



MINUTES
APGAW Meeting
12th July 2016 5-6.30pm

FARM ANIMAL WELFARE & AGM

Political Members: Rebecca Pow MP, Roger Gale, Lord Trees, Rob Ffello MP, Angela Smith, MP Henry Smith MP, Kerry McCarthy MP, Andrea Jenkyns MP

Associate Members: Allen Parton (Hounds for Heroes), Lord NcNair (ECMA), Drusilla Summers, Shakira Miles (The SaveABulls), Claudia Parry (HSI), Claire Bass (HSI), Elizabeth Cox (Run Free Alliance), Sue Starkey (Run Free Alliance), Cordelia Britton (Four Paws UK), Brian da Cal (Four Paws UK, Michael Bellingham (PfMA), Jason Felney (Food Standards Agency), Heather Peck (Food Standards Agency), Vicki Betton (PDSA), Majorie Thompson (LACS), Emily Wilson (World Animal Protection), Laura McArea (Animal Welfare Party), Sarah Dickinson (World Animal Protection), Lady Tabor (Dog Theft Action), Chistine Elmer (CAFH), Lorraine Platt (Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation), Nik Oakley (Dogs Lost), Debbie Matthews (Vets Get Scanning), Arnot Wilson (The Dog Union), Richard Jordan (Pet Theft Awareness), Samantha Chandler (Anglican Society for Welfare of Animals) Dr Daniel Allen (Animal Realities), Dr Lesley Mitchell (World Animal Protection), Katie Rook (Vet), Ben Myring (RCVS), Ben Rayner (DODs), Alpesh Patel (Dr Hawden Trust), Nikita Bachelard (ADI), Wendy Smith (CIWF), Kate Fowler (Animal Aid), Marcus Papadopoulos (Politics First), Tom Knehnell (Vegan Society), Peter Smith (Vegan Society), James Somerville-Meilde (Countryside Alliance), Kate Vervain (Animal Welfare Party), Helena Cotton (BVA), Harvey Locke (BVA), Vanessa Biggle (RVC), Carolyn Smith (RVC), Laura Chepner, Peter Stevenson (CIWF), Jo Lewis (The Soil Association), John Fishwick (BVA)

Officers elected as follows:

Co-Chairmen: Angela Smith MP (Lab), Henry Smith MP (Con), Rebecca Pow MP (Con)

Vice Chairman: Jim Fitzpatrick MP (Lab), Kerry McCarthy MP (Lab), Caroline Lucas MP (Green)

Treasurer: Lord Trees (Cross Bench) Sheryl Murray MP (Con)

Secretaries; Rob Ffello MP (Lab), Andrea Jenkyns MP (Con)

Financial Report:

APGAW had an existing balance before the General Election of £3,532.73, Membership Income from May 2015 was £2056 and the Dogs In Society Conference raised £3,482.63 with a total of £9,074.36. With the publication and printing of the Dog Strategy and the Dogs in Society Conference alongside payment for speakers, meeting equipment, membership cards, email and website hosting, there was a spend of £4807.19.

Angela Smith MP thanked Marisa Heath for the work in running APGAW so effectively, increasing membership, producing reports and ensuring animal welfare had a strong profile in Parliament.

Peter Stevenson: Compassion in World Farming

The Effects of Brexit on Farm Animal Welfare and the Need for a Sustainable Food Plan

Defra's 25-year Food Plan was due to be published in March but has been postponed until there is greater clarity about the future relationship with the EU. The proposed plan focussed on increasing production, competitiveness & agri-tech and would drive further industrialisation of farming. It largely ignored animal welfare, the environment & public health. Government must now take this opportunity to develop a cohesive Food & Farming Policy that seeks to deliver on a wide range of intermeshed objectives. The Policy must move us away from industrial farming otherwise the potential for improving welfare is limited.

There might be opportunities with Brexit to improve welfare, e.g. once UK is no longer bound by EU rules, it will be free to ban live exports provided that in any new trade agreement with EU it insists on inclusion of clause permitting it to do so. Once the UK leaves the EU it will be able to improve welfare in the UK & protect UK farmers by banning import of lower welfare products. Defra should ban import of foie gras once leaving the EU. In new trade agreements UK must insist on inclusion of clauses enabling it to require imports to meet UK welfare standards. 51% of UK hens are still kept in enriched cages across the EU and we should ban this. Many UK sows are kept in farrowing crates for the week before giving birth & for 3-4 weeks after the piglets are born. These are so narrow the sow cannot even turn round. Several alternatives to farrowing crates are available. Piglet mortalities in loose farrowing systems can as low as or lower than in crates. Farrowing crates should be replaced by free farrowing systems.

