Animal welfare in a Military Working Dog program

initial proposal for the Brazilian Army

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Introduction

• Animal welfare concepts \(\rightarrow\) unequally spread
  - Globe
  - Different type of animals
• MWD ➔ several particularities

• Routine
  — Training
  — Feeding
  — Resting

• Injuries
  — Osteoarticular
  — Traumatic
Introduction

Particularities

Welfare concerns
Introduction

• MWD particularities

• Few studies

• Few officially incorporated concepts to military programs
Objectives

- Describe → handling, training and operation procedures
- Quantify → animal welfare
- Propose → manual of good practices
Materials and methods

- São Paulo State
  - 3 kennels
    - Barueri
    - Osasco
    - Campinas
  - Aprox. 70 animals
Materials and methods

Step 1 ➔ Research
- Document analysis
- In loco visits
- Questionnaire

Step 2 ➔ Animal welfare quantification

Step 3 ➔ Manual elaboration
1.1 Document analysis

- Military Kennels Construction (1997)
- Veterinary Activities (1999)
- War Dogs – Campaign Manual (2013)
- Canine Control - Army Regulation (2016)
1.2 *In loco* visit

- 2 visitors
- Authorized
1.3 Questionnaire

- Five freedoms based
- Responsible
  - Chief
  - Veterinarian
  - Trainer

PRACTICES TOLD X EACH FREEDOM
Step 2 ➔ Quantification

- Regulation (1.1) + practices seen (1.2) + practices told (1.3)

- 10 point grade ➔ five freedom for animal welfare
  - UK Farm Animal Welfare Council (1979)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Result</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>Appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Partially appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>Inappropriate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Hunger and thirst ➔ appropriate

- Acquisition program
- Responsible DVM
- Handlers training
- Seen appropriate
Results

2. Discomfort \(\rightarrow\) partially appropriate

- Facilities normative standardization
- Facilities in reality \(\rightarrow\) opportunities for improvement
- Lack of training material standardization
3. Pain, injury and disease → partially appropriate

- Structured veterinary practices
- Some animals → low availability medical facilities and procedures
Results

4. Express normal behavior ➔ appropriate

- Time, space and opportunities
- Some controversy
  - Sexual behavior
  - Social behavior x aggression
5. Fear and distress → partially appropriate

- Handlers/trainers
  - Few hours of training in behavior/animal welfare

- Controversy
  - Electronic collar
Manual of Good Practices

- Proposal
  - Normative reference
Next steps

• Finishing the manual

• Method validation ➔ Manual approval (Army)

• Regular evaluations

• Review of the animal welfare indicators ➔ new ones
Take home messages

• MWD have particular welfare concerns

• Animal welfare must be scientifically taken into account in MWD programs
Acknowledgments

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