

University of Veterinary Medicine Budapest

**International “Best Practice”: Operation of Different
‘Animal Police’ in the World**

**Nemzetközi "Legjobb Gyakorlat": Különböző
'Állatrendőrségek' Működése a Világban**

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the operational frameworks and strategies employed by animal law enforcement agencies in the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, and the United States of America. By examining their financial, legal, and socio-economic dimensions, our objective is to discern the distinct methodologies adopted by each nation in promoting animal welfare. Through a comparative analysis, we endeavor to pinpoint the optimal practices in managing animal law enforcement agencies, which could serve as a blueprint for other nations.

Absztrakt

"Jelen szakdolgozat az állatrendőrségek működési struktúráit és stratégiáit vizsgálja Hollandiában, Norvégiában, Romániában és az Amerikai Egyesült Államokban. A pénzügyi, jogi és társadalmi-gazdasági aspektusok feltárásával célunk az, hogy megértsük, milyen egyedi megközelítéseket alkalmaznak ezek az országok az állatvédelem terén. Összehasonlító elemzésünk által arra törekszünk, hogy azonosítsuk azokat a jó gyakorlatokat, amelyek más országok számára is mintaként szolgálhat az állatrendőrségek működésére vonatkozóan.

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1. Introduction

1.1. History and Evolution of Animal Protection

The history and evolution of animal protection reflects changes in societal values, scientific understanding, and ethical considerations over time. In ancient Greece, philosophers like Pythagoras advocated for kindness to animals. He believed that “all sentient beings possess identical souls, and that the soul, not being physical, is immortal” [1]. He believed in reincarnation, where the soul could be reborn into a different species than in the previous life. Other religious teachings, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, focused on non-violence towards all living beings. Aristoteles on the other hand believed that all “animals exist for the sake of humans” and that animals should be governed by humans [2]. During the Renaissance, human-centric views prevailed. René Descartes taught that “the separation between humans and animals with the assertion that the body is a machine, and what sets humans apart from the animal machines would be the lack of true speech, reason and feeling pain” [3]. During this time, vivisection was a common practice when studying animal organs, with the popular belief that “animals feel no pain, and that they are ours to do with as we please” [4]. The Industrial revolution brought large-scale use of animals in agriculture, which again raised the question of animal cruelty. Richard Martin was an Irish politician best known for his work against animal cruelty. In 1822 he succeeded in getting the “Cruel Treatment of Cattle Act” passed into British law. “The Cruel Treatment of Cattle Act”, or “The Martin’s Act of 1822” is considered to be the first animal protection law. Following the uprising of animal protection, the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) was founded in 1824, with Reverend Arthur Broome as the main instigator [5]. During the 20th Century awareness concerning animal welfare increased. Books such as Ruth Harrison’s “Animal Machines” (1964) [6] and Peter Singer’s “Animal Liberation” (1975) [7] played significant roles in bringing public awareness to animal protection. In 1965 the Office International des Epizooties (OIE), now known as the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), established the “Five Freedoms”. This describes the conditions of which animals should experience when under human

control. 1. Freedom from hunger, malnutrition, and thirst. 2. Freedom from fear and distress. 3. Freedom from heat stress or physical discomfort. 4. Freedom from pain, injury and disease, 5. Freedom to express normal patterns of behavior [8]. In 1966 the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act was passed in the United States of America, which covered dogs, cats, nonhuman primates, guinea pigs, hamsters and rabbits [9]. The rise of the global movement for animal protection has continued to grow in the 21st Century. Several legal reforms have been made in many countries, and activist groups are working world wide. Technological advances have also been made in efforts to protect animal welfare. An example is the development of alternatives to animals testing, like in vitro methods and computer modeling [10, 11].

1.2 Prevalent Animal Cruelties and Their Impact

Prevalent animal cruelties encompass a wide range of unethical and inhumane practices that inflict suffering on animals, spanning across pets and agricultural animals. These actions not only cause immediate harm to animals but also have broader societal impacts, contributing to a cycle of violence and disregard for life.

Pets, often considered part of the family, are not immune to cruelty. Common forms of abuse include physical violence, neglect, such as failure to provide adequate food, water, shelter, or veterinary care, and abandonment [12]. Hoarding cases, where individuals keep more animals than they can care for, result in severe neglect and suffering due to unsanitary conditions and lack of attention to the animals' basic needs [13].

The impact of cruelty towards pets extends beyond the immediate harm to animals. It reflects and contributes to societal issues, including domestic violence, as animal abuse is often linked to abuse against humans [14]. Moreover, exposure to animal cruelty can desensitize individuals, particularly children, to violence, fostering an environment where empathy and respect for living beings are undermined.

In the agricultural sector, animal cruelty manifests in various forms, including intensive confinement, inhumane handling and transport, and painful procedures without pain relief, such as castration or dehorning [15]. Livestock animals are often treated as production units rather than sentient beings, leading to practices that prioritize efficiency and profit over animal welfare.

The industrial farming system, characterized by factory farms, can be a major source of animal suffering due to overcrowded living conditions, lack of outdoor access, and the use of rapid growth practices that cause health problems. Moreover, the slaughter process sometimes lacks adequate measures to ensure a quick and painless death, causing unnecessary fear and pain [16].

The impact of cruelty in agriculture is multifaceted. It poses ethical and moral concerns, challenging the human-animal relationship and our responsibilities towards non-human lives. Environmentally, intensive animal farming contributes significantly to pollution, climate change, and biodiversity loss, exacerbating the ecological crisis [17]. From a public health perspective, the overuse of antibiotics in factory farming to promote growth and prevent disease in cramped conditions has led to the rise of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, posing a significant threat to human health [18].

Prevalent animal cruelties in both the pet and agricultural sectors have far-reaching impacts beyond immediate animal suffering. They reflect and exacerbate societal issues, including violence, environmental degradation, and public health crises.

1.3 The Role of Animal Police in Modern Society

The significance of animal police or protection officers in today's society is underscored by the increasing recognition of animal protection and their need for safeguarding. These officers are crucial in applying animal welfare laws, investigating animal maltreatment, and ensuring animals' safety and humane treatment [19, 20].

Their core responsibilities include enforcing welfare laws, probing into reports of animal cruelty, and collaborating with other agencies to prosecute offenders. They also engage in community outreach to educate the public about animal care responsibilities and reporting abuse, aiming to foster a culture of compassion and prevent cruelty [19].

Additionally, these officers conduct rescue missions to aid animals in distress, working with shelters and vets to provide care and rehabilitation. Their collaborative efforts with various stakeholders tackle complex legal, medical, and environmental issues.

Overall, animal police and protection officers are integral in promoting animal welfare, serving as guardians, educators, and advocates to enhance respect and care for animals across society.

2. Methodology

This thesis employs a comparative case study methodology to examine the operational structures and strategies of animal police forces in four distinct countries: Holland, Norway, Romania, and the United States of America. This method allows for an in-depth understanding of the nuances and variations in how each country addresses animal protection through their animal police forces. The comparative analysis aims to highlight best practices and provide actionable insights for other nations looking to enhance their animal protection enforcement.

The legal frameworks governing animal protection in each of the four countries will be analyzed to understand the scope, enforcement mechanisms, and evolution of laws related to animal police forces. This will involve a review of primary legal documents, statutes, and case law that outline the responsibilities, powers, and limitations of animal police forces.

Whether each country has dedicated animal police officers will be assessed and, if so, detail their roles, training, and integration within the broader law enforcement or animal welfare landscape.

Information will be gathered through analysis of organizational structures, and examination of training curricula.

The nature and extent of collaborations between animal police forces and NGOs will be explored to understand how these partnerships enhance or impede the effectiveness of animal protection efforts. This will include reviewing partnership agreements, statements from both police officers and NGO representatives, and analyzing reports of the joint initiatives.

An examination of the funding mechanisms for animal police forces in each country will be conducted to understand how financial resources are allocated and utilized. The aim is to identify trends, challenges, and best practices in financing animal protection enforcement.

The level of public awareness and support for animal police forces will be evaluated through surveys, and media analysis. This will help gauge the societal recognition and backing of such forces, which is crucial for their legitimacy and efficacy.

The findings from each country will be compared and contrasted to identify patterns, similarities, and differences in the operationalization of animal police forces. Further on they will be given a score from 1-5 depending on their respective performance.

The evaluation of each country's approach to animal police forces and protection programs will be assessed across five distinct categories: Legal Framework, Dedicated Police Officers, Collaborations with NGOs, Funding, and Public Awareness. Each category will be rated on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 representing exemplary performance that meets all necessary aspects comprehensively, and 1 indicating a significant deficiency in the category.

Legal Framework (1-5): This category assesses the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the legal statutes governing animal welfare and protection in each country. A score of 5 indicates a robust legal framework that clearly defines standards of animal care, enforcement protocols, and penalties for violations. A score of 1 suggests a weak or poorly implemented legal framework that fails to adequately protect animal rights.

Dedicated Police Officers (1-5): This evaluates the presence and efficacy of specialized police units or officers dedicated to addressing animal welfare issues. A score of 5 is awarded when there is a well-trained, adequately staffed, and effectively operating animal police force. A score of 1 reflects the absence of specialized officers or significant shortcomings in their training or operational effectiveness.

Collaborations with NGOs (1-5): This category gauges the extent and impact of partnerships between the animal police or enforcement bodies and non-governmental organizations focused on animal welfare. A score of 5 signifies strong, productive collaborations that enhance enforcement and advocacy efforts, while a score of 1 indicates minimal or ineffective collaboration.

Funding (1-5): This assesses the financial resources allocated to animal welfare enforcement, including the funding of dedicated animal police units, enforcement activities, and related programs. A score of 5 denotes robust and sustainable funding, whereas a score of 1 indicates insufficient or unstable financial support.

Public Awareness (1-5): This category measures the level of public awareness and engagement concerning animal welfare and the role of animal police or protection programs. A score of 5 reflects widespread public knowledge and proactive engagement with animal welfare issues, while a score of 1 denotes low awareness and limited public involvement.

