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 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
Message From the Chairman

In 2005 – 2006, the Council continued to provide Government with strategic advice on farm animal welfare via two major reports and various responses to requests for consultation. In addition, it has also undertaken a thorough review of its strategy and ways of working with a view to raising both efficiency and effectiveness. The past year has been one of consolidation for most working groups with several reports in the final stages of preparation while the establishment of three new Standing Committees has allowed Council to take a more proactive view of developments in farm animal welfare in the UK and elsewhere.

A Report on the Welfare Implications of Farm Assurance Schemes was published in summer 2005. This provided an independent analysis of the incorporation of animal welfare in farm assurance schemes, alongside more established characteristics such as food safety and traceability. While the evidence that scheme membership guarantees a favourable outcome for welfare is limited, providing consumers with assurance about the welfare provenance of livestock products will have long-term benefits to all parties. Many of the report’s recommendations addressed the uniformity of scheme coverage of fresh, frozen and processed food, or of home produced and imported supplies. Many inconsistencies will need to be overcome if the potential of farm assurance schemes is to be realised.

A Report on the Welfare of Farmed Animals at Gatherings was also published in summer 2005. Council had last examined this topic in 1986 and there have been numerous developments since then. The Report considered the many types of gatherings of livestock and recommended a unifying piece of legislation that would resolve some of the discrepancies that are apparent and which may deny farm animals the protection they deserve.

The Council has undertaken a review of its strategy to ensure that its work fully meets its remit to advise Government on farm animal welfare. There have been many developments in Government policy and livestock farming which indicated that such a review was timely. The strategy will be published this summer: One significant outcome has been prioritisation of topics for future investigation for which an extensive consultation with over 100 stakeholders was most helpful. Discussions are now being held with Ministers and Implementation Groups in England, Scotland and Wales to ensure that Council’s advice addresses those topics of highest priority. The short list covers economics, disease, knowledge transfer, dairy cows and indoor pigs and a final selection of up to three topics will be made soon. It is noteworthy that generic topics, such as the economics of farm animal welfare, were identified alongside species-specific topics, which continues the trend of reports published in recent years.

The Standing Committees will provide advice using a new format of opinions. These will comprise a short report on contemporary issues, e.g. lameness in dairy cows, where a full report is not warranted. With a narrow focus and new working methods, opinions will be published within a year of commencement, thereby contributing to Council’s remit and making effective use of its resources.

Looking to the future, Council will work in parallel with the Implementation Groups for England, Scotland and Wales that are responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy within Great Britain. There is also a need to liaise with other welfare advisory groups, i.e. the Companion Animal Welfare Council, the Zoos Forum and the Animals Procedures Committee where there are common issues of animal welfare. Council will take a lead role in establishing a forum of welfare advisory bodies from amongst the 25 member states within Europe, sharing ideas on efficient working practices and priority topics, amongst others. The EU Action Plan on animal welfare and the various OIE initiatives have provided part of the impetus for such a forum.

Three longstanding members of Council retired in 2005 after distinguished and valuable service. I should like to thank John Don MBE, Eddie Harper and Dr Martin Potter for their many contributions that ensured that Council’s advice to Government was based on sound evidence and addressed issues of great importance to the welfare of farm animals.

The recruitment exercise this year has led to the appointment of four new members of Council after stiff competition. I should like to welcome Huw Davies, Professor Sandra Edwards, Dr David Main and Alison Ward, whom I am sure will make a worthy contribution to the Council’s work over the coming years. The new strategic plan will help Council to identify expertise that will be needed in our future recruitment.

Kumu Adhinetti retired as Secretary of the Council in spring 2006. Undoubtedly her tireless commitment to the Council’s work, her knowledge of Government policy and practice, and her devotion to the harmonious operation of the working groups and the Secretariat contributed enormously to the effectiveness of the Council. I shall also be eternally grateful to her for the most enjoyable way in which she inducted me into the Chairman’s role so ably and effectively. I should like to thank her on behalf of the Council and wish her a long and happy retirement.

The Annual Open Meeting will be held at Mary Sumner House, Tufnott Street, London on 14th June 2006. Members of Council and the Secretariat will be present to describe the Council’s work for the past year: I look forward to welcoming you to this event.

Professor Christopher Wathes
May 2006
Current Membership (May 2006)

Chairman

Professor Christopher Wathes, Chair of Animal Welfare at the Royal Veterinary College, University of London. His research focuses on 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.

