IAHAIO

Prague Declaration

Preamble

There is much research now available to prove that companion animals can add to the Quality of Life of the humans to whom they may provide practical assistance or therapy.

IAHAIO members believe that those who train animals and deliver the service to others must ensure the Quality of Life of the animals involved. Programmes offering animal-assisted activities or animal-assisted therapy for the benefit of others should be governed by basic standards, regularly monitored, and be staffed by appropriately trained personnel.

IAHAIO members have therefore adopted four fundamental guidelines at their General Assembly held in Prague in September, 1998. IAHAIO urges all persons and organizations involved in animal-assisted activities and/or animal-assisted therapy, and all bodies governing the presence of such programmes in their facilities to consider and abide by the following points.

Guidelines

1. Only domestic animals which have been trained using techniques of positive reinforcement, and which have been, and will continue to be, properly housed and cared for, are involved.

2. Safeguards are in place to prevent adverse effects on the animals involved.

3. The involvement of assistance and/or therapy animals is potentially beneficial in each case.

4. Basic standards are in place to ensure safety, risk management, physical and emotional security, health, basic trust and freedom of choice, personal space, appropriate allocation of programme resources, appropriate workload clearly defined roles, confidentiality, communication systems and training provision for all persons involved.

Organizations adhering to the above four guidelines will be invited to join IAHAIO as Affiliate Members.