

Animal Welfare.
Worldwide.



FOUR PAWS Policy on our Animal Welfare Work

September 2023

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1 INTRODUCTION

FOUR PAWS is the global animal welfare organisation for animals under direct human influence, which reveals suffering, rescues animals in need and protects them. Beside the local presence, FOUR PAWS works with local authorities and strategic partner organisations on the ground to support efforts with animal rescue and care, veterinary public health services, and the protection of livelihoods.

This document wants to give a brief summary of our standpoints on wild animals, farm animals and companion animals, as well as on animal welfare in general. As an organisation, we have come a long way, and while our methods and approaches have changed over the years and decades, our mission has always stayed the same: to create a better world for animals.

2 TARGET GROUP

This Standard document applies to all employees, interns, and volunteers of FOUR PAWS, hereafter “colleagues”, as well as to all Board members.

3 FOUR PAWS AND ANIMAL WELFARE

Animal welfare is an individual and subjective mental state. It is the sum of all mental experiences of an individual at a given time. This mental state is influenced by the interplay between the functional domains of an animal's life, namely: the quality of its nutrition, the physical environment it lives in, its health status, and its behavioural interactions within its physical and social context.

All of these factors may fluctuate in time, leading to changes in overall welfare within a range from good to bad. Regular monitoring is therefore essential for welfare to be managed well. The goal is to achieve a positive quality of life overall, i.e., a favourable balance, by keeping negative experiences as mild and as few as possible and to enable animals to also have positive experiences.²

FOUR PAWS is committed to shaping its work according to latest scientific evidence. To that end, **FOUR PAWS recommends the use of 'The Five Domains Model'**, created by Prof. Emeritus D.J. Mellor³ and further adapted by FOUR PAWS **as a tool for guiding animal welfare assessments.**

We have come a long way

Since the 1990s, science has greatly improved our knowledge of animal welfare. We now know much more about the unpleasant and pleasant mental experiences animals can have and how they affect their welfare. This knowledge has led to the development of new tools that allow a thorough assessment of animal welfare. Such assessments are a regular part of welfare management and are aimed at improving the practical care of animals.⁴