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

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

Rosemary Berry, retired dairy farmer from Devon with a small flock of pedigree Texels. Formerly National Vice-Chairman and Central Executive Member of the Women's Farming Union with responsibility for animal welfare and human health.

Huw Davies, a sheep farmer from Carmarthenshire. Chairman of the Steering Committee for the Implementation of the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Wales. Member of the Welsh Regional Board of the Moredun Research Institute.

Professor Sandra Edwards, Chair of Agriculture at the University of Newcastle. A past director of the Scottish Pig Industry Initiative, a former President of the British Society of Animal Science and member of the EU Scientific Veterinary Committee working group on pig welfare.

Professor Peter English, retired Professor of Animal Science and Husbandry at the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, University of Aberdeen. Also involved with research on the education, training and motivation of stockpeople.

Graham Godbold, Trading standards manager for Shropshire County Council with extensive animal health and welfare enforcement experience. Former Secretary to the Local Authority Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services’ Animal Health and Welfare Group.

David C Henderson, former Head of the Division of Clinical Studies and Director of Farms, Moredun Research Institute, Edinburgh; Past-President of the Sheep Veterinary Society; Co-ordinator of the Scottish Centre for Animal Welfare Sciences; Veterinary Consultant.

George Hogarth. Director of an international chicken breeding Company based in Scotland with executive responsibility for UK production operations.

Professor Alistair Lawrence, Chair of Animal Behaviour and Welfare (SAC), Honorary Chair of Animal Welfare (University of Edinburgh), and research scientist who heads the Animal Behaviour and Welfare Department at the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) in Edinburgh.


Stephen Lister, veterinary surgeon and partner in a specialist poultry practice in Norfolk and a 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 a RCVS recognised specialist in Animal Welfare Science, Ethics and Law.

Richard Maunder, Operations director of a poultry processing business in Devon, supplying the multiple and wholesale trade.

Professor David Morton, scientist and a laboratory animal veterinarian. Member of the European Food Standards Authority's Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare 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 technical advisory committee for Assured British Pigs 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.

Barbara Smith, a member of the Women’s Food and Farming Union, and past Chairman of its Dairy Committee, a member of the CBI Regional Council and European Union of Women. Past Chairman of the Animal Welfare Committee of the National Council of Women and past County Chairman of the Cheshire NFU. Member of the Agricultural Land Tribunal.

Michael Vaughan, retired partner in a mixed animal veterinary practice in Devon, Past-President of the British Cattle Veterinary Association.

Alison Ward, consumer representative on the Food Standards Agency Committee on Toxicity in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment. 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 retired during 2005/06:

John Don MBE, Eddie Harper and Dr Martin Potter. We should 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 a package of 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 programme
The Council’s work is described in its strategy for 2006 to 2010, which will be published this summer, along with an annual implementation plan for 2006/7.

During 2005/2006 Council and its Working Groups held 70 meetings and conducted 11 visits over 9 days to various agricultural premises. In addition members spent a number of days representing FAWC at 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 2005/2006 the total expenditure on the Council by government was £487,179. This sum comprised £155,000 for member’s fees, travel and related costs; £282,481 for Secretariat salaries, travel and other costs; £33,796 for Defra advisers and consultants; and £15,902 for printing and publicity.

Secretariat
The FAWC Secretariat is staffed by officials on secondment from DEFRA. The Secretary is Kumu Adhihetty (now retired) and the other members of the Secretariat team are Richard Aram, Simon Renn, Barbara Silberstein, Janice Munday and David Westerman. Richard Aram has taken over as acting Secretary upon Kumu Adhihetty’s retirement.

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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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.

What does the Council Do?

In considering the welfare conditions under which farm animals are kept, we are 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.
Council’s work over the past twelve months

Advice to Government

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


In June 2005 FAWC published its advice to Government on the Welfare Implications of Farm Assurance Schemes at its annual Open Meeting.

The welfare standards experienced by the farm animals that provide our livestock products are increasingly the focus of attention by consumers who are concerned about the provenance and quality characteristics of the food we eat. Assurance that certain conditions have been met originate back in the supply chain and cannot be checked at point of purchase; hence the need for a robust and independently certified framework to ensure the availability, validity and delivery of that information.

The report looked at the evolution of farm assurance schemes since an interim report in 2001 and their impact on animal welfare, including organic certification schemes. Recommendations were directed at all players in the food supply chain, with the intention of stimulating greater leadership, particularly from the post farm sectors who wield most power in the market place.

FAWC believes that, if it is to be meaningful, the assurance process needs to embrace the treatment of farm animals throughout their life from birth to slaughter and extend to all livestock products, whether fresh, frozen or processed, home produced and imported.


