

REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Are there lessons to be learned from the unilateral raising of welfare standards? The case of the UK pig farming industry

As provided for by the *Welfare of Pigs Regulations (1991)*, the UK unilaterally raised standards in its pig farming industry in 1999. Unlike its main competitors in the European Union (EU) at present, the UK prohibited the tethering of pigs and the use of stalls for dry breeding sows. This report from the RSPCA investigates the alarming downturn in the UK pig farming industry that was seen alongside the implementation of these bans and tries to determine whether there are any lessons for others wishing to act unilaterally on animal welfare issues in the future.

The first point the report makes is that the rise in standards (and the relatively short capital write-off time allowed to pig farmers) was only part of the cause of the downturn – other major contributing factors being the implementation of measures to control BSE and the strong pound. The report primarily investigates the effect of the bans by comparing and contrasting the fortunes of the UK pig industry with its main competitor for the UK market – the Danish. Many useful facts and figures are given. The report concludes that there is a financial cost to improving welfare standards for farm animals, an underlying 7 per cent decline in pre-ban margins, but that other factors specific to the UK market meant that the costs of implementation were higher in this country and that these costs were borne primarily by the producers, initiating the crisis that followed.

Profit with Principle: Animal Welfare and UK Pig Farming. RSPCA (2000). RSPCA: Horsham. 19pp. Paperback. Obtainable from the publishers, Causeway, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1HG, UK; and <http://www.rspca.org.uk> (Pub No Z-3045). Price £3.00.

New bibliography for the husbandry and veterinary care of animals in zoos

Produced in response to a request from the Research Group of the Federation of Zoological Gardens of Great Britain and Ireland, this bibliography brings together published information regarding the husbandry and management of captive (wild) animals. As such, it is a first attempt to collate such information and present it in a readily accessible form. The information is listed alphabetically by author, and subdivided into the following categories: general topics, invertebrates, amphibia, reptiles, birds, fish and mammals. This bibliography is aimed not only at keepers, biologists and veterinarians actively caring for captive animals but also at librarians. The compilers note that when collecting the information they were surprised to find that no single library or institution collects and holds such publications – making it very hard for educational establishments, the public, policy-makers and the media to access the material. In the light of this finding, they recommend that any zoo or organization publishing such material in the future should ensure it is sent to national reference and lending libraries, to universities teaching veterinary and/or biology students, and to international libraries with an active interest in the area.

The bibliography is very much a ‘work in progress’ document and the intention appears to be that it should be regularly updated; areas where information is incomplete are highlighted and the compilers request that they be notified of omissions and of the publication of new husbandry manuals (the address and format for such information are detailed below). One suggestion that would make a second edition easier to use, would be the inclusion of an index of authors, species and subject, and a clearer indication of where each section starts and finishes. It is to be hoped that the bibliography continues to grow and develop as it is a much needed resource.

(Additional husbandry references should be submitted to the publishers, marked for the attention of the Conservation Coordinator, in the following format: author name – last name,