

## EU publishes evaluation on past animal welfare policies and considers options for the future

In 2006 the European Commission (EC) adopted the European Union (EU) Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2006-2010. This document laid out EU policy on animal welfare and put forward a strategy for advancing animal welfare within the EU during this period. The Action Plan was a key text for the welfare of animals within the EU since it grouped together, in a single document, all EU policy relating to the protection of animals.

The EC is now preparing a second document, the EU Animal Welfare Strategy 2011 to 2015, to take forward the welfare of animals over the next five years. As part of this process the EC Directorate General Health and Consumer Protection (DG SANCO) commissioned GHK Consulting Ltd and ADAS UK Ltd to undertake an independent evaluation of EU policy on Animal Welfare (EUPAW). The final report: *Evaluation of the EU Policy on Animal Welfare and Possible Policy Options for the Future*, was published in December 2010.

The evaluation centred around four main objectives:

- Undertake an analysis of the results of the EUPAW and a comparison with its objectives;
- Assess the efficiency of the policy in meeting these objectives and its coherence with other areas of EU Policy;
- Establish whether changes are needed to the EUPAW and suggest possible improvements to the scope, structure and working practices, having considered different policy options; and
- Make recommendations for the design of future policy, taking into account socio-economic issues.

European policy concentrates on the following four areas of activity to progress the welfare of animals: legislation, research, communications, and international initiatives. The evaluation gives an overview of these four areas, with reference to farm animals, experimental animals, companion animals, and wild animals, and also addresses the objectives above by considering eleven evaluation questions.

Interesting issues raised by the evaluation include: a recommendation for greater enforcement of existing legislation; the possibility of extending the scope of EU legislation to include other animal groups that are currently not specifically covered by an existing Directive (eg dairy cows, goats, sheep, turkeys, geese, ducks, horses, rabbits and fur animals: which total about 868 million across the EU); harmonisation of standards to avoid competitive distortions within the internal market; consideration to introducing pet welfare legislation at an EU level, such as a central registration of ownership of dogs; allocating greater amounts of EU funding to the refinement of animal experiments and to zoo animal welfare; and developing an animal welfare communication strategy.

The report will play a key role in the formation of the new animal welfare strategy, which will be published later this year.

**Evaluation of the EU Policy on Animal Welfare and Possible Options for the Future** (December 2010). A4, 211 pages. A report submitted by GHK Consulting Ltd in association with ADAS UK, and commissioned by the European Commission Directorate General Health and Consumer Protection. For further information, or to download the report, please visit the EUPAW website, available at: <http://www.eupaw.eu/>.

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