REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Octopus vulgaris and *Coturnix coturnix*

The *Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act (Amendment) Order 1993*, made under the *Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986*, has brought the common octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*) under the protection afforded by this Act to animals being used in biomedical research in the UK. The Act was initially restricted to vertebrates but there was authority within it to widen the coverage if it was deemed necessary. The Home Office Minister, after consultation with the Animal Procedures Committee and in response to representations made by animal welfare groups and scientists, laid an Order before Parliament on the 2nd September 1993. It was held that cephalopods (although invertebrates) were highly intelligent animals with a large and a well developed nervous system and were probably capable of suffering emotional distress. Part of the build-up of interest in the welfare of cephalopods was due to the publication in 1991 of *The UFAW Handbook on the Care and Management of Cephalopods in the Laboratory*, obtainable from UFAW; price £10 including postage.

The same Order put *Coturnix coturnix* (quail) into Schedule 2 of the Act. This was done so that the UK legislation complies with Article 21 of Council Directive 86/609 EEC on the approximation of laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States regarding the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes. In effect the Order now ensures that all *Coturnix coturnix* used in procedures under the Act must be obtained from a designated breeder or supplier.

Education without exploitation

The National Anti-Vivisection Society (NAVS) carried out a postal survey in 1991/92 on the use of animals in institutions of higher education. They have now published a guide based upon the replies received; its purpose is to give guidance to prospective students looking for biologically inclined academic courses which do not use animals. 'Animal use' in this instance is thought of as animals being dissected; being experimented on, and animal tissue eg slaughterhouse material being used for demonstrations.

Each college or university department is given a short entry in the Guide. The courses covered range from agriculture through all aspects of biology, environmental sciences, medicine, nursing studies, physiology and pharmacology to veterinary studies. A reading of the entries shows how difficult it is to give real information on such a complex subject in a short paragraph. The institutions are listed alphabetically but there is no index.

The booklet is inevitably somewhat dated but is a brave attempt to provide guidance to students who have serious objections to the use of animals. It will provide ideas on how a student may approach a particular institute regarding animal use. Many colleges and departments do seem to have educational mechanisms which will allow objecting students to carry on with their chosen courses.

The interest shown by some students in 'violence-free science' (NAVS term) shows how important it is for teachers in the biological sciences to seriously and systematically discuss with their students the ethical, practical and social implications of man's use and, at times, abuse of animals.

The Good Science Guide Produced and published by NAVS: London (1993). 45pp. Paperback. Obtainable from NAVS, 261 Goldhawk Road, London W12 9PE, UK. Price £1.50.