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Hokkaido University-The University of Edinburgh International Vet Exchange Program 2025

Achieving Global Standards of Excellence in Veterinary Education

Student Report from School of Veterinary Medicine,
Hokkaido University
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Project Managers

The University of Edinburgh

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The University of Edinburgh, located in the capital of Scotland, has a history of nearly 400 years. Its veterinary school, the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, was founded in 1823 and is now based at the Easter Bush campus. The campus hosts a variety of facilities, including the university's small animal and equine hospitals, the Roslin Institute (famous for the cloning of Dolly the sheep), the Large Animal Research and Imaging Facility (LARIF), and Langhill Farm. These institutions play key roles in advancing animal science, life sciences, and animal welfare not only in Scotland, but also all over the world.

In the United Kingdom and many other western countries, animal welfare standards are generally high, and public interest in the subject is strong. The University of Edinburgh is leading this field globally by education and research in animal welfare.

During my programme, I had the opportunity to take lectures, visit research facilities, and take part in medical treatments at the animal hospitals. I also visited Edinburgh Zoo. These experiences provided a valuable chance to observe animal welfare practices in action and reflect on their significance.

It takes about 30 minutes to reach Edinburgh Zoo from the city centre. Walking through the zoo's hillside park, I saw otters running along a small river, a tiger strolling slowly through a tunnel above visitors, and red pandas napping on high branches. The experience felt almost like encountering wildlife in their natural habitats. The animals appeared to enjoy their lives in enclosures that provided much larger spaces, abundant vegetation resembling their native environments, and enrichment features that allowed them to hide from human view. It was an entirely new experience for me to see such natural behaviours, and I was deeply impressed. These observations made me reflect on the situation in Japanese zoos, which I decided to focus on in my presentation.

On the third day of the training, I was given the opportunity to deliver a presentation. I chose to speak about the current state of animal welfare in Japanese zoos. In preparing for this, I considered that although efforts to improve conditions are being made in Japan, there are limits to what zoos alone can achieve. For more significant progress to take place, broader societal involvement is essential—bringing citizens, governmental institutions, and the wider community into the conversation. This realization seemed to extend beyond zoos and it applies across the entire animal industry in Japan.

The high public interest in animal welfare can be seen in everyday life. For instance, in supermarkets, meat products are often labeled with the RSPCA certification mark, indicating compliance with animal welfare standards. Packaging also specifies the conditions in which animals were raised, such as indoors, outdoors, or free-range. I realized that public demand drives institutional and governmental action, and this correlation creates lasting improvements in animal welfare.

Raising public awareness is not simple. The World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) has stated that "Animal welfare is a complex and multi-faceted subject with scientific, ethical, economic, cultural, social, religious and political dimensions." I would like to propose two important perspectives in Japan. The first one is the cultural difference. Rather than simply importing the Western concept of "animal welfare", we must carefully develop and adapt a form of animal welfare that matches Japanese society. It is essential that the principles are accepted, internalized, and made meaningful within Japan's cultural framework. The second one is historical difference. Hokkaido University will celebrate its 150th anniversary next year. By comparison, the University of Edinburgh's history spans nearly 400 years, leaving a difference of about 250 years. This historical gap reminded me that building animal welfare in Japan requires a long-term, culturally grounded effort.

I believe that zoos can serve as a starting point. Zoos are accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds, and they can attract public interest. Small-scale initiatives within zoos, such as enrichment activities that encourage natural behaviors, can spark awareness among visitors. Such moments of recognition may gradually develop into broader social movements that shape national and even international attitudes toward animal welfare of the entire animal industry.

For my generation of veterinary students, this responsibility feels especially significant. Animal welfare has recently been incorporated into our curriculum, meaning we are among the first to receive structured education in this field in Japan. As such, we carry both the expectation and the responsibility to advance animal welfare in our country. I strongly feel that we must take the initiative to build a uniquely Japanese understanding of animal welfare—one that acknowledges global standards but is also grounded in the values and perspectives of Japanese society.

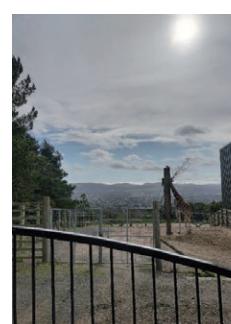
Through this programme, I not only deepened my understanding of animal welfare but also came to appreciate the broader cultural and societal contexts that shape it. I returned to Japan with new perspectives, renewed motivation, and a stronger sense of responsibility to contribute to the advancement of animal welfare in my country.

I would like to touch a little on my life in Edinburgh. I was overwhelmed by the cityscape of cobblestone streets and brick buildings. On the very day of my arrival, September 14, I happened to come across a ceremony celebrating the 900th anniversary of Edinburgh, where I watched a parade of horses and bagpipes. Listening to live bagpipes had long been a dream of mine, so I was truly delighted.

