

illegally docked and also about what to check for if a client brings in a docked puppy that meets the criteria for exemption. Suggestions are also given about sources of further information and there is a brief round-up of the relevant legislation in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Although tail docking of working dogs meeting the criteria is permissible, some veterinarians are not comfortable with carrying out the procedure and the guidance leaflet advises veterinarians that “regardless of new laws you are NOT obliged to dock exempt dogs. This remains at your discretion as a veterinary surgeon”.

The BVA AWF guidance will provide a useful starting point for veterinarians when confronted with the issue of tail docking in dogs.

BVA Animal Welfare Foundation Guidelines: The Practical and Legal Approach to the Docked Puppy (November 2011). A4, 7 pages. Guidance leaflet produced by the British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Foundation (BVA AWF). Available at the following BVA AWF webpage: http://www.bva-awf.org.uk/about/BVA_AWF_Tail_docking_guidance_Nov2011.pdf.

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The use of animal-based measures to assess the welfare of pigs and dairy cattle

Following a request by the European Commission, the Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) Panel of the European Food Standards Agency (EFSA) has recently investigated the use of animal-based measures to assess the welfare of pigs and dairy cattle, the findings of which were published in January in the form of two Scientific Opinions. The EFSA AHAW Panel provides independent, scientific advice on all aspects of animal health and welfare (predominantly farm animals) to the European Commission, the European Parliament, and Member States. Its Scientific Opinions focus on helping risk managers identify methods to reduce unnecessary animal pain, distress and suffering and to increase animal welfare where possible. The advice given by EFSA is frequently used to support policy decision-making, such as adopting or amending European legislation.

The EFSA AHAW Panel considers animal welfare to encompass both the physical health and emotional state of an animal and it states that animal-based measures are increasingly being used to assess an animal's welfare rather than resource (environment) or practice (management) measures. Animal-based measures seek to evaluate the welfare status of an animal directly and to encompass any impact that environmental and management factors may have.

On reviewing previous EFSA Scientific Reports (that consider pig and dairy cattle welfare), and the EU-funded project, Welfare Quality® (which published protocols for assessing the welfare of pigs, and dairy cattle using predominantly animal-based measures in 2009), the Panel considered that animal-based measures

can be used effectively to evaluate the welfare of pigs and dairy cows and, where possible, these should be used in preference to resource or practice measurements. The majority of animal-based observations and measures are made on a sample of individual animals and these results may then be interpreted at the farm or group level. It is suggested that non-animal-based measures may be used when the association between them and a welfare outcome is strong and when they are more efficient to use than animal-based measures.

Certain animal-based measures were identified by EFSA as addressing the largest number of poor welfare outcomes as identified by EFSA's previous recommendations and hazards. In pigs, these measures were: health (sneezing, coughing, scouring, mortality); behaviour (both positive social behaviour and negative, eg tail-biting); and general appearance (wounds on the body and body condition score). In dairy cattle, the following animal-based measures were found to be important: lameness; hock, knee and skin lesions and swelling; colliding with equipment when standing or lying; teat injuries; evidence of mastitis; and body condition score.

A large part of both Opinions is taken up with a multitude of tables that list the welfare recommendations from previous EFSA Scientific Opinions along with suitable animal-based and non-animal-based measures. The lists put forward are extensive and the Panel note that it is not necessary to measure all things on all occasions. It is intended that the lists are thought of more as a ‘tool-box’ of possible measures and the selection of measures chosen will depend on the welfare outcome to be assessed and the reason for wanting to assess them, eg whether as part of a management/breeding programme or to comply with legislation.

In both Opinions, it is stated that although a number of animal-based measures are fully developed, eg stereotypies in sows, and gait scoring in dairy cattle, they are not always widely used in commercial practice and, conversely, some animal-based measures are in regular use, eg somatic cell counts in dairy cattle, but they are not fully utilised as an indicator of animal welfare. It is recommended that automatic data-recording systems for animal-based measures are further developed and more widely implemented. Additionally, herd monitoring and surveillance programmes should be employed within both the pig and dairy industries using a range of suitable ‘benchmark’ animal-based measures to show changes in welfare over time.

It is expected that, following suitable training, the measures put forward may be used by a farmer, veterinarian or inspector when evaluating animal welfare on-farm, and also at the slaughterhouse for ante and post mortem checks. It is hoped that the Scientific Opinions on pigs and dairy cattle are the first in a series and, in time, that all farm species will be covered. The Opinions support the implementation of the recently adopted European Union Animal Welfare Strategy 2012-2015.

