



WORK PLAN 2013- 2016

November 2013

Introduction

Terms of Reference

1. The Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC) is an expert committee of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), also advising the Devolved Administrations in Scotland and Wales.
2. FAWC's terms of reference are:
 - i) to provide independent, authoritative, impartial and timely advice, to Defra and the Devolved Administrations in Scotland and Wales on the welfare of farmed animals, including farmed animals on agricultural land, at market, in transit and at the place of killing; and on any legislative or other changes that might be considered necessary to improve standards of animal welfare; and
 - ii) to provide independent scientific support and advice as required by Article 20 of Council Regulation (EC) No.1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing.
3. The Chairman and Secretariat are responsible for ensuring that FAWC's work is effective and efficient, as evidenced by strategic and annual implementation plans, external audit and operation within the agreed budget.

Ways of working

4. FAWC works by: i) writing reports, opinions and letters that offer advice to Governments¹ on specific topics, supplemented by meetings with Ministers and their Senior Responsible Owners (SROs), Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) and other officials in England, Scotland and Wales; ii) responding to *ad hoc* requests for advice from Government(s); iii) responding to government consultations; and iv) developing strategic relationships with interested parties.
5. FAWC delivers strategic advice in the form of a report on a broad topic, which is prepared by a Working Group over a period of up to three years. The lifespan of a report is expected to be at least 10 years. For budgetary reasons FAWC has agreed that, in future, only one report study will run at any one time.
6. FAWC also produces Opinions, which offer advice on targeted, contemporary topics relating to farm animal welfare. Each is drafted by one of the Standing Committees taking up to 18 months.
7. In addition to these, FAWC produces around six letters each year, responding to specific requests for advice from Government or arising from a concern of the Committee.

¹ Where we refer to "Government(s)" we are addressing the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in England, the Scottish and Welsh Governments, and other responsible Government Departments and Agencies.

8. All reports, opinions and letters are approved by the full Committee before submission to Governments and publication on FAWC's website (www.defra.gov.uk/fawc).

Selection criteria for topics of study

9. The Committee identifies topics of study in consultation with its policy customers. When considering topics for investigation, FAWC uses three main criteria:

i). The rationale for the investigation. The nature, degree and extent of poor welfare. This criterion is the most important. Factors include: the species and number of animals involved in British livestock farming and in other countries producing livestock products consumed in Great Britain (i.e. the 'food that we eat' principle); the duration, nature and extent of any suffering; and the main welfare, ethical, scientific and economic drivers, which may be derived from scientific and other evidence and changes in livestock farming methods due to new knowledge, public or consumer pressure, economic or environmental issues.

ii). Legislation and regulation. Changes in legislation or a lack of appropriate legislation might make a topic more pressing for consideration. Factors include: recent or pending legislation or new regulations by the European Union, UK Government or devolved administrations that affect the topic; and the potential requirements for new legislation, regulations or welfare codes that may arise.

iii). The practical relevance and implementation of recommendations. Factors include: the main stakeholders who would be involved in or benefit from the investigation; potential difficulties foreseen and solutions identified; and opportunities for new systems of livestock production, transport or slaughter that could lead to improved welfare.

Standing Committees

10. Three of FAWC's Standing Committees cover Ruminants; Pigs, Poultry and Fish (PPF); and Ethics, Economics, Education and Regulation (EEER) and have the following remit:

- to maintain a watching brief upon issues relating to farm animal welfare and the species or topics covered by the Standing Committee;
- to respond to consultation requests and provide timely advice to Governments where needed; and
- to prepare opinions or letters on topics within their remit.

11. FAWC's fourth Standing Committee, Welfare at Killing, has the specific purpose of providing independent scientific support to Defra and the Devolved Administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales in relation to Council

Regulation (EC) No.1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing.

