“The question is not just, “Do they suffer?” nor, “Are their needs met?” but rather, “Do they have a life worth living?”

The Farm Animal Welfare Council, 2010
Terms of Reference

The Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) is an independent advisory body established by Government in 1979.

Our terms of reference are to keep under review the welfare of farm animals on agricultural land, at market, in transit and at the place of slaughter; and to advise Ministers in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales, of any legislative or other changes that may be necessary.

The Council can:

- investigate any topic falling within this remit
- communicate freely with outside bodies, the European Commission and the public
- publish its advice independently

Website: www.fawc.org.uk
With about 900 million animals farmed annually in the United Kingdom, the Council’s work is often driven by ethical or economic issues. The economic forces that affect the quality of life of farm animals are mighty while there are many vested interests within the food supply chain, meaning that only the Government, including the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales, can be the true guardian of farm animal welfare.

This new concept of guardianship was introduced in our recent Report (Farm animal welfare in Great Britain: past, present and future). Other advice covered the ethics of farm animal welfare and a proposal for a new minimum standard, the so-called ‘life worth living’. For the very first time, the Council has advised Government about the ethical principles to be used when considering farm animals and their welfare. It has recommended Banner’s ethical principles that mix deontology with utilitarianism. The first principle states that some harms should be absolutely impermissible, whatever the circumstance. The crucial question is what are these harms? Obvious examples are an inhumane death and cruelty, i.e. indifference to or delight in another’s pain. Undoubtedly, the debate about impermissible harms is intense. The second principle requires that any harm must be outweighed by the good. Again, there is much debate on how the balance should be weighed: how do we decide which is the lesser of two evils, for example?

After over 30 years, the Council believes that it is now time to build on the Five Freedoms. It proposes that acceptable welfare – the so-called minimum standard – should move beyond the current test of whether a farm animal suffers, there is unnecessary pain or distress or its needs are met, to a new standard of whether it has a life worth living or not, from its point of view. This positive approach to animal welfare is a logical development in man’s humane treatment of farm animals. It would be a damning indictment of Government and commercial policies since Brambell’s inquiry if the intention had not been to give each and every farm animal a ‘life worth living’.

Last summer, FAWC published a major report on the welfare of poultry at slaughter. Given that approximately 800 million broiler chickens are killed in the UK each year – or about 25 every second – there is a strong moral imperative to ensure that the events leading up to the animal’s death are humane. The Report covers the last few hours of a chicken’s life, starting with collection on the farm, and makes over 50 recommendations.

Using the new format of an Opinion, Council updated its previous advice on the welfare of dairy cows, last covered in 1997. Although there have been many improvements and initiatives to address the underlying issues, the evidence is that the welfare of dairy cows has not improved significantly over the past decade. A major reason for this is the low profitability of British dairying; while consumers and retailers have benefited considerably from low price milk, the cow has often paid the price. Indeed, it would be more profitable for a farmer to bottle his cow’s drinking water than to turn it into milk.

As in previous years, I am very grateful for the work of all the Council’s members. Ruth Layton, Stuart Shearlaw, Steven Tait and Alison Ward left the Council having made significant contributions to its work. I welcome Laura Green and Richard Moody, who bring expertise in veterinary epidemiology and consumer science, respectively. I should also like to thank Frances Radcliffe and Susanna May for their sage counsel; the FAWC baton has now passed to Sue Ellis. I am extremely grateful for the Secretariat’s work, particularly that of Richard Aram and Simon Renn.

The annual Open Meeting of the Council will be held on 5th July 2010 at Mary Sumner House, Tufton Street, London. All are welcome to attend; I look forward to a frank and open discussion about the past, present and future work of the Farm Animal Welfare Council.

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Professor Christopher Wathes
June 2010
Current Membership
June 2010

Chairman

Professor Christopher Wathes holds the Chair of Animal Welfare at the Royal Veterinary College, University of London. He is a research scientist with interests in the environmental biology and management of farm and other animals.

Members

Professor Michael Appleby, chief scientific adviser for the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA). Member of the Scientific Committee of Humane Farm Animal Care and the Animal Compassionate Committee of Whole Foods Market in the USA. Formerly senior lecturer in Applied Animal Behaviour, University of Edinburgh.

Professor Richard Bennett, an agricultural economist in the Department of Agricultural and Food Economics at the University of Reading. He is a Trustee of the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare, the Humane Slaughter Association and the Farm Animal Welfare Trust. Until September 2009, he was a member of the England Implementation Group for the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy.