While walking through the city, I always saw medium- to large-sized dogs. What surprised me even more was that dogs were not only present in the streets but also inside cafés and even on buses. Speaking of buses, I was also excited to ride a double-decker bus. Sitting in the very front seat on the upper deck was especially exciting. Each traffic light and every curve in the road gave me a rush of thrill, and I thoroughly enjoyed the ride.

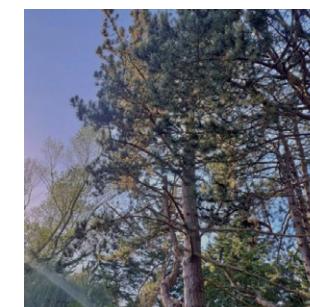
People in Edinburgh seemed to have a relaxed lifestyle. They took days off frequently, and even on working days people often finished early and went home, giving me the impression that they had a good work-life balance. Another difference in working style that I noticed was at Tesco (a supermarket) during the busy dinner hours. A staff member was restocking shelves with a large cart, moving customers out of the way without hesitation. I thought this would be rare to see in Japan.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to those who supported me throughout this invaluable training experience. To Nicola and the faculty and staff of the University of Edinburgh, who so generously shared their time and expertise, to the five exchange students from last year, and to the faculty members of my own veterinary school who organized and coordinated the programme, including Professor Tsubota and Levi. Without their guidance and support, this experience would not have been possible.



The View from the Giraffe enclosure

Can You Spot Two Red Pandas?



A whole chicken labeled 'CORN FED' and 'FREE RANGE' with the RSPCA mark

Chiharu WATABE, 5th year

During my ten days in Edinburgh, I was able to gain many valuable insights into animal welfare, both in large animal husbandry and in the care of zoo animals. Through observations at the university farm and the zoo, I was able to directly see husbandry methods that consider animal behavior and living environments. These experiences made me much more aware of the perspectives I should attach importance to when I work with animals in the future. In addition, during lectures at the University of Edinburgh, I had the opportunity to learn about animal welfare in relation to fish.

Through behavioral observations of fish, I realized that the scope of animal welfare has expanded to include fish, a group that has traditionally been neglected. During the observations, I confirmed that when fish were placed in environments considered stressful, they became restless and displayed more behaviors that suggested fear. From this experience, I learned that fish also respond sensitively to their environments, and that their behavior reflects their internal state. In recent years, animal welfare on farm animals began to attract interest in Japan, but we need to start thinking about animal welfare about fish. It is important to Japan which fisheries are an important industry.

In terms of large animal husbandry, what left the strongest impression on me was the rearing environment for calves. The barn I visited was kept extremely clean, and each calf wore a device resembling a long collar that monitored its milk intake, ensuring that each calf received the appropriate amount of milk. I had thought that group rearing, compared to the individual rearing of calves which is common in Japan, was effective for developing social behavior but made individual management difficult. For example, in the individual rearing, it is difficult to monitor the amount of milk consumed and to manage health conditions. Therefore, I was surprised to learn about this method, which balances both. Grazing also presents challenges in nutritional management because it depends on the condition of the local pasture. However, by grazing cows during their dry period, farmers prevented a direct impact on milk yield. I was impressed by this method, which balanced giving cows freedom to spend in a wide environment with maintaining production efficiency.

Furthermore, during milking, cows were provided with highly nutritious feed as a reward, depending on their milk yield. This approach was designed to ensure that milking did not become a painful or stressful experience for the cows, and I learned from this animal-centered management style. As evidence that this method is working well, it is said that cows naturally come to the milking area when it is time for milking. In addition, large brushes were installed in the barn so that cows could scratch their heads and necks on their own. I felt that such enrichment plays an important role in reducing stress and ensuring comfort for the animals.

At Edinburgh Zoo, I also had the opportunity to learn about husbandry practices that prioritize the welfare of display animals. What impressed me most overall was that animals were given choices in their environment. For example, they were able to move freely between indoor and outdoor spaces or hide from people if they wished. I felt that this freedom of choice reduced stress and encouraged natural behaviors. Therefore, none of the animals in the zoo exhibited stereotypic behaviors. One particularly memorable case was the enclosure for the Visayan warty pig (*Sus cebifrons negrinus*). Compared to the adjacent deer enclosure, the soil in their habitat was deeper, allowing them to root with their snouts. I observed this rooting behavior multiple times during my visit. Since these pigs are omnivorous, being able to search for insects in the soil encourages their natural foraging behavior. This left a strong impression on me as an example of a husbandry environment designed with animal welfare in mind.

Another memorable part of the lectures was the phrase *“output, not input.”* This means that we should not be satisfied simply with what we provide to animals but instead focus on the outcomes—how the animals behave and change as a result. It is not enough to simply practice what textbooks or manuals describe as good welfare, the true measure is whether the animals' lives and behaviors are actually improved. I found this perspective to be essential, and it is something I want to keep in mind in my future learning and practice.

