

statistics from 1994–2000. However, the main thrust of the report is to identify welfare concerns and produce recommendations, of which there are 20. Although implementing some of these could be difficult and expensive, they provide a useful basis for advancing the welfare of laboratory primates.

Counting the cost — welfare implications of the acquisition and transport of non-human primates for use in research and testing (2001) by M J Prescott. A4 paperback. 47 pp. Report available from the RSPCA, Wilberforce Way, Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 9RS, UK.

RSPCA broiler welfare report

Most of the chicken consumed today comes from broilers — birds bred solely for meat. Intensive broiler production began in the USA and came to the UK in the 1950s. Broiler chickens are the most numerous farmed species in the world: 40 billion are reared every year. In May 2001, it was reported that over the preceding year, 817 million were reared for meat production on UK farms. The welfare problems of broilers include heart failure, ascites and lameness.

In 2001, the RSPCA released their report entitled '*Behind closed doors — the truth about chickens bred for meat*'. The report contains an introduction to broiler production in the UK, followed by sections on: the consequences of genetic selection; legislation surrounding broiler production; breeding for productivity; health and welfare; problems caused by lighting, high stocking density and the barren environment; the role of consumers and retailers; the economic cost of animal welfare; the quality of chicken meat; and, a summary of the changes that the RSPCA consider a priority. The RSPCA would like to see:

- supermarkets and caterers ensuring that the chicken they sell is produced to a higher welfare standard.
- the provision of clear and accurate information about welfare at the point of sale.
- consumers choosing higher-welfare options and, where they are not available, asking for them.
- the UK broiler industry improve the conditions under which broilers are reared, especially by reducing lameness, reducing stocking densities and providing an appropriate night period for birds to rest.
- DEFRA initiate a survey of lameness undertaken by independent research scientists.
- the production of a European Directive to protect broiler chicken welfare.
- breeding companies placing a higher emphasis on selection for traits that improve health and welfare.

The report is occasionally emotive, using language such as “behind closed doors” and “selected for suffering”. However, it provides accessible information about most of the major welfare problems associated with broiler production in the UK.

Behind closed doors — the truth about chickens bred for meat (2001) RSPCA. A4 paperback. 43 pp. Report available from the RSPCA, Wilberforce Way, Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 9RS, UK.

Welfare of cattle kept for beef production

The European Commission asked its Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare to prepare a report on the welfare of fattening cattle. The resultant report deals with male and female cattle fattened for meat production. For cattle from dairy herds it applies to those over six months of age, and for cattle reared in suckler herds it applies after weaning. The report, entitled '*The welfare of cattle kept for beef production*', was adopted on 25 April 2001.