Membership

12. FAWC's members are appointed by Senior Responsible Owners (SROs) in England, Scotland and Wales in line with the Code of Practice of the Office for the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Members are drawn from a wide range of disciplines and occupations, and they serve in a personal capacity, not as representatives of any organisation or interest group. Membership includes those with extensive knowledge and experience of animal welfare science, livestock farming, veterinary medicine, ethics, economics and consumer affairs.

13. Recruitment usually takes place in the autumn. Appointments are made on the basis of the expertise needed to address topics to be investigated in the next few years. The composition and balance of the Committee is therefore not fixed. Occasionally, a Working Group or Standing Committee may co-opt a member from outside FAWC where specific expertise is required for a particular topic.

Strategic relationships

14. Maintaining a dialogue with interested parties is important to ensure that work of the highest priority is undertaken and delivered. FAWC maintains working relationships with: i) Implementation/Steering Groups in Wales and Scotland responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain and the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England (which may also make suggestions towards FAWC's work plan); ii) other UK animal welfare advisory bodies, i.e. the Companion Animal Welfare Council, the Zoos Expert Committee and the Animals in Science Committee; and iii) independent European animal welfare advisory bodies via the European Forum of Animal Welfare Councils (EuroFAWC).

Communication

15. FAWC is committed to a culture of openness, as indicated in its Publication Scheme (found on the FAWC website), which has been prepared in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2001.

16. Reports, opinions, letters, responses to consultations and summaries of plenary meetings of the Committee are published independently on FAWC's website.

17. Minutes of Working Groups and Standing Committees are not normally made publicly available because they are documents assisting the development of work in progress, and can involve detailed consideration of confidential issues relating to organisations and individuals. FAWC will endeavour to answer all requests for information, subject to the resources available and any particular individual or commercial confidentiality.

The Work Plan for 2013 – 2016

Introduction

18. This revised Work Plan details the programme of work for the Farm Animal Welfare Committee from 2013 to 2016 and progress to date. It is a three year rolling plan reviewed annually by FAWC and Governments.

19. The Work Plan ensures that timely advice is provided to Governments on farm animal welfare by the most efficient and effective use of FAWC's resources. It demonstrates that the Committee has a clear focus on the major studies agreed with Governments while retaining the flexibility to provide *ad hoc* advice speedily when required.

Initial Work Plan – completed work

20. An Initial Work Plan was agreed shortly after the Committee was established, setting out the work to be picked up from the predecessor Council and completed by the Committee; and new work to be undertaken in 2011/2012. The majority of this work has been completed:

- Reports on Economics and Farm Animal Welfare and on Education, Communication and Knowledge Application in relation to farm animal welfare were published in December 2011 and a Report on Farm Animal Welfare: Health and Disease was published in November 2012.
- Opinions have been published on contingency planning for farm animal welfare in disasters and emergencies (March 2012); on the welfare implications of breeding and breeding technologies in commercial livestock agriculture (November 2012) and on the Welfare of Farmed and Park Deer (July 2013). Also published this year is Advice on the EFSA proposals on animal transport (September 2013) and a Review of the welfare implications of farm assurance schemes (October 2013)
- A discussion document on UK law relating to animal welfare was published in January 2013 by the Liaison Group of UK Animal Welfare Advisory Bodies.

Ongoing work

Report on the Evidence base for farm animal welfare (2011–2015)

21. A Working Group has been established to investigate and report on evidence and the welfare of farmed animals.

22. Governments' and commercial policies for livestock farming and farm animal welfare should be based upon evidence. This study will consider and evaluate the types of evidence available when assessing farm animal welfare. Questions to be addressed will include:

- What are the current types of evidence used when assessing knowledge in general and animal welfare in particular? – e.g. evidence used in human and animal research; evidence used where there is little or no research; evidence used in decision making.
- Where is the evidence base strong and where is it weak? – e.g. areas in farm animal welfare where the evidence for good/poor welfare is robust; areas where the evidence is weak and the implications of this; and why the evidence available varies by type of welfare issue.
- How is UK and EU policy using the evidence base for animal welfare? – e.g. to develop policy; to encourage self regulation; in CAP reform with consequences for production practice; welfare as a public good; potential for welfare incentive payments; and in international trade and WTO (OIE initiatives).