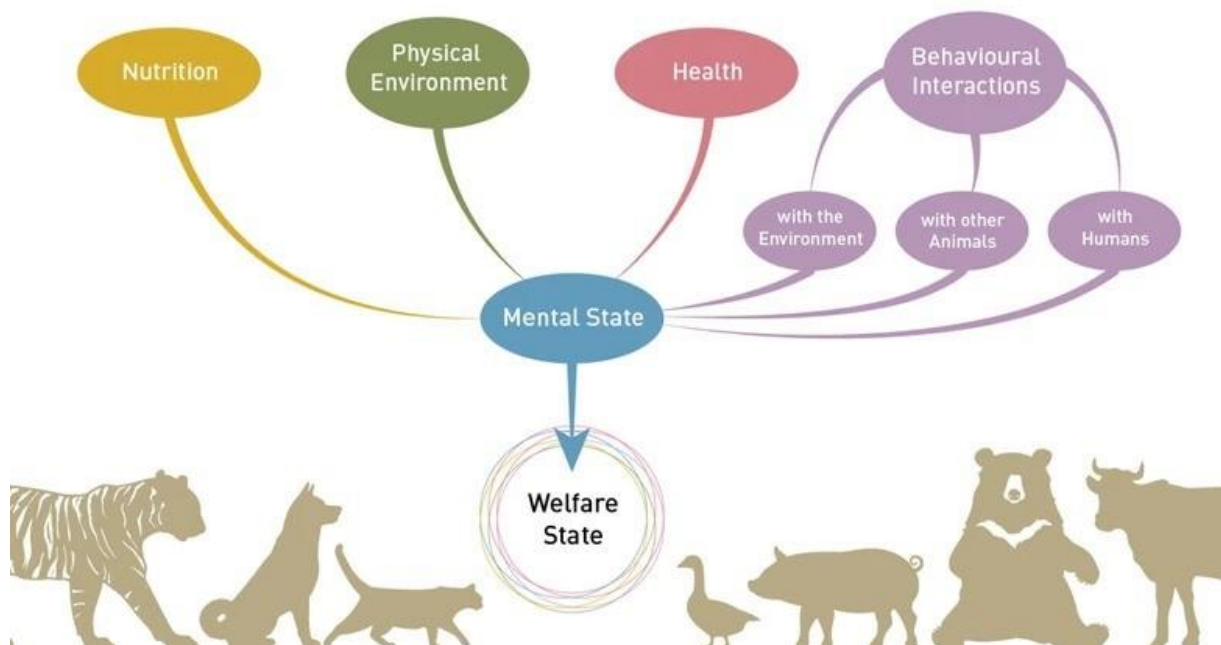


Figure 01: Five Domains Model

FOUR PAWS is today working with the Five Domains Model, a modern tool for guiding systematic and thorough assessments of animal welfare states. The Model incorporates the understanding that mental experiences, be they negative or positive, are a reflection of an animal's internal states (e.g. hunger leading to feed intake; vitality stimulating play behaviour) or external circumstances (e.g. threat from attack leading to fear; presence of conspecifics

leading to pleasures of being bonded). The Model therefore focusses on identifying the internal and external conditions that give rise to mental experiences. The sum of all mental experiences represents the welfare status of an animal at a given time.

4 FOUR PAWS AND COMPANION ANIMALS

Millions of humans share their homes and lives with dogs, cats and other beloved pets. However, 80% of all dogs worldwide actually live on the street⁸. No matter where companion animals spend their lives: their welfare is our highest priority!

Companion animal suffering is manmade

The sad truth is that many issues companion animals face are created by humans through:

- overbreeding
- irresponsible pet ownership
- abandonment of pets leading to large populations of stray dogs and cats
- the cruel dog and cat meat trade in which 10 million animals are killed every year

Our mission: to create a better world for companion animals

To help achieve this, our overarching goals are to:

- stop the illegal online trade of pets
- significantly increase responsible pet ownership
- improve the welfare of stray animals through building capacity at both community, municipality, and local NGO level to demonstrate best practice in responsible stray animal care
- bring an end to the horrific dog and cat meat trade in Southeast Asia

Improving the lives of pets

To help address these issues and improve the lives of millions of companion animals, FOUR PAWS is actively pushing for industry, political and consumer change. Our activities include:

- lobbying for legislations to regulate the buying and selling of pets online
- providing industry with solutions on how to protect pets being sold online
- raising awareness of companion animal welfare and supporting pet owners in taking proper care of their pets.
- campaigning to bring an end to the dog and cat meat trade

Improving the lives of stray animals

Animals living on the street are often confronted with a harsh reality. They suffer from a lack of food, shelter and veterinary care. Frequently authorities use ineffective ways to control the problem such as killing the animals or putting them into overcrowded shelters.

Both these approaches cause animal suffering and have proven to be ineffective and costly. Instead, FOUR PAWS has developed a **community led approach** to stray animal care. This innovative approach helps:

- the community and municipalities to address the stray animal issue in a humane and sustainable way

- Provides the community with the tools and training they need to effectively implement stray animal welfare programmes
- Addresses the causes not just the symptoms of stray animals through responsible pet ownership education and support

5 FOUR PAWS AND FARM ANIMALS

Some 70-80 billion farm animals suffer from poor keeping conditions, terrible long-distance transports, and unprofessional slaughter. When they are no longer of use and unprofitable, they are disposed of, unprotected by law. Where regulations do exist, they are often not fully controlled or enforced. FOUR PAWS is working on a change for a better world for farm animals!

What is factory farming?

Factory farming is an industrial method of raising farm animals, that applies to almost all farmed animals. On factory farms, animals are raised under conditions intended to maximize production at minimal cost. The animals in these systems regularly suffer from cruel practices and their basic needs are not met. On factory farms, animals are confined in small spaces and the animals are kept indoors and/or in cages for their entire life.

