

Reports and Comments

New UK Code of Practice for housing and care in science

The Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU) of the UK Home Office, the body responsible for the regulation of animal use for scientific research and testing in the UK has recently issued a new Code of Practice for the Housing and Care of Animals Bred, Supplied or Used for Scientific Purposes. The document is designed to accompany the legislation that governs the use of protected animals for scientific research and testing in the UK — the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act, 1986 (ASPA). ASPA has recently been amended following the UK's transposition of the European Directive (2010/63) and the new Code of Practice (CoP) reflects recent changes to ASPA as well as some upcoming changes.

The CoP is divided into three sections — the first section outlines the mandatory minimum standards for the care and accommodation of protected animals in the UK, whilst the second outlines standards which will come into force in 2017, including new standards for a number of species which were not covered in Section 1, such as amphibians and reptiles. Sections 1 and 2 are comprised predominantly of a series of engineering standards which specify the minimum standards for housing and environmental conditions (such as cage sizes and temperatures) for various species.

Section 3 is perhaps the most interesting as it goes beyond the legal minimum standards to provide advice on how animals should be cared for. Unlike the first two sections, this chapter adopts a mixture of engineering and performance standards, acknowledging that environmental conditions for animals may be judged to be inappropriate by inadequate performance or welfare outcomes, such as decreased breeding performance or undesirable behaviours, such as aggression. Since the role of ASRU is primarily to ensure that legal minimum standards are complied with, the inclusion of this section represents an interesting development and shows a commitment to raising standards of animal care in UK science above and beyond the minimums specified by legislation.

The advice in Section 3 takes into account recent research findings and Section 3 also includes encouragement to establishments to continually review and improve standards of care and to adopt 3Rs' principles. It is also acknowledged that Section 3 is likely to be revised or amended as new knowledge and refinement techniques emerge. Finally, at the end of the document, it is pleasing to see the inclusion of a bibliography and links to web resources, which along with encouragement for those caring for laboratory animals, and especially ethical review bodies and 'named persons' (those with statutory responsibility for animal care) to keep abreast of the latest findings to ensure that they maintain the highest welfare standards based not only on the CoP but the wider scientific literature.

As well as being an essential item on the library shelves of all institutions caring for laboratory animals in the UK, the CoP may prove useful elsewhere where less-detailed information is available.

Code of Practice for the Housing and Care of Animals Bred, Supplied or Used for Scientific Purposes (December 2014). A4, 227 pages. Home Office, UK. Available for download from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/388895/COPAnimalsFullPrint.pdf.

Huw Golledge,

UFAW

EFSA publishes Scientific Opinion on sheep welfare

Following a request from the European Commission, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) Panel have published a Scientific Opinion on the welfare risks related to the farming of sheep taking into account differences in genetic lines, local production systems, environmental conditions and nutrition.

The Opinion considers sheep farmed for three different production purposes (wool, meat and milk) and focuses on ewes and lambs. There are a number of ways in which sheep may be managed, and the AHAW Panel categorised management systems as: shepherding, intensive, semi-intensive, semi-extensive, extensive, very extensive and mixed. Characterisation was based on: degree of human contact; use of housing; quality, availability and management of pasture; and provision of supplementary feeding.

Seventeen animal welfare consequences and associated risk factors were generated by the Working Group based on the following four principles: good feeding; good housing and environment; good health; and appropriate behaviour (as identified in the Welfare Quality project®). Welfare consequences are considered by EFSA AHAW to be "changes in any welfare aspect that result from the effect of a factor or factors, defined as any aspect of the environment in relation to housing and management".

Across all systems the following welfare consequences were rated as most important in ewes: thermal stress, lameness and mastitis. In lambs, the most important welfare consequences were found to be: thermal stress, pain due to management procedures, gastro-enteric disorders, and neonatal disorders.

Validated animal-based measures (ABMs) were also identified which may be used to evaluate the welfare consequences. In ewes, suitable ABMs were found to be: body condition score, locomotion score, udder consistency and somatic cell count in milk, and for lambs: shivering, evidence of painful husbandry procedures and dag score.

The Opinion closes with 17 Conclusions and 11 Recommendations. Recommendations include: "Further

research is necessary to identify and validate protocols for ABMs for welfare consequences where none are currently suitable for on-farm assessment (eg prolonged thirst in ewes and lambs, restriction of movements in lambs)” and, “Harmonised methods to implement and maintain accurate and verifiable farmer records of mortality, incidence of diseases and welfare outcomes should be actively developed, in order to facilitate a systematic data collection”.

