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 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

Contents

Chairman’s message 1

Current membership 2

Council’s working methods 3

Secretariat 3

Contact us 3

What does the Council do? 4

Council’s work over the past twelve months 5

Council’s advice to Government 5
Food Information Inquiry 5
Animal Breeding 5
AEBC Report on Animals and Biotechnology 5
Draft Animal Welfare Bill 5
CAP reform and animal welfare 6

Responses to consultations 7

Working Groups 8
Strategy and Communication 8
Farm Assurance 8
Stockmanship 8
Research and Development 8
Poultry Issues 9
Markets and Transport 9
Slaughter 9
Welfare Labelling 9

Appendix – Publications 10
I am delighted to welcome you to this review of FAWC’s activities in 2004/2005. The work outlined here was conducted under the Chairmanship of my predecessor, Judy MacArthur Clark, and I should like to take this opportunity of paying tribute to the major contribution she has made to the work of the Council during her six years as Chair. I should also like to thank several retiring FAWC members, John McInerney, Gareth Lloyd and James Hook; their specialist knowledge, wide-ranging experience and wisdom will be sorely missed. As part of the Nolan procedures for public appointments, we welcomed four new members to Council at the beginning of the year; Robin Anderson, Richard Bennett, George Hogarth and Andrew Nicholson. I look forward to the valuable contributions that they will undoubtedly make to FAWC over the coming years.

Since its establishment in 1979, FAWC has become recognised and respected world wide for its independent, critical analysis of contemporary issues relating to the welfare of farmed animals. As the advisory body to Government Ministers in England, Scotland and Wales, the Council has a unique role to play in safeguarding and improving the care of animals on livestock farms. Our advice usually takes the form of detailed reports or letters to Ministers and is published openly on our website (http://www.fawc.org.uk); printed copies are also available on request.

FAWC’s Report on the Welfare Implications of Animal Breeding and Breeding Technologies in Commercial Agriculture, published in June last year, was well received as a timely contribution to an important debate and we look forward to the Government’s response to this report. Other advisory bodies, such as the Companion Animal Welfare Council, are also considering this subject and we have valued our joint discussions.

The recent introduction of the Single Payment Scheme has brought about a major change by which farming is supported in the European Union through the Common Agricultural Policy. Abandoning production-related subsidies for measures to promote the rural economy and the environment offers significant opportunities to raise the standard of welfare on farms. Council’s advice to Ministers on CAP Reform and Animal Welfare has highlighted the need for strong Ministerial support to ensure that every opportunity is taken to utilise the ‘Pillar 2’ provisions of the Rural Development Regulations and provide incentives to benefit animal welfare.

The high work load on Council members and the Secretariat is reflected in the large number of meetings and visits conducted by the eight working Groups, six of which have been working towards producing reports. Two major FAWC reports will be published next month. The report on the Welfare of Farmed Animals at Gatherings explores the common welfare principles, which apply to farm animals at markets, shows, exhibitions and other gatherings. Amongst other things, it probes the lack of consistency in the levels of protection afforded to animals at various gatherings and makes recommendations to redress the balance. The Second Report on the Welfare Implications of Farm Assurance Schemes looks into the ability of such schemes to deliver credible assurance to the public on the welfare standards under which farm animals are kept. The recommendations in this report are aimed at enabling assurance schemes to embrace animal welfare concerns and deliver welfare outcomes.

We have also started work this year to determine FAWC’s strategic priorities for the short and medium term. As part of this, we will consider the long-term future for farm animal welfare in Great Britain and try to set achievable goals for acceptable standards of welfare, building on current legislation and codes. Later this year, we expect to invite the views and suggestions of interested organisations and individuals on our strategy and vision for the future of animal welfare. Both the strategy and its associated business plan will be published.

So far as a global perspective of animal welfare is concerned, the recent initiative by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) to become the leading international organisation in the field of animal welfare is greatly welcomed by FAWC. We also keep abreast of work being done by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), which impinges on animal welfare, and hope to develop further our links with FAWC – like bodies in other countries.

As Chairman, I look forward to working with Council members and our stakeholders to build on FAWC’s past achievements and explore ways of enhancing the wellbeing of farm animals in the face of future challenges. The collective expertise and experience of members and the commitment they bring to the work of Council is one of FAWC’s greatest strengths. I am grateful for the whole-hearted support that I have received from Council and many of FAWC’s stakeholders since my appointment at the beginning of this year. I look forward to meeting many of you at the Annual Open Meeting which will be held in the Mary Sumner House, Tufton Street, London SW1 on 30 June this year.

