

for the worst possible scenario of Sterchi's thought-provoking remembrances, guilt and mind-set of a 'Dante's inferno abattoir' in Switzerland. Could this be happening in the country which had the world's first humane slaughter laws in 1874?

Ambrosio of Cow is in good company as he joins the downtrodden Lithuanian Jurgis in Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* and Isaac Bashevis Singer's Yoineh Meir in *The Slaughterer* who in despair threw the tools of his trade as a ritual slaughterer into the pit of the outhouse (toilet).

J L Albright

Department of Animal Sciences, Purdue University, Indiana, USA

Do hens suffer in battery cages? A review of the scientific evidence commissioned by the Athene Trust (1991). Michael C Appleby. Price £2.50 post free from Athene Trust, 20 Lavant Street, Petersfield, Hants GU32 3EW.

Appleby gives a useful introduction to this subject, providing scientific data to support people's instinctive dislike of cages. He draws evidence together under five headings which he calls the 'FAWC five freedoms', but are actually later modifications by other authors and differ substantially from FAWC (1st Press Notice 1979).

Appleby's facts are sometimes misleading. Only in 1995 will cages already in existence in 1986 have to provide a minimum space allowance of 450cm²/bird in EEC countries, and only in 1994 will abrasive strips on food troughs become compulsory in Sweden. He attributes incorrectly to a FAWC report a statement concerning pre-laying behaviour in hens. He also makes one or two sweeping statements - for example: 'the importance of feathers to the welfare of hens is not clear', 'there is no scientific evidence that general freedom of movement is actually important to hens', and 'there is almost no firm evidence that (wire floors) cause discomfort', and then proceeds to give evidence to the contrary.

By not using the second of FAWC's actual five freedoms - that the animal should be provided with 'appropriate comfort and shelter' - Appleby is spared answering the penetrating question of whether battery cages, even modified by his suggested legislation for the provision of 'more space and height . . . and alternative substrates such as perches, loose material or nest sites', are **appropriate** for laying hens. He suggests that his proposals for legislation could be complied with either by modified cages or by more radical alternatives but adds somewhat contentiously: 'in the current state of development of alternative systems there is no consistent welfare advantage known for either of these approaches.

Retailers have long since realised that hefty premiums can only be levied on eggs from alternative systems, preferably free-range. What is now needed is radical legislation (phased in over a suitable period of time) to give hens the sort of life which both producers and retailers like to suggest they already have.

These criticisms of detail do not of course detract from the usefulness of the report as a whole in collating scientific evidence which will be invaluable to members of the public who are determined to bring pressure to bear at this crucial time of re-evaluation of the battery cage.

Ruth Harrison
Farm Animal Care Trust, London

Dance of Death, a colour VHS video produced by the World Society for the Protection of Animals (European Region), London (1991) in conjunction with the International Council Against Bullfighting, 24 min. Price: £8 post free.

This campaigning video has been produced to promote the abolition of bullfighting. There is a critical commentary by Ed Asner, with a strong emphasis on the gruesomeness of the spectacle. Particular note is taken of the cruelty meted out to the bulls and the damage and distress inflicted on the horses.

The first 10 minutes or so show Spanish bullfighting scenes. This is followed by sequences on the training of matadors which, seemingly, begins when they are as young as eight years - yet children under 14 years of age are, in theory, excluded from watching the fiesta itself.

The bulls at the time of the fight are four years old, weigh half a ton and have been selectively bred from distinctly savage blood lines dating back over thousands of years. They are apparently docile while within their herd but fierce when isolated and intimidated in the arena. From the material presented in the video it seems that the bulls are not fed prior to the fight; they are usually sore after being battered with sand bags, and are held in darkness before being admitted to the bright arena. The horses of the picadors are blind-folded and have their ears stuffed with cottonwool so they neither see nor hear the approach of the bull. Furthermore, they are numbed by the administration of morphine. They never scream in spite of severe treatment, which occasionally leads to their death, and this is thought to be evidence that their vocal cords have been cut.

The involvement of tourists in the continued commercial success of bullfights in Spain, Mexico and parts of Latin America (Portugal no longer kills the bull in its version of the fight) is emphasized.

Repetitive sequences follow and show the contributions of picadors and banderillos to the 'fight', the death of a bull in the preliminaries to the main part of the performance and another sequence in which an incompetent matador kills a bull after four attempted coups de grace.

For me the repeated sequences represent somewhat of an overkill. However, the glory message of 'no glory' and 'little art' is effectively ramed home.

David P Britt
School of Education and Community Studies, Liverpool Polytechnic