The Report on the Welfare of Farmed Animals at Gatherings was also published at the annual Open Meeting in June 2005.

Much has changed since the last FAWC report on markets in 1986 in terms of the structure of the livestock industry, its marketing strategies and the design and operation of livestock markets. The Council’s timely review encompassed markets and sales, other gatherings of farmed animals, agricultural shows and exhibitions and horse and pony sales and fairs.

The Report identified the common welfare challenges present at all animal gatherings, such as transport to the gathering site, unloading, mixing with unfamiliar animals and people and loading for onward consignment. It also identified the lack of consistent protection for animals subject to different types of gathering and called for a single piece of legislation to provide this.

Specific recommendations were made to improve animal welfare standards at gatherings in terms of ensuring the knowledge and competence of people employed to look after animals, animal care and handling, facilities provided at the gathering site and levels of supervision and enforcement. Many recommendations are common to all gatherings sites.


Council passed advice to Government in August 2005 on proposals to update a European Directive on broiler chicken welfare. The UK was keen to see this proposal progressed during its Presidency of the EU. The main issues addressed by FAWC’s advice were suitability of a range of stocking densities for keeping broiler chickens dependent on other management, housing and environmental factors; the use of mortality (and culling) as measures of welfare and the effect of this on prudent culling policies that protect bird welfare; the lighting regimes being suggested in the proposal; and the use of other welfare outcomes, such as foot pad dermatitis scores, as welfare measures that could lead to remedial or enforcement action.

Council has continued to provide advice on the proposal as it has progressed.
Avian influenza contingency planning and bird welfare.

The threat of Avian Influenza has been present for much of the period covered by this annual review. It has impacted on some of the work of the Council, for example delaying visits to poultry slaughterhouses, particularly those on farm premises.

FAWC was asked for urgent advice by Defra on aspects of its contingency planning for an outbreak of Avian Influenza in the UK. Within a very short time, FAWC was able to offer a considered opinion that covered the impact on the welfare of free range birds that may have to be kept indoors for extended periods of increased disease threat and the potential impact on welfare of methods of mass killing of poultry should these become necessary.

FAWC will continue to work with Government to protect the welfare of poultry in the face of increased disease risk.

Responses to consultation

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 about the management of populations of feral wild boar in England;
- Defra consultation on amendments to legislation governing artificial insemination in cattle; Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966; and
- Scottish Executive consultation on the draft Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Bill.
- OIE Guidelines on slaughter or killing of animals.

FAWC’s Strategic Plan

The Farm Animal Welfare Council has set out its Strategic Plan for 2006-2010. The Plan provides an overall direction for FAWC’s work and a clear focus for major studies, whilst retaining the Council’s ability to provide advice speedily to Ministers and Officials when required. It also sets out the structure and means that FAWC will adopt to provide this advice. In addition, starting from June 2006, an annual implementation plan will be prepared that will detail the work of the Council via its Working Groups and Standing Committees.

Copies of these documents are available on-line at www.fawc.org.uk or from the Secretariat (see contact details).

The Strategic Plan has been informed by extensive consultation with Ministers and Officials of the GB Governments, the Implementation Groups for England, Scotland and Wales, and with our wider community of stakeholders. The Plan takes full account of the need for FAWC’s work to be relevant to, and inform, Governments’ objectives and strategies.

Stakeholders were invited to complete an Internet-based questionnaire on priorities in farm animal welfare and more than one hundred organisations or individuals responded. Ministers and Officials were also approached directly for their views on the priority issues that FAWC should address in the form of major studies or with more closely focussed short term advice in the form of opinions.

Decisions taken by Council on its work priorities for the next five years are contained within the Strategic Plan, and more immediately in the Implementation Plan for 2006-2007.
Standing Committees and Working Groups

The full Council of currently 24 members usually meets three times a year. Summaries of these meetings are available on the FAWC website (www.fawc.org.uk).

In 2005, FAWC established three Standing Committees that will 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 will horizon scan for new welfare issues, keep under review and press for action on existing welfare problems and may carry out small scale studies leading to short reports in the form of opinions.

Working Groups will continue to take on major studies on specific welfare issues or target species and produce reports for Council to approve for publication.

Membership of these Groups and Committees will aim to making the best use of FAWC members’ specialist knowledge and experience.

Ruminants Standing Committee.

