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**GUERNSEY STATUTORY INSTRUMENT**

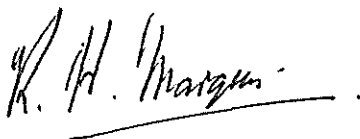
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1995 NO 13

**CODE OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WELFARE OF LIVESTOCK**

|                        |               |
|------------------------|---------------|
| Made                   | 18 April 1995 |
| Laid before the States | 1995          |
| Coming into effect     | 18 April 1995 |

The States Agricultural and Milk Marketing Board, in pursuance of the powers conferred upon it by Section 18 of the Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance, 1987, (a), and all other powers enabling it in that behalf has this day made this Code of Recommendations which shall come into operation on 18 April 1995.



R.H. Marquis.  
President.

STATES AGRICULTURAL AND MILK MARKETING BOARD.  
For and on behalf of the Board.

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(a) Recueil d'Ordonnances Tome XXIV p.51.

EXPLANATORY NOTE.

The code is intended to establish minimum standards for the welfare of cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, horses, farmed deer, domestic fowls, turkeys and farmed rabbit and to enable the Island to meet its obligations as a party to the European Convention on the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes.

## **CODE OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WELFARE OF CATTLE**

Animal Welfare Codes are intended to encourage stock-keepers to adopt the highest standards of husbandry.

The Code embodies the latest scientific advice, and the best current husbandry practices. It takes account of the five basic needs:

1. Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition;
2. Appropriate comfort and shelter;
3. Prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment of injury and disease;
4. Freedom to display most normal patterns of behaviour;
5. Freedom from fear.

In particular it stresses the need to provide shelter for animals tethered outside during the winter; and the fact that calves under 6 months of age should not be tethered outside at all between 1 December and 31 March of the following year. The use of adequate amounts of straw or other bedding materials is also stressed.

The preface to the Code identifies good stockmanship as a key factor in farm animal welfare. I am convinced that this Code is an essential tool for every stockman. I therefore ask you, and all involved with cattle on your farm, to read it carefully, and to bear its recommendations in mind at all times.

### **PREFACE**

This preface is not part of the Code but is intended to explain its purpose and to indicate the broad considerations upon which it is based.

The basic requirements for the welfare of livestock are a husbandry system appropriate to the health and, so far as practicable, the behavioural needs of the animals and a high standard of stockmanship.

Stockmanship is a key factor because, no matter how otherwise acceptable a system may be in principle, without competent, diligent stockmanship, the welfare of the animals cannot be adequately catered for. The recommendations which follow are designed to help all stockmen to attain the required standards. The part that training has to play in the development of the stockman's awareness of welfare requirements cannot be overstressed. Detailed advice on the application of the Code in individual circumstances is readily available from The States Agricultural Officer, or The States Veterinary Officer.

Nearly all livestock husbandry systems impose restrictions on the stock and some of these can cause an unacceptable degree of discomfort or distress by preventing the animals from fulfilling their basic needs. Provisions meeting these needs, and others which must be considered, include -

- \* comfort and shelter;
- \* readily accessible fresh water and a diet to maintain the animals in full health and vigour;
- \* freedom of movement;
- \* the company of other animals, particularly of like kind;
- \* the opportunity to exercise most normal patterns of behaviour;
- \* light during the hours of daylight, and lighting readily available to enable the animals to be inspected at any time;
- \* flooring which neither harms the animals, nor causes undue strain;
- \* the prevention, or rapid diagnosis and treatment, of vice, injury, parasitic infestation and disease;
- \* the avoidance of unnecessary mutilation, and
- \* emergency arrangements to cover outbreaks of fire, the breakdown of essential mechanical services and the disruption of supplies.

Cattle husbandry systems in current use do not equally meet the physiological and behavioural needs of the animals. Nevertheless, within the framework of the statutory powers under which the Code has been prepared an attempt has been made, on the basis of the latest scientific knowledge and the soundest current practices, to identify those features where the cattle's welfare could be at risk unless precautions are taken. The Code sets out what these precautions should be, bearing in mind the importance to the cattle of their total environment and the fact that there is often more than one way in which their welfare can be safeguarded. Particular attention is drawn to the requirements of cattle which are tethered (see paragraph 66).

Certain aspects of livestock husbandry can present hazards to the health and safety of the stockman. Advice on these matters is available from the Agricultural Officer, Environmental Health Officers of the States Board of Health, and the Health and Safety Executive.

For the purposes of this Code, the word "cattle" refers to all bovine stock, and an animal under six months of age is considered to be a calf.

## INTRODUCTION

1. The welfare of cattle can be safeguarded and their behavioural needs met under a variety of management systems. The system, and the number and stocking rate of cattle kept at any one time, should depend on the suitability of the conditions and the skills of the stockman.

2. Consideration should be given to the question of animal welfare before installing more complex or elaborate equipment than has previously been used. In general the greater the restriction imposed on the animal and the complexity of the system or the degree of control which is exercised over temperature, air flow or food supply, the less the animal is able to use its instinctive behaviour to modify the effect of unfavourable conditions and the greater the chance of suffering if mechanical or electrical failures occur. Thus systems involving a high degree of control over the environment should only be installed where conscientious staff skilled in both animal husbandry and the use of equipment will always be available.
3. Although very large herds can be managed successfully, in general the larger the size of the unit the greater the degree of skill and conscientiousness needed to safeguard welfare. The size of a unit should not be increased nor should a large unit be set up unless it is reasonably certain that the stockman in charge will be able to safeguard the welfare of the individual animal.
4. All stockmen should be familiar with the normal behaviour of cattle. Badly managed and unhealthy cattle will not do well, and it is essential that the stockman should watch for signs of distress or disease. It is important for management purposes that stockmen should have ample time for the inspection of stock and the checking of equipment.
5. The signs of ill-health in cattle include listlessness, loss of appetite, sudden fall in milk yield, cessation of cudding, discharge from the nostrils or eyes, excessive salivation, persistent coughing, swollen joints, lameness, and scouring, in particular, calves should be watched carefully for signs of scouring or respiratory disorders which could spread rapidly.
6. The good stockman should be able to recognise trouble in its earliest stages and may often be able to identify the cause and put matters right immediately. If the cause is not obvious, or if the stockman's immediate action is not effective, veterinary or other expert advice should be obtained as soon as possible. (see also paragraph 75).

## **BUILDINGS (including unroofed units)**

### **General**

7. Advice on welfare aspects should be sought when new buildings are to be constructed or existing buildings modified.
8. Internal surfaces of housing and pens for calves should be of materials which can, and should, either be cleansed and disinfected, or be easily replaceable when necessary. (see also paragraph 70 and 76).

9. Fittings and internal surfaces of buildings, cubicles, pens, kennels, milking parlours, stalls and passages accessible to cattle should not have sharp edges or projections, and fittings should be so arranged as to avoid injury to cattle. (see also paragraph 77).
10. Passages should be of such a design and width, and cubicles, pens, kennels and stalls so constructed, that animals can move freely into or out of them without encountering any physical obstruction.
11. All floors, particularly slatted ones, should be designed, constructed and maintained so as to avoid discomfort, distress or injury to the cattle. Remedial action should be taken if any of these occurs.
12. Cows should not be kept in a totally slatted area. A solid floored area incorporating straw or other suitable bedding material should be provided to ensure comfort and reduce the risk of injury to the udder, to which dairy cows are particularly vulnerable.
13. In accommodation for cows (especially those on a loose housed system), it is recommended that separate solid floored bedded pens be provided for use at calving time, and a solid floored creep area with bedding should also be available for the calves where cows with calves at foot are grouped together.
14. A dry lying area should be available to all housed cattle. Straw or other suitable bedding is strongly recommended. Floors should be adequately drained. (see also paragraph 78).
15. The construction and siting of individual calf pens should be such that each calf has an opportunity to see other calves. Solid-floored calf pens should have a slope of about 1:20 to provide adequate drainage. (see also paragraphs 35, 44 and 69).
16. Bull pens should be sited so as to allow the bull sight and sound of farm activity.
17. Paints and wood preservatives which may be toxic to cattle should not be used on surfaces accessible to them. Particular care is necessary to guard against the risk of lead poisoning from old paintwork in any part of the building or when secondhand building materials are used; this is particularly so when using old greenhouse timber.
18. Provision should be made for the segregation and comfort of sick or injured animals.
19. A cattle crush and race or other adequate facilities with quick-release devices are essential for the proper treatment of animals under examination, treatment or test. For a breeding herd, calving boxes should be available.