One thing I noticed while spending time in Edinburgh was difference in people's way of thinking. In supermarkets in Edinburgh, it was prominently displayed that the eggs came from free-range chickens. I had already felt a strong awareness of animal welfare from the fact that battery cages are banned, but I was still surprised to see it emphasized even in local supermarkets. Another thing that left an impression on me, though not directly related to animal welfare, was something I saw in the supermarkets. There was a space where people could donate food. By putting food that they could not finish consuming themselves, they were able to provide it to the local community. In addition to food, there was also a place to donate dog food. I realized that a culture of passing on surplus food to others so that it does not go to waste has taken root here. Through this study abroad experience, I learned that animal welfare is not merely about creating environments that look comfortable, but about designing systems that allow animals to express their natural behaviors and fulfill their intrinsic needs. The true measure of welfare is whether their quality of life is genuinely improved as a result. In the future, whenever I am involved with animals, I want to maintain this output-focused perspective and strive to objectively understand their conditions.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Professors Tsubota, Dr. Yanagawa, and Dr. Otani, as well as all the faculty members of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Hokkaido University, Ms. Kawashima, and Dr. Nicola and the other staff at the University of Edinburgh. Thanks to your guidance and support, I was able to make the most of this valuable opportunity and learn as much as possible. I am truly grateful.



figure 1 The Visayan warty pigs at Edinburgh Zoo



figure 2 The calves that were on the farm



figure 3 Grazing cows

The University of Edinburgh

Masako KATO , 4th year

I participated in this program to study animal welfare, especially the welfare of companion animals, in Edinburgh. I also wanted to observe how local pet owners and people in the city perceive and treat their animals. During my stay, I found significant differences from Japan in three main aspects: the handling of animals at the University of Edinburgh Small Animal Hospital, the diversity of clinical departments, and the way pets live in the city and how people interact with them.

First, I attended a lecture on animal welfare in clinical practice for companion animals at Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies Small Animal Hospital. In the lecture, it was emphasized that the hospital makes every effort to minimize the pain, fear, and anxiety animals may feel during treatment. For example, when giving an injection, one staff member distracts the animal while another performs the procedure quickly and smoothly.

Before attending this lecture, I believed that ensuring the animal's safety was the top priority, even if it caused some fear or restraint. However, this belief was completely changed. I was deeply impressed by their attitude of always prioritizing the animal's emotional well-being, even though many different kinds of animals visit the hospital every day.

I was also surprised by the relaxed behavior of the dogs in the hospital. The patients walked around the consultation rooms calmly and appeared to enjoy being there. In Japan, it is common to see dogs that are afraid to even enter a veterinary hospital. In contrast, at the University of Edinburgh, the dogs wagged their tails happily as they entered and waited quietly and peacefully in the waiting area.

I realized that this atmosphere is the result of the daily efforts of veterinarians and staff members to avoid giving animals any negative experiences such as fear or anxiety. Their consistent efforts to consider the animals' emotions were clearly reflected in the calm behavior of the animals visiting the hospital.

The hospital also has a wide variety of clinical departments. Among them, I had the opportunity to observe the Exotic Animal Department. In Japan, practical training in companion animal medicine at veterinary schools mainly involves dogs and cats. However, at the University of Edinburgh, students can take part in clinical training that includes exotic animals such as rabbits, guinea pigs, mice, and turtles.

On the day of my observation, I saw those animals being examined. It was my first time watching the diagnosis and treatment of such species, and I realized that each requires a different handling method, living environment, and diet. I felt the unique difficulties involved in treating exotic animals.

During the practical session, students took medical histories directly from the owners, performed blood sampling, and filled out medical records. Through these activities, I could sense their strong sense of responsibility and commitment that come from engaging in real clinical practice.

I was also impressed by their mindset. The students were not only interested in dogs and cats, which are the most common companion animals, but also eager to become veterinarians capable of treating a wide range of species. They were active participants, not just assistants to veterinarians, and they approached each case with enthusiasm and curiosity.

Another major difference I noticed was in the way dogs live in the city. Many dogs I saw during walks were off-leash, yet they followed their owners closely and behaved calmly. Dogs are allowed to ride buses and trains for free, and many cafés and restaurants welcome dogs inside. I was amazed by how naturally dogs and humans coexist in everyday public life.

I rarely saw dogs barking or running away from their owners. This showed that they were well-trained and socialized. I realized that proper dog ownership and training practices are widely shared and socially accepted in the community.

Owners take responsibility for their dogs' behavior, and this mutual understanding forms the foundation of a society where dogs are welcomed everywhere.

I learned that dog owners in Edinburgh actively train their pets from puppyhood. They expose their dogs to public transportation and busy places such as cafés so that the dogs can get used to being around people and learn to stay calm in any environment. This practice helps dogs become comfortable and well-behaved in public spaces.

Through this program, I strongly felt that animals are given a high priority in Edinburgh society. This awareness is supported by the mindset of individual owners, veterinarians, and educators.

