

STATEMENTS OF POLICY OF BLUE CROSS OF INDIA

FOREWORD

This Booklet contains those statements of Policy that have been approved by the Governing Body of the Blue Cross of India in 1986. Many are revisions of previous statements, while some are new. Taken together these statements constitute the state and position of the Blue Cross of India regarding the animal welfare/rights issues at this particular time in history.

Elected by the membership of the Blue Cross of India, the Governing Body is responsible for determining the programmes and policies of the organization. In order to do so in an effective manner, the Governing Body created a Programme and Policy Committee to develop and design programme ideas and options and to draft for the Governing Body's considerations various policy positions and statements. It is anticipated that some of these position may in the future be further revised as the Society seeks to respond creatively and realistically to new challenges and opportunities to protect animals from abuse and suffering. Because the conditions, attitudes and actions affecting animals in our society are constantly changing, so shall we continue to be a dynamic force working on behalf of animals.

The Blue Cross of India invites and encourages other organizations to adopt these policies on their own, either in whole or in part, thereby linking us together in our respective and common efforts to ensure the rights and welfare of all animals.

The elimination of the wrongs enumerated in these statement is the goal of this Society, and it will devote its efforts and resources towards the maximum achievable realization of this goal. To do any less would be failure to meet our responsibility.

Our tools will be leadership education and action using such legal means as are most effective and are at our disposal. We shall endeavour to promote animal welfare in specific situations and strive to bring about new respect for all living things.

The statement of Principles and Beliefs in based upon our conviction that all life possesses an inherent value and is thus deserving of this consideration.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES AND BELIEFS

Every living things has an intrinsic value that derives from creation. It exists by reason of a design and order not of man's making. Yet, man has all too often abused or destroyed other life capriciously and wantonly.

The Primary and motivating concern of the Blue Cross of India is the prevention of cruelty to all living creatures. We are mindful that man has been uniquely endowed with a sense of moral values. For this reason, we believe he is responsible for the welfare of those animals that he has domesticated and those upon whose natural environment he encroaches. The responsibility, we believe, must be shared by all people, It does not matter if they benefit from the use of such domestic animals or participate in the opposed to the legitimate and appropriate utilization of the animals in the service of man, such utilization gives man neither the right nor the license to exploit or abuse any animal in the process.

To guide the Society in its applications of these beliefs to its endeavors, the following principles were set forth at the time of its founding in 1964.

That it is a moral obligation that all animals, whether domesticated or wild, be protected from cruelty on the part of man.

That the claims and interests of science, sport, entertainment and the production of food do not exempt man from the obligation to eliminate cruelty and avoid suffering.

Based on these guiding principles, the following were enumerated:

It is wrong to kill animals needlessly or for entertainment or to cause animal's pain or torment.

It is wrong to fail to provide adequate food, shelter and care for animals for which man has accepted the responsibility.

It is wrong to use animals for medical, educational or commercial experimentation or research unless the following criteria are met: absolute necessity; no available alternative methods; and no pain or torment caused to the animals.

It is wrong to maintain animals that are to be used for food in a manner that causes them discomfort or denies them an opportunity to develop and live in conditions that are reasonably natural for them.

It is wrong to kill animals for food in any manner that does not result in instantaneous unconsciousness. Methods employed should cause no more than minimum apprehension.

It is wrong to confine animals for display, impoundment, or as pets in conditions that are not comfortable and appropriate.

It is wrong to permit domestic animals to propagate to an extent that leads to over population and misery.

ANIMAL SACRIFICES

The Blue Cross of India deplores the sacrificing of animals in the name of religious observances. In this, it is supported by many religious. The Blue Cross of India recognizes that persuasion and education of the public will ultimately be the most effective way of putting an end to such practices. However, in the meantime the Blue Cross of India will act to enforce existing legislation and, where required, press for passage of fresh legislation. The Blue Cross of India will work with central and state agencies including the police departments to enforce existing legislation and bring to book offenders under the law.

ANIMALS IN MOTION PICTURE AND TELEVISION PRODUCTIONS

Because the motion picture and television industries have no production code specifically defining & prohibiting cruelty to animal during film or programme production, the Blue Cross of India is firmly committed to demanding that these industries establish and enforce a strong set of standards and procedures that will assure humane treatment for all animals used in these productions.

