

dangerous wild animals. DWAA achieves this aim by requiring all private individuals to obtain a dangerous wild animal licence from their local authority before keeping an animal listed in the Schedule of the Act and through detailing a number of conditions that must be satisfied before a licence may be granted. One requirement under the Act is for a veterinary surgeon to inspect the premises where a dangerous animal is to be kept. The inspection is to ensure that the property is of a type suitable to house the animal securely and that granting a licence would not go against the public interest on the grounds of safety, nuisance or otherwise. Also assessed are basic provisions concerning the suitability of animal accommodation, including the requirement that adequate food, drink and bedding materials are provided.

Over the past few years, the Government has undertaken several consultation exercises reviewing the DWAA and licensing arrangements, the latest taking place in 2008, and a number of modifications to update the existing legislation have now been agreed. These include:

- Removal of the mandatory requirement that a veterinary inspection is carried out when a licence is due for renewal;
- Extension of the validity of a licence from one year to two years;
- A change from awarding licenses by calendar year to allowing them to come into force immediately upon being granted.

A further amendment, to remove animal welfare considerations from the DWAA had also been put forward during consultation but was rejected following strong opposition from welfare organisations and veterinary associations. It was considered that the basic husbandry requirements covered within the DWAA were still necessary to help safeguard the welfare of dangerous wild animals.

The Government hopes that the changes will reduce administrative burdens on local authorities and animal keepers and enable local authorities to better target inspections of premises where wild animals are kept. The above amendments will come into force in October 2009.

Further information explaining the Dangerous Wild Animals Act and the agreed amendments is available on the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/protection/dwaa/>.

The Legislative Reform (Dangerous Wild Animals) (Licensing) Order (2009). Draft statutory order laid before Parliament in June 2009. Available at: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2009/draft/ukdsi_9780111480984_en_1.
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EFSA reviews Three Rs principle for animals in toxicology food safety experiments

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) provides independent scientific advice and communication on risks associated within the food chain. In this role, EFSA

Scientific Committees, Scientific Panels and other expert Working Groups carry out work and deliver Scientific Opinions and advice on all issues linked to food and feed safety, nutrition, animal health and welfare, plant protection and plant health.

The majority of risk assessment projects undertaken by EFSA require some form of experimental work to be carried out to ensure high levels of food and feed safety and part of this process involves toxicological testing on animals. EFSA is required to take account of animal health and welfare during its work and is keen to promote animal welfare where possible. The Authority has therefore published a Scientific Opinion that reviews how the organisation incorporates the Three Rs ethical framework (Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement of animals in laboratory testing) when considering humane endpoints for toxicology studies. Toxicological investigations carried out by EFSA, include: toxicokinetic studies; acute toxicity testing; skin irritation and corrosion testing; skin sensitisation testing; eye irritation testing; testing for acute systemic and local toxicity; genotoxicity testing; repeated dose toxicity and reproduction and developmental toxicity studies.

Existing methods of replacement, reduction and refinement are discussed for each toxicological endpoint and recent and future possibilities for further development are considered. According to Professor Vittotio Silano, Chair of the EFSA's Scientific Committee: "This opinion is a thorough review of the guiding principles on the use of animals for experimental purposes. It summarises possibilities for replacement, reduction and refinement of animal testing within the different areas of EFSA's activities. We hope it will help in further developing a proactive approach to animal welfare in its risk assessment activities based on sound scientific principles."

It is recommended by the Scientific Committee that EFSA reviews the organisation's progress in relation to alternatives to animal testing in three year's time.

Existing Approaches Incorporating Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of Animal Testing: Applicability in Food and Feed Risk Assessment (2009). Scientific Opinion of the Scientific Committee on request from EFSA. The EFSA Journal (2009) 1052, 1-77. Available for download at: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/efsa_locale-1178620753812_1211902559349.htm.

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European Food Safety Authority issues six reports on dairy cow welfare

Over a number of years, dairy production systems have increased in intensification, and the breeding of dairy cows has been highly-g geared towards achieving maximum milk yields. There has been a growing concern that the welfare of dairy cows has been adversely affected by these cumulative changes. It is therefore timely that, in a response to a request by the European Commission, the Animal Health and

Animal Welfare (AHAW) Panel of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have issued five scientific opinions and a scientific report on the welfare of dairy cows.

The remit given to EFSA was to consider whether current European farming and husbandry systems comply with the pathological, zootechnical, physiological and behavioural well-being requirements of dairy cows. In particular, the European Commission wished for the impact that genetic selection for high productivity has had on animal welfare to be considered, along with the incidence of lameness, mastitis, metabolic disorders and fertility problems.

In view of the abundance of information and scientific research relating to these issues, the AHAW Panel divided the project into a number of separate areas. The largest of the resulting documents was a comprehensive scientific catch-all report that considered the effects of farming systems on dairy cow welfare and disease. Additionally, four risk assessments were undertaken, and separate scientific opinions written, on each of the following areas: i) metabolic and reproductive disorders; ii) udder disorders; iii) leg and locomotion disorders and iv) behavioural disorders, fear and pain. Each risk assessment considered the four main dairy production systems in use across Europe (cubicle houses, tie-stalls, straw yards, and pasture) and any hazards identified were placed under one of the following headings: housing; nutrition and feeding; management; and genetics. An overall scientific opinion was also produced which took into account the findings of the scientific report and the conclusions and recommendations of the four risk assessment opinions.

Scientific Opinion on Welfare of Dairy Cows in Relation to Behaviour, Fear and Pain Based on a Risk Assessment with Special Reference to the Impact of Housing, Feeding, Management and Genetic Selection (2009). Scientific opinion of the EFSA Animal Health and Animal Welfare Panel on a request from the European Commission. The EFSA Journal (2009) 1139, 1-68. Available at: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/ScientificPanels/efsa_locale-1178620753812_AHAW.htm.

Scientific Opinion on Welfare of Dairy Cows in Relation to Metabolic and Reproductive Problems Based on a Risk Assessment with Special Reference to the Impact of Housing, Feeding, Management and Genetic Selection (2009). Scientific opinion of the EFSA Animal Health and Animal Welfare Panel on a request from the European Commission. The EFSA Journal (2009) 1140, 1-75. Available at: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/ScientificPanels/efsa_locale-1178620753812_AHAW.htm.

Scientific Opinion on Welfare of Dairy Cows in Relation to Udder Problems Based on a Risk Assessment with Special Reference to the Impact of Housing, Feeding, Management and Genetic Selection (2009). Scientific opinion of the EFSA Animal Health and Animal Welfare Panel on a request from the European Commission. The EFSA Journal (2009) 1141, 1-60. Available at: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/ScientificPanels/efsa_locale-1178620753812_AHAW.htm.

Scientific Opinion on Welfare of Dairy Cows in Relation to Leg and Locomotion Problems Based on a Risk Assessment with Special Reference to the Impact of Housing, Feeding, Management and Genetic Selection (2009). Scientific opinion of the EFSA Animal Health and Animal Welfare Panel on a request from the European Commission. The EFSA Journal (2009) 1142, 1-57. Available at: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/ScientificPanels/efsa_locale-1178620753812_AHAW.htm.

Scientific Opinion on the Overall Effects of Farming Systems on Dairy Cow Welfare and Disease (2009). Scientific opinion of the EFSA Animal Health and Animal Welfare Panel on a request from the European Commission. The EFSA Journal (2009) 1143, 1-38. Available at: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/ScientificPanels/efsa_locale-1178620753812_AHAW.htm.

Effects of Farming Systems on Dairy Cow Welfare and Disease (2009). Scientific report of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) prepared by the Animal Health and Animal Welfare Unit. Annex to the EFSA Journal (2009) 1143, 1-284. Available at: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/ScientificPanels/efsa_locale-1178620753812_AHAW.htm.

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