By applying this scoring system, the study aims to provide a nuanced comparative analysis of how different countries operationalize and support their animal police forces, highlighting areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

3. Literary Review

3.1. Relevance

The selected literary reviews delve into different aspects of animal welfare, offering insights for this thesis exploring animal police and protection. Together, these reviews are significant for the thesis as they provide a multifaceted view of animal protection, encompassing psychological, social, economic, and legal dimensions. They illustrate the complexity of animal welfare issues and underscore the importance of integrated approaches that include enforcement, public education, and legislative advocacy, all of which are central to understanding and enhancing Animal Police and Protection frameworks.

3.2. Intersections of Animal Welfare: Societal Perceptions, Psychological Implications, and Economic Considerations

3.2.1 Cruelty to Animals: Changing Psychological, Social, and Legislative Perspectives

The Article "Cruelty to Animals: Changing Psychological, Social, and Legislative Perspectives" by Ascione and Lockwood (2001) offer a comprehensive examination of the complex interrelations between animal cruelty, societal violence, and the evolving responses from psychological, social, and legislative perspectives. It delves into the increasing societal concern over violence, with a particular focus on the "social toxicity" associated with cruelty to animals and its implications for understanding broader patterns of violence within a cultural and historical context.

The authors trace the historical development of attitudes towards animal welfare, highlighting shifts in moral and ethical considerations towards animals from pre-eighteenth-century Europe to contemporary times. They emphasize the role of cultural and religious traditions in shaping our relationship with animals, pointing out how figures like Saint Augustine and Thomas Aquinas have influenced Western views on animal maltreatment by severing the connection between animal abuse and moral depravity towards humans.

A significant portion of the review is dedicated to examining the relationship between animal cruelty and human development. It categorizes the ways in which cruelty to animals can manifest across different stages of human development, exploring concepts such as maintenance, emergence, desistance, escalation, and absence of violent behavior. Through this framework, Ascione and Lockwood critically evaluate the "escalation hypothesis," which suggests that cruelty to animals in childhood could predict violent behavior in adulthood, and discuss its implications within the context of developmental psychopathology and antisocial personality disorder.

The article also addresses the prevalence of animal cruelty within nonclinical and noncriminal populations, drawing on empirical studies to explore the association between childhood experiences of animal abuse and attitudes towards interpersonal violence. This includes an exploration of the dynamics within domestic violence situations, where pets can become targets or pawns in abusive relationships, and how concerns for pet welfare can influence victims' decisions to seek help or leave abusive environments.

Legislative and law enforcement responses to animal cruelty are thoroughly reviewed, with the authors noting the increasing enactment of felony-level provisions within cruelty to animals codes across various states. This section underscores the societal push towards recognizing severe animal abuse as indicative of potential violent tendencies towards humans, advocating for psychological assessment and intervention for offenders.

Finally, the review calls for further research into the "ecology of violence" against animals, developmental dynamics of cruelty, social-service responses, and effective prevention and intervention strategies. Ascione and Lockwood argue for a multidisciplinary approach to understanding and combating cruelty to animals and human violence, emphasizing the need for prospective studies and the development of standardized programs for assessment and intervention.

In conclusion, this article offers a vital contribution to the literature on animal cruelty and human violence, highlighting the importance of a holistic understanding of violence that incorporates animal welfare. It serves as a call to action for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to

further investigate and address the complex interplay between animal cruelty and societal violence[21].

3.2.2 Consumer Attitudes Towards Animal Welfare and their Willingness to Pay

"Consumer Attitudes Towards Animal Welfare and their Willingness to Pay," by Bozzo et al., examines the economic dynamics influencing consumer behavior regarding animal welfare, highlighting a growing trend among consumers to financially support ethical animal treatment through their purchasing choices. Through a structured questionnaire distributed among 500 respondents, the study examines various dimensions of consumer behavior, including socio-economic backgrounds, meat consumption habits, and attitudes toward animal welfare.

The findings reveal a significant correlation between consumers' willingness to pay a premium for animal welfare-certified products and their place of purchase, level of education, concern about animal welfare, and type of meat consumption. Interestingly, consumers purchasing meat from butchers, organic shops, or directly from producers are more inclined to pay extra, reflecting a quality-price association tied to perceived animal welfare standards.

The research underscores the need for more transparent and comprehensible certification systems to enhance consumer understanding of what constitutes animal welfare. The study advocates for institutional subsidies to support farmers who adhere to higher animal welfare standards, suggesting that such financial incentives could help balance the increased costs associated with ethical farming practices.

Overall, this study contributes valuable insights into the complex interplay between consumer knowledge, ethical considerations, and economic behavior in the context of animal welfare. It highlights the growing consumer interest in ethically produced meat and the potential market dynamics that could support more humane animal husbandry practices. The findings also point toward a broader societal trend of increasing concern for the welfare of farm animals, reflecting a shift in consumer values that could drive changes in agricultural practices and policy frameworks [22].

3.3. Assessing the Impact of Animal Police in the Netherlands

3.3.1. Five years of animal police led to more reports of animal suffering.

The report on the Netherlands' animal police underscores the practical outcomes of implementing such forces, noting an increase in animal suffering reports and the subsequent legal actions, reflecting on the critical role law enforcement plays in addressing and preventing animal cruelty.

The introduction of the animal police and the reporting point 144 in Holland has led to a significant increase in reports of animal suffering, according to research conducted by Bureau Beke for the Ministry of Security and Justice. The report, summarized in the book "How the Hares Walk," highlights the outcomes of five years of animal police operations. In 2012, the first full year after the animal police were established, there were 46,000 reports of animal suffering, which rose to 64,000 the following year, marking a 38 percent increase. The number of reports has since stabilized around 65,000 annually.

This increase in reports was also reflected in the actions of the Public Prosecution Service, which saw a 20 percent rise in animal cruelty cases handled between 2012 and 2014. Most of these cases were resolved with a fine or community service, with one-third being dismissed.

The animal police initiative, proposed by the PVV party, was implemented when the party supported the coalition government of VVD and CDA. Despite the initial plan for a 500-officer unit dedicated solely to animal matters, the actual full-time force was reduced to 180 officers after the cabinet fell, much to the disappointment of the initiative's proponent, Dion Graus. However, the hotline 144 for reporting animal suffering remained operational.

The report by Bureau Beke notes that the absence of a full-time animal police force has led to varying levels of attention to animal welfare across regions, emphasizing the importance of police involvement in identifying and addressing animal suffering to maintain knowledge about animal welfare.

Additionally, the report commemorates the 30th anniversary of the National Animal Protection Inspection Service, highlighting a significant change since 2008 that allowed for criminal

prosecution, making it feasible to tackle abuses more effectively. The ability to take action and impose necessary improvements, even at the owner's expense, has been a key advancement in fighting animal cruelty [23].

4. Holland

4.1. Overview of the Dutch System

In Holland, the commitment to animal welfare is evident through comprehensive legislation, dedicated enforcement bodies, and active non-governmental organizations. The Dutch Animal Welfare Act, along with other specific regulations, ensures the well-being of animals across various sectors, including pets, livestock, and wildlife. The Dierenpolitie (Animal Police) and Municipal Animal Control Officers play crucial roles in enforcing these laws, despite facing financial and resource constraints.

The judicial system supports these efforts by adjudicating animal welfare cases effectively. Moreover, public awareness and concern for animal welfare are high, significantly influenced by organizations like the Dierenbescherming (Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals) and the political presence of the Partij voor de Dieren (Party for the Animals), which underscores the societal value placed on animal- and environmental protection.

This robust framework for animal welfare is paralleled by Hollands' strong socio-economic status, characterized by a thriving service sector, low unemployment rates, and a high standard of living. Public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives further promote animal welfare, reflecting the Dutch society's deep-rooted tradition of animal advocacy. However, debates on issues like intensive livestock farming and the use of animals in research highlight the ongoing challenges in balancing human interests with animal welfare and environmental conservation.

4.3. Judicial Framework and Enforcement

In Holland, the protection of animals is supported by a robust legal and regulatory framework that ensures animal welfare. The central legislation, the Dutch Animal Welfare Act (Wet Dierenwelzijn) [24], establishes the legal obligations for the treatment, care, and transport of animals, setting out the requirements for pets, livestock, and animals used in research. The Criminal Code (Wetboek van Strafrecht) [25] further categorizes severe animal welfare violations, including deliberate abuse or illegal trade, prescribing stringent penalties.

The Animal Welfare Act sets forth the essential guidelines and standards for animal treatment and care. The Nature Conservation Act [26] focuses on the protection of wildlife and their natural habitats. The Companion Animals Act [27] regulates the keeping and breeding of pets. The Food and Agriculture Act [28] addresses welfare standards in the agricultural sector, it also complies with the EU General Food Law [29]. The Criminal Code delineates the legal consequences for animal cruelty offenses, ranging in severity.

Enforcement of these laws is a collaborative effort involving various organizations and agencies. Within the police department, there are specialized officers known as "Dierenpolitie" or Animal Police, who are part of the regular police force and are specifically trained to handle animal-related issues. These officers are adept at responding to incidents of animal cruelty, neglect, and other offenses against animals, working in tandem with other law enforcement bodies to probe and rectify such cases [30]. The Dutch Food and Safety Authority, or the Nederlandse Voedsel- en Warenautoriteit (NVWA) [31] oversees compliance with welfare standards in agricultural and food production settings, performing inspections and enforcing regulations.

The Dierenbescherming, or the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals, a non-profit entity, contributes to advocating for animal welfare. Although not a law enforcement agency, the Dierenbescherming closely cooperates with the authorities, offers education on responsible pet ownership, and heightens public awareness about animal welfare concerns, sometimes engaging in rescue and rehabilitation activities [32]. Furthermore, the Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority, plays a crucial role in assuring the safety of food and consumer products,

including those of animal origin. The NVWA also supervises the welfare conditions of farm animals during transport and housing, conducting investigations and enforcing actions against violations of animal welfare regulations [31].

The legal system plays a pivotal role in adjudicating animal welfare cases, with courts imposing sanctions based on the gravity of offenses as established by the Dierenpolitie and prosecutorial evidence.

The Partij voor de Dieren (Party for the Animals) is a political party in Holland that focuses on animal- and environmental protection. Established in October 2002, it became the world's first party to gain parliamentary representation with an agenda focused primarily on animal welfare [33].

The Party for the Animals (PvdD) emphasizes the interconnection between animal welfare, environmental sustainability, and human health and well-being. Their policies advocate for reducing intensive livestock farming, promoting plant-based diets, enhancing animal welfare laws, and adopting more sustainable environmental practices [33]. In the 2022 Dutch municipal elections, the Party for the Animals secured 63 seats across 29 municipalities, with most seats in Almere, Arnhem, and Groningen [34].

4.4. Financial Aspects and Funding

The Dierenpolitie (Animal Police), which is embedded within the national police framework, is financially supported through the national police budget [25]. The central government allocates a portion of the national police force's budget to the Dierenpolitie. Furthermore, specific government grants and programs are earmarked to bolster animal welfare initiatives, demonstrating a commitment to this cause at the highest levels of governance [35].

Municipal Animal Control Officers (Gemeentelijke Opsporingsambtenaren - GOAs), who are positioned within local government structures, are tasked with addressing less critical animal welfare issues, such as managing stray animals, enforcing leash laws, and addressing cases of

minor neglect [36]. Local governments dedicate a portion of their budgets to fund animal control services, ensuring that GOAs are equipped to perform their duties effectively.

Both the Dierenpolitie and GOAs frequently encounter financial and resource constraints, impacting their capacity to conduct thorough investigations and respond swiftly to incidents. This challenge underscores the need for more robust funding mechanisms.

4.4. Socio-economic Situation

The socio-economic situation in Holland showcases a strong and diversified economy, with a notable emphasis on the services sector and international trade. The country's GDP per capita stands at an impressive USD 57,276, significantly above the global average of USD 10,589, reflecting a high standard of living [37]. Services dominate the economic landscape, constituting over 68.7% of national revenue and employing 84% of the workforce, emphasizing transportation, distribution, logistics, banking, insurance, water engineering, and new technologies [38].

In terms of the labor market, Holland boasts a low unemployment rate and a high employment rate, reflecting a dynamic and inclusive job market. The labor force is predominantly employed in the services sector, followed by industry and a small percentage in agriculture. The nation's open markets are facilitated by trade freedom, investment freedom, and financial freedom, making it an attractive destination for foreign direct investment and international trade [37].

4.5. Public Awareness

Public awareness and concern for animal welfare and protection in Holland are notably high compared to many other countries [39]. The Dutch society has a strong tradition of animal advocacy, reflected in its well-developed legislative framework and the active role of various non-governmental organizations dedicated to animal welfare. This awareness extends across various sectors involving animals, including agriculture, pet ownership, wildlife conservation, and the use of animals in entertainment and research.

Public concern for animal welfare is evident in the widespread support for animal welfare organizations. Many Dutch citizens are members of or donate to animal welfare NGOs, which play a crucial role in advocacy, education, and the provision of care for animals in need. Organizations such as the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals (Dierenbescherming) [32] and World Animal Protection Netherlands [40] are highly active and influential in shaping both public opinion and policy on animal welfare issues.

The high level of public concern for animal welfare is also reflected in the political arena. Holland is one of the few countries with a political party dedicated to animal protection—the Party for the Animals (Partij voor de Dieren), which has representation in both the national parliament and the European Parliament. The presence of this party highlights the importance of animal welfare in Dutch politics and contributes to the ongoing dialogue and legislative action on animal protection issues [33].

Awareness and education on animal welfare are promoted through various campaigns and initiatives, both by the government and NGOs. Educational programs in schools often include components on responsible pet ownership and the importance of protecting wildlife [41]. Campaigns targeting specific issues, such as the welfare of farm animals or the negative impacts of certain types of entertainment, are frequent and supported by extensive media coverage [42].

Despite the high level of awareness and legislative protection, debates and challenges remain. Issues such as intensive livestock farming, the use of animals in experimentation, and wildlife management continue to spark public discussion and activism. These debates indicate an ongoing process of negotiating the balance between human interests, animal welfare, and environmental conservation.

In conclusion, the public view and awareness of animal welfare and protection in Holland are marked by a strong ethical concern for animals, significant political and NGO activity, and a comprehensive legal framework. This collective approach continues to evolve, reflecting the dynamic nature of societal values regarding animals and their well-being.

5. Norway

5.1. Overview of the Norwegian System

Norway's approach to animal welfare encompasses a comprehensive system that integrates financial support, a robust judicial framework, and rigorous enforcement mechanisms, ensuring the humane treatment of animals across all sectors. The national police budget includes funding for the animal police unit, although financial allocation varies across districts, with some dedicating specific resources to animal welfare enforcement. The Norwegian Food Safety Authority (Mattilsynet), funded by the state budget and user fees, plays a pivotal role in overseeing animal welfare, supported by legislation such as the Animal Welfare Act and the Food Safety Act. Enforcement involves both the Norwegian Food Safety Authority and the police, focusing on adherence to welfare standards and addressing violations through inspections, sanctions, and legal proceedings.

The country's socio-economic stability supports these endeavors, marked by a robust economy and high living standards. Public engagement in animal welfare is high, with active NGO participation and widespread community support, reflecting a deep-seated cultural empathy towards animals. Despite challenges, such as debates on intensive farming and predator culling, Norway's comprehensive model highlights a society deeply invested in ethical animal treatment and environmental sustainability, showcasing a holistic approach to animal welfare that aligns with its progressive values and socio-economic resilience.

5.2. Judicial Framework and Enforcement

Norway's Animal Welfare Act (Dyrevelferdsloven) establishes a comprehensive framework to ensure the humane treatment of animals [43]. It institutes the fundamental principles for animal treatment, setting out specific care requirements and prohibiting mistreatment across various animal categories. The Food Safety Act (Matloven) complements these efforts by ensuring that animal-related aspects of food production, slaughter, and transport meet high welfare and safety

standards. Moreover, additional legal statutes, including the Criminal Code [44] and sector-specific acts like the Hunting Act [45], provide further layers of protection, addressing the needs and welfare of different animal groups, from domestic pets to wildlife.

Enforcement of these regulations is primarily the responsibility of the Norwegian Food Safety Authority (Mattilsynet). They are equipped with the authority to inspect, impose sanctions, and initiate legal proceedings to ensure adherence to welfare standards [46]. Additionally, the police force plays a crucial role, especially in instances of criminal offenses linked to animal welfare, while the judiciary adjudicates on severe violations and appeals against Mattilsynet's decisions [47].

The legislative framework is designed to prevent mistreatment through mandatory standards for animal care, including adequate housing, nutrition, and health care. Mattilsynet employs a risk-based strategy for its inspections, focusing on areas with higher risk profiles such as certain animal species, production methods, or prior complaint records. Consequences for non-compliance vary from administrative warnings and fines to more severe measures like bans on animal keeping, confiscation of animals, or criminal charges, depending on the violation's gravity. Additionally the Animal Welfare Council offers independent advice and oversight, ensuring the government's accountability in enforcing and updating the Animal Welfare Act.

Mattilsynet is pivotal in monitoring animal welfare standards across Norway. Though it functions differently from a specialized animal police unit, its mandate to inspect animal facilities and enforce welfare standards is crucial for the protection of animals and their well-being [48].

Norway has taken significant steps towards the protection of animals by forming a special police unit against animal abuse. Animal abuse in Norway is a serious offense, with penalties reaching up to three years in prison [49].

The formation of the animal police unit was based on studies indicating a correlation between the mistreatment of animals and the propensity to harm humans, suggesting that protecting animals also safeguards society [50]. The Norwegian animal police began as a trial project in Sør-

Trøndelag during the autumn of 2015, initially set for a duration of three years. Due to its considerable success, the program was not only extended indefinitely but also recommended for expansion across the country. Influenced by NOAH – For Animal Rights (NOAH) [51] advocacy, the 2018 governmental platform committed to establishing an animal police unit in every police district [52]. By January 2020, animal police units were operational in the Trøndelag, South-West, East, West, and Inland police districts. Further expansion was planned, with a decision made to introduce an animal police unit in the Troms police district within the year 2020. Each police unit is composed of police officers and legal experts with specialized knowledge in animal welfare law [53].

Routine checks by Mattilsynet in various facilities like farms and pet stores ensure ongoing compliance, with investigations triggered by both routine assessments and public complaints. Police intervention is mandated in instances of overt cruelty or neglect, with Mattilsynet collaboration to address and rectify such situations. Legal penalties enforced by courts for violations have ranged from financial fines to imprisonment up to three years, reflecting the seriousness with which Norway treats animal welfare offenses.

NGOs focus on animal welfare significantly contribute to advocacy and public education efforts in Norway. These organizations often work closely with government agencies like Mattilsynet to promote better treatment of animals and combat cruelty through awareness campaigns and collaborative projects. NOAH – For Animal Rights, established in 1989, is a leading animal protection organization in Norway, dedicated to ending animal exploitation and promoting respect for animals as sentient beings. Through public awareness campaigns, educational efforts, and political lobbying, NOAH aims to influence societal attitudes and legislation towards more humane treatment of animals. They have been instrumental in advocating for significant changes such as the phase-out of fur farming and the establishment of specialized animal police units to enforce animal welfare laws. Supported by volunteers and members, NOAH's work encompasses peaceful demonstrations, media engagement, and collaboration with policymakers to strengthen animal protection in Norway [51].

5.3. Financial Aspect and Funding

Because the animal police unit is part of the national police force in Norway, the funding is embedded in the national police budget [54]. As of now there is no specific budget allocated to the animal police itself, so each police district is responsible for distributing money to each unit. In an article published by Dagsavisen in 2022, each police district was asked to disclose how much of their budget was dedicated to their animal police units. Eight out of the twelve police districts said that they did not have an own animal police budget, but that the salaries for the officers working in the animal unit were covered by the districts general budget. Only one police district said that they had earmarked resources for the animal police unit. This was Trøndelag, which was the first animal police unit in Norway, and that took part in the trial project in 2015 [55].

Furthermore Mattilsynet (The Norwegian Food Safety Authority) is responsible for overseeing animal welfare in all sectors, including farms, slaughterhouses, and pet breeding establishments. Their funding comes from the state budget allocation.

5.4. Socio-economic Situation

The socio-economic situation in Norway reflects a stable and robust economy supported by sound public finances. Despite global challenges, Norway's government gross debt remained relatively stable, with a debt-to-GDP ratio estimated at 37.4% in 2023 [56].