## **Fire and Other Emergency Precautions**

20. Farmers should make advance plans for dealing with emergencies such as fire, flood or disruption of supplies, and should ensure that all staff are familiar with the appropriate emergency action.
21. Fire precautions should be a major priority for the good stockman. The relevant provisions of Section 1.3 of British Standard BS5502 (particularly paragraphs 2.5 to 2.9) relating to fire precautions should therefore be followed. Expert advice should be sought from the States of Guernsey Fire Prevention Officer (Tel: 724491).
22. In the design of new buildings, or the alteration of existing buildings, there should be provision, wherever possible, for livestock to be released and evacuated quickly in cases of emergency. Materials used in construction should have sufficient fire resistance to enable emergency procedures to be followed.
23. All electrical, gas and oil services should be planned and fitted so that if there is overheating, or flame is generated, the risk of flame spreading to equipment, bedding or the fabric of the building is minimal. It is advisable to site power supply controls outside buildings. Consideration should be given to installing fire alarm systems which can be heard and acted upon at any time of the day or night.
24. In case a 999 call has to be made notices should be prominently displayed in all livestock buildings stating where the nearest telephone is located. Each telephone should have fixed by it a notice giving instructions on the best route to the farm and a description of the location of the telephone on the farm.
25. There is usually some warning of interruptions in the supply of feedingstuffs and, so far as possible, arrangements should be made to lay in adequate stock to offset the worst effects of such a contingency.

## **Ventilation and Temperature**

26. Effective ventilation of buildings and the avoidance of draughts are essential. Properly designed natural ventilation reduces the risk of breakdown. There should be an alarm system independent of the mains electricity supply to warn the stockman of failure of any automatic equipment (see also paragraph 31). Expert advice may be necessary to ensure correct temperature, air flow and humidity for the type of stock housed.
27. When cattle are kept in unroofed units it is important to provide effective shelter from the wind and a reasonably dry, comfortable lying area. Unroofed units are not suitable in very wet exposed areas, especially for young calves without their dams. (see also paragraph 65).

28. Although healthy young calves can tolerate low air temperatures well, newborn animals, calves that have been transported or deprived of food, or sick calves, are particularly susceptible to chilling. Chilling can usually be avoided in a well-ventilated, unheated building by the use of thick, dry bedding and the avoidance of draughts. Sick individuals may also benefit from artificial heat.
29. When removing slurry from under slats, special care is essential to avoid fouling the air with dangerous gases which may be fatal to man and animals (especially if silage effluent has been mixed with slurry), and it is important that the building should be thoroughly ventilated during this operation.

## **Lighting**

31. All equipment and services, including feed hoppers, drinkers, milking machines, ventilating fans, heating and lighting units, fire extinguishers and alarm systems, should be cleaned and inspected regularly and kept in good working order. All automated equipment should incorporate a fail-safe device maintained in working order and, where the cattle's welfare is dependent upon such equipment, an alarm system to warn the stockman of failure. These should be regularly tested. To guard against the possibility of a breakdown, alternative ways of feeding, of operating machinery used for milking and of maintaining a satisfactory environment should be ready for use.
32. All electrical installations at mains voltage should be inaccessible to cattle and properly earthed. Any installation or extension involving mains electricity should comply with the Regulations for the electrical Equipment of Buildings issued by the Institution of electrical Engineers (see also paragraphs 67-69).

## **SPACE ALLOWANCE**

33. The space allowance for cattle housed in groups should be calculated in relation to the whole environment, the age, sex, liveweight and behavioural needs of the stock, taking account of the presence or absence of horns and the size of the group, and should be based on appropriate advice.
34. When cattle are fed in groups there should be sufficient through space or feeding points to avoid undue competition for food, especially if cattle are not fed to appetite.



35. All cattle, whether tethered inside or in pens, should at all times have sufficient freedom of sideways movement to be able to groom themselves without difficulty and sufficient room to lie down and be free to stretch their limbs and to get up; thus the width of the pen for a singly-penned animal should be not less than the height of the animal at the withers. Where tethers or ties are used, they should not cause injury or distress to the cattle. Consideration should be given to the adoption of a suitable loose-housing system. Cubicles for growing animals should provide adequate space for the animals at their maximum size whilst accommodated in them. (see also paragraphs 15 and 44).
36. It is recommended that cattle which are permanently tied or tethered in buildings should be released for exercise, whenever possible.
37. As a guide, individual accommodation for an adult bull of average size should include a sleeping area of not less than  $16\text{m}^2$  (approx  $180\text{ft}^2$ ). For very large bulls, the sleeping area should be not less than  $1\text{m}^2$  for each 60kg (9ft<sup>2</sup> per 1 cwt) liveweight. An exercise and service area should also be provided and this should be twice as large as the sleeping area.

## FEED AND WATER

38. Whatever feeding system is adopted, all cattle should receive a daily diet which is adequate to maintain full health and vigour.
39. It is vital that every calf receives colostrum from its dam, or from another newly-calved cow, as soon as possible after it is born and certainly within the first six hours of its life; it should continue to do so for the first three days. Thereafter, the calf should receive suitable food at frequent intervals. (see also paragraphs 41 and 42)
40. When calves arrive at the farm, and before they have contact with calves already present, a competent person should check their general health, paying particular attention to breathing and the condition of nose, eyes, navel, anus, feet and legs.
41. On arrival unweaned calves acquired for feeding by artificial means should be rested in comfortable conditions for a few hours and then given a first feed of milk or other suitable liquid.
42. All calves should receive liquid food daily at least during the first four weeks of life and until they are eating adequate quantities of suitable solid food. For normal development unweaned calves should have access to palatable unmilled roughage and fresh clean water. (see also paragraphs 79 and 80)

43. Where calves are being raised for veal production, particular care should be taken to ensure that they obtain sufficient available iron to maintain them in health. The iron status of individual calves will depend on their initial body reserves at birth and on the average available iron content of the milk substitute and other feed together with that occurring naturally in the water used to reconstitute such feeds.
44. To facilitate adequate feeding (and to limit the spread of disease or "vice"), housed calves should be kept either singly or in small groups until they are weaned off liquid food. When calves are fed by natural suckling or by mechanical means, other penning arrangements may be satisfactory. (see also paragraphs 15 and 35).
45. Whilst calves are being bucket fed each calf should preferably have its own bucket. Utensils used for feeding liquids should be thoroughly cleansed immediately after each use and disinfected daily by heat or with a suitable chemical sterilising agent. Troughs should be kept clean and any stale food removed. Automatic feeding equipment should be cleaned at regular and frequent intervals.
46. Cattle should have access to sufficient fresh clean water at least twice daily. (see also paragraph 83).
47. Water troughs, especially those in loose-housing cubicle units, should be constructed and sited so as to protect them from fouling and to minimise the risk of water freezing in cold weather. Water troughs, bowls and nipples should be kept thoroughly clean and should be checked at least once daily to ensure that they are dispensing water. (see also paragraph 84)

## MANAGEMENT

48. A calf should not be removed from the farm of birth for at least three days unless for suckling by another newly-calved cow or direct to a place of slaughter as a bobby calf. A calf showing any signs of ill-health should not be moved other than for treatment or direct to a place of slaughter.
49. Housed calves should be closely inspected frequently, and at least twice daily, and it is desirable that other cattle should be inspected daily, for signs of injury, illness or distress.
50. Any injured or ailing animal should receive appropriate treatment and veterinary advice, if necessary, should be sought without delay.
51. Regular attention should be paid to the feet of all classes of cattle.
52. When loose-housed, growing cattle should be grouped according to size and age. (see also paragraph 33).

