

## **FARM ANIMAL WELFARE COUNCIL OPEN MEETING 5 JULY 2010**

### **Welcome**

1. The FAWC Chairman welcomed all attendees and introduced the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) and the way it worked. FAWC was the grit in the oyster that recognised the need for and catalysed improvements in farm animal welfare. The purpose of FAWC, as with any advisory Non-Departmental Public Body was to advise the Government and to serve the public.
2. FAWC was considered to be in good shape for three reasons:
  - An external review of the Council conducted in 2009 concluded that *“this review provides strong endorsement for the Farm Animal Welfare Council to continue in much its present form. FAWC’s work is still needed, FAWC is the best organisation to undertake it, and it provides exceptional value for money”*. Total spend on FAWC was about £300,000 a year. Government could not get this quality or amount of advice for this spend in the open market.
  - There were typically 15 applications for each post advertised on FAWC. Recruitment was open and on merit leading to Ministerial appointment.
  - The traffic on the FAWC Website had been increasing in recent years to its current impressive levels, e.g. 140,000 hits per month and 350 reports, opinions or other files downloaded each day. Hard copies of some reports were still available from the Secretariat but in future the Website would be the main vehicle for FAWC communications.
3. FAWC worked to a published Strategic Plan, the current one ending in 2010. Council was working on a new Plan for 2011-2015, which had included an extensive public consultation and seeking Government priorities for policy advice. It seemed likely that FAWC would continue as an advisory body into the foreseeable future but it was not immune from the current rounds of cost savings being planned by all government funded organisations. The new Plan was expected to be published later in the summer.

### **Report on Farm Animal Welfare in Great Britain: Past, Present and Future**

4. This landmark report, published in October 2009, looked at farm animal welfare policy and regulation back as far as the Brambell Report of 1965 and through to the present day. The Brambell Report led to or inspired:
  - Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1968; Welfare Codes
  - Farm animal welfare R&D; Welfare in agricultural and veterinary curricula
  - Public surveillance of welfare; Changes in systems and husbandry
  - Farm assurance schemes; Raised consumer awareness of welfare
  - FAWAC and FAWC; The Five Freedoms (1979)
5. While the many achievements made since Brambell were very welcome it had to be recognised that progress was still needed in many areas including:
  - Limited, independent information about farm animal welfare;

- Variance between local authorities in enforcement of welfare regulations; static level of non-compliance with legislation;
- Loss of boundary controls at European ports;
- Slow progress in resolution of lingering problems of poor welfare;
- Reliance on mutilations and behavioural restrictions in some systems of husbandry;
- Little confidence amongst British farmers to invest to improve welfare;
- Failure of market mechanisms that allow the concerned consumer to make an informed choice about the welfare provenance of animal products because of an absence of welfare labelling.

6. The Report on Farm Animal Welfare in Great Britain: Past, Present and Future introduced 4 major concepts:

- Guardianship, which included the need for sound government policy on farm animal welfare; implementation and regulatory enforcement; public surveillance of welfare standards; and provision of independent, expert, impartial information for citizens/consumers.
- Quality of life, which should move policy on from prevention of suffering and provision of an animal's needs to achieving a life worth living or a good life from the animal's point of view. This could be a universal principle applicable to all animals. FAWC had adapted Bentham's famous quotation to read: *The question is not just, "Do they suffer?" nor, "Are their needs met?" but rather, "Do they have a life worth living?"*.
- Power of the concerned consumer, which could influence through their buying decisions what is supplied in the supermarkets and other outlets and thereby pull improvements in farm animal welfare from producers. This was as yet a largely untapped resource because of a lack of education and relevant product information.
- Ethics. The Report set out publicly for the first time the ethical basis for the considerations of the Council. FAWC started with the Banner principles.

