

## EDITORIAL

The first contribution in this issue of *Animal Welfare* is the second of the newly instigated *Invited Essays*, written at the invitation of the editor and aimed at addressing contemporary welfare problems. It is by Robert Hubrecht, Assistant Director of UFAW and it examines the techniques involved in the genetic modification of animals, and considers the welfare implications and the relevance of the current UK legislation. These essays, which will be an occasional feature of the journal, are refereed by independent experts but very much represent the personal views of the authors. Hopefully some of the opinions expressed will stimulate readers to respond with constructive critical comments, which could be published in the journal's *Letters* section. The original author will of course have the right to reply.

There are five main *Articles* and one *Short Communication*. The first (Anderson *et al*) is a detailed case history of the successful rearing of a newborn capuchin monkey following major emergency surgery (amputation of a seriously infected arm). The infant was kept in isolation with its mother for three weeks, and the pair were then resocialized with the seven other members of the captive social group.

This is followed by a valuable and extensive review type article (Sainsbury *et al*) on the harm caused by human activity to free-living wild animals in Europe. The extent of the problem is brought home when the impact of man is quantified in terms of the numbers of animals suffering and/or dying. Then there is a study (Beattie *et al*) on the effects of environmental enrichment on behaviour and productivity of growing pigs. This contribution shows how welfare can be improved by providing additional space, peat and straw, without lowering the growth rates of the animals.

Next is a critical review (Reinhardt *et al*) of the restraint methods used on laboratory primates. Physical restraint methods are usually a source of fear and distress – the animals do not often habituate. Humane training techniques result in cooperative subjects. This has the advantage that the capture, restraint, blood sampling, injection, or veterinary examination can be carried out quickly and precisely without distressing the animal. This is good animal welfare and good science.

The final main article (Gansloßer) considers the effects of age/sex class relationships on the captive-breeding of kangaroos and wallabies. This fascinating piece emphasizes the importance of understanding the behavioural organization of the animals, and then applying this information to social groups set up within the captive environment such that normal social activity – including, in some species, desirable/normal aggression – is possible. Keepers of wild animals usually feel that they have to reduce, wherever possible, the levels of conflict amongst the animals in their care. Normal social activity does, however, involve a certain amount of aggression in many species.

The *Short Communication* (Scott *et al*) presents the results of a questionnaire survey of the opinions of veterinary students, who have had experience of lambing during their farming practice, on the humaneness (or otherwise) of the various methods commonly used for the correction of vaginal prolapses in ewes. This survey showed quite clearly

that perivulval suturing is, from the welfare point of view, preferred to mattress suturing.

We are now receiving large numbers of papers for possible inclusion in the journal. There are, however, quite a number of articles – fully refereed and edited – awaiting publication. A delay is beginning to build up between submission time and publication date. This is being dealt with in the short term by increasing the size, without as yet increasing the price of each issue of the journal. The long-term solution will be to increase the number of pages per issue and to restrict the length of the papers. We intend to firmly encourage both these approaches. All will benefit: authors through shorter delays in publication; the journal through publishing more information per issue; and the subject of animal welfare in that relevant technical material will move more quickly into the public domain and be available for improving the ways in which man uses and cares for animals.

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Editor-in-Chief