Terms Of Reference

The Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) is an independent advisory body established by Government in 1979.

Its terms of reference are to keep under review the welfare of farm animals on agricultural land, at market, in transit and at the place of slaughter; and to advise Ministers in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales, of any legislative or other changes that may be necessary.

The Council can:

- investigate any topic falling within this remit
- communicate freely with outside bodies, the European Commission and the public
- publish its advice independently

Website: www.fawc.org.uk

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The Farm Animal Welfare Council has continued to provide Government with strategic advice on farm animal welfare in 2006/7 with a major report on labelling, and responses to various requests for consultation.

New ways of working have been established via the Standing Committees while the publication in 2006 of the Council’s Strategic Plan for 2006 - 2010 provides a clear statement of our priorities, including the rationale for their choice.

This innovation has led to greater understanding by the Council of Government policies on farm animal health and welfare, and related developments in farming and rural affairs. For example, the Government’s developing policy on global warming and climate change will likely impact on livestock farming systems: Council will address this important subject as part of its Report on Welfare Strategy. The Plan has also led to enhanced communication with officials in Defra and the devolved administrations that will bring benefits in the provision of advice on farm animal welfare.

The publication in 2006 of the Report on Welfare Labelling was timely in light of current interest by consumers, farmers and others in the food chain. Many of its recommendations on labelling are in line with the EU Action Plan on animal welfare: labelling is being actively debated within Europe at present. The Report argues that the concerned consumer can only make an informed choice if food and other products from farm animals are labelled according to the standard of welfare achieved throughout an animal’s life. The Report is a natural sequel to our 2005 Report on the Welfare Implications of Farm Assurance Schemes, since both will help to raise the efficiency of the market place to the benefit of animals, farmers, retailers and the consumer alike. The Council’s new investigation into the Economics of Farm Animal Welfare will complete our work on this topic.

The new Standing Committees have demonstrated how the Council can respond efficiently – and rapidly - to requests for advice on various topics. In 2006/7, the Council responded to more than ten consultations, in addition to sending several letters to Ministers on topics ranging from the welfare consequences of avian influenza to animal breeding.

Effective communication with stakeholders is an important requirement for a body such as FAWC.

The Council has noted with interest the great use now made of its website (www.fawc.org.uk): on average over 4,500 copies of reports were downloaded each month in 2006 while the web page describing the Five Freedoms was the most popular, being visited between 600 and 1500 times each month. This means of communication is complementary to the more traditional printed reports but of growing importance.

Our work in progress is described in detail in this review. Publication of reports on Stockmanship and on Castration and Tail Docking in Lambs later this year will be the culmination of much effort by two groups. The latter group especially has had to resolve complex scientific and ethical issues, where balanced analysis and judgement were required.

Other developments have included (re)formation of two groups that have allied interests. The European Forum of Animal Welfare Advisory Councils (EuroFAWCs) was established in 2006 to bring together FAWC analogues. Learning about the priorities and working practices of other European Welfare Advisory Councils has been most interesting; in some countries, the use of formal methods of ethical analysis has helped to resolve difficult issues in animal welfare and may be a lesson to the Council. Within Great Britain, the Companion Animal Welfare Council, the Zoos Forum and the Animal Procedures Committee have complementary interests to FAWC and a liaison group has been formed to share best practice.

Finally, I should like to thank Rosemary Berry, Professor Peter English, Graham Godbold, Richard Maunder, Miriam Parker MBE, Barbara Smith and Mike Vaughan, who retired from Council after many years of devoted public service. Individuals with such experience and knowledge are hard to replace but I am glad to welcome Dr Michael Appleby, Gwyn Jones, Stuart Shearlaw and Steven Tait to the Council in the expectation that they will also provide wisdom and guidance on complex, difficult issues in farm animal welfare. I should also like to thank Richard Aram for standing in most successfully as Head of the Secretariat last summer and to welcome David Foot as the new Secretary of the Council.

The annual Open Meeting of the Council will be held on 14 June 2007 at Mary Sumner House, Tufton Street, London. All are welcome to attend: I look forward to an open discussion about the past and current work of the Farm Animal Welfare Council.

Professor Christopher Wathes
May 2007
Current Membership May 2007

Chairman

Professor Christopher Wathes, holds the Chair of Animal Welfare at the Royal Veterinary College, University of London. He is a research scientist with interests in the environmental biology and management of farm animals.

Members

Robin Anderson, Managing director of a livestock auctioneering company in South West Scotland. He is immediate past President of the Institute of Auctioneers and Appraisers for Scotland, an Associate of the Royal Agricultural Societies and a member of the Scottish Agricultural Arbiters and Valuers Association.

