

In the peak of Swedish mid-summer light, SLU Ultuna was visited by a group of international researchers in animal welfare, travelling from near and far to learn and discuss important matters in a new way. While small in credits and length, there was something new and unique happening – nowhere else in the world is there anything like this PhD-course on the relationship between animal welfare and the UN sustainable development goals.

The course included four days of workshop and lectures at SLU in Uppsala, with reading and individual project work assignments before and after the workshop. The workshop aimed to achieve transdisciplinary knowledge transfer with other students, international researchers and practitioners in animal welfare and sustainable development.

The starting point of the course is the UN Sustainable Development goals, the 17 goals developed within the Agenda 2030 framework, to achieve a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable world. People working with animal welfare had noticed that the SDG's did not include animal welfare which plays a major role in many aspects of sustainable development. The relationship between animal welfare and UNSDGs needed to be analyzed in terms of the contribution of animal welfare to sustainable development, and the effects of sustainable development on animal welfare. This course aimed to address this gap and enable PhD students to relate their research to sustainable development.

- What we see is that animal welfare and sustainability go hand in hand. Animals are part of our societies, systems, culture and our lives. If we are thinking of a sustainable future on earth, we need also to include the animals, says Daiana de Oliveira, Department of Animal Environment and Health, and one of the organizing teachers on the course.

She emphasizes that there is a win-win situation in including the animal welfare perspective in the work with the goals:

- When we include the animal welfare perspective in the sustainability work, the fact is that we are also increasing the possibilities to achieve the goals.

The idea of a course in this field came from the June 2018 workshop organised by the Centre of Excellence in Animal Welfare Science and Global Challenges University Alliance <https://www.slu.se/en/collaboration/international/slu-global/global-challenges-university-alliance/> hosted by the faculty of veterinary medicine and animal science at the SLU Ultuna Campus.

- We wanted to broaden the discussion and involve PhD-students to introduce them to the complexity of the UNSDG's, get their view on animal welfare-SDG relationships and encourage them to think about how their research might contribute to Agenda 2030, says Michael Jones, at the Swedish Biodiversity Centre.

There were 15 students on the course from ten different countries representing four regions, including Scandinavia, South and North America and Asia (one student even came all the way

from China to participate!). They were all on PhD level, and covered the fields of animal science, veterinary science biology, agronomy, ethology, sociology, psychology, philosophy and ecology.

Daiana, her co-teachers and the organizing group are hoping that each of the students feel more positive when they leave, and that they will find new ways to contribute to animal welfare within the framework of the SDGs.

- We are planting seeds, Daiana says: When the students get back to their own universities, they will hopefully initiate a discussion and keep working with these issues, and together we can start to make a change.

Gabriela Olmos, Department of Clinical Sciences, facilitator and part of the group developing the course, explains the course outline:

- The course started with students using their existing knowledge to select six of the 17 SDGs which they thought animal welfare is most closely related to. Then the students were introduced to the complexity of the relationships between animal welfare and SDGs using specific case studies, which showed how much the relationships vary with the social, economic and environmental context of each case. Finally the students were taken back to considering animal welfare and SDG relationships in a general, but with the new knowledge acquired during the course.

The process of learning about animal welfare and SDG relationships was interspersed with lectures on ethics, complexity and sustainable development, animal welfare in livestock, companion animals and working equines, and social responsibility in the food chain.

Course leaders were Daiana De Oliveira, Department of Animal Environment and Health, and Michael Jones at the Swedish Biodiversity Centre. Gabriela Olmos was a teacher and part of the organization group. The initiators of the course include Linda Keeling, Harry Blokhuis and Anna Wallenbeck, at the Department of Animal Environment and Health.