

Scientific Opinion on the Use of Animal-Based Measures to Assess Welfare of Dairy Cows (2012). A4, 81 pages. EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare. *EFSA Journal* (2012): 10(1): 2554. doi: 10.2903/j.efsa.2012.2554. Available online at: www.efsa.europa.eu/efsajournal.

Scientific Opinion on the Use of Animal-Based Measures to Assess Welfare in Pigs (2012). A4, 85 pages. EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare. *EFSA Journal* (2012) 10(1): 2512. doi: 10.2903/j.efsa.2012.2512. Available online at: www.efsa.europa.eu/efsajournal.

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The Farm Animal Welfare Committee publishes two reports to inform government within the United Kingdom

The Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC) is an expert committee within the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) whose remit is to provide independent advice on the welfare of farmed animals to governments within England, Wales and Scotland. In December 2011, the FAWC published two reports.

Education, Communication and Knowledge Application in Relation to Farm Animal Welfare

A key message within the FAWC's *Education, Communication and Knowledge* report is that educating society about farm animal welfare issues should begin in school. According to FAWC, approximately 95% of five to 16 year-olds are in full-time education on any given school day and it suggests that primary and secondary education could play a fundamental role in engaging children on the importance on animal welfare. FAWC notes that there are a range of subjects in which animal welfare elements could be incorporated, including biology, geography, citizenship, and design and technology. Children are receptive to different aspects of animal welfare at different ages therefore this should be taken into account when considering lesson plans: the younger years (three to six year-olds) are open to learning biology; seven to 12 year-olds are interested in learning about animals in general; and 13 to 16 year-olds are more responsive to ethical and moral dilemmas of animal use. The report states that currently very little animal welfare is taught in schools and, where the subject is touched upon, this is often undertaken using materials lacking in quality control and by teachers who themselves often have only a limited understanding of animal welfare science.

FAWC makes four recommendations to governments with regards to animal welfare in education including: "Any government revisions of the national curricula in England, Scotland and Wales, need to ensure that school pupils, in an age-appropriate manner, learn about where our food comes from and about how farm animals are — and should be — treated. Educational initiatives should, at a minimum, address the basic legal obligations for farm and

companion animals, such as the duty of care and the requirement to provide an animal's five freedoms". The need for primary and secondary teachers to be provided with continuing professional development to enable them to teach animal welfare is also recommended, along with the benefits of encouraging and facilitating commercial farm visits by schoolchildren.

The report then goes on to discuss how best to communicate with adult consumers on farm animal welfare and a variety of means through which this can be achieved are put forward, such as: product information and labelling at the point of sale; corporate social responsibility statements; and public information campaigns. FAWC considers that: "The consumer should be able to compare meat and other animal products in terms of welfare provenance either at the product, the brand or the retailer level". Although various farm assurance schemes and supermarket-own brand 'higher welfare' products are currently in circulation, FAWC notes that there is a lack of information and comparability between products and retailers and that this can hinder shoppers when attempting to make more ethical purchasing decisions: "Consumers may be confused by the different standards used, different units of measurement, means of welfare assessment employed, assessment times in the animal's lifecycle and distance from mandatory welfare requirements that limit their ability to compare products, ranges and brands directly and thus ultimately frustrate choice".

Nine recommendations are made on how government may improve the communication on farm animal welfare to wider society, including the need to "align higher welfare claims to a common and identifiable set of defined welfare objectives and outcomes against which welfare claims can be compared directly by interested consumers". Another key recommendation suggests that: "Where marketing claims are used that imply that animals enjoy higher welfare standards, this should be demonstrated by whole life welfare advantages over and above current minimum legislative compliance".

Finally, the report considers knowledge generation, transfer and application. This section begins by accepting that there is frequently a gap between the generation of knowledge and its application and that in farm animal welfare "the pace and uptake of change is often slow, despite the demonstrable benefits of such changes to the animals concerned". FAWC highlights the need to better understand how those responsible for the care of animals respond to the expanding amount of research available on agricultural and animal welfare knowledge transfer.

A key route through which farmers receive information on farm animal welfare is through advisory and extension services. FAWC emphasises the importance of these services, such as those provided by EBLEX, BPEX and Dairy Co (the levy bodies for beef and sheep, pigs, and dairy cows, respectively), which include: farm-specific advice on animal health and welfare; training schemes; and forums for sharing ideas, learning and networking. A number of other strategies are also put forward by FAWC on