



Improving Welfare in Livestock Markets

Owing to foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), the 2001 Livestock Market Welfare Development Grant was cancelled and the HSA offered two awards in 2002.

Whilst some markets did not re-open, many decided to use the 'spare time' during the enforced closure to improve their facilities: mending penning, improving floor surfaces and adding new structures to improve conditions for livestock.

The high standard of this work became evident as a number of strong entries for the grant were received this year. After careful consideration it was decided that both Devil's Bridge Auction Mart and Honiton Market would each receive an award of £1,500 towards the costs of their improvements.

Devil's Bridge has not only improved its sheep penning and sale ring but has also provided a separate walkway for the public. Due to its location, this market is visited by many tourists and the separation of people and animals provides welfare benefits as there is minimal disturbance to the stock, whilst still allowing public access to the market and a chance for visitors to watch an auction mart at work. The award was presented on 18 December 2002 at the annual Show and Sale.



Members of Devil's Bridge Auction Mart receiving the Award from HSA staff

2003 Market Award

Applications for the 2003 Livestock Market Welfare Development Grant are now invited.

This year up to £2,000 is available to any market which has carried out improvements to its premises that will significantly improve livestock welfare.

Application forms are available from the HSA office or by emailing info@hsa.org.uk.

Closing date is 31 May 2003

Honiton Market, which now acts as a collection centre under the close supervision of a vet, has started work on a new cattle race which will dramatically improve conditions for the animals moving through the handling system. This project is still ongoing and consequently the award is yet to be presented. Both markets serve remote areas and if closed the animals may be subject to longer journeys on often narrow and winding roads.

Two further grants of £500 were given to Clitheroe (new poultry pens) and Tavistock (new cattle race) in recognition of their work towards improving animal welfare in their respective markets.

The Road Ahead CD-ROM

Due to the kind generosity of HSA members and the Animal Defence Trust, the HSA has been able to transfer *The Road Ahead*, the HSA's livestock transport video, onto CD-ROM. The aim is to make the information available to more people, especially to students at colleges and universities around the world. The CD format allows easier use in foreign countries as different video formats can often cause compatibility problems.

The CD-ROM was launched at the Royal Smithfield Show in November and received strong media interest. Plans are now going ahead to advertise the CD-ROM internationally and hopefully it will be as successful as the video. Already there have been enquires for this version to be translated so that it can be used as a teaching aid in Spain.

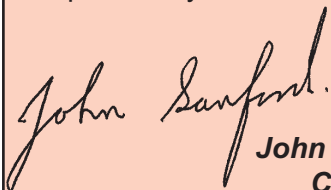
Chairman's Comment

Readers of this Newsletter cannot fail to be struck by the wide range of activities of the HSA. These include giving grants for animal welfare improvements in livestock markets, the funding of further work on the slaughter of trout, research into transport and slaughter of ostriches, deer, bison, water buffalo and wild boar in the UK and the development of more humane methods for the disposal of spent hens.

In addition, a comprehensive educational programme is in progress, including courses on poultry and hatchery welfare and the use of firearms for animal slaughter. These, and the several other initiatives described in the Newsletter, are all organised and, in most cases, also carried out by our handful of enthusiastic and dedicated staff.

I should like to draw particular attention to the Spring Appeal for the funding of the HSA Casualty Video. Anybody keeping livestock may be confronted with the task of humane killing. This can often be unexpected and requires rapid decisions and effective action, so prior training and consideration is important. This video provides essential information and advice to ensure that animal welfare is not compromised.

In this, my first message as Chairman of the HSA, I should like to take the opportunity to thank my predecessor Ronald Anderson for his constant enthusiasm and hard work during the past two years.