Professor Henry Buller, Chair of Rural Geography and Director of the BA Human Geography programme at the University of Exeter. Editor of the international rural science journal Sociologia Rurals.

Dr Joanne Conington, senior animal breeding specialist in the Sustainable Livestock Systems group at the Scottish Agricultural College. Formerly a sheep specialist with the Meat and Livestock Commission.

Huw Davies, a sheep farmer from Carmarthenshire. He is a member of the Steering Committee for the Implementation of the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Wales and the Welsh Regional Board of the Moredun Research Institute, and a Fellow of the Royal Agricultural Societies.

Professor Sandra Edwards, Chair of Agriculture at the University of Newcastle. Previously director of the Scottish Pig Industry Initiative, past President of the British Society of Animal Science and member of the European Food Safety Authority working groups on pig welfare.

Professor Laura Green, Chair in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Warwick, leading a research group on farm animal veterinary epidemiology. Member of the Society for Veterinary Epidemiology and Preventative Medicine, Chair of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council Research Committee A and Member of the Rural Economy and Land Use Strategic Advisory Committee.

George Hogarth, production director for an international chicken breeding company based in Scotland. A science graduate with research experience in poultry welfare and international experience in commercial poultry production.

Gwyn Jones, a dairy farmer from West Sussex. Currently Vice President of the NFU and a member of the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations (animal health).

Dr David Main, BVA Animal Welfare Foundation Lecturer in Animal Welfare at the University of Bristol and an RCVS recognised specialist in Animal Welfare Science, Ethics and Law.

Professor Richard Moody, a consultant specialising in food and consumer issues, after 30 years experience as a senior academic and food scientist. Previously an independent Commissioner with the Meat and Livestock Commission and Chairman of its Consumers’ Committee, he is also an adviser on food additives research to the Food Standards Agency, was a member of its inaugural research committee, and is a Fellow of the Institute for Food Science and Technology.

Professor David Morton, Emeritus Professor of Biomedical Science and Ethics, and a laboratory animal veterinarian. Member of the European Food Safety Authority’s Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare, and the Companion Animal Welfare Council.

Andrew Nicholson, senior technical manager and animal welfare specialist for the Co-operative Group. He is a member of the joint pig industry technical advisory committee and the EU Technology Platform on Global Animal Health.

Reverend Professor Michael Reiss, assistant director and Professor of Science Education at the Institute of Education, University of London. His research and consultancy interests are in science education, bioethics and sex education.

Dr Philip Scott, reader in farm animal studies at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies at Edinburgh University and lead veterinarian in the School’s Farm Animal Teaching Hospital. RCVS and European specialist in sheep health and production and European specialist in bovine health management.

Meryl Ward, director of a commercial pig breeding and finishing business and a member of the British Pig Executive. She is a Council Member and Selector for the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust and a Governor of Harper Adams University College.

Mike Wijnberg, leading veterinarian for a large pig production and processing company. Member of the Pig Veterinary Society, the American Association of Swine Veterinarians and RSPCA’s Freedom Food Technical Advisory Committee on pigs.

The following members of Council retired during 2009/10:

Ruth Layton, Stuart Shearlaw, Steven Tait and Alison Ward. We would like to thank them for their many contributions to the work of FAWC.
What does the Council do?

The Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) is an independent advisory body established by the Government in 1979. Our terms of reference are to keep under review the welfare of farm animals on agricultural land, at market, in transit and at the place of slaughter; and to advise Government and the devolved administrations of any legislative or other changes that may be necessary.

A key element is our ability to act independently; we may pursue any topic we regard as important to the welfare of farm animals and publish our advice without censorship or approval. FAWC is recognised world-wide for its independent, critical analysis of contemporary issues relating to farm animal welfare. It has provided the model for similar advisory bodies on animal welfare in other countries.

FAWC fulfils its remit by:

i) writing Reports, Opinions and Letters that offer advice to Ministers on specific topics, supplemented by formal meetings with Ministers and their Chief Veterinary Officers and Officials in England, Wales and Scotland;

ii) responding to ad hoc consultations, usually originating from Government;

iii) developing strategic relationships with decision makers and opinion formers.

The main form of advice to Ministers is a Report on a topic, prepared by a Working Group. Opinions are advice to Government, drafted by a Standing Committee, on contemporary topics relating to farm animal welfare. All Reports, Opinions and Letters are approved by the Council before submission to Ministers. They are also published independently on FAWC’s website, www.fawc.org.uk.

Our members are drawn from a wide range of disciplines and occupations and serve in a personal capacity, not as representatives of any organisation or interest group. The membership includes those with extensive knowledge and experience of animal welfare science, livestock farming, veterinary medicine and consumer affairs.