At the university, professors repeatedly emphasized the importance of animal welfare in their lectures. In practical training, students are encouraged to use models as much as possible instead of live animals. When live animals are used, they are healthy adult dogs owned by university staff, ensuring that no animals are harmed for educational purposes. I also learned about the university's system for canine blood donation. Only healthy dogs under seven years old and weighing more than 20 kilograms are accepted as volunteer donors. This system demonstrates the university's commitment to ethical medical practice and the responsible involvement of pet owners in supporting clinical care.

I was impressed by the high level of ethical awareness and responsibility shown by everyone involved. The consistent effort to minimize animal suffering and respect animal welfare is deeply rooted in their educational philosophy and clinical environment. I felt that this attitude directly contributes to building a society that is tolerant and compassionate toward dogs and other animals.

Through this experience, I gained a deeper understanding of what true animal welfare means—not only minimizing physical pain, but also respecting the emotional state and individuality of each animal. I realized that creating an animal-friendly society requires continuous awareness and responsibility from both professionals and the public.

This program also encouraged me to rethink my future as a veterinarian. I hope to apply what I learned in Edinburgh to promote better welfare standards and practices in Japan. I believe that by valuing the feelings and comfort of animals in daily clinical work, we can improve both the quality of veterinary medicine and the relationship between people and animals.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the people who supported this program. I am deeply thankful to Professor Tsubota, Ms. Kawashima from IVEP, and Drs. Nicola and Holly for their kind guidance and hospitality in Edinburgh. I also appreciate the professors at the University of Edinburgh who shared their expertise and the students from Hokkaido University who learned alongside me.

This program gave me precious experiences that I could never have gained without visiting the site in person. I am truly grateful for this opportunity, and I will continue to apply the lessons I learned in Edinburgh to my future studies and career in veterinary medicine.

ING	SPECIES/ BREED	PRESENTING COMPLAINT	DATE 12/09	COMMENTS
1. S. Rat		Abdominal pain & Diarrhoea		
2. Rat		Diarrhoea, water intake		
3. Budgie		Heavy Breathing		
4. Cockatoo		Respiratory		
5. Parrot		Diarrhoea, constipation		
6. Parrot		Diarrhoea, water intake & weight loss		
7. Parrot		Abdominal pain & Diarrhoea		
8. Parrot		Diarrhoea, weight loss		
9. Parrot		Respiratory		
10. Parrot		Respiratory, weight loss & diarrhoea		
11. Parrot		Diarrhoea, weight loss		
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The University of Edinburgh

Hitomi KAWAMURA, 3rd year

I had a very rewarding experience during the dispatch program to Edinburgh. I took the lectures on animal welfare, visited animal hospitals and research facilities, and had a guided tour of Edinburgh Zoo. In addition, we prepared our presentations and delivered them in front of professors and students.

For the presentation at the University of Edinburgh, we chose the different topics and beforehand. I decided to talk about retired racehorses and their second career as riding horses. After the presentation, I asked students what they felt of thought about horse racing and horse riding. I was pleased that some students shared their feelings and experience with horses. Giving a presentation in English was challenging for me, but was a great experience.

The lectures we took at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies focused on the welfare of animal patients in clinical settings, the euthanasia of companion animals, the welfare of poultry, and that of salmonids. Among them, the lecture on the euthanasia of companion animals was the most impressive to me. I've felt that Japanese people try not to say even the word "euthanasia" regarding companion animals, but I learned that veterinarians in the UK explain euthanasia as an option when there is no possibility of recovery or relief from pain. I also learned that it is important for veterinarians to be considerate of the owner's feelings and be objective toward the situation. This lecture made me reflect not only on the way I treat the animals, but also on how to interact with their owners. Furthermore, the lecture on the welfare of salmonids was interesting for me because I had never evaluated the welfare level of fish. I was surprised to see fish behaving differently when they were deprived of food. Also, this lecture was a good opportunity to be aware of the production structure of cultured fish.

Animal hospitals in the University of Edinburgh have three departments, small animal, large animal and equine. We visited Hospital for Small Animals and Equine Hospital.

At Hospital for Small Animals, I observed a femoral head resection in a dog and an ear cleaning under general anesthesia, accompanied by anesthesiologists. This was my first time to observe a surgery and I was impressed by veterinarians conducting the procedure interactively with students, as they asked questions about the anesthesia equipment and the treatment itself.

