

consumer under the banner of ‘higher quality’ as fish which are captured and dispatched swiftly and more humanely produce a better quality flesh.

It finishes by calling on animal welfare and environmental groups to become more involved in raising awareness of the welfare issues concerning fishing and lobbying retailers, fisheries and governments to develop and adopt more humane and sustainable practice.

This important report is not without fault however. It is at its weakest when dealing with the issue of fish sentience. Here, the author lays out some of the evidence in support of the fish’s ability to feel pain and suffer. Too much of what is cited here comes from secondary rather than primary sources, and is dated. For example, an RSPCA report from the early 1980s is cited as evidence that fish feel pain, as are the BBC news website and a report from a UK national newspaper, the *Daily Mail*; this despite the fact that there is more up-to-date research on the issue. Nonetheless, few would argue that fish don’t at least deserve the benefit of doubt on these matters. More problematic is when the author addresses the issue of fish feeling fear and panic as the supporting evidence is somewhat superficial. Certainly its brevity distracts from the otherwise persuasive arguments and evidence offered elsewhere in the report.

It is to be hoped that this report marks an important turning point in our use of fish — a sea change in our attitude towards them if you will — and that all those involved in their capture and harvesting take note of it. As it points out, at present, the sentience of fish is little acknowledged by the commercial fishing industry; similarly the concept of fish suffering is not covered by existing codes of practice, including the laudable Marine Stewardship Council standards for well-managed fisheries. This report, one trusts, should help to change this.

**Worse Things Happen at Sea: Report on the Welfare of Wild-Caught Fish** (August 2010). A4, 139 pages. By Alison Mood, fishcount.org.uk. Available to be downloaded from: <http://fishcount.org.uk>

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### **Good Practice Guide for animals used in scientific purposes**

The aim of this Guide is to promote the humane and responsible use of animals for scientific purposes and to encourage the highest standard of husbandry and animal care. It encompasses all aspects of the care and use of animals in medicine, biology, agriculture, veterinary and other animal sciences, industry and teaching. Split into 8 sections, covering the acquisition of animals, facilities, responsibilities of investigators and teachers amongst others, it is well written and clear and incorporates the latest thinking and recommendations on animal use. Grounded in the principle that animals should always be given the benefit of any doubt concerning pain relief, and with a specific appendix

that addresses the pain, this guide can perhaps be regarded as a model for others looking for guidance on this subject or seeking to draft their own guide.

**Good Practice Guide for the Use of Animals in Research, Testing and Teaching** (2010). A4, 40 pages. National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee, MAF Biosecurity New Zealand. Copies of these documents can be obtained from: The Secretary, National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee, PO Box 2526, Wellington 6140 New Zealand. It is also available for download from: <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/files/regs/animal-welfare/pubs/naeac/guide-for-animals-use.pdf>

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### **New Zealand Code of Welfare for dogs**

For those of us concerned about companion animal welfare, this Code of Welfare for dogs from the New Zealand Government will be of interest. Following, as it does, the recently published England, Wales and Scotland Codes, it provides an opportunity to compare the issues of concern between these countries and look at how they have been addressed.

Under New Zealand legislation, any individual or organisation can draft a code of welfare, and this one was drawn up by a group convened by the New Zealand Companion Animal Council, which included representatives from the Royal New Zealand Society for the Protection of Animals, New Zealand Veterinary Association and Vet Nurses Association, Federated Farmers of New Zealand, Companion Animal Society, Unitec, New Zealand Kennel Club and the Institute of Animal Control Officers.

The Code is split into 10 sections and details 21 minimum standards that New Zealand dog owners must meet. In addition, each section and sub-section of the Code thereof, contains an introduction to the area of concern and further outlines recommended best practice and other general information deemed relevant.

Amongst the minimum standards are those that address expected issues such as food and feeding, access to water, euthanasia and ill-health and injury. Other standards are more specific and cover concerns that include debarking, removal of dew claws and aids for behavioural modification; as such these may be less anticipated but perhaps no less welcome.

In drawing up this Code, the group have also been able to incorporate some of the recommendations that recent reports, such as the UK’s Bateson Inquiry (see Reports and Comments, *Animal Welfare* 19[ii]) have made regarding the better safeguarding and regulation of the genetic health of dogs. The Code therefore requires that:

- ‘Breeders must make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the genetic make-up of both sire and dam will not result in an increase in the frequency or severity of known inherited disorders.’ (Minimum standard No7 — Breeding); and
- ‘.....(b) People supplying puppies must, at the time of supply, disclose to persons receiving them, any known

inherited disorders that the puppy or adult dog may be predisposed to which may cause health and/or welfare problems during the dog's lifetime.' (Minimum standard No9 — Supply of Puppies).