The full Council, currently 18 members, usually meets three times a year. Summaries of these meetings are available on the FAWC website, www.fawc.org.uk.

When embarking on a new investigation, we consult a wide range of interest groups. We carefully consider written advice and take oral evidence from those with specific expertise. Wherever possible we use relevant and robust scientific evidence to aid us. This is carefully balanced with information gained from industry experience, visits to farms and other agricultural businesses, and guidance from experts. We also rely on the extensive experience and collective expertise of FAWC members. Where there is insufficient scientific knowledge, we may recommend funding of research and development to fill the gaps.

The Council welcomes approaches from organisations planning events such as conferences or seminars. If you would like us to be represented at appropriate events, please get in touch. The Council is keen to develop an effective partnership with the media, and we welcome press approaches, routed through the Secretariat.
The Five Freedoms and a life worth living

In considering the conditions under which farm animals are kept, the Council is guided by ideals that have become known as the Five Freedoms:

1. **FREEDOM FROM HUNGER AND THIRST**
   - by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.

2. **FREEDOM FROM DISCOMFORT**
   - by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.

3. **FREEDOM FROM PAIN, INJURY OR DISEASE**
   - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.

4. **FREEDOM TO EXPRESS NORMAL BEHAVIOUR**
   - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal’s own kind.

5. **FREEDOM FROM FEAR AND DISTRESS**
   - by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

“The question is not just, “Do they suffer?” nor, “Are their needs met?” but rather, “Do they have a life worth living?”

The Farm Animal Welfare Council, 2010
Lives worth living?
A Veterinary Record Viewpoint

To date, animal welfare measures have focused primarily on the avoidance of cruelty and the provision of basic needs. Christopher Wathes, chairman of the Farm Animal Welfare Council, argues that it is important to take animals’ positive experiences into account as well.

‘The question is not, “Can they reason?” nor, “Can they talk?” but rather, “Can they suffer?”’


Bentham’s dictum has been the foundation of British policy on the welfare of farm and other animals for the past two centuries. Indeed, an historical review of British legislation reveals only minor changes in the expectation that animals should not suffer; once it was recognised that they were more than chattels. The Animal Welfare Act 2006 in England and Wales and similar legislation in Scotland now requires that an animal’s needs are provided. These needs are based on the Farm Animal Welfare Council’s (FAWC’s) Five Freedoms. These were first promulgated in 1979 and have their origins in the 1965 Brambell inquiry into the welfare of animals kept under intensive livestock husbandry systems. The Brambell inquiry concluded that more was needed to protect animal welfare than just preventing wanton cruelty.

‘Determining whether an animal has a life worth living requires that both positive and negative experiences are counted’

The FAWC’s recent report, ‘Farm Animal Welfare in Great Britain: Past, Present and Future’ (FAWC 2009), builds on Bentham’s sturdy foundations and proposes that acceptable welfare – the so-called minimum standard – should move beyond the current test of whether the animal suffers; there is unnecessary pain or distress or its needs are met, to a new standard of whether the animal has a life worth living from the animal’s point of view. This positive approach to animal welfare is a logical development in man’s humane treatment of farm animals.

At first sight, the notion of ‘a life worth living’ may seem strange when considering a farm animal. Yet, it is very familiar to many veterinarians and farmers who are often called upon to cull, in a swift and humane manner, animals in ill health. Regularly, judgements are made about an animal’s welfare, such that if it is not possible to treat a disease or to improve an aspect of husbandry then the animal is culled on humanitarian grounds. The inference of the concept is that the positive experiences outweigh the negative and that certain harms are not caused. An animal that does not have a life worth living – from its point of view – and whose circumstances cannot be improved to achieve such a life, is, literally, better off dead.

Straightaway, this new standard puts everyone on the front foot and moves beyond the Five Freedoms with their heavy emphasis on avoidance of negative experiences. While, of course, it is and will continue to be absolutely necessary to punish those who are cruel, cause animals to suffer deliberately and unnecessarily or do not provide for an animal’s needs, we can now celebrate the good things in an animal’s life while continuing to abhor the bad.