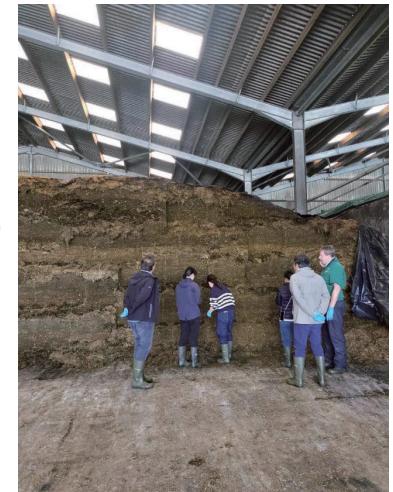
At Equine Hospital, I had an opportunity to watch an ultrasound examination and an abdominal fluid test on a horse that had undergone colic surgery the night before, as well as examinations of a foal that was brought in as an emergency. I found that this hospital was well-equipped, because there were a glassed-in room that enables students to observe two surgery rooms at the same time, a stable where a foal and its mother can stay together while being separated by a partition for individual treatment, and some CT rooms. Furthermore, the skills laboratory of Equine Hospital had a horse model that reproduced the shapes and places of digestive organs at almost actual sizes. I realized that students are able to practice with models before their clinical training in a way that closely simulates actual practice. At the hospital, I saw veterinarians and students discussing the details of the procedure afterward. I was impressed that teachers and students interacted closely with each other.

The lecture on the behavior of horses was really intriguing for me, because I have a strong interest in animal behavior. The lecturer, who was a veterinarian working at the Equine Hospital and had her own horse, explained how to assess emotions of horses from behavior in order to improve their welfare. I thought that this assessment is also useful for other animals. The environment of horses under captivity is widely different from that of wild horses, which graze for sixteen hours and walk more than ten kilometers a day. I learned that it is important to give them multiple options to improve their welfare. The lecturer showed us an example that horses could choose which grass they ate and which water they drank.

In addition to animal hospital, we visited Langhill Farm, where dairy cows are kept, and LARIF, a large animal research facility, both of which belonged to the University of Edinburgh. At Langhill Farm, we could see cows scratching their body with electric brushes and lying down comfortably on the soft floor in the free stall barns.

Additionally, they can spend time in the large grazing fields. I was impressed that the radio was kept on to prevent animals, which were used to living in groups, from feeling lonely in the housing area of large animals at LARIF. Moreover, LARIF was equipped with the pens with a transparent panel that allows laboratory animals to see others in the adjacent enclosure, and barns whose size can be adjusted according to the number of animals.

During the guided tour of Edinburgh Zoo, I was able to see a lot of natural behaviors of animals. For example, a red panda was climbing up high into the trees, pigs were digging in the soil with their snouts, and Przewalski's horses were running in a large pasture. I was amazed that most of enrichments in the zoo were made from natural materials. Furthermore, there were many displays focusing on endangered animals in the zoo, which I thought would encourage visitors to think about their conservation. I felt that this zoo was a good place to learn how animals behave in the wild and to consider issues related to animal conservation.



Learning about silage, Langhill Farm



A Przewalski's horse scratching its neck on a brush, Edinburgh Zoo

Through this dispatch, I had the opportunity to consider and compare the approaches to animal welfare and the efforts to enhance it in Japan and the UK. During the program, I often felt the limits of my English skills and professional knowledge, but thanks to the faculty and students at the University of Edinburgh, I was able to have an enjoyable and extremely rewarding experience. I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Tsubota, faculty members at Hokkaido University who gave us advice on our presentations before the program, the administrative staff, and all others who supported this program.

学生氏名:多田 雪乃 (獣医学部 5 年) IVEP エジンバラ大学派遣

エジンバラ大学はスコットランドの首都にある、約 400 年の歴史をもつ大学です。獣医学部は 1823 年に設立され、現在は伴侶動物や馬の附属動物病院、クローン羊ドリーで有名なロスリン研究所、Large Animal Research and Imaging Facility (LARIF) や Langhill 牧場などとともに、スコットランドの動物科学研究の拠点として、エジンバラ中心街からバスで 1 時間のイースタープッシュキャンパスに集約されています。

イギリスをはじめとする欧米諸国は、アニマルウェルフェアの水準が高く、市民の関心も高いと言われています。エジンバラ大学は、獣医学部のアニマルウェルフェアセンターとロスリン研究所を筆頭として、世界のアニマルウェルフェア研究を牽引しています。

今回の研修では講義や研究施設の見学、動物病院での診療参加に加え、エジンバラ動物園を訪問し、アニマルウェルフェアについて充実した内容を学ばせていただきました。

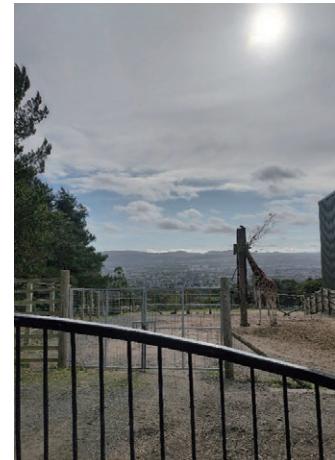
エジンバラ動物園は中心街からバスで 30 分ほど。丘の斜面に広がる園内を歩いていると、カワウソの群れが小川を越えて駆け抜け、頭上の通路にはトラがゆったりと姿を現しました。高い木の枝ではレッサーパンダが昼寝をしており、まるで野生に迷い込んだかのような光景に心を奪われました。展示場は広く、動物ごとに植生や土壤まで工夫され、動物が来園者から身を隠せる場所が随所に見られます。日本各地の動物園でも、動物の生息環境を再現した展示が進んでいますが、ここまでいきいきとした姿は初めてで、大きな刺激を受けました。

