

Working together for animal welfare



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National Curriculum in England Framework document, and welcomes many of the changes, particularly the decision to retain a Citizenship Programme of Study at Key Stage 3 and 4, which allows teachers to address moral and ethical issues, such as animal welfare, in a practical and everyday setting.

“However, there are some missed opportunities particularly in the Primary Science curriculum, with the most pressing of these being the focus on an animal’s basic needs to survive. It states that pupils should learn about an animal’s basic needs for survival, and lists air, food and water. The AWEA is concerned that this doesn’t reflect current UK animal welfare legislation, which states that an animal has five welfare needs, and these are outlined clearly in the Animal Welfare Act 2006. The Five Needs is a great framework for classroom teaching. It’s also a golden opportunity to educate the next generation of pet owners about their legal duty of care.”

National Pet Month is 1 April to 6 May and it’s the perfect time to work with your local community and raise awareness and money for animal welfare charities. For example, if you run a pet shop, why not invite classes from your local school to find out more about animals and promote our pet-themed resources. You could also theme a fun day for the local community in general – raising funds for your local rehoming centre. Have a look at www.nationalpetmonth.org.uk and register your event. If you need to download some fun posters about animal welfare simply visit www.peteducationresources.co.uk

The Pet Food Manufacturers’ Association has been working closely with a number of organisations to raise awareness of the need for better education on the subject of animal welfare. Here chief executive **MICHAEL BELLINGHAM** gives an update



The Animal Welfare Education Alliance – how it all started

Back in 2009, the PFMA hosted the first education symposium and invited the UK’s leading animal welfare organisations to come along and discuss how they could work effectively together. The response was very positive, with 20 organisations represented at initial meetings forming the Animal Welfare Education Alliance (AWEA).

The AWEA is united by a key belief that children and young people should be educated about animals and the importance of providing for an animal’s five welfare needs¹. Unfortunately, the majority of schools do not teach about caring for pets² and the meeting’s key objective was to brainstorm how a collaborative approach could improve the situation.

After the first couple of meetings, it was agreed that a valuable step forward would be to create a free website for teachers and anyone with a love of pets, enabling access to all of their educational resources and visits in one place. The

AWEA worked closely to launch and develop www.peteducationresources.co.uk

As Wood Green confirmed: “We are passionate about teaching responsible pet ownership and giving the next generation the skills and knowledge to make pets’ lives happier and healthier. By joining forces with other animal charities, a wealth of educational expertise has been brought together in one easy-to-use location, creating a unique signposting website suitable for a range of audiences and for the benefit of animals large and small.”

In addition to working together to create this valuable online resource, the alliance continues to collaborate and liaise with the Department for Education, outlining the case for an adjustment to wording to include reference to the five welfare needs in order to reflect current legislation.

Vicki Craighill of the PDSA comments: “AWEA has reviewed the newly proposed

About the PFMA

The Pet Food Manufacturers’ Association is the principal trade body representing the UK pet food industry; a key focus of activity is to promote animal welfare and responsible pet ownership. Its 60 members account for over 90 per cent of the market and produce a wide range of products for cats, dogs, rabbits and other pet animals. To find out more or download some useful information sheets for you and your customers, please visit: www.pfma.org.uk

National Pet Month is a registered charity number 1114880.

1) All children should understand the five welfare needs, arising from the Animal Welfare Act (2006): 1. Environment – the need for a suitable living environment; 2. Diet – the need for a suitable diet; 3. Behaviour – the need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns; 4. Companionship – the need for appropriate companionship; 5. Health – the need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.
2) Survey conducted by PFMA among 2,500 adults and 400 teachers, 2011. Caring for pets is not taught at 60 per cent of primary schools although 89 per cent of parents and 78 per cent of primary teachers agreed it was important.