‘Quality of life may be compromised by the powerful economic and other forces that combine to determine an animal’s collective experiences’

as the best observers have always done. There is also a role to develop the concept of ‘iceberg indicators’ of welfare; that is, the key physiological, behavioural and psychological signs of wellbeing that indicate that all is well, such as body condition, normal behaviour and alertness. Just as the sighting of an iceberg signals that 90 per cent of its bulk is below the water line, and we ignore its tip at our peril, so iceberg indicators are critical signs of welfare. Few good observers (mentally) tick 100 or more boxes when assessing animals; instead, they use iceberg indicators to decide whether to leave well alone or investigate. Teaching veterinary students about iceberg indicators and thus making them good observers is an essential part of veterinary education and should be a cornerstone of the curriculum.

‘A life worth living’ is a statement about an animal’s quality of life during its lifetime, including the manner of its death. A reasoned judgement is required, and, because animals cannot speak, we largely have to rely on external observable signs and cues (‘outcome-based measures’ in the jargon), just as a physician does when dealing with an unspeaking infant. Who is to make the judgement? Veterinarians, inspectors from assurance schemes and stockmen can all play their part on the basis of their expertise, role and interest. What is needed is regular
assessment during an animal’s lifetime using validated methods, including iceberg indicators. Many will argue that it will never be possible to make the judgement from the animal’s point of view. But this is familiar territory for veterinarians and stockmen, even if interpretation of observable signs of welfare is subjective: in any case, the courts will be the ultimate arbiter if the new standard is given the force of the law.

Quality of life is a new way of looking at farm animal welfare. It is a universal concept that can be applied to all animals, regardless of their use or value to us. Quality of life may be compromised by the powerful economic and other forces that combine to determine an animal’s collective experiences. The diagram above shows a quality of life range from ‘a life not worth living’ to ‘a good life’. The uppermost category indicates that an even higher standard than ‘a life worth living’ may be experienced by some animals. The FAWC report says: ‘The requirements for “a good life” go well beyond those for the lower level. Not only must there be full compliance with the law but also with examples of good practice described in the Welfare Code. In addition, good welfare should be a main aim of husbandry with disease controlled by the strictest measures and with minimal prevalence, normal behaviour, availability of environmental choices and harmless wants, a ban on most, if not all, mutilations, certain husbandry practices (including the manner of death) prescribed or forbidden, opportunities provided for an animal’s comfort, pleasure, interest and confidence, and the highest standards of veterinary care. Above all else, the highest standard of stockmanship has to be provided.’

Quality of life can be used for classification and decision making. For example, are the marketing claims of a farm assurance scheme consistent with ‘a life worth living’ or ‘a good life’? Which investment – in training stockmen or in bricks and mortar – will yield the greater quality of life return? If an animal is being used in research, what are the quality of life costs to it and what are the quality of life benefits to other animals, including humans? (The Animals [Scientific Procedures] Act 1986 states clearly: ‘In determining whether, and on what terms, to grant a project licence the Secretary of State shall weigh the likely adverse effects on the animals concerned against the benefit likely to accrue’. In other words, a quality of life balance sheet should be computed.)

The FAWC’s proposal should sit comfortably with the veterinarian’s declaration on admission to the Royal College to ensure the welfare of animals. After all, while the veterinarian’s raison d’etre is normally to treat disease, we can all rejoice in the rich lives of farm and other animals. It would be a damning indictment of Government and commercial policies since Brambell’s inquiry if the intention had not been to give each and every farm animal a life worth living.


Reference


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In accordance with Cabinet Office recommendations on Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs), FAWC was reviewed in 2009. We are grateful to the reviewer, Susan Carter, and to interviewees and written respondents who contributed.

The review provides strong endorsement for FAWC to continue in much its present form. It found that “FAWC’s work is still needed, FAWC is the best organisation to undertake it, and it provides exceptional value for money”.

The review also found that “always highly-regarded, FAWC’s performance and use of resources have improved significantly in recent years.” It identified some scope for further improvement, in particular to:

- Maintain the quality of FAWC’s output by attracting members of a high calibre and retaining their goodwill by balancing workload and Secretariat support;
- Ensure effective outcomes by ensuring issues studied match policy needs and are delivered in the format required; and
- Increase awareness of FAWC’s activities.

Defra and the devolved administrations have considered the findings and recommendations and developed an action plan to act on them.
FAWC’s Strategic Plan sets out the remit, aims, objectives and work programme for the Council. It ensures that we provide timely and sound advice to Government on priority areas in farm animal welfare by the most efficient and effective use of our resources. There is a clear focus on major studies whilst retaining the flexibility to provide advice speedily on new and immediate issues as these arise.

The Plan for 2006-2010 identified the need for major studies on the economics of farm animal welfare; education, communication and knowledge application in farm animal welfare; and disease and farm animal welfare, all of which are underway.