Professor Christopher Wathes
May 2005
Current Membership (May 2005)

**Chairman**

Professor Christopher Wathes, Director of Science at Silsoe Research College in Edinburgh. He will be shortly transferring to the Royal Veterinary College, University of London, to establish an Animal Welfare Group.

**Members**

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

Dr 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.

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.

John Don, livestock and arable farmer from Aberdeenshire. Chairman of the Scottish Rural Property and Business Association and a former Council Member of the National Farmers’ Union of Scotland.

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 or farm animal carers.

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.

Eddie Harper, self-employed livestock transport consultant in Somerset, and currently National Chairman of the Livestock Group of the Road Haulage Association.

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

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

Professor Alistair Lawrence, research scientist who heads the Animal Behaviour and Welfare Department at the Scottish Agricultural College in Edinburgh.


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

Richard Maunier, Operations Director of a meat and poultry wholesale company in Devon.

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 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.

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

The following stepped down at the end of 2004:

Dr Judy MacArthur Clark CBE, James Hook, Gareth Lloyd, FRICS, IRRV and Professor John McInerney OBE. 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 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.

Workload
During 2004/2005 Council and its Working Groups held 63 meetings and conducted 11 visits over 13 days to various agricultural premises. FAWC was also represented at two major shows.

Costs
The work of the Farm Animal Welfare Council is financed by Defra, which also provides the Secretariat. During the financial year 2004/2005 the total expenditure on the Council by government was £514,094. This sum comprised £185,023 for member’s fees, travel and related costs; £288,524 for Secretariat salaries, travel and other costs; £31,765 for Defra advisers and consultants; and £8,781 for printing and overheads.

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

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.

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.
Advice to Government

Summaries of advice provided over the past year are given below. FAWC advice to Government in its entirety can be viewed on the FAWC website: www.fawc.org.uk.

FAWC's submission to the House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee Food Information Inquiry.

This submission identified animal welfare as a quality of livestock products, about which some consumers would wish to be informed. It stressed the need for the enforcement of minimum acceptable animal welfare standards but recognised the increasing sector of the public that wished to have the choice of buying livestock products coming from systems which enhanced animal welfare standards. Such standards should apply throughout the production process, from birth to slaughter.

FAWC's submission recommended the development of systems for communicating the welfare provenance of livestock products and informed the Committee of the study Council had begun to look further into these complex issues.

FAWC's Report on the Welfare Implications of Animal Breeding and Breeding Technologies in Commercial Agriculture

In June 2004 FAWC published its advice to Government on animal breeding regimes and new breeding technology at its annual Open Meeting.

The report discussed the animal welfare implications of commercial application of new breeding technologies and the potential for acceleration of conventional breeding strategies.

Council recommended that a standing committee be established to evaluate the use of new and existing breeding technologies in commercial agriculture and provide advice to Government and the industry. The remit should include the ethical, animal welfare and legislative impacts relating to animal breeding and breeding technologies, including genetic modification, and the effective surveillance of new breed types or technologies being introduced into agriculture.

This report was followed up in November 2004 by:

Advice to Government from the Animal Welfare Advisory Bodies Liaison Group on the AEBC Report on Animals and Biotechnology

In its response to the recommendations of the Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Commission’s (AEBC) report on Animals and Biotechnology, the Government invited FAWC to establish a working party with the Companion Animal Welfare Council (CAWC), the Animal Procedures Committee (APC) and others to consider recommendations and particularly:

“to consider whether there is a case for a new statutory advisory body to examine issues raised by the use of genetic biotechnology on farm animals in the context of its use on other animals and current livestock farming practice and the wider international aspects.”

The Joint Working Party responded to the Government in November 2004, against the background of the problems identified by FAWC and CAWC in their respective reports covering animal breeding and breeding technologies.

Following an independent review of the AEBC, the Government wound up the Commission at the end of April 2005. In relation to current areas of concern, the Government believes that existing bodies can between them take forward the AEBC legacy.
Evidence to the House of Commons
Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Committee on the Draft Animal Welfare Bill

FAWC saw significant improvement represented in the draft including:

- Modernisation of existing law for both farmed and companion animals;
- Strengthening of legislation in respect of companion animals (although this is outside of Council’s remit);
- Establishing the basic principle of ‘ensuring an animal’s welfare’;
- Strengthening of the provisions and sanctions for animals likely to be in distress/likely to suffer including Court penalties and a positive stance on deprivation and disqualification;
- Greatly enhanced enforcement powers for inspectors and constables and delegated powers of prosecution for Local Authorities to deal with the welfare of animals.