7. The report concluded that there were 8 conditions to be met for the ethical consumer to exercise their concerns:

- I. The Government to act as the guardian of farm animal welfare;
- II. Standards for a 'good life' defined by an independent body;
- III. Minimum welfare standard defined by quality of life;
- IV. Stockmen to be educated and trained to a high standard about welfare;
- V. Welfare assessment to be valid, feasible and rigorous with independent audit ;
- VI. Due diligence in the food chain with marketing claims verified;
- VII. Citizens educated about food and farming from childhood;
- VIII. Animal products to be labelled according to welfare provenance to provide consumer choice.

## Questions

8. Richard Griffiths, British Poultry Council – BPC may disagree with some of the detail in the report but is very happy with the ethical direction that FAWC was proposing and asked whether it would continue into the Council's future work. FAWC – Yes, FAWC has recommended a set of reasoned, reasonable and

responsible ethical principles it would wish government to pursue and will use them in its own future work.

9. Alan Long, VEGA Research – Peter Singer is a patron of VEGA and well known for espousing ethical principles for animal welfare. He noted that at Paragraph 109 of the Report FAWC said that there had been little progress in reducing the incidence of cattle lameness and mastitis in 20 years. Many words had been spoken on these years about improvement but little seemed to have been done. Many here were customers of dairy producers and should not accept milk from animals with such problems. Milk alternatives should be the norm. FAWC – Found during the study for the Opinion on the Welfare of the Dairy Cow that some causes of lameness had been tackled by the industry but that other causes had arisen and the incidence of lameness remained about the same.

10. Mike Varley, BPEX – What was FAWC's influence in Europe? FAWC – the Council was a founder member of the European Forum of Animal Welfare Councils (EuroFAWC) open to all government advisory bodies on animal welfare in Europe (or responsible Government Departments where no advisory body existed). This Forum meets once a year to share information and develop joint positions on animal welfare issues, e.g. castration of pigs, all year round housing of dairy cattle. The EU Commission, OIE and the New Zealand animal welfare advisory body (NAWAC) had observer status on the forum. A website for the forum was now open ([www.EuroFAWC.com](http://www.EuroFAWC.com)). The FAWC Chairman had direct discussions with EU Commission officials and members of Council were also on the Animal Health and Welfare Scientific Panel of the European Food Safety Authority.

11. Marjorie Pooley, VEGA Research – highlighted the suffering of the dairy cow and lamented that no soya milk had been available. FAWC – Apologised for the oversight in arrangements.

12. Alan Rose, British Pig Association – Was recommendation 4, that stockmen should be educated and trained, meant to mandatory or voluntary? FAWC – The Stockman is the most important element in the welfare of farmed animals. Industry needs to invest more in education and training and the pig industry was a good example to raise. FAWC had not recommended mandatory training but this was already required in certain areas of animal production, e.g. animal transport and (soon) slaughter.

### **Opinion on the Welfare of the Dairy Cow**

13. Huw Davies, Chairman of the Ruminants Standing Committee introduced the Opinion, published in October 2009, and aired its conclusions. The study aimed to provide advice on the welfare of the dairy cow and review developments since FAWC's previous report in 1997. It shows whether the welfare of dairy cows has improved, shown no change or deteriorated over the intervening period.

14. The study had found a smaller but more intensive dairy industry with 20% fewer cows and fewer farms keeping them but higher yields. Many efforts had been made by government and industry but welfare had not improved significantly over the last decade. FAWC had found increasing awareness of animal welfare in the

industry and a number of more recent efforts aimed at improvement. Critical issues were:

- Supply of trained farmers and stockmen;
- Incidence, prevalence and causes of lameness, mastitis, metabolic diseases and injuries in dairy cows;
- The level of infertility in both heifers and cows, though this is not itself a direct measure of welfare;
- The lack of centralised recording schemes yielding data at the national level;
- Breeding policies for dairy cattle; and
- Public surveillance of welfare.

