

EDITORIAL

This issue of *Animal Welfare* takes the journal into its eighth year. It has a gratifyingly high *Science Citation Index* impact factor (the index of how frequently papers published in scientific journals are cited which is widely taken as an index of quality) of 0.909, which places it very well up the ranks of both veterinary and zoology journals. This, and the relatively short mean interval from acceptance to publication (c 9 months), make the journal increasingly attractive to authors and the number of manuscripts submitted continues to grow. It is pleasing also that the journal has a worldwide uptake and readership and that subscriptions continue to increase.

This healthy position reflects the combined efforts of authors, referees, section editors, editorial advisers, journal staff, and everyone else involved. We are most grateful to all, especially our authors, for their contributions and support. Animal welfare science provides the foundations for improvements in animal welfare and it is the journal's aim to help disseminate knowledge and stimulate interest in this important and growing field.

In 1998 we put out a call for papers for a special issue of the journal on the subject of 'Genetics and Animal Welfare'. This was partly to test the merits of running occasional special issues on subjects of current importance and interest. There has been a very good response and manuscripts for this issue have been received from all around the globe. The special edition will be published as issue 8(3) or 8(4) in August or November 1999. It appears at this stage, as if running occasional special issues may be an attractive scheme and we are considering making calls for papers for special issues on 'Animal Consciousness' and/or 'Animal Welfare Aspects of Human-animal Interactions'. A final decision will be made later in the year and, if we do schedule another special issue, calls for papers will be advertised in the journal and elsewhere.

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*James K Kirkwood
Editor-in-Chief*