Caring beyond the farm gate
Humane Slaughter Association
Centenary Year
The Humane Slaughter Association (HSA), established in 1911, is an independent charity that works through scientific and technical advances, education and training towards achieving the highest worldwide standards in food animal welfare at markets, during transport and at slaughter.

To accomplish its aims the HSA provides:
- technical information and advice on all aspects of animal handling, transport and slaughter
- training in humane methods of handling and slaughter of livestock for farmers, vets, abattoir staff, police firearms officers, RSPCA Inspectors, students and others
- educational and technical publications
- independent advice to governments, other welfare organisations and the food industry
- regular visits to markets and slaughterhouses, advising on improvements where appropriate
- funding for research projects
- development and application of scientific advances into industry working practices
- grants towards improvement of animal handling facilities in markets and slaughterhouses

Examples of the HSA’s wide range of activities in these areas are outlined in the following pages.
The 17 January 2011 was the 100th anniversary of the founding of the HSA. The marking and celebrating of the Centenary has, pleasantly and rewardingly, coloured and influenced the charity’s activities during the year, notably through four special major events: the international symposium on ‘Recent Advances in the Welfare of Livestock at Slaughter’, Portsmouth, 30 June & 1 July 2011; publication of ‘Making a Difference: 100 years of the Humane Slaughter Association’; launch and award of the HSA Research Training Scholarship; a reception at the House of Lords in the Palace of Westminster on the evening of 16 June 2011.

The anniversary has prompted reflection about the way the world was 100 years ago, on how much it has changed, and regarding the extent of progress. One hundred years ago, attempts to stun animals prior to slaughter were often, literally, a matter of hit or miss. However, thanks to the very impressive scientific and technical advances that have been made, it can now be humanely achieved with very high levels of consistency.

Many people are content not to know how the animals that provide them with meat, eggs, milk, wool, leather and other products are killed – they prefer not to think about it. However, it is of course a very important matter and it is essential that others do think long and hard about it. The slaughterman has a very special task on behalf of society but rather rarely receives thanks for this. The HSA is very grateful to all those who, through their knowledge, skill and expertise, care for welfare in the slaughter of animals and who help to promote pride in this special profession.

In its work throughout its hundred years, the HSA has greatly benefited from the support of its members and an extensive network of individuals, many of whom are leading experts in their fields, in universities, commercial organisations, institutes, in other charities, in government departments and elsewhere, in the UK and overseas. The charity is very grateful to all who have helped it in pursuit of its objectives for animal welfare.
We were very pleased to be able to mark the HSA’s Centenary with ‘Making a Difference: 100 years of the Humane Slaughter Association’, an account of the charity’s history. The HSA is an active and busy organisation focused on protecting and improving the welfare of farmed livestock in the final stages of their lives: from leaving the farm gate to the moment of slaughter. Mostly, its eyes are firmly set on the present and the foreseeable future and its work is such that there is little time for looking back into the archives and records. However, in this fast-paced world, it is valuable, now and again, to review past activities and to try to take the long view backwards, partly to inform thinking about the future.

That is one reason for this book, but another is that it is very good to be able to remember all those who have played a part and to recognise their roles and contributions in supporting and developing the HSA and in undertaking and promoting its work. Unless special effort is taken to make a record of events and the players involved in them, as time passes it becomes harder and harder to do so. This is not just because (life being what it is) information tends to get lost and memories to fade, but also because with each year that passes the scale of the task becomes greater.

The book has been made possible thanks to Dr Tony Hughes. We are very grateful to him for painstakingly going through the HSA’s archives of Annual Reports and other documents and for his skill in compiling the manuscript. We are very grateful to Brian Pemberton also – he has taken the publisher’s role and worked with Tony to lay out and illustrate the text.

As this book shows, the HSA has played a remarkable role in developing and promoting humane methods of livestock slaughter and killing. It has been able to do this thanks to the far-sightedness of its founders, wise governance by its Board of Trustees, the initiative and hard work of its staff and volunteers, and the kindness and generosity of all who have supported it.
HSA award for significant advances in humane slaughter of farmed livestock 2011

Very large numbers of farmed livestock are slaughtered daily around the world to provide food and other resources for human benefit. It is important that slaughter methods are as humane as possible – that is they approach as closely as possible the ideal of causing loss of consciousness and death without fear or pain. During the last 100 years or so, great advances have been made in this field and work in pursuit of further improvements is continuing.

