

processing scheme does not permit on-farm slaughter. The report strongly recommends that this slaughtering restriction be lifted to prevent calves from being needlessly exposed to long-distance travel. FAWC also reviews the conflicting views surrounding separation of mother and calf and recommends that further research should be carried out on this subject, 'taking into consideration the potential benefits that both might derive from being kept together within a practicable dairy system'.

Significantly, the Council recommends several changes to legislation to minimize pain and stress caused by mutilations such as castration, disbudding, dehorning, removal of supernumerary teats and ear tagging. They emphasize the importance of questioning whether these procedures are essential to prevent worse welfare problems. As dehorning is known to be particularly painful, the report recommends that, in addition to local anaesthesia, analgesics should also be administered as part of this procedure.

Perhaps the most encouraging point, repeated throughout the report, is that good stockmanship can help to reduce, control or prevent many of the more serious welfare problems raised, and bring benefits in terms of better health and welfare of the animals as well as a more efficient dairy herd. In particular, the once-a-day inspection of dairy cattle required by the *Welfare of Livestock Regulations 1994* is not, according to the Council, adequate for lactating animals or those near to calving. However, FAWC recognizes that it is difficult to recruit good stockmen as the job involves working antisocial hours and offers few opportunities for career progression. To help combat this problem, and to ensure competency and up-to-date knowledge among stockmen, FAWC advocate theoretical and practical training - both on-farm and from a recognized agricultural trainer. Training should, preferably, continue throughout their employment. 'It is up to those responsible for the management of farms', the report states, 'to ensure the cattle are cared for by sufficient, well-motivated stockmen and handled compassionately and in a humane manner'.

Unless this last statement is taken seriously and acted upon it seems inevitable, from the findings presented in this report, that the dairy cattle on many farms will continue to suffer unnecessarily.

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*Report on the Welfare of Dairy Cattle.* Farm Animal Welfare Council (1997). Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food: London. 96pp. Paperback. Obtainable from FAWC, Government Buildings, Hook Rise South, Tolworth, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 7NF, UK (Pub No PB3426). Free.

### **Making choices about medical research**

*Choices* is a video which seeks to explain the case for the use of animals in biomedical research to young people. It is aimed at sixth formers and college students. The video is accompanied by a short, but useful, set of teachers' notes which outlines the following reasons for making the video: (i) to provide information for pupils to help them make decisions about working with living animals or animal tissue in science classes; (ii) to offer pupils a balanced view of the issue of the use of animals in medical research; and (iii) to present the views of most medical scientists and patients' groups who are concerned that young people are being misinformed about the issues involved.

The video covers the dilemmas relating to use of animals with easily understood examples and metaphors. It is clear that the purpose of the video is to argue the case for the use of animals in medical research and to explain the reasons for and potential benefits of this activity. However, the title '*Choices*' reflects the open and questioning approach taken and,

as the notes advise, 'the audience will ultimately have to make up their own mind on the matter'. This video makes a calm and measured argument for its case, suitable for weighing in school debates on the subject.

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*Choices*. Biomedical Research Education Trust/Seriously Ill for Medical Research (1997). Produced by BRET/SIMR. VHS Video (c. 15min). Available from Biomedical Research Education Trust, Room 501, International House, 223 Regent Street, London W1R 8QD and Seriously Ill for Medical Research, PO Box 504, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU6 2LU. One copy free to schools and colleges on request.