

The *Difficult Choices* pack (for the 12 year-old plus pupils) has three units, *Animals in Society*, *The Cost of Life* and *Truth, Images and Attitudes*. Each of these units has Teachers' Notes, a Teacher Information Sheet, and Student Work and Information Sheets. The aim of this pack is to encourage students to look outside themselves at the way society uses animals and to look inside themselves at their own beliefs and moral standpoints. The role of animals in advancing medical knowledge is the main example used in the 2nd and 3rd units.

These packs are an excellent and structured way to introduce to school audiences and perhaps to others, the difficult, important and controversial concept that man's use (or misuse) of animals in biomedical research may pose an insoluble moral dilemma.

Animal Rights and Medical Research: Sixth Form Discussion Pack and Difficult Choices: PSE Discussion Pack. Produced and published by Research for Health Charities Group (RHCG) (1994). For further details contact RHCG, PO Box 1417, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 4YZ, UK.

Laying hens – the Swiss experience

In 1981 the Swiss *Animal Protection Act* came into force. It has become famous for its section on the housing of chickens. By prescribing sheltered, darkened nest boxes, perches or slatted grids for all hens and with a minimum area of 800cm² per bird on mesh floors, it effectively prohibited the battery cage – this made Switzerland the first country to impose such a ban. For practical economic reasons the legislation granted farmers a ten-year transition period, expiring at the beginning of 1992.

Consequently there has been a widespread adoption of aviary systems. Free-range production has only captured an estimated 20 per cent of the Swiss market. This represents 400 thousand free-range laying hens, which is considerably less than the 3.6 million birds in the UK.

Laying Hens: 12 years of experience with new husbandry systems in Switzerland is a 32 page report of the poultry working group of the Swiss Society for the Protection of Animals STS. It is clearly written, well presented, and contains a considerable amount of facts and details. Areas this report covers include: the keeping of laying hens in Switzerland, laws and regulations, the behaviour of fowls, new housing systems for laying hens, fold and free-range keeping of laying birds, economic aspects and health.

What makes this publication particularly attractive are the long lists of references – many, however, in German. This report is a must for anybody working in this important area of husbandry R and D.

Laying Hens: 12 years of experience with new husbandry systems in Switzerland. Produced and published by the Swiss Society for the Protection of Animals (1994). 32pp. Paperback. Obtainable from the publishers, Birsfelderstrasse 45, CH-4052 Basel, Switzerland. Price SwF15.

European hedgehog

This booklet gives the reader a brief insight into the lives of hedgehogs and their current status in Britain.

There are short accounts of: hedgehog structure and function; signs of the animals' presence; habitat; food; and even their own fleas! Behaviour is included under three headings: