

## Schools Animal Ethics Committee

Cats and dogs, cows and sheep, mice, fish, horses, rabbits, birds, frogs, crabs, worms, spiders, snails, flies and even humans were the subject of applications for ethics approval for projects involving live animals in 2008. Subjecting an animal to an unusual practice or interfering with it as part of research and teaching, requires the prior approval of an animal ethics committee. Proof of approval may also be required for entry into science fairs. To assist schools with meeting this legislative requirement the New Zealand Association Science Educators (NZASE) runs an Animal Ethics Committee to assess teacher and student projects involving animals. Most projects involved manipulating feeding, e.g. the preferences of cats for different foods, or monitoring behaviour, e.g. the effects of water temperature on goldfish feeding. The creativity of the students was impressive – the reaction of horses to different colours, behaviour of sheep after vaccination, disrupting wildlife by removing mangroves, the preference of mice for classical or rock music, the sounds rabbits make were all investigated; while the development of a ceramic-fabric horse blanket, solar-powered cat collar, dog wash, horse shampoo, and automatic cat feeder were the aim of others. With few exceptions, most would have had little or no impact on the welfare of the animals. Those that would have involved, for example, routine farm husbandry procedures such as tail-docking or antibiotic injections. Given the large number of family pets involved, many of the manipulations would have had positive impacts on the welfare of the animals because of the extra attention they would have received. The majority of applications were from Intermediate school children with lesser numbers of senior and primary school children, as well as teachers, also applying.

### Remember:

- Approval is required for using live animals before the project begins.
- Application forms are available on the website <http://www.nzase.org.nz/ethics.html>. The form has been revised to make it simpler – answer all the questions.
- Submit applications at least 1 week before the meeting at which you would like it considered for approval. The remaining meeting dates for 2009 are 13 May, 10 June, 8 July, 12 August, 9 September, 14 October and 11 November.
- Applications can either be emailed to [animalethicscommittee@nzase.org.nz](mailto:animalethicscommittee@nzase.org.nz) or posted to NZASE Animal Ethics Committee, PO Box 10122, Wellington