

BOOK AND VIDEO REVIEWS

A Far Cry from Noah: The Live Export Trade in Calves, Sheep and Pigs

Peter Stevenson (1994). Green Print: London. 128pp. Paperback. Obtainable from Compassion in World Farming, Charles House, 5A Charles Street, Petersfield, Hampshire GU32 3EH, UK (ISBN 1 85425 089 2). Price £5.99.

This book, apart from Chapter 14 (the Irish Trade contributed by Mary-Anne Bartlett), is written by the Political Director of the animal welfare pressure group Compassion in World Farming. It thus, by its very provenance, must reflect one particular point of view and objective. Indeed, the whole purpose of the book is to influence the reader to join the campaign to stop the export of cattle, sheep and pigs from Great Britain to other Member States of the European Union for fattening or slaughter.

In her foreword to the book Joanna Lumley writes:

‘My hope is that it (the book) will activate and motivate as many people as possible so that our government is forced to listen to our demands for an end to this intolerable trade in living creatures.’

Despite the inevitable slant in the presentation of facts, the book does contain a useful summary of the main landmarks of the last forty years of this trade in livestock and the campaign for its abolition.

The book is divided into three parts. Part One, comprising Chapters 1 to 7, relates the history of the transport of fattening and slaughter animals from Great Britain to the Continent of Europe from 1956 onwards. The campaign both inside and outside Parliament is to improve the welfare of the animals involved or to abolish their export altogether. This includes the discussion and implementation of the recommendations from two important Committees of Enquiry, the Balfour Committee and the O’Brien Committee. In addition attention is paid to the ‘economic aspects’ of the trade, particularly the loss of work for slaughterhouses in Great Britain and the loss of ‘raw material’, in the shape of young calves, sold to European veal producers at prices which beef producers in Great Britain could not afford.

Part Two, Chapters 8 to 14, deals with the present-day situation and the involvement of the European Union and the various Directives on the transport of livestock. Again the whole emphasis is on the need to ban the trade. In particular to change the trade in slaughter animals to a trade in carcase meat. The objective ‘animals to be slaughtered as near to the point of production as possible’ is emphasized.

In Chapter 10 the abolition of the trade in calves sold to veal producers in other Member States of the European Union where crates are used, is a clearly stated objective. Certainly there would appear to be an illogicality in the export of calves for veal production in crates, when the use of such crates has been banned in Great Britain since 1st January 1990. This Chapter also contains an interesting discussion on the meaning and intention of Article 36 of the Treaty of Rome, and its possible use by Member States to impose restrictions on imports or exports where these can be justified on grounds of ‘public morality, public policy . . . the protection of health and life of humans and animals . . .’. It is Peter Stevenson’s intention that this Article would allow the UK Government to prohibit this trade. The Government’s counter-argument is that Article 34 of the Treaty specifically prohibits restriction on exports to other Member States.

Part Two contains many reports of maltreatment adduced as evidence for the banning of the transport of livestock from Great Britain to other Member States of the European Union and between other Member States. Sadly not all of these can be denied.

Finally, Part Three deals with 'The Way Forward'. Chapters 15 and 16 are of particular interest. They contain a number of useful suggestions for the improvement of the transport of livestock generally. Those in Chapter 15 under the headings 'Need for Tougher Rules' and 'Enforcement' are very relevant indeed. So too the suggestion to change the status of animals within the Treaty of Rome is worthy of serious consideration by the responsible authorities, both in the European Commission and in the governments of all Member States.

Unfortunately, although there are quotes from scientific papers and the proceedings of the Scientific Committee of the European Commission, they are selective to further the general argument and add nothing to our overall knowledge.

The book may appeal to the interested layman and welfarist. In doing so it may influence others to support the campaign to ban the transport of fattening and slaughter animals from Great Britain to other Member States of the European Union. The book is of very little, if any, use to the scientist except as a summary of the history of the trade and of the arguments of one side of the debate.

Roy Moss
Appledore
Kent

Hedgehogs

Nigel Reeve (1994). T & A D Posyer: London. 313pp. Hardback. Obtainable from the publishers, 24-28 Oval Road, London NW1 7DX, UK (ISBN 0 05661 081 X) Price £20. This simply titled book does, as it would suggest, cover almost everything about hedgehogs. While it is a comprehensive and fully referenced text book, the narrative is in an easy to read style and Reeve does not miss an opportunity to note the funny and peculiar. Scientific terms are explained so that all can grasp the author's meaning.

The book is divided into ten chapters. The first chapter deals with the evolution and taxonomy of the Family Erinaceidae and, for the European reader, importantly places the European species (*Erinaceus europaeus*) into context with other spiny and hairy hedgehogs. There follows a description of the distribution and distinctive features of each genus and the species within that genus. Chapter Two details the remarkable features of hedgehogs which separates this family from others. For example, the structure of the spines is described and depicted showing how valuable they are as shock absorbers. Hedgehogs have apparently little fear of falling from heights and merely roll up to allow their spines to cushion the impact.

The diet of hedgehogs and their feeding behaviour is covered in depth in Chapter Three, including methods used to study their diet and food selection, and feeding folklore. The literature of dietary studies is covered comprehensively and considerable attention is paid to the diversity of the hedgehogs diet. While it is well known that hedgehogs prey on invertebrates, the author may surprise the reader new to hedgehogs that they will feed on amphibians, lizards, snakes, ground nesting birds, carrion and have even been found feeding