The society is opposed to any cruelty to animals in the production of motion pictures and television programmes. Further, the society develops the production and distribution of films and programmes that depict scenes of cruelty and violence to animals.

In seeking to advance these objectives, the Blue Cross of India seeks the aid of all resources of central and state governments and the corporation of the Indian film and television industries, their trade associations and persons associated with the film and television industries.

ANIMALS IN BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH AND TESTING

The Blue Cross of India recognizes that some benefit for both animals and mankind may have been achieved through some research and testing on animals but that advancement of medicine and human health has also been hindered by such research. It is also widely accepted that, today, many alternates to the use of animals in research are available. However, the Blue Cross of India also recognizes that use of animals in biomedical research, safety testing, and other programmes are many and varied, and that this research and testing is not likely to end in the immediate future. While committed to ending vivisection; the Blue Cross will accept a phase out stage.

While some of the animals used in research and testing are subjected to procedures that result only in momentary discomfort, the Blue Cross of India believes that millions of laboratory animals do suffer severely and needlessly in experiments, resulting from exposure to noxious substances and pathogenic organisms, or from cruelty, carelessness, ignorance and indifference. The Blue Cross of India also contends that toxicity testing on live animals, as now required by government agencies to test the safety of serums, drugs and cosmetics, and other chemicals is often unreliable, inaccurate and unnecessary and should be replaced as soon as possible by new methods not involving animals. Existing measures intended to ensure humane treatment have proven inadequate. Coverage should be expanded to include all animals used, protect animals undergoing the research and experimental process, and require immediate prohibition of specific painful invasive procedures

The Blue Cross of India believes that scientists and facilities using experimental animals should be held strictly accountable for their care and use and should keep animals in a manner fulfilling both physical and behavioral needs. Experiments should be rigorously planned, with proper statistical design, so as to minimize the number of animals necessary to be used to achieve reliable results and, through the administration of anesthesia and analgesics and other appropriate medication and veterinary care required, to preclude animal suffering. The Blue Cross of India believes that the government agencies and relevant professional organizations should encourage and actively support efforts to eliminate animal suffering in the laboratory.

The Blue Cross of India strongly advocates the development and application of alternative methods of research and testing which could reduce the number of animals required; refine existing techniques and procedures so as to minimize the level of stress endured by the animal; and to replace the use of laboratory animals. Refinement and reduction are interim steps towards the ultimate goal of complete replacement of animals in biomedical research and product testing.

Therefore, it is the policy of the Blue Cross of India to use every means in its power to reduce and end the use of animals in biomedical research and testing laboratories by advocating the attitudes and approaches set forth in this statement.

BLOOD SPORTS

The Blue Cross of India is unalterably opposed to the so-called Blood Sports such as bull-fighting, dog-fighting, cock-fighting, snake – mongoose-fighting and similar spectacles. The Society maintains all of these are brutal animal contests with acute suffering, torture and harassment for animals forced to participate torture for fun that is degrading and unfit for a civilized society. Further, the Society recognizes that these spectacles continue to survive because of ineffective law enforcement.

It is, therefore, the Blue Cross of India's policy to take all steps necessary to end these cruel events by legal action which possible, by seeking strong legal legislation, where needed, to outlaw these activities, by working with state law enforcement officials, and by working with both Central government agencies and other organizations.

COSMETIC SURGERY ON ANIMALS

It is the policy of the Blue Cross of India to oppose tail myotomy, tail neurectomy and tongue myotomy in equines, ear cropping of dogs and declawing of cats when done solely for the convenience of the owner and without benefit to the animal itself. Further, the Society opposes any other unnecessary surgical procedure that is painful, distressful or restrictive of the function of the body part involved when done for cosmetic purposes or to disguise natural imperfections of any animal, including the defanging of snakes, removing the teeth of mongooses and the debarking of dogs.

DISPOSITION OF ORPHANED AND INJURED WILDLIFE

In the handling and disposition of orphaned and injured wildlife the Blue Cross of India recognizes that fundamental consideration must always be given to the well-being of the animals themselves, that such animals may be subjected to stressful conditions when housed in animal shelters, and that few animal welfare organizations or shelter staffs are equipped to treat, care for, maintain, or reintroduce these animals in to the wild.

