

summary of communications with external individuals/groups. The appendices list published codes of recommendations and minimum standards, other publications and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)-funded animal welfare operational research from 1993 to 2002.

One of the issues that the NAWAC committee considered during 2001 was dubbing, the removal of the comb of male poultry. Consultation took place between NAWAC and interested parties and NAWAC is now working towards a strategy to prevent this practice. Amongst other topics, vertebrate pest control was on NAWAC's agenda in 2001 along with broiler chicken welfare, Kosher slaughter and the use of electric collars and electronic boundary fences.

Research topics undertaken during the year included welfare and mortality of newborn calves in the dairy industry, analgesic best practice for animals used in research and testing, predicting risk conditions for thermal stress during long-distance transport, and trauma in livestock, companion animals and wildlife. A comprehensive review is currently taking place into research topics that need addressing in the future.

The document provides an insight into the aims of NAWAC and how it works to achieve these aims. It also provides useful information about the current state of codes of recommendations and minimum standards and a list of MAF-funded papers that have been published.

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*National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee 2001 Annual Report*. May 2002. Available from the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, c/o Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, P O Box 2526, Wellington, New Zealand. 32 pp A4 paperback.

### **Survey of supermarkets' farm animal welfare standards**

Between July and November 2001, Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) carried out a survey of supermarket standards and performance on farm animal welfare. The results of this survey were recently made available on their website in a document entitled 'Supermarkets and Farm Animal Welfare: Raising the Standards'.

CIWF evaluated the ten leading UK supermarkets on over 100 different measures considered by CIWF to be relevant to animal welfare. According to their survey results, the top five supermarkets in the UK with regard to animal welfare were deemed to be Marks & Spencer, Waitrose, Sainsbury, Co-operative Group and Tesco. The performance indicators against which the supermarkets were judged included the proportion of free-range and organic produce sold, commitments to reducing animal transportation times, and policies against genetic engineering. However, none of these are direct indices of welfare and it is a weakness of the report that the difficulties of using such indices are not discussed.

The report also highlights a complete range of measures which CIWF believes are vital to improve the welfare of farm animals. These include: the provision of bedding material for all animals; the absence of mutilations such as tail docking, debeaking, tooth clipping or castration; no sourcing of livestock from auction markets; a reduction in journey time to slaughter, and humane slaughter techniques for all animals by use of instantaneous pre-slaughter stunning methods; a written animal welfare policy with targets that are annually reviewed; a main Board or Executive member to be appointed with specific responsibility for animal welfare; and a dedicated animal welfare officer who could facilitate active implementation of the company's animal welfare policy.

By repeating the survey on an annual basis, CIWF aims to track progress and commitment to these standards in order to improve the lives of all farm animals. A rigorous scheme of this sort

would be a welcome initiative which highlights many areas of concern about farm animal welfare and recognises those supermarkets that are working towards better standards of animal care and welfare. It is hoped that the award will encourage all supermarkets to improve the standards of animal welfare that they accept from their suppliers thereby improving the lives of individual farm animals that serve us on a daily basis. However, it is important that focus should be kept on issues of real welfare significance.

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*Supermarkets and Farm Animal Welfare: Raising the Standards.* Published by Compassion in World Farming, Charles House, 5A Charles Street, Petersfield, Hampshire, GU32 3EH, UK. The document can be found on the CIWF website: [www.ciwf.co.uk/pubs/supmart.pdf](http://www.ciwf.co.uk/pubs/supmart.pdf).

### **Chief Veterinary Officer's report: Animal Health 2001**

The 2001 Annual Report of DEFRA's Chief Veterinary Officer was published recently. It begins with a short section on the role of the State Veterinary Service and an introduction in which the Chief Veterinary Officer mentions some of the Service's achievements over the course of the year, including the handling of the foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreak and other notifiable diseases.

There are four main chapters in the document: Section A is entitled 'Protection of public health in relation to food and diseases transmissible to humans'; Section B covers 'Veterinary surveillance and emerging disease'; Section C reports on 'Prevention and control of animal diseases'; and Section D focusses on 'Animal welfare on farm, during transport, at market and at slaughter'. The chapters review, amongst other topics, current research, results of surveys, information about diseases and control strategies, an update on the Pet Travel Scheme, consumer protection, international trade and livestock protection.

The chapter on animal welfare begins by running through the measures that DEFRA introduced to help alleviate the problems caused by restrictions imposed as a result of the FMD outbreak. These included the provision of advice to farmers on changes in housing, feeding and management to deal with increased numbers of stock on premises; licences for the movement of animals, which allowed them to move across roads on the same holding; and the opening of the Livestock Welfare Disposal Scheme to deal with severe welfare problems arising from the FMD restrictions. Slaughter during the FMD epidemic, religious slaughter, consultation exercises and research and development are also mentioned.

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*Report of the Chief Veterinary Officer: Animal Health 2001.* Published by the UK Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. 95 pp A4 paperback (ISBN 0 85521 006 0). Available from DEFRA Publications, Admail 6000, London SW1A 2XX, UK, and at <http://www.defra.gov.uk>.

### **Database resource: <http://www.animalscience.com>**

CABI Publishing, a division of CAB International, has recently launched [animalscience.com](http://www.animalscience.com). This is a web-based database dedicated to information about animal and veterinary science. There are six main areas: literature search, news and reviews, books, jobs, calendar, and a links section. The literature-search records include material from serials, conference proceedings, books, and published theses and reports; the information is updated on a weekly basis and abstract records are linked to full-text primary journals via Ingenta. The news and reviews section is updated daily and includes corporate news and scientific developments. There is an extensive list of titles in animal and veterinary science in the book section and a selection of available positions around the world is advertised in the job section. In addition, the calendar