15. The opinion made recommendations on:

- Raising the standard of welfare of dairy cows over the next five years. A target lifespan of eight years for the dairy cow.
- Investing more in education, skills, training and professional development of farmers and stockmen.
- Breeding programmes used by British dairy farmers placing more emphasis on welfare traits resulting in a cow that is better able to deal with the demands of modern dairying.
- Urgently reducing the incidence of endemic diseases in dairy cows, particularly mastitis and lameness and implementing an eradication plan for bovine tuberculosis.
- Public surveillance of cow welfare.

## **Questions**

16. Marjorie Pooley, VEGA Research – What are FAWC's views on year round housing of dairy cows and very large herd sizes? FAWC – Council is developing advice in this area that will be given to Ministers in the next few weeks.

17. Stephen Lister, Poultry Vet and ex-FAWC – Can a high yielding cow have a life worth living? FAWC – Given the correct cow, housing, management and stockmanship are in place then yes.

18. Tony Birbeck, CAWC and ex-FAWC – Would exhorting the public to eat more British veal improve the welfare of the dairy cow and male calves? FAWC – Removing calves from cows early can have an effect on the welfare of both. Shooting bull calves was mainly an economic question provided that the calves were killed humanely. There was limited demand for veal from retailers or consumers but some retailers did have schemes working with industry aimed at raising bull calves for beef. The predominant focus on production of milk in breeding programmes had moved attention away from dual purpose animals, useful for milk and beef. Calls were, however, growing for multi-purpose animals.

## **Opinion Leg health in sheep**

19. As a sheep farmer Huw Davies was well aware of the lameness issues that persisted in the UK flock. FAWC's 1994 Report on the Welfare of Sheep highlighted lameness as a common problem and the new Opinion would follow up this concern.

20. The objectives of the current study were to:
- to review the evidence for the welfare and economic issues linked to lameness in sheep;
  - to review developments on the prevalence, causes and management of lameness in sheep and whether this has changed in the last 20 years;
  - to review the current advice and best practice for joint health and foot conditions and identify gaps;
  - to review current approaches to knowledge transfer and recommend improvements;
  - to recommend future research and development needs.
21. Drafting of the Opinion and its conclusions was now well underway and Council would be asked to discuss and approve a final draft before submission to Ministers and publication towards the end of 2010.

### **Questions**

22. Alan Long, VEGA Research – Was there any research on the movement of sheep and injuries incurred? He was concerned about live sheep movements worldwide for religious festivals. While much of this would be outwith FAWC's GB remit there should be concern expressed for the welfare of large numbers of live animals transported globally. FAWC – FAWC would look at whatever evidence was available. Council has long held principles that animals should be slaughtered as close to the point of production as possible and that all animals should be stunned before slaughter.

### **Opinion on mutilations of growing pigs**

23. Sandra Edwards said that FAWC had for many years had concerns that mutilations were required to enable animals to be kept in farming systems. It had most recently published its views on castration and tail docking of lambs in 2008.
24. The new Opinion on mutilations of growing pigs would cover piglets and growing animals. 9 million piglets were born in the UK each year and another 9 million were born elsewhere for products imported into the UK. Under the Council's principle of concern for the food we eat rather than just that we produce, FAWC was concerned about the welfare of all 18 million pigs.
25. There were 3 or 4 mutilations controlled by legislation and faced by these animals, most without pain relief:
- Castration – to avoid deleterious mature male behaviours and boar taint. Almost none of the pigs raised in the UK are castrated but most male pigs in the rest of Europe are, although current political pressures mean that surgical castration without pain relief is likely to reduce in many countries in the near future.
  - Teeth reduction – done in the first 24 hours of life to reduce the risk of damage to litter mates and mother at suckling.
  - Tail docking – done in the first 24 hours to reduce the risk of tail biting and cannibalism in later life.