研修 3 日目にはプレゼンテーションの機会を設けていただき、私は、日本の動物園におけるアニマルウェルフェアの現状について発表しました。準備を進める中で、日本でも改善の努力は重ねられているものの、動物園のみでは限界があり、さらなる飛躍には市民や行政を巻き込む大きな動きが必要だと感じました。動物園だけでなく、日本の動物業界すべてに同じことが言えるでしょう。欧米ではアニマルウェルフェアに対する市民の関心が高いと触れましたが、スーパーでは肉に RSPCA (動物福祉団体) 認証マークが付され、飼育環境 (室内、屋外、フリーレンジなど) も表示されています。前述ではあえて「水準が高く、市民の関心も高い」としましたが、本当は「市民の関心が高いから水準を上げざるを得ない」のではないかでしょうか。

WOAH は「アニマルウェルフェアは科学・倫理・経済・文化・社会・宗教・政治などの複合的な問題である」と提言しています。市民の関心を高めるのは簡単ではありませんが、私は、動物園こそが、そのきっかけになれると思います。動物園は、幅広い世代に開かれていて、興味関心を引きやすい存在です。動物園におけるエンリッチメントなどの小さな取り組みが市民の気づきとなり、やがて大きな流れに発展する可能性を秘めています。

北海道大学は来年創基 150 周年を迎ますが、つまり、単純計算で 250 年の差があります。歴史や文化などの背景が異なる中で”Animal Welfare”をそのまま当てはめようとするのではなく、日本人が納得し受け入れられる「アニマルウェルフェア、動物福祉」をじっくりと形作り、根付かせていくことが大切だと学びました。動物福祉学がカリキュラムに組み込まれた私たちの世代が、これから日本のアニマルウェルフェアを切り開いていく、期待と責任を強く意識しています。

最後になりますが、身重にも関わらず一緒に動物園の斜面を登ったり休日の海鳥クルーズに付き合ったりしてくれた Nicola 先生をはじめとするエジンバラ大学の先生方、職員の皆様、臨床実習で多忙にもかかわらず時間を作ってくれた昨年の交換留学生の 5 人、企画に携わっていただいた獣医学部の皆様、Levi、坪田先生に、深く御礼申し上げます。



キリンの放飼場から街を望む



レッサーパンダを 2 匹見つけられるかな



スーパー (TESCO) で売られているお肉。'CORN FED' 'FREE RANGE' の表記と、RSPCA のマークがついている

学生氏名：渡部 千遙(獣医学部 5 年) IVEP エジンバラ大学派遣

エジンバラでの 10 日間の中で、大動物の飼育現場における動物福祉と、動物園での展示動物の福祉について多くの学びを得ることができた。大学の牧場や動物園での観察を通して、動物たちの行動や生活環境に配慮した飼育方法を直接見ることができ、自分が今後動物に関わるうえで大切にすべき視点を強く意識するようになった。

まず、大動物の飼育において印象的だったのは、子牛の育成環境である。訪れた牛舎は非常に清潔に保たれており、子牛一頭一頭に長い首輪のような機械が装着されていた。それによって飲んだミルクの量が管理され、子牛にとって適切な量が提供されるようになっていた。群飼育は、日本で一般的な子牛の個別飼育に比べて社会性を培う点では優れているが、個体管理の難しさが課題だと考えていた。そのため、このような方法があることを知り、驚いた。また、放牧はその地の草の状態に左右されるため栄養管理が難しいが、乾乳期の牛を放牧することで乳量に直接的な影響を与えないよう配慮されていた。広い環境で牛たちが自由に採食することと生産効率を両立させた方法であることに感心した。

また、搾乳の際には牛の乳量に応じて栄養価の高い飼料が報酬として提供されていた。これは、搾乳という行為が牛にとって苦痛やストレスにならないように工夫された取り組みであり、動物の立場に立った飼育姿勢を学ぶことができた。さらに、牛舎内には大きなブラシが設置され、牛が自ら頭や首を搔けるようにされていた。こうしたエンリッチメントは、牛のストレスを軽減し快適に過ごすために重要な要素だと感じた。

一方、エジンバラ動物園では展示動物の福祉を考えた飼育方法を学ぶ機会があった。全体を通して印象的だったのは、動物たちに場所の選択肢が与えられていることだった。室内と屋外が自由に行き来できたり、人から隠れる場所を設けたりするなど、動物自身が環境を選べることが、ストレスの軽減や自然な行動の引き出しにつながっていると感じた。特にビザヤンイボイノシシ(*Visayan warty pig, Sus cebifrons negrinus*)の飼育環境が印象的であった。彼らの飼育場所は、隣に飼育されていた鹿の一種の環境に比べて土が深くなっている、鼻で土を掘る行動が可能になっていた。実際に見ている中でも鼻で掘る行動は何度も観察された。雑食であるイボイノシシが、土の中の虫を探して食べるという本来の行動を表現できるよう配慮されており、動物福祉に基づいた飼育環境として強く印象に残った。

