

ing. Guidelines, codes of conduct, or position statements are essential. They need to be as short and simple as possible if they are to be used and understood by teachers at all levels of science instruction. It may be true that very few "inhumane" science projects get to state or national levels of competition. This point is supported by an analysis of projects at an independent regional science fair in North Carolina this past year. Three hundred and fifty-one projects were entered. Ninety-seven were in the biological area; only 24 projects involved vertebrate animals. Of these, three projects were observed to be questionable with respect to the current humane issue. Three may not seem excessive, but these three could have been prevented if guidelines had been established by the sponsoring group.

A new interest and awakening in science on a national level further supports the need for such guidelines. In North Carolina, we are aware of a growing interest in science fairs and research projects. There are about 400,000 students taking science in the secondary schools of our state. In the junior high grades, only 53% of the science teachers are appropriately certified to teach science. When this is coupled with the science backgrounds of elementary teachers, who are by law required to teach science, the problem is compounded. The number of science fairs at the local school level is increasing. Many of these take place in individual classrooms. Others involve the whole school system. Both elementary and secondary students are involved. Theoretically, thousands of science fair projects could, and do, take place in isolation of any recognized regional, state, or national science fair. Do these low-level fairs involve animals? Are guidelines on the humane use of animals applicable to these projects? If the response is positive to these questions, then simple, easy-to-understand guidelines are essential.

## Discussion Paper

# Implications of State Humane Laws for Education

Wayne A. Moyer

We have recently seen a number of laws being written which are directed at teachers in public schools regarding use of animals in classrooms. In Illinois a seventy-year-old law forbidding any experiment on any animal in a public school was resurrected as a result of a BSCS experiment involving testosterone injection into male chicks. This resulted in all animal experiments being halted in Illinois public schools. The Illinois House passed a bill which invoked the existing Animal Welfare Code. Strong opposition developed in the Senate and a compromise was worked out between the Illinois Association for Biology Teachers, the Illinois Science Teachers Association, and the American Humane Association (AHA). It was agreed that pithing of frogs, nutrition experiments, and cancer-induction experiments had no place in schools in Illinois. To cover nutrition experiments, a second section of the Animal Welfare Code was invoked; all animals shall be provided with proper feeding and water. George Zahrobsky, representing the teachers, agreed to write a letter to be published in the AHA newsletter setting forth the conditions for the compromise. However, when the bill reached the Senate floor, the hand shake agreement fell apart and strong opposition again developed preventing passage of the law and leaving the old law in place, thus preventing any animal experiments of any kind, including observation, in the public schools.

In Massachusetts a law was recently passed late in the legislative session which is again directed specifically at teachers. While less restricted than the Illinois laws, it effectively prevents chick development studies and animal husbandry studies, such as fish raising for food, in both schools and science fair projects.

I have a number of concerns: Who is to be arbiter of what is humane? I am concerned about any group which sets itself up as the sole authority on any topic. Secondly, I object, and will oppose, any special legislation which singles out the teachers and saddles them with regulations which do not apply to the society-at-large. We have existing animal welfare laws which should be used. Third, I am concerned about the drive to pass laws without first working out compromises at the professional level. The legislatures of the states are not equipped to handle these problems when they are presented from a unilateral standpoint. We all have similar aims, and we should work out acceptable guidelines outside of the political arena. Finally, I am concerned about the confrontation-style politics practiced by certain elements in the animal welfare lobby. Irrevocable positions and verbal overkill do not serve democracy well.

In 1966 Judge Charles S. Barrett of Essex County, New Jersey supported the right

of a teacher to judge the educational value of supervising student use of animals in an experiment in school. His concluding remarks are instructive: "SPCA further argues that the result, if defendant Board were successful, would be that the science teacher would determine when the experiment was justified, balancing his evaluation of the pain and cruelty against the educational value to be derived. This indeed would place an awesome responsibility in the hands of the teacher, but then again the minds of our children are also placed in his hands."

## Discussion Paper

# A Brief History of the 1979 Massachusetts Act Regulating the Use of Live Animals in Public School Activities

Nancy Ann Payton

In March 1894 the Massachusetts legislature, at the urging of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA), enacted the first United States law prohibiting vivisection in public schools and restricting dissection in the classroom. The law remained unamended until the 1970s, when renewed interest in the use of live animals in pre-university educational activities brought the law once again to public attention.

The MSPCA was becoming increasingly concerned about science fair projects that used live animals. In response to inhumane experiments competing at the Massachusetts State Science Fair, the foremost science fair in the Commonwealth, the MSPCA and several other animal welfare societies approached representatives of the fair. As a result, in 1978 the Massachusetts State Science Fair adopted more stringent guidelines on the supervision of participants using live animals, e.g., proper care and handling were outlined in more detail. There was hope in the humane community that these guidelines would filter down to the regional, local and school science fairs striving to send finalists to the state competition.

To the dismay and disappointment of the MSPCA, the 1979 State Science Fair's enforcement of the new humane guidelines was nonexistent. Not only were projects more blatantly cruel than the previous year, but the judges failed to disqualify projects that clearly violated the guidelines. The formal request by the MSPCA to include a veterinarian and/or a humane representative on the 39-member State Science Fair Committee was completely ignored.

Reacting to cruelty which he had seen at science fairs, a Boston science teacher began introducing remedial legislation. The thrust of his bill was to limit science fair projects involving live animals to observational, noninterventive studies. The bill received little attention and repeatedly was killed early in the legislative process.

During the 1979 legislative session the bill was once again introduced by the teacher and was assigned to the Committee on Natural Resources and Agriculture. Although the April public hearing date was announced in early February, the MSPCA delayed active support of the bill until late April. This decision was due to continuing problems with the State Science Fair's obvious unwillingness to enforce even voluntary guidelines. It should be noted that the MSPCA has a definite policy of actively supporting legislation only as a last resort, when all other potentially expedient avenues have