53. Fractious or horned cattle should not be loose-housed where there is danger of injury or bullying. Consideration should be given to the disbudding of calves. (see also paragraph 61).
54. Bulls reared for slaughter at a young age should be kept in small groups preferably of not more than 20 animals. Bulls should not normally be added to groups already formed nor should one group be added to another when the animals are turned out to grass or being sent to slaughter. It is advisable to keep groups of bulls at a safe distance from female cattle.
55. It is essential that suitable handling facilities are provided for bulls. It may be necessary to give special attention to the strengthening of housing and fencing.
56. Electric fences should be so designed, installed and maintained that contact with them does not cause unnecessary pain or distress to the cattle.
57. The marking of cattle for identification should be done with care by competent operators so as to avoid unnecessary pain or distress to the animals at the time of marking or subsequently. Acceptable methods of permanent marking include tagging, tattooing, notching or punching of the ear or freeze-branding. Caustic paste and hot irons must not be used for branding.
58. If aerosols or paints are used for temporary marking, only non-toxic materials should be used.
59. Neck bands or chains, tail bands or leg bands used for identification purposes, should be fitted with care and adjusted as required to avoid any unnecessary pain or distress to the animals.
60. The tail-docking of cattle is prohibited with exceptions- See The Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance 1987 (section 2).
61. Castration, disbudding and dehorning must also be undertaken in accordance with the above named Ordinance. The operation must be carried out by a veterinary surgeon or by a competent trained operator where a layman is permitted to undertake the operation.
62. Cattle should be handled quietly but firmly at all times and with care to avoid unnecessary pain or distress. This applies particularly to cows during milking, and care should be taken that they are not over-milked. Milking machines should be constructed, installed and maintained in accordance with British Standard BS5545 ("Specification for Milking Machine Installations").
63. Appropriate methods should be used to prevent parasitic infestations or to treat them if they occur.

64. When breeding, especially from maiden heifers, sires should be carefully selected, taking into account size, age and previous record, so as to reduce the likelihood of subsequent calving difficulties. Cows and heifers should be managed so as to be in suitable bodily condition at the time of calving. Stockmen should be experienced and competent in the techniques of calving and should pay particular attention to hygiene, especially at assisted calvings. Mechanical calving aids should only be used by a competent person who has received proper instruction in their use. Veterinary advice should be sought at an early stage if difficulties are suspected.
65. In exposed grazing areas where natural shelter or shade is not available, consideration should be given to the provision of artificial protection from the weather. Out-wintered cattle should have access to a well-drained lying area and to adequate supplementary nutrition when necessary. (See also paragraphs 27 and 66).

### **TETHERING OF CATTLE**

66. Calves under the age of six months or with a girth measurement of under 100cms should not be tethered outside during the winter months beginning on the 1st December and ending on the 31st March next following. When animals are tethered outside, a suitable head chain, halter or neck rope and a free running swivel should be used.

Other animals should be confined to land where natural or other shelter is available i.e. away from the direct effect of cold winds and driving rain/snow. IDEALLY THEY SHOULD NOT BE TETHERED AT ALL IN VERY BAD WEATHER CONDITIONS.

If animals over the age of six months have to be tethered outside during the winter months, it is essential that they receive extra rations.

When animals are so tethered, whether it be summer or winter, it is imperative that they are given adequate quantities of water and food and are visited and are offered water at least twice during each day. It is particularly important to ensure that animals do not go short of water in hot weather conditions.

The following are among those deemed, under the Veterinary and Animal Welfare Ordinance 1987, to be operations which cannot be performed unless an anaesthetic is used:

- (i) the castration of a bull by means of a device that constricts the flow of blood to the scrotum, unless the device is applied within the first week of life;

- (ii) the castration of a bull by any means once it has reached the age of two months;
- (iii) the de-horning of cattle;
- (iv) the disbudding of calves, except by means of chemical cauterisation applied within the first week of life.

## THE MANAGEMENT OF CATTLE IN INTENSIVE SYSTEMS

- 67. Where calves are housed in groups, they shall have sufficient unobstructed floor space to be able to turn round and lie down without hindrance, and in any event each calf of 150 kg or more live weight must have at least 1.5 square metres unobstructed floor space.
- 68. Where tethers are used, they must not cause injury to the calves and must be inspected regularly and adjusted as necessary to ensure a comfortable fit. Each tether must be of sufficient length to allow the calves to stand up, lie down, rest and groom itself without hindrance. The design must be such as to avoid, as far as possible, any risk of strangulation or injury.
- 69. Where a calf is housed in an individual stall or pen -
  - (a) the stall or pen shall have at least one perforated wall which enables the calf to see other animals in neighbouring pens or stalls unless isolated for veterinary reasons;
  - (b) the width of the stall or pen shall be no less than the height of the calf at the withers;
  - (c) the calf must be able to stand up, turn round, lie down, rest and groom itself without hindrance.
- 70. Materials used for the construction of calf accommodation and all equipment with which calves may come into contact shall not be harmful to the calves and shall be capable of being thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- 71. Insulation, heating and ventilation of the building must ensure that the air circulation, dust level, temperature, air relative humidity and gas concentrations are kept within limits which are not harmful to the calves.
- 72. (1) All automatic equipment shall be thoroughly inspected by a stock-keeper, or other competent person, not less than once each day to check that there is no defect in it.

(2) Where a defect is found in the automatic equipment (whether on inspection of the equipment in accordance with this paragraph or at any other time)-

- (a) the defect shall be rectified forthwith, or
- (b) if this is impracticable, such measures shall immediately be taken and shall be maintained until the defect is rectified, as are required to safeguard the calves from suffering unnecessary pain or unnecessary distress as a result of the defect.

(3) Where the automatic equipment includes a ventilation system, the system shall contain-

- (a) an alarm which will give adequate warning of the failure of that system to function properly (which alarm will operate even if the principle electricity supply to it has failed), and
- (b) additional equipment or means of ventilation (whether automatic or not), which, in the event of such a failure of the ventilation system, will provide adequate ventilation so as to prevent the calves from suffering unnecessary distress as a result of the failure.

(4) The alarm system mentioned in the preceding sub-paragraph shall be tested and the additional equipment mentioned there shall be thoroughly inspected, in each case, by a stock-keeper or other competent person not less than once every seven days in order to check that there is not defect in it and, if any defect is found in such alarm or equipment (whether or not on it being tested or inspected in accordance with this paragraph) it shall be rectified forthwith.

- 73. Calves must not be kept permanently in darkness. To meet their behavioural and physiological needs, appropriate natural or artificial lighting shall be provided; if the latter, it must function for a period at least equivalent to the period of natural light normally available between 9.00a.m. and 5.00p.m. In addition, suitable lighting (fixed or portable) strong enough to allow the calves to be inspected at any time, shall be available.
- 74. Calves in intensive systems shall be thoroughly inspected by a stock-keeper not less than once each day to check that they are in a state of well-being.
- 75. Where calves are found not to be in a state of well-being such measures shall immediately be taken as are required to safeguard them from unnecessary pain or unnecessary distress. Sick or injured calves shall, where necessary, be isolated in suitable accommodation with dry, comfortable bedding. Veterinary advice must be obtained as soon as possible for calves which are not responding to the stock-keeper's care.

76. Housing, pens, equipment and utensils used for calves must as necessary be properly cleaned and disinfected to prevent cross-infection and the build-up of disease-carrying organisms, and faeces, urine and uneaten or spilt food must be removed as often as necessary to minimise smell and avoid attracting flies or rodents.
77. Where calves are kept in a building, floors must be smooth but not slippery so as to prevent injury to the calves and so designed as not to cause injury or suffering to calves standing or lying on them. They must be suitable for the size and weight of the calves and form a rigid, even and stable surface. Appropriate bedding must be provided for all calves less than two weeks old.
78. All calves shall be kept on, or have access at all times to, a lying area which is clean, comfortable and does not adversely affect the calves, and is well drained or well maintained with dry bedding.
79. Calves shall be fed on a wholesome diet appropriate to their age, weight, species and behavioural and physiological needs, which includes sufficient iron and which is fed to them in sufficient quantity to maintain them in good health and to promote a positive state of well-being.
80. If the calf is more than 14 days old, it shall have access each day to dried feed or forage material containing sufficient digestible fibre (which shall not be less than 100-200 grammes daily depending on the age of the animal) so as not to impair the development of its rumen.
81. Calves must not be muzzled.
82. All calves must be fed at least once a day. Where calves are housed in a group and do not have continuous access to feed, or are not fed by an automatic feeding system, each calf must have access to the food at the same time as the others in the feeding group.
83. All calves shall be provided with an adequate supply of fresh drinking water each day.
84. Feeding and watering equipment must be designed, constructed, placed and maintained so that contamination of the calves' feed and water is minimised.
85. The interior of any building (including the floor) to which calves have access shall be so constructed and maintained that there are no sharp edges or protrusions likely to cause injury or distress to the calves.
86. No inadequately constructed or insecure fittings shall be used for restraining calves.
87. No person shall apply an electrical current to calves for the purpose of immobilisation.