また、講義の中で心に残っている言葉がある。それは「output, not input」という言葉である。これは、私たちが動物に対して何を与えたかという行為そのものに満足するのではなく、その結果として動物がどのように行動し、どう変化したのかという成果に目を向けることの重要性を示している。教科書やマニュアルに書かれた良い福祉のための行動を実践するだけで安心するのではなく、その行動によって実際に動物の生活や行動が改善されたかどうかを基準に判断しなければならないという考え方には、今後の学びや実践において常に意識していきたい視点だと感じた。

この留学を通して学んだのは、動物福祉とは単に快適そうに見える環境を整えることではなく、動物が本来持つ行動や欲求を引き出せるような仕組みをつくり、その結果として彼らの生活の質が向上しているかどうかを見極めることの大切さである。今後、自分が動物に関わる場面においても、今回学んだ output を重視する姿勢を忘れず、客観的に動物の状態を理解できるように努めていきたい。

坪田先生、柳川先生、大谷先生をはじめ北海道大学獣医学部の先生方、川島さん、そしてエジンバラ大学のニコラ先生をはじめとする先生方には、大変お世話になりました。先生方のご指導とサポートのおかげで、この貴重な機会を最大限に活かして学ぶことができました。心より感謝申し上げます。



図 1 エジンバラ動物園のビザヤンイボイノシシ



図 2 農場にいた子牛



図 3 放牧中の乳牛

学生氏名：河村 瞳（獣医学部3年）IVEP エジンバラ大学派遣

エジンバラへの派遣プログラムでは、エジンバラ大学で動物福祉に関する講義を受けたり、動物病院や研究施設を見学したり、エジンバラ動物園を案内していただいたりと、充実した日々を過ごすことができました。また、北海道大学からの派遣学生はそれぞれテーマを決めてプレゼンテーションを作成し、エジンバラ大学の先生方と学生の皆さんとの前で発表を行いました。

エジンバラ大学では、動物病院の患者の福祉や伴侶動物の安楽死、家禽の福祉、養殖サケの福祉についての講義を受けました。特に印象に残ったのは伴侶動物の安楽死についての講義です。日本では、伴侶動物に対して安楽死という言葉を使うことさえも忌避されているような印象でしたが、イギリスでは、回復や痛みの軽減が見込めない場合に獣医師が安楽死を1つの選択肢として提示すると知りました。獣医師は飼い主の感情に配慮しつつも、客観的な視点で伝えることが重要であると学び、動物だけでなく、飼い主との向き合い方についても考えさせられる内容でした。

エジンバラ大学の動物病院は、小動物、大動物、馬に分かれています。私たちは小動物の動物病院と馬の動物病院を見学しました。

小動物の動物病院では、麻酔科の先生に付いてイヌの大腿骨頭切除術と全身麻酔下での耳掃除を見学しました。手術を見学したのは今回が初めてでしたが、先生が麻酔の機器や処置の内容について学生に質問するなどして、対話しながら処置が進んでいったのが印象的でした。

馬の動物病院では、前日の夜に疝痛の手術を行った馬の超音波検査や腹水の検査、緊急来院した仔馬の検査の様子を見学しました。この病院には2つの手術室を同時に見ることのできるガラス張りの部屋や、仔馬と母親が同居しながらも柵で区切って別々に治療を行うことができる馬房、CT室などがあり、施設も充実しているなどを感じました。また、スキルラボには馬の消化管の位置や形状をほぼ実寸大で再現できる模型があり、学生は臨床実習の前に模型を使って実践に近い練習を積むことができます。



Langhill Farm でサイレージについて学ぶ

馬の動物病院の見学後に受けた馬の行動についての講義は、私自身が動物行動学に興味を持っていたためとても面白かったです。行動から感情を評価して、福祉の向上に活かすという手法は、馬に限らずあらゆる動物に対して用いることができる学びました。飼育下の馬が暮らす環境は、1日に16時間草を食べ、10km以上歩く野生の環境とは大きく異なります。その中で馬の福祉を向上させるためには、自分で美味しい草を選ぶことができるようするなど、選択肢を与えることが重要であると学びました。

エジンバラ大学では動物病院に加えて、乳牛を飼育しているLanghill FarmやLARIFという大動物の実験施設も見学しました。牛が体を搔ける電動ブラシや実験動物の飼育スペースで動物の不安を軽減するためのラジオ、隣の区画の動物が見える透明のパネルなど、動物福祉に配慮した設備が整えられていました。