In addition to these, the Plan identified subjects for short term studies leading to Opinions by Council. These are carried out by the Council’s Standing Committees in line with their remits. An Opinion on the welfare of the dairy cow was published in October 2009, and work is in progress on Opinions on osteoporosis and fractured bones in laying hens, mutilations of growing pigs, contingency planning for farm animal welfare in emergency situations, lameness in sheep and breeding and farm animal welfare.

The Strategic Plan for 2011-2015 is being prepared and will address the recommendations made by the recent Review of the Council, the implications for FAWC of any savings required in public expenditure, as well as Government priorities for farm animal welfare advice and the results of a public consultation.
Council’s work – past and present

Reports and Opinions

Summaries of Reports, Opinions and Letters provided over the past year are set out below. The full advice can be viewed on the FAWC website, www.fawc.org.uk. Copies of recent publications are also available from the Secretariat at the contact address at the end of this review.

Report on the Welfare of Farmed Livestock at Slaughter or Killing – Part Two: White Meat Animals


The Report considers the welfare of poultry (and other white meat species) in the last few hours of their lives up to the moment of slaughter or killing. It deals with the experiences of poultry during catching and loading on the farm, the journey to the slaughterhouse, the wait in the lairage, unloading from transport containers, stunning and finally slaughter or killing. Since over 800 million poultry are killed annually in Great Britain, there is a strong moral imperative to ensure that welfare is a prime consideration at all these stages.

The Report also covers other circumstances in which poultry are killed, as well as licensing and training of slaughtermen, legislation and its enforcement, and equipment design and approval, since these also affect welfare. The responsibilities of slaughtermen and other workers are grave and the need for training and compassion is paramount.

The Report sets out six principles for the humane slaughter and killing of white meat species:

i. All personnel involved with slaughter or killing must be trained, competent and caring;
ii. Only those animals that are fit should be caught, loaded and transported to the slaughterhouse;
iii. Any handling of animals prior to slaughter must be done with consideration for the animal’s welfare;
iv. In the slaughterhouse, only equipment that is fit for the purpose must be used;
v. Prior to slaughter or killing of an animal, either it must be rendered unconscious and insensible to pain instantaneously, or unconsciousness must be induced without pain or distress; and
vi. Animals must not recover consciousness before death ensues.

Report on Farm Animal Welfare in Great Britain: Past, Present and Future

In this landmark Report, published in October 2009, FAWC examined the effectiveness of British policy on farm animal welfare since the Brambell Report in 1965, and set out a strategy that will lead to improvements in welfare over the next 20 years.

Farm animal welfare policy and practice must seek to eliminate cruelty and unnecessary suffering and to cater for animals’ needs. But in the future farmers must ensure that each and every animal has a life worth living from the animal’s point of view. This emphasis on an animal’s quality of life means that positive as well as negative experiences are counted and that certain harms are not caused. This will require new methods to aggregate welfare, both good and bad, over an animal’s lifetime.

Eating meat and using animal products requires hard moral choices to be made. The main conditions that FAWC believes to be necessary for ethical consumerism and improved farm animal welfare are:

i. The Government to act as the guardian of farm animal welfare;
ii. Standards for a good life to be defined by an independent body;
iii. Minimum welfare standards to be defined by an animal’s quality of life;
iv. Stockmen to be educated and trained to a high standard about animal welfare;
v. Welfare assessment to be valid, feasible and rigorous with independent audit;
vi. The food supply chain to show due diligence with marketing claims verified;

Defra Farming Minister Jim Fitzpatrick said of the Report, “This important report gives us a fresh insight into the moral and ethical debate about the humane treatment of farm animals. The report acknowledges improvements to farm animal welfare made in recent years, and the government is committed to ensuring that all farm animals are treated humanely. I will consider the report’s recommendations carefully and look forward to continuing to work closely with the Farm Animal Welfare Council on the issues raised in this report.”

FAWC looks forward to working with Government on the reasoning behind the Report and on how its recommendations will be taken forward.
Opinion on the Welfare of the Dairy Cow


Economic pressures on the dairy industry over the past decade have forced British farmers to seek greater efficiencies, resulting in significant changes in dairy husbandry. Some believe that these developments have compromised the cow’s welfare. Certainly, the low profitability of dairy farming has compromised investment and maintenance on many farms which, in turn, may have hindered progress in reducing the incidence of lameness, mastitis and metabolic diseases.

In the 1997 report, the main concerns were in relation to endemic diseases, infrastructure and stockmanship. These same concerns persist today and are covered in this Opinion. While there have been many improvements and initiatives in the dairy industry to address key welfare issues since 1997, the evidence is that the welfare of dairy cows has not improved significantly over the past decade.

