

Stranded cetaceans

The RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) has produced a second edition of its stranded whales booklet. The first version was published out of the RSPCA's 1983 Stranded Whale Workshop and this 1994 edition incorporates additional information from a follow-up seminar run by the Society in November 1992.

The main purpose of this well written and very practically organized booklet is to assist those who may be officially involved after stranding incidents eg the police, the coastguard, animal welfare society officials, veterinary surgeons and environmental health officers.

Clear instructions are given as to what should and should not be attempted and thoughts are directed both towards the welfare of the stranded cetacean and the safety of the human helpers. The booklet includes items on protecting the stranded cetacean from injury and overheating; refloating; transportation; convalescence in captivity, and humane killing. There is an illustrated identification section, and a detachable British Museum (Natural History) stranded whale report form has been included.

The point is well made that the stranding event should be recorded in as much detail as possible so that others may benefit from the accumulation and correlation of the hard-bought experience of those who have assisted at strandings.

This most useful and reasonably priced booklet should be available to all who may, at some time, have to deal with stranded cetaceans.

Stranded Whales, Dolphins and Porpoises: A First Aid Guide Produced and published by the RSPCA: Horsham (1994). 32pp. Paperback. Obtainable from the publishers, Causeway, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1HG, UK. Price £1.10 including postage.

Codes of animal welfare

In 1989 the then New Zealand (NZ) Minister of Agriculture set up an Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC) to advise him on animal welfare matters. The Committee has continued in existence and now consists of members from the following backgrounds: the farming community, animal welfare groups, the veterinary profession, behavioural science and the NZ Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. It also includes the Chairman of the NZ National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee, an independent chairman and, up to February 1991, a philosopher. Much of the Committee's work has been directed towards a series of Codes of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Animals.

These codes – three of those published in 1993 on horses, bobby calves and animals in breeding establishments being noted here – were developed after extensive consultation with industry and other interested groups. The codes take account of five basic animal needs:

- freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition;
- provision of appropriate comfort and shelter;
- prevention, or rapid diagnosis and treatment of injury, disease or infestation with parasites;
- freedom from distress;
- ability to display normal patterns of behaviour.

These basic animal needs are essentially the same as the UK Farm Animal Welfare Council's 1992 so-called 'new Five Freedoms'. In many ways the NZ Animal Welfare Advisory Committee seems to work in a similar manner to the UK Farm Animal Welfare Committee, although the UK's Codes of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock do not include in their titles the words Minimum Standards. Minimum standards in the UK would be set more by statutory regulations and not by a code of recommendation.

The *Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Horses* is a substantial and somewhat unique document which covers most aspects of horse use and care in New Zealand. There are sections on legal responsibilities; grazing; feeding; housing; husbandry; agistment (the commercial keeping of horses belonging to other people for grazing, education, conditioning, training or breeding); lease hire premises; equine events; transport, and humane slaughter.

The *Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Bobby Calves* – defined as a calf which is at least 4 days old and is destined for slaughter for human consumption – is shorter than the horse code but is laid out in the same general way. There are however special sections on 'Maturity and acceptability for slaughter', 'Calf diseases and drug residues' and on 'Emergency humane destruction'.

The *Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Care of Animals in Boarding Establishments* deals briefly with the housing, management, feeding and health of dogs and cats kept in commercial boarding kennels and catteries. There is information here that could be useful to the current UK revision of boarding establishments' standards.

Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Horses Code of Animal Welfare No 7. 43pp. ISBN 0 478 07310 0.

...*Bobby Calves* Code of Animal Welfare No 8. 11pp. ISBN 0 478 07328 3.

...*Care of Animals in Boarding Establishments* Code of Animal Welfare No 9. 11pp. ISBN 0 478 07332 1.

All paperback. AWAC (1993). Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries: Wellington. Obtainable from the publishers, ASB Bank House, 101-103 The Terrace, PO Box 2526, Wellington, New Zealand. Free of charge for the first five copies, subsequent copies NZ\$4.

Rearing pheasants for shoots

The rearing of pheasants for release and the subsequent shooting of them for sport has been much criticized by animal welfarists. Many of the arguments, however, have been made without the non-specialist critics knowing much about the practicalities of the operation. A short booklet published by the Farm Animal Welfare Network (FAWN) – an organization originally set up as Chickens' Lib – will largely fill this information gap. The publication briefly covers such matters as the number of birds reared to be shot; the method of rearing; the use of 'bits' and 'spectacles' to control aggression; the health of the birds, and their legal protection. It will be argued by some that the material in this FAWN document is presented in a somewhat one-sided manner but, at least, the booklet does bring many of the practicalities of rearing pheasants for shooting out into the open.