

REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Animal welfare and schools

This booklet is aimed at school heads and governors and explains why the RSPCA considers that there is a need for all schools to have, or to develop as part of their overall plan, a policy on animals and education. It also provides guidance on what the policy should cover and how it can be established. A key component of the suggested programme is the undertaking of an animal welfare audit of the school and its activities. This includes, not only an assessment of standards of management of any animals kept at the school but also the animal welfare implications of maintaining the school grounds and of catering, cleaning and waste disposal. It is suggested that much of the audit and follow-up activities can be undertaken by pupils in a way that can fulfil key requirements of the National Curriculum in core and foundation subjects.

This booklet introduces an interesting idea for a programme which, for little cost and relatively little effort, is likely to benefit animal welfare, school children and society. Hopefully the programme, or something like it, will be widely taken up.

Animals and Education. Produced and published by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (1995). A 13 page A4 paperback booklet. Obtainable from the publishers, RSPCA, Causeway, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1HG, UK.

UK Law Relating to Farm Animal Welfare

The UK Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has produced a short guide to the legislation relating to the welfare of animals on the farm. It covers the 11 main Acts of Parliament which are of importance in this area. There is a summary of the statutory provisions of each of these Acts and, where appropriate, of the Orders and Regulations made under the Acts. It is pointed out that while every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the summaries: they are only summaries and the actual legislation should be consulted and legal advice sought when particular points in the law need to be considered.

There is an especially useful appendix dealing with the legislation relating to certain (surgical) operations eg castration, dehorning, hot branding, teeth clipping, docking, debeaking. The details are laid out in seven species specific tables each with five vertical columns headed *Operation, Age of Animal, Conditions, Person who may perform, With or without anaesthetic*. This table format presents a complex mass of information in a clear and accurate manner.

Summary of the Law Relating to Farm Animal Welfare. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1996). MAFF Publications: London. 34pp. Single copies obtainable free from MAFF Publications, London SE99 7TP, UK.

Postgraduate courses in farm animal welfare

Early in 1995 the Department of Animal Hygiene of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine carried out a survey of postgraduate teaching in farm animal welfare and ethics. Some 60 university-based persons in 12 countries, known to be interested and working in this area, were contacted and asked to fill in a straightforward two-page questionnaire. All but 4 responded. The results were correlated and have now been published in booklet form. There are some 10 pages of text, 22 pages of tables and, in an Appendix, a copy of the actual questionnaire.

It was concluded that many universities seem to have paid notice to the increasing importance of the issue of farm animal welfare and ethics. The survey identified 21 universities in 10 countries that offer, or have concrete plans on starting, postgraduate courses. However, not many of the programmes really concentrate on *farm* animal issues. Also, ethics seems to be a relatively minor component of the courses compared with coverage of the science of welfare and the more practical aspects of the subject. It is suggested that future initiatives in this area should give a prominent role to the ethics component.

This booklet contains much of interest to educationalists, etc working in the agricultural animal welfare and veterinary fields.

Post Graduate Teaching in Farm Animal Welfare and Ethics. Lund V and Algers B (1995). Special Project Series No 27. Department of Animal Hygiene, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences: Skara. 34pp. Obtainable from the above, Box 345, S-532 24, Skara, Sweden (ISSN 0283 0701).

Man's relationship with animals

In April 1995 a public conference entitled *In the Company of Animals* was held in New York under the auspices of the international quarterly journal of social science, *Social Research*. This meeting was set up to examine man's relationship with animals, over time and in different cultures. The printed proceedings of this conference have now been produced as a single whole issue of Volume 62 of *Social Research*. There are 14 full papers, an Editor's Introduction, 4 Section Introductions, a Keynote Address by Stephen Jay Gould and 8 shorter contributions to a panel discussion. The 'book' has been edited by Arien Mack. The whole is, in effect, a most interesting, scholarly and wide-ranging coverage of the biological, historical, social and ethical aspects of man's relationship with animals. Animal welfarists, scientists, sociologists and historians will all benefit from browsing through and hopefully reading much of the material in this modestly priced but extremely valuable volume.

In the Company of Animals. Edited by A Mack (1995). *Social Research* 62(3). Fall 1995. 424pp. Obtainable from the New School for Social Research, 66 West 12th Street, New York, NY 10011, USA. Price US\$6.

Dog bite prevention

It has been estimated that each year some 4.7 million Americans – 2.8 million of them children – are dog bite victims. To help deal with this problem June 10th to the 15th 1996 was designated National Dog Bite Prevention Week. In dealing with this initiative the United States (HSUS) prepared a *Postmaster's Dog Bite Prevention Week Kit*. This kit is made up of a well-produced, glossy 23-page brochure produced by the United States Postal Service (USPS) and two factual leaflets and a poster produced by the HSUS.

The material, of course, is tuned to US conditions but the information provided will be useful to any organization interested in the public control of canine aggression. There are, for example, suggestions as to how the media can be made aware of the problem; there are hints as to how local authorities can be encouraged to set up dog control schemes; there are written codes to help children learn how to avoid being bitten by dogs; and there is advice to users on how to prevent their dogs becoming a danger to the public.