- Identification – most commonly management and genetic selection in breeding stock by ear tagging, notching or tattooing, and for traceability purposes in meat animals by or slap marking with the farm of origin before leaving the premises.
26. The objectives of the study were:
- To evaluate whether mutilations are necessary and justified by the severity of the welfare issue prevented;
  - If they are necessary, how should they be done in relation to best practice, training, skill and pain relief; and
  - Is there management action that can reduce the need for mutilations, such as stockmanship, housing, environmental enrichment?
27. This advice would also be put to Council for discussion and approval with the aim of publication later in 2010.

### **Questions**

28. Kate Barger, Cobb Europe – What identification methods are allowed? FAWC - Ear tags, tattoos, notching and implants are allowed methods of identification for pigs. FAWC will assess the processes and effectiveness of each method.

### **Contingency planning for farm animal welfare in emergencies and disasters**

29. Richard Bennett outlined the ongoing study into contingency planning for farm animal welfare in emergencies and disasters.
- Aims: Identify a range of scenarios and their main FAW implications, explore strategies and their incorporation into plans.
  - Scope: All emergency and potential disaster scenarios – natural and man-made. All farmed species in GB.
  - Method: Consult widely (formal consultation exercise, stakeholder meetings, co-option of experts – AH, WSPA, Defra AW, CBRN), review what currently done, draw on examples of best practice (use of case studies), identify gaps, make recommendations.
30. The expected structure for the Opinion was discussed and comments invited via the Secretariat:
- Introduction – nature of Opinion, scope, aims etc.
  - (Brief) overview of contingency planning in GB and internationally.
  - Identification and classification of emergency and disaster situations/scenarios.
  - Identification and categorisation of animal needs (based on 5 Freedoms).
  - How to meet animal needs across different phases of emergency/ disaster management – planning, response, recovery.
  - Important principles of contingency planning – identifying gaps in current practise and how they might be filled (incl. cost implications).
  - Recommendations.
  - Appendix – responses to consultation etc. (may include some summary in main body of Opinion)

## Questions

31. Eirian Williams, Somerset County Council Trading Standards – Some work on contingency planning for flooding and other emergencies had been done for the Somerset Levels and for heat stress in poultry. It was clear that links to local services were essential. Floods in Gloucestershire had shown that animals could be moved but that providing feed had been a major stumbling block. FAWC – Council has consulted with national and local contingency planning authorities but any further information to inform the study would be very welcome.

32. Richard Griffiths, British Poultry Council – Speed and transparency of decision making are important. Will share some of the planning for Avian Influenza that the poultry industry has done with the Secretariat.

33. Zoe Davies, National Pig Association – Standard operating procedures have been set up in the pig industry for notifiable diseases. Mass killing was a big welfare issue. She would also send a contribution.

34. Alan Long, VEGA Research – Disease outbreaks mainly involved vaccination or culling. Killing animals on a large scale presented many difficulties. There were concerns about the disease issues facing bees and there were also animal welfare implications on hobby and petting farms. FAWC – Disease outbreaks were important but were not the only emergency scenario. Mass culling would be covered in the Opinion (with reference to previous reports on Foot and Mouth Disease and slaughter). Focus would be on preparedness, response and recovery aspects. WSPA has input into worldwide disaster response and recovery. An earthquake is not a disaster on its own but allied with a lack of preparedness it becomes one. Extreme weather may increase with climate change (heat, cold and wind) and there needed to be plans to respond to this. Responding to road traffic accidents involving animal transport was also key to resolving acute animal welfare issues.

## General discussion

35. Tony Birbeck, Companion Animal Welfare Council and ex-FAWC - The Five Freedoms principles have been in use for 30 years. There is some debate in CAWC about their appropriateness. Any plans to update them? FAWC – The Working Group that produced the Farm Animal Welfare in Great Britain: Past, Present and Future report looked very closely at the Five Freedoms but concluded that they should remain the simple but effective framework they have been for some time. The Five Freedoms are widely included in legislation and industry standards. FAWC's philosophy of approach has, however, been extended to include quality of life from the animals point of view, including the need for positive welfare experiences and the Banner principles on impermissible and permissible harms.