Our mission: to create a better world without factory farming

In the sense of “One Health”, the wellbeing of humans, animals and the planet is intrinsically connected. Factory farming not only **harms animals**, but is also a **threat to human health**, contributes to the **climate crisis**, causes **biodiversity loss**, and increases the **risk of pandemics**. FOUR PAWS therefore advocates a **ban on factory farming** and a significant reduction of the number of farm animals. The animals that are kept should receive lifetime care and are kept in keeping conditions according to their social, physical, and mental needs (i.e. the Five Domains).

Reduce – replace - refine

This is accompanied by a reduction in the consumption of animal-derived food like meat, eggs, and dairy products. FOUR PAWS therefore recommends the 3R-principle when it comes to the human diet:

- **R**educing the consumption of animal-derived proteins and other products of animal-origin
- **R**eplacing animal-based products with plant-based alternatives
- **R**efining one’s diet by choosing products from production systems with high animal welfare standards

FOUR PAWS works for farm animals

Crises like pandemics and climate change can only be managed if animal welfare is considered a global priority. Therefore, animal welfare must be made a global policy on the highest possible level, implemented in every country. Higher animal welfare standards must be developed on all levels to:

- change practices and industries
- enhance research needs

- develop and realize innovative new solutions to advance animal welfare faster in an ever-changing world

FOUR PAWS works to achieve commitments by governments, international organisations, and industry to reduce the use of animal-derived products as well as the number of farm animals kept worldwide and to improve keeping conditions of the remaining farm animals by ending factory farming.

6 FOUR PAWS AND WILD ANIMALS

FOUR PAWS believes that, whenever possible, wild animals should live in the wild without human interference. However, the reality is very different: millions of wild animals are born in captivity or removed from the wild and spend their lives under keeping conditions that do not meet their needs. The welfare of any wild animals living under the direct influence of humans is our highest priority!

Wild animal suffering is man-made

Wild animals experience inappropriate keeping conditions worldwide, regardless of the purpose they are (ab)used for, which usually falls under two (legal and illegal) commercial activities:

- trade of live animals or their body parts including fur, exotic leather, trophies, luxury items, traditional medicines, food and other items
- entertainment in circuses, substandard zoos, private ownership, tourism, wild animal interactions, recreational hunting, film industry and others

Trade and entertainment fuel each other, retroactively feeding the irresponsible breeding, keeping and ownership of wild animals on a global scale. Some wild animals are removed from the wild and used as breeding stock to sustain legal and illegal activities. Their welfare is greatly compromised and their removal from the wild can impact their wild conspecifics. Humans also affect wild animals in the wild through the degradation and destruction of habitats that are crucial for their survival and the preservation of biodiversity.

Other commercial activities affecting wild animals and not covered under trade and entertainment include laboratory testing and animal labour.

Our vision: a world where humans treat wildlife with respect, empathy and understanding

FOUR PAWS supports sustainable human-wildlife coexistence, species-protection and conservation efforts, including rehabilitation and release efforts. We work towards an end to cruel keeping practices, the use of wild animals for entertainment purposes and commercial trade. We advocate the highest possible animal welfare standards in certified zoological institutions, sanctuaries and rescue centres, and establish best-practice examples in our own projects. Our overarching goals are to:

- end the use of wild animals for entertainment purposes
- stop the commercial trade of wild animals and their body parts, including fur
- rescue non-releasable wild animals in need and provide lifetime care in species-appropriate sanctuaries that commit to the highest animal welfare standards

- enable rehabilitation and release of wild-born animals into their natural habitat where possible and risks for animals, humans and wildlife are known and acceptable

Our mission: improving the lives of wild animals under human influence

To help improve the lives of millions of captive wild animals, FOUR PAWS is actively pushing for industry, political and consumer change. Our activities include:

- lobbying for legislation to regulate the breeding, keeping, buying and selling of wild animals
- revealing illegal activities and promoting the enforcement of existing legislation
- raising public awareness on issues regarding the treatment of wild animals
- providing species-appropriate and exemplary care for rescued wild animals that are unable to be released into the wild
- providing rescue stations for the rehabilitation of local wildlife

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