

the UK and throughout Europe is a high priority for the Government; that when EC Directive 91/630 is revised in late 1997 the Government will press for higher welfare standards to be adopted throughout the European Community; and that the Government intends to prepare a revised welfare code for pigs which will take full account of FAWC's recommendations. FAWC's recommendations will also be taken into account when commissioning the Government's research and advisory programmes.

For the most part, the Government's report follows and supports the FAWC line closely. It agrees with FAWC that non-therapeutic mutilation (tail-docking and tooth-clipping) should not be carried out routinely and will be seeking to bring about a reduction in the use of these procedures. It also agrees that there is little, from the welfare perspective, to justify nose-ringing and will recommend against this practice. As regards FAWC's recommendation about modification of set-aside rules – to enable tenant farmers to enter set-aside land in the autumn rather than in January (which is often the worst time, in welfare terms, for moving pigs) – the Government has already received clarification from the European Union that pigs may be put on set-aside from 1st September 1997. However, with regard to FAWC's recommendation that research is commissioned to establish the age at which pigs are best suited (from various perspectives) for weaning, the Government does not propose to fund research on this topic and sees no reason to change from the current 3-week minimum age indicated in the *Welfare of Livestock Regulations (1994)*.

A revised welfare code for pigs is to be prepared (by MAFF) and will be the subject of a full consultation process before being presented to Parliament for approval.

Government Response to the Farm Animal Welfare Council Report on the Welfare of Pigs Kept Outdoors. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, UK (1997). Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food: London. 21pp. Paperback. Obtainable from MAFF Publications, Admail 6000, London SW1A 2XX, UK. Free.

Transport of live animals by air

The latest edition of the IATA *Live Animals Regulations* (effective from 1st October 1997) contains a considerable amount of new material. This includes information on European Union (EU) requirements for the importation of livestock, the handling of shipments, and specific handling procedures for deer. It also contains fully updated information on relevant codes, guidelines and lists, such as CITES Appendices, health and hygiene requirements for personnel, and lists of EU border inspection posts. There are chapters on application of the regulations – specifying shippers' and carriers' responsibilities, government and carrier regulations, reservations, animal behaviour (including matters such as disturbance, segregation, sedation and euthanasia), marking and labelling, and handling procedures. A large part of the book is devoted to detailing requirements for the construction of containers for specific animals (of a wide range of vertebrate and invertebrate species) together with specific information on preparations before despatch, feeding and watering, and general care and loading.

The regulations are accepted by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and by the Office International des Epizooties (OIE). The book is absolutely essential for anyone involved in transporting live animals by air – and a very valuable source of information on live animal transport in general. It is an excellent manual.

Live Animals Regulations, 24th edition. International Air Transport Association (1997). International Air Transport Association: Montreal. 350pp. Paperback. Obtainable from regional suppliers, and Customer Service Representation, International Air Transport Association, 2000 Peel Street, Montreal, Canada H3A 2R4 (<http://www.iata.org> [ISBN 9290359706]). Price £70.00.

Review of scientific procedures

The *Interim Report on the Review of the Operation of The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986* was published in *The Report of the Animals Procedures Committee for 1996*. The review was conducted to mark the Act's 10th anniversary, and in it the Animals Procedures Committee (APC) sought the views of users, animal protection and welfare groups and other interested organizations. The review will not be completed until 1998, but at this stage the Committee has already concluded that the 1986 Act is functioning adequately, and they do not feel that major changes in legislation are necessary.

However, this interim report does list 13 major recommendations, all of which have been accepted by the Home Secretary. Probably the recommendation most likely to attract interest is that the APC intends to produce an extended statement on the assessment of costs and benefits, required by section 5(4) of the Act. This will be no mean task. In 1993, the then Chief Inspector published a formulation indicating how the Home Office Inspectorate weigh costs and benefits. Despite this, it remains very difficult to see how benefits can be measured and off set against costs. As a recent document produced by the Boyd group has argued, the importance of the outcome at the start of a project is often uncertain; it is often difficult to judge the relative merits of research, and it can be difficult to quantify the likely benefits.

The interim report recommends that proper training should be required for those using Schedule 1 methods of killing animals, and that certificate holders should be trained to assist them to carry out their responsibilities under the Act. This is particularly important as the certificate holder is the key to the on-site administration and effectiveness of the Act. Users will also be glad that the Home Office *Guidance on the Operation of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986* is to be revised to include the numerous changes that have taken place to the operation of the Act since its inception.

Confidence in the operation of the act will also be strengthened by the fact that the Home Office will publicize the procedures by which infringements are handled, and that more resources will be invested in the Inspectorate and the operation of the Act. This was an idea promoted both by users and animal protectionists in their response to the consultation. Another area of agreement, was the need for the development and promotion of so called 'alternatives', that is: Reduction, Refinement and Replacement, the 3R framework developed in 1959 by the UFAW scholars Russell and Burch in their book *The Principles of Humane Experimental Technique*. It was, therefore, particularly disturbing to read in the same APC report that the UK Government will be investing only £182 000 in the APC's 1997-1998 budget (a decrease of 28% from the 1995-1996 figure) which is used to fund research in this area. It is to be hoped that the publication of this interim review will help to strengthen the APC's voice for next year's budget round.

Interim Report on the Review of the Operation of The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. In: *The Report of the Animals Procedures Committee 1996.* (1997) Appendix B, pp23-35. HMSO: London. Obtainable from the publishers, PO Box 276, London SW8 5DT and other usual HMSO sources. Price £8.10.