This investigation will include a review of farm animal welfare research and development, identifying knowledge gaps in relation to known and anticipated policy development to inform decisions about future R&D priorities.

23. This report will be published in three parts over three years. The first of these will consider the nature and the construction of evidence used in the field of farm animal welfare; the second will consider and assess the procedures by which evidence is mobilised and employed in the policy and decision-making processes associated with animal welfare; and the third will look more specifically at how animal welfare evidence is used in the EU and beyond, at the global institutional level.

Opinions and other advice

24. Studies are underway on the welfare of beef cattle, the welfare of farmed fish, the welfare of farmed fish at killing and the relationship between farmer wellbeing and the welfare of their stock. Opinions on farmed fish welfare are expected early in 2014. Ruminants, PPF and EEER Committees are focussed on 1-2 topics at present so should have capacity to expand their agendas if necessary to cover further policy-focused work and improve the variety of work they undertake.

25. The Welfare at Killing Standing Committee has provided advice on inversion of cattle; guides to good practice, including key parameters for stunning; the suitability of a novel gas killing system for poultry and led on a FAWC response to UK Governments' consultations on the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No.1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing. Ongoing work includes guidance on approval of restraining pens for cattle slaughtered without pre-stunning; advice on space allowances in lairages; and an Opinion on the welfare of farmed fish at killing.

26. FAWC has written letters on sustainable intensification (February 2012); welfare impacts of cloning (April 2012); and keel bone fractures in laying hens (August 2013) and has identified the welfare impact of animal housing as a potential topic for an advisory letter. Advice on the concept of an Animal Health and Welfare Stewardship Scheme under CAP Pillar II has been submitted at the request of the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England.

Responses sent to consultations on alternative arrangements for farm animal welfare guidance and broiler guidance (7 August 2013), Government Red Tape Challenge (September 2013).

27. FAWC's Breeding Workstream, having completed its first assessment of welfare impact of breeding and breeding technologies, will continue with its standing remit of:

- Developing and maintaining relationships with major breeding companies operating in the UK or supplying the UK market;
- Key liaison between the Farm Animal Genetic Resources Standing Committee and FAWC;
- Providing short opinions on emerging technologies in animal breeding; and
- Keeping abreast of latest developments in animal breeding that may potentially have major impacts on livestock welfare, including attending relevant conferences and industry meetings, and reporting back to FAWC.

The workstream has also been asked by Defra to assess how, and how quickly, breeding might assist in reducing injurious pecking in laying hens and to respond to specific welfare queries as they arise relating to the development of EU policy on cloning.

PRIORITIES FOR FAWC ADVICE IN 2013-2016

Evidence base for farm animal welfare – ongoing for delivery of first part end 2013 and final report early 2015

Cross-sector Group or Chairs' Group to take an overview of large farms, intensification, sustainability and climate adaptation (spring 2014 – spring 2016)

Pigs, Poultry and Fish Standing Committee

- 1) *Welfare of farmed fish – under way for delivery winter 2013 (requested by Scottish Government)*
- 2) Welfare of pigs (spring 2014 - winter 2014):
 - Free farrowing sows – review of research and implementation in comparison to other farrowing systems (and other housing changes)(suggested by Defra); and/or
 - Contingency arrangements to minimise welfare issues arising from disease outbreaks, particularly where banned from moving pigs off unit for significant time periods (suggested by Scottish Government).
- 3) Large farms and continuous housing, intensification, sustainability and climate adaptation as it affects pigs, poultry and fish. Working alongside Ruminants Committee work in the same area and feeding into a central group with cross-membership. Possible staged approach of: i) define large farms and identify issues relating to intensification; ii) sustainability issues (e.g. genotype, behaviour, disease, etc.); iii) climate change mitigation and adaptation, etc. Scope to be clear on divisions of responsibility and on previous FAWC advice /other evidence to look back on for guidance (winter 2014 – spring 2016) (identified by FAWC and Defra)
- 4) Welfare of broiler chickens
 - FAWC could feed into the Meat Chicken Directive post implementation review work, perhaps by looking at representative sampling and the existing trigger system. Work anticipated in 2015. (identified by Defra)
- 5) Beak trimming of laying hens (High Priority)
 - FAWC will contribute to an evidence review in 2015 on pecking and beak trimming of laying hens. The results of the current pilot study to assess the effectiveness of management strategies to reduce injurious pecking in flocks of birds with intact beaks and any other new research will feed into this review. (identified by Defra)