# CODE OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WELFARE OF PIGS

## PREFACE

This preface is not part of the Code, but is intended to explain its purpose and to indicate the broad considerations upon which it is based.

The basic requirements for the welfare of livestock are a husbandry system appropriate to the health and, so far as practicable, the behavioural needs of the animals and a high standard of stockmanship.

Stockmanship is a key factor because, no matter how otherwise acceptable a system may be in principle, without competent, diligent stockmanship, the welfare of the animals cannot be adequately catered for. The recommendations which follow are designed to help stockmen, particularly those who are young or inexperienced, to attain the required standards. The part that training has to play in the development of the stockman's awareness of welfare requirements cannot be overstressed. Detailed advice on the application of the Code in individual circumstances is readily available from the States Veterinary Officer or the Agricultural Officer of the Agricultural & Milk Marketing Board.

Nearly all livestock husbandry systems impose restrictions on the stock and some of these can cause an unacceptable degree of discomfort or distress by preventing the animals from fulfilling their basic needs. Provisions meeting these needs, and others which must be considered, include -

- \* comfort and shelter;
- \* readily accessible fresh water and a diet to maintain the animals in full health and vigour;
- \* freedom of movement;
- \* the company of other animals, particularly of like kind;
- \* the opportunity to exercise most normal patterns of behaviour;
- \* light during the hours of daylight, and lighting readily available to enable the animals to be inspected at any time;
- \* flooring which neither harms the animals, nor causes undue strain;
- \* the prevention, or rapid diagnosis and treatment, of vice, injury, parasitic infestation and disease;
- \* the avoidance of unnecessary mutilation, and
- \* emergency arrangements to cover outbreaks of fire, the breakdown of essential mechanical services and the disruption of supplies.

Pig husbandry systems in current use do not equally meet the physiological and behavioural needs of the animals. Nevertheless, within the framework of the statutory powers under which the Code has been prepared an attempt has been made, on the basis of the latest scientific knowledge and the soundest current practices, to identify those features where the pig's welfare could be at risk unless precautions are taken. The Code sets out what these precautions should be, bearing in mind the importance



The Code sets out what these precautions should be, bearing in mind the importance to the pigs of their total environment and the fact that there is often more than one way in which their welfare can be safeguarded.

Certain aspects of livestock husbandry can present hazards to the health and safety of the stockman. Advice on these matters is available from Agricultural Officer, Environmental Health Officers of the States Board of Health, and the Health and Safety Executive.

## INTRODUCTION

1. The welfare of pigs can be safeguarded and their behavioural needs met under a variety of management systems. The system, and the number and stocking rate of pigs kept at any one time, should depend on the suitability of the conditions and the skills of the stockman.
2. Consideration should be given to the question of animal welfare before installing more complex or elaborate equipment than has previously been used. In general the greater the restriction imposed on the animal and the greater the complexity of the system or the degree of control which is exercised over temperature, air flow or food supply, the less the animal is able to use its instinctive behaviour to modify the effect of unfavourable conditions and the greater the chance of suffering if mechanical or electrical failures occur. Thus systems involving a high degree of control over the environment should only be installed where conscientious staff skilled in both animal husbandry and the use of the equipment will always be available.
3. Although very large herds can be managed successfully, in general the larger the size of unit, the greater the degree of skill and conscientiousness needed to safeguard welfare. The size of a unit should not be increased nor should a large unit be set up unless it is reasonable certain that the stockman in charge will be able to safeguard the welfare of the individual animal.
4. All stockmen should know the normal behaviour of pigs. Badly managed and unhealthy pigs will not do well, and it is essential that the stockman should watch for signs of distress, disease or aggression by other members of the group towards an animal. It is important for management purposes that stockmen should have ample time for the checking of stock and inspection of equipment.
5. The good stockman will know the signs which indicate good health in pigs. He should also be able to recognise impending trouble in its earliest stages and may often be able to identify the cause and put matters right immediately. If the cause is not obvious, or if the stockman's immediate action is not effective, veterinary or other expert advice should be obtained as soon as possible.

6. Signs of illness in pigs include separation from the group, poor appetite, vomiting, constipation, diarrhoea, discoloration of the skin, shivering, sneezing, rapid or irregular breathing, persistent coughing or panting, swollen navel, udder or joints, lameness (inspection of the feet and legs is particularly important) and lack of co-ordination.

## **GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL PIGS**

### **Housing**

7. Advice on welfare aspects should be sought when new buildings are to be constructed or existing buildings modified. Some intensive systems depend on specialised buildings and complex mechanical and electrical equipment, which require a high level of technical and managerial skills to ensure that husbandry and welfare requirements are met. Weighing, handling and loading facilities should be incorporated.
8. Internal surfaces of housing and pens should be of materials which can, and should, either be cleansed and disinfected or be easily replaceable when necessary.
9. Internal surfaces and fittings of buildings and pens accessible to pigs should not have sharp edges or projections likely to cause injury.
10. Good floor design and adequate maintenance are of paramount importance. The lying area should always be kept dry and pen floors, particularly the dunging area, should be drained effectively. The use of bare concrete, slatted or perforated floors, particularly when badly maintained, can cause severe problems, such as lameness or damage to the feet (see also paragraph 46). Veterinary advice should be sought if any of these abnormalities occur.
11. Given the opportunity, the pig eats fibrous materials, also roots about and makes a nest and uses a separate dunging area. Bedding, and especially straw, contributes towards the need of the pig for thermal and physical comfort and satisfies some of its behavioural requirements. Many buildings at present in use may be difficult to adapt and the use of bedding can cause problems of drainage and hygiene. Nonetheless, systems in which straw or similar material is provided in the lying area are strongly recommended.
12. Paints and wood preservatives which may be toxic to pigs should not be used on surfaces accessible to them. Particular care is necessary to guard against the risk of poisoning from old paintwork in any part of the building or when second-hand building materials are used.

## **Fire and Other Emergency Precautions**

13. Farmers should make advance plans for dealing with emergencies such as fire, flood or disruption of supplies, and should ensure that all staff are familiar with the appropriate emergency action.
14. Fire precautions should be a major priority for the good stockman. The relevant provisions of Section 1.3 of British Standard BS5502 (particularly paragraphs 2.5 to 2.9) relating to fire precautions should therefore be followed. Expert advice should be sought.
15. In the design of new buildings, or the alteration of existing buildings, there should be provision, wherever possible, for livestock to be released and evacuated in case of emergency. Materials used in construction should have sufficient fire resistance to enable emergency procedures to be followed. It should, however, be borne in mind that it will not always be possible to make full use of escape routes, since experience shows that pigs in the immediate vicinity of a fire may either refuse to move or, if moved, try to return to their accustomed quarters.
16. All electrical, gas and oil services should be planned and fitted so that if there is overheating, or flame is generated, the risk of flame spreading to equipment, bedding or the fabric of the building is minimal. It is advisable to site power supply controls outside buildings. Consideration should be given to installing fire alarm systems which can be heard and acted upon at any time of the day or night.
17. In case a 999 call has to be made notices should be prominently displayed in all livestock buildings stating where the nearest telephone is located. Each telephone should have fixed by it a notice giving instructions on the best route to the farm and a description of the location of the telephone.
18. There is usually some warning of interruptions in the supply of feedingstuffs and, so far as possible, arrangements should be made to lay in adequate stocks of food or water to offset the worst effects of such a contingency.

