

# Animal

## ROUNDAABOUT



ISSUE NUMBER 4, WINTER 1999

Produced for people with an interest in the exhibition of animals in zoos, circuses, mobile farms, fauna and wildlife parks in NSW.



NSW Agriculture

## Up to the Gills

Good water quality is the key factor influencing the welfare of gilled aquatic animals such as fish, sharks, rays and many invertebrates. These animals have highly permeable gill lining which promotes the exchange of respiratory

gases between blood in the gills and the surrounding water.

Unfortunately potentially dangerous dissolved substances can also be absorbed. Harmful particles and disease organisms circulating in the water also cannot be avoided by these animals.

Harmful substances and diseases in aquarium water are pollutants which can rapidly degrade the animals' environment. As the animals' sensitivity is high, stress, illness and death can follow quickly.

Pollution can be caused by decaying food, faeces and dead animals, toxic metabolic waste (urea, ammonia), insufficient aeration, toxic construction materials and other sources.

Good water quality can be achieved by

using chemically-inactive construction materials, disease and pollution-free water, appropriate stocking rates, regular water monitoring and filtration.

Filtration can be mechanical (to remove suspended particles) chemical or biological (using bacteria) to convert aquarium waste products into less dangerous substances. Skimmers may be used to remove surface pollutants. Water can be sterilised using ultra violet, ozone or chlorine. As a further precaution, an alarm system can be fitted to warn of deteriorating water quality or system failure.

The need to provide a 'total environment' for gilled animals explains why aquarists have to devote so much of their time, effort and resources to maintaining good water quality.



Photo courtesy of Sydney Aquarium.

# Looze Lipz



## Itch Hikers

Biting lice can cause occasional problems for sheep, in exhibits and mobile displays. The best way to handle the problem is to shear the animals and treat them with a registered pesticide. The most convenient way to treat a small flock is to use a pour-on or spray-on treatment that is applied to the back line after shearing.

Make sure the treatment is registered and most importantly, use the product according to the label directions. Seek advice from your veterinarian.

## Know-how

There are many ways to learn more about the welfare of exhibited animals. Behaviour enrichment, nutrition, housing stocking rates and legal matters are all important aspects of keeping animals in captivity.

Do you know of any special courses, workshops or seminars to be held in the Year 2000? There are many *Animal Roundabout* readers who may wish to participate. Please write, email or telephone the editor, Sonya Begg with suggestions.

## Friendly reminder

We would really like to hear about any notable births of exhibited animals. Breeding some species in captivity is often quite a feat... why not share your joy with others. Call Cathy Greenwood on (02) 6391 3276 or email [catherine.greenwood@agric.nsw.gov.au](mailto:catherine.greenwood@agric.nsw.gov.au)

## Koala care

An inaugural workshop run by the Fauna & Marine Parks Association was held at the Australian Wildlife Park in May. This is the first course in NSW which focuses on the specific requirements for the successful care of koalas in captivity. The course was run as a non-profit venture and covered aspects of care of housing, feeding and breeding, as well as treatments for commonly encountered health problems. The Association is planning to hold further koala care workshops depending on demand. Contact the Association on (02) 6581 0783 for more details.

## The Right Connections



**Natural History Book Store.**  
<http://www.nhbs.com/>

Thousand of titles describing the amazing diversity of the natural world. Includes subjects from aardvarks and amphibians through to zebras, environmental assessment, species and habitat conservation and zoology.

**UFAW the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare.**  
<http://www.users.dircom.co.uk/~ufaw3/>

UK-based scientific organisation with interests in the welfare of all animals. Check out their newsletter.

## 18 Months later

It's now over 18 months since circus inspections commenced under the *Standards for Exhibiting Circus Animals in New South Wales*. All circuses registered in NSW have received at least one visit from the Animal Welfare Unit and many have had the chance to show off their improvements at following inspections. The Standards were introduced in 1996 under the *Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986* to improve and maintain high standards of animal welfare and public safety in the circus industry. Results to date have been most encouraging.

## Helpful Hints

### Colour Counts

Black or other darkly-coloured mesh or bars on animal exhibit enclosures has many benefits. It makes it easier to view an animal especially from a distance - and visitors are able to take clearer photographs. Paint can flake or be easily removed by sharp, gnawing teeth. Reports indicate that powder coating provides a superior finish. If you feel

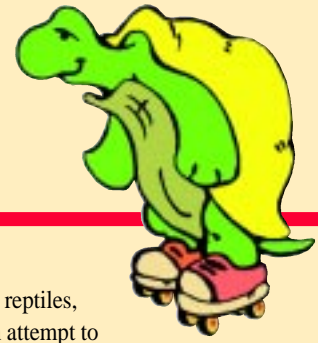
like trying this idea, make sure the products used are not toxic to your animals either during or after application.

