

REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Animal welfare and schools

This booklet is aimed at school heads and governors and explains why the RSPCA considers that there is a need for all schools to have, or to develop as part of their overall plan, a policy on animals and education. It also provides guidance on what the policy should cover and how it can be established. A key component of the suggested programme is the undertaking of an animal welfare audit of the school and its activities. This includes, not only an assessment of standards of management of any animals kept at the school but also the animal welfare implications of maintaining the school grounds and of catering, cleaning and waste disposal. It is suggested that much of the audit and follow-up activities can be undertaken by pupils in a way that can fulfil key requirements of the National Curriculum in core and foundation subjects.

This booklet introduces an interesting idea for a programme which, for little cost and relatively little effort, is likely to benefit animal welfare, school children and society. Hopefully the programme, or something like it, will be widely taken up.

Animals and Education. Produced and published by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (1995). A 13 page A4 paperback booklet. Obtainable from the publishers, RSPCA, Causeway, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1HG, UK.

UK Law Relating to Farm Animal Welfare

The UK Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has produced a short guide to the legislation relating to the welfare of animals on the farm. It covers the 11 main Acts of Parliament which are of importance in this area. There is a summary of the statutory provisions of each of these Acts and, where appropriate, of the Orders and Regulations made under the Acts. It is pointed out that while every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the summaries: they are only summaries and the actual legislation should be consulted and legal advice sought when particular points in the law need to be considered.

There is an especially useful appendix dealing with the legislation relating to certain (surgical) operations eg castration, dehorning, hot branding, teeth clipping, docking, debeaking. The details are laid out in seven species specific tables each with five vertical columns headed *Operation, Age of Animal, Conditions, Person who may perform, With or without anaesthetic*. This table format presents a complex mass of information in a clear and accurate manner.

Summary of the Law Relating to Farm Animal Welfare. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1996). MAFF Publications: London. 34pp. Single copies obtainable free from MAFF Publications, London SE99 7TP, UK.

Postgraduate courses in farm animal welfare

Early in 1995 the Department of Animal Hygiene of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine carried out a survey of postgraduate teaching in farm animal welfare and ethics. Some 60 university-based persons in 12 countries, known to be interested and working in this area, were contacted and asked to fill in a straightforward two-page questionnaire. All but 4 responded. The results were correlated and have now been published in booklet form. There are some 10 pages of text, 22 pages of tables and, in an Appendix, a copy of the actual questionnaire.