

equines. Based on the five freedoms, basic advice is given on how to cater for an animal's welfare through considering the following needs: the need for a suitable environment; the need for an appropriate diet; the need to exhibit normal behaviour patterns; the need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals; and the need to be protected from suffering, injury and disease.

Also included within the code is information on horse passports and other applicable legislation, together with listings of publications relevant to topics covered within the code.

**Code of Practice for the Welfare of Equidae** (April 2009). A4, 32 pages. Published by the Scottish Government. Available for download from the Scottish Government website: [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk), or alternatively, hard-copies may be obtained by writing to the Rural Directorate, Animal Health and Welfare Division, Pentlands House, 47 Robb's Loan, Edinburgh EH14 1TY.

*E Carter,*  
*UFAW*

### **Introductory leaflet to goat-keeping, launched by the BVA AWF**

The British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Foundation (BVA AWF) is an animal welfare charity which aims to improve animal welfare through applying the "knowledge, skill and compassion of veterinary surgeons in an effective way". The BVA AWF undertakes and funds a variety of projects in pursuit of this goal and one of these is the production of information leaflets, the latest of which is entitled: *An Introduction to Goat Keeping*.

It is hoped that the leaflet will provide useful guidance for people interested in keeping goats by outlining some factors important for meeting goats' welfare needs. Included within the leaflet is information on how to choose the right breed of goat for your own situation, the type of facilities required for goat-keeping, what to look for in a healthy goat, and the types of diseases which goats may suffer from. Relevant legislation is also listed and a number of sources of further helpful information provided.

Other information leaflets available in the BVA AWF information series include: *Caring for your Ferret*; *What Makes my Pet Happy?*; *Taking your Pets Abroad*; and *Pets and Poisons: Keeping your Pet Safe*.

**An Introduction to Goat-Keeping** (April 2009). 5 page leaflet produced by the British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Foundation (BVA AWF). Available for download from the BVA AWF website: [www.bva-awf.org.uk](http://www.bva-awf.org.uk).

*E Carter,*  
*UFAW*

### **European Union pledges formal support for the Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare**

The 27 Agricultural Ministers of the European Council have all approved a number of conclusions adopted by the Council which highlight the importance of animal welfare at an international level and also invite Member States and the Commission to support, in principal, the Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (UDAW).

UDAW is a voluntary agreement that people, organisations or nations, may support in order to show that they recognise animals are sentient beings, are capable of suffering and that animal welfare needs should be respected. The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) originally launched the UDAW campaign in 2000 and now acts as the official Secretariat. A number of governments, veterinary associations and international animal welfare organisations have already pledged their support for the UDAW and ultimately the hope is that it will be accepted by the United Nations, thereby establishing animal welfare as a global concern and leading to the development of effective animal welfare standards worldwide.

**Council Conclusions on a Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare** (March 2009). Council of the European Union. 2934th Agriculture and Fisheries Council Meeting, Brussels. Available at: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/agricult/106877.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/agricult/106877.pdf).

Further information on the Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare is available at the following website: <http://www.udaw.org/>.

*E Carter,*  
*UFAW*

### **International agreement on validation of alternatives to tests involving animals**

A Memorandum of Co-operation has been signed by four major government agencies responsible for co-ordinating validation studies on alternatives to animal test methods: the European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ECVAM), the Japanese Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods (JACVAM), the National Toxicology Program Interagency Centre for the Evaluation of Alternative Toxicology Methods (ICCVAM, United States of America) and Canada's Environmental Health Science and Research Bureau. These organisations have supported the agreement in order to establish an International Co-operation on Alternative Test Methods (ICATM). The aim of the ICATM is to "expand and strengthen co-operation, collaboration, and communications among national validation organisations on the scientific validation and evaluation of new alternative testing methods proposed for regulatory health and safety assessments".

It is proposed that the ICATM will assist in the following five areas:

1. Further the optimal design and conduct of validation studies to support national and international regulatory decisions on the usefulness and limitations of alternative methods.
2. Further high quality independent scientific peer reviews of alternative test methods that incorporate transparency and the opportunity for stakeholder involvement.
3. Enhance the likelihood of harmonised recommendations by validation organisations on the usefulness and limitations of alternative test methods for regulatory testing purposes.
4. Achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness by avoiding duplication of effort and leveraging limited resources.

5. Support the timely international adoption of alternative methods.

The goal of such international co-operation is to reduce the number of animals required in laboratory tests and hence improve the welfare of laboratory animals worldwide.

**Memorandum of Co-operation** (April 2009). Agreement signed by the ECVAM, JACVAM, ICCVAM and Canada's Environmental Health Science and Research Bureau, regarding the International Co-operation on Alternative Test Methods. Available at: [http://iccvam.niehs.nih.gov/docs/about\\_docs/ICATM-MOC.pdf](http://iccvam.niehs.nih.gov/docs/about_docs/ICATM-MOC.pdf).

*E Carter,*  
*UFAW*

### **Novel farm animal welfare web portal now available**

Developed in partnership with a number of international collaborators, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) has recently launched a new website that it hopes will act as a central and reliable source of farm animal welfare information. Hosted and managed by the FAO, the objectives of the web portal are to raise awareness of farm animal welfare issues, foster national and international partnerships, and facilitate the funding, implementation and dissemination of animal welfare initiatives.

The website is aimed at a wide variety of users, including: farmers, policy makers, researchers, and animal welfare

organisations. Various sources of relevant information may be accessed on the site through easy-to-use links, such as: events, codes of practice and recommendations, scientific and technical papers, training material and funding opportunities. In addition, an advanced search mechanism is available to search the entire site for particular organisations, people, documents or data of interest. There is also a facility that allows individuals or organisations, once registered, to submit their own details or reports to the website. Information may be put forward in any language and once it has been deemed "pertinent, factual, notable, verifiable with cited sources, and neutrally presented", the data will be uploaded, usually within 24–72 hours of submission.

It is anticipated that the website will provide a valuable resource and, in particular, will be of benefit to less economically developed countries, thereby improving livestock health, welfare and productivity worldwide. Future plans for the website include hosting web-based events such as electronic conferences and seminars, and developing participatory projects on relevant topics.

**Gateway to Farm Animal Welfare** (May 2009). Website managed by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/animal-welfare/en/>.

*E Carter,*  
*UFAW*