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## PRESS NOTICE

28 May 2009

The Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) today publishes its Report on the Welfare of Farmed Animals at Slaughter or Killing – Part Two: White Meat Animals

Chairman of FAWC, Professor Wathes said “This Report considers the welfare of poultry (and other white meat species) in the last few hours of their lives up to the moment of slaughter or killing. It deals with the experiences of poultry during catching and loading on the farm, the journey to the slaughterhouse, the wait in the lairage, unloading from transport containers, stunning and finally slaughter or killing. Since over 800 million poultry are killed annually in Great Britain, there is a strong moral imperative to ensure that welfare is a prime consideration at all these stages.”

“The Report also covers other circumstances in which poultry are killed as well as licensing and training of slaughtermen, legislation and its enforcement and equipment design and approval, since these also affect welfare.”

“The Report sets out six principles for humane slaughter and killing.

- i. All personnel involved with slaughter or killing must be trained, competent and caring
- ii. Only those animals that are fit should be caught, loaded and transported to the slaughterhouse
- iii. Any handling of animals prior to slaughter must be done with consideration for the animal's welfare
- iv. In the slaughterhouse, only equipment that is fit for the purpose must be used
- v. Prior to slaughter or killing an animal, either it must be rendered unconscious and insensible to pain instantaneously or unconsciousness must be induced without pain or distress
- vi. Animals must not recover consciousness until death ensues.

The responsibilities of slaughtermen and other workers are grave and the need for training and compassion is paramount.”

“The Council's advice to the Government is based on a wealth of scientific knowledge and practical experience, not only of its members but also of many within the poultry and its allied industries, scientists, veterinarians and others concerned about poultry welfare. I have no doubt at all that implementation of this Report's recommendations will lead to significant improvements in the welfare of poultry at slaughter or killing.”

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## Notes for Editors

1. The Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) is an independent advisory body established by Government in 1979 to keep under review the welfare of farmed 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.
2. Professor Christopher Wathes was appointed Chairman of FAWC in January 2005. He is Professor of Animal Welfare at the Royal Veterinary College, University of London.
3. All FAWC members serve in a personal capacity and do not represent any organisation with which they may be associated.
4. Copies of FAWC Reports are available from the FAWC Website at the address below. Media approaches should be routed through the Secretariat.

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