

TO BE ISSUED AT ..... Noon



FARM ANIMAL WELFARE COUNCIL  
BLOCK B GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS  
HOOK RISE SOUTH TOLWORTH SURBITON SURREY KT6 7NF

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Council reference

Your reference

PRESS NOTICE

June 25, 1984

REPORT ON THE WELFARE OF LIVESTOCK AT SLAUGHTER PUBLISHED

The Farm Animal Welfare Council has today published a Report on the welfare of livestock at slaughter. The Report, which is on red meat animals, examines all aspects of the welfare of livestock from the time of arrival at the place of slaughter until the moment of death. The Report has been submitted to Agriculture Ministers in Great Britain for them to consider.

The Report contains over 100 recommendations which call for better enforcement of, and changes to the existing legislation, suggest the need for further research work into certain aspects of slaughter and seek improvements in the design of slaughter premises and equipment. Among the Council's findings are recommendations which would:

- require the local authorities to make greater use of their enforcement powers and to designate an official for each slaughterhouse to be responsible for ensuring that animal welfare requirements are fully met
- improve standards of stunning equipment and its use
- require improved training and licensing requirements for slaughtermen
- introduce better safeguards to ensure the humane handling of injured or sick animals
- prohibit the use of sticks for driving animals within slaughterhouses and limit the use of electric goads
- require further research work into the identification of animals' unconsciousness and insensibility to pain during slaughter.

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The Council's Chairman, Professor Sir Richard Harrison, who was speaking in London at the launch of the Report, said:

"The large number of recommendations we have made should not be interpreted as a general indictment of those engaged in the difficult and often uncongenial work of slaughtering livestock. They are an indication of the thorough way in which the Council has carried out this review and reflect our genuine concern to see improvements in the care of animals at slaughter. We have seen slaughterhouses where care and understanding for the well-being of the stock is evident but it has to be said that we have also observed slaughter operations which left much to be desired.

"I very much hope that Agriculture Ministers will feel able to accept our proposals and to initiate early action which will lead to the legislative and other changes needed to bring about the improvements we believe to be in the interests of all."

The publication of this Report completes the second stage of the Council's major review of slaughter practices. The first stage was completed with the publication of the Report on poultry slaughter in January 1982 and the third and final stage will be the publication of the Council's findings on religious slaughter practices.

#### NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The Council's Report on 'The Welfare of Livestock (Red Meat Animals) at the Time of Slaughter', which is published by HM Stationery Office, price £4.95, is available from Government Bookshops.
2. The Council announced its review on 'The Welfare of Livestock at the Time of Slaughter' in September 1981 (FAWC Press Notice 4/81) and invited the submission of comments from any organisations or individuals with an interest in the subject.
3. The Council's Report on 'The Welfare of Poultry at the Time of Slaughter' was published in January 1982 (FAWC Press Notice 1/82). Many of the recommendations contained in that Report have been accepted by Agriculture Ministers and some of the resultant legislative changes are being provided for in the Animal Health and Welfare Bill now proceeding through Parliament.
4. A small Working Group of Council Members is currently reviewing religious slaughter practices; this aspect of slaughter is not therefore dealt with in this Report. The Council's findings on religious slaughter practices will be published later.
5. The Farm Animal Welfare Council was set up by Agriculture Ministers in 1979 to keep under review the welfare of farm animals on agricultural land, at markets, in transit, and at the place of slaughter, and to advise them of any legislative or other changes it considers necessary.