There are still critical issues about the welfare of the dairy cow to be addressed over the next few years and these are covered in the Opinion. More should be invested in education, skills, training and professional development of both farmers and stockmen. A lifespan of eight years for the dairy cow is already achieved by the best dairy farmers and should be an aspiration of the entire industry.

Beak trimming of laying hens

FAWC has updated its advice on beak trimming of laying hens, advising that every effort should be made to end routine beak trimming in Great Britain as soon as possible. However, FAWC concluded that, until it can be demonstrated reliably under commercial conditions that laying hens can be managed without beak trimming and without greater risk to their welfare from feather pecking and cannibalism, the ban on beak trimming should not be introduced on its original date in December 2010.

In the meantime, Council recommended that infra-red treatment of day-old chicks should be the method of choice for birds that need to be beak trimmed, although other methods might need to be available in emergencies for older birds.

FAWC has pressed for a concerted strategy leading towards the management of laying hens without beak trimming and will work with Government and others to make this happen.

Council also responded to Government consultations on the necessary amendments to the legislation to defer the ban on beak trimming of laying hens.

Responses to consultations

FAWC responds to a number of consultations each year, mostly from Government. The full text of these can be viewed on the FAWC website, www.fawc.org.uk.

European Commission proposal to replace Directive 93/119 with a Regulation on the protection of animals at the time of killing

The proposed Regulation took on board many of the Council’s suggestions from the 2003 Report on the Welfare of Farmed Animals – Part One: Red Meat Animals, and from work in progress on the complementary Report (at the time unpublished) Part Two: White Meat Animals, which the UK used in its negotiating position on the draft Regulation. FAWC backed this up with a number of detailed comments.

FAWC argued that the Government should not accept any regressive steps from the current domestic requirements and indeed that it should be able to retain some flexibility under the legislation to enhance standards of welfare at slaughter or killing as this became necessary.

Council welcomed the setting of welfare outcomes under the legislation as a means of protecting the welfare of animals killed in a variety of ways, as it placed the focus of the legislation on the animal and its needs.

New Regulations and Code for Meat Chickens


FAWC had advised Government at several stages during the development of the new Directive and saw many of its suggestions included. Council was disappointed that a number of welfare outcome measures were not included in the final Directive. However, it believed that many provisions (e.g. a maximum stocking density, defined housing conditions, defined stockmanship standards, output measures and feedback systems) would impact broiler welfare positively in the future.

Defra consultation on a draft Animal Health Bill

The draft Bill proposed the establishment of a new body with responsibility for animal health. Policy responsibility for farm animal welfare, however, would remain within Defra. FAWC’s concern was that animal health and welfare policy should not be (and should not be perceived to be) separated to the extent that each was considered in isolation.
FAWC’s view was that the necessary working relationships between the new body and Defra needed to be in place to make sure this did not happen, but also to take advantage of the opportunities to promote welfare alongside disease risk management. Animal welfare needed to be embedded in the new body and the disease management decisions it took. There should be the necessary expertise available on the board and within the organisation to ensure this, and FAWC would be available to advise the new body as necessary.

**Draft code of practice for the welfare of gamebirds reared for sporting purposes**

FAWC welcomed the fact that its Opinion on the Welfare of Farmed Gamebirds had been thoroughly taken into account in the draft code.

Council re-iterated its view that barren cages should not be used for breeding pheasants or partridge and that research was required into the design of accommodation for these birds to meet their physical and behavioural needs.

**Welsh Assembly Government Rural Development Sub-Committee Inquiry into Animal Welfare and Meat Hygiene in Slaughterhouses**

In responding to this Inquiry, FAWC was able to call on its two recent Reports on the Welfare of Farmed Animals at Slaughter or Killing – Part One: Red Meat Animals (2003) and Part Two: White Meat Animals (2009). The response drew out and discussed recommendations on aspects of surveillance and enforcement in slaughterhouses aimed at improving the welfare of farmed animals at slaughter.

**Standing Committees and Working Groups**

FAWC’s three Standing Committees keep a watching brief on welfare issues within three broad subjects:

- Ethics, Economics, Education and Regulation;
- Pigs, Poultry and Fish; and
- Ruminants.

These Committees undertake ‘horizon scanning’ for new welfare issues, keep under review and press for action on contemporary welfare topics, and carry out studies leading to short reports in the form of Opinions.

Working Groups are set up to undertake major studies into specific welfare issues or target species, and produce Reports for Ministers.

