

Scientific Opinion on the Welfare of Cattle Kept for Beef Production and the Welfare in Intensive Calf Farming Systems (2012). A4, 166 pages. EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW). *EFSA Journal* 2012; 10 (5): 2669. doi: 10.2903/j.efsa.2012.2669. Available online at: www.efsa.europa.eu/efsajournal.

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Contingency planning for farm animal welfare in disasters and emergencies

The Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC) is an expert committee that provides independent advice on farm animal welfare to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in England, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government, and other Government Departments and Agencies. The latest advisory report issued by FAWC is an *Opinion on Contingency Planning for Farm Animal Welfare in Disasters and Emergencies*.

The Opinion identifies various disaster and emergency situations that may threaten the welfare of farmed species, including fish. FAWC defines a disaster as “an event that exceeds the local capacity to deal with it” and an emergency as “an unforeseen or sudden occurrence that demands immediate action”. A number of disaster and emergency scenarios that could adversely affect animal welfare are outlined by FAWC, including: human disease; animal disease; industrial accidents; deliberate acts; severe weather; natural disasters; loss of power or technical failure; transport problems; and damage to buildings. Examples are given for each of these scenarios and a brief explanation as to how they may impact upon animal welfare.

FAWC describe four main ways through which the needs of animals may be adversely affected by a disaster or emergency: (1) as a direct result of the disaster (eg during a flood animals may suffer from hypothermia and pneumonia following prolonged exposure to water); (2) as a result of the way in which animals are managed (eg if milking facilities and routines are disrupted for high yielding dairy cows then this can result in poor welfare due to mastitis); (3) through effects on farm or emergency workers (eg farm workers are themselves affected by an emergency and are unable to care for their animals’ needs); and (4) as a result of the way in which the emergency is managed (eg standstill orders may be given during a notifiable disease outbreak and these can have a great impact on the welfare of growing animals if they cannot be transported to other areas of the farm).

Disasters and emergencies may vary greatly in duration and scale, ranging from national, eg a widespread notifiable disease outbreak, to individual local incidents, eg the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service undertook 350 animal rescues in 2010. Various emergency and disaster case studies are described more fully in the Appendix, along with a list of animal disease outbreaks that have occurred over the past 10 years.

FAWC defines contingency planning as: “a mechanism for anticipating and thereby proposing responses to unexpected and unintended events and emergencies”. The national and

regional considerations for co-ordinating a response to an emergency in the UK are discussed and it is noted that although there is a contingency plan in place to cover exotic notifiable disease of animals in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, there is no contingency plan in place for non-disease emergencies. Additionally, there are no contingency plans in place at an EU level.

The Opinion then outlines best practice contingency planning for livestock through using an established set of eight principles developed in other contexts: Anticipation; Preparedness of organisations and individuals; Subsidiarity; Direction; Information; Integration; Cooperation; and Continuity. Each principle is explained in the context of farm animal welfare. FAWC then goes on to describe the role that various livestock stakeholders may play in the management of animal welfare in emergencies.

The Opinion draws to a close with a number of recommendations, including: “Local farm animal emergency networks should be developed that involve relevant stakeholders and services in contingency planning an emergency response. National Farmers Unions and other stakeholders should be active in developing such networks, which should be integrated into regional and national emergency plans”. It is also recommended that “The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency Disease Alert Subscription Service should be expanded to cover other types of emergency”.

Opinion on Contingency Planning for Farm Animal Welfare in Disasters and Emergencies (March 2012). A4, 14 pages. Farm Animal Welfare Committee. Available for download from the FAWC website: www.defra.gov.uk/fawc, or by contacting FAWC at the following address: Area 8B, 9 Millbank, c/o Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR, UK.

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New Zealand Code of Welfare for goats

There are over 100,000 goats in New Zealand (NZ) and the National Animal Welfare Advisory Council (NAWAC) has recently published a new Code of Welfare to inform all ‘owners’ and ‘persons in charge’ of the relevant minimum standards to ensure that the needs of all goats are met. The Code covers all kept goats including: farmed goats (eg milk, mohair, cashmere and meat production); companion goats; tethered goats; goats kept on estates or safari parks; and feral goats when collected for farming or slaughter. The only ones not covered by the Code are those defined as ‘wild’ by the Wild Animal Control Act 1977.

