

## REPORTS AND COMMENTS

### **Welfare of bobby calves**

The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee of New Zealand was established in 1989 by their Minister of Agriculture to advise him on matters concerning animal welfare. It consists of members from various backgrounds including farming, animal welfare science, consumer interests, animal welfare law, conservation, pest control and the Ministry of Agriculture. The Committee is comparable in some ways to the UK's Farm Animal Welfare Council but, unlike FAWC, its remit extends beyond the welfare of farm livestock. Since its formation, the Committee has produced some 20 'Codes of Recommendations' on the welfare aspects of a wide range of subjects, including farm livestock, circus, rodeo, companion and laboratory animals.

The Committee's most recent publication is a revision of their *Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Bobby Calves*, first published in 1993. This revised code of conduct for the welfare of 'bobby' calves (those at least 4 days-old and which are destined for human consumption) covers all aspects of welfare, 'unique' to them, from birth to slaughter. The document is divided into seven sections, covering: (1) introductory comments; (2) legal responsibilities; (3) general objectives for owners/farmers, transport operators/drivers and processors; (4) owners'/farmers' responsibilities; (5) transport operators'/drivers' responsibilities; (6) processors' responsibilities; and (7) emergency humane destruction. Throughout the booklet, clear distinctions are drawn between the statutory requirements, minimum standards, and recommendations that are listed.

The report will be required reading for those in the cattle industry in New Zealand. However, like the others in this series, it is a valuable short review of welfare issues and it may prove very helpful for those aiming to raise standards elsewhere - particularly in countries which lack a clear framework for farm animal welfare.

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*Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Bobby Calves*. Code of Animal Welfare No 8 (Revised). Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (1997). Ministry of Agriculture: Wellington. 18pp. Paperback. Obtainable from the publishers, PO Box 2526, Wellington, New Zealand. (ISBN 0478073283; ISSN 1171090X).

### **Practical farm animal research**

On 19 May 1997, Cambac JMA Research (Wiltshire, UK) held an open day during which the organization celebrated 15 years of research since its formation in 1982. To mark this event, Cambac published a booklet entitled *Practical Solutions to Practical Problems*. This presents information on the history of the organization and its current research activities in to aspects of farm animal production and welfare. It includes, as a foreword, the text of the topical opening address given at the open day by Mr Grenville Welsh, Chief Executive of the British Pig Association. In this foreword, Mr Welsh contrasts the rising need for research and development of the sort undertaken by Cambac to improve production and transport systems and practices, with the decline of government funding for near-market research.

The bulk of the book comprises short, poster-like and simply illustrated accounts of recent and current projects undertaken by Cambac staff and their collaborators. These short papers (which do not include references) are grouped into sections on pig transport, abattoir handling systems, outdoor pigs, housing systems for sows, cattle transport, objective methods for assessing welfare, and industry-funded work. There are 25 papers in total covering quite a wide range of subjects, as indicated by the following almost-randomly-picked selection of titles: 'A national survey of transport conditions for cattle'; 'Behaviour

and welfare of pigs during extended journeys'; 'Welfare implications of outdoor breeding systems'; and 'Handling of broilers: a welfare audit'. The book is a useful source of information on a variety of practical farm animal welfare issues of current importance in the UK and elsewhere.

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*Practical Solutions to Practical Problems: Practical Farm Animal Research.* Cambac JMA Research (1997). Cambac JMA Research: Wiltshire. 80pp. Paperback (ring-bound). Obtainable from the publishers, Manor Farm, Draycot Cerne, Nr Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 5LD, UK. Price £20.

### **Quarantine for pets**

Since 1901, protection from rabies in the UK has been based on the quarantining of potential carrier animals, including domestic pets, on import into the UK. In view of the development of possible alternative methods of control (for some types of animals), notably advances in vaccination against rabies, the Government has launched a scientific review of the current policy. This document provides the background to the assessment of possible alternatives to quarantining to be undertaken by independent scientists. It makes clear that there should be no changes to the present arrangements, if these would increase the likelihood of rabies entering the UK.

The document briefly outlines the present rabies controls in the UK, and in other Member States of the European Union (EU). It presents views from the public, the House of Commons Select Committee (1994) and from the Government itself, and identifies six main options to be assessed. These are: (i) make no change; (ii) reduce the period of quarantine; (iii) allow exemption from quarantine for animals for which reliable assurances can be obtained; (iv) as for (iii), but with checks to be carried out at approved centres away from entry points; (v) replace quarantine with vaccination; and (vi), as for (v), but also with vaccination of all dogs resident in the UK. There has been concern about the welfare of pet animals in quarantine which exemption would clearly address. Meanwhile, the Government indicates in this report that it would like to put the *Voluntary Code of Practice on the Welfare of Dogs and Cats in Quarantine Premises* on a statutory basis, and will be publishing a list of premises that have agreed to abide by the voluntary code.

The assessment is unlikely to be concluded before early 1998 and, following its publication, there will be a full public consultation. The Government will also discuss the position with other EU Member States.

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*Quarantine for Pets. A discussion document.* Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Scottish Office Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries Department; Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland; Welsh Office Agriculture Department (1997). MAFF: London. 18pp. Paperback. Obtainable from MAFF Publications, Admail 6000, London SW1A 2XX. Free.

### **Government Response to the Farm Animal Welfare Council Report on the Welfare of Pigs Kept Outdoors**

Following consultations on the UK Farm Animal Welfare Council's (May 1996) report on the welfare of pigs kept outdoors, the Government has now published its response. This commends FAWC's recommendations to the industry.

In the introductory paragraphs the Government indicates its stance by making the following points: that the achievement and maintenance of high animal welfare standards in