Five Freedoms: Background reading

The origins of the Five Freedoms

The concept of “Five Freedoms” originated with the Report of the Technical Committee to Enquire into the Welfare of Animals kept under Intensive Livestock Husbandry Systems, the Brambell Report, December 1965 (HMSO London, ISBN 0 10 850286 4). This stated that farm animals should have freedom “to stand up, lie down, turn around, groom themselves and stretch their limbs,” a list that is still sometimes referred to as Brambell’s Five Freedoms. As a direct result of the Brambell Report, the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (FAWAC) was set up. This was disbanded at the same time that the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) was established by the British Government in July 1979, with some common membership. One of these bodies started to list the provisions that should be made for farm animals in five categories, which also became known as the Five Freedoms (despite the fact that not all the categories were actually freedoms). The concept was subsequently refined by FAWC so that it actually took the form of five freedoms. It has since been further updated and is now the most visited page on the Council's Website. These freedoms define ideal states rather than standards for acceptable welfare. They form a logical and comprehensive framework for analysis of welfare within any system together with the steps and compromises necessary to safeguard and improve welfare within the proper constraints of an effective livestock industry. They are:

1. Freedom from Hunger and Thirst - by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor.

2. Freedom from Discomfort - by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.

3. Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.

4. Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal’s own kind.

5. Freedom from Fear and Distress - by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.
Aim

Read the assigned papers and write a report that addresses;

1. What are the five freedoms?
2. Give one way we could measure each of these freedoms
3. Which freedom in your opinion is the easiest to measure and why?
4. Which freedom in your opinion is the hardest to measure and why?

Student responsibilities:

1. Locate and read the assigned papers
   a. Pew report: Animal welfare chapter
   b. Ethical and behavioral bases for farm animal welfare legislation; Croney and Millman 2007
   c. Using behaviour to assess animal welfare; Dawkins 2004
   d. The science of animal suffering; Dawkins 2008
   e. Scientific conception of animals welfare that reflects ethical concerns: Fraser et al., 1997
   f. How important is natural behaviour in animal farming systems? Špinka 2006
   g. Welfare assessment in extensive animal production systems: challenges and opportunities: Turner and Dwyer 2007
   h. Identifying and preventing pain in animals? Weary et al., 2006
   i. (Optional) others of your choosing

2. Written report; 3 to 5 pages, Arial font, one inch margins, insert page numbers, 1.5 spacing, name, date and title on the first page and a reference list using the Journal of Animal Science style to list all scientific papers read as background for formulation of your opinions. Submit electronically (to all 3 instructors) by noon on Friday March 12th 2010

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