It is, therefore, the policy of the Blue Cross of India to recommend the placement of orphaned or injured wildlife with a wildlife rehabilitation specialist or the humane euthanasia of such animals which are badly injured.

ENGANGERED SPECIES

An estimated 40% of all living species is now threatened with extinction as a result of pollution, trapping, hunting and/or destruction of habitat. Recognizing that the demise of any species is an irreparable loss that deprives the world of a unique creature, the Blue Cross of India is committed to restoring and protecting the endangered species in every way possible. We also urge Central and State wildlife agencies to broaden their programmes for the protection and propagation of threatened and endangered species and their habitats, and we encourage private citizens to assist in preserving habits where such species are known to reside.

HUNTING

The Blue Cross of India is strongly opposed to the hunting of any live creature for fun, trophy or for sport, because of the trauma, suffering and death to the animals which results. The Blue Cross of India also opposes such killing because of the negative effect upon the young who may learn to accept and live with needless suffering and killing. The Blue Cross of India believes that a civilized society should not condone the killing of any sentient creature as sport.

The Blue Cross of India believes that the characterization of wild animals as 'game' denies their intrinsic value and belittles their ecological importance. The Society finds that a great deal of wild life allegedly killed for management reasons actually is killed as 'game' for sporting purposes. In such cases, we oppose both the killing and the duplicity. It is goal of the Blue Cross of India to ensure ethical stewardship of wildlife and its environment.

The Blue Cross of India recognizes that the welfare and the responsible management of animals may, on occasion, necessitate the killing of wildlife. When such a killing is permitted, it must be used as a last resort, be demonstrably necessary, be conducted by responsible officials and methods utilized must result in an instantaneous and humane death.

IMPOUNDED ANIMALS -*

The Blue Cross of India is convinced that the surrender of impounded animals from public and private shelters to biomedical research laboratories, training institutions, pharmaceutical houses, and other facilities that use animals for experimental teaching or testing purposes contributes to a breakdown of effective animals control programmes through abandonment of animal by owners who rightfully fear such animals may be subjected to painful use. The Society believes that animals shelters should not be a cheap source of supply for laboratories or pursue, voluntarily or

otherwise, a practice that will inevitable destroy public confidence in its operation and thereby lessen public support.

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- *Under The Gazette of India Notification No.544 dated August 28, 1998 and Ministry of Environment and Forests Notification dated August 26, 1998 dogs cannot be handed over for research to any Private or Government institution. This pound seizure regulation was proposed by the Blue Cross and accepted by the Central Government*
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It is, therefore, the policy of the Blue Cross of India to oppose the release of impounded animals from public pounds and private animal shelters to biomedical research laboratories or related animal-using facilities and to oppose any measure, administrative or legislative, that would make this practice mandatory. Further, the Society condemns any organizations, calling itself an animal welfare society or society for the prevention of cruelty to animals that voluntarily sells or gives animals in its custody to biomedical research laboratories.

LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY PRACTICES

The Blue Cross of India recognizes that the suffering of farm animals is widespread. This suffering primarily results from the adoption of intensive confinement husbandry systems which, because of their scale, are economically competitive over less stressful and more humane methods of meat, milk, and egg production. Examples include laying hens that are crowded in small, wire “battery” cages. The Society recognizes and has documented that the majority of modern intensive confinement systems of live stock and poultry production are stressful to the animals and the systems are inadequately designed to provide a healthful environment for the animal’s physical, behavioral and emotional needs and requirements.

The Blue Cross of India recognizes additional concerns such as branding, dehorning and castration of cattle without anesthesia, improper handling and transportation of farm animals under inhumane conditions, and inhumane slaughter of animals in slaughter houses. The Society further recognizes that existing legislation offers little protection for food animals. Standards affecting the well-being and comfort of livestock and poultry are determined usually on the basis of productivity and profit.

Since more and more animals products sold are from “factory farm” animals, the Society endorses the concept of eating with conscience and of avoiding slaughter house products.

