

FAWN suggests that further information on shooting birds for sport can be obtained from the League Against Cruel Sports, 83-87 Union Street, London SE1 1SG, UK.

***Rearing Pheasants for Shoots: The Disturbing Facts*** Produced and published by FAWN: Huddersfield (1994). 8pp. Paperback. Obtainable from the publishers, PO Box 40, Holmfirth, Huddersfield HD7 1QY, UK. Price 50p (plus a second class stamp for UK requests).

### **Welfare of sheep**

The Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) – the independent advisory body to the UK Agriculture Ministers – has, over the years, issued a number of important reports on the welfare of farm animals. The latest in the series, the *Report on the Welfare of Sheep*, was published in April 1994 and is based upon a two year investigation carried out by the seven members of the FAWC Sheep Advisory Group. Particular attention was paid to the extensive husbandry component of the sheep industry although all types of systems – extensive, intensive, and mixed (intensive parts of the year, extensive at others) – were examined. Sixty-nine recommendations to improve the welfare of sheep are made. Some of these recommendations will require alterations to the legislation; others might be addressed by changes in the Codes of Recommendation for the Welfare of Sheep made under the *Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1968*; others are more advisory and may influence the sheep industry to modify some of its husbandry practices.

The recommendations *re* castration and tail docking are the ones that are most likely to have an immediate impact, and a few of them have been given a mixed reception in some quarters. It is suggested that surgical castration with the knife should be banned at any age except when carried out by a veterinary surgeon using an anaesthetic; that the use of rubber rings and bloodless castration should be allowed on lambs up to 6 weeks of age only, and that tail docking when performed by a non-veterinarian should be limited to lambs less than 6 weeks of age. Over this age docking must be carried out by a veterinary surgeon for therapeutic purposes only, and only then with the use of an anaesthetic. Combined castration and tail docking should not be carried out on lambs less than 24 hours old.

This detailed, sensible and well written Report should be compulsory reading for all farmers, agricultural scientists/advisers and veterinary surgeons who are involved in any way with sheep.

***Report on the Welfare of Sheep*** PB 1755. Produced and published by FAWC: Surbiton (1994). 40pp. Paperback. Available free of charge from FAWC, Room 2107A, Tolworth Tower, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 7DX, UK.

### **Vivisection controversy**

A new booklet, *'How to Win Debates with Vivisectors'*, which is based upon Vernon Coleman's 1991 book *Why Animal Experiments Must Stop* (see Books received), is '...designed to help all anti-vivisectionists understand exactly HOW to argue when faced with the false arguments put forward (often with apparent scientific logic) by the Vivisectors and those who defend vivisection'. The booklet is laid out as a series of paired statements and rebuttals – two or three to a page – each starting 'The Vivisectors say:...' and followed by 'The truth is:...'.

Many people are concerned over the use and misuse of animals to obtain knowledge in the biomedical field. There are numerous ethical, scientific and economic arguments put forward for and against the use of animals in science and technology. Vernon Coleman's booklet makes several telling points but paints a very black and white picture of the issue: the debate on animal experimentation unfortunately contains many grey and uncertain areas.

*How to Win Debates with Vivisectors, new edition* Vernon Coleman (1994). European Medical Journal: Lynmouth. 37pp. Paperback. Obtainable from EMJ Sales, 234 Summergangs Road, Hull HU8 8LL, UK. Price £1.50.