**Ethics, Economics, Education and Regulation Standing Committee**

This Committee has addressed aspects of the Responsibility and Cost Sharing agenda as it has the potential to impact on farm animal welfare, leading to comments on the draft Animal Health Bill.

The Committee is also working on an Opinion on contingency planning for farm animal welfare in disasters and emergencies, both natural and resulting from human actions, and disease outbreaks. A workshop has been held with stakeholders and a written consultation issued.

The aim of this study is to:

- identify the potential impacts on farm animal welfare of disaster and emergency situations, both natural or resulting from human actions, including disease outbreaks; and
- consider the implications for contingency planning to protect farm animal welfare.

The main areas of investigation are to:

- identify a range of possible disaster and emergency scenarios for which contingency planning might be necessary, from farm-based emergencies to potentially very serious and large-scale disaster and emergency scenarios with the ability to adversely affect the welfare of farm animals;
- identify the main welfare implications of these scenarios for farm animals;
- explore strategies for protecting the welfare of farm animals and for mitigating welfare impacts, drawing on examples of best practice;
Council’s work – past and present – continued

- consider how these strategies might best be incorporated into contingency planning and
- define roles and responsibilities of livestock keepers/owners, government (and its agents) and other stakeholders with regards to farm animal welfare in emergency situations.

Comments on this study may be sent to the Secretariat at the address given at the end of this review.

**Pigs, Poultry and Fish Standing Committee**

The Committee is currently working on Opinions on osteoporosis and bone fractures in laying hens, and mutilations of growing pigs and how environmental enrichment or other management practices might prevent the need for them.

The Committee has also been involved in producing advice on beak trimming of laying hens, a code of practice for the welfare of gamebirds reared for sporting purposes and on implementation of the Directive on the protection of meat chickens through domestic legislation and codes of recommendations for the welfare of livestock.

**Ruminants Standing Committee**

Following the publication of the Opinion on the Welfare of the Dairy Cow, the Committee embarked on an Opinion in October 2009 concerning leg joint and foot health in sheep. This will cover conditions that cause lameness and make recommendations on their management. The Committee undertook a written consultation in January 2009 and it is anticipated the Opinion will be published in early 2011.

**Economics Working Group – target publication 2010**

This Working Group is examining the interactions between the economics of livestock production and farm animal welfare in Great Britain and will make recommendations on relevant actions to safeguard and promote welfare. The Group has concluded its programme of meetings with key stakeholders.

**Education, Communication and Knowledge Application Working Group – target publication 2011**

The remit of this Working Group is to examine how education and communication can positively affect the welfare of farmed animals. The Group is looking at mechanisms for promoting responsible attitudes among schoolchildren and students in higher education; better informing consumers and policy makers about welfare issues; and promoting the application of existing knowledge amongst producers.

FAWC recognised that the delivery of animal welfare improvements may be better achieved by partnership working as outlined in the GB Animal Health and Welfare Strategy. The scope of this study is therefore not limited to Government activities. The work of the group is a logical successor to previous FAWC advice to Government on farm assurance schemes (2005), welfare labelling (2006) and stockmanship (2007).

The Group is seeing selected stakeholders at the moment and it expects to publish its Report in 2011.

**Disease and Welfare Working Group – target publication 2012**

This Working Group is looking into the impact on animal welfare of diseases in farm animals. The scope is wide but the Report will use examples to illustrate points of principle, rather than deal with all diseases.

The aim of the study is to:

- examine disease incidence by species, including both physical and mental health impacts, and their relationship to animal welfare;
- try to quantify the degree of animal suffering caused by diseases;
- examine the infrastructure, education and other frameworks that shape the current management of animal disease; and
- identify potential improvements that could reduce the current disease challenge at national, sectoral and individual farm level.
The potential threat of emerging exotic diseases will also be examined. The Report will cover the main sectors of farm animals, except fish.

The main areas for investigation are:

- The incidence and severity (as measured by duration and intensity) of the impact of the major diseases of animals, categorising them by direct and indirect welfare significance and numbers of animals affected.
- Measures for the recognition of poor welfare and its assessment, and also an assessment of the risk to animal welfare of notifiable and endemic diseases.
- Current disease surveillance systems at national, sectoral and farm level – their purpose, adequacy and potential for improvement.
- The availability of current disease diagnostic techniques, and the availability and use of preventative and curative treatments.
- Major outbreaks of notifiable disease and the consequences for animal welfare.
- Potential of on-farm disease management, supply chain led solutions and Government strategies to improve welfare through improved health.
- Potential for improved disease resistance and management through genetic selection.
- Development of Animal Health and Welfare Strategies and the influence of Europe and OIE, including conflicts between welfare and other policies, such as environmental, trade and public health policies.
- The role of education, training and competence and the farm animal health plan in driving improvements, particularly the benefits of stockman/animal interactions.

