

Economics and food animal welfare

In April 1996 the Animal Health Trust, the British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Foundation and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals held the second of an annual series of joint one-day symposia on welfare problems of food animals and horses, entitled *The Economics of Food Animal Welfare*.

The Proceedings of this second symposium have now been published and take the form of a collection of papers from various organisations and persons involved in issues relating to food animal welfare and economics.

Organisations such as the National Farmers Union, the Meat and Livestock Commission and the Farm Animal Welfare Council are represented in the symposium and their papers outline how these organisations are working towards improving animal welfare in the UK and elsewhere in Europe. An example of the economic cost of welfare problems, such as, production-related disease in the dairy industry is given in a paper from the Department of Agriculture at Reading University. Redistribution of the Common Agricultural Policy ewe premium to fund 'veterinary welfare vouchers' is suggested in one paper, as a way to improve welfare in the sheep industry. Finally, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and Tesco supermarkets present papers on their joint animal welfare food-labelling scheme, 'Freedom Foods'. This is an initiative set up to improve animal welfare while meeting consumer demands for 'welfare-friendly' products.

Although many of the issues are discussed from each organisation's particular perspective, this publication gives an interesting insight into various issues relating to food animal welfare. Both the power of the consumer and the often conflicting pressure from the public to improve animal welfare without increasing food price are highlighted by many of the organisations. The conclusion is that, although more research is needed to provide the solid scientific foundations on which to base animal welfare recommendations, we are making steady progress towards improving food animal welfare.

Welfare Problems of Food Animals and Horses 2. The Economics of Food Animal Welfare: Symposium Proceedings. Suckling A, Higgins A J and Wade J F (eds) (1996). Published by the Animal Health Trust, the British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Foundation and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. 29pp. Paperback. Obtainable from T G Scott, 6 Bourne Enterprise Centre, Wrotham Road, Borough Green, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 8DG, UK. Price £10.

Humane killing of laboratory animals

The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (Appropriate Methods of Killing) Order 1996 came into force in the UK on 1st March 1997. This sets out a revised Schedule 1 to the 1986 Act concerning appropriate methods of humane killing. To accompany this 1996 Order, the Home Office has issued a Code of Practice as guidance to the amended Schedule 1 (which is included in the Code of Practice as an appendix). The approved methods of killing laboratory animals are those which are used to kill animals at designated establishments for scientific purposes (other methods of killing, should there be a requirement for them, can only be used under licence from the Home Office). The revised Schedule 1 lists approved killing methods and secondary procedures which ensure that the animal is dead. These include the following: confirmation of permanent cessation of the circulation, destruction of the brain, dislocation of the neck, exsanguination, confirming the onset of *rigor mortis* or