

There are sections on cattle, sheep, pig, horse, deer and poultry handling and literature on the welfare of cattle, pigs, horses and poultry during transport has also been comprehensively reviewed. Individual chapters of the book have been written by authors with either research or practical experience of their subject. For example, within their respective chapters there are reviews by Grandin on cattle handling; Hutson on sheep handling; Hemsworth on responses of pigs to human handling; Tarrant on cattle transport; Lambooij and van Putten on pig transport, and Nicol on poultry transport. The international perspective of the book adds to its interest and value.

There was only a limited amount of research material on the transport of sheep and deer available to the authors. By the time that a second edition is prepared there will be much more published research on the transport of all farm animals. There are no specific sections on air and sea transport, however the chapter on pig transport covers air and rail transport, and transport of sheep by sea is covered in an introductory chapter.

The relevance of measurements of behaviour, physiology, mortality, injury and carcase quality to the assessment of animal welfare during handling and transport is discussed in chapters on stress by Gross and Siegel and welfare assessment by Broom. In addition to the handling of animals in relation to transport and slaughter, handling of animals on farms is also discussed with contributions by Gonyou, Ewbank and Albright. The problems of handling livestock in extensive or range conditions are considered in separate chapters from those on handling of animals in more intensive systems.

This is a book that I would recommend to anyone with an interest in animal welfare and the efficient handling of livestock.

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The Mink

Nigel Dunstone (1993). T & A D Poyser: London. 232pp. Hardback. Obtainable from the publishers, Foots Cray High Street, Sidcup, Kent DA14 5HP, UK (ISBN 0 85661 080 1) Price £19.50.

This is a fascinating book which will not only be of great practical value to anyone who is working with mink but will also appeal to all those interested in wildlife and natural history.

There are eleven chapters covering all aspects of the subject and there is a very useful reference section divided into three parts. One covers actual references mentioned in the text, one is a species index and the third is a comprehensive general index. There are a great number of black and white drawings and diagrams which are both clear and useful and eight pages of coloured photographs which are extremely attractive as well as illustrative of particular points made in the text.

The mink is a generalist which has managed to survive in a world where most species have found some adaption was essential to survival and in many cases a very high degree of specialization has been necessary.

The first three chapters cover the world distribution of both wild and feral mink, their classification and their anatomy. Then there is information on their habitat, food and lifestyle followed by a description of sexual behaviour and the rearing of their young. All these chapters contain a wealth of detail demonstrating the careful research carried out by the author and his colleagues over the last twenty years.

Having painted a very comprehensive picture of the mink, the author bravely attacks the two subjects connected with this creature which appear to stimulate so much controversy: the farming of mink for the fur trade and the environmental effect resulting from the establishment of colonies of feral mink. He manages to discuss these two topics without bias and for those who want information and have a genuinely open mind on either or indeed both of these subjects, this section is ideal. He points out that the main debate concerning fur farming centres around whether security and food are important enough to be traded for freedom and implies that for a human, the answer will depend on the individual, and that unfortunately the mink is unable to indicate a preference. As far as the effect of feral mink on the environment is concerned one is left with the distinct impression that as the mink population is not expanding and eradication is not feasible then it is a situation that must be accepted.

This book fills a need which has long been felt by many people for an authoritative and comprehensive publication on this interesting animal. It is not only an excellent text book but is also extremely readable.

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Action for Animals: Animals in Research

Produced and published by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals: Horsham (1993). Obtainable from the publishers, Causeway, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1HG, UK. Price £10.95 plus £1 postage.

This is the fourth in a series of resource packs produced for secondary schools, earlier packs having focused on companion animals, wildlife concerns (both published in 1990) and farm animals (published in 1991). The pack consists of a set of 40 slides, text related to the slides and an information booklet for teachers. The target audience is 11 to 16 year olds but the purpose of the packs is to provide teachers with information, questions and visual material that will provoke discussion on issues surrounding the use of animals in research.

The slides are plastic mounted, individually numbered and include pictures of people, monkeys, pigs, cats, dogs, rabbits, rats and an octopus. Other images are of data, pamphlets and RSPCA policy. The slides are of good quality and provide the opportunity to present the animals in research issues in a balanced way. The same materials could be used to give a one-sided view but that is in the gift of the presenter. One minor irritation is the difficulty of removing slides from the plastic wallet in the intended running order.