

### Animal experimentation

The literature available to schools on animal experimentation in the biomedical sciences has increased both in quantity and quality over the last few years. Organizations which support animal experimentation and the animal welfare/anti-vivisectionist societies have put much effort into preparing clear and attractive, well-argued booklets on the cases for and against the use of animals for scientific purposes.

*Animal Experimentation* a reference guide for schools, is a recent example of the improved antivivisectionist literature. It is factual – may be a little selectively factual – clearly written and employing much use of diagrams and artwork. It paints a rather negative picture. It does not seemingly give any indication of how firmly animal experimentation is controlled in the UK. There is no credit given to the dramatic drop in animal usage in the UK from some 5.5 million per year in the 1970s to some 2.5 million per year today, nor to the fall in the use of animals for cosmetic testing from c 30,000 per year in 1979/80 to c 3,000 per year today – even though it clearly illustrates these two trends in graphic form.

There have been improvements, over the last few years, in the ways in which animals are used – not as many improvements as we would wish – but still improvements.

The booklet paints a rather black and white picture. The debate on the value and ethics of animal experimentation contains many grey and uncertain areas. *Animal Experiments* is still, however, a stylish and well produced document. It sets a high standard: a standard which the publications of the pro-animal usage groups will have to match.

*Animal Experiments*. A reference guide for schools. Produced and published by the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection: London (1994). 16pp. Paperback. Obtainable free from the publishers, 16A Crane Grove, London N7 8LB, UK.

### BST

Bovine Somatotrophin (BST) is a synthetic growth hormone that can increase milk yield in dairy cows by between 10 and 20 per cent. BST was approved for commercial use in the United States last year, where reaction from consumers, farmers and retailers to the use of the drug has been cool. For several years pharmaceutical companies have been testing and seeking official authorization to market BST in the European Union (EU). However, its introduction has been resisted by many farmers and most consumers because of concern for the health and welfare of the cows, the health of consumers and the possible effects on the economic viability of the small dairy farm. The use of BST does increase the milk yield but it also seems to be associated with a higher level of mastitis. It has also been suggested that the use of the hormone may also result in an increased incidence of anaemia, digestive disorders, enlarged hocks and lesions of the knees.

*The Cynical Abuse: BST – A Welfare Analysis* is a short booklet produced by Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) which provides a clear, if slightly one-sided introduction to this complex topic. It details what BST does to the cow, the research into the effects of BST on the health and welfare of the animals, and concludes with ‘. . . that in view of the health and welfare problems caused by BST administration, the product should not be licensed for use in the EU’.

The CIWF report was published in November 1994 just before the EU voted to extend its moratorium, which bans the use of BST, until the year 2000. The Council of Ministers of the EU suggest that by that time further scientific data as to the effects it has on cows will have been collected and that this could be used in any reassessment of the situation.

*The Cynical Abuse: BST – A Welfare Analysis* Joyce D'Silva (1994). Compassion in World Farming: Petersfield, UK. 10pp. Paperback. Obtainable from the publishers, Charles House, 5A Charles Street, Petersfield, Hants GU32 3EH, UK. Price £2.50.

### Codes of Animal Welfare

The New Zealand Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC) has issued a further set\* of Codes of Recommendation for the welfare of: animals at the time of slaughter, farmed pigs, exhibition animals and animals transported within New Zealand.

The codes have been produced after extensive consultation with industry and other interested groups and take account of the five basic animal needs:

- freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition
- the provision of appropriate comfort and shelter
- the prevention, or rapid diagnosis and treatment, of injury disease or infestation with parasites
- freedom from distress
- ability to display normal patterns of behaviour.

These detailed and most carefully prepared codes have been endorsed by the AWAC, ie they have official status in New Zealand. They will also, however, be of considerable interest to anyone elsewhere who is keeping or is responsible for preparing codes of welfare on slaughter animals, farmed pigs, exhibition animals or transported animals.

*Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Animals at the Time of Slaughter at Licensed and Approved Premises.* Code of Animal Welfare No 10. 17pp. ISBN 0 478 07337 2.

*Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Pigs.* Code of Animal Welfare No 13. 27pp. ISBN 0 478 07357 7.

*Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Exhibit Animals and Information for Animal Exhibit Operators.* Code of Animal Welfare No 14. 29pp. ISBN 0 478 07366 6.

*Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Animals Transported within New Zealand.* Code of Animal Welfare No 15. 51pp. ISBN 0 478 07372 0.

Produced and published by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries: Wellington (1994). All paperback. Obtainable from the publishers, ASB Bank House, 101-103 The Terrace, PO Box 2526, Wellington, New Zealand. Free of charge for the first five copies, subsequent copies NZ\$4.

\*AWAC welfare codes on horses, bobby calves and animals in boarding establishments were reported in *Animal Welfare* 3(1994) 236-237.