36. Stephen Lister, Poultry Vet and ex-FAWC – The Report Farm Animal Welfare in Great Britain: Past, Present and Future does address Tony Birbeck's points. It also had as a policy goal that the standards for a good life should be defined by an independent body. Who should this be? FAWC – A body setting enhanced animal welfare standards should be independent of all economic and vested interests. A life

worth living could be achieved at minimum legal standards and farm assured standards. Higher levels of welfare provision required an independent arbiter who can take expert views and knowledge from industry but come to independent conclusions. This could be FAWC or another body resourced for this purpose. FAWC members are experts without being representatives of bodies by which they were employed or were otherwise associated with. Other advisory councils, e.g. FAWAC in Ireland were deliberately representative.

37. Marjorie Pooley, VEGA Research – After exposés by animal welfare organisations, will FAWC lobby for CCTV in slaughterhouses? FAWC – FAWC is an advisory body to governments, it does not lobby or campaign. FAWC deplores cruelty to animals and has argued for CCTV in slaughterhouses in its recent Report on the Welfare of Farmed Animals at Slaughter or Killing: Part Two – White Meat Species. Government and industry should work together to ensure a humane death for all farm animals – part of the guardianship role.

38. Steve Wickens, Universities Federation for Animal Welfare – FAWC Opinions highlight the need for education and training and high standards of stockmanship to ensure animal welfare. Education may not be ring fenced from government cuts so can FAWC ask Defra to ensure that funding for education and training of stockmen remains available? FAWC – FAWC will publish a report in 2011 on Education, Communication and Knowledge Application in regard to Animal Welfare. There should also be education of consumers from an early age and provision of independent information.

39. Nizar Boga, UK Halal Agency – I represent an education agency on Halal food, which conveys strong messages on animal welfare. In the light of EU countries with bans on slaughter without pre-stunning and recent developments in New Zealand, will FAWC again recommend that all farm animals be stunned before slaughter? FAWC – FAWC has consistently made the recommendation in its reports on welfare at slaughter that all animals should be stunned before slaughter. The views of all people in our society should be respected and part of this should be information at the point of sale or consumption to inform the consumer about method of slaughter.

40. Alan Long, VEGA Research – CCTV should be considered for all areas where animals are congregated. FAWC - How do we know all is well on farms, in transport, markets and at slaughterhouses? Public surveillance is carried out by Animal Health on farms, by Food Standards Agency in slaughterhouses and Local authorities in markets and during transport. There is private surveillance for farm assurance purposes but the data are not public. CCTV was another method of surveillance and there should be a balance of surveillance methods consistent with the risk involved.

41. Louise Moorhouse, National Sheep Association – Tagging of sheep with electronic identification is a welfare issue. There is a feedback form on the RPA website for farmers to send welfare concerns regarding EID tags. Tags cost 70-120 pence each and cause damage to ears if they are torn out or have to be cut out to treat infections. The EID tags were too heavy for young lambs or some breeds. FAWC – Huw Davies had a 1-2% tag loss on his own farm but had heard of 20% loss rates on others. Tagging was not new, just the EID element, and had

recognised welfare issues if not done properly. FAWC would be interested in objective evidence about ear tags and the Ruminants Committee would look into the issue.

42. Charlie Mason, Humane Slaughter Association – Have seen lambs at foot in markets with tags in their ears applied far too tightly with no movement for growth. FAWC – There is a training issue to ensure farmers and stockmen apply tags properly, with the correct equipment and with clean tags to reduce the risk of infection.

43. Keith Porteus Wood, National Secular Society – Will FAWC support or encourage Defra to press for food labelling to include identification of meat from animals slaughtered without pre-stunning? FAWC – FAWC has made its position clear in its advice that food should be labelled according to its welfare provenance, including the manner of the animal's death.