John Sanford
Chairman

2002/03 Research Awards

In October we advertised for applications to research some of the issues of current concern to the HSA (full details can be found in the 2001/02 Annual Report). There was a good response and the standard of applications was high. We are pleased to announce the following successful applicants:

Drs J Lines and S Kestin, of Silsoe Research Institute and University of Bristol respectively, for a study entitled: ***Humane slaughter of trout using reduced electric power;***

and

Drs D Arney, H Bornett, J Martin and Ms A Simpson, of Moulton College, for a study entitled: ***Transport and slaughter of ostriches, deer, bison, water buffalo and wild boar used for the meat industry in the UK.***

Both projects address issues of key importance for future welfare improvements and we will report on the progress of these valuable studies in annual reports or newsletters in due course. We are planning to run a similar research award scheme in the 2003/04 financial year.

PWO Refresher Course

The first ever Poultry Welfare Officer (PWO) Refresher Course took place at Marston, Lincolnshire in October 2002. The course, designed to bring trained PWOs up to date with recent commercial developments in relation to bird welfare, was well supported by the poultry industry. Delegates from all areas of the industry joined a wide range of guest speakers who presented talks on poultry transportation, casualty killing, electrical waterbath evaluation, quality assurance schemes and staff training.

Requests for Translations of HSA Publications

Demand for translations of HSA publications into other languages for use around the world continues. We have been approached for translations of our *Humane Slaughter - Taking Responsibility* video into the 10 languages of the EU candidate countries. The *The Road Ahead* booklet has recently been translated into Slovenian for distribution to border-post personnel, and there are plans for it to be translated into French and Dutch.

Dorothy Sidley Award

The Dorothy Sidley Award was set up in 1986 to encourage young people to develop their interest in animal welfare in the areas of marketing, transport and slaughter. These awards are available for any young person involved with food animals to work on a project which will benefit animal welfare. Over the years many people have benefited from this award and much valuable work has been produced.

Historically, most projects have been carried out over the summer vacation. However, to allow students greater flexibility as to when they undertake their projects, we have changed the timetable to enable grants to be awarded before the Easter holiday. This year's grant applications are now being considered. Details of the successful applicants will appear in the next HSA Annual Report.

Hatchery Welfare Course

Poultec Training Ltd has now delivered the first *Disposal of Chicks and Hatchery Waste* course. The course was written in conjunction with the HSA and is based on the *Code of Practice for the Disposal of Chicks in Hatcheries*, produced by the HSA. Delegates attending this course were all from one leading broiler company. To date the course is the only one of its type which has been given the HSA's full support.

Market Awareness Day

On 8 November a group of market managers, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) officials and industry experts came together for the first HSA Welfare Awareness Day. The day saw six speakers talk on a range of topics that all have a direct effect on the handling and welfare of livestock in markets.

The informative talks prompted discussion amongst delegates, allowing a good exchange of information between markets. It also provided DEFRA officials with a valuable insight into the practical problems faced by markets on a daily basis. Feedback from the delegates was very positive and the HSA is now planning to run this event every two years.

It was also made apparent that markets would like more help in writing welfare policies; this is something the HSA aims to develop in the coming months.

OUT AND ABOUT - 2003

With no major technical meat and livestock events taking place in 2003, the HSA's activities at exhibitions and shows have yet to be confirmed this year. Details will be posted on the HSA website, www.hsa.org.uk, when plans have been finalised.

Firearms Courses

This year the provision of HSA specialised firearms training has extended to three new groups. As part of new contingency plans, DEFRA organised a firearms course for Animal Health Officers. In a similar vein, the East Midlands Veterinary Association, in conjunction with the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA), organised two one-day courses in firearms training for veterinary surgeons at the VLA's Sutton Bonnington premises. On these occasions the course included practical as well as theoretical instruction. The days were set up as part of the ongoing professional training now essential for all occupations.

The HSA is willing to provide training to people involved in the humane destruction of animals using firearms. Each course will be designed for the specific audience. If you would like to receive training from the HSA on firearms issues please contact the HSA office.

NEWC Code of Practice

During 2002 the HSA has worked closely with the National Equine Welfare Council, RSPCA and the Livestock Auctioneers Association on the development of *The Code of Practice for Horse Markets, Fairs and Sales*. The code aims to set a common standard for all markets and sales in terms of horse welfare and will provide sound guidance for those people visiting and inspecting markets.

