

World Association for Transport Animal Welfare and Studies (TAWS)



Common ground: moving forward with animals

TAWS/TAA/BVA workshop held 15 April 2004, Silsoe Research Institute, UK

TAWS 2004 workshop evaluation

Before the workshop closed, evaluation forms were distributed and participants were asked to complete them anonymously. A total of 22 completed forms were returned.

Participants were asked to assess thirteen aspects of the workshop on a scale of A (very useful, very good) through C (OK) to E (very poor). The information on the various forms was consolidated and the average responses were ranked using a scoring system (see table below). Responses were generally positive. Of 286 assessments made, 83% were 'good' or 'very good'. Only 2% were considered 'weak', and nothing was 'very poor'. The highest evaluation score was for the overall impression of the workshop (16 As and 6 Bs). The most popular presentations were collaboration between charities, ox yokes and animal power for transport. The discussion groups were rated above 'good' and were in the middle of the evaluation scores. Unlike all other aspects of the workshop, these seem to have provoked a bimodal response, with people mainly thinking they were either very good or simply OK. From various comments added, it appears that one group was rather dominated and this discouraged some of the participants. At the other end of the scale, was the practical demonstration (although this still had a relatively high approval rating, nearer to 'good' than 'OK'). Comments in the evaluation forms suggested that the tillage demonstrations should have been more structured.

Things learned

Participants were asked to note three things they had learned from the workshop. Several responses related to yoking systems (6), the diversity of opinion on these issues (3), the need to study the issues more (1) and the injuries caused by poor systems (1). Another cluster of responses related to knowledge of the animal welfare charities (including TAWS) and their need to collaborate (9). The importance of inter-agency collaboration, and its implications was another key issue (7). People had learned about the diversity of animal traction and systems of using oxen (10). Several people said they had learned about international linkages and people working in other countries (5). People had learned about tillage systems (3) and the motor/animal power equipment supplied by Charles Pinney (3). People had learned about programmes in The Gambia, Madagascar and Africa and issues such as education, the global village and diverse points of view.

Best and most useful aspects

Participants were asked what was the best aspect of the workshop. Many people (11) referred to making contacts, networking and/or strengthening collaboration. There were mentions of good presentations (5), new information (3) and the international experience presented (5). Mention was made of the enthusiastic and friendly atmosphere (2), the practical demonstrations (2) and bringing the charities together (2). Individuals mentioned harnessing, tillage, collaboration, animal welfare and the discussions.

Suggestions for improvements and future workshops

When asked how the workshop could have been improved, four people said it was excellent as it was. Four people suggested there should have been a list of participants and their addresses available at the beginning of the workshop. Two people said there should have been more participants. Three people suggested there should have been more time for structured practical demonstrations. Other ideas included more time (eg, a two-day workshop) and more time for questions after the presentations. It is important to avoid the domination of discussion groups by their chairpersons. Similarly, verbal clashes between those with differing opinions about harnessing systems should be minimised. Afternoon tea should have been available.

Future workshops should be broadly similar (3), but with a wider range of people (1) and more people from southern countries (1). They should be more regular (twice a year) or longer (two days). There should be more animal demonstrations (2). They should not be held in school holidays. Specific ideas included:

- Examples of good welfare practices and successful animal power case histories
- Appropriate legislation and enforcement for animal power
- Increasing inter-agency cooperation.

Other comments

In response to the opportunity to give 'any other comments', 10 participants wrote positive remarks, thanking the organisers for a well-organised workshop and great day, and hoping to be present at the next workshop. One person wrote that the potential for greater collaboration between the animal welfare charities was very good news.

It is interesting to note that the workshop had a higher average score than the previous year, with higher ratings for the overall impression and for the more popular presentations (but there is no suggestion that this is statistically significant). The rankings are summarised in the table below.

TAWS 2004 Workshop

Evaluation questions, ranked by mean response (score)

	😊	Response				☹	Mean	Mean
	A	B	C	D	E		2004	2003
Overall impression of workshop	16	6					9.2	7.9
Presentation: Cooperation between charities	15	5	1				9.0	
Presentation: Ox yokes	14	7	1				8.8	
Overall usefulness of workshop	12	10					8.6	7.8
Presentation: Animal power for transport	11	10	1				8.4	
<i>Mean score</i>							7.8	7.6
Discussion groups	9	4	7				7.7	7.6
Opening session and Keynote address	5	15	2				7.5	
Reporting progress: Students	4	10	3				7.4	
Presentation: Ox harnesses	6	10	6				7.3	
Presentation: Tillage systems	5	11	4	1			7.1	
Information: Donkey harness initiative	5	11	4	1			7.1	
Practical demonstrations	4	10	6	2			6.6	6.5
Information: Working cattle collaboration	2	10	8	1			6.3	
Total of responses	108	119	43	5	0			
% response 2004	39	43	16	2	0			
% response 2003	33	49	16	2	0			