Scientific Opinion on the Use of Animal-Based Measures to Assess Welfare of Dairy Cows (2012). A4, 81 pages. EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare. *EFSA Journal* (2012): 10(1): 2554. doi: 10.2903/j.efsa.2012.2554. Available online at: www.efsa.europa.eu/efsajournal.

Scientific Opinion on the Use of Animal-Based Measures to Assess Welfare in Pigs (2012). A4, 85 pages. EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare. *EFSA Journal* (2012) 10(1): 2512. doi: 10.2903/j.efsa.2012.2512. Available online at: www.efsa.europa.eu/efsajournal.

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The Farm Animal Welfare Committee publishes two reports to inform government within the United Kingdom

The Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC) is an expert committee within the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) whose remit is to provide independent advice on the welfare of farmed animals to governments within England, Wales and Scotland. In December 2011, the FAWC published two reports.

Education, Communication and Knowledge Application in Relation to Farm Animal Welfare

A key message within the FAWC's *Education, Communication and Knowledge* report is that educating society about farm animal welfare issues should begin in school. According to FAWC, approximately 95% of five to 16 year-olds are in full-time education on any given school day and it suggests that primary and secondary education could play a fundamental role in engaging children on the importance on animal welfare. FAWC notes that there are a range of subjects in which animal welfare elements could be incorporated, including biology, geography, citizenship, and design and technology. Children are receptive to different aspects of animal welfare at different ages therefore this should be taken into account when considering lesson plans: the younger years (three to six year-olds) are open to learning biology; seven to 12 year-olds are interested in learning about animals in general; and 13 to 16 year-olds are more responsive to ethical and moral dilemmas of animal use. The report states that currently very little animal welfare is taught in schools and, where the subject is touched upon, this is often undertaken using materials lacking in quality control and by teachers who themselves often have only a limited understanding of animal welfare science.

FAWC makes four recommendations to governments with regards to animal welfare in education including: "Any government revisions of the national curricula in England, Scotland and Wales, need to ensure that school pupils, in an age-appropriate manner, learn about where our food comes from and about how farm animals are — and should be — treated. Educational initiatives should, at a minimum, address the basic legal obligations for farm and

companion animals, such as the duty of care and the requirement to provide an animal's five freedoms". The need for primary and secondary teachers to be provided with continuing professional development to enable them to teach animal welfare is also recommended, along with the benefits of encouraging and facilitating commercial farm visits by schoolchildren.

The report then goes on to discuss how best to communicate with adult consumers on farm animal welfare and a variety of means through which this can be achieved are put forward, such as: product information and labelling at the point of sale; corporate social responsibility statements; and public information campaigns. FAWC considers that: "The consumer should be able to compare meat and other animal products in terms of welfare provenance either at the product, the brand or the retailer level". Although various farm assurance schemes and supermarket-own brand 'higher welfare' products are currently in circulation, FAWC notes that there is a lack of information and comparability between products and retailers and that this can hinder shoppers when attempting to make more ethical purchasing decisions: "Consumers may be confused by the different standards used, different units of measurement, means of welfare assessment employed, assessment times in the animal's lifecycle and distance from mandatory welfare requirements that limit their ability to compare products, ranges and brands directly and thus ultimately frustrate choice".

Nine recommendations are made on how government may improve the communication on farm animal welfare to wider society, including the need to "align higher welfare claims to a common and identifiable set of defined welfare objectives and outcomes against which welfare claims can be compared directly by interested consumers". Another key recommendation suggests that: "Where marketing claims are used that imply that animals enjoy higher welfare standards, this should be demonstrated by whole life welfare advantages over and above current minimum legislative compliance".

Finally, the report considers knowledge generation, transfer and application. This section begins by accepting that there is frequently a gap between the generation of knowledge and its application and that in farm animal welfare "the pace and uptake of change is often slow, despite the demonstrable benefits of such changes to the animals concerned". FAWC highlights the need to better understand how those responsible for the care of animals respond to the expanding amount of research available on agricultural and animal welfare knowledge transfer.

A key route through which farmers receive information on farm animal welfare is through advisory and extension services. FAWC emphasises the importance of these services, such as those provided by EBLEX, BPEX and Dairy Co (the levy bodies for beef and sheep, pigs, and dairy cows, respectively), which include: farm-specific advice on animal health and welfare; training schemes; and forums for sharing ideas, learning and networking. A number of other strategies are also put forward by FAWC on