

## Reports and Comments

### UK equine industry guidelines for the welfare of horses, ponies and donkeys

This compendium (see details below) is the result of a consultation with 17 organisations within the UK equine industry (including DEFRA, the British Equine Veterinary Association and the British Horse Society). It aims to promote good welfare and management practices for those responsible for the care and supervision of all horses, ponies and donkeys.

The introductory chapter sets out the reasons for the production of the compendium stating that *“No aspect of horse ownership is more important than ensuring the horses’ health and welfare. Owners and keepers of horses have a moral and legal responsibility to care for them and to ensure their physical and mental well being.”* Further chapters include guidelines on management, food and water, health, housing, abandonment, export, riding schools and livery yards, transportation, and EU legislation, with the relevant sections of UK legislation quoted throughout for ease of reference. The chapter on transport is particularly comprehensive and covers a range of issues, including the suitability of vehicles, trailers and equipment, loading density and headroom, space requirements (which are set out in a table according to age for quick reference), segregation, loading and unloading, holding facilities and feed, water and rest.

The appendices contain some useful sources of information, including a list and brief summary of government publications such as the Guidance Notes on the Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 1997 (DEFRA) and the Summary of the Law Relating to Farm Animal Welfare (DEFRA 1996). Also provided is a list of advisory publications, codes of recommendations and codes of practice, from organisations including the RSPCA, ILPH, and the National Equine Welfare Council, on topics such as disease control, markets, riding schools and general welfare. A list of the Orders and Statutory Instruments relating to equine animals are included, together with a list of EU Council Directives and useful contact addresses. There are also diagrams of horses and donkeys showing ‘good’ and ‘poor’ body condition, which should assist the general public in assessing physical welfare.

This compendium summarises equine welfare legislation in a user-friendly manner and encourages more rigorous monitoring and enforcement of welfare legislation. It will be useful to all those responsible for the care and management of horses, ponies and donkeys.

**Equine industry guidelines compendium for horses, ponies and donkeys** (2002). 41 pp A4 paperback. Produced by and available free of charge from ADAS Consulting Ltd, Woodthorne, Wergs Road, Wolverhampton WV6 8TQ, UK. Also available at: <http://www.adas.co.uk>

### The use of non-human animals in research: a guide for scientists

The use of animals in scientific procedures is an emotive subject, with opinion often sharply divided between those who defend the importance of such research and those wholly against the use of animals. The Royal Society has recently published a document (see details below) that sets out the arguments for the use of animals in research by addressing many of the key issues involved.

Following an introductory chapter summarising the past use of, and public attitudes towards, animals in research, Chapter 2 discusses the medical advances that have been achieved through such research. This is illustrated by three case studies: the development of polio vaccine; the development of kidney dialysis and kidney transplant techniques; and understanding the role of gastrin and histamine in gastric acid secretion. The advantages of using animals as models are discussed and the point often made by opponents, that the differences between animals and humans invalidates such research, is addressed.

Whilst alternatives are available in some areas of research, a great deal has been achieved through the past use of animals. Chapter 3 focuses on these developments, concentrating on drug therapies. The example of using mice to investigate the activity of the CFTR protein, which causes cystic fibrosis, is discussed in detail. Examples are given of future therapies that are likely to require the use of animals at some stage: the prevention of drug-resistant infections; the treatment of mental illnesses, especially depression, schizophrenia and anxiety, which will require some whole-animal studies; better treatments of conditions involving complex interactions throughout the body, such as diseases of the bone, joints and immune system; and the treatment of HIV/AIDS, which is likely to require animal models of the disease to test possible vaccines before trials can be safely conducted on humans.

Chapter 4 concentrates on the philosophical and ethical issues surrounding the use of animals in research, primarily by addressing the arguments that are used by its opponents, such as the view that each animal has the right to life. In particular, the ethical issues surrounding the use of genetically modified animals are addressed and it is concluded that *“...ensuring that any genetically modified trait is consistent with good welfare applies equally to animals bred by the conventional technique of selection and genetic modification...”*

The ethical theme is continued in Chapter 5, which expands on the view encapsulated in UK law that research is allowed, but only by qualified people who hold appropriate licenses, and under tightly controlled conditions. Russell and Burch’s ‘3Rs’ principles of humane experimental technique (replacement, reduction and refinement) are discussed in some detail with appropriate case studies. For example, the replacement of the lesioning method (which