Dr Michael Appleby, welfare policy advisor for the World Society for Protection of Animals (WSPA), Member of the Scientific Committee of Humane Farm Animal Care and the Animal Compassionate Committee of Whole Foods Market in the USA. Formerly Senior Lecturer in Applied Animal Behaviour; University of Edinburgh.

Ian Baker, senior partner in the farm animal department of a large veterinary practice in Buckinghamshire and past-President of the British Cattle Veterinary Association.

Professor Richard Bennett, an agricultural economist in the Department of Agricultural and Food Economics at the University of Reading. He is a member of the Council of the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare, a Trustee of the Humane Slaughter Association, and a member of the England Implementation Group for the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy.

Huw Davies JP, a sheep farmer from Carmarthenshire. He is a member of the Steering Committee for the Implementation of the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Wales and of the Welsh Regional Board of the Moredun Research Institute; Fellow of the Royal Agricultural Societies.

Professor Sandra Edwards, Chair of Agriculture at the University of Newcastle. Previously director of the Scottish Pig Industry Initiative, past President of the British Society of Animal Science and member of EFSA working groups on pig welfare.

David Henderson, retired Head of the Division of Clinical Studies and Director of Farms, Moredun Research Institute, and past President of the Sheep Veterinary Society.

George Hogarth, Production Director for an international chicken breeding company based in Scotland.

Gwyn Jones, a dairy farmer from West Sussex. Currently Chairman, NFU National Dairy Board, and a member of NFU Policy and Governance Boards, director and board member of Dairy UK, Chairman of Dairy UK Producer Forum.

Professor Alistair Lawrence, Chair of Animal Behaviour and Welfare, Scottish Agricultural College (SAC), Honorary Chair of Animal Welfare (University of Edinburgh); head of the Animal Behaviour and Welfare Department, SAC, Edinburgh.

Ruth Layton, veterinary surgeon and holder of the RCVS Diploma in Animal Welfare Science Ethics and Law, Director of the Food Animal Initiative. Consultant to food retailers and the food service sector.

Stephen Lister, veterinary surgeon and partner in a specialist poultry practice in Norfolk, and Trustee of the British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Foundation.

Dr David Main, BVA Animal Welfare Foundation Lecturer in Animal Welfare at the University of Bristol and an RCVS recognised specialist in Animal Welfare Science, Ethics and Law.

Professor David Morton, Emeritus Professor of biomedical science and ethics, and a laboratory animal veterinarian. Member of the European Food Standards Authority’s Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare, the Companion Animal Welfare Council, and the Board of Assured Food Standards.

Andrew Nicholson, Quality assurance manager and animal welfare specialist for the Co-operative Group (CWS) Ltd. He is a member of the joint pig industry technical advisory committee and the EU Technology Platform on Global Animal Health.

Reverend Professor Michael Reiss, Professor of Science Education and Head of the School of Mathematics, Science and Technology at the Institute of Education, University of London; Director of Education at the Royal Society.


Steven Tait, Head of sales and marketing for Freedom Food. Member of the Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF) management board.

Alison Ward, a horticulturist; consumer representative on the Food Standard Agency Committee on Toxicity in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment; an independent consultant; Past Director of the British Bankers’ Association, and formerly a Non-Executive Director in the Health Service.

Meryl Ward, Director of a commercial pig breeding and finishing business, member of the British Pig Executive and a founder member of Agskills Training Association. She is a Council Member and Selector for the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust and a member of the Genesis Assurance Technical Advisory Committee.

The following members of Council retired during 2006/07:

Rosemary Berry, Professor Peter English, Graham Godbold, Richard Maunder, Miriam Parker MBE, Barbara Smith and Mike Vaughan. We would like to thank them for their contributions to the work of FAWC.
Council’s working methods

Membership and Appointments

Appointments to the Council are made according to procedures laid down in the Code of Practice produced by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Register of members’ interests

The Council’s work covers a wide range of issues connected with the agricultural industry, animal welfare organisations, research bodies and the veterinary profession. In order to avoid any concern that members’ interests might adversely affect the advice given by Council, information about significant and relevant interests of the membership is kept on a register, copies of which are available from the Secretariat. This register is updated annually. In addition to information on commercial interests a record is kept of relevant non-commercial interests, such as membership of organisations whose work may overlap with the Council’s area of interest.

