

Foot problems

In April 1995 the Animal Health Trust, The British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Foundation and The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals held the first of a proposed series of joint one-day symposia on welfare problems of food animals and horses. The first of the series was subtitled *The Foot*. This was a good choice, for foot conditions are an important welfare and economic problem in farm animals and horses.

The Proceedings of this first Symposium have now been published and can be seen as a series of authoritative papers on diseases and injuries of the feet in horses, cattle, pigs, sheep and poultry. Each of the contributions, except for that on sheep, is followed by a one-page account, written by an experienced rapporteur, of the discussion engendered by the papers.

Those who work on the foot problems of animals tend to be specialists in their particular species. One of the good points of the meeting was the interesting and useful exchange of ideas between single species oriented specialists.

This symposium and its published proceedings will certainly help towards the understanding and perhaps even the resolving, of some of the husbandry and disease factors underlying the painful foot conditions seen only too frequently in farmed livestock and horses.

Welfare Problems of Farm Animals and Horses 1. The Foot: Symposium Proceedings. Higgins A J and Wade J F (eds) (1995). Published by The Animal Health Trust, The British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Foundation, and The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA). 33pp. Paperback. Obtainable from The British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Foundation, 7 Mansfield Street, London W1M 0AT, UK. Price £10.

The housing of laying hens

The Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand in July 1993 requested the Sub-Committee on Animal Welfare to undertake a review process in relation to an Australian policy for the housing of laying hens. This request was driven by a need to address the issue and its animal welfare aspects at the national level, and to consider community views as well as the scientific and commercial aspects of the problem. A working group was set up with members from a wide range of interests. There were animal welfarists, animal scientists, behaviourists, veterinarians and representatives of the Australian egg industry. The lengthy and detailed report was published in December 1994. It is essentially a critically argued account of the interplay of the various scientific, ethical, social and economic factors which impinge on the real and perceived welfare of laying hens. It does largely take account of Australian conditions but the approaches to the welfare of layer hens elsewhere in the world are considered in detail. The conclusions which are numerous and in most cases realistic, are applicable to most situations under which egg laying poultry are kept and used. This authoritative report is essential background reading for all who are seriously interested in the welfare of the layer hen.

A Review of the Welfare Aspects of Layer Hen Housing in Australia. The Working Group of the National Layer Hen Housing Review (1994). Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand/Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management Animal Health Committee Occasional Paper, AHC No 1. Department of Primary Industries and Energy: Canberra. 162pp. Paperback. ISBN 0 642 22270 3.