This swiftness of implementation is in contrast to the UK, where there is continuing debate about how to best address the recommendations of these reports.

Supporting the Code, is an accompanying document which outlines some of the considerations and debate that took place during its drafting and which makes for interesting reading (<http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/files/regs/animal-welfare/req/codes/dogs/dogs-code-of-welfare-report.pdf>). Prominent in this is the section on tail docking. In the Code, tail docking (or banding) is allowed without analgesia before the pups eyes open. That this recommendation wasn't arrived at without much debate is revealed by the amount of attention devoted to the subject in the report. Indeed, from this it is clear that this advice remains under review, and there is a desire to conduct further research on the issue. A contract for this research was put out to tender but, in the end, not awarded.

Another interesting point is the decision taken by the Code to set both a lower and upper limit on body condition, making it an offence to keep a dog that is too thin but also that is 'grossly obese'. The weight of pets, and increasingly levels of obesity, has been a popular focus of attention in the veterinary press in recent years but to my knowledge this is the first time it has been specifically legislated for.

Finally, and perhaps surprisingly given some of requirements of the other standards, is the omission to require dogs to be routinely vaccinated. Although recommended as best practice, the accompanying standard simply requires that "dogs known to be infected with an infectious disease must be.... securely isolated so as to prevent infecting other dogs (Minimum Standard 11)". No doubt others will have their own opinions as to whether this is an oversight or not.

**Animal Welfare (Dogs) Code of Welfare 2010** (2010). A4, 51 pages. National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, MAF Biosecurity New Zealand. Copies of these documents can be obtained from: Animal Welfare Directorate, MAF Biosecurity New Zealand, PO Box 2526, Wellington 6140 New Zealand. It is also available for download from: <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare/codes/dogs>.

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### **New Zealand Code of Animal Welfare 2010: commercial slaughter**

The New Zealand Animal Welfare Act 1999 came into force on 1 January 2000. This established the basic obligations relating to the care of animals but the detailed requirements were set out in separate Codes. The Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare was issued in 2002. This was revoked when the new Code came into force on 28 May 2010. Failure to meet the minimum standards set

out in the Code may be used as evidence to support a prosecution under the Animal Welfare Act. Alternatively, someone charged with an offence under the Animal Welfare Act may use as a defence evidence that they have equalled or exceeded the minimum standards in the Code.

The Code covers all farmed mammals, birds (including ostriches and emus), finfish (including eels), crustaceans and other species defined in the Animal Welfare Act 1999, that are slaughtered to provide animal products for trade. Also included are wild mammals and birds caught alive and taken into a person's care and later killed. Finally, the Code applies to finfish (including eels), crabs, lobsters and crayfish caught from the wild and kept alive onshore, until slaughtered for sale as food.

The publication is divided into eight chapters plus appendices. Chapter 1 is the Introduction and outlines the purpose of the Code, to whom and to what animals it applies, what happens if the Code is not followed and how the Code relates to other welfare codes. Chapter 2 deals with the required training, competences and supervision of personnel involved in stunning and slaughter, and sets out the minimum levels of knowledge and competence required of management and personnel involved in the stunning and slaughter of animals.

Chapters 3 through 6 deal with large and small mammals, birds and aquatic species. Each Chapter is divided into sections dealing with the handling, restraint, stunning and bleeding of the various species, and in each section the minimum standards required are specified. Many sections also include a paragraph outlining the recommended best practice. The Chapter on birds relates mainly to poultry, but includes a section dealing with the specific requirements for ostriches and emus. Chapter 6 on aquatic species is divided into two sections, one covering farmed and wild-captured finfish and eels, and the other dealing with farmed and wild-captured crabs, rock lobsters and freshwater crayfish.

Chapter 7 sets the minimum standards for the slaughter of animals outside slaughterhouses by home-kill service providers and pet-food operators. The responsibilities and obligations of the individuals involved in the restraint, stunning and slaughter of the animal are defined, and the minimum standards set out in relation to those for animals killed in a slaughterhouse. In Chapter 8, the need for a quality assurance programme with written procedures is emphasised, and the minimum standards for the document set out.

Appendix I provides diagrams showing the optimum position on the skull of the animal for the use of a captive-bolt gun or a free-bullet firearm. Diagrams are given for cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, equines and deer. Appendix II details the signs of an effective stun in farmed mammals when a penetrating/non-penetrating captive-bolt gun, a head-only electrical stunner or a head-to-body electrical stunner is used. Interpretations and definitions of terms used in the Code are given in Appendix III, and the legislative requirements of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 with particular reference to the Code are set out in Appendix IV. Finally, Appendix V outlines the process for developing and