Council considered the Bill to be a great advance on the present legislative framework, which places considerable reliance on the veterinary profession delivering an informed opinion on both matters of health and welfare. It is critically important that welfare is seen as an important issue in its own right and that high standards of veterinary training support this.

Council made a number of detailed comments on the content of the draft Bill and expressed some concern about the apparent lack of additional financial resources from Central Government to support this major initiative. In order for the law to have the desired impact it must be effectively enforced and this will require funding from Central and Local Government.

CAP reform and animal welfare

In December 2004 FAWC passed to Defra its advice on how it believed the recent reform of the CAP would impact on animal welfare. Various groups had voiced general expectations that the ending of output-related farm support would lead to a reduction in the ‘intensity’ of farming methods and a consequent rise in welfare standards in livestock production. However, we consider this proposition to be too simplistic. First, there is no evidence that the CAP support regimes in themselves have led to greater intensity in the production of farm animals (as opposed to intensity of land use); furthermore, the sectors where more intensive methods have led to welfare concerns being raised — pigs and poultry — have been outside the CAP support framework anyway. Indeed, far from the abolition of product price support leading to better animal welfare, the concern is that the opposite might be the case. The need for livestock farmers to produce now without market support will place the emphasis on increased technical efficiency and an ability to produce competitively in the face of lower prices on open, globalised markets. This, in turn, will create financial pressures to seek the cost economies of large scale units, incentives to adopt the latest animal technologies, and a stimulus to exploit further the biological production potential of farm animals. Without appropriate constraints or reward systems the resulting prospect could be for a worsening of welfare levels in a cost-driven production environment.

Second, the hope that cross-compliance conditions attached to receipt of the single farm payment will provide those constraints, or even lead to improved welfare, is unrealistic. These conditions contain only a minor element associated with animal welfare, they relate to no more than existing statutory requirements, and the financial penalties for non-compliance are far from severe.

The third issue is the possibility for schemes having specific animal welfare objectives to be funded under the ‘Pillar 2’ framework of the Rural Development Regulations. This is the only direct means by which improved animal welfare can be encouraged, but there
are no specifically targeted resources. In competition with environmental and land management schemes, the process for allocation or take-up of funding to compensate farmers for the higher costs of pursuing enhanced welfare standards seem problematic. FAWC has urged Ministers to give sufficient prominence to the opportunities under the new Pillar 2 provisions of the CAP and to focus on the dominant welfare issues in modern livestock agriculture. The implementation of these opportunities will undoubtedly vary among the devolved administrations in the UK.

Responses to consultation

FAWC has responded to a large number of consultations during the past year. A list of responses is attached, all of which can be viewed on the FAWC Website: www.fawc.org.uk.

- Defra consultation on the House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee Report on Veterinarians and Veterinary Services.
- Defra consultation on a GB strategy for the control of bovine TB.
- Defra consultation on welfare codes for ducks, turkeys and goats.
- Food Standard Agency consultation on a draft second report on campylobacter.
- Defra consultation on contingency planning for the emergence of naturally occurring BSE in sheep.
- Defra consultation on State Veterinary Service agency status.
- Defra consultation on the National Scrapie Scheme – options for a strategy.
- Defra’s needs from the sciences over the next ten years.
- Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council review of future directions in farm animal genetics and genomics.
- Humane Slaughter Association consultation on slaughter and killing of minority species.
Working Groups

The Council carries out detailed reviews in small working groups comprising a cross section of members. There is significant responsibility on these members to provide thoroughly researched and carefully considered advice for discussion and endorsement by Council.

Strategy and Communication

The Group organised FAWC representation at the Pig and Poultry Fair in May 2004 and the Sheep Event in July 2004. In addition members also attended regional Agricultural Shows. Each year the Group is responsible for reviewing the content of the Annual Review and for the arrangements for the annual Open Meeting.

The last Open Meeting held in June 2004 attracted over 90 people from some 60 organisations. Those who attended found the occasion to be interesting and informative. This year’s Open Meeting will be held on 30 June 2005 at the Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London SW1P 3RB starting at 10:00 a.m.

Since the beginning of 2005 the Group has been working on a process for identifying Council’s strategic priorities in the short and medium term. It will also be formulating FAWC’s strategy and vision, and preparing a business plan for the coming year.