Scientific Opinion on the Welfare Risks Related to the Farming of Sheep for Wool, Meat and Milk Production (December 2014). A4, 128 pages. European Food Safety Authority, Animal Health and Welfare Panel. *EFSA Journal* 12(12): 3933. doi: 10.2903/j.efsa.2014.3993. Available online at: www.efsa.europa.eu/efsajournal.

E Carter,

UFAW

CCAC publishes guidelines on marine mammal care

Established in 1968, the Canadian Council of Animal Care (CCAC) is a not-for-profit, national agency responsible for setting and maintaining standards for the ethical use and care of animals in science (research, teaching, and testing) throughout Canada. Twenty-four scientific and animal welfare member bodies make up the CCAC and together they seek to advance the welfare of animals used in science through four key areas: a Standards Program; an Assessment and Certification Program; Public Affairs and Communication; and Operations.

Under the Standards Program, CCAC develops and revises guidelines according to: current and emerging needs of the research community; advances in laboratory animal care; and the needs of the CCAC Assessment and Certification Program. Guidelines are produced by a sub-committee of experts, selected according to their knowledge in one or more areas to be covered by the guidelines, and are based on scientific evidence and expert opinion. Guidelines also undergo extensive peer review.

The latest guidelines produced by the CCAC cover the care and use of marine mammals and are intended for all Canadian institutions that house these animals. The recent guidelines replace a previous CCAC document which covered marine mammal care (*Chapter XVII — Marine Mammals, Guide to the Care and Use of Experimental Animals, Volume 2*, published in 1984).

Marine mammals are defined as all members of the Order Cetacea (whales, dolphins and porpoises), the Order Sirenia (manatees and dugong), and within the Order Carnivora, the Family Phocidae (true seals), the Family Otariidae (eared seals and sea lions), the Family Odobendidae (walrus), and the sea otter (*Enhydra lutris*).

The bulk of the guidelines focus on providing information within the following chapters: General Considerations; Facilities; Facility Management, Operation and Maintenance; Acquisition and Disposition; Transportation; Husbandry; and Animal Health Care. Each chapter is divided into subsections

and, where applicable, a specific guideline is given. Guidelines may be mandatory (in which case the term ‘must’ is used), or a guideline may indicate an obligation (in which case ‘should’ is used, and any exceptions must be justified and approved by an ACC). Sixty-four specific guidelines are presented in total.

For example, within the chapter considering Husbandry there are 11 subsections and information and guidelines are presented on: Quality of Life; Daily Care and Maintenance; Record Keeping and Documentation; Standard Operating Procedures; Housing; Nutrition and Feeding Practices; Handling and Restraint; Animal Training; Quarantine and Isolation; Behavioural or Management Separation; and Breeding Management. Within section 7.1, Quality of Life, Guideline 43 states that: “Institutions housing marine mammals must give careful attention to the quality of life of the animals and address their social and behavioural requirements throughout the duration that they are held, as the interests and activities of the animals may change with age”.

The CCAC emphasise that in order to successfully cater for the many needs of captive marine mammals, an interdisciplinary approach must be used, involving the Animal Care Committee (ACC), management, animal care personnel, veterinary personnel, and investigators.

It is hoped that the guidelines will improve the care of marine mammals and the way in which experimental procedures are carried out.

Other guidelines currently under development by the CCAC include: genetically engineered animals; care and maintenance of rats; care and maintenance of mice; and care and maintenance of non-human primates.

CCAC Guidelines on the Care and Use of Marine Animals (December 2014). A4, 73 pages. Canadian Council on Animal Care. Print ISBN 978 0 919087 55 2. Available at: http://www.ccac.ca/Documents/Standards/Guidelines/CCAC_Marine_Mammals_Guidelines.pdf.

E Carter,

UFAW

Californian legislation to prevent the confinement of veal calves, egg-laying hens and pregnant pigs now in effect

In November 2008, Californian voters passed, by a margin of 63 to 37%, an initiative measure called Proposition 2. Proposition 2 sought to improve the welfare of farmed animals by preventing the cruel confinement of calves raised for veal, egg-laying hens and pregnant pigs, and resulted in a number of new provisions being added to the Californian Health and Safety Code, Chapter 13.8, Farm Animal Cruelty.

The new legislation, cited as the Prevention of Farm Animal Cruelty Act, states that: “a person shall not tether or confine any covered animal, on a farm, for all or the majority of any day, in a manner that prevents such animal from: a) lying down, standing up, and fully extending his or her limbs; and b) turning around freely”. The Act includes a division on definitions which explains the meaning of a number of terms. For example, “fully extending his or her limbs’