Norway's economy is characterized by a high GDP per capita, one of the highest globally, underlining the country's wealth and high living standards. The nation also consistently ranks at the top of the United Nations Human Development Index [57]. In January of 2024, the unemployment rate was 4.5% [58], reflecting a tight labor market.

The Norwegian economy benefits significantly from its natural resources, with the oil and gas sector being particularly pivotal, although its contribution to GDP has decreased compared to its peak levels. The service sector constitutes a major part of the economy, employing a substantial portion of the workforce and contributing significantly to GDP. Agriculture and industry also play

important roles, with Norway being a significant exporter of seafood and maintaining a strong industrial sector [59].

5.5. Public Awareness

Public awareness and concern for animal welfare and protection are prominent in Norway, illustrating the country's progressive stance on ethical treatment of animals across various domains, including agriculture, wildlife, and pets. Norwegian society demonstrates a high level of empathy and responsibility towards animals, reflected in its strong legal framework, active non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and public participation in animal welfare issues.

Various Norwegian NGOs are dedicated to promoting animal welfare and protection, such as NOAH – For Animal Rights [53], the Norwegian Society for the Protection of Animals (Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge) [60], and the Norwegian Animal Protection Alliance (NAPA) [61]. These organizations actively engage in advocacy, awareness campaigns, and educational programs to further the cause of animal welfare. They also play a critical role in rescue operations and providing care for abused, neglected, or abandoned animals.

The general public in Norway demonstrates strong support for these organizations, either through memberships, donations, or active participation in campaigns and events that aim to raise awareness and foster positive change for animals.

Animal welfare is a concern that resonates across the political spectrum in Norway, with various political parties incorporating animal welfare policies into their platforms [62]. The government has also established the Norwegian Food Safety Authority, which oversees the enforcement of animal welfare legislation, ensuring compliance across different sectors involving animal use.

Education plays a crucial role in fostering a culture of respect and empathy towards animals. Norwegian educational institutions often include animal welfare topics in their curricula, aiming to instill responsible attitudes toward animal care and protection from a young age. Public

awareness campaigns further reinforce these messages, targeting specific issues like the welfare of farm animals, responsible pet ownership, and the importance of biodiversity conservation.

Despite the strong legislative and societal framework, Norway faces challenges, such as issues related to intensive farming practices, the use of animals in fur farming, and the culling of predators like wolves [63], which has sparked considerable debate. The Norwegian public continues to engage in these discussions, reflecting an active and evolving concern for animal welfare and environmental ethics.

In Norway, public awareness and concern for animal welfare and protection are embedded in societal values, legislative measures, and active NGO participation. These elements collectively contribute to a national ethos that prioritizes the ethical treatment of animals, with ongoing dialogue and actions to address emerging challenges and improve the welfare standards across different domains involving animals.

6. Romania

6.1 Overview of the Romanian System

In Romania, the safeguarding of animal welfare relies on various legislative and institutional frameworks, with a dedicated animal police force. The National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority (NSVFSA) contributes to these efforts, funded primarily through the national budget and supplemented by EU contributions, to ensure adherence to both national and international standards in animal health and safety. Key legislation, such as the Animal Protection Law and the Food Safety Act, provides a structured approach to animal welfare, encompassing care requirements and prohibitions on mistreatment.

Non-profit organizations and animal welfare NGOs play an indispensable part in advocacy, public education, and direct animal care, pushing for legislative improvements and heightened societal awareness.

Despite these structures, Romania faces challenges in enforcement efficiency, public awareness, and legal consistency in animal welfare. However, the alignment with EU norms and active NGO campaigns indicate progress. Coupled with Romania's socio-economic context—marked by modest economic growth but significant poverty risks—the country's journey toward improved animal welfare standards reflects a complex interplay of policy, public engagement, and economic factors, emphasizing the need for continued commitment across all societal sectors to foster a more humane and ethical treatment of animals.

6.2. Judicial Framework and Enforcement

In Romania, the legislation and enforcement mechanisms for animal protection are defined under various laws. The primary law, the Law on the Protection of Animals [64] adopted in 2008, establishes a framework for animal welfare, addressing issues such as cruelty prevention, proper care, and the legal obligations of animal keepers. This law is supported by other specific regulations that cover a wide range of animal welfare aspects, from domestic pets to wildlife and animals used in agriculture.

The Animal Welfare Act is central to Romania's approach, setting broad welfare standards and defining unacceptable practices. Alongside this, the Food Safety Act [65] addresses welfare in the context of animal production and food processing, ensuring humane treatment throughout an animal's life cycle.

Furthermore, Romania added three specific laws aimed at reinforcing animal welfare standards in 2004. Law no. 205/2004 establishes the requisite measures to ensure suitable living conditions and the welfare of animals, whether they have caretakers or not [66]. Law no. 215/2004 is part of the criminal legislation framework, addressing legal repercussions for violations of animal welfare [67]. As well as Law no. 60/2004, which concerns the ratification of the European Convention for the Protection of Pets, reinforcing its commitment to international standards of animal welfare [68].

Romanian legislation emphasizes prevention, aiming to ensure animals are provided with appropriate living conditions, healthcare, and nutrition to prevent suffering and distress.

Romanian legislation also includes the fundamental requirements of the OIE's standards [69].

The National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority (Autoritatea Nationala Sanitara Veterinara si pentru Siguranta Alimentelor) [70] is tasked with enforcing the national laws, ensuring compliance through inspections and regulatory actions. Local police units may handle complaints of animal cruelty and can intervene to safeguard animals.

In 2020, Romania made significant strides in animal welfare enforcement by establishing a specialized Animal Police division within the Romanian Police force, illustrating the country's commitment to enhancing the protection and welfare of animals. This initiative aimed to provide a more focused and efficient response to animal cruelty cases, distinguishing Romania's efforts within the region and aligning its practices with those of other European countries with similar units [71].

The Romanian Animal Police was set up to address various forms of animal abuse and neglect, ranging from pets subjected to maltreatment to issues concerning stray animals and the conditions of animals in commercial settings like farms and entertainment. Key responsibilities of the Romanian Animal Police include investigating reports of animal cruelty, conducting raids in suspected abuse cases, ensuring compliance with animal welfare legislation, and working closely with veterinary authorities and animal welfare organizations. The unit also plays a vital role in raising public awareness about animal rights and promoting responsible pet ownership [72, 73].

Non-profit organizations and animal welfare NGOs, such as Asociatia Pentru Protectia Animalelor Robi [74] and Romania Animal Rescue [75] play a vital role in Romania. While they are not law enforcement entities, these organizations may collaborate with authorities, raise public awareness about animal welfare issues, and contribute to the rescue and rehabilitation of animals in distress.

6.3. Financial Aspects and Funding

The Animal Police, a specialized unit within the Romanian police service, likely receives its primary funding from the national government. This funding is allocated to support law enforcement and public safety efforts, covering essential expenses such as staff salaries, operational equipment, and office needs [72].

The National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority (NSVFSA) in Romania is primarily funded through the national budget, reflecting its status as a governmental organization. [70] NSVFSA's budget supports activities including veterinary inspections, animal disease control, and food safety, ensuring compliance with national and international regulations [70]. It manages and enforces animal welfare and safety regulations, ensuring compliance with both national laws and international standards, including those set by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). Additionally, NSVFSA might receive funds or resources from the European Union, especially given Romania's EU membership, which often requires alignment with broader EU regulations on animal health and safety [76, 77]. This funding supports the authority's activities, ranging from inspection and surveillance to disease control and emergency response.

6.4. Socio-economic Situation

Romania's socio-economic landscape presents a mix of challenges and growth potentials. The nation's economy experienced a nominal GDP of USD 301 billion in 2022 and recorded a GDP per capita of USD 15,785, contrasting with the global average of USD 10,589 [78]. Despite a notable average real GDP growth of 3.4% over the past decade, Romania still faces various financial difficulties. In 2022, the budget deficit stood at an estimated 5.8% of GDP, though it is projected to slightly decrease in the coming years due to various fiscal measures [79].

The public debt ratio, which was 49.7% in 2022 [79], is anticipated to rise slightly in the near future. Inflation has been a significant concern, driven by high energy and food prices, averaging

12% in 2022. Romania's population faces substantial risks of poverty or social exclusion, the highest in the EU, with 34.4% of people affected [80].

Overall, while Romania has made strides in economic development, it grapples with structural challenges, including an aging population, emigration, and economic sustainability, which could impact its long-term growth trajectory and socio-economic stability [81].

6.5. Public Awareness/Concern

Public awareness and views on animal welfare and protection in Romania have seen significant changes over the years, moving towards increased sensitivity and concern for the ethical treatment of animals. While progress is being made, Romania still faces challenges regarding animal welfare, particularly in the areas of stray animals, animal shelters, and the conditions of farm and working animals.

One of the most visible animal welfare issues in Romania has been the management and treatment of stray dogs. Over the years, the population of stray dogs in urban areas, particularly in Bucharest, has sparked public debate and international attention [82]. Various measures, ranging from mass euthanasia to large-scale adoption programs, have been implemented with varying degrees of success and public approval [83]. Many Romanians and international activists advocate for humane solutions, including sterilization and responsible adoption programs, to address the stray dog issue.

A growing number of Romanians are becoming involved in animal welfare through volunteer work, donations, and support for local and international NGOs that operate within the country. Organizations such as Vier Pfofen (Four Paws) [84], Asociația Pentru Protecția Animalelor ROBI (ROBI Animal Protection Association) [85], and Save the Dogs [86] play vital roles in rescuing, rehabilitating, and rehoming animals. They also run educational campaigns to raise public awareness about animal welfare issues, responsible pet ownership, and the importance of spaying and neutering to prevent overpopulation.

The welfare of farm and working animals is another area of concern in Romania. Issues such as inadequate living conditions, improper handling, and lack of veterinary care are prevalent, particularly in rural areas and smaller farms [87]. While there is increasing awareness and discussion around these issues, significant improvements are needed to align Romania's animal welfare standards with those of other European Union countries [69].

Cultural attitudes toward animals in Romania are diverse, with traditional views coexisting alongside growing animal welfare consciousness [88]. Education plays a crucial role in shaping future attitudes, and there is a need for enhanced educational programs that incorporate animal welfare into school curricula to foster empathy and responsible behavior toward animals from a young age.

