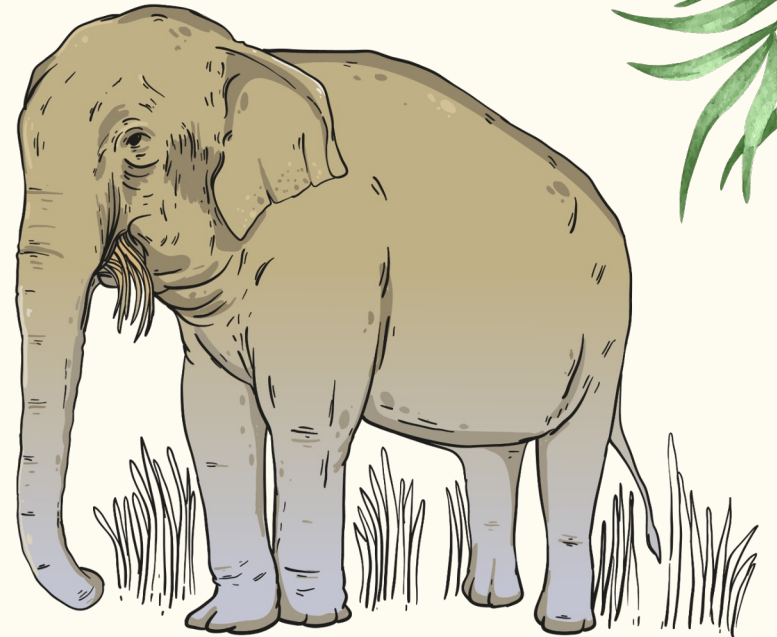# Orphan Elephant Welfare
An Overview

Elephant Care International

www.elephantcare.org

Introduction

The animal welfare concepts described in this document have been incorporated in practical ways throughout our *"Hand-raising Orphan Asian Elephants Guide"* to assist you in achieving the best possible outcomes for young, orphan elephants in your care.

What is Animal Welfare?

Animal welfare means how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives. An animal is in a good state of welfare if it is healthy, comfortable, well-nourished, safe, able to express innate behavior, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear, and distress.

American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)

Good animal welfare addresses all the following factors in order to promote positive experiences and mental states:

- Nutrition

- Environment

- Health

- Behavior

- Mental

Mellor DJ, Beausoleil NJ, Littlewood KE, McLean AN, McGreevy PD, Jones B, Wilkins C. The 2020 Five Domains Model: Including Human-Animal Interactions in Assessments of Animal Welfare. Animals (Basel). 2020 Oct 14;10(10):1870.

The Five Freedoms

This core concept states that all animals deserve:

- Freedom from hunger or thirst

- Freedom from discomfort

- Freedom from pain, injury or disease

- Freedom to express normal behaviors

- Freedom from fear and distress

How can we provide good welfare to orphan elephants?

Welfare Inputs & Outcomes

Freedom from hunger and thirst

Inputs: Access to fresh water and a nutritional diet

Outcomes: Healthy and growing; good body condition

Janine L. Brown PhD

Welfare Inputs & Outcomes

Freedom from discomfort

Inputs: Appropriate shelter, comfortable resting areas, access to natural habitat and substrates

Outcomes: Healthy skin and feet; no signs of stress

Welfare Inputs & Outcomes

Freedom from pain, injury, diseases

Inputs: Good veterinary care, safe environment, clean enclosure

Outcomes: No illness or wounds; alert, playful, and healthy

Welfare Inputs & Outcomes

Freedom to express normal behaviors

Inputs: Sufficient space, opportunities to socialize, natural habitat

Outcomes: Active, alert, and content; explores environment; playful

Welfare Inputs & Outcomes

Freedom from fear and distress

Inputs: Quiet and safe environment, kind caregivers, positive reinforcement training if appropriate

Outcomes: Outgoing and inquisitive; happy and content

Thank you for caring!

Please return to our online "*Hand-raising Orphan Asian Elephants Guide*" to learn more about how you can incorporate good welfare into your elephant care practice.

www.elephantcare.org/raisingorphanelephants