

Dr. Michael Appleby
ISAE Honorary Fellow, 2016

A brief biography of Michael Appleby, written by Birte Nielsen

Michael Appleby obtained his PhD in animal behaviour from the University of Cambridge, where he was attached to King's College. He then worked for 20 years at the Poultry Research Centre in Scotland and at the University of Edinburgh, as Lecturer and then Senior Lecturer in Applied Animal Behaviour. He studied the behaviour, husbandry and welfare of farm animals, mainly pigs and poultry, and taught courses including the MSc in Applied Animal Behaviour and Animal Welfare. He subsequently held positions in non-governmental organisations, first in The Humane Society of the United States, and for the last 10 years in World Animal Protection, where he is currently Chief Scientific Advisor.



He is also a Visiting Professor at Scotland's Rural College and the University of Plymouth, an Honorary Fellow at the University of Edinburgh, a member of the UK's Farm Animal Welfare Committee, and a member of the scientific committee of Humane Farm Animal Care.

Mike worked extensively on cages for laying hens in the 1980s and 1990s with a view to developing an alternative cage system. He was heavily involved in the design of what became known as the Edinburgh Modified Cage, which was a prototype for the furnished cages now used in many countries.

On 18 June 1999 at 11:38 many of us working with poultry at the time received this email from him:

Dear All, Major news: at a meeting of the EU Agriculture Commissioners on Tuesday, the new Directive on Laying Hens was passed, which will phase out conventional laying cages, commonly known as battery cages [...] Each of the welfare charities is claiming responsibility, but it is fair to say that applied ethology has been a major player in the story.

There is no doubt that the research carried out by this Honorary Fellow was a game changer in the successful development and implementation of this EU Directive.

Mike has written, co-authored and edited numerous articles, chapters and books on subjects related to animal welfare, some of them with thought-provoking titles, such as “Whom Should We Eat? Why Veal Can Be Better for Welfare than Chicken” and “Vocal communication in pigs: Who are nursing piglets screaming at?”

He has been an ISAE member for nearly 35 years, since the Society was called the Society for Veterinary Ethology. He plays a continuing, active role in the organisation and development of the ISAE, having served on council more than once, and he is currently our Procedural Advisor.

Mike attends many regional and international ISAE meetings – where he is well known for his insistence that there must be dancing – and is a prolific and enthusiastic contributor to discussions and AGMs. He was an organising committee member for the 2016 Congress in Edinburgh, and chairs the working group to support ISAE 2020 in Bangalore, India.

ISAE members will recognise Mike's outstanding and long-lasting contributions both to the field of applied ethology and to the ISAE, where his personality as a humorous, well-read and welcoming person is much appreciated.