Guidance to members

On appointment, members receive guidance about matters such as working procedures, guiding principles, working with the media, representing Council, networking, fees and expenses. Incorporated in the guidance is a Code of Practice for Members, which is written with full regard to the seven principles of public life identified by the Nolan Committee in its Report on Standards in Public Life and the recommendations made by the Phillips Inquiry Report relevant to advisory bodies.

Work

The Council’s work is described in its strategy for 2006 to 2010, which was published in 2006, and in its annual implementation plan for 2006/7.

During 2006/2007 Council, its Standing Committees and Working Groups held 44 meetings and went on 3 visits to agricultural premises. In addition, Council members and the Secretariat represented FAWC at various conferences, seminars and workshops.

Costs

The work of the Farm Animal Welfare Council is financed by Defra, which also provides the Secretariat. During the financial year 2006/2007, the total public expenditure on the Council was £370,972. This sum comprised £102,117 for member’s fees, travel and related costs; £218,906 for the Secretariat’s salaries, travel and other costs; £34,949 for Defra advisers and consultants; and £15,000 for printing and publicity.

Secretariat

The FAWC Secretariat is staffed by officials on secondment from Defra. The Secretary is David Foot and the other members of the Secretariat are Richard Aram, Simon Renn, Barbara Silberstein and Janice Munday.

The Council welcomes approaches from organisations planning events such as conferences or seminars. The Secretariat can provide copies of FAWC materials on request. Many members carry with them a wealth of expertise about farm animal welfare, and if you would like us to be represented at appropriate events, please get in touch. The Council is keen to develop an effective partnership with the media, and we welcome press approaches, routed through the Secretariat.

Contact us

If you would like to be sent any of our reports, or to find out more about the Council please contact:

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What does the council do?

The Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) is an independent advisory body established by Government in 1979. Its terms of reference are to keep under review the welfare of farm animals on agricultural land, at market, in transit and at the place of slaughter; and to advise Government of any legislative or other changes that may be necessary.

The Council can also investigate any topic falling within this remit, communicate freely with outside bodies, the European Commission and the public, and publish its advice independently.

Our members are drawn from a wide range of disciplines and occupations and serve in a personal capacity, not as representatives of any organisation or interest group.

A key element is our ability to act independently; we may pursue any topic we regard as important to the welfare of farm animals.

When embarking on a new investigation, we consult a wide range of interest groups. We carefully consider written advice and take verbal evidence from those with specific expertise. Wherever possible we use relevant scientific evidence to aid us. This is carefully balanced with information gained from industry experience, visits by members of FAWC to farms and other agricultural businesses and guidance from experts. We also rely on the extensive experience and collective expertise of FAWC members. Where there is insufficient scientific knowledge, we may recommend funding of research and development to fill the gaps.

FAWC’s Strategic Plan

FAWC’s Strategic Plan for 2006-2010 was published in October 2006.

The Plan was the result of wide consultations with stakeholders (via an Internet survey) and with Ministers, Chief Veterinary Officers and senior officials in England, Scotland and Wales. The Plan sets out the remit, aims, objectives and work programme of the Council from 2006 to 2010. The Plan ensures that timely advice is provided to Government on priority areas in farm animal welfare. There is a clear focus on the necessary major studies, while ensuring flexibility to provide advice on new and immediate issues as they arise.

The priority issues identified for major studies were: Economics of farm animal welfare (on which work began in April 2007); Knowledge transfer on animal welfare issues (beginning in 2008); and Disease and farm animal welfare (beginning in 2009).

In addition to the major studies, subjects for shorter term studies leading to Opinions by Council were identified. These will be carried out by the Council’s Standing Committees in line with their remits. The Standing Committee on Ruminants has just begun work on the Longevity of the Dairy Cow. The Standing Committee on Ethics, Economics, Education and Regulation is looking into Policy Instruments for Improving Animal Welfare. The Standing Committee on Pigs, Poultry and Fish is completing Opinions on Laying Hen Welfare (Beak Trimming, Skeletal Health and Enriched Cage Systems), and has also started work on an Opinion on the Welfare of Farmed Game Birds.
The Five Freedoms

In considering the welfare conditions under which farm animals are kept, the Council is guided by ideals that have become known as the Five Freedoms:

1. **FREEDOM FROM HUNGER AND THIRST**
   - by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.

2. **FREEDOM FROM DISCOMFORT**
   - by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.

3. **FREEDOM FROM PAIN, INJURY OR DISEASE**
   - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.

4. **FREEDOM TO EXPRESS NORMAL BEHAVIOUR**
   - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal’s own kind.

