Animals in the UK in 2009

- Broiler chickens; 840 m
- Farmed salmon; ~80 m
- Lambs; 16 m from 15 m ewes
- Pigs; 9 m from 0.45 m sows
- Cattle; 2.6 m from 3.5 m cows
- Milk; 13 m l from 1.9 m dairy cows
- Eggs; 9 b from 30 m hens
- Laboratory procedures; 3.5 m
- Cats and dogs; ~20 m
How do we ensure an acceptable quality of life for a farm animal?

Quality of a life

- Legislation
- Citizens’ attitudes
- Commercial practice
Welfare and economics

Milk – Farm 26 p/l

Milk – Supermarket 67 p/l

Water – Supermarket 40 p to £1/l
Welfare, Economics and Ethics
Market forces
Lesser of two evils
Political dilemmas
The Brambell Report, 1965

“a continuing development of concern for animal welfare
and that conditions which appear to us tolerable today
may come to be considered intolerable in the future”

Brambell’s recommendations 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)
Progress still to be made in 2009, 44 years after Brambell

- 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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freedom from hunger and thirst</th>
<th>By ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freedom from discomfort</td>
<td>By providing an appropriate environment including shelter and comfortable resting area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom from pain, injury or disease</td>
<td>By prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom to express normal behaviour</td>
<td>By providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal’s own kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom from fear and distress</td>
<td>By ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ethical principles:
What should be the legal minimum standard?
Should it move beyond the Five Freedoms?

The emphasis in current legislation is on the avoidance of “unnecessary suffering” and “provision of needs”.
The Five Freedoms are well respected but focus on negative aspects of welfare, i.e. “Freedom from”.
This reinforces a negative image of farming and food production.
Focusing on an animal’s quality of life rather than its suffering puts everyone on the front foot.
'The question is not just, “Do they suffer?” nor, “Are their needs met?” but rather, “Do they have a life worth living?”’


Quality of a Life

- A good life
- A life worth living
- A life not worth living

Classification
- Policy
- Welfare surveillance
- Retail marketing

Decision making
- Veterinary treatment
- Investment
- Animal use

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Quality assurance

1. Welfare must be assessed regularly over the animal’s life.
2. Assessment must be valid, reliable and feasible.
3. Assessment must be audited independently.

Setting the standards

1. Quality of life must be defined by an independent body.
2. Marketing claims to a ‘good life’ must be verified by the independent body.
Welfare assessment

By Farmer, Inspector, Machine

Current measures
• ‘More than disease’
• Resource provision
• Welfare outcomes

Up and coming measures
• Qualitative assessment of behaviour
• EU Welfare Quality®: 12 ‘principles’

Iceberg indicators
• Involuntary culling rate
• Prevalence of certain diseases, e.g. lameness, mastitis
• Body condition according to stage of development and production
• Normal and abnormal behaviour, e.g. suffering, stereotypies and play
• Demeanour, alertness and confidence
Public surveillance
- Welfare guardianship
- Compliance with legislation; Ensuring minimum standards met
- Government’s responsibility
- Animal Health survey; LA & MHS inspections
- Resources, disease and welfare outcomes (plus?)

Private surveillance
- Farm management; Consumer assurance
- Farm profitability; Marketing
- Farmer’s responsibility (within the food supply chain)
- Self-assessment; Farm assurance schemes
- Productivity (?) Resources and outcomes (plus?)
Guarding the welfare of farm animals

- Government policy
- Implementation and regulatory enforcement
- Public surveillance
- Information
Necessary conditions for ethical consumers and improved farm animal welfare

1. The Government to act as the guardian of farm animal welfare
2. Standards for a ‘good life’ defined by an independent body
3. Minimum welfare standard defined by quality of life
4. Stockmen to be educated and trained to a high standard about welfare
5. Welfare assessment to be valid, feasible and rigorous with independent audit
6. Due diligence in the food chain with marketing claims verified
7. Citizens educated about food and farming from childhood
8. Animal products to be labelled according to welfare provenance to provide consumer choice
What should we do when we don’t have the evidence?

Precautionary principle

Give the animal the benefit of the scientific and moral doubt

The new variant 3Rs

any actions ought to be: Reasoned, Reasonable and Responsible