While Romania has made strides in raising public awareness and improving the welfare of animals, there is still considerable work to be done. Continued advocacy, stronger legislation, better enforcement, and education are crucial to ensuring that animal welfare standards in Romania continue to advance, reflecting a more compassionate and humane treatment of all animals.

7. United States of America

7.1 Overview of the System in the United States of America

The animal protection system in the USA is comprehensive, involving various federal, state, and local laws, as well as dedicated enforcement agencies and NGOs. Key federal laws like the Lacey Act [89] and the Swine Health Protection Act [90] play crucial roles in protecting wildlife and ensuring the health of farm animals. The Lacey Act, for instance, targets illegal wildlife trafficking, while the Swine Health Protection Act aims to control risks associated with feeding animals' untreated waste. In 2019 the PACT act was passed, making acts of animal cruelty a federal felony [88].

At the state level, all 50 states have enacted felony animal cruelty laws, though the specifics vary, with strong protections generally afforded to companion animals like dogs and cats. Some states, like California and Maryland, have implemented progressive policies such as retail pet sale bans, which mandate that pet stores can only sell animals sourced from shelters and rescue organizations [92, 93].

Wildlife protection also features prominently within state laws, including regulations on hunting and fishing, as well as bans on the use of wild animals in entertainment, as seen with the elephant performance bans in Illinois and New York [94]. For farmed animals, while protections are less comprehensive, there has been a push against intensive confinement practices, with some states adopting legislation to improve living conditions.

Local jurisdictions further augment state and federal regulations with their own animal protection laws, which can include retail pet sale bans, anti-tethering statutes, and wild animal performance prohibitions. The local laws are vital for safeguarding animals in their specific contexts and often serve as indicators for broader legislative trends across the country.

Here we will focus on the approaches taken by Oregon and Main on addressing the issue of animal protection. These two states rank as top one and two as the best states for animal protection laws according to the Animal Legal Defence Fund [95]. This report evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of animal protection laws in each state and territory.

8. Oregon

8.1 Overview of the System in Oregon

Oregon has established a comprehensive judicial framework for animal protection, focusing on laws that enforce minimum care standards, address cruelty, neglect, and abuse, and outline stringent penalties for violations. The state's unique enforcement strategy relies on the Oregon Humane Society's Humane Law Enforcement unit rather than a state-managed police force, with funding sourced from donations, grants, and service fees to ensure operational stability. The state's

socioeconomic climate supports these initiatives, yet disparities and housing challenges persist, necessitating continual attention.

Public engagement in Oregon is strong, with widespread support for animal welfare demonstrated through active participation in advocacy and educational programs. The state's commitment is further evidenced by legislative actions, such as banning puppy and kitten sales from commercial breeders, and maintaining a dedicated animal cruelty prosecutor, underscoring a proactive stance against animal cruelty. Despite these positive strides, Oregon faces ongoing challenges in ensuring comprehensive animal welfare, requiring sustained effort across legislative, educational, and community domains to foster an environment where animal welfare is a prioritized and protected value.

8.2. Judicial Framework and Enforcement

Oregon's approach to animal protection is comprehensive, emphasizing both prevention and enforcement. The state has enacted several laws to safeguard animals' welfare, including specific statutes against cruelty, neglect, and abuse.

The animal protection law mandates minimum care standards for animals, ensuring they have sufficient food, water, shelter, and necessary veterinary care. Failure to provide this care constitutes neglect, which is punishable under Oregon law. Specific statutes address animal neglect and improper tethering, providing clear definitions and requirements for the proper treatment of animals. This includes ensuring animals have adequate space, clean living conditions, and humane euthanasia or care for those unable to walk or stand [96].

Oregon statutes explicitly prohibit the intentional, knowing, or reckless causing of physical injury, serious physical injury, or cruel death to an animal. These actions are punishable by law, with severity ranging from misdemeanors to felonies, depending on the nature of the abuse and prior convictions of the perpetrator. Neglect of animals is categorized as a misdemeanor, which can escalate to a felony for cases involving more than 11 animals [97]. Additionally, Oregon law treats certain forms of animal abuse as misdemeanors and escalates these to felonies if committed in the

presence of minors, highlighting the state's recognition of the link between animal cruelty and human violence [98]. Importantly, veterinarians in Oregon are mandated to report cases of aggravated animal abuse, and abandoning an animal is considered a misdemeanor, even if the animal is left at a shelter or veterinary clinic [99]. Oregon recognizes aggravated animal abuse, which includes malicious killing or intentional torture of an animal, as a Class C felony [100].

Oregon has taken steps to ban the retail sale of puppies and kittens sourced from commercial breeders in new stores starting September 2023, with a phase-out period for existing stores. This is part of a broader effort to combat puppy mills and promote animal welfare [101].

Enforcement of the state's laws are carried out by OHS Humane Special Agents, who are commissioned by the Oregon State Police to operate statewide [102]. These agents are instrumental in investigating reports of cruelty or neglect, assessing evidence, interviewing witnesses, and issuing citations. They also work closely with pet owners to educate them on proper care standards and connect them with necessary resources [103].

The Oregon Humane Society (OHS) plays a pivotal role in advocating for animals, having contributed significantly to the enactment of some of the nation's most stringent animal protection laws [104]. The recent passage of the PACT Act on a federal level, which criminalizes gross forms of animal cruelty, complements Oregon's existing laws that already classify aggravated animal abuse as a felony.

8.3. Financial Aspect and Funding

Oregon's approach to animal law enforcement is unique. The state itself doesn't directly employ a statewide force of animal police. Instead, the responsibility falls on a special unit within the Oregon Humane Society (OHS) called Humane Law Enforcement (HLE). [105] The OHS uses a combination of funding sources to support its HLE operations, including donations, private grants, and fees from services [106]. This provides the OHS with stable funding and a level of financial independence.

Additionally, in August 2023, a bill was signed allocating funds from the state budget to create a permanent Animal Cruelty Deputy District Attorney (AC-DDA) position within the Department of Justice. This indirectly supports OHS work by providing a dedicated prosecutor for animal cruelty cases [107].

8.4. Socio-economic Situation

In 2023, Oregon's GDP hit around \$321 billion, showcasing economic growth and a diverse economy [108]. The unemployment rate stabilized at 3.6%, near the national level, marking a rebound from COVID-19's impact [108].

By 2022, the median household income reached approximately \$86,780, surpassing the national average but revealing income disparities between urban and rural areas [109, 110, 111]. The poverty rate stood at 12.1%, slightly below the national figure, with variations across the state [112, 113].

Housing prices, especially in Portland, surged, pushing the median home value to about \$480,000 in early 2024, although this varied by location [114]. Key economic sectors include technology, manufacturing, and agriculture, notably in greenhouse products and dairy [115].

Oregon's commitment to education and healthcare is evident, with spending per student above average and proactive healthcare reforms, ensuring low uninsured rates [116, 117]. Despite these advancements, challenges like income inequality and education rates persist, requiring ongoing attention.

8.5. Public Awareness

In Oregon, public awareness and concern for animal welfare and protection reflect the state's progressive values and environmental consciousness. The state has enacted several laws and regulations to safeguard animal protection and animal welfare, demonstrating a robust commitment to ethical treatment across various sectors, including pets, wildlife, and farm animals.

Numerous animal welfare organizations operate in Oregon, ranging from shelters and rescue groups to advocacy organizations that work on policy reform. These organizations, such as the Oregon Humane Society [104] and Oregon Wildlife Institute [118] play a crucial role in educating the public, influencing legislation, and providing direct care for animals in need. They often collaborate with state agencies, communities, and schools to promote awareness and implement programs aimed at improving animal welfare.

Oregonians are generally supportive of these organizations, participating in community events, supporting fundraising efforts, and volunteering, which indicates a strong community commitment to animal welfare.

Public opinion in Oregon tends to favor progressive animal welfare policies. For instance, citizens have supported measures to restrict the use of animals in entertainment, such as circuses, and have advocated for humane alternatives in industries like farming [119]. Education and outreach efforts have led to a well-informed populace that actively participates in animal welfare initiatives, from adopting pets from shelters to engaging in wildlife conservation projects. Despite the progress made, challenges remain, such as addressing the needs of homeless pets, preventing wildlife conflicts, and ensuring humane practices in farming [119].

In Oregon, public awareness and support for animal welfare and protection are evident through strong legislative measures, active advocacy groups, and community engagement. The state's approach to animal welfare reflects its broader commitment to environmental stewardship and ethical treatment of all living beings, with ongoing efforts to address challenges and promote a culture of compassion and respect for animals.

9. Maine

9.1. Overview of the System in Maine

Maine maintains a robust judicial framework and enforcement mechanism for animal protection through its Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, specifically via the Animal Welfare Program. This program enforces the state's animal welfare laws, handles licensing, and manages humane agents who address animal cruelty and neglect. Maine's approach benefits from diverse funding sources, including licensing fees, donations, and specialty license plates, ensuring financial stability for its Animal Welfare Program.

The state's socio-economic environment, characterized by modest economic growth and a relatively low unemployment rate, supports these efforts, although challenges like income inequality and demographic shifts persist. Public engagement in Maine is strong, with significant support for animal welfare reflected in community involvement, educational efforts, and advocacy, contributing to a comprehensive and community-backed animal protection framework. This proactive stance on animal welfare, combined with Maine's legislative support and public participation, showcases the state's commitment to ensuring the ethical treatment and well-being of animals.

9.2. Judicial Framework and Enforcement

In Maine, the judicial framework and enforcement of animal protection are outlined by state statutes and overseen by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, specifically through its Animal Welfare Program [120]. This program is responsible for enforcing animal

welfare laws, licensing animal shelters, pet stores, and kennels, and overseeing humane agents who investigate complaints of animal cruelty and neglect.

The Animal Welfare Program plays a pivotal role in overseeing animal welfare within the state, responding to reports of animal cruelty and neglect, ensuring compliance with state laws, and promoting the welfare of animals through education and enforcement activities.

The Animal Welfare Program regulates various aspects of animal care and welfare, including shelter standards, pet store operations, and kennel licensing [121]. Humane agents in Maine have the authority to investigate complaints, seize animals in distress, and work in conjunction with local law enforcement agencies to address issues of animal welfare. These agents are key to the enforcement of animal welfare laws [120]. The Animal Welfare Program oversees animal control officers and investigates complaints of animal cruelty. Through education, enforcement, and collaboration with local entities, the program aims to protect the well-being of all animals in Maine [122].