## **Ventilation and Temperature**

19. Excessive heat loss or gain should be prevented either by the structural insulation of the external walls, roof and floor of the lying area or by the provision of adequate bedding. Effective ventilation of all buildings and the avoidance of draughts are essential. There should be an alarm system independent of the mains electricity supply to warn the stockman of failure of any automated equipment (see also paragraph 26). Expert advice may be necessary to ensure correct temperature, air flow and humidity for the type of stock housed.

20. Pigs, which have very limited ability to sweat are acutely susceptible to heat stress and an adequate airflow should be maintained or alternative cooling methods used to ensure that pigs in buildings do not become overheated in hot weather.
21. Extremes of air temperature or of humidity (as in the 'sweat box'); particularly those liable to cause heat stress, should not be deliberately maintained.
22. The temperature ranges given below all incorporate the minimum temperature appropriate over a range of circumstances. Feed intake, air speed, floor type, group size and liveweight markedly affect temperature requirements and it is essential that these factors are taken into account in determining the minimum temperature appropriate in each case. Perforated/slatted floors and low feed levels increase temperature requirements and straw bedding, high feed levels and high body weights decrease requirements. For most circumstances an appropriate temperature can be found within the range given below:

| Category of Pig                | Temperature |       |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------|
|                                | (°C)        | (°F)  |
| Sows                           | 15-20       | 59-68 |
| Sucking pigs creeps            | 25-30       | 77-84 |
| Early weaned pigs*             | 27-32       | 81-90 |
| Weaned pigs (6 weeks and over) | 21-24       | 70-75 |
| Finishing pigs (porkers)       | 15-21       | 59-70 |
| (baconers)                     | 13-18       | 55-64 |
| (heavy hogs)                   | 10-15       | 50-59 |

\*(see also paragraphs 43 and 44)

23. In intensive housing systems it is important to avoid wide or abrupt fluctuations in temperature with any 24 hour period. When pigs are moved to new accommodation the possibility of cold stress occurring as a result of sudden changes in the thermal environment should be lessened by the provision of bedding such as straw, or by preheating the building.
24. When removing slurry from under slats, special care is essential to avoid fouling the air with dangerous gases which may be fatal to man and animals, and it is important that the building should be thoroughly ventilated during this operation.

## **Lighting**

25. Pigs should not be kept permanently in darkness. Throughout the hours of daylight the level of indoor lighting, natural or artificial, should be such that all housed pigs can be seen clearly. Adequate lighting for satisfactory inspection should be available at any time.

## **Mechanical Equipment and Services**

26. All equipment and services including feed hoppers, drinkers, ventilating fans, heating and lighting units, fire extinguishers and alarm systems should be cleaned and inspected regularly and kept in good working order. All automated equipment should incorporate a fail-safe device maintained in good working order and, where the pigs' welfare is dependant upon such equipment, an alarm system to warn the stockman of failure. Alternatively ways of feeding and of maintaining a satisfactory environment should be ready for use in the event of a breakdown.
27. All electrical installations at mains voltage should be inaccessible to pigs and properly earthed.

## **Feed and Water**

28. When pigs are fed by any system which does not allow prolonged and unrestricted access to feed, all pigs should be able to feed at the same time. Care should be taken, when introducing pigs to unaccustomed housing, to ensure that they find the feed and water points.
29. Whatever feeding system is adopted, all pigs should receive a daily diet which is nutritionally adequate to maintain health.
30. It is important for pigs to have sufficient fresh clean water, or other wholesome liquid, for their daily needs. It is an advantage to design the water supply so that medication can be added if required. Where water is not freely available, for example by means of bowls or drinkers, at least 2.5 litres of water should be added to each kilogram of meal. The following is a guide to minimum daily water requirements for sows:  
  

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| Non-Pregnant | 5 Litres     |
| In Pregnancy | 5-8 Litres   |
| In Lactation | 15-30 Litres |
31. Where drinking points are used for growing pigs, particularly those on dry feed, it is recommended, as a general guide, that a drinking point should be available for each ten pigs.
32. Feed and water should not be completely withdrawn from sows which are being dried off.

## Management

33. Pigs should be closely inspected at least daily, preferably when feeding, for signs of injury, illness or distress.
34. Pigs should be kept in stable groups with as little mixing as possible. They should be handled quietly and firmly, with care to avoid unnecessary pain or distress.
35. Sick or injured pigs should be treated without delay. Accommodation, including a deep-strawed box, should be available to enable them to be isolated if necessary.
36. Where it is necessary to mark pigs for permanent identification, the ear may be tattooed, tagged, notched or punched, or the body may be tattooed. Slapmarking is an acceptable method where identification is required immediately prior to transporting the pigs to slaughter. These operations should be carried out by competent operators, exercising care to avoid unnecessary pain or unnecessary distress to the pigs at the time of marking or subsequently.
37. Castration <sup>(1)</sup> is a mutilation and should be avoided wherever possible. If it cannot be avoided, it must be carried out in accordance with the law, by a veterinary surgeon or by a competent trained operator where a layman is permitted to undertake the operation.
38. Tail-docking <sup>(2)</sup> has been adopted primarily to reduce the risk of tail biting. The objective should be to avoid the need for this mutilation, but, where it remains necessary, it must be carried out in accordance with the law, by a veterinary surgeon or by a trained operator where a layman is permitted to undertake the operation.
39. Tooth clipping is used to minimise the risk of damage to the sow's teats and to the litter-mates. Where it is necessary, this mutilation should also be performed by a veterinary surgeon or by a competent trained operator.
40. Sows and gilts should be managed so as to be in suitable bodily condition at the time of farrowing. Stockmen should be experienced and competent in the techniques of farrowing and should pay particular attention to hygiene, especially at assisted farrowings. Mechanical farrowing aids should only be used by a competent person who has received proper instruction in their use.

(1) Under Part II of the Guernsey Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance 1987, it is an offence to castrate a pig by using any device to constrict the flow of blood to the scrotum unless an anaesthetic is used, or the device is applied within the first week of life. Only a veterinary surgeon or veterinary practitioner may castrate a boar which has reached the age of 2 months.

(2) The Guernsey Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance 1987 requires that the docking of pigs shall be by quick and complete severance of the part of the tail to be removed. It prohibits the docking of pigs more than seven days old except when performed by a veterinary surgeon on health grounds or to prevent injury from tail-biting.

## **ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PIGS KEPT INDOORS**

### **Farrowing Pigs and Sucking Piglets**

41. Farrowing quarters should have some means of protecting the piglets. Where farrowing rails or similar devices are used, the escape area should be at least 300mm wide.
42. Sows should be settled into clean and comfortable farrowing quarters well before the piglets are due to be born.
43. A temperature suitable for piglets should be maintained in the nest or creep, by insulation and/or by artificial heating. The environment should be significantly warmer than that provided for the sow (see also paragraph 22). Heating devices (eg infra-red lamps) should be securely fixed and should be protected from interference by the sow or piglets.
44. Problems associated with weaning are related to the age at weaning, and the earlier the weaning age the better must be the system of management and nutrition if welfare problems are to be avoided. Piglets should not be weaned from the sow at less than three weeks, although orphaned, sick and surplus piglets requiring special attention are obvious exceptions.

### **Growing Pigs**

45. The total floor space should be adequate for sleeping, feeding and exercising. Minimum sleeping areas, excluding exercise and dunging areas, should be of sufficient size to accommodate all the pigs lying on their sides.

The minimum unobstructed floor area available to each weaner or rearing pig reared in a group, is given in the following table.

| Average Liveweight<br>(Kg) | Unobstructed<br>Floor Area<br>(m <sup>2</sup> ) |
|----------------------------|---|
| Up to and including 10     | 0.15  |
| 11-20                      | 0.20  |
| 21-30                      | 0.30  |
| 31-50                      | 0.40  |
| 51-85                      | 0.55  |
| 86-110                     | 0.65  |
| 111 and above              | 1.00  |

46. Cage rearing systems commonly cause injury to the feet and legs of piglets and may give rise to behavioural abnormalities. Although perforated floors can, in some cases, reduce the incidence of disease in the post-weaning period, systems which provide a bedded lying area are strongly recommended. (See also paragraph 10).