Ruminants Standing Committee

- 1) *Welfare of animals in the beef industry, including management of calves and cull animals – under way for delivery end 2014 (identified by FAWC)*

2) Large farms and continuous housing, intensification, sustainability and climate adaptation as it affects ruminants. Working alongside Pigs, Poultry and Fish Committee work in the same area and feeding into a central group with cross-membership. Possible staged approach of: i) define large farms and identify issues relating to intensification; ii) sustainability issues (e.g. genotype, behaviour, disease, small and medium sized farms, economics, etc.); iii) climate change mitigation and adaptation, etc. Scope to be clear on divisions of responsibility and on previous FAWC advice /other evidence to look back on for guidance (winter 2014 – spring 2016) (identified by FAWC and Defra)

3) Review of goat welfare to include large scale units and covering both dairy and angora (identified by Defra) (2016?)

Ethics, Economics, Education and Regulation Standing Committee

1) *Advice on Animal Health and Welfare Stewardship Scheme (requested by AHWBE) (publish as letter winter 2013)*

2) *Relationship between farmer wellbeing (physical & mental) and the welfare of their stock - under way for delivery winter 2014 (identified by Defra)*

3) Contributions to study on large farms and continuous housing, intensification, sustainability and climate adaptation

4) Identifying, educating and training hobby farmers about farm animal welfare (e.g. health and welfare, biosecurity, disease control, welfare at killing regs). (spring 2015 – spring 2016) (identified by Scottish Government)

Welfare at Killing Standing Committee

1) *Space allowances in lairages – under way for delivery winter 2013 (requested by Defra)*

2) *Restraining pens for cattle slaughtered without pre-stunning – under way for delivery winter 2013 (requested by Defra/FSA)*

3) *Welfare of fish at killing – under way for delivery spring 2014 (requested by Defra and devolved administrations to inform EU report due in 2014)*

4) *Various time limited advice in lead up to implementation of WATOK (Guides to Good Practice, draft legislation, etc.)*

5) Recoverable stunning (requested by Defra, Welsh and Scottish Governments) (spring-summer 2014)

- EU changes to technical parameters required for stunning, and whether or not the new parameters are reliable in producing a recoverable stun (as opposed to possibly killing the animal), which is crucial factor in any acceptability for Halal. If not, what alternative technical parameters could we make mandatory for religious slaughter that would provide for good welfare while ensuring that the stun is recoverable?

6) Use of CCTV in live animal areas of the slaughterhouse (Welsh Government request)

7) On farm killing: Emergency slaughter, casualty slaughter, killing for other management purposes, etc. (spring-summer 2014)

Breeding Workstream

1) *Impact of breeding on feather pecking in laying hens – under way for delivery winter 2013 (requested by Defra)*

2) Cloning of farm animals (requests to come from Defra)

3) Standing remit

Livestock buildings letter

Targeted letter on welfare impact of livestock buildings – age and design suitability; lack of investment; tax arrangements; intensification issues – under way for delivery spring 2014 (identified by FAWC)

Welfare codes – possible future QA role for FAWC

Possible future quality assurance role for FAWC following Defra consultation on reform of the animal welfare codes. Role and resource implications to be discussed when the result of the consultation is complete.

Liaison Group of Animal Welfare Advisory Bodies

To be held in abeyance rather than formally closed down pending discussions on future of companion animal welfare advice.

