

REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Animal welfare and the Common Agricultural Policy

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the overarching framework for European agriculture, is currently under review. In response to this, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), in conjunction with the Eurogroup for Animal Welfare, has produced a report entitled '*Into the fold: bringing animal welfare into the CAP*'. The author of the report suggests that animal welfare has long been a neglected topic in European agricultural policy making and policy implementation and that the 2002 CAP review must reposition animal welfare as an important issue within the CAP.

The document provides a useful overview of the CAP, including brief descriptions of the two different forms of agricultural support — Pillar 1 and Pillar 2. The report then goes into detail about some of the major welfare implications of the CAP as it stands. It recommends ways of promoting better standards of animal welfare from Pillar 1 direct payments, for the dairy industry, beef and veal regime and for sheep and goats. Recommendations include reform of the price support and quota system to reverse the incentive to produce more milk per cow, the development of payments based on area rather than headage, and the abolition of export refunds for the trade in live animals to third countries.

There is also a section on Pillar 2 Payments: Rural Development Regulation (RDR). This section includes a summary of measures promoting animal welfare in the RDR and details the impact of the RDR in member states ending with several recommendations. These recommendations include: the creation of a distinct animal welfare incentive scheme under the RDR, uptake of which would be compulsory for member states; in areas where win-win situations can occur between environmental goals and animal welfare goals, these should be developed by member states; and that animal welfare should be developed as a mandatory goal in any Good Farming Practice schemes used by member states.

In the penultimate section entitled 'Defining levels of animal welfare standards', the report suggests the implementation of a pyramid approach to encouraging animal welfare through setting different levels of standards. The base of the pyramid would ensure basic compliance with legislation. The intermediate level would be based on welfare codes, which could be developed into standards and incorporated into voluntary payments for farmers. Finally, the highest level would be linked to initiatives that employ the highest standards of animal welfare.

In conclusion, the report states that it is important that animal welfare is introduced into the CAP as a concept. It recommends that different standards for animal welfare need to be established and linked to payments, and that all payments to relevant sectors under the CAP should be conditional on reaching the baseline standard of the legislative requirements.

Into the Fold: Bringing Animal Welfare into the CAP (2002) Published by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Wilberforce Way, Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 9RS, UK, and by Eurogroup for Animal Welfare, 6 Rue des Patriotes, 1000 Brussels, Belgium. 30 pp. A4 paperback.

Science and animal welfare

The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) has recently produced a booklet entitled '*Science and Animal Welfare*', which aims to show how scientific research is helping to identify factors that influence animal welfare and how this provides a basis for improving the welfare of livestock and other animals. It sets out to provide a flavour of current and recent scientific research that relates to understanding and improving animal welfare,

drawing largely on work funded by the BBSRC or undertaken at BBSRC-sponsored research institutes.

The booklet is introduced by a short section on the difficulties associated with evaluating animal welfare; this leads into a chapter on the different scientific approaches that can be used to understand welfare issues. The information provided is basic but well written and accessible to those with little scientific background. This section also maps out the BBSRC's priorities for animal welfare research, which include cognition, motivation, and pain and discomfort.

The next chapter is entitled 'What animals can tell us about how they perceive the world'. First, it touches on research into recognition; it then moves on to the subject of whether animals can retain mental pictures independent of their surroundings. This whole section reports findings of experiments, but for an enquiring mind it fails to provide sufficient experimental detail to allow the reader to fully understand how these conclusions have been drawn. However, as an introduction to the topic it draws the reader in and would hopefully encourage readers to find out more. The chapter continues with a section about research into social behaviour and understanding and concludes with a short piece on memory.

'What animals can tell us about their needs and preferences' is the title of the next chapter. It provides a clear explanation of approaches to assessment of animals' preferences; it draws on various experiments carried out to determine what animals will work for, what they will choose to avoid, and what they will endure in order to receive a reward. The following two chapters address specific welfare issues and practical ways of improving livestock welfare. Areas of research that are highlighted include space requirements, environmental enrichment, lighting, handling and transport. The final chapter addresses health-related welfare problems including respiratory disease in pigs, lameness in cattle and osteoporosis in laying hens.

A useful addition to the booklet would be discussion of the ethical considerations when designing experiments and an explanation of the Ethical Review Process and the strict controls put in place to ensure the welfare of experimental animals. However, all in all, it maps out interesting areas of animal welfare science and gives a good overview of areas that are currently of interest to welfare scientists. It is written in an easily digestible way and it could be an excellent tool for sparking an interest in the subject.

Science and Animal Welfare (2002) Published by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon SN2 1UH, UK. 48 pp. A4 paperback (ISBN 0 7084 0648 3).

The welfare of zoo elephants in Europe

Being concerned about the welfare of zoo elephants in Europe, the RSPCA recently commissioned Ros Clubb and Georgia Mason of the Animal Behaviour Research Group at Oxford University to undertake a review of the subject. The aims of this review, the results of which were published in October 2002, were to identify welfare problems and their relationships to husbandry, and to make sound, ethically based recommendations for improving the welfare of captive elephants.

The report includes chapters on elephants in the wild and in captivity, general husbandry, social aspects in captivity, handling and training, diseases and mortality rate, captive reproduction and behaviour problems. In the conclusions and recommendations, whilst noting that "some zoos are not doing too badly in certain areas", the authors comment: "Overall, our conclusion is that zoo elephants generally experience poor welfare, stemming from stress and/or poor physical health". Among the potential causes of poor welfare that they list are restricted