#### **Dry Sows and Gilts**

47. Where sows and gilts are kept in groups, aggressiveness can present a severe problem. Much depends on the temperament of individual animals; but the stockman should ensure that persistent bullying leading to severe injury or deprivation of food does not take place. Separate penning may be required when persistent bullying takes place. Facilities in which animals can be fed individually and thereafter released are strongly recommended.
48. The keeping of sows and gilts in stalls with or without tethers raises serious welfare problems. It inevitably places severe restrictions on the animals' freedom of movement, denies them normal exercise, can give rise to patterns of abnormal behaviour and very commonly cause injuries and leg weakness. Alternative systems, such as kennels, straw-yards or yard-and-cubicles in which animals' behavioural and exercise needs can be fully met, are therefore strongly recommended, even though it is accepted that these systems might require a higher level of stockmanship and increased capital investment.
49. Producers already operating stall or tether systems are strongly recommended to use straw or similar material to reduce injury and eliminate some of these behavioural abnormalities. Lameness and problems at parturition can also be reduced if sows are allowed some exercise. Additionally, tethers, if used, should be adjusted so as not to severely restrict the animal's freedom of movement and cause injury or distress. The area of skin in contact with the tether is particularly susceptible to chafing and should be inspected regularly.



50. In order to avoid undue excitement, which can lead to injury, breeding sows and gilts should be fed simultaneously whenever possible.

### **Boars**

51. As a guide, individual accommodation for an adult boar should have a floor area of not less than  $7.5\text{m}^2$  ( $81\text{ft}^2$ ) if used for living purposes only. If used for both living and service purposes, the floor area should be not less than  $10\text{m}^2$  ( $108\text{ft}^2$ ) with the shortest side not less than 2.5m (8ft 2in). In either case the pen divisions should not be less than 1.5m (4ft 11in) high. Boar pens should not be sited or constructed in such a way as to isolate the boar from sight or sound of other stock or of farm activity.
52. In a single-purpose pen, bedding should be provided in the lying area. In a dual purpose pen, an adequate part of the floor area should be bedded, and the whole floor area should be kept dry, or sufficient bedding provided to give an adequate grip during service. The use of a service crate might be advantageous.
53. Where injury to other animals is likely to occur, boars' tusks should be trimmed by a veterinary surgeon or other competent person.

### **ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PIGS KEPT OUTDOORS**

54. Huts used for farrowing and rearing should be liberally provided with bedding and have a warm and draught-free bed for the sow and litter. Suitable restrainer boards should be used to prevent very young piglets from straying.
55. When sows are tethered, the design and length of tethers should be such as to prevent sows becoming entangled either with the huts or with each other. (See also paragraph 49).
56. Adequate shelter in winter and shade in summer should be available to all pigs.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR INTENSIVELY MANAGED PIGS**

57. No person shall tether or cause to be tethered, any pig except while it is undergoing any examination, test, treatment or operation, carried out for any veterinary purpose.

58. (1) A pig shall be free to turn round without difficulty at all times.
- (2) The dimension of any stall or pen shall be such that the internal area is not less than the square of the length of the pig, and no internal side is less than seventy five per cent of the length of the pig, the length of the pig in each case being measured from the tip of it's snout to the base of it's tail while it is standing with it's back straight.
- (3) This paragraph shall not apply in relation to a female pig for the period between seven days before the predicted day of her farrowing and the day on which the weaning of her piglets (including any piglets fostered by her) is complete.
- (4) A person shall not be guilty of an offence under this paragraph by reason of keeping a pig in a stall or pen-
- (a) while it is undergoing any examination, test, treatment or operation, carried out for veterinary purposes;
  - (b) for the purposes of service, artificial insemination or collection of semen;
  - (c) while it is fed on any particular occasion;
  - (d) for the purposes of marking, washing or weighing it;
  - (e) while it's accommodation is being cleaned;
  - (f) while it is awaiting loading for transportation,
- provided that the period during which it is so kept is not longer than necessary for the purpose in view.
- (5) A pig shall not be regarded as being kept in a stall or pen in which it could not be kept without contravention of this paragraph if it is in a stall or pen which it can enter or leave at will, provided that the stall or pen is entered from a stall or pen in which the pig is kept without contravention of this paragraph.
59. Materials used for the construction of housing for pigs, and all equipment with which pigs may come into contact, shall not be harmful to the pigs and shall be capable of being thoroughly cleansed and disinfected.
60. Insulation, heating and ventilation of the building must ensure that the air circulation, dust level, temperature, air relative humidity and gas concentrations are kept within limits which are not harmful to the pigs.

61. The interior of any building (including the floor) to which pigs have access shall be so constructed and maintained that there are no sharp edges or protrusions likely to cause injury or distress to the pigs.
62. No inadequately constructed or insecure fittings shall be used for restraining pigs.
63.
  - (1) All automatic equipment shall be thoroughly inspected by a stock-keeper, or other competent person, not less than once each day to check that there is no defect in it.
  - (2) Where a defect is found in the automatic equipment (whether on inspection of the equipment in accordance with this paragraph or at any other time)-
    - (a) the defect shall be rectified forthwith, or
    - (b) if this is impracticable, such measures shall immediately be taken and shall be maintained until the defect is rectified, as are required to safeguard the pigs from suffering unnecessary pain or unnecessary distress as a result of the defect.
  - (3) Where the automatic equipment includes a ventilation system, the system shall contain-
    - (a) an alarm which will give adequate warning of the failure of that system to function properly (which alarm will operate even if the principle electricity supply to it has failed) and
    - (b) additional equipment or means of ventilation (whether automatic or not) which, in the event of such a failure of the ventilation system, will provide adequate ventilation so as to prevent the pigs from suffering unnecessary distress as a result of the failure.
  - (4) The alarm system mentioned in the preceding sub-paragraph shall be tested and the additional equipment mentioned there shall be thoroughly inspected, in each case, by a stock-keeper or other competent person not less than once every seven days in order to check that there is no defect in it and, if any defect is found in such alarm or equipment (whether or not on it being tested or inspected in accordance with this paragraph) it shall be rectified forthwith.
64. Pigs must not be kept permanently in darkness. To meet their behavioural and physiological needs, appropriate natural or artificial lighting shall be provided; if the latter, it must function for a period at least equivalent to the period of natural light normally available between 9.00a.m. and 5.00p.m. In addition, suitable lighting (fixed or portable) strong enough to allow the pigs to be inspected at any time shall be available.

65. (1) Pigs shall be thoroughly inspected by a stock-keeper not less than once each day to check that they are in a state of well-being.
- (2) Where pigs are found not to be in a state of well-being (whether on inspection in accordance with this paragraph or at any other time) such measure shall immediately be taken as are required to safeguard them from unnecessary pain or unnecessary distress. Sick or injured pigs shall, where necessary, be isolated in suitable accommodation with dry, comfortable bedding. Veterinary advice must be obtained as soon as possible for pigs which are not responding to the stock-keeper's care.
66. If pigs are kept together, measures must be taken to prevent fighting which goes beyond normal behaviour. Pigs which show persistent aggression towards others or are victims of such aggression shall be isolated or kept separate from the group.
67. Accommodation used for pigs shall be constructed in such a way as to allow each pig to-
- (a) stand up, lie down and rest without difficulty;
  - (b) have a clean place in which it can rest, and
  - (c) see other pigs, unless the pig is isolated for veterinary reasons.
68. Where tethers are permitted in accordance with paragraph 57 above, they must not cause injury to the pigs and must be inspected regularly and adjusted as necessary to ensure a comfortable fit. Each tether shall be of sufficient length to allow the pigs to move as stipulated in paragraph 67 above. The design must be such as to avoid, as far as possible, any risk of strangulation or injury.
69. Housing, pens, equipment and utensils used for pigs must be properly cleansed and disinfected as necessary to prevent cross-infection and the build-up of disease-carrying organisms, and faeces, urine and uneaten or spilt food must be removed as often as necessary to minimise smell and avoid attracting flies or rodents.
70. Where pigs are kept in a building they shall be kept on, or have access at all times to, a lying area which is clean, comfortable and does not adversely affect them, and is well-drained or well maintained with dry bedding. Where bedding is provided, this must be clean, dry and not harmful to the pigs.
71. Where pigs are kept in a building, floors shall be smooth but not slippery so as to prevent injury to the pigs and so designed as not to cause injury or suffering to pigs standing or lying on them. They must be suitable for the size and weight of the pigs and form a rigid, even and stable surface.