Comments on this study may be sent to the Secretariat at the address given at the end of this review.


Council’s working methods

Membership and appointments

Appointments to the Council are made according to procedures laid down in the Code of Practice of the Office for the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Appointments are made on the basis of the expertise required to undertake the advisory work that FAWC is engaged in and reflect the priorities contained in the Strategic Plan (currently 2006-2010, with a new Plan for 2011-2015 in preparation). Criteria for membership therefore vary from time-to-time and there is no permanent balance.

Guidance to members

On appointment, members receive guidance about matters such as working procedures, guiding principles, working with the media, representing Council, networking and fees and expenses. Incorporated in the guidance is a Code of Practice for Members, which is written with full regard to the seven principles of public life, identified by the Nolan Committee in its Report on Standards in Public Life and the recommendations made by the Phillips Inquiry Report relevant to advisory bodies.

Register of members’ interests

The Council’s work covers a wide range of issues connected with the agricultural industry, animal welfare organisations, research bodies and the veterinary profession. In order to avoid any concern that members’ interests might adversely affect the advice given by Council, information about significant and relevant interests of the membership is kept on a register, copies of which are available from the Secretary. This register is updated annually. In addition to information on commercial interests, a record is kept of relevant non-commercial interests, such as membership of organisations whose work may overlap with the Council’s area of interest.

Activity in 2009/10

During 2009/10, Council, its Standing Committees and Working Groups held 33 meetings and went on 9 visits to agricultural premises. In addition, Council members and the Secretariat represented FAWC at more than 20 meetings, conferences and workshops on farm animal welfare.

FAWC held an Open Meeting in July 2009 to provide an overview of its work over the last year and an opportunity for communication with all its stakeholders.

Costs

FAWC’s work is financed principally by Defra, which also provides the Secretariat. During the financial year 2009-2010, total public expenditure on the Council was £298,560. This sum comprised £94,210 for members’ fees, travel and related costs; £171,618 for the Secretariat’s salaries, travel and other costs; £21,797 for Defra advisers; and £10,935 for printing and publicity.

Secretariat

The FAWC Secretariat is staffed by officials on secondment from Defra. In 2009/2010 the role of Secretary was taken up by Richard Aram. The other members of the Secretariat are Simon Renn and Louise Mulcahy.

Communications

FAWC’s website has developed into the main route by which our advice is accessed by the public. In the first three months of 2010, about 300 copies of Reports, Opinion and Letters were downloaded by visitors to the website each day.
Council’s working methods – continued

Average levels of traffic on the FAWC website per month:

Downloads of Reports and Opinions per year:

Past, present and future

DEF-R11248-FAWCRep09 ;DEF-R11248-FAWCRep09  21/6/10  11:32  Page 15
Publications

Opinions
The Welfare of the Dairy Cow, 2009
Policy Instruments for Protecting and Improving Farm Animal Welfare, 2008
The Welfare of Farmed Gamebirds, 2008
Beak Trimming of Laying Hens, 2007
Enriched Cages for Laying Hens, 2007

Reports since 1991
Farm Animal Welfare in Great Britain: Past, Present and Future, 2009
The Welfare of Farmed Animals at Slaughter or Killing – Part Two: White Meat Animals, 2009
The Implications of Castration and Tail Docking for the Welfare of Lambs, 2008
Stockmanship and Farm Animal Welfare, 2007
Welfare Labelling, 2006
The Welfare Implications of Farm Assurance Schemes, 2005
The Welfare of Farmed Animals at Gatherings, 2005
The Welfare Implications of Animal Breeding and Breeding Technologies in Commercial Agriculture, 2004
Foot and Mouth Disease 2001 and Animal Welfare: Lessons for the Future, 2002
The Implications of Cloning for the Welfare of Farmed Livestock, 1998
The Welfare of Broiler Breeders, 1998
The Welfare of Dairy Cattle, 1997
The Welfare of Laying Hens, 1997
The Welfare of Farmed Fish, 1996
The Welfare of Pigs Kept Outdoors, 1996
The Welfare of Turkeys, 1995
The Welfare of Sheep, 1994
The Priorities for Animal Welfare Research and Development, 1993
The Welfare of Broiler Chickens, 1992
The European Commission Proposals on the Transport of Animals, 1991
Contacts

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