The key areas considered are: Stockmanship and Animal Handling; Food and Water; Shelter and Housing Facilities; Husbandry Practices; Health; Emergency Humane Destruction; and Quality Management. Within these sections a total of 19 minimum standards are given and each standard follows a similar format. For example, minimum standard number 5 covers the mixing of goats and states: “Where goats are mixed, they must be managed to minimise the effects of aggression”. Example indicators are then given that may be used to show that this standard is being

followed, eg provision of sufficient space to allow bullied goats to move away from their aggressor, and removal of persistently bullied goats from the herd. Recommended best practice is then provided, in varying levels of detail, and in the case of mixing goats it is recommended that goats are not mixed more frequently than necessary due to the social distress that occurs during the re-establishment of a social hierarchy between the resident and incoming goats.

Codes of Welfare are not stand-alone documents and for more detailed information on painful husbandry procedures the new Code directs readers to the Animal Welfare (Painful Husbandry Procedures) Code of Welfare 2005. Goats may be subjected to a number of painful husbandry procedures during their lifetime (eg disbudding, castration and occasionally dehorning) and the new Code makes the point that special care should be taken when disbudding goat kids using thermal cautery to avoid damaging underlying tissues, including the brain, as the skull of goat kids is much thinner than that of calves.

Other useful Codes of Welfare, Codes of Recommendation and Minimum Standards, and Guidelines are listed in the Appendix, along with a Body Condition Scoring Chart for goats, a list of interpretations and definitions of terms used within the code and a section on legislative requirements.

Welfare codes play a key role in improving the care of animals by providing extra detail to the relevant animal welfare legislation and, although not legally binding in themselves, minimum standards may be used as evidence to support a prosecution for an offence under the NZ Animal Welfare Act. Codes are reviewed at least every 10 years or sooner if necessary.

Animal Welfare (Goats) Code of Welfare 2012 (March 2012). A4, 48 pages. National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, New Zealand. ISBN: 978 0 478 38763 3 (print) ISBN: 978 0 478 38764 3 (online). The guidelines are available at the MAF website: <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare>, or by emailing: animalwelfare@maf.govt.nz.

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Progress report on The Kennel Club's dog health group

This report summarises the work of the Dog Health Group of the Kennel Club, which includes the work of the Assured Breeders scheme, Breed Standards and Conformation, and Genetics and Health Screening sub-groups. As such it gives some insight into how the Kennel Club has sought to tackle the issues concerning the health and breeding of dogs that, of late, have been a subject of much media and public concern that resulted in a number of independent reports (outlined in Reports and Comments published in previous issues of *Animal*

Welfare: volume 19, issues 1 and 2) and the formation of the Advisory Council on the Welfare Issues of Dog Breeding.

The report highlights the launch of 'Mate Select' as being the most significant activity of the group in 2011. This service seeks to address the issue of inherited genetic defects by trying to assist breeders in avoiding matings between individuals that are very closely related. An online service calculates an individual's inbreeding coefficient, the current inbreeding coefficient for their breed, and predicts the inbreeding coefficients of puppies from a hypothetical mating. Also welcome is the information that the Kennel Club's Charitable Trust has spent £400,000+ in support of research into improving canine health and welfare.

For those who like reports with data, of interest will be the sections on the 'Monitoring of Judging of High Profile Breeds' (15 breeds of dogs whose health and welfare the Kennel Club has identified of particular concern — these include the Pug, Pekingese and St Bernard) and Annex A that reports on the annual summaries of health data generated by the British Veterinary Association/KC health schemes for hip and elbow dysplasia and eye health, and the results of DNA testing of breeds for prevalence of various heritable conditions.

With respect to 'High Profile Breeds', the Kennel Club has now agreed that the 'best of breed' award at their dog shows should be discretionary (rather than mandatory as previously) enabling judges — should they be so disposed — to not declare a 'best of breed' if they decide that the dog before them is suffering from any visible condition which adversely affects its health or welfare*. As part of encouraging such decisions, judges have been requested to complete a report providing their opinion of the health and well-being of dogs they have judged and a summary of these along with similar reports from independent observers are detailed. The St Bernard and Mastiff breeds are two that attracted some of the lowest gradings, with eyes, hindquarters and lameness being of specific concern in both.

Finally, the report draws attention to the fact that initiatives to limit the number of litters born to individual dogs have now come into effect. The number of litters that can be registered per bitch is now limited to four and the number of litters born by Caesarean section that can be registered to two.

* NB: At the Kennel Club's premier dog show, Cruft's, earlier in 2012, independent veterinary surgeons contracted by the Kennel Club decided that no 'best of breed' award should be given to the Pekingese, Clumber Spaniel, Neapolitan Mastiff and Bulldog breeds because of health concerns.

The Kennel Club Dog Health Group Annual Report 2011 (2012). A4, 40 pages. Published by The Kennel Club, UK and available at: <http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/item/3671>.

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