

## REPORTS AND COMMENTS

### **Ethics, morality and animal biotechnology**

Produced by the BBSRC (Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council), this booklet provides a useful and clear overview of the ethical, moral and social issues surrounding animal biotechnology; specifically the direct manipulation of an animal's genetic makeup (genetic modification) and the new technology of nuclear transfer (transference of whole nuclei and the genes which they carry, as in the case of Dolly the sheep). It does not attempt to provide definitive answers; instead it seeks to provide readers with a philosophical and ethical grounding sufficient to allow intelligent debate on the ethical and moral issues raised by this technology. The booklet discusses intrinsic concerns that people may hold with respect to animal biotechnology, extrinsic concerns that may arise through the application of the technology, and highlights the reasoning (logical or otherwise) on which these concerns are based. Finally, it focuses on some of the animal welfare issues and ethical problems raised by the use of this technology.

This valuable booklet should help to improve the quality of discussion relating to this important and often-debated field.

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*Ethics, Morality and Animal Biotechnology*. Roger Straughan (1999). Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council: Swindon. 25pp. Paperback. Obtainable from the publishers, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1UH ([www.bbsrc.ac.uk](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk)). Free.

### ***Farm Animal Welfare Council Annual Review 1998***

The Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) have previously published their priorities for animal welfare research and development every 4–5 years. This report marks a shift in approach; priorities will now be published annually as part of the FAWC's annual review of achievements and activities.

The review restates FAWC's belief in the importance of a broad-based approach to research in animal welfare. They state, for example, that 'applied research on the design and management of husbandry systems must be underpinned by fundamental research on the capacity of animals to perceive and comprehend incoming sensations and then evaluate them in terms of quality of life', and on 'complex areas such as motivation, cognition or the development of welfare indices'. They call for all types of research to be supported 'even when the payback may not be immediately apparent'.

The following five categories are highlighted as areas in which FAWC would like to see research and development focused as a matter of priority: livestock breeding programmes, stocking densities, mutilations, disease and stockmanship, and technology transfer.

FAWC specifically call for the following within each of the respective categories: an urgent assessment of the welfare of different breeds of livestock and their suitability for the environment (because many of the most serious welfare problems highlighted in recent FAWC reports are associated with the effect of unbalanced genetic selection in breeding programmes and the selection for production-based criteria at the expense of welfare); more general research on stocking densities, particularly for poultry and fish; a multi-disciplinary approach (encompassing breeding and genetics) to finding ways of avoiding the need for mutilations such as tail docking in pigs and beak trimming in laying hens and turkeys; research on the prevention and control of mastitis and of lameness in cattle and sheep; and greater emphasis on the continuing education and training of those involved with livestock.

The review also reports on new initiatives. FAWC are currently gathering information for reviews on the welfare of animals at market and at slaughter. The welfare impact of farm

assurance schemes is also highlighted as a likely topic of a future FAWC report. Another proposed initiative is the establishment of a FAWC presence on the forthcoming MAFF website on animal welfare. This presence will take the form of summaries of FAWC meetings, advice and reports.

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*FAWC Annual Review 1998* (1999). Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC): Surrey, UK. 13pp. Paperback. Obtainable from the publishers, The FAWC Secretariat, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (MAFF), Government Buildings, Hook Rise South, Tolworth, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 7NF, UK. Free.

### ***Report of the Animal Procedures Committee for 1998***

The latest report of the Animal Procedures Committee (APC) highlights some notable changes to UK laboratory animal welfare legislation. In July, ferrets and gerbils were added to *Schedule 2* of the *Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986*, as were genetically modified pigs and sheep. This means that laboratories requiring these animals must obtain them from designated breeding and supplying establishments. UFAW, together with other welfare and professional organizations, have been consulting with the Home Office on the development of Codes of Practice for the housing and husbandry of these animals. Cosmetics ingredients testing was ended and the (UK) Government also agreed to set up a dedicated secretariat for the APC. This should make the operation of the APC more transparent, and clearly separate from that of the Home Office Inspectorate.

Xenotransplantation was also an issue, as the APC had received two applications for the transplantation of pig hearts and livers into primates to research methods of preventing rejection. The Committee studied these applications in detail, and, while the heart transplant study went ahead, the liver transplant study was not carried out in 1998, possibly as a result of the view of United Kingdom Xenotransplantation Interim Regulatory Authority that the supply of human livers is broadly in line with demand.

The Committee administer a budget to support scientific research into the 3Rs, and the budget for research for 1998–99 was increased by 43 per cent to £259 000. This was not as generous as it sounds, since, as the Committee noted, this only restored the budget to previous levels.

The Report also contains the results of a survey of dog accommodation and care, which was designed to identify best practices with regard to social and environmental enrichment of dogs housed in designated establishments. This survey was partially stimulated by the programme 'It's a Dog's Life', which was broadcast on 26 March 1997 and showed substantial abuses of dogs at a major research contract house. The recommendations, which UFAW and other organizations discussed with the Home Office, emphasize the need for social housing and staffing levels sufficient to provide good human/dog social interactions, enrichment and a socialization programme, as well as ongoing staff training.

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*Report of the Animal Procedures Committee for 1998* (1999). The Stationery Office: London. 21pp. Paperback. Obtainable from the Publications Centre, PO Box 276, London SW8 5DT, UK and other usual HMSO sources. Price £6.00.

### **Funding for rural conservation or animal welfare activities**

*The Directory of Grant Making Trusts Focus Series: Rural Conservation and Animal Welfare* is aimed specifically at those working within the rural conservation and animal welfare community who wish to benefit from the billions (£1.9 billion in 1997) given out by the 8800 charitable grant making trusts in the UK each year. Initially breaking the trusts down by geographical area, field of interest and grant type, the directory is designed to allow a shortlist