The UK dairy sector is rapidly industrialising with cows being taken off the fields & confined in year round 'zero-grazing' systems. Greater support should be given to pasture based dairy farmers e.g. subsidies or legislation requiring cows to be kept on pasture during the grass growing season. Milk & dairy products must be labelled, once we have the freedom to do so, as to what farming method was used so that consumers can play their part in supporting pasture-based dairying.

Industrial livestock production is damaging not just to animal welfare but also to food security, natural resources, climate & health. The detrimental impact of industrial livestock on environment largely stems from its use of cereals as animal feed. It takes 100 calories fed to animals to produce 17-30 calories in the form of meat. 55% of EU cereal production is used as animal feed. Many reputable bodies recognize the detrimental impact of industrial livestock on the environment largely stems from its use of cereals as animal feed. Chatham House called it "staggeringly inefficient" and the International Institute for Environment and Development call it a "colossally inefficient use of resources." Industrial livestock production with its huge need for cereals has fueled the intensification of crop production which – with its monocultures & agro-chemicals – leads to water pollution, soil degradation and biodiversity loss. Modern agriculture, in seeking to maximize yields has caused loss of soil organic carbon, compaction, reduced soil biodiversity and soil quality in UK is in some cases now so poor that it is thought to be an important factor constraining productivity (Edmondson et al, 2014; Tsiafouli et al, 2015; Committee on Climate Change, 2015). There has been a marked decline in pollinators including bees & farmland birds in UK with intensive farming being a leading driver in these declines (Parliamentary Office for Science & Technology; Defra 2013). Rearing animals on pasture will convert grass into food that we can eat, produce food from land unsuited to other forms of food production, will integrate rotational crop-livestock systems and allow the use of crop residues for use of by-products as feed.

There are also health issues to consider with high levels of consumption of red & processed meat contributing to heart disease, diabetes & certain cancers. The New Eatwell Guide by Public Health England says "Eat less red and processed meat" and the Carbon Trust states less meat has an appreciably lower environmental impact than the current UK diet, with substantially reduced GHG emissions & land use. Reduced meat & dairy consumption would allow animals to be farmed extensively to high welfare standards. By 2050, on a business-as-usual basis our diets alone likely to have taken us above the 'well below 2°C' target (Bajželj et al, 2014). Chatham House believe we can't hit the Paris target without a reduction in meat & dairy consumption.

The new food and farming policy must deliver on natural resources, health, climate & animal welfare. To do this it must reduce use of cereals as animal feed, animals should primarily be fed on materials that cannot be eaten by people, it should aim to restore water, soils & biodiversity, develop health-orientated systems for rearing animals, encourage a reduce in consumption of meat & dairy and subsidies should be used for public goods.

Questions

Lord McNair - Have you considered the Sustainable Development Goals to support what you are doing as everything you are saying is supported by some or all of the goals.

Peter Stevenson (CIWF) – Absolutely, we have produced a briefing looking at how the Goals and the Paris Agreement supports the kind of agriculture we are seeking.

Lord Trees – I would agree with much of what you say but welfare and intensification are not always absolutely synonymous and not all intensive systems have bad welfare. Cereal feeding is not desirable but you did not touch on how we can satisfy the demand for food and ensuring food security as we are producing less food ourselves than we have ever done. The use of antibiotics is used very little in sheep and cattle in total. You mentioned the poorest have to eat the poorest food but food has never been cheaper. We spend 11% of our disposable income on food which is the lowest we have ever spent. I would not accept that good food has to be expensive.

Rebecca Pow MP – I love the idea of more grass feeding and more rotation but it is true that we have to feed the nation so how would this be addressed? Are more sustainable methods not going to produce less food and therefore would it be more expensive?