The Blue Cross of India is also concerned with the widespread use of antibiotics, hormones, and other drugs used to boost animal growth and productivity and to offset the stressful and disease

promoting conditions on “factory” farms. A related concern is the impact on public health, the environment, and on wildlife in order to primarily supply inhumane animal farm-factories with livestock and poultry feed stuffs.

It is, therefore, the policy of the Blue Cross of India to work for the elimination of all cruelty in the raising, housing, care, transportation, and slaughter of food animals. The Society is committed to pursuing this objective by publicity, distribution of literature, and investigation and legal action. Further, the Society seeks reform and regulation of the production and marketing of these animals, enforcement of applicable laws, repeal of ritual slaughter exemptions in central and state statutes, and implementation of humane standards for animals in every aspects of livestock, dairy products and poultry production.

MARINE MAMMALS

The Blue Cross of India strongly opposes on both ethical and humane grounds the slaughter of marine mammals for commercial and sport purposes including, the example, the harpooning of whales, clubbing of seals, drowning of porpoises and other marine mammals in fishing nets and gear and shooting them from boats with rifles. The Blue Cross of India believes that these inhumane activities cannot be justified as being either socio-economically essential or necessary for human nutrition. Moreover, the Blue Cross of India is convinced that many marine mammal populations are either endangered or in imminent danger of becoming so as a result of such activities and that steps must be taken to reverse the decline of those marine mammal populations.

It is, therefore, the policy of the Blue Cross of India to promote and support measures to protect and preserve all marine mammals. In pursuing this policy, the Blue Cross of India:

1. Supports the total ban on all commercial whaling adopted by the international Whaling Commission and the imposition of sanctions against those nations that refuse to comply with it;
2. Supports a total ban on all commercial seal hunts;
3. Opposes the sport hunting of marine mammals;
4. Seeks the development of new fishing practices that will prevent injury to and agonizing death by drowning of marine mammals incidentally taken in fishing nets; and
5. Seeks an end to the practice of dumping fishing nets and other materials overboard which creates so-called “ghost fishing nets” entangling and killing thousands of marine mammals annually.

PET OVERPOPULATION *

The Blue Cross of India is acutely aware that the rate of birth of pet animals is grossly disproportionate to the homes available, a situation that has produced enormous suffering for millions of abandoned animals and many more that are impounded and destroyed, often by inadequate and misused methods of euthanasia.

Since 1964, the Blue Cross of India has been carrying out an Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme which has been recently been enthusiastically assisted by the Animal Welfare Board, Government of India. Spay/neuter and release has been adopted by the Government of India in 1997 as its official dog control policy.

It is, therefore, the policy of the Society to urge all animal welfare organizations and animal control agencies to require that the male and female animals be spayed or neutered before being released for adoption, encourage the establishment of low-cost spaying and neutering programmes, urge enactment and enforcement of animal control ordinances designed to deter and reduce domestic pet breeding, encourage cooperation between animal welfare societies and veterinarians in seeking to resolve the problem, encourage development of an inexpensive chemosterilant and continue to pursue educational programmes and efforts on the total problem.

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- *Thanks to the efforts of Mrs. Maneka Ghadhi and the Blue Cross, the Animal Birth Control(ABC) Rules, 2001 was published under the sub-section (1) of Section 38 of the prevention of Cruelty to Animal Act, 1960 (59 of 1960) vide Ministry of Culture notification number G.S.R.816(E) dated November 2, 2001*
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TRAPPING

The Blue Cross of India opposes trapping because it is cruel and causes needless exploitation of wildlife

The Blue Cross of India finds no justification for any form of trapping including the Kheddha operations except in those rare cases when such trapping demonstrably benefits animals or is necessary to preserve human health or to halt severe economic or ecological damage. This kind of trapping may be conducted only after less intrusive alternatives have been attempted and exhausted and must be done responsibly, efficiently, and by a humane method that captures the animal alive and without injury or produce rapid loss of consciousness and painless death.

STUDY OF LIVE ANIMALS IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL BIOLOGY

The Blue Cross of India recognizes the importance of biology studies within the elementary and secondary school curricula. As the “Study of Life”, biology programmes should be designed to instill in students an interest in and respect for all living things, as well as an appreciation for the uniqueness of each individual organism. Since, for the vast majority of young people, formal exposure to biology ends with high school graduation, it is also necessary that pre-college biology studies provide exposure to values and learning experiences that will continue to be meaningful beyond the narrow applications of the class room laboratory. The Blue Cross of India believes that these objectives are best met when biology education at the pre-college level focuses on animals as living, sentient creatures, stressing their behavior, life patterns, and relationship with their environment.

