

In this contentious field, it is important that such valuable studies should be subject to the rigors of peer-review.

Welfare Aspects of Shooting Foxes (June 2003) A study for the All Party Parliamentary Middle Way Group by N Fox, S Rivers, N Blay, A G Greenwood and D Wise. 48 pp A4. Published by and available from the All Party Parliamentary Middle Way Group, c/o Lembit Öpik MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

Proposed European Council Regulation on the protection of animals during transport

On 16 July 2003, the European Commission in Brussels announced their proposals to improve the current rules regarding animal welfare during transport. The proposed Regulation aims to strengthen existing legislation covering the protection of animals during transport by addressing the quality of transport and changes in practice.

The proposals include new maximum journey times with a maximum of 9 h travelling followed by a minimum of 12 h rest, that specific temperatures should be provided according to species requirements, and that animals should have access to drinking water at all times. Another proposal is to remove the need for staging points since animals will rest in their vehicles to avoid unnecessary loading and unloading. New controls on the transport of very young animals are also detailed along with stricter controls on the transport of horses.

Improved space allowances are proposed based on species and length of journey, as are stricter controls regarding animal transport through registration of transporters. There is also a proposal for more detailed definition of unfitness for travel, for clarification of responsibilities, and for mandatory training for those dealing with animals during a journey. To improve enforcement, the regulation identifies the chain of individuals involved in animal transport and places greater onus on personal responsibility if infringements occur. Enforcement tools, such as checks via tachographs, will also be introduced.

The document also sets out stricter standards for road vehicles used for longer journeys and inspection and approval of these vehicles. If the Regulation is approved, there will be a requirement for the inspection and approval of livestock vessels. Finally, better procedures for cooperation between member states are proposed. Member states will also be encouraged to develop guides of good practice for operators.

The Regulation still requires approval from the Council of Ministers after consultation of the European Parliament; however, it is expected that this Regulation will be in force by the end of 2005.

Proposal for a Council Regulation on the protection of animals during transport and related operations (July 2003) Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the protection of animals during transport. Published by the Commission of the European Communities. 65 pp A4. Published in the Official Journal of the European Communities and available, free of charge, from the website: www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/search/en/search_oj.html

Cost–benefit assessment in the use of animals in research

The role of the UK's Animal Procedures Committee (APC) is to provide Ministers with independent advice about the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 and their functions under it. It is a legal requirement that in determining whether, and with what conditions, to grant a licence to permit scientific procedures on animals, the Secretary of State weighs the likely benefits of the work against the likely adverse effects on the animals used. In response to concerns regarding how the cost–benefit assessment operated in practice, the APC decided in