

control', 'Animal welfare' and 'Practical aspects of hunting: the concerns'. The complete text of these submissions is available on a CD-ROM that accompanies the report, or via the website: ([www.huntinginquiry.gov.uk](http://www.huntinginquiry.gov.uk)).

In the chapter on 'Population management and control', the report concludes that hunting with hounds accounts for relatively few of the foxes, deer, hares and mink that are killed each year in the UK; shooting accounts for far the greatest numbers. The exception appears to be in upland areas, where dogs are extensively used in flushing out foxes or during the digging out of a fox that has sought protection in a burrow. It also indicates that there is some consensus that a cull of the species under consideration is needed in some parts of the country – to reduce damage and destruction to crops or livestock. The evidence arguing for a control of numbers is strongest for deer but much more equivocal for hares.

In the chapters on 'Animal welfare' and 'Practical aspects of hunting: the concerns', the Inquiry considered the humaneness of all potential (legal) methods of control – to determine whether a ban on hunting with hounds would improve the welfare of the hunted animals or not. The Inquiry concluded that hunting with hounds seriously compromises the welfare of the hunted animal, but that all methods of control have serious, adverse welfare implications. Preferred options for the control of foxes and deer are stated: 'lamping' using rifles (where the animal is picked up in the beam of a vehicle-mounted high-powered spot) is favoured for foxes; for deer, dog-assisted stalking (where an animal is approached and shot with a high-powered rifle) is regarded as probably the most humane. The Inquiry was less clear on which method of control it preferred for hare and mink. The adverse impact on welfare of shooting an animal and only wounding it was also highlighted, and thought by the Inquiry to be of most concern when shotguns are used. The report argues that hunting with hounds may be preferable to the use of shotguns. It suggests that a demonstration of competency and skill in firearm use, through training, would lessen the chances of a negative impact on welfare.

The Report concludes that if hunting with hounds is not banned, consideration should be given to the introduction of some form of licensing system and regulation of hunting through closed seasons – as is common practice outside the UK. If hunting with hounds is banned, then the Inquiry felt that a closed season for the taking of hares should still be considered, along with training of stalkers and the use of snares. Finally, it noted that if a ban were implemented enforcement might be problematic, that exceptions to the ban would be needed, and that a period of adjustment would be preferable to an immediate ban. Also, that if a ban on hunting with hounds was not to be challenged under *European Convention on Human Rights*, any Bill would have to be carefully worded – reflecting concern over unnecessary suffering, not simply mere disapproval.

The response of the UK Government to the Inquiry is now keenly awaited by all interested parties.

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*Report of The Committee of Inquiry into Hunting with Dogs in England and Wales*. Home Department (2000). The Stationery Office: Norwich. 223pp. Paperback and CD-ROM. Obtainable from the publishers, PO Box 29, Norwich NR3 1GN, UK; and [book.orders@theso.co.uk](mailto:book.orders@theso.co.uk) (ISBN 0101476329). Price £32.50.

### Regulating GMOs

The science and technologies of genetic modification are relatively new, and cause concern to many people. While genetic modification offers the hope of breakthroughs that will substantially improve health and the quality of life for humans and animals, it also has the potential to cause great harm and suffering. The UK Advisory Committee on Genetic Modification (ACGM) was set up in 1984 to advise the UK Government on all aspects of human and environmental safety

relating to the contained use of genetically modified organisms. This annual report, it's first, is another product of the current UK Government's drive towards greater openness and transparency. The report details the terms of reference, constitution and procedure of the Committee and lists the ACGM's main activities over the year (primarily the revision of its *Compendium of Guidance* – a technical guide aimed at promoting good working practices in the field). Likely future activity is also listed.

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*Advisory Committee on Genetic Modification: First Annual Report.* Health and Safety Commission (2000). Health and Safety Commission: London. 26pp. Paperback. Obtainable from, Dr Alison Spalding, Health and Safety Executive, Rose Court 6.19, 2 Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HS, UK; and [alison.spalding@hse.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:alison.spalding@hse.gsi.gov.uk). Free.