Maine's laws prohibit animal cruelty, animal abandonment, and neglect, with specific statutes defining and addressing different forms of mistreatment. These laws establish the standards of care required for animals and the penalties for violations, which can include fines, imprisonment, and prohibitions on owning animals in the future [123].

When animal welfare laws are violated, cases can be brought before the judicial system for resolution. Penalties for animal cruelty in Maine can range from fines and community service to jail time, depending on the severity of the offense [123].

Maine's Animal Welfare Program collaborates with other state agencies, non-profits, and local communities to enhance the effectiveness of its animal protection efforts, including sharing resources and information to better prevent and respond to animal welfare issues. The organization Maine Friends of Animals has been instrumental in advocating for and assisting in the passage of the state's animal welfare laws [124]. Their ongoing efforts to protect animals are exemplified by

their initiatives to ban hunting in enclosed areas [125], a testament to their dedication to preventing cruelty and ensuring the humane treatment of animals across the state.

9.3. Financial Aspect and Funding

Unlike Oregon, Maine has a dedicated state agency for animal welfare enforcement. The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) houses the Animal Welfare Program (AWP) which functions as the state's "animal police" [120].

Funding for the Maine AWP comes from a number of sources, deliberately keeping it separate from the general state budget. A significant portion of the program's resources comes from animal licensing fees [126]. This includes fees paid for dogs, as well as various animal facilities like shelters, kennels, pet shops, and research institutions. Additionally, fees associated with registering pet and livestock food contribute to the AWP's budget.

Maine citizens also have the opportunity to directly support the AWP through a voluntary check-off program on their state tax return. Donations made to the Companion Animal Sterilization Fund indirectly assist the program. Furthermore, revenue generated from the sale of special Animal Welfare license plates is split between the Animal Welfare Auxiliary [127]

By combining user fees, voluntary contributions, and dedicated specialty license plates, Maine ensures its Animal Welfare Program operates with a high degree of financial independence, separate from the annual state budget allocation process.

9.4. Socio-economic Situation

In 2022, Maine's GDP reached around \$84.5 billion, placing it lower among U.S. states in economic rankings [128]. The state sees growth driven by key sectors like healthcare, retail, and manufacturing, despite its modest pace.

The unemployment rate in Maine was about 3.4% in 2023, below the national average, indicating a stable job market amidst an aging workforce [127, 129]. The median household income in Maine approximated \$75,160 in 2022, aligning with national figures but varying between urban and rural areas [130, 131].

Maine's poverty rate stands at roughly 10.8%, similar to the national rate, with disparities present across different regions [132]. The housing market has experienced increases, yet Maine maintains relative affordability compared to other states [133].

The economy is diversified, with strong sectors like healthcare and tourism, and is known for industries such as lobster fishing and agriculture [134]. Education and healthcare access are generally good, with investments in public education [135] and initiatives to improve healthcare coverage [136]. However, challenges like income inequality and demographic shifts persist, needing strategic addressing for Maine's socio-economic health.

9.5. Public Awareness

In Maine, public awareness and views on animal welfare and animal protection are notably progressive, reflecting a community that actively advocates for the protection and well-being of animals across various sectors, including pets, wildlife, and farm animals.

The public support for animal welfare in Maine is evident through the active participation of residents in supporting local animal shelters and rescue organizations. These entities often enjoy robust community backing, receiving aid through donations, volunteerism, and adoption efforts, showcasing a communal drive to enhance animal welfare [137].

Maine's educational institutions and community organizations play a pivotal role in fostering awareness about animal welfare. They offer programs and initiatives that educate the public about responsible pet ownership, wildlife conservation, and the ethical treatment of farm animals [138, 139]. These educational efforts are crucial in shaping informed attitudes and behaviors toward animal protection.

The state is also home to various advocacy groups and nonprofits dedicated to animal welfare, such as Maine Friends of Animals [140], and Maine Animal Coalition [141], who lobby for stronger protection laws, organize awareness campaigns, and offer resources and support for animal care. These groups help maintain a dialogue on animal welfare issues, ensuring that they remain prominent in public discourse.

Maine's approach to wildlife is particularly noteworthy. The state not only enforces regulations to safeguard wildlife but also engages in habitat conservation efforts and promotes coexistence strategies to minimize human-animal conflicts, reflecting a respect for nature and animal life [142].

In summary, public view and awareness regarding animal welfare and protection in Maine are characterized by active community engagement, a strong legal framework, educational initiatives, and advocacy efforts. Together, these elements highlight Maine's commitment to promoting the well-being and humane treatment of animals across various contexts.

10. Limitations

This thesis aimed to explore the multifaceted realm of animal policing, delving into its financial, judicial, and socio-economic aspects. However, certain limitations were inherent in the study's scope and methodology, which merit acknowledgment and reflection.

10.1 Extensive Requirement of Sources

The comprehensive nature of this research mandated the utilization of a substantial number of sources to construct a well-rounded narrative. While this depth of inquiry is crucial for thorough analysis, it also introduced significant time constraints. Critically evaluating each source for its relevance, validity, and bias was exceedingly time-consuming, potentially affecting the depth at which each resource could be examined. Moreover, the sheer volume of literature sometimes made it challenging to synthesize and distill key insights without oversimplifying complex concepts.

10.2. Limited Resources for Fact-Checking

Given the rapid evolution of animal policing and related legal frameworks, staying abreast of the most current data and legislative changes was imperative. However, limited access to certain databases, jurisdictional restrictions, or the unavailability of the latest research posed challenges in verifying facts and figures. This limitation might have impacted the comprehensiveness and contemporaneity of the information presented, underscoring the necessity of ongoing research and updates in this dynamic field.

10.3. Short Trials and Uncertain Long-Term Consequences

Many of the studies and trials referenced, particularly those evaluating new enforcement units or legislative measures, had relatively short timelines. As a result, gauging the long-term outcomes and sustainability of these initiatives remained uncertain. The nascent nature of certain animal policing models means that longitudinal data capturing their efficacy and impact over extended periods is scarce, leaving some conclusions necessarily tentative.

10.4. Inability to Incorporate All Relevant Aspects

The intersectionality of animal policing with various societal facets, including social norms, cultural practices, and psychological underpinnings, presents a vast territory for exploration. While the thesis aimed to provide a comprehensive overview, the immense breadth of the topic inevitably led to the exclusion of some dimensions. For instance, delving deeply into how cultural differences influence perceptions of animal protection or exploring the psychological profile of individuals engaged in animal cruelty could constitute entire studies in their own right. Therefore, this research could not cover all interconnected aspects.

The limitations reflect the complexity and evolving nature of the field, underscoring the potential for future in-depth studies in unexplored areas.

11. Comparative Analysis

11.1 Legal Framework

11.1.1 Holland

In Holland, the legal infrastructure is comprehensive, highlighted by the Animal Welfare Act (Wet Dieren) which detail the care requirements for different animal categories. The presence of Dierenpolitie exemplifies a dedicated force for enforcing these laws, indicating a high priority placed on animal welfare. The integration of various legal instruments, including the Criminal Code, underscores a strong commitment to upholding animal welfare standards across different sectors.

11.1.2. Norway

Norway also exhibits a robust legal framework, with the Animal Welfare Act ensuring the humane treatment of animals. Like Holland, Norway employs a specialized approach with its animal police unit, emphasizing enforcement and prevention of cruelty. The involvement of the Norwegian Food Safety Authority and various sector-specific laws demonstrate a multi-faceted commitment to animal welfare, supported by comprehensive enforcement strategies.

11.1.3. Romania

In Romania, the legislative scaffold comprises the Law on the Protection of Animals and supplementary acts, with the NSVFSA ensuring enforcement. While Romania has established the Animal Police to enhance enforcement, challenges persist in achieving consistent and effective animal welfare protection. Non-profit organizations are crucial in advocacy and support, striving for alignment with broader European standards.

11.1.4. The United States of America

The animal protection system in the USA, characterized by its multifaceted legal structure at federal, state, and local levels, sets a comprehensive backdrop for understanding specific state approaches like those in Oregon and Maine. The integration of federal laws such as the Lacey Act and the Swine Health Protection Act, along with the federal felony status accorded to acts of animal

cruelty under the PACT Act, underscores a nationwide commitment to combating animal abuse and ensuring the welfare of various animal categories.

11.1.5. Oregon

Oregon showcases a detailed statutory framework addressing cruelty, neglect, and abuse, with specific laws governing animal care standards, complemented by federal legislation. While Oregon lacks a dedicated animal police force, the Oregon Humane Society plays a significant role in enforcement, demonstrating an effective partnership model between the state and NGOs. Oregon's approach emphasizes both prevention and legal action, with a dedicated animal cruelty prosecutor enhancing the state's enforcement capabilities.

11.1.6. Maine

Maine's commitment to animal welfare is manifested through its Animal Welfare Program, which collaborates with NGOs and local communities to enforce and educate about animal protection laws. This collaboration, alongside strategic state and federal laws, underlines Maine's holistic approach to animal welfare, emphasizing the importance of cross-sector partnerships and community engagement in fostering a protective environment for animals.

11.1.7. Summary

While Holland and Norway benefit from specialized enforcement units, all examined regions demonstrate a commitment to animal welfare through comprehensive legal frameworks and strategic collaborations. The effectiveness of these frameworks varies, influenced by the presence of dedicated enforcement bodies, the extent of legal regulations, and the role of NGOs and public education in promoting animal welfare.

	The Netherlands	Norway	Romania	Oregon	Maine
Legal Framework	5	5	3	4	4

Table 1 – Legal Framework

11.2. Dedicated Police Officers

11.2.1. Holland

Holland has a specialized unit known as the Dierenpolitie (Animal Police), which is integral to enforcing the country's comprehensive animal welfare laws. This dedicated branch within the national police force is specifically trained to handle animal-related issues, reflecting a strong commitment to animal welfare and the seriousness with which the country approaches enforcement.

11.2.3. Norway

Similar to Holland, Norway has established a special police unit focused on combating animal abuse, demonstrating a significant commitment to animal welfare. This initiative, based on the correlation between animal mistreatment and broader societal violence, signifies an advanced approach to animal welfare enforcement, recognizing the importance of specialized units in addressing these issues effectively.

