

REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Animal welfare and the Common Agricultural Policy

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the overarching framework for European agriculture, is currently under review. In response to this, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), in conjunction with the Eurogroup for Animal Welfare, has produced a report entitled '*Into the fold: bringing animal welfare into the CAP*'. The author of the report suggests that animal welfare has long been a neglected topic in European agricultural policy making and policy implementation and that the 2002 CAP review must reposition animal welfare as an important issue within the CAP.

The document provides a useful overview of the CAP, including brief descriptions of the two different forms of agricultural support — Pillar 1 and Pillar 2. The report then goes into detail about some of the major welfare implications of the CAP as it stands. It recommends ways of promoting better standards of animal welfare from Pillar 1 direct payments, for the dairy industry, beef and veal regime and for sheep and goats. Recommendations include reform of the price support and quota system to reverse the incentive to produce more milk per cow, the development of payments based on area rather than headage, and the abolition of export refunds for the trade in live animals to third countries.

There is also a section on Pillar 2 Payments: Rural Development Regulation (RDR). This section includes a summary of measures promoting animal welfare in the RDR and details the impact of the RDR in member states ending with several recommendations. These recommendations include: the creation of a distinct animal welfare incentive scheme under the RDR, uptake of which would be compulsory for member states; in areas where win-win situations can occur between environmental goals and animal welfare goals, these should be developed by member states; and that animal welfare should be developed as a mandatory goal in any Good Farming Practice schemes used by member states.

In the penultimate section entitled 'Defining levels of animal welfare standards', the report suggests the implementation of a pyramid approach to encouraging animal welfare through setting different levels of standards. The base of the pyramid would ensure basic compliance with legislation. The intermediate level would be based on welfare codes, which could be developed into standards and incorporated into voluntary payments for farmers. Finally, the highest level would be linked to initiatives that employ the highest standards of animal welfare.

In conclusion, the report states that it is important that animal welfare is introduced into the CAP as a concept. It recommends that different standards for animal welfare need to be established and linked to payments, and that all payments to relevant sectors under the CAP should be conditional on reaching the baseline standard of the legislative requirements.

Into the Fold: Bringing Animal Welfare into the CAP (2002) Published by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Wilberforce Way, Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 9RS, UK, and by Eurogroup for Animal Welfare, 6 Rue des Patriotes, 1000 Brussels, Belgium. 30 pp. A4 paperback.

Science and animal welfare

The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) has recently produced a booklet entitled '*Science and Animal Welfare*', which aims to show how scientific research is helping to identify factors that influence animal welfare and how this provides a basis for improving the welfare of livestock and other animals. It sets out to provide a flavour of current and recent scientific research that relates to understanding and improving animal welfare,