Farm Assurance

The Farm Assurance Working Group will be publishing its second report on the welfare implications of farm assurance schemes in June 2005. The report considers the ability of assurance schemes to deliver credible assurance about the welfare standards under which farm animals are kept, and looks at the extent to which welfare assurance is sought or desired by the retail and food service sectors and consumers. The report also reviews the welfare implications of organic certification schemes.

Stockmanship

A Working Group has been established to prepare a 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 stockpeople. It will consider the role of stockmanship as a key component of good husbandry and the accreditation of ‘stockmanship competence’. The Group will also look at the problems of recruitment and retention of stockpeople and the issue of Continuous Professional Development (CPD). Following a consultation exercise the Working Group has held several meetings with key stakeholders and more meetings are planned for this year. The report is due to be published in early 2006.

Research and Development

The Report on the Welfare Implications of Animal Breeding and Breeding Technologies in Commercial Agriculture, researched and drafted by the Research and Development Working Group, was launched at FAWC’s Open Meeting on 30 June 2004.

This has subsequently formed part of a submission to Government from the Animal Welfare Advisory Bodies Liaison Group (comprising Chairs, and members of the Farm Animal Welfare Council, the Companion Animal Welfare Council, the Animal Procedures Committee and Government and veterinary representatives) on the welfare implications for all animals of breeding regimes and technologies. The Government will consider the submission and FAWC’s report before responding.

The Group is preparing a short report on the welfare problems associated with castration and tail docking in sheep. The report will be published by the end of 2005. A considerable amount of research on the pain associated with methods of castration and tail docking has been completed since FAWC produced its 1994 Report on the Welfare of Sheep and meetings have been held with researchers, as well as the industry and welfare organisations.
Poultry Issues

The Poultry Issues Working Group has been addressing issues of poultry welfare on a number of fronts. It has been able to discuss broiler stocking density research with the research group from the University of Oxford and gained an insight into the range of significant inputs, not only stocking density, that have implications for the welfare of broiler chickens during rearing. The aim is to advise Defra on possible measures by which a rearing system’s suitability can be assessed. The Group will continue to monitor progress on the major Defra-funded research project on broiler chicken leg weakness being conducted by the University of Bristol in close co-operation with the industry.

The issue of skeletal health is considered to be one of the main welfare problems facing the laying hen and continues to exercise the Group. The Group has met with stakeholders and is considering all the evidence at its disposal. Further discussions with stakeholders will be likely as the Group reaches its conclusions, which will lead to a report to Council.

Advice has been passed to Defra on trials of a new beak treatment for poultry, which aims to replace hot and cold beak trimming as a method of preventing aggressive pecking. Council’s overall reaction has been positive to this novel treatment.

Council’s overall reaction has been positive to this novel treatment.

The Group is aware that the review of the Laying Hens Directive is imminent and has initiated discussions on enriched cages and alternative systems with the industry. Visits to commercial applications of enriched and colony cages and to modern designs of alternative systems will begin the information gathering process, leading to advice to Government on its negotiating stance.

Markets and Transport

The Markets and Transport Working Group has been putting the final touches to its Report on the Welfare of Animals at Gatherings and this will be published in June 2005. The report makes recommendations that will improve the welfare of farmed animals in many situations where they are gathered together for sale, onward transfer or shows and exhibitions, and of horses at market, sales or fairs.

Slaughter

The Slaughter Working Group is continuing with its study of the welfare of white meat farmed species at slaughter or killing. The study will look into the welfare of broiler chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, end-of-lay hens, game birds and rabbits slaughtered or killed both at the abattoir and on farm.

The written consultation has yielded a useful response, which the Working Group will study. The Group will also review the literature and hold consultation meetings with a variety of stakeholders. The programme of visits to white meat slaughter systems began in 2004 and will be continued during 2005.

The collection of all the available data on the welfare of white meat animals at slaughter will enable members of the Working Group to draw conclusions and draft recommendations for endorsement by Council. A report will be published towards the end of 2006.

Welfare Labelling

The Working Group is considering what information can be transmitted to the interested consumer about the animal welfare provenance of the livestock products they purchase. A written consultation has produced a wide ranging response. The Group has commenced meetings with key stakeholders in order to clarify a number of issues, and will be making recommendations to Council towards the end of 2005.
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


Assessment of Pig Production Systems, 1988

Advice to Agricultural Ministers on Transportation of Unfit Animals, 1988


An Assessment of Egg Production Systems, 1986


Report on the Welfare of Livestock when Slaughtered by Religious Methods, 1985


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