

Transition Network Conference

Ruskin Mills, 31-May-07

Session Notes

Vav Simon: Low Carbon Animal Healthcare

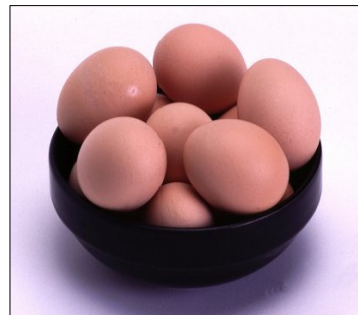
TRANSITION ANIMAL HEALTH

Dr Vav Simon DC AMC MMCA MCC

Director, Natural Therapy Centre for Animals, Isle of Wight

We relate to animals in four different ways.

1. They are our **food sources**, in the shape of eggs, milk, cheese, bacon, sausages, butter. And then there is the meat itself too - pigs, cows, sheep, poultry.
2. There are also our **working animals**, such as guide dogs, assistance dogs, police dogs, and sheepdogs. And those we use as draught animals, e.g. horses and oxen for ploughing and for pulling wagons and loads. We must also remember those we use to help us in vermin control terriers, falcons and lurchers.



3. Which brings us on to the next category, **vermin**, coming in the shape of rats, mice, foxes, tapeworms, fleas, ticks, and mosquitoes, for instance. These have a huge effect on both human and animal health and, must be kept in check to prevent a multitude of diseases.

Amongst these diseases are Leptosprosis, Bubonic Plague, Lyme's Disease, Protozoan infections, Rickettsia, Worms, Bacterial infections, Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, Mange, Rabies, Toxocariasis, Scabies, Feline Infectious Anemia, Babesiosis, Ehrlichiosis, Encephalitis, Malaria, Meningitis, West Nile Disease, African Horse Disease, etc. There are also issues of contamination of grain stores, destruction of chicken and lamb flocks, etc.



4. We must make sure we don't under-estimate how important our own **pets** are to us – for instance the distress caused when there aren't drugs to help an ill pet. This category includes the more obvious puppies, kittens, horses, rabbits, guinea pigs, etc, etc.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE PEAK-OIL SITUATION FOR ANIMALS

Feeding Large Animals

We currently feed our animals pre-processed bulk compound feeds. These contain preservatives, growth hormones, antibiotics, vitamins & supplements. They all contain bulking agents, which until the BSE outbreak was often made up on animal waste ie chicken shit. Health Regulations have now stopped that and would you believe they are now replacing the animal waste with CONCRETE !!!

Transport costs in getting these from the factory to the shop are piled on to the consumer.

IS THIS THE WAY FORWARD?

ANSWER:

We have to re-learn the skills of hard-feeding with grains and vegetables and the natural herbs available in our pastures & hedges.

We have to consider the efficiency of livestock grazing versus vegetable growing. Therefore the future of agriculture needs great discussion.

Feeding Small Animals

We are persuaded by supermarkets to buy pre-processed kibble. This also contains preservatives, growth hormones, antibiotics, vitamins & supplements. Many dogs and cats suffer skin & gut problems resulting from this. Transport costs are the same as above.



IS THIS THE WAY FORWARD?

ANSWER:

We need to return to a Raw Meaty Bones diet, more akin to a carnivore's natural diet. Much pet food advertising relies on anthropomorphic emotions rather than sensible animal husbandry.

Drugs for Animals

We spend hundreds of pounds at the vets on vaccinations wormers and antibiotics. These synthetic chemicals are expensive to manufacture, are often used unnecessarily and often produce side-effects inviting the use of further medication.

Many of these drugs return to the food chain in the form of manure spread on grazing land or end up silently on supermarket shelves having arrived in most of

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the food products mentioned earlier. Again, bulk transport costs hide in the price.

IS THIS THE WAY FORWARD?

ANSWER:

We should consider large-scale production of cheap and effective herbal remedies. Homeopathic remedies have proven successful in the recent outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease and great efforts were made to hide this information. Political changes to release us from the grip of oil-based pharmacological multi-nationals is essential. Government changes to the current veterinary laws to allow professionals in the fields of chiropractic, osteopathy, homeopathy and acupuncture (appropriately trained in veterinary care) to work alongside vets for animal health.



Skills of the Country

Efforts need to be made in the re-skilling of country people for the trades of incineration, knackerman, skimmers & tanners. Local abattoirs need to return to keep local food local, reduce petrol consumption over long journeys and improve animal welfare. The skills of the ratman, mole-catcher, farriers, falconers, shepherds, etc need to be given their true values again. Vets need to get back to the job of hands-on diagnosis rather than high-tech diagnosis sponsored by drug companies to satisfy insurance companies and pet food companies.

Developments Required



In summary, re-training in animal husbandry skills and country ways needs to be provided in further education facilities. Re-location to the country for shops, butchers, abattoirs, etc requires the man-power to run them. This in turn requires affordable rural housing. Appropriate complementary therapies for animals should be more widely available through your vet, and farmers should be encouraged to take up homeopathy as part of the organic revolution.

IN CONCLUSION

Much needs to change to safeguard our health and that of our animals. Dialogue needs to start with RCVS (Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons) and DEFRA (Department of

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Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs). Changes need to happen in politics to stop the giants like media, supermarkets, pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies and advertising agencies calling the shots. The problem is that their working in short-sighted profit-motive ways ignores the peak-oil problems and obstructs creative solutions.

Democracy creates an economy that allows change to happen. While individual choices can make a difference, the giants have organised our lives so much that the social-political-economic momentum makes it difficult to turn the tide. Mass awareness of peak-oil problems and Government leadership will need to work together to influence the ethical and community values of big business.

IF WE FOLLOW THESE FEW SIMPLE STEPS, we should all live happily ever after ...like porcines in excretia...