5. **FREEDOM FROM FEAR AND DISTRESS**
   - by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.
Advice to Government

Summaries of Reports and advice provided over the past year are set out below. The advice can be viewed in its entirety on the FAWC website (www.fawc.org.uk). Copies of FAWC publications are also available from the Secretariat at the contact address at the beginning of this review.

FAWC’s Report on Welfare Labelling

In June 2006 FAWC published its advice to Government on Welfare Labelling. The report considered the information that could and should be transmitted to the interested consumer and others about the animal welfare provenance of the livestock products they purchase. It also addressed the benefits, effectiveness and practicalities of welfare labelling. The report made recommendations to improve the welfare of farmed animals through effective welfare labelling. The Government’s response to this report is awaited.

Avian Influenza

In addition to advice on the welfare implications of movement restrictions, and keeping free range birds indoors, FAWC provided advice to Defra and the devolved administrations on emergency killing methods for poultry.

Powers to use ‘ventilation shutdown’ as a method of killing birds in a closed poultry house were taken by Defra when an outbreak of Avian Influenza was feared imminent and other methods of killing were still in the early stages of development.

FAWC recognised that, at the time, a scenario might develop where there was no option but to compromise the welfare of a particular flock of poultry for the greater benefit of public health and the national flock. However, ventilation shutdown should be a method of last resort; legislation requires the written authority of the Secretary of State to approve its use.

FAWC wanted to be assured prior to any use of ventilation shutdown that: the benefits were substantial and clearly outweighed any harms; ventilation shutdown would only be used in situations where expert assessment indicated that death would be reasonably rapid and no alternatives were available; an available backup method was in place to destroy humanely those birds found not to have been killed; and any use would be well documented and results fed back rapidly to inform future decisions and to improve the contingency plan.

It would be far preferable to ensure that death was achieved as rapidly as possible. To this end, Defra and others have been working hard to develop methods of killing large numbers of birds...
on the farm with gas or foam, either collectively in
the poultry house or in containerised units (for gas
only). FAWC has advised about the welfare
implications of these methods.

Containerised gas units ensure that birds can be
killed on the farm but still require birds to be
captured and loaded into transport modules for
delivery to the units. Whole house gassing has the
advantage of killing birds in situ without any need
for handling. The logistics of whole house gassing
are not inconsiderable and might be stretched by a
widespread outbreak. Development of foam as a
delivery agent for gas shows promise and FAWC
will keep this and the further development of
other methods under review.

Proposals for a Meat Chicken
Directive

FAWC continued to give Defra speedy and
pertinent advice throughout 2006 on the rapidly
developing proposals for a Directive for the
protection of meat chickens. Council is pleased
that agreement on the Directive has been reached
recently by the EU Council of Ministers.

Responses to consultations

FAWC responds to a number of consultations
each year. The full text of these can be viewed on
the FAWC Website (www.fawc.org.uk).

- Defra consultation on replacement of the
  Welfare of Farmed Animals (England)
  Regulations 2000

- Defra/Scottish Executive consultations on
  responsibility and cost sharing for animal health
  and welfare

- FAWC replied to the draft Government
  response to FAWC’s Report on the Welfare
  Implications of Animal Breeding and Breeding
  Technologies in Commercial Agriculture.

- Defra consultation on its Animal Welfare
  Delivery Strategy

- Defra, Scottish Executive, and Welsh Assembly
  Government consultations on allowed/exempt
  procedures carried out on animals

- Defra follow up consultation on amendment
to WASK 1995, inclusion of end of life breeder
  birds

- Defra consultation on amendments to WASK
  1995 to permit the use of gas to kill poultry
  outside of the slaughterhouse

- Defra/Scottish Executive consultations on
  implementation of the EU Transport
  Regulation EC 1/2005

- Defra consultation on the future structure of
  the organic conversion information service in
  England

- Defra consultation on the Rural Development
  Programme for England 2007-2013

- Defra consultation on the EU Commission
  Working Document on a Community Action
  Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals
  2006-2010
FAWC’s Standing Committees and Working Groups

The full Council of currently 21 members usually meets three times a year. Summaries of these meetings are available on the FAWC website (www.fawc.org.uk).

FAWC’s three Standing Committees keep a watching brief on the welfare issues within three broad subjects:

- Ruminants;
- Pigs, Poultry and Fish; and
- Ethics, Economics, Education and Regulation.

These committees ‘horizon scan’ for new welfare issues, keep under review and press for action on contemporary welfare topics and undertake small scale studies leading to short reports in the form of opinions.

Working Groups are set up on an ad hoc basis to undertake major studies into specific welfare issues or target species and produce reports for Council to approve for publication.

