

They conducted questionnaire surveys of the various groups with specific responsibilities under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986: Certificate Holders, Project Licence Holders, Named Veterinary Surgeons, and Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers. They concluded: "The general view obtained from this survey is that most people working under the Act understand the importance of alternatives and are pursuing their use in everyday work." They also noted that the majority of Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers believed that the ERP had improved many aspects of refinement alternatives and that 'the culture of care' had improved. The results of the part of the study on the implementation of the policy for ERP introduction are to be published shortly.

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**Purchase I F H and Nedeva M (2001)** The impact of the introduction of the ethical review process for research using animals in the UK: attitudes to alternatives among those working with experimental animals. *Alternatives to Laboratory Animals* 29: 727-744

### **Impact of the ethical review process in research using animals in the UK**

In addition to the survey by Purchase and Nedeva (see above), the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Inspectorate — the UK Home Office inspectors responsible for administration of the law concerning the use of animals in scientific procedures — has also recently undertaken a review of the new ethical review process (ERP) in the UK. Like Purchase and Nedeva, they conclude that ERPs have had a beneficial effect: "The review ... has established that although local processes are still evolving, they are making a positive contribution to the welfare of animals bred, kept and used for experimental or other scientific purposes." The Inspectorate believes that although there are still some problems in practice, these relate to the way in which some ERPs have been designed and operated rather than to a flaw in the concept. Among the problems in practice that are noted in the review, one is that some ERPs seem more focused on process than output and seem unnecessarily complex and bureaucratic.

Based on the results of the review, the Inspectorate draws attention to a number of examples of good practice in effective and efficient ERPs. There is danger in singling some of these out as examples here, as the review emphasises that unless the report is read in full their significance may be misunderstood, and also that processes must be designed to meet local circumstances. However, the following provide some insight into the sorts of examples of good practice listed: "fast-tracking requests and initiatives that will promote animal welfare and the 3Rs", "involving high-quality, well-informed and enthusiastic lay people", and "a focus on outputs rather than processes". This review should be read by all those involved in ERPs in the UK and will be of interest also to persons elsewhere on ethical review committees concerned with the use of animals in research or for other purposes.

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**Review of the 'Ethical Review Process' in establishments designated under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986** (November 2001). Produced by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Inspectorate. Available from The Home Office, Constitutional and Community Policy Directorate, Animal Procedures and Coroners Unit, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT, UK; <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk>.

### **Welfare of laboratory primates**

The UK is the largest importer of primates in the EU, and uses approximately 2000–3000 primates per year in scientific procedures (mostly toxicology studies of pharmaceuticals). Given this significant usage, as well as general concern about primate acquisition, importation and use, this very detailed report is to be welcomed for providing a useful summary of the issues and

statistics from 1994–2000. However, the main thrust of the report is to identify welfare concerns and produce recommendations, of which there are 20. Although implementing some of these could be difficult and expensive, they provide a useful basis for advancing the welfare of laboratory primates.

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*Counting the cost — welfare implications of the acquisition and transport of non-human primates for use in research and testing* (2001) by M J Prescott. A4 paperback. 47 pp. Report available from the RSPCA, Wilberforce Way, Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 9RS, UK.

### **RSPCA broiler welfare report**

Most of the chicken consumed today comes from broilers — birds bred solely for meat. Intensive broiler production began in the USA and came to the UK in the 1950s. Broiler chickens are the most numerous farmed species in the world: 40 billion are reared every year. In May 2001, it was reported that over the preceding year, 817 million were reared for meat production on UK farms. The welfare problems of broilers include heart failure, ascites and lameness.

In 2001, the RSPCA released their report entitled '*Behind closed doors — the truth about chickens bred for meat*'. The report contains an introduction to broiler production in the UK, followed by sections on: the consequences of genetic selection; legislation surrounding broiler production; breeding for productivity; health and welfare; problems caused by lighting, high stocking density and the barren environment; the role of consumers and retailers; the economic cost of animal welfare; the quality of chicken meat; and, a summary of the changes that the RSPCA consider a priority. The RSPCA would like to see:

- supermarkets and caterers ensuring that the chicken they sell is produced to a higher welfare standard.
- the provision of clear and accurate information about welfare at the point of sale.
- consumers choosing higher-welfare options and, where they are not available, asking for them.
- the UK broiler industry improve the conditions under which broilers are reared, especially by reducing lameness, reducing stocking densities and providing an appropriate night period for birds to rest.
- DEFRA initiate a survey of lameness undertaken by independent research scientists.
- the production of a European Directive to protect broiler chicken welfare.
- breeding companies placing a higher emphasis on selection for traits that improve health and welfare.

The report is occasionally emotive, using language such as “behind closed doors” and “selected for suffering”. However, it provides accessible information about most of the major welfare problems associated with broiler production in the UK.

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*Behind closed doors — the truth about chickens bred for meat* (2001) RSPCA. A4 paperback. 43 pp. Report available from the RSPCA, Wilberforce Way, Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 9RS, UK.

### **Welfare of cattle kept for beef production**

The European Commission asked its Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare to prepare a report on the welfare of fattening cattle. The resultant report deals with male and female cattle fattened for meat production. For cattle from dairy herds it applies to those over six months of age, and for cattle reared in suckler herds it applies after weaning. The report, entitled '*The welfare of cattle kept for beef production*', was adopted on 25 April 2001.