large audience base and includes print media, photography, cinema, broadcasting by radio and television, social media platforms and any form of advertising.

The language used when referring to animals informs our thoughts and perceptions, which in turn influence our actions. Since society is increasingly recognising the moral and ethical responsibility humans have towards animals, including their humane treatment, media that portrays, depicts or suggests irresponsible or harmful behaviour towards animals not only threatens the values and morals of society but has with far wider and deeper consequences. It may manifest in low empathy, callous disregard and disrespect towards animals by members of the public, and result in social acceptability for certain acts which negatively impacts upon animal well-being. When an animal is depicted as unworthy of compassion or respect, it sends a message to the viewer that an animal's sentience is irrelevant. When the viewer becomes desensitised to acts of animal cruelty, humane treatment, respect and compassion are affected and animals suffer.

8. WILDLIFE

8.1 WILDLIFE FARMING PRACTICES / SYSTEMS

The SPCA is opposed to all forms of wildlife farming, farming systems and animal husbandry practises which causes or may cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

Wildlife farming, game farming and wildlife ranching refer to the management of wildlife on private land for commercial purposes. Wildlife farming geared towards the breeding and farming of wildlife in intensive systems is of relevance.

The SPCA is of the opinion that the farming of wildlife in intensive systems serves no true conservation value. Farming of wildlife without accredited scientific proof in contributing towards protecting wild populations and habitats, including not contributing towards biodiversity conservation is not regarded as conservation. Even under claims where farming of wildlife, primary for commercial gain, has a secondary purpose such as to release wildlife back into the wild as a conservation tool or to minimise demand pressures on wild populations from complex trade markets is highly questionable from an animal well-being and conservation perspective. The SPCA believes that the farming of wildlife has serious animal well-being and ethical implications and requires those who farm wild animals to consider and foster the animals' well-being, and to incorporate ethical measures into their farming methods and procedures.

8.2 HYBRIDS AND COLOUR MORPHS

The SPCA is opposed to the hybridisation, propagation of colour morphs and crossing of wild with domesticated animals.

Hybridisation involves the breeding of different species or two genetically distinct populations, and the deliberate crossing of wild with domesticated animals to create wild-domestic hybrids, whilst colour morphs involve the selective breeding of individuals with unique pelage colours or patterns to ensure that the rare coat colour is expressed in the offspring.

Unnatural, induced forms of hybridisation and colour morphs are undertaken for commercial profit. Hybridisation is conducted as a marketing tool to lure in more tourists to captive wildlife facilities and zoos. Colour morphs are based on a wildlife ranching system of intentional genetic manipulation to supply private collectors, hunting enterprises, and for purposes of trade. The breeding of wild-domestic hybrids seeks to profit from the creation of companion animals with unique specific physical features. Examples of hybrids and/or wild-domestic hybrids include tigers, liger, zonkey, zorse, cama, savannah cat and a wolfdog. Animals selectively bred as colour morphs include the golden wildebeest, black and white impala, black and white springbok, white blesbok, golden oryx, white lion and the king cheetah. Animal well-being concerns include various physical, physiological and mental health impacts, deformities, decreased resistance to disease and parasites, loss of genetic diversity, risk of contaminating the gene pool of wild populations and unacceptable intensive farming systems.

Hybridisation and the intensive breeding of colour morphs do not fall within the legitimate conservation and ecological principles of biodiversity conservation of South Africa. It is an unethical and a pointless form of wildlife exploitation with no true honourable benefit, but poses reputational harm to South Africa's wildlife industry and shadows the conservation success stories of the past.

8.3 KEEPING AND/OR BREEDING OF WILD ANIMALS

The SPCA is opposed to the keeping and/or breeding of indigenous and exotic wild species in captivity for reasons other than for bona fide conservation purposes, or for rehabilitation and/or sanctuary purposes in facilities approved by the National Council of SPCAs.

The SPCA's opposition to the keeping and/or breeding of indigenous and exotic wild species in captivity is based on the fact that a wild animal's well-being is automatically compromised while in a captive state. Wildlife should remain and roam freely in their natural habitat. It is inhumane to force a wild animal to a life in captivity, where their species-specific needs cannot be addressed. These animals are often denied their Five Freedoms and are forced to endure a life in captivity. Captive situations do not provide for the same physical, social or behavioural surroundings.

Animals kept at rehabilitation centres should be released back into the wild unless an animal cannot sustain itself if released, whilst sanctuaries should not engage in trade or breeding activities, including that these animals should not be used for wildlife interaction purposes by members of the public.

8.4 WILDLIFE INTERACTIONS

The SPCA is opposed to interactions between humans and wild animals, except for bona fide conservation purposes, reasons based on animal well-being, or where the interaction between animal and caregiver is necessary.