In order to help give recognition to important contributions made in this field, and to help promote interest in pursuit of further advances, the Humane Slaughter Association runs an award scheme for individuals or organisations (anywhere in the world) whose work has resulted in significant advances in the humane slaughter of farmed livestock.

We were very pleased to announce the winners of the 2011 award at the reception on board HMS Warrior during the HSA’s International Symposium held in Portsmouth in June 2011:

Dr Jeff Lines of Silsoe Livestock Systems for his research into electrical methods for the humane stunning and killing of farmed fish;

and, John Ace-Hopkins of Ace Aquatec Ltd for his work in taking up Jeff’s research and in the development of commercial humane killing equipment for farmed fish.

They are part of a very good story of how animal welfare improvements can be made. In September 1996 the Farm Animal Welfare Council published a report on the welfare of farmed fish. This included the recommendation:

‘Para 255. A satisfactory method of slaughtering trout en masse which renders them instantaneously insensible until death supervenes is urgently required. There should be research to develop acceptable methods of humanely killing trout, for example electrical methods....’

Various organisations came together to take up this challenge. Jeff Lines led the necessary research into the electrical currents needed to stun and kill trout humanely and the ways in which this current could be applied for long enough to ensure that there was no recovery. This research was very successful and it wasn’t long before a prototype system was being tested.

John Ace-Hopkins worked with Jeff to develop, manufacture and make available systems based on these new scientific findings to the farmed fish community. The result was that within about 10 years from FAWC drawing attention to the need for humane slaughter systems, a system had been developed and was in use. Until 10 years ago there was no way to humanely kill farmed fish en masse – they died slowly through suffocation when harvested from the water, now they are instantaneously stunned whilst still in water.

This is a welfare benefit for millions of fish. The development of this technology is a great achievement – a huge step forward – and we are very pleased to make these awards to Jeff Lines and John-Ace Hopkins.

Reception for the HSA at the House of Lords

Almost 200 guests attended a reception in the Peers’ Dining Room at the House of Lords on the evening of Thursday 16 June, to mark the HSA’s Centenary. The Lord Soulsby of Swaffham prior very kindly arranged to host this for the charity but, sadly, under doctors’ orders was unable to be present (on behalf of all present James Kirkwood wrote to Lord Soulsby wishing him a swift recovery). We are most grateful to Lord Plumb for hosting the reception in Lord Soulsby’s stead and for his very kind words about the charity and its work. It was a very pleasant and memorable occasion.
Education & Training

The HSA's comprehensive range of training services in livestock handling and welfare, built on its long experience and expertise, is a key element in establishing and maintaining high standards of welfare. Below are some examples of the way the HSA helps promote best practice.

Firearms and other training

The demand from industry and others for the HSA technical team to provide theoretical and hands-on training continues apace. Since the last annual report, Charles Mason, HSA Technical Director, has provided the following: five emergency slaughter courses to pig producers via the offices of BPEX and EEPTG; captive-bolt training to National Trust farm managers, Robinson Mitchell and veterinary staff at Porton Down; lectures to animal science students at Harper Adams University College, to trainee livestock auctioneers and to veterinary undergraduates at the University of Cambridge; three courses on animal welfare at slaughter to employees of Dalehead, Spalding and a similar course to a smaller pig processor in Lincolnshire.

FSA seminar

In early June the Food Standards Agency (FSA) held a seminar for its lead veterinary officers at its headquarters in York. The day was focused on animal welfare at slaughter. The HSA's role was to speak about what veterinary and meat inspection staff should be looking for as basic indicators of potential welfare problems in red meat slaughter and processing. Since then, the HSA has been approached by one of the leading providers of veterinary surgeons to the meat industry to give a similar presentation to its staff in September 2011.