Peter Stevenson (CIWF) – I believe that whilst you can indeed have worse or better welfare, in general most industrial systems have little potential for good welfare. The potential for good welfare is much greater with other methods. In terms of feeding the nation the thing driving industrialisation is the myth that we need to produce 70% more food but we already produce enough, it is just that we waste so much of it and part of that is the use of cereals for animal feed. I have reports from the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation to back that up.

Jo Lewis: Food for Life by The Soil Association

Changing Food Culture

The vision of Food for Life is to make good food the easy choice for everyone, whoever and wherever they are. Good food means a healthy and sustainable diet: less high fat/salt/sugar processed food and less but better quality meat, more fruit and vegetables, whole grains and sustainable fish. It is quality food you can trust with more fresh, local, seasonal, sustainable food, with low climate impact and high welfare standards. It also seeks to promote eating together: more opportunities for social contact through food, building families and communities and tackling loneliness. There are three levels of awards in the Food for Life programme: Bronze Catering, Silver Catering and Gold Catering. This to reward food that is: freshly prepared & unprocessed, nutritious & free from trans fats, ethically sourced, sustainable and enabling healthier food choices. There are extra marks for using organic ingredients, sourcing from other welfare schemes and championing local producers. We work with a range of labels including RSPCA Assured, British Poultry Council, Quality British Turkey, Soil Association Organic, Farm Quality Assured, AHDB Beef and Lamb, British and Local Free Range Eggs, Marine Conservation Society, FAWL, Quality Pork Standard.

“The Food for Life Catering Mark provides independent endorsement that food providers are meeting the school food standards and serving food prepared from fresh, sustainable and locally sourced ingredients.” New School Food Standards: A Practical Guide (Department for Education). Over 46 UK hospitals already have a Catering Mark for patient, staff and visitor food. 40,000 Catering Mark meals are served daily to patients, staff and visitors in UK hospitals which is 13.5 million meals a year. 37% of UK universities have achieved a Catering Mark. 10,000 UK schools have a Catering Mark with over 300 early years’ settings have one too. 2.2 million Catering Mark meals are served annually in workplace restaurants and cafes and available in 49 visitor attractions around the UK. Food for Life Catering Mark is a well-established scheme for caterers that covers similar issues to the balanced scorecard. Membership of the scheme provides caterers with independently verified evidence of their achievements. It incorporates a wide range of product assurance schemes including Red Tractor and other farm assurance schemes, Fairtrade, LEAF Marque, Marine Stewardship Council, Freedom Food and Organic, and will generally guarantee good or excellent performance by caterers against the award criteria in the balanced scorecard.

This partnership between the Soil Association Certification and the Carbon Trust is an exciting opportunity to inspire businesses and caterers to improve their environmental performance and show a clear commitment to buying fresh, healthy, locally sourced, sustainable food and champion British producers via the Red Tractor scheme. The Food for Life Catering Mark is making it easy to verify a good or excellent score across all areas of the DEFRA balanced scorecard for public procurement, including food production, social and economic value, quality and now resource efficiency too. An example of what it means in practice is Bolsover Church of England Junior School in Derbyshire which is a FFL Gold school in an area of deprivation with a high incidence of childhood obesity. Before FFL, the school had no facilities for cooking, growing or farming. They now have a specially designated cookery classroom, a garden, polytunnel, an orchard and a ‘farm’ where they raise chickens, pigs and goats. They have food theme nights, where children set up the canteen like a restaurant and take bookings. Every fortnight, they offer a roast dinner for 40 people in the local community and the children serve the guests. In the words of Headteacher Rowena Herbert: “The children have developed new skills, gained in confidence, and are seeing what they have grown. Food for Life has raised awareness of the whole of food culture – what we eat, how we produce and cook it – and the children really enjoy this.”

8 years ago there was one or maybe two exceptional schools like Bolsover but we now have over 10,000 other primary schools also with FFL-certified menus - that’s 50% of all primary schools in England. There are also nearly 1400 schools with the FFL School Award for their whole school ethos on food and the richness of their food education. Food for Life has extended its work to high street restaurants as well and have created league tables for the main chains. The transition to a prevention culture needs to occur in society at large and not just within the health service. It will not be accomplished unless good food is made more readily available and affordable.

Questions:

Sue Starkey (Run Free Alliance) – How do we know what constitutes high welfare? For example, what is the definition of free range eggs? Do they have access to outside for just an hour as it has been suggested?