72. All pigs shall be fed on a wholesome diet appropriate to their species, age, weight and behavioural and physiological needs, which is fed to them in sufficient quantity to maintain them in good health and to promote a positive state of well-being.
73. All pigs must be fed at least once a day. Where pigs are housed in a group and do not have continuous access to feed, or are not fed by an automatic feeding system, each pig must have access to the food at the same time as the others in the feeding group.
74. All pigs shall be provided with an adequate supply of fresh drinking water each day.
75. Feeding and watering equipment must be designed, constructed, placed and maintained so that contamination of the pigs' feed and water is minimised.
76. In addition to the measure normally taken to prevent tail-biting and other vices and in order to enable them to satisfy their behavioural needs, all pigs, taking into account environment and stocking density, must have access to straw or other material or object suitable to satisfy those needs.
77. No person shall apply an electrical current to pigs for the purposes of immobilisation.

#### **Boars**

78. Boar pens shall be sited and constructed to as to allow the boar to turn round and to hear, see and smell other pigs, and to provide for clean resting areas. The lying area shall be dry and comfortable. The minimum pen size for an adult boar shall be six square metres, except that a larger area shall be provided when pens are used for service.

#### **Sows and Gilts**

79. Gilts and sows between weaning their piglets and the perinatal period shall, where necessary, be treated against external and internal parasites. If they are placed in farrowing crates, pregnant sows and gilts shall be thoroughly clean.
80. Gilts and sows between weaning their piglets and the perinatal period shall be provided with a clean, adequately drained, comfortable lying area and shall, if necessary, be given suitable nesting material.
81. During farrowing, an unobstructed area behind the sow or gilt shall be available for the ease of natural or assisted farrowing.
82. Farrowing pens where sows are kept loose must have some means of protecting the piglets, such as farrowing rails.

### **Piglets**

83. If necessary, piglets shall be provided with a source of heat and a solid, dry and comfortable lying area away from the sow where all of them can rest at the same time.
84. Where a farrowing crate is used, the piglets must have sufficient space to be able to be suckled without difficulty.
85. Neither tail docking nor tooth clipping shall be carried out routinely but only when there is evidence, on the farm, that injuries to sows' teats or to other piglets have occurred or are likely to occur as a result of not carrying out these procedures. Where tooth clipping appears necessary, this shall only be carried out within seven days of birth, and tail docking of pigs more than seven days old is prohibited except where performed by a veterinary surgeon on health grounds or to prevent injury from tail biting.
86. Piglets must not be weaned from the sow at an age of less than three weeks unless the welfare or health of the dam or piglets would otherwise be adversely affected.

### **Weaners and Rearing Pigs**

87. Pigs shall be placed in groups as soon as possible after weaning. They shall be kept in stable groups with as little mixing as possible.

# **CODE OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WELFARE OF SHEEP**

## **PREFACE**

The code of recommendations for the welfare of sheep, which is made under Part IV of The Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance 1987, is intended to encourage all those responsible for looking after these animals to adopt the highest standards of husbandry. It takes account of five basic animal needs; freedom from thirst, hunger, and malnutrition; appropriate comfort and shelter; the prevention, or rapid diagnosis and treatment of, injury, disease or infestation; freedom from fear; and freedom to display most normal patterns of behaviour.

The Code is backed up by the law of the land. To cause unnecessary pain or unnecessary distress to any farm animal is an offence under The Protection of Animals Ordinance, 1976 as amended in 1986; and The Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance, 1987. The breach of a Code provision, whilst not an offence in itself, can nevertheless be used in evidence as tending to establish the guilt of anyone accused of causing suffering.

Without good stockmanship, animal welfare can never be adequately protected. The Code is designed to help stockmen - particularly the young and inexperienced - to reach the required standard.

For the purposes of this Code the word 'sheep' refers to all ovine stock, and an animal under six months is considered to be a lamb.

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. The recommendations in this Code are appropriate to sheep under various husbandry systems, and their observance will help to ensure that the welfare of the stock is safeguarded.
2. The number and type of sheep kept and the stocking rate should depend on the suitability of the environment and the skills of the stockman. The qualities of stockmanship are of paramount importance in sheep husbandry, as badly managed and unhealthy sheep cannot thrive. The stockman should know the signs which indicate good health in sheep. These include general alertness, good and free movement and absence of lameness, active feeding, rumination and in most breeds good uniform fleece, and no visible wounds, abscesses or injuries.

identify the cause of ill-health he should take immediate remedial action. If the cause is not obvious, or if the stockman's action is not effective, veterinary advice should be obtained as soon as possible.

4. In general the greater the restriction imposed on the animal through the complexity of a system involving control over temperature, air flow or food supply, the less the animal is able to use its instinctive behaviour to modify the effect of unfavourable conditions. Stockmen must ensure that prompt action is taken whenever mechanical or electrical failures occur so as to prevent suffering.
5. When changes are made to sheep husbandry systems - to involve installing more complex or elaborate equipment than has previously been used - consideration should be given to animal welfare. Systems involving a high degree of control over the environment should be installed only where conscientious staff skilled in both animal husbandry and the use of the equipment will always be available.
6. Although very large flocks can be managed successfully, in general the larger the size of unit the greater the degree of skill and conscientiousness needed to safeguard welfare. The size of a unit should not be increased nor should a large unit be set up unless it is reasonably certain that the stockman in charge will be able to safeguard the welfare of the individual animal.

## HEALTH

7. Sheep should be regularly inspected for signs of injury, fly strike, illness or distress. Frequent inspection is required in intensive systems and in other systems during lambing, and in the period before and after clipping and dipping.
8. Any injured, ailing or distressed sheep should be treated without delay and veterinary advice sought when necessary. Provision should be made for the segregation and care of seriously sick and injured animals. When a sheep has to be destroyed on the farm, this should be done humanely, and, where possible, by a person who is experienced in both the technique and the equipment used for slaughtering sheep.
9. Stockmen should be experienced and competent in the prevention and treatment of foot rot, the techniques of lambing, injection and oral dosing, tail docking (1) and castration of lambs (2).
10. The health of flocks can best be safeguarded by the use of proper vaccination, foot care and dosing programmes based on veterinary advice.
11. Special care should be taken to ensure that all equipment used in dosing, vaccination and treatment is maintained to a satisfactory standard. Equipment used for any injection technique should be frequently cleansed and sterilised to



avoid infections at the site of injection. Disposable needles should be used whenever possible. Dosing gun nozzles should be of a suitable size for the age of the sheep.

12. It is essential that all practical measures be taken to prevent or control external and internal parasitic infestations. Where infestations such as fly strike are likely to occur, sheep should be given routine treatment by regular dipping or other effective methods.

## **MANAGEMENT**

### **Handling**

13. Adequate and safe holding and handling facilities should be available and these should not have sharp edges, projections or other features likely to cause injury to the sheep. Sheep should not be lifted by the head, horns, legs tail or fleece.
14. Aerosols or paints used for temporary marking should be non-toxic.
15. Where it is necessary to mark sheep for permanent identification, horn branding is to be preferred. When this is not possible, the ear may be tattooed and if necessary notched, punched or tagged. These operations should be carried out by a skilled stockman using properly maintained instruments and should not be undertaken during the fly season.
16. Devices such as harnesses, hobbles, tethers and yokes should be of suitable material and should be properly fitted and adjusted to avoid causing injury or discomfort. They should not be used for longer than necessary.
17. When sheep are kept outdoors and particularly when fed on root crops, they should have access to a grassed area or straw to limit the build up of mud or dung on the fleece.

### **Shearing**

18. When shearing, care should be taken not to nick or cut the skin. Where a wound does occur, immediate treatment should be given.
19. Care should be taken when turning out sheep which were sheared while they were housed. In winter, ewes should not be turned out within two months of shearing and even then only in suitable weather conditions and with adequate shelter arrangements. If an effective natural windbreak is not available, other methods of shelter such as straw bales should be provided.
20. Winter shearing is not a suitable practice unless the sheep are housed.