Training for poultry smallholders

The HSA provided training for poultry smallholders on 13 April 2011 at the Plumpton College at Netherfield Centre for Sustainable Food and Farming, East Sussex. The course involved theory and practical instruction in the techniques for humane culling of poultry in small scale production. Delegates were taught how to humanely kill chickens and turkeys, enabling them to obtain slaughter licences permitting them to process on-farm and sell poultry meat at the farm gate.

Emergencies involving livestock vehicles

Technical Director, Charles Mason, has been involved in two new initiatives. In March and June 2011, seminars dealing with emergencies involving livestock vehicles were held in Somerset and Yorkshire respectively. As well as the HSA, there were speakers from the industry, the police, trading standards, Animal Health and the fire service. Such incidents may result in serious injuries to animals and some may be loose on the highway. The time and location of the incident will have logistical and procedural implications for those dealing with it and these seminars, both of which were oversubscribed, highlighted the extreme difficulties that can be faced by the emergency services in dealing with animal welfare, public safety and traffic management.

Training government staff for disease outbreaks

The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA) is an executive agency working on behalf of Defra, and the Scottish and Welsh governments. AHVLA's role is to safeguard animal health and welfare as well as public health, protect the economy and enhance food security. In May 2011 the HSA helped AHVLA run a two-day training course for AHVLA staff, to prepare them in case of the need for culling poultry during notifiable disease outbreaks (eg avian influenza). The HSA provided training in animal welfare and how best to perform certain culling methods, with animal welfare in mind. The course covered a wide range of techniques, including those for small numbers of birds (eg pets or smallholdings) right through to the use of systems more appropriate for large commercial units with thousands of birds in one shed. This was the fourth course of the series (three others were held in 2009) and it was again well-received, with delegates expressing how ideal the mix of theory and practical training is for field staff.
HSA workshop on catching and handling of waterfowl

On 16 June 2011 the HSA ran a workshop at The Farmers Club, London which was attended by representatives of the UK duck and goose industry, specialist avian veterinarians and those responsible for catching and handling ducks and geese, either for transport or for immediate slaughter. The aim was to seek a consensus view on best practice methods and to ensure HSA recommendations for bird welfare are up-to-date. In particular, the meeting addressed whether traditional methods of catching ducks and geese, by the neck and shoulder bases of the wings, are safe for the welfare of the birds. Providing catching and lifting is done with care, there is no evidence that these traditional methods cause harm or are unsuitable. However, all parties attending the workshop agreed that further research into the impact of handling techniques on the welfare of farmed ducks and geese would be helpful.
As one of the major events to mark its Centenary, the HSA organised an international symposium on ‘Recent Advances in the Welfare of Livestock at Slaughter’. This is the first time in its history that the HSA has held such a meeting and we are very pleased that it attracted great interest in this important subject from around the world.

The Symposium was held on the 30 June and 1 July at the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and was fully booked with 254 delegates attending from 25 different countries including Thailand, China, Uruguay, Argentina, Australia, Canada and South Africa. Those who attended included scientists, veterinarians, students, stakeholders in the meat and agricultural industries, retailers, policy makers, government officials and representatives of animal welfare charities.

The aim of the Symposium was to present and discuss scientific and technical advances in the humane slaughter of farmed animals (mammals, birds, fish and others); the uptake and application of these advances around the world and their relevance to current farming methods; to provide a forum for sharing information and experiences; and to help identify future priorities and consider how these may be tackled.

Thirty-two speakers gave presentations on a range of interesting and varied topics from the whole-house gassing of poultry during a disease outbreak (Victoria Sandilands, Scottish Agricultural College) to whether or not crustaceans feel pain (Robert Elwood, Queens University Belfast). PhD student, Sofia Wiberg, Swedish University of Agriculture and Life Science, described a project that is underway in Sweden looking at how the welfare of employees in abattoirs and laboratories can impact on the welfare of animals they are handling. Neville Gregory, Royal Veterinary College, spoke about the complications that can occur during halal and shechita slaughter methods without stunning and Bert Lambooij, Wageningen UR presented work on the electrical stunning of captured fish on behalf of Hans van de Vis.