Peter Stevenson (CIWF)- To use the term there are EU legally binding standards that the hens must have full access to outside. Some timid hens do not want to go outside so the house must be designed to accommodate that too.

Jo Lewis (Food for Life) – Our standards committee defers to CIWF rating in terms of what constitutes the gold standard for animal welfare with higher points given to outdoor systems. An assurance scheme like the RSPCA is recognised over schemes which do not have that. There are challenges of the affordability of higher welfare schemes but one of the things we have demonstrated is that half of the 1.7million meals at silver and gold level

are at public sector catering where the budgets are very constrained and we have shown it can be done in a cost neutral way. If it was not commercial viable it would not be taken up. A bit less meat and planning makes this possible. The higher quality of the meals makes more pupils take it up so there is a positive virtuous circle that will improve quality and economics.

Lord Trees – 40% of food waste is at the home level because people buy impulsively without planning.

Jo Lewis (Food for Life) – That is true. We buy a third of what we buy in total on promotion which is often the junk. There is a need for a cultural shift in teaching those skills for the next generation to enable them to buy good food affordably and avoid waste.

John Fishwick (British Veterinary Association)

Humane Slaughter

When I talk about farming livestock the points I make is that we are trying to feed a growing population and we need to do that by maintaining welfare and looking after the environment. So much of what we talk about comes down to good husbandry. If we rear animals well we do not need a huge amount of drugs and they will have a good standard of life. A large farm is industrial and so is seen as factory farming with low welfare but that is a dangerous assumption as the standard of husbandry for the animals is the most important factor. I have worked on some of the largest dairy farms where the standard of care was top rate and I have seen small farms which are very badly run.

Reconnecting young people, indeed all people with where their food comes up is really important and I feel very strongly about this. The time an animal is slaughtered is a difficult time and it is vital welfare is at the highest level so the animal knows effectively little or nothing about it.

Generally when animals are slaughtered there are two parts – a stun which makes the animal unconscious and the second is when the animal has its throat cut. There are a few ways of doing the first part; ballistics using a gun with a captive bolt to destroy higher levels of sensibility in the brain, electrical methods applied to the brain making the animal insensible to pain and gas such as CO₂ can be used. Once the animal has been stunned we need to 'stick' the animal by cutting the major blood vessels. We do know that if the animal just has its throat cut it does cause a great deal of pain. The Farm Animal Welfare Council made a formal recommendation that it was very significant in terms of pain. It can take 2-5 minutes for the animal to die. The law controlling this is the EU Directive 1099/2009 which came into place in 2013 and that law in England is implemented by the FOWAC 2015. Animals must be stunned before being cut but there is a derogation for certain religious reasons. Everybody has a right to free speech and we have to respect how different cultures feel but these derogations allow for non-stun slaughter where the animal has its throat cut. Shechita slaughter means only the front end of the animal goes for consumption and the rear end goes into the main food chain. With Halal slaughter 85% has been pre-stunned so it is not so much of a welfare issue. The total number of animals killed using the non-stun method are 2% of cattle, 15% of sheep and goats and 3% of poultry. The percentages sound low but the numbers are high.

The BVA feels very strongly that non-stun slaughter causes a major source of stress and compromises welfare of animals. We believe it should be made illegal. The fact that 85% of halal slaughter uses pre-stun shows how good the welfare standards can be. Where no pre-stun slaughter takes place it is possible to do an immediate post cut stun instead of bleeding the animal to death. The second way of improving the situation is to make sure the amount of non-stun meat produced is only what is required by limiting the numbers. Matching supply and

demand will do a great deal to reduce non-stun slaughter in the UK. Finally, the labelling of meat to say it is non-stunned is important for the consumer who can then make an informed decision. Farm Assurance Schemes insist on only stunned meat which helps reduce the amount.

The BVA want to look at WATOK regulations applying to the slaughter of poultry. A large proportion are slaughtered in an electric water bath for which the regulations say where non stun methods takes place there is no specific requirement for the parameters in the water bath, i.e. the voltage, time etc are not specified which means it is not necessarily effective. Birds which are stunned incorrectly are immobilised so no one can tell if they are truly stunned. The law needs to be amended to put those regulations in place.