### Handy Help for Records

A book containing both the common and scientific names of species is now available from the Animal Welfare Unit of NSW Agriculture. This book is a

great help for completing animal record pages; applying for transaction approvals; permits; or any other forms where it is necessary to identify a species. Using this book as a reference, also helps to speed up the data entry process of animal records each year. If you would like a copy of this handy reference manual, contact Diane Williamson on (02) 6391 3474.

# Wildlife on Wheels



It's often presumed that people's most memorable animal encounter takes place at a zoo or fauna park. There is however, a good chance that such an experience actually occurred at the local shopping centre, fete or school, and was conducted by a mobile wildlife educator.

The role these mobile educators play is essentially in the form of an outreach program, where groups of people that are not situated near a zoo or fauna park can still have access to the education experience of observing animals 'up close'. The importance of outreach

programs in educating the public in relation to animal conservation has been highlighted by the World Zoo Conservation Strategy.

The 'Mobile Wildlife Educators Association' was formed in February 1998 by NSW mobile wildlife exhibitors in an attempt to formalise their contribution to education. The aim of the Association is to promote conservation and welfare of animals through positive, hands-on interaction with people. The main focus of these

shows is the display of reptiles, especially snakes, in an attempt to dispel many of the myths about this group of animals.

With these wildlife educators reaching well over 100,000 people a year in NSW alone, a touchy-feely animal experience is just around the corner!

*Craig Adams-Maher from "We're all Little Aussies" shows how to carefully handle an olive python in a manner which is safe for the children and python.*



*'Touchy-feely' animal experiences for children from Calare School at Orange.*



*The Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Land and Water Conservation, Mr Richard Amery MP, making friends with an affable python.*



# Greener Pastures

David Allerton from NSW Agriculture, Grafton, suggests the following methods to be considered as a way to reduce concentrated grazing, loss of pasture and soil erosion in animal enclosures.

- For larger animals such as cattle which may not be on permanent display, put them in their exhibit only when they are on show. Allow them to graze elsewhere at other times, such as in an adjacent paddock.
- Use supplementary feeding early in the morning and late in the afternoon.
- Use railway sleepers around shelter areas and gravel around water points to reduce mud and erosion.
- Use an electric wire to fence off overgrazed patches to allow revegetation.



# Raising the Standard

Animal Roundabout, Issue 3, reported on the introduction of the Standards for the Operation of Mobile Farms in NSW. The Standards reflect the commitment of the industry and the community to ensure animals are transported and displayed in a way that is safe - both for the animals and for the public.

One way of presenting information is through the use of signs which have

been included in the General Standards (Clause 8) and the Mobile Farm Display Standard (Clause 6). The latter also covers the availability of attendants who can answer questions from the public. Apart from the Standards, the way in which visitors to an exhibit are informed about the animals on display is left to the ingenuity of the exhibitor.

The educational value gained from mobile displays is varied, depending on the species presented, the age of the audience and the venue. Some operators of mobile farms make maximum use of the opportunity to educate young people about positive attitudes towards animals, others may not.

Your views about these issues are important. We want to hear what you think about the Mobile Farm Standards.

Contact Peter Johnson on (02) 9264 9533 or email [peter.johnson@agric.nsw.gov.au](mailto:peter.johnson@agric.nsw.gov.au)

**NEXT  
ISSUE**

**Quarantine for newcomers**

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## Mailing List:

If you would like your own copy of Animal Roundabout, we can add your name to the mailing list.

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## Contributions:

Short items and good quality photos are welcome. Send them to the editor:

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NSW Agriculture

## Mobile Farm Standards - What is your opinion?

■ Is an opportunity being missed to acquaint people with the value and importance of the animals in their own right and in their interaction with humans?

■ Should there be an alternative to the use of signs in mobile farm displays such as a short oral presentation at advertised times during the day?

■ Is there interest in forming an association for mobile farms (similar to the Mobile Wildlife Educators Association?)

# Spotlight on Committee

## Members of EAAC Committee

Back row, Neil Ballment, Jeff Hardy, Catherine Greenwood, Matthew Crane, Barry Wilton.  
Sitting, Regina Fogarty, Giovanna Pawson. Absent, William Meikle



The Exhibited Animals Advisory Committee (EAAC) gives advice to NSW Agriculture on many important issues associated with the exhibited animals industry.

The committee meets six times a year and reviews drafts of new Standards and considers proposals to amend existing Standards. It monitors the effectiveness of the licensing scheme and may also make recommendations on licence applications. The

committee also assists in coordinating regulation of the industry and often undertakes familiarisation visits of exhibit facilities to ensure proper assessment of proposals.

Committee members represent private exhibitors, statutory exhibitors, animal welfare groups, NSW Agriculture (responsible for the Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986 and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979) and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (responsible for the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974).

Media reports, complaints, animal injuries, human injuries and animal escapes are drawn to the attention of the committee through an information appendix on its meeting agenda. People can ask the committee to consider an issue by writing to the Executive Officer, EAAC c/- Animal Welfare Unit, Locked Bag 21, Orange 2800.