Red Meat Refresher

Once again the HSA is planning to run a course for people working with red meat animals to update them on all the latest information, research results and practical developments. The course provides a good forum for industry members to come together, not only to learn about the new developments but also to exchange information between themselves.

The date of the event, which will take place over two days, is still to be determined but is likely to be at the end of September. Further information about the programme and costs will be advertised in the next few months and posted on the HSA website. Should you wish to be added to the mailing list please email us with your contact details, at:

awo@hsa.org.uk

Disposal of Spent Hens

A collapse in the market for spent hens (birds at the end of their laying period) has increased the difficulties faced by the egg production industry with the humane disposal of these birds. Changes to environmental law, due to come into force in May 2003, will lead to further difficulties through the prevention of on-farm burial of carcasses. These are issues that pose problems for both large and small producers. In response to the situation, the HSA has produced a Technical Note setting out the permitted methods with comments on the welfare benefits/disadvantages and practicalities. The HSA ran a workshop in February to discuss practical and humane solutions and how these can be developed. Full details will feature in the HSA Annual Report 2002 - 2003.

Humane Killing of Day-Old Chicks in Israel

The HSA has recently supported Hai-Meshek, the Israeli Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Farm Animals, in the development of a humane system for killing day-old chicks in Israel. Male chicks are unwanted by-products of the egg production industry, and until this new development there was no method in Israel for their humane destruction. However, with support from the HSA and its sister charity, the Society for Animal Welfare in Israel, Mr Avi Pinkas of Hai-Meshek has been able to develop a production model of an electrical killing system that he devised a few years ago. We are pleased to report that this system has received approval from the Israeli state veterinary service and is now in operation in one of the major hatcheries. We congratulate Avi Pinkas and Hai Meshak on the success of this important project.



Avi Pinkas with his humane disposal system

HSA Codes of Practice

Good progress is being made with the development of HSA best practice guidelines for the handling and welfare of livestock at slaughter. After the initial step of writing a draft for sheep and goats and circulating it to a small group of interested parties, the project moved forward with an industry meeting. The purpose of the meeting, which was held at the British Veterinary Association headquarters on 16 December, was to consider the need for such standards, their focus and scope, how to take them forward, and ideas for financial support for the project. Various organisations sent representatives including the British Meat Federation, Assured Chicken Production, the Meat Hygiene Service, Assured Food Standards, the Meat and Livestock Commission and Assured British Meat. After some initial concerns the ideas met with approval.

The HSA now plans to produce an updated draft for consultation in the coming months.

DEFRA Code of Practice

DEFRA is currently compiling comments on the *Code of Practice on the Welfare of Poultry at Slaughter*. The HSA was involved with initial drafts of the code and has submitted substantial comments to DEFRA. Written to complement current legislation, *The Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) Regulations 1995*, the aim is to provide guidance for personnel who are involved in the slaughter of poultry.

New Technical Note

Instantaneous Mechanical Destruction (IMD) - Technical Note No. 10 is now available. This Technical Note provides advice on how IMD machines can be used effectively for the humane disposal of day-old chicks. It includes guidance on the relevant legislation, staff training, different IMD designs, cleaning and maintenance of machines. The leaflet is available from the HSA office on receipt of an A4 SAE (2 x 1st class stamps).

Casualty Slaughter Video

The need for a training package on casualty and emergency slaughter techniques has been evident for some time. In the past it has always proved difficult to obtain the relevant footage, due to logistical problems and animal welfare considerations. However, during the 2001 FMD epidemic, many hours of suitable footage were filmed for the production of a field slaughter video for DEFRA veterinary staff, for which the HSA were technical advisors. As a result, the HSA can now move the project forward as the majority of the filming has already taken place. The video will include poultry species as well as cattle, sheep, goats and pigs.

Together with the HSA Guidance Notes 2 & 3, the video will give farmers access to comprehensive and easy-to-follow guidance on this difficult aspect of livestock production. Work has started on the final script and the aim is to have the package ready for early autumn. For further details contact the HSA office.

HSA General Meeting

This year's General Meeting will take place on 7 October in Wheathampstead. Full details will appear in the Annual Report. Please note the date in your diary.