派遣中に訪れたエジンバラ動物園では、レッサーパンダが高くまで登ることのできる木や、ブタが鼻で掘ることのできる軟らかい土など、自然のものを使用したエンリッチ

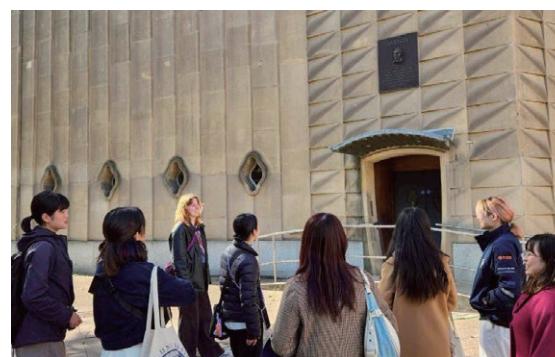
メントが充実しており、動物たちが野生でどのように行動しているのかを学ぶことができる動物園だと感じました。

今回の研修を通して、日英における動物福祉の捉え方や動物福祉向上のための取り組みなどを比較しつつ考えることができました。度々自身の英語力や専門知識の至らなさを痛感しましたが、エジンバラ大学の先生方や学生の皆さんのおかげでとても楽しく、学びの多い時間を過ごすことができました。また、引率してくださった坪田先生や派遣前からプレゼンテーションのアドバイスをくださった北海道大学の先生方、事務職員の皆様など、このプログラムを支えてくださった方々に心より感謝申し上げます。



ブラシで首をかくモウコノウマ
(エジンバラ動物園)

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Charles Darwin 史跡



学生氏名:加藤雅子（獣医学部4年）IVEP エジンバラ大学派遣

私は、エジンバラでの動物福祉、特に伴侶動物の動物福祉を学ぶとともに、現地の飼い主や街の人々のペットに対する意識を体感したくて参加しました。エジンバラ滞在中は、エジンバラ大学付属の小動物病院での動物の扱い、診療科の種類の多様さ、街中のペットの過ごし方と周りの人の意識の3点について、日本とは大きな違いを感じました。

まず、エジンバラ大学付属の小動物病院での動物の扱いについて、伴侶動物の臨床現場における動物福祉に関する講義を受けました。そこでは、処置の際に動物が感じる苦痛や恐怖、不安をできる限り減らすよう努めているとのことでした。たとえば、注射の際には一人が動物の気を引いている間に、もう一人が素早く処置を終えるそうです。私はこれまで、動物の安全を確保するためには、多少の恐怖があっても確実に保定することが大切だと考えていましたが、その常識が覆されました。多種多様な動物が毎日来院する中でも、動物の気持ちを最優先に考える姿勢に深く感銘を受けました。

また、エジンバラ大学付属の小動物病院にはさまざまな診療科があり、私はその中のエキゾチックアニマル科を見学しました。日本の獣医学部では、伴侶動物臨床の実習で扱うのは主に犬と猫ですが、エジンバラ大学ではエキゾチックアニマル科が設けられ、実習の一環として診療に携わることができます。見学した日には、ウサギやモルモット、マウス、カメが来院していました。これらの動物を診察するのを見るのは初めてで、それぞれに適した保定方法や飼育環境、餌の違いに、エキゾチックアニマルならではの難しさを感じました。実習では、学生が飼い主から稟告を聞き、採血やカルテの記載まで行っており、実際の診療に携わるからこそ責任感と覚悟が伝わってきました。

街中の飼い犬の過ごし方にも、日本との大きな違いがありました。散歩中の犬の多くはリードをつけておらず、リードがなくても飼い主の後をきちんとついて歩いていました。さらに、バスや電車には犬を無料で同伴でき、カフェやレストランにも犬と一緒に入れる場所が多く、驚かされました。散歩中に飼い主と離れてしまったり、公共の場で吠えたりする犬はほとんどおらず、しつけが十分に行き届いていることがわかりました。これは、正しい飼い方が社会に浸透していると同時に、飼い主が責任をもってしつけをしているからこそであり、それを前提として犬が街の人々に受け入れられているのだと感じました。

本プログラムを通して、エジンバラでは動物の優先度の高さを強く実感しました。そしてそれは、飼い主や獣医師一人ひとりの普段の意識から生まれているものだと学びました。大学の先生方は講義で、動物への配慮を繰り返し強調していました。また、大学の実習では、できるだけ模型を使用し、生体を扱う際は大学スタッフが飼っている健康な成犬を用いるなど、動物を犠牲にしない方法が徹底されていました。こうした高い意識と責任感をもって動物と向き合う姿勢こそが、犬に寛容な社会を支えているのだと実感しました。

最後になりますが、引率してくださった坪田先生、IVEPの川島さん、現地で案内をしてくださったNicola先生、Holy先生、講義や説明をしてくださったエジンバラ大学の先生方、一緒に研修を受けた北海道大学の学生の皆さん、そして本プログラムを支えてくださったすべての方々に、心より感謝申し上げます。現地でしか得られない貴重な経験をさせていただき、本当にありがとうございました。