11.2.4. Romania

Romania established its dedicated Animal Police in 2020, signifying a progressive step toward enhanced animal welfare enforcement. The legislative backdrop includes the Law on the Protection of Animals and supplementary regulations, framing a preventative approach to animal cruelty. The National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority (NSVFSA) complements this framework, overseeing adherence to national and EU welfare standards. NGOs contribute notably to advocacy, rescue, and rehabilitation, illustrating a collaborative effort toward animal protection.

11.2.5. Oregon

Oregon, while not having a dedicated police unit, has taken a unique approach by integrating animal welfare enforcement into the broader responsibilities of law enforcement agencies. The Oregon Humane Society's Humane Special Agents, commissioned by the Oregon State Police, play a critical role in investigating and addressing animal welfare cases. Additionally, the funding of a dedicated animal cruelty prosecutor enhances the focus and resources allocated to these issues.

11.2.6. Maine

Maine does not have a dedicated police unit for animal welfare; instead, it relies on the Animal Welfare Program and humane agents authorized to enforce state laws concerning animal protection. While this structure facilitates enforcement, the lack of a specialized police unit may limit the scope and depth of responses to animal welfare violations compared to regions with dedicated enforcement units.

11.2.7. Summary

The presence of dedicated police units in Holland and Norway reflects a higher level of specialization and prioritization of animal welfare enforcement. In contrast, Romania, Oregon, and Maine demonstrate different models of integrating animal welfare enforcement into existing structures, with varying degrees of specialization and focus. The effectiveness of these approaches can be influenced by factors such as resource allocation, legal framework comprehensiveness, and societal attitudes toward animal welfare.

	The Netherlands	Norway	Romania	Oregon	Maine
Dedicated Police Officers	5	4	4	3	2

Table 2 – Dedicated Police Officers

11.3. Collaboration with NGOs

The collaboration between government bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the field of animal welfare is crucial for enhancing animal protection, education, and enforcement of laws. The following analysis compares the collaboration with NGOs in Holland, Norway,

Romania, Oregon, and Maine, focusing on how these collaborations enhance animal welfare initiatives.

11.3.1. Holland

The Dutch approach to animal welfare is characterized by a strong partnership between the government and various NGOs. Notably, the Dierenbescherming (Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals) plays a significant role in advocating for animal welfare, providing education on responsible pet ownership, and assisting in rescue and rehabilitation activities. This collaboration is an integral part of Hollands' comprehensive animal welfare framework, showcasing a model where NGOs actively complement governmental efforts, particularly in public education and awareness. The collaboration extends to political realms as well, with the Partij voor de Dieren (Party for the Animals) emphasizing the interconnectedness of animal welfare, environmental sustainability, and human well-being.

11.3.2. Norway

Norway exhibits a proactive approach to animal welfare, with governmental bodies like the Norwegian Food Safety Authority (Mattilsynet) working closely with NGOs. A key player is NOAH – For Animal Rights, Norway's leading animal protection organization, which has been instrumental in advocating for changes such as the phase-out of fur farming and the establishment of specialized animal police units. This partnership highlights the importance of NGOs in influencing policy changes and promoting societal awareness about animal welfare.

11.3.3. Romania

In Romania, the collaboration between the government and NGOs is crucial due to the relatively less developed legal and enforcement frameworks compared to Holland and Norway. Organizations like Asociația pentru protecția animalelor Robi and Romania Animal Rescue are vital in filling gaps, offering support in rescue operations, public education, and sometimes even collaborating with authorities to improve animal welfare conditions. This collaboration is essential for enhancing animal welfare in Romania, highlighting the role of NGOs in advocating for stronger legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms.

11.3.4. Oregon

Oregon's animal welfare landscape is marked by the significant involvement of the Oregon Humane Society (OHS), which plays a pivotal role in enforcing animal protection laws and advocating for legislative changes. The collaboration between OHS and state law enforcement, including the commissioning of Humane Special Agents by the Oregon State Police, demonstrates a model of effective partnership that leads to tangible outcomes in animal welfare. The collaboration extends to legal realms as well, with the Animal Legal Defense Fund supporting the prosecution of animal cruelty cases, showcasing how NGOs can provide specialized resources and expertise to complement governmental efforts.

11.3.5. Maine

Maine's collaboration with NGOs in the realm of animal welfare is highlighted by the efforts of Maine Friends of Animals, an organization instrumental in advocating for and assisting in the passage of state animal welfare laws. The state's Animal Welfare Program works in conjunction with local communities, non-profits, and other state agencies, demonstrating a collaborative approach to animal protection. This partnership is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of Maine's animal welfare initiatives, emphasizing the role of NGOs in legislative advocacy and public education.

11.3.6. Summary

The collaboration between government bodies and NGOs in the field of animal welfare varies across Holland, Norway, Romania, Oregon, and Maine. While Holland and Norway show a robust partnership model with a significant impact on policy and societal awareness, Romania illustrates the critical role of NGOs in advocating for improvements. Oregon and Maine demonstrate effective models of collaboration, particularly in enforcement and legislative advocacy, showcasing the essential role of NGOs in complementing governmental efforts to enhance animal welfare.

	The Netherlands	Norway	Romania	Oregon	Maine
Collaborations with NGOs	5	5	4	5	4

Table 3 – Collaborations with NGOs

11.4. Funding Analysis

11.4.1. Holland

Holland boasts a sophisticated system with the Dierenpolitie, funded through the national police budget, and Municipal Animal Control Officers, supported by local governments. Its economy is strong and diversified, with a significant emphasis on services and international trade, a low unemployment rate, and a high GDP per capita reflecting a high standard of living.

11.4.2. Norway

Norway integrates its animal police unit within the national police budget, with no specific allocation, relying instead on individual police districts for funding distribution. The Norwegian Food Safety Authority also plays a pivotal role, funded through state allocation and user fees. Norway has a robust economy with a high GDP per capita, low unemployment, and substantial contributions from its natural resources.

11.4.3. Romania

Romania's Animal Police and the NSVFSA are predominantly financed through the national budget, with additional EU funding to ensure alignment with broader European standards. This financial strategy aims to bolster Romania's animal welfare enforcement amid its evolving economic landscape. Although Romania is experiencing growth, it contends with significant challenges such as a high poverty rate and economic inequality. These factors potentially limit the resources available for animal protection, necessitating efficient allocation and utilization of the funds dedicated to this cause.

11.4.4. Oregon

Oregon does not employ a statewide animal police force. Instead, the Oregon Humane Society’s special unit, funded by donations, grants, and service fees, undertakes these responsibilities. Oregon's economy is characterized by positive GDP growth, and an above-average median household income.

11.4.5. Maine

Maine operates a dedicated state agency for animal welfare enforcement, with funding from animal licensing fees, voluntary contributions, and specialty license plates, ensuring financial independence. Maine's economy, while diversified, grows modestly, with challenges related to its income disparity, and housing affordability despite a relatively stable job market.

11.4.6 Summary

Each region's socio-economic status directly and indirectly influences its capacity to fund and support animal protection programs, highlighting the importance of integrating animal welfare within broader economic and social policies for sustainable development.

	The Netherlands	Norway	Romania	Oregon	Maine
Funding	4	4	3	3	3

Table 4 – Funding

11.5. Public Awareness

11.5.1. Holland

In Holland, there is a notably high public concern for animal welfare, supported by a well-established network of NGOs and a unique political representation through the Party for the Animals. Dutch society demonstrates a comprehensive approach to animal welfare, encompassing various sectors and actively engaging in education and policymaking. The presence of a political

party dedicated to animal protection in Holland is distinctive and underscores the significance of animal welfare in the national discourse.

11.5.2. Norway

Norway showcases a deep-rooted concern for animal welfare, integrated into societal values and supported by active NGOs and government oversight. Like Holland, Norway exhibits a strong commitment across different domains involving animals, with particular emphasis on legislative support and public participation. Norwegian society's progressive stance is also evident in its evolving dialogue on controversial issues, such as fur farming and predator culling, reflecting a society responsive to animal welfare debates.

11.5.3. Romania

In contrast, Romania is in a phase of transition, improving its approach to animal welfare amidst various challenges. While public awareness and concern are growing, especially in urban areas, Romania grapples with issues like stray animal management and farm animal conditions. The involvement of international and local NGOs plays a crucial role in advancing animal welfare, signaling a shift towards greater public engagement and legislative reforms.

11.5.4. Oregon

Oregon exemplifies a progressive state with a strong environmental consciousness, where animal welfare is integral to broader values of ethical treatment and sustainability. Public support in Oregon is visible through active NGO participation, community engagement, and responsive legislation, addressing needs across pets, wildlife, and farm animals. Oregonians' support for animal welfare initiatives indicates a well-informed and committed populace.

11.5.5. Maine

Maine stands out for its community-driven approach to animal welfare, with significant public involvement in supporting local initiatives and advocacy groups. Education and community organizations are pivotal in Maine, promoting awareness and responsible practices. The state's dedication to wildlife and habitat conservation further illustrates a comprehensive and respectful approach to animal welfare.

11.5.6. Summary

While all five regions demonstrate a commitment to animal welfare, the extent and nature of public awareness, engagement, and legislative support vary. Holland and Norway stand out for their well-developed infrastructures and societal integration of animal welfare concerns. In contrast, Romania is evolving, with increasing public engagement and ongoing challenges. Oregon and Maine exemplify how U.S. states can foster robust community and legislative support for animal welfare, reflecting broader environmental and ethical values. These comparisons highlight the diverse ways societies value and advocate for animal welfare, influenced by cultural, political, and historical factors.

	The Netherlands	Norway	Romania	Oregon	Maine
Public Awareness	5	4	2	4	3

Table 5 – Public Awareness

11.6. Final Grade

	The Netherlands	Norway	Romania	Oregon	Maine
Legal Framework	5	5	3	4	4
Dedicated Police Officer	5	4	4	3	2
Collaborations with NGOs	5	5	4	5	4
Funding	4	4	3	3	3
Public Awareness	5	4	2	4	3
Final Grade	4,8	4,4	3,2	3,8	3,2

Table 6 – Final Grade

11.7. Common Success Factors

Successful animal protection systems are underpinned by detailed legal frameworks that outline clear responsibilities, standards of care, and penalties for violations. Laws that specifically address different aspects of animal welfare, from domestic pets to wildlife and farm animals, create a structured environment where the need for animal protection are recognized and protected.