Ruminants Standing Committee

The Ruminants Standing Committee has started work on the first priority topic for an Opinion identified in the FAWC Strategic Plan for 2006 – 2010, i.e. the longevity of the dairy cow. Public consultation on this topic has commenced and further engagement with stakeholders will happen during the course of 2007 and it is expected that the Committee will publish this Opinion in the Spring of 2008.

Pigs, Poultry and Fish Standing Committee

As well as formulating advice to Government on the proposed EU Directive on the welfare of chickens kept for meat production, the Committee is actively studying the welfare of laying hens in anticipation of a review of the European Directive on their protection. Issues of particular interest to FAWC include developments in housing for laying hens and solutions to injurious pecking. Opinions on these issues should be published later in 2007. The Committee is also gathering information for its next Opinion on the welfare of farmed game birds, i.e. pheasant and partridge that are bred and/or reared in Great Britain for sport.

Ethics, Economics, Education and Regulation Standing Committee

The remit of the Ethics, Economics, Education and Regulation (EEER) Standing Committee extends across all species of farm animals. During this last year, the Committee has responded to many of the requests for consultation by Defra and the devolved administrations as described above.

Outbreaks of avian influenza during the study have affected the main work of the Group but have also

Slaughter Working Group

The Slaughter Group has now gathered relevant information on the welfare of white meat animal species at slaughter or killing and is carefully considering this evidence prior to drafting its report.

The Committee also considered a number of other consultations and discussed documents to assess whether they required comment from EEER on FAWC’s behalf. It has also liaised with the other Standing Committees and Working Groups to provide input concerning their work.

In April 2007, the Committee embarked on the production of an Opinion on Policy Instruments for Improving Welfare, which is due to be published in the Spring of 2008.
provided the opportunity to study the welfare of birds subject to emergency killing on farm in the face of infectious disease. The Group has been able to offer specific advice to Defra on the welfare aspects of mass killing methods during this period.

The Group will consult key stakeholders when the main messages of the report are known. Given the additional work on emergency killing, the expected publication of this report is now in Spring 2008.

Stockmanship Working Group

The Working Group has completed its report on stockmanship and its enhancement in relation to animal welfare. Good stockmanship is the most effective means of ensuring a high standard of welfare. The report addresses among other topics the challenge of providing effective education and training for livestock farmers and stockmen.

The Group held a final meeting with stakeholders in January and will publish its report in June 2007.

Welfare Economics Working Group

FAWC has established a Working Group, in accordance with its Strategic Plan 2006-2010, to examine the economics of farm animal welfare. The aim of the Group will be to analyse the interactions between the economics of livestock production and animal welfare in the UK and make recommendations on relevant actions to safeguard and promote welfare. The Group held its first meeting in April 2007 and will be undertaking a public consultation during the Summer of 2007. It is anticipated that the group will report its findings in 2010.

Welfare Strategy Working Group

The Welfare Strategy Working Group was formed to address a long-term strategy for animal welfare over the next 25 to 30 years. It was charged with delivering an ethically-based framework for farm animal welfare standards, surveillance and goals.

A public consultation exercise was carried out in the second half of 2006 and the Group is considering carefully how each response can inform the development of the strategy. Meetings with stakeholders will be arranged in 2007, when the Group is clearer how the strategy will be formed.

Amongst other topics, the Group is considering the ethical standpoint from which farm animal welfare should be viewed and how welfare could be assessed by negative and positive welfare measures. Long term goals for the standards of animal welfare will also be addressed.

Lamb castration and tail docking Working Group

In April 1994 FAWC published its Report on the Welfare of Sheep. This report made several recommendations on castration and tail docking, particularly that their need should be re-examined and justified and that further research into these practices should be carried out. Since the 1994 report a great deal of research on these issues has been done. As recommendations reached ten years old, it was considered that FAWC should address the problem afresh armed with the new information available.

A Working Group was tasked with reviewing the research literature on lamb castration and tail docking and has been compiling its findings over the past two years. The Group held a final consultation meeting with stakeholders in November 2006 and expects to publish its report in the Summer of 2007.
# Appendix - Publications

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<td>Advice to Ministers on the Handling and Transport of Poultry, 1990. PB 0125</td>
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<td>Advice to Agricultural Ministers on Transportation of Unfit Animals, 1988.</td>
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<td>Advice to the Agriculture Ministers of Great Britain on the Need to Control Certain Mutilations of Farm Animals, 1981.</td>
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<td>Report on the Welfare of Farmed Fish, 1996. PB 2765</td>
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