The Ruminants Standing Committee met in October 2005 and February 2006. The Committee agreed its remit and reviewed two previous FAWC Reports on the Welfare of Farmed Deer and the Welfare of Dairy Cattle. While there was little need to reconsider the former, there have been substantial changes in the dairy industry since this report was published. The Committee may therefore revisit aspects of dairy cow welfare during the forthcoming year. The Committee also discussed Bovine Tuberculosis and the welfare implications of the ending of the Over Thirty Months Scheme.

Pigs, Poultry and Fish Standing Committee.

As well as formulating advice to Defra on the proposed EU Council Directive on the welfare of chickens kept for meat production, the Committee is working on advice on the welfare of laying hens in anticipation of a review of the EU Council Directive on their protection. Issues of particular interest to FAWC are developments in housing for laying hens in anticipation of a ban on conventional cages from 2011, skeletal health of laying hens and solutions to injurious pecking.

Ethics, Economics, Education and Regulation Standing Committee.

The Committee held its first meeting in October 2005. Since that time it has undertaken a number of activities involved with keeping a watching brief concerning each of the topics covered by the Committee in relation to farm animal welfare. These activities include consideration of FAWC’s philosophy of approach (in consultation with the Welfare Strategy Working Group), review of progress of the Animal Welfare Bill in England, written response to the Government consultation on the EU Transport Regulation (1/2005) and written comments to the Government and the EU on the EU Commission action plan on the protection and welfare of animals 2006 - 2010. In addition, the Committee has undertaken horizon scanning to help
inform FAWC’s five year strategic plan, identifying a number of topics for consideration by the Committee. These include the treatment of animals as sentient beings as opposed to goods (under EU law), the measurement of farm animal welfare, consideration of farm animal welfare in international trade agreements and within the Common Agricultural Policy, the implications of globalisation for farm animal welfare and the meaning of sustainability in relation to welfare.

**Slaughter Working Group.**

The Slaughter Group continues to gather information in its study of the welfare of white meat species of farmed animals at slaughter or killing. Visits to a number of slaughter plants processing various species by a number of methods have already been carried out and the balance should be completed in the first half of 2006, Avian Influenza permitting.

Meetings have been held with a wide range of stakeholder organisations and the Group will begin work on drafting its report shortly. It is hoped to publish a report early in 2007.

**Stockmanship Working Group.**

The Working Group has been preparing its report on stockmanship and its enhancement in relation to animal welfare. The report will address the challenge of providing effective education and training for livestock farmers and stock people in difficult economic circumstances. It will consider the role of stockmanship as a key component of good husbandry and the accreditation of stockmanship competence. The Group will also address the problems of recruitment and retention of stock people and the issue of continuous professional development. The report is due to be published towards the end of 2006.

**Welfare Labelling Working Group.**

The Working Group has been compiling its report on welfare labelling and expects to publish its findings in June 2006. The report considers the information that can and should be transmitted to the interested consumer and others about the animal welfare provenance of the livestock products they purchase and addresses the benefits, effectiveness and practicalities of welfare labelling. The report makes recommendations to improve the welfare of farmed animals through effective welfare labelling.

**Welfare Strategy Working Group.**

The Welfare Strategy Working Group was formed to address a long-term strategy for farm animal welfare for Great Britain, i.e., an ethically-based framework for farm animal welfare standards, welfare surveillance and welfare goals. The Group was given the brief to look 10-20 years into the future, consider what the farm animal welfare landscape should look like and assess the steps that needed to be taken to satisfy strategic goals.
The Group will prepare a report setting out the ethical standpoint from which farm animal welfare should be viewed. It will consider how welfare could be assessed at a national level by tracking improvements and deteriorations in welfare measures, which reflect the quality of life of farm animals from birth until death. Goals for the standards of animal welfare for the future could then be projected with obstacles to improvement identified.

Work is at an early stage but a public consultation is expected in the second half of 2006.

**Lamb Castration and Tail Docking Working Group.**

In April 1994 FAWC published its Report on the Welfare of Sheep. The report made recommendations on castration and tail docking, particularly that its necessity should be considered and that research into the practice of castration and tail docking and the practical use of local anaesthesia 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. It has also held consultation meetings with the industry, researchers, veterinary groups and welfare organisations.

The Group is currently completing the drafting of its report and expects to publish its findings in Autumn 2006.
Appendix - Publications


Report on the Welfare of Farmed Fish, 1996. PB 2765


Advice to Ministers on the Handling and Transport of Poultry, 1990. PB 0125


Advice to Agricultural Ministers on Transportation of Unfit Animals, 1988.


Advice to the Agriculture Ministers of Great Britain on the Need to Control Certain Mutilations of Farm Animals, 1981.