The Blue Cross of India opposes the use of animals in school sponsored or approved experiments, lessons, or projects that interfere with the normal health or development of the animals constitute major manipulations of the animals’ behavior or environment, or cause pain, fear, anxiety, or discomfort. Experiments and activities involving live animals should be limited to observations of the normal living patterns, behavior, growth, and development of domestic animals, or wild animals in the free-living state or in those zoological parks or aquaria that maintain animals in suitable naturalistic environments. In rare instances, small, native animals whose habitat can be easily simulated in a classroom setting may be brought into the classroom for observation over a brief period of time, but should be returned promptly to the place from which they were taken.

It is also the policy of the Blue Cross of India that dissection is unnecessary and inconsistent with the development of a general appreciation and respect for living organisms and is, therefore, unacceptable. *

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- *The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has, after detailed study and deliberation, stopped the dissection of animals for biology students from March 2002*
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PREDATOR CONTROL

The Blue Cross of India believes that the predator control programme as now implemented by the central and state government results in a massive slaughter of wild life without justification. The Society finds the indiscriminate killing of predatory animals by poisoning, trapping, shooting

and other inhumane methods totally unacceptable and a shortsighted view that can cause serious ecological damage to mankind and his environment. The Blue Cross of India questions much of the data provided by farmers, and other to support their claims of major livestock and other losses due to predators.

It is, therefore, the policy of the Blue Cross of India to oppose the cruel techniques used in the present programme, encourage the use of nonlethal control measures such as repellents, lights, sound agents, and chemosterilants, and work for adoption of a government indemnity programme to compensate farmers for proven stock losses caused by predators

WILD ANIMALS AS PETS

The Blue Cross of India believes that most wild animals make unsuitable pets under virtually all circumstances and very few unsuitable pets under virtually all circumstances and very few people, adult or child, are equipped to properly maintain any wild animals in the whole environment. We define wild animal as any animal not genetically controlled over a very long period of time and specifically, thereby, adapted to the human environment.

While recognizing that there inevitably exists the rare exception of the legitimately involved person who can provide a satisfactory environment for such animals, the Blue Cross of India is against the general traffic in wild animals. In all cases it is opposed to the keeping of those animals that will suffer by capture, transport, and confinement (all non-human primates are included as are all wild canids and felids); and the traffic in any animal whose kind is already known to be endangered or is believed likely to become endangered; and is equally opposed to the private confinement in the pet category of any animal potentially harmful or dangerous as transmitter of disease or as on attacker of man because of the inevitable disenchantment with such animals; and the problems of appropriate and humane disposal.

ZOOS

The Blue Cross of India believes that under most circumstances wild animals should be permitted to exist undisturbed in their natural environments. To a considerable extent, zoos violate that right frequently resulting in abuse, neglect, suffering and death of animals. Consequently, the

Blue Cross of India cannot condone the capture and confinement of animals from the wild for use in zoos, except for necessary propagation of endangered species.

However, the Blue Cross of India recognizes the widespread existence of zoos and acknowledges that some serve demonstrable purposes for the long-term benefit of animals such as:

- Preservation and restoration of endangered or threatened species.
- Education of people to the needs of wild animals and their role in ecosystems

In order to justify their existence, zoos must serve such purposes must maintain animals in conditions simulating their natural habitats as closely as possible, and must treat them with the highest degree of humaneness, care and professionalism.

The Blue Cross of India believes it is extremely important that these requirements be met not only for the welfare of the animals but also because inhumane or inappropriate conditions viewed by an impressionable public provide a negative learning experience by seeming to condone indifference or cruelty.

Unfortunately, few zoos approach these standards at the present time; more, in fact, make no attempt to do so. Most municipally operated zoos are so inferior as to be nothing more than sub-standard menageries. The Blue Cross of India pledges itself to work with those zoological parks and other zoos desiring to improve and having the capability to do so, but it is committed to the eradication of those that will not or cannot improve.