Human interaction with wild animals is unnatural, even where they have been born in captivity since wild animals still retain many of their wild behaviours and instincts. Many of the facilities that permit or encourage human interaction with wild animals are financially driven with little to no regard to the well-being of the animals and expose wildlife to stress and potential abuse. The SPCA believes that such facilities should be discouraged. Whilst the SPCAs opposition to wildlife interactions is based on the fact that wildlife is exploited for human entertainment, the SPCA also recognises that certain wildlife interactions are necessary for bona fide conservation purposes and where interaction between animal and caregiver is required.

Animal well-being concerns with regards to wildlife interactions include but are not limited to using training methods and equipment for punishment purposes; restricting natural behaviour; display of unnatural behaviours and tricks for entertainment purposes; lack of veterinary care; lack of health checks; drugging or physical alterations to make animals safer to handle during interactions with public; lack of control for the animal to move away from forced interactions with humans; overcrowding; malnutrition; unhygienic conditions; lack of shelter; lack of protection against the elements; and the promotion of keeping wild animals as pets.

8.5 TRADE IN WILDLIFE

The SPCA is opposed to the trade in wild animals which causes or may cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm. The SPCA is opposed to the trade in products derived from wild animals.

Wildlife trade either involves taking and selling dead or living wild species and the products derived from them, removing live animals from their natural habitats or breeding and raising wildlife under captive managed conditions. The insatiable demand for wildlife products, directly and indirectly threatens various species and results in loss of biodiversity which further threatens ecosystem functioning.

Significant animal cruelty and well-being concerns exist throughout the legal and illegal trade chain. Those animals killed to feed the trade often suffer inhumane deaths from poison, drugs, and snares to poor shooting practices. Those who are captured alive often suffer as a result of compromised animal well-being, the intensity and duration of which depends upon whether and how the animal is restrained, transported, kept, fed, given water or used. Numerous animals die in transit as a result of crushing, asphyxiation, starvation, dehydration, temperature shock, disease, injury or stress.

Wildlife trade also results in animals supplied to countries where no animal well-being regulations exist, severely compromising the welfare of the animals and frequently condemning them to cruel conditions.

8.6 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES ON WILD ANIMALS

The SPCA recognises that there are management procedures necessary for conservation management, research, protection and monitoring of wild animals, but is opposed to any technique which causes or may cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

The SPCA recognises that there may be management procedures necessary for conservation management, research, protection and monitoring of wild animals. These management procedures may include chemical and/or physical immobilisation; restraint, tagging, ear notching, marking, DNA sampling, attachment and/or insertion of tracking and monitoring devices, vaccination, disease monitoring or sampling, dehorning, horn cutting and horn infusions.

All procedures, techniques, attachments, insertions, sampling and/or physical modifications should at all times be carried out with concern for the well-being of the animal and should not cause or likely to cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm. All procedures must be carried out by persons competent and experienced in the processes, procedures and equipment used.

Relevant national and provincial legislation, medicines control, Veterinary and Para-veterinary Acts; municipal bylaws and any relevant regulations are applicable.

9. EDUCATION

9.1 ANIMALS IN EDUCATION, TEACHING AND TRAINING

The SPCA is opposed to the use of animals for education, teaching and training which causes or may cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm, unless a justifiable animal well-being rationale for keeping the animals can be demonstrated.

Alternatives to the use of animals for education, teaching and training should be implemented unless there is proof that there is no suitable replacement. Teaching activities that involve the use of animals must comply with all relevant legislation and regulations. This includes but is not limited to relevant permits, health and safety, biosecurity and disease control. The highest level of care, monitoring and husbandry practices must be followed where animals are used for education, teaching and training.

9.2 DISSECTION

The SPCA is opposed to the practice of dissecting vertebrate and invertebrate animals in schools.

The SPCA believes that animals can be studied in schools without keeping animals in captivity and that studying an animal should be done in its natural environment with minimal disturbance.

The SPCA is opposed to the killing and dissection of vertebrate and invertebrate animals in education establishments, since alternatives are available, except in such cases as veterinary degree courses where no alternatives can be proven.

10. WORKING AND SERVICE ANIMALS

The SPCA is opposed to the use of domesticated working and service animals which causes or may cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

The SPCA understands the immense value of working and service animals to humankind. From equine being used to pull carts loaded with essential supplies for people; dogs used to assist the disabled and improve the quality of their lives; animals used for protection and security purposes from the detection

of explosives and narcotics to search and rescue – these animals provide humans with vital, life-improving services. Society does not only have a legal duty to ensure that working and service animals have the best possible care and treatment but the SPCA believes that humans are morally and ethically bound to ensure they have the best quality of life possible.

Animal well-being concerns in this area include the excessive use of animals and prolonged periods on duty, the use of unsuitable and ill-fitting equipment, inappropriate training methods, incompetent handlers, unsuitable housing and management of facilities, mistreatment, failure to address their physical, behavioural and mental needs and the disposal of non-performing and retired animals in a manner that is detrimental to their well-being.

