

anyway. They are, at least with the present state of knowledge, matters of judgement rather than fact. The report provides a useful summary of the present state of primate use for research and testing in the UK and an introduction to the issues underlying the ethical debate about this.

The Boyd Group Papers on the use of Non-Human Primates in Research and Testing. June 2002. Edited by Jane A Smith and Kenneth M Boyd. Published by The British Psychological Society Scientific Affairs Board Standing Advisory Committee on The Welfare of Animals in Psychology. Available from The Boyd Group, P O Box 423, Southsea PO5 1TJ, UK, and at the Boyd Group website: www.boyd-group.demon.co.uk. 59 pp A4 paperback (ISBN 1 85433 371 2). Free of charge within UK, £3 overseas postal charge.

House of Lords report on the use of animals in scientific procedures

After more than a year of gathering oral and written evidence from over 100 organisations and over 350 individuals, the House of Lords Select Committee has now published its report on the use of animals in scientific procedures. Given the breadth of the subject, the Committee is to be commended for producing a report that is only 82 pages long. For those interested in the background evidence, two supplementary volumes listing all the oral and written evidence are also available.

The report begins with a statement that lays out the Select Committee's view on the ethics of using animals in science. The committee considers that it is morally acceptable for humans to use other animals but that it is morally wrong to cause them unnecessary or avoidable suffering. The Committee believes also that there is a continued need for animal experiments both in applied research and in research aimed purely at extending knowledge. In effect, the Committee agrees with the *status quo* regarding policy with respect to using animals in experiments. The report does, however, provide a number of important recommendations for change in the operation of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. Two major ones are that the Home Office should examine ways of reducing the bureaucracy of the project license system and speeding up routine or minor amendments, and that there should be greater openness about the projects licensed — subject to specific requirements for confidentiality, for example about the identities of the researchers involved or commercial information.

There are a number of important recommendations aimed at improving animal welfare. Probably the most significant of these is the proposal to establish a Centre for the 3Rs. This Centre, which would be funded by the government, industry and animal welfare charities, would coordinate research on the 3Rs and disseminate information. The suggestion is likely to be politically attractive, but will need to be carefully examined to ensure that any new organisation lacking a proven track record does not impair the activities of organisations currently working to advance the 3Rs. Moreover, it seems uncertain that animal welfare charities will wish (or be able) to devolve responsibility for dispersing their funds to another organisation. Another important suggestion is that the Government and the scientific community should engage in a systematic search for reduction, refinement and replacement techniques in toxicology. As toxicology represents 17% of animal use and is an area in which it is notably difficult to introduce change, this is a valuable contribution; however, it remains to be seen how such a search could be organised.

It is recommended that the Animal Procedures Committee's (APC's) budget for the 3Rs should be transferred to the proposed new Centre, and that there should be greater separation of the APC from the Home Office regulators. This is at least partly to allow the APC to more actively monitor the work of the Inspectorate. This is presumably what the Committee had in mind when it recommended that the Inspectorate be subject to independent review.

There have been many calls in the past for a Royal Commission to investigate animal experimentation. The Select Committee seems to have carried out their review of this subject with commendable thoroughness and efficiency. Its proposals are valuable because they could improve animal welfare and reduce the risk of the export of research to countries with poorer welfare standards. However, there may be risks in accepting them uncritically. Some of the proposals may seem politically attractive, but they should not be initiated without further consideration of the detail of how they might be achieved in practice, and of their possible ramifications.

Select Committee on Animals in Scientific Procedures. Volume I — Report; Volume II — Oral Evidence; Volume III — Written Evidence. 16 July 2002. Three A4 paperback volumes published by authority of the House of Lords, London, by The Stationery Office Limited. Available from The Stationery Office, P O Box 29, Norwich NR3 1GN, UK; www.tso.co.uk. Volume I (HL Paper 150–I): 82 pp (ISBN 0 10 412102 5), price £13.00. Volume II (HL Paper 150–II): 411 pp (ISBN 0 10 411902 0), price £29.50. Volume III (HL Paper 150–III): 359 pp (ISBN 0 10 412002 9), price £26.50.

Code of recommendations for the welfare of meat and breeding chickens

Under Section 3 of the UK's Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1968, the Secretary of State for the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), England, the Scottish Ministers and the National Assembly for Wales are empowered to produce codes of recommendations on the welfare of farmed livestock. On 22 July 2002, DEFRA published a code of practice for the welfare of broilers and broiler breeders in England. It is 15 years since the publication, in 1987, of the government's previous code on this subject.

The Code covers a wide range of aspects of broiler rearing and breeding including stockmanship and staffing, feeding, health inspections, mutilations, accommodation, stocking density, record keeping, catching and handling, transport and disposal. Information is presented clearly and in a logical way, with the legal provisions relevant to each section being first set out in boxes, which are followed by commentary and specific guidance.

The Code is introduced in a preface in which its legal status is explained, the Five Freedoms are listed and recommended as a logical basis for the assessment of welfare, and the aims of the publication are set out. The Code is intended to encourage all those who care for farm animals to adopt the highest standards of husbandry.

This Code is required reading for all those responsible for the care of broilers and broiler breeders in England (all stockmen are required by law to be familiar with and to have access to appropriate welfare codes), but will also be of interest to those in the broiler industry elsewhere in the world. Similar codes are being produced in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and until these are published the old, 1987, welfare code for domestic fowl will still apply in these regions.

Meat Chickens and Breeding Chicks: Code of Practice for the Welfare of Livestock. July 2002. Published by the UK Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. 23 pp A4 paperback. Available from DEFRA Publications, Admail 6000, London SW1A 2XX, UK, and at <http://www.defra.gsi.gov.uk/animalh/welfare>.

Code of recommendations for the welfare of laying hens

At the same time as publishing the code of practice for the welfare of broiler chickens and broiler breeder stock (see above), DEFRA has also published a new code for the welfare of laying hens. This covers the subject under more or less the same chapter headings as in the broiler code. In