My final point is on the use of CCTV in abattoirs. The FAWC made recommendations about the need for this and the BVA backed that. The idea of a camera running where animals are slaughtered is fundamental to ensuring the welfare of the animal. It is hard to have someone filming you when you are doing your job so there is a huge job to getting the buy in for people working on abattoirs to accept CCTV. Nonetheless, it can protect people as well as alerting authorities to illegal or sub-standard operations. CCTV is not the answer to solving all problems but it can play an important role. Workers may think people are looking at them to pick up minor problems so they need to be assured we are only looking for issues on welfare of the animals. The footage can be stored and looked at if needed but would not be open to any viewing.

Isabel Cox (Run Free Alliance) – To my knowledge some of the problems arising in abattoirs was that workers were paid by the numbers slaughtered, is that still the case?

John Fishwick (BVA) – I would agree with you. I cannot tell you how slaughtermen are paid in all situations but welfare should be put first over numbers

Lelsey Mitchel (WAP) I appreciated the list of recommendations on what needs to be done to achieve real change. We need to identify what the priority issues are for each species and have incremental change where we can meet the industry to help it move forward, We should look to global efforts being taken around Global Sustainable Livestock to try and find ways to develop more sustainable systems. The issue of what we invest outside of the EU through DFID in funding such as sustainable livestock systems in Columbia is really worth looking at as we seek new trade deals. A point of concern is that we rely on skilled farm workers from Europe for good animal husbandry and we need to understand what will we see in terms of employment for those working in these fields as we leave the EU.

John Fishwick – UK agriculture does rely heavily on international workers and if their ability to work here is compromised it may cause issues for animal husbandry.

Laura Chepner (Restaurant Owner) – Have you ever considered showing footage to fully demonstrate the difference between non-stun and stun? Would it help to encourage people to step away from this?

John Fishwick (BVA) - Peter Jinman worked on a series which slaughtered animals live on television and that showed people what was going on but it was very well done, the animal was stunned and the welfare was high. In terms of encouraging people not to have non-stun meat there is a lot of engagement and the stunned halal meat percentage shows something positive. I think it would a good thing to show people how it is done so they can understand the difference.

Jo Lewis (Food for Life) – The majority of our work is through primary schools so there is an issue over what is age appropriate but I would say with the children from primary age it is often the teachers who are more squeamish about discussing this issue. Children can take this kind of thing on board. With secondary school we need to give teachers good access to all resources so they can decide what to show to pupils. It is best handled by teachers.

Lorraine Platt (CAWF) – A few countries in the EU were able to ban non-stun slaughter, how was this achieved?

John Fishwick (BVA) – There are a range of attitudes across Europe. In Germany specific permission must be given for a specific demand so it limits the number of animals killed with the non-stun method.

Lord Trees – There could be smaller religious communities in some of these countries which makes restricting non-stun easier to do if you do not have strong opposition. If something was shown on TV there would be public uproar. I have never called for a ban as I believe we need to persuade the religious authorities to give up this practice which is biblical and there are no real technical reasons for doing it. There are ways of non-fatal stunning that would fulfil their religious requirements so that the animal is alive. For the Judaic slaughter the animal must not have blemishes which can be done with head electrical stunning. There is a standstill requirement that the animal must be left immobile in its holding crate for 20 seconds and that standstill is broken more often than not and we could legally enforce that. It would have material effect as it would make it more expensive to use non-stun.

John Fishwick – That could be easily enforced by the CCTV

Rebecca Pow MP – As a final question how might Brexit affect animal welfare in the UK?

Peter Stevenson (CIWF) – We can have more freedom to end farrow crates and live animal exports when we negotiate new trade standards but we will need clauses that protect welfare UK standards and to protect our farmers when doing this. If we do not have the political will we are in danger, as we are already with the EU, of setting higher standards in this country but having lower standard competition coming in. We need to take this opportunity to rethink our whole food and farming system.

John Fishwick – EU legislation is not perfect but in many ways it drives standards so the important thing is to not drop our standards when we do not have someone else to blame for it. This is something we need to look out for in doing new trade deals.

Rebecca Pow MP – It seems sensible that APGAW should flag this concern with the relevant Minister dealing with trade and also animal welfare so Marisa will write a letter on behalf of the officers.

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