There were also 42 poster presentations on display during the Symposium with topics including: reducing stress in beef cattle at slaughterhouses by facilitating animal tameness; the pros and cons of various on-farm poultry culling methods; and an assessment of the effect of road transportation on the welfare of farmed African catfish and European eel. The abstracts of all the oral and poster presentations at the symposium can be found on the HSA website www.hsa.org.uk or are available from the HSA office.

A drinks reception was held on board HMS Warrior on the evening of the first day. This very enjoyable event included presentation of the HSA’s 2011 Award for Significant Advances in the Humane Slaughter of Farmed Livestock by Temple Grandin to Jeff Lines and John Ace-Hopkins.

The Symposium was a great success and was much enjoyed by all. The HSA received many emails and letters of appreciation from delegates (and enquiries have been made about when the next symposium might be held!) It is intended that the proceedings of the Symposium will be published in the journal Animal Welfare in due course. These will be sent to delegates, others interested in receiving a copy should contact Heather Barker (heather@hsa.org.uk). Our thanks to all who helped make the event so successful, particularly HSA Technical Officer Heather Barker who did a great job in organising the HSA’s first-ever international symposium.
Professor Temple Grandin, Colorado State University, gave a presentation on auditing animal welfare and practical improvements in beef, pork and sheep slaughter plants.

Dr Robert Elwood of Queen’s University, Belfast asked the thought-provoking question ‘Do crustaceans experience pain?’

Nikki Kells of Massey University, New Zealand, discussed assessment of the relative welfare impacts of various gas treatments for the euthanasia of suckling piglets.

Jia Zili of the Beijing Chaoyang Anhua Animal Product Safety Research Institute, China, and his simultaneous translator JJ Sun, described the WSPA and APSRI humane slaughter programme in China.

Dr Andrea Gavinelli of the European Commission opened the Symposium with his talk on future challenges of the new European regulation on the protection of animals at the time of killing and its relevance to international trade.

Dr James Kirkwood, HSA Chief Executive and Scientific Director, welcomes delegates to the evening reception on board HMS Warrior.

Networking time during a break in presentations.
Dorothy Sidley Memorial Scholars

This year the HSA has awarded Dorothy Sidley Memorial Scholarships to two students. Bethan Jones is studying for an MSc Meat Science degree at the University of Bristol and is examining methods for improving the movement of cattle into the stunning pen and the implications for the use of electric goads. Under the supervision of Steve Wotton, Bethan’s project will examine the effect of mirrors and images on cattle behaviour.

Eduardo Santurtun Oliveros is studying for a PhD at the University of Queensland, Australia under the supervision of Professor Clive Phillips. Eduardo’s project examines the responses of sheep to movements experienced during sea transport and assesses the implications for animal welfare on such voyages. This is a novel area of research and Eduardo hopes to improve scientific understanding in this area of sheep behaviour and welfare.

This year’s annual meeting at which Dorothy Sidley Memorial Scholars and Animal Welfare Student Scholars of the HSA’s sister charity UFAW present their work is being planned for December 7 or 14 at Cambridge University.

HSA Centenary PhD: humane mechanical methods for killing chickens

As one of the special activities to mark its Centenary, the HSA this year, for the first time in its history, called for applications for a Research Training Scholarship to support PhD research into an important aspect of humane slaughter. The successful candidate was Jessica Hopkins of the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC). Jessica will undertake a three-year research programme to address the major welfare problem of the need for a simple, portable method for humanely killing chickens.

When the need for emergency killing of sick and injured birds occurs on large-scale commercial chicken farms, the usual method is neck dislocation. This method is also routinely used [ie for non-emergency killing] in some smaller commercial operations and smallholdings, and where ‘backyard’ chickens are kept. Thus, very large numbers of birds are killed this way. However, there is evidence that this method is not ideal: it may be difficult for some people to perform effectively every time and even when it is performed correctly birds may retain brain activity for up to 30 seconds, for part of which time consciousness may persist. From January 2013, European law will limit the number of birds that can be killed in this way each day.

Various types of culling equipment are available but none are ideal. For example, some are affordable but have welfare risks; others are humane but too expensive for all smallholders. There is thus a pressing need for a humane, easily used and accessible alternative.