APPENDIX 1 - REPORTS AND OPINIONS PUBLISHED SINCE 2001

Farm Animal Welfare Committee

Reports

Farm animal welfare: health and disease, 2012

Education, communication and knowledge application in relation to farm animal welfare, 2011

Economics and farm animal welfare, 2011

Opinions

Welfare of farmed and park deer

Welfare implications of breeding and breeding technologies in commercial livestock agriculture, 2012

Contingency planning for farm animal welfare in disasters and emergencies, 2012

Farm Animal Welfare Council

Reports

Farm animal welfare in Great Britain: past, present and future, 2009

The welfare of farmed animals at slaughter or killing – Part 2: white meat animals, 2009

The implications of castration and tail docking for the welfare of lambs, 2008

Stockmanship and farm animal welfare, 2007

Welfare labelling, 2006

The welfare implications of farm assurance schemes, 2005

The welfare of farmed animals at gatherings, 2005

The welfare implications of animal breeding and breeding technologies in commercial agriculture, 2004

The welfare of farmed animals at slaughter or killing: Part 1 – red meat animals, 2003

Foot and mouth disease 2001 and animal welfare: lessons for the future, 2002

Interim report on the animal welfare implications of farm assurance schemes, 2001

Opinions

Lameness in sheep, 2011

Mutilations and environmental enrichment in piglets and growing pigs, 2011

Osteoporosis and bone fractures in laying hens, 2010

The welfare of the dairy cow, 2009

The welfare of farmed gamebirds, 2008

Policy instruments for protecting and improving farm animal welfare, 2008

Beak trimming of laying hens, 2007

Enriched cages for laying hens, 2007

ANNEX 2 – TIMETABLE FOR FAWC ADVICE

	Autumn 2013	Winter 2013	Spring 2014	Summer 2014	Autumn 2014	Winter 2014	Spring 2015	Summer 2015	Autumn 2015	Winter 2015	Spring 2016
Evidence Group	Evidence Report →	Publish part 1 of report	→	→	→	→	Publish final report Close				
Pigs, Poultry and Fish Standing Committee	Welfare of farmed fish →	Publish welfare of farmed fish	Welfare of pigs: free farrowing; contingency for disease control and movement restriction	→	→	Publish welfare of pigs. Large farms, intensification, sustainability, climate adaptation (pigs, poultry, fish)	→ Meat Chicken directive, input to post implementation review Beak trimming of laying hens – contrib. to evidence review	→ →	→ →	→ Advise on meat chickens and beak trimming of laying hens	Publish sustainable livestock agriculture

Ruminants Standing Committee	Welfare of beef cattle →	→	→	→	<u>Publish on welfare of beef cattle</u>							
					Large farms, intensification, sustainability, climate adaptation (ruminants)	→	→	→	→	→	<u>Publish sustainable livestock agriculture</u>	Goat welfare
Chairs' Committee			Oversight of Large farms, intensification, sustainability, climate adaptation	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	Publish sustainable livestock agriculture	
Ethics, Economics, Education and Regulation Standing Committee	Farmer wellbeing and animal welfare	→	→	→	→ Contribution to sustainability study	<u>Publish on farmer wellbeing</u> Hobby farmers	→	→	→	→	Publish on hobby farmers	
Welfare at Killing Standing Committee	Welfare of farmed fish at killing → <hr/> WATOK implementation work	WATOK implementation work	Publish on welfare of farmed fish at killing ----- <u>Recoverable stunning</u>	→	→ Further requests	→	→	→	→	→	→	

			CCTV On farm killing								
Welfare Codes	TBA										
Breeding Workstream	Standing remit plus:	Genetics and pecking in layers Cloning queries as required	Standing remit and requests→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→
Review welfare impact of farm assurance schemes	Publish review of farm assurance scheme impact on farm animal welfare	Close									
Livestock buildings	Livestock buildings – age and design impact on welfare	→	Publish on livestock buildings – Close								

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