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News Release

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Policy Instruments for Protecting and Improving Farm Animal Welfare

The Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC), today, launched its Opinion on policy instruments for protecting and improving farm animal welfare. The Opinion advises the Government about the range of policy instruments suitable for protecting and improving farm animal welfare.

Professor Wathes, Chairman of FAWC, said “to achieve the standard of farm animal welfare that people want – or expect - requires a coordinated approach to the use of policy instruments.”

He continued “Legislation will always be necessary to protect animals from unacceptable treatment and cruelty or to avoid unnecessary suffering and distress but other policy instruments have a valuable role to play in other circumstances. Society has an expectation that Government should intervene to ensure that animal welfare is appropriately protected in relation to products from farm animals, including imported produce.”

The Opinion notes the potential power of the consumer and the market in improving welfare. One recommendation is that serious consideration should be given to a labelling system to enable concerned consumers to make informed choices.

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Notes for Editors

1. The Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) is an independent advisory body established by Government in 1979 to keep under review the welfare of farm animals on agricultural land, at market, in transit and at place of slaughter; and to advise Ministers in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales, of any legislative or other changes that may be necessary.
2. Professor Christopher Wathes was appointed Chairman of FAWC with effect from 1 January 2005. He is Chair of Animal Welfare at the Royal Veterinary College, University of London.
3. All FAWC members serve in a personal capacity and do not represent any organisation with which they may be associated.
4. Copies of FAWC publications are available from the FAWC Secretariat at the address below. Approaches for interviews should also be routed through the Secretariat.

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