The research programme will investigate the potential for modification of existing devices developed for use in other species (eg rabbits), and includes scope for the development of totally new approaches. The aim is to develop a reliably humane, effective and affordable method for use by all poultry keepers anywhere in the world.

Lectures in animal welfare for students

In January 2011 Jade Spence, HSA Technical Officer, visited the University of Edinburgh to give a presentation on animal welfare at slaughter to MSc Applied Animal Behaviour and Animal Welfare students. The lecture discussed the legislation protecting animal welfare at slaughter, identified how humane slaughter methods are applied and the techniques used to assess the effectiveness of stunning and killing. Jade also discussed some of the challenges to animal welfare which are encountered with certain types of killing methods. As well as the typical mammalian and avian species, the development of humane killing methods for farmed fish were also highlighted.

In February 2011, Jade visited third year veterinary medicine students at the University of Liverpool to discuss the welfare of farmed fish at harvest. This was a novel subject area for the trainee veterinarians and the presentation raised some interesting discussions. Many welfare scientists consider fish to be capable of suffering and therefore industry has followed the red meat and poultry sectors in introducing humane killing methods. The student vets were taught about electrical stunning and other methods, and about the signs that fish farmers can use to identify whether their fish are effectively stunned.
Captive-bolt research

Since 2009 the HSA technical staff have been involved in a major project, led by the Royal Veterinary College (RVC), to assess the efficacy of captive-bolt equipment with regard to different breeds, types and ages of sheep. The demand for this work was born out of the foot-and-mouth disease epidemics of 2001 and 2007. The aim is to determine if certain types of sheep can be effectively killed using captive-bolt equipment without having to carry out a secondary operation (bleeding or pithing), which is currently required by law, but is both time-consuming and labour-intensive.

The field work is now in its final stages: repeat-firing tests were completed over three days in July at the RVC, with the assistance of the HSA technical team; velocity testing has been carried out on a large sample of government-owned, captive-bolt equipment; and the final stage is to complete the velocity testing of a given number of captive-bolt instruments in current commercial use. This is being carried out by HSA technical staff, who have all received the necessary training in the use of the testing equipment by the project leaders. The equipment being tested is a sample of instruments in everyday use by the knacker industry and the testing is being carried out with the full co-operation of the equipment owners. The HSA aims to finish this work by the end of August 2011.
Independent welfare appraisals

In the past year the HSA technical team has carried out a number of independent appraisals on behalf of primary processors supplying major retailers. These appraisals are a requirement of the retailers’ quality assurance schemes which have done much to raise the baseline of animal welfare at slaughter in recent years. The HSA observes the whole live animal operation from unloading through to exsanguination and provides advice based on the findings. The reports may contain recommendations for improvements in certain areas and/or commend practices, facilities and individuals where appropriate. Generally, standards have been found to be good and the HSA’s recommendations have been found to be valuable.

Over the last 12 months, in the UK, the HSA has visited cattle, sheep, chicken, turkey and duck slaughter plants to provide assessments of animal welfare in the live animal areas of these plants. The HSA welfare assessment service helps industry to ensure that their standard operating procedures are compliant with legislation and best practice recommendations for animal welfare. More information, including the HSA Welfare Assessment Policy, is available at www.hsa.org.uk

Overseas training opportunities

In January this year, HSA Technical Director Charles Mason was a keynote speaker at the Nordic Veterinary Association’s annual conference, which took place in Tartu, Estonia and was organized by one of the HSA’s university ‘LINK’ personnel. The presentation outlined the current and past work of the HSA with emphasis on the education and training opportunities offered. It was well received and prompted a number of questions, with a great deal of interest being shown in the HSA Centenary Symposium.

The Technical Director will be visiting Zambia again in July/August 2011, when he will visit some more slaughter facilities and endeavour to build on the interest shown by representatives of the Zambian meat and livestock industry last year.

WELLFISH COST Action 867 and International Workshop on Fish Welfare

Technical Officer Heather Barker attended the final meeting of WELLFISH COST Action 867 “Welfare of Fish in European Aquaculture” which was held in conjunction with the first International Workshop on Fish Welfare. The meetings were held in February 2011 at the Escuela Técnica Superior de Ingenieros Agrónomos in Madrid, Spain and over 90 delegates participated.

COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) Action 867 has been running for the past five years. Its main objectives have been to improve knowledge of the welfare of fish, to formulate a set of guidelines embodying a common and scientifically sound understanding of the concept of welfare in farmed fish, and to construct a range of targeted operational welfare indicator protocols to be used in the industry. The meeting concluded that the networking function of the COST Action 867 had been very important with collaboration between European countries being improved since the first meeting, and that the network should continue even though the COST Action had now finished. A special edition of the journal Fish Physiology and Biochemistry is due to be published which will encapsulate the work and progress achieved by the working groups of the COST Action initiative over the past five years.

The first International Workshop on Fish Welfare covered a range of interesting talks including: a review of the current understanding of fish pain perception and what kinds of information are required to improve the welfare of fish; how the moral agenda for the use of fish and other dealings with fish may change in the future; the implications of the aggressive behaviour of juvenile barramundi to commercial culture; and the welfare of fish slaughtered on ice. It is hoped that more international workshops on fish welfare will be held in the future.
General Meeting 2010

The General Meeting was held at the Old School, Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead. As in previous years this was held in conjunction with the AGM of the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW). The members of UFAW Council are Trustees of the HSA. Joint meetings are held to save time and money.

The notice convening the meeting had been sent to all subscribers and was taken as read. The meeting agreed the Minutes of the General Meeting of 2009 and resolved to receive the Accounts and Auditor’s Report for the year ended 31 March 2010. There were no questions on the Report of the year’s work and the meeting resolved that the Report and Accounts be received.

It was resolved that Anthony Joseph & Co, Registered Auditors, be appointed as auditors to HSA.

The Chairman, Mr John Pratt and Trustee Professor Vince Molony, were standing down from the Board of Trustees. There were two new candidates for election and in accordance with UFAW’s Articles of Association Professor Alistair Lawrence and Mr David Pritchard were elected. Dr James Anderson was re-elected.

Notice of General Meeting 2011

The General Meeting of the HSA will be held at 2.00pm on Tuesday 11 October 2011, at The Old School, Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire (HSA’s office premises). The formal notice and agenda have been sent to all members and are available from the Secretary at the registered office.

Finance and Accounts

The summarised accounts set out overleaf have been extracted from the full accounts and have been prepared in accordance with section 43 of the Charities Act 1993, which were approved by the Trustees and signed on its behalf on 12 July 2011.

The full accounts have been audited and the auditors’ opinion was without qualification. The accounts will be filed with the Charity Commission after the general meeting on 11 October 2011. Full accounts, and the audit report can be obtained from the HSA Secretary, The Old School, Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead, Herts AL4 8AN.
Caring beyond the farm gate  13

The summarised accounts were approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf on 12 July 2011

M Radford OBE LLB
Chairman

Michael T Bird FCA
Hon Treasurer

The summarised accounts set out above have been extracted from the full accounts and have been prepared in accordance with section 43 of the Charities Act 1993. The full accounts have been audited and the auditors’ opinion was without qualification. The accounts will be filed with the Charity Commission after the General Meeting on 11 October 2011. Full accounts and the audit report can be obtained from the Secretary, The Old School, Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead, Herts AL4 8AN.

Independent Auditors’ Statement to the Trustees of the HSA & CJA
We have examined the summarised financial statements that comprise the summary statement of financial activities and summary balance sheet.

Respective Responsibilities of the Trustees and Auditors
You are responsible as the Trustees for the preparation of the summarised financial statements. We have agreed to report to you our opinion on the summarised financial statements’ consistency with the financial statements, on which we reported to you on 12 July 2011.

Basis of Opinion
We have carried out the procedures we consider necessary to ascertain whether the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements from which they have been prepared.

Opinion
In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2011.

S. Francis-Joseph FCCA, Senior Statutory Auditor, Anthony Joseph & Co, Registered Auditors, Stevenage, 12 July 2011
The Humane Slaughter Association
and Council of Justice to Animals
(Registered in England Charity No. 209563)

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