

**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](http://www.efsa.europa.eu/efsajournal).

*E Carter,*

*UFAW*

### **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](http://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.

*E Carter,*

*UFAW*

### **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