The presence of specialized units or agencies focused on animal welfare, such as dedicated animal police forces or humane agents, significantly enhances the effectiveness of law enforcement and ensures a proactive approach to preventing and addressing animal abuse.

Effective animal welfare systems benefit from strong partnerships between government bodies and NGOs. These collaborations facilitate comprehensive approaches to animal welfare, combining enforcement with education, advocacy, and rehabilitation efforts. They also contribute to the development and implementation of policies and programs that address both immediate and systemic issues.

Adequate and sustainable funding mechanisms, whether through government budgets, donations, or licensing fees, are crucial for supporting the activities of enforcement bodies, shelters, and welfare programs. This financial support enables ongoing operations, educational initiatives, and the ability to respond to emergencies.

High levels of public engagement and awareness contribute significantly to the success of animal protection efforts. Public education campaigns, community involvement, and advocacy work help to foster a culture that values and actively supports animal welfare. This societal backing can drive policy changes, increase reporting of abuses, and promote responsible animal care practices.

These common factors demonstrate that successful animal protection requires a multifaceted approach, integrating legal, financial, educational, and societal components to create environments where animals are respected and protected from harm.

11.8. Lessons Learned from the Different Models

From the detailed examination of the different models across Holland, Norway, Romania, Oregon, and Maine, several positive and negative lessons can be learned.

11.8.1. Holland

Positive: The comprehensive legal infrastructure and the dedicated Dierenpolitie show the country's strong commitment to animal welfare, ensuring rigorous enforcement and specialized attention to animal welfare cases.

Negative: The reliance on multiple legal instruments may lead to complexity and potential challenges in enforcement consistency.

11.8.2. Norway

Positive: Norway's robust legal framework and specialized police unit underscore a proactive and well-rounded approach to animal welfare, integrating enforcement with broader societal values.

Negative: The dependency on a specialized unit's funding and distribution may create inconsistencies in enforcement effectiveness across regions.

11.8.3. Romania

Positive: Romania's animal police force, as well as engagement with NGOs and public education initiatives illustrates a commitment to improving animal welfare.

Negative: Fragmented legal framework may hinder effective animal protection and response to welfare issues.

11.8.4. Oregon

Positive: Oregon's detailed statutory framework, partnership with the Oregon Humane Society, and the presence of a dedicated animal cruelty prosecutor demonstrate an integrated and effective enforcement model.

Negative: The absence of a specialized animal police force may limit the depth of enforcement and reliance on existing law enforcement structures may dilute focus on animal welfare.

11.8.5. Maine

Positive: Maine shows a strong commitment through its Animal Welfare Program and collaborations with NGOs, highlighting the importance of community engagement and cross-sector partnerships.

Negative: Similar to Oregon, the lack of a dedicated animal police force might restrict the scope of focused animal welfare enforcement, relying more on broader programmatic strategies.

11.8.6. Summary

Specialized Enforcement: The effectiveness of specialized enforcement units, as seen in Holland, Norway, and Romania significantly boosts the capacity to address animal welfare issues comprehensively and swiftly.

Comprehensive Legal Frameworks: The establishment of detailed and overarching legal standards, as observed in all regions, is vital for setting clear expectations and guidelines for animal welfare.

Collaboration with NGOs: Engaging with NGOs not only extends the reach and impact of animal welfare initiatives but also promotes public education, advocacy, and rehabilitation, as evidenced in all regions but particularly in Holland and Norway.

Funding and Resource Allocation: Adequate funding and strategic resource allocation, essential for the execution of animal welfare policies and programs, are critical as demonstrated across all models.

Public Awareness and Engagement: Cultivating a societal ethos that values animal welfare, supported by active public engagement and awareness initiatives, enhances the overall effectiveness of animal protection efforts, as shown in all regions but notably in Holland and Norway.

Adaptability and Innovation: Learning from Oregon and Maine, the integration of animal welfare within broader law enforcement and community programs can compensate for the lack of

specialized units, though the ideal model favors dedicated resources and personnel for animal welfare.

These lessons underline the multifaceted nature of effective animal welfare protection, emphasizing legal structure, specialized enforcement, collaborative efforts, and societal involvement as pivotal elements.

12. Proposal for “Ideal Animal Police Operations”

Robust Legal Infrastructure

Establish comprehensive legislation that explicitly defines animal welfare standards, enforcement protocols, and penalties for violations. The legal framework should cover all animal categories, including domestic pets, wildlife, and livestock, ensuring clear guidelines for care and protection. These laws should also empower animal police operations with the necessary authority to enforce regulations effectively.

Specialized Enforcement Units

Create dedicated animal police units or humane enforcement agencies with trained professionals who have expertise in animal welfare, veterinary care, and law enforcement. These units should have the jurisdiction and resources to investigate complaints, conduct inspections, and take action against violators, ensuring swift and effective responses to animal welfare concerns.

Integrated Collaboration

Foster strategic partnerships between the animal police operation, governmental agencies, NGOs, and community organizations. These collaborations should aim to enhance resource sharing, streamline responses to animal welfare issues, and develop unified strategies for prevention, education, and enforcement. Joint efforts should also extend to policy advocacy, research, and data sharing to continuously improve animal protection measures.

Sustainable Funding Models

Secure reliable funding for the animal police operation through a mix of government allocations, grants, donations, and possibly service fees. Funding should adequately support enforcement activities, animal care and rehabilitation, public education programs, and infrastructure needs, ensuring the operation's sustainability and effectiveness.

Engaged Public Awareness

Implement ongoing public awareness campaigns to educate citizens about animal welfare laws, reporting mechanisms, and responsible animal care. Encourage community involvement in monitoring and protecting animals, and foster a culture that denounces animal cruelty. Public education should also highlight the roles and responsibilities of the animal police, building community trust and cooperation.

Policy Influence and Advocacy

Utilize insights and data gathered by the animal police operation to advocate for policy improvements and legislative changes. The operation should play an advisory role in shaping laws and regulations, ensuring they reflect best practices in animal welfare and address emerging issues.

Emergency Response and Preparedness

Develop protocols for rapid response to animal welfare emergencies, including natural disasters, large-scale cruelty cases, or disease outbreaks. Ensure the animal police operation is equipped and trained to handle such crises, safeguarding animal welfare under all circumstances.

By integrating these components into a comprehensive framework, an ideal animal police operation can effectively safeguard animal welfare, prevent abuse, and promote a compassionate society that values and protects its animals.

13. Potential Barriers in Implementing Best Practices

Insufficient Legal Clarity

Without comprehensive and clear legal standards that are consistently enforced, animal police operations may lack the authority or direction needed to effectively protect animal welfare.

Funding Constraints

Inadequate or unstable funding can limit the capabilities of specialized enforcement units, affecting everything from staffing to resources necessary for investigations and emergency responses.

Lack of Specialization

Without dedicated and trained personnel focusing solely on animal welfare, enforcement efforts may not be as effective or informed, potentially leading to suboptimal outcomes in addressing animal welfare issues.

Inconsistent Collaboration

Effective animal protection requires cooperation across various sectors and organizations. Weak or inconsistent collaboration can hinder the sharing of knowledge, resources, and support, reducing the overall impact of animal welfare initiatives.

Public Awareness and Engagement

The absence of strong public support and awareness can limit the effectiveness of animal welfare policies and programs. Ensuring ongoing community engagement and education is crucial for fostering a culture that values and actively participates in animal welfare.

14. The Future of Animal Policing: Trends and Innovations

The future of animal policing is poised to evolve significantly, incorporating advanced technologies, enhanced legal frameworks, and broader societal engagement to ensure more effective enforcement of animal welfare laws and protection of animals across various contexts. Here are some of the key trends and innovations that are likely to shape the future of animal policing:

The integration of technology in animal policing is set to increase, with tools like drones for surveillance in hard-to-reach areas, data analytics for predicting and preventing animal cruelty hotspots, and digital platforms for easier reporting of animal welfare concerns by the public. Additionally, body cameras on enforcement officers and online tracking systems for animal abuse cases will enhance transparency and accountability in operations.

Future animal policing is likely to see greater interdisciplinary collaboration, involving experts from veterinary science, animal behavior, law, and social work. This approach will provide a more holistic understanding of animal welfare issues and lead to more nuanced and effective interventions.

As the world becomes more interconnected, there will be a push toward establishing and adhering to global standards for animal welfare. International cooperation can help in sharing best practices, conducting joint operations against transnational animal cruelty networks, and standardizing enforcement protocols.

Legal provisions for animal welfare are expected to become more comprehensive and stringent, with clearer definitions, stronger penalties, and broader coverage of different animal species and contexts. Future legislation may also grant more explicit powers to animal policing units and establish clearer protocols for collaboration between agencies.

The future will likely see the development of specialized training programs for animal police officers, focusing not only on law enforcement techniques but also on veterinary first aid, animal behavior, and ethical considerations. Public education campaigns will likely also evolve, utilizing various media platforms to raise awareness about animal welfare and legal responsibilities.

Building strong community relations will be a crucial aspect of future animal policing, with efforts to engage citizens as active participants in monitoring and protecting animal welfare. Community liaison officers, volunteer programs, and partnership initiatives with local organizations can foster a culture of compassion and cooperation.

Alongside enforcement, future animal policing is set to increasingly emphasize the rehabilitation and rehoming of rescued animals. This may involve collaborations with animal shelters, sanctuaries, and adoption agencies, as well as the use of behavioral rehabilitation programs to improve the chances of successful rehoming.

With advancements in data analysis and behavioral science, future animal policing can adopt more proactive strategies to prevent animal cruelty before it occurs. This could include identifying risk factors, engaging at-risk populations with targeted interventions, and promoting positive animal-human relationships through education and community programs.

In conclusion, the future of animal policing is indicated to be more dynamic, interdisciplinary, and technology-driven, aiming not only to enforce laws but also to foster a deeper societal respect and compassion for animals. By embracing these trends and innovations, animal policing can significantly contribute to the advancement of animal welfare and the cultivation of more humane and just societies.

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