44. Stephen Lister, Poultry Vet and ex-FAWC – Are there reasons for concern about future funding for FAWC and for animal welfare research and development? FAWC – Cannot comment on the governments' R&D budgets. FAWC cost the tax payer about £300,000 in 2009/2010, down from £500,000 five years ago. Output had not fallen in quantity or quality in this time. FAWC was not immune from the cost savings having to be found by all publicly funded bodies. It will be expected to reduce costs by 30% in future years and will discuss with Defra how this might be achieved.

FAWC Secretariat  
July 2010

## APPENDIX 1

### ATTENDEES

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Job Title</b>
Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board	Dr Elizabeth Berry Dr Mike Varley	DairyCo R&D Manager Head BPEX Knowledge Transfer and R&D
BEIC and Tom Barron ISA	Stephen Turner	General Manager - Technical Manager
Bernard Matthews Farms	Jeremy Hall	
Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council	Dr Lee Glassbrook	Strategy and Policy Officer
British Egg Industry Council	Giles Clifton	
British Pig Association	Alan Rose	Chairman
British Poultry Council	Richard Griffiths	Senor Executive Officer
British Veterinary Association	Dr Rachel Keys	Policy Officer
Cattle and Sheep Health and Welfare	Brian Lindsay	
Cobb Europe Ltd	Kate Barger	Company Veterinarian
Companion Animal Welfare Council	Sir Colin Spedding	Adviser
City & Guilds NPTC	Rev. Tony Birbeck	Member
Crowshall Veterinary Services	Susie Brennan	Industry Consultant
Defra	Stephen Lister	Poultry Veterinarian
	David Pritchard	Senior Veterinary Consultant – Animal Welfare
	Alastair George	Veterinary Adviser – Animal Welfare
	Geoff Webdale	Animal Welfare Core Team
Elmbridge Animal Aid	Elizabeth Shaw	
Freedom Food	Lydia Stratton	Scheme Development Manager
Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust	Christopher Davis	Head of Wildlife Disease and Epidemiology
Humane Slaughter Association	Charlie Mason	Technical Director
	Heather Barker	Technical Officer
National Farmers Union	Sian Davies	Dairy Adviser
National Office of Animal Health	Donal Murphy	Technical Executive
National Pig Association	Dr Zoe Davies	Regions Manager
National Secular Society	Keith Porteous Wood	Executive Director
National Sheep Association	Louise Moorhouse	Policy Adviser
RSPCA	Alice Clark	Senior Scientific Officer, Farm Animals Department
SAC	Dr Malcolm Mitchell	Senior Researcher
	Dr Victoria Sandilands	Poultry behaviour and Welfare scientist
Sainsbury's Supermarkets	Alice Swift	Agriculture Technologist – Beef, Lamb, Dairy
Somerset County Council – Trading Standards	Eirian Williams	Team Leader - Animal Health
	Julie Richardson	Acting Senior Animal Health and Welfare Inspector
Universal Halal Agency	Nizar Boga	Chief Executive
Universities Federation for Animal Welfare	Liz Carter	Scientific Officer
University of Bristol	Stephen Wickens	Development Officer
	Mr Mohan Raj	Reader in Farm Animal Welfare

Vega Research	Dr Alan Long	Honorary Research Adviser
Veterinary Consultancy Services	Marjorie Pooley	Specialist in Sheep Health and Production
Veterinary Laboratories Agency	Paul Roger	VLA Welfare Programme Manager
World Society for the Protection of Animals	David Harwood	UK Programmes Manager
Members of the public	Paivi Vahvelainen	Research Manager
	Helen Proctor	
FAWC Members	Liza Mc Dowell	
	Prof Christopher Wathes	Chairman
	Prof Mike Appleby	
	Prof Richard Bennett	
	Huw Davies	
	Prof Sandra Edwards	
	Prof Laura Green	
	Prof Richard Moody	
FAWC Secretariat	Richard Aram	
	Louise Mulcahy	