

LETTERS

'Unnecessary' cruelty

Sir, We have subscribed to *Animal Welfare* since its inception, and congratulate you on a most interesting and useful journal.

I wish to voice one small concern. In the 'Instructions for Authors' section on the inside back cover, you state 'UFAW will not publish papers based on work which involves unnecessary cruelty'. Of course the implication of this statement is that you would accept research papers involving *necessary* cruelty.

I hope you agree that cruelty to animals is never necessary, and will therefore delete the word from your statement.

We look forward to future issues.

Frances Rodenburg
Executive Director
Canadian Federation of Humane Societies

Editor's note

Frances Rodenberg is, of course, quite correct in voicing concern about the statement in Instructions for Authors which ran 'UFAW will not publish papers on work which involves unnecessary cruelty', and, indeed, we only included this statement in two issues of the journal (Vol 1 No 4 and Vol 2 No 1), after which we omitted the word 'unnecessary', thus in some ways defusing this criticism.

However, we have now reconsidered the wording more deeply and have come to the conclusion that the essence of our message could be better expressed by the wording '...pain, distress, suffering or lasting harm'. This phrase follows the lead set by the *Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986*, and while authors in countries other than those in the United Kingdom are not obliged to follow UK legislation, and in many cases may not even be expected to know about it, papers *Animal Welfare 1994, 3: 71*

offered to *Animal Welfare* must at least conform with this basic standard.

The reason why 'pain, distress, suffering or lasting harm' is a more suitable concept than cruelty (be it necessary or otherwise) is that 'cruel' and 'cruelty' are words whose main meaning has strong overtones of a pleasure or delight in or indifference to pain or suffering in another person or animal, and whose meaning as a plain expression of pain, distress, suffering or lasting harm is only a secondary or tertiary one (see *Oxford English Dictionary*).

Consequently we think it is better to go to the root of the matter and use the term 'pain' plus its related words, but still including the word unnecessary (see main Editorial) - and we have now altered our Instructions for Authors accordingly.