

The IAHAD Prague Guidelines on Animal Assisted Activities and Animal Assisted Therapy

Preamble

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

IAHAD 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.

IAHAD members have therefore adopted four fundamental guidelines at their General Assembly held in Prague in September, 1996. IAHAD urges all persons and organisations 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 domesticated animals¹ which have been prepared and trained using humane methods, and which have been, and will continue to be, properly housed and cared for, are involved.
2. Safeguards are in place to prevent adverse physical, psychological and emotional effects on the animals involved.
3. The involvement of assistance and/or intervention 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.

Organisations adhering to the above four guidelines will be invited to join IAHAD as *Affiliate Members*.

¹ See the IAHAD White Paper 2014 for more detailed information.