### **Tail Docking**

21. The anal and vulva regions of sheep are sensitive areas and care must be taken to ensure that sufficient tail is retained to cover the vulva in the case of female sheep and the anus in the case of male sheep; (see refs. 1 and 2).

### **Castration**

22. Castration must be carried out only in strict accordance with the law by a competent trained operator. (2).

### **Foot Care**

23. Close attention should be given to the condition of the feet. Preventative measures should include careful foot paring and the regular use of a footbath. Non-irritant materials such as zinc sulphate solution should be used for footbathing.

### **Fencing**

24. Electric mesh fencing should not be used for horned sheep. Electric fences should be so designed, installed, used and maintained that contact with them does not cause more than momentary discomfort to the sheep. Where any type of mesh fencing is used and in particular for horned sheep and around lambing fields it should be inspected frequently.

### **FEED AND WATER**

25. Sheep should have access to sufficient food and fresh, clean water at all times. They should not be deprived of food or water for management purposes, for example to dry off ewes or to reduce condition of over-finished sheep.
26. Care should be taken to ensure that the diet is always adequate to maintain full health and vigour.
27. Sheep prefer fresh food, so any stale or contaminated food should be removed from troughs and boxes before further food is added. Stored foods, such as hay and silage, should be palatable and of good quality.
28. Sudden changes in the type and quantity of food should be avoided. For store lambs and mature sheep, systems involving the use of high intakes of cereal-based diets require an appropriate introductory feeding period, during which sufficient roughage or a suitable high fibre concentrate should also be fed. In such systems mineral mixtures should be specifically designed to avoid urinary problems in male animals.
29. Care should be taken that compound feeds do not contain unsuitable additives. Compounded feeds prepared for other species should be avoided as certain substances such as copper can be toxic to sheep.

30. Sheep with poor teeth (e.g. broken-mouthed) should be provided with food which they can eat without difficulty.
31. Arrangements should be made in advance to ensure that adequate supplies of suitable food can be made available to sheep in emergencies.

### **PREGNANCY AND LAMBING**

32. Scanning techniques can be useful to determine foetal numbers and the diet adjusted accordingly.
33. Heavily pregnant ewes should be handled with care to avoid distress and injury which may result in premature lambing.
34. Pregnant and nursing ewes should receive sufficient food to ensure the development of healthy lambs and to maintain the health and bodily condition of the ewe (see also paragraph 58).
35. Stockmen should pay particular attention to cleanliness and hygiene. Every effort should be made to prevent the build up and spread of infection by ensuring that lambing pens are provided with adequate clean bedding and are regularly cleansed and disinfected. It is particularly important to ensure that dead lambs and afterbirth are removed and disposed of without delay, preferably by burial. There is a potential health risk to pregnant women from aborting sheep, those at risk of abortion, dead lambs and afterbirths. Pregnant women should therefore stay away from sheep at lambing time.
36. It is vital that every newly-born lamb receives colostrum from its dam, or from another source, as soon as possible and in any case within 6 hours of birth. Adequate supplies of colostrum should always be stored for emergencies.
37. Stockmen should be trained in resuscitation techniques such as feeding by stomach tube. Some form of heating should be available to revive weakly lambs. Where lambing takes place out of doors some form of shelter or windbreak should be available.
38. The problems of mis-mothering, which occur particularly during transport or dipping, can be avoided by keeping group size to a minimum. Careful marking of lambs and mothers may also be beneficial.

### **ARTIFICIAL REARING**

39. Artificial rearing can give rise to problems and requires close attention to detail and high standards of supervision and stockmanship to be successful. It is essential that the lambs should be allowed to suck the ewe for at least the first 12 hours of life. (see paragraph 36).

40. All lambs should receive an adequate amount of suitable liquid food, such as ewe milk replacer at regular intervals each day during their first three weeks of life. Where automatic feeding equipment is provided lambs should be trained in its use to ensure an adequate intake of food. From the end of the second week of life, lambs should also have access to palatable and nutritious solid food (which may be grass) and fresh clean water.
41. Troughs should be kept clean and any stale food removed. Equipment and utensils used for liquid feeding should be thoroughly cleansed at regular and frequent intervals and should be effectively sterilised.
42. A dry bed and adequate ventilation should be provided at all times. Where necessary, arrangements should be made to provide safe supplementary heating for very young lambs.
43. For at least the first 3 weeks of life housed lambs should be kept in small groups to facilitate inspection and limit the spread of disease.
44. Where young lambs are being reared at pasture, care should be taken to ensure that they have adequate shelter.

## **HOUSING**

### **General**

45. Winter housing of sheep can improve welfare but it is important to be aware of the special problems that can arise. Advice should be sought on the construction or modification of buildings.
46. When first housed, sheep should be in a dry condition and if possible free from foot rot. Any foot rot should be treated immediately.

### **Ventilation and Temperature**

47. Housed sheep do not normally need a temperature higher than that outside. Effective ventilation of buildings to avoid high humidity, condensation and draughts is essential as sheep are particularly susceptible to respiratory diseases. Properly designed ventilation will permit the free circulation of air above sheep height and avoid draughts at sheep level.

### **Buildings and Equipment**

48. Internal surfaces of housing and pens should be made of materials which can be cleansed and disinfected or be easily replaced when necessary.

49. Surfaces should not be treated with paints or wood preservatives which may cause illness or death. There is a risk of lead poisoning from old paint work especially when second-hand building materials are used.
50. All floors should be designed, constructed and maintained so as to avoid discomfort, distress or injury to the sheep. Remedial action should be taken if any of these conditions occur. Solid floors should be well-drained and provided with some form of dry bedding. Newly-born and young lambs should not be put on slatted floors unless suitable bedding is provided.
51. Water bowls and troughs should be constructed and sited so as to avoid fouling and to minimise the risk of water freezing in cold weather. They should be designed and installed in a way that will ensure small lambs cannot get into them and drown. They should be kept thoroughly clean and should be checked at least once daily and more frequently in extreme conditions to ensure that they are in working order.
52. Hay racks should be properly positioned and designed to avoid risk of injury and eye damage to all types of sheep.

### **Lighting**

53. Throughout the hours of daylight the level of indoor lighting, natural or artificial, should be such that all housed sheep can be seen clearly. In addition, adequate lighting for satisfactory inspection should be available at any time.

### **Space Allowances**

54. The space allowance and group size for housed sheep should be determined according to the age, size and class of stock.
55. When sheep are fed in groups, there should be sufficient trough space or feeding points to avoid undue competition for food.
56. Pen shape and stocking density should be such that there is sufficient freedom of movement to permit adequate exercise.

## **MILK SHEEP**

### **Management**

57. Milk sheep flocks are in many cases subjected to a more intensive system of husbandry than the conventional flock and this will require more vigilant stockmanship to ensure that the health and welfare of the flock is maintained. The stockman should be aware of the specific problems relevant to the system and the ways in which these may be avoided.

58. Milk sheep are naturally prolific and it is important that care is taken to provide an adequate level of nutrition during pregnancy.
59. Some breeds of milk sheep appear to be susceptible to foot problems (e.g. foot rot) and these can be aggravated by the husbandry methods under which the sheep are kept. It is important to try and minimise the spread of infection by ensuring that sheep are not grazed on contaminated pastures. The entrances and exits to buildings and fields should be maintained in a dry condition and routine methods of prevention, for example foot baths and/or vaccination should be used.
60. Where lambs are artificially reared there should be adequate provision for housing and feeding (see paragraphs 39-44).
61. The welfare of unwanted lambs should not be neglected. This should include the use of suitable rearing systems.

### **Milking Practices**

62. Special attention should be paid to milking techniques, the adjustment of milking equipment and dairy hygiene.
63. Before and after milking, hygiene measures should be adopted to reduce the spread of disease.
64. Good milking practices include careful handling, an examination of foremilk and the avoidance of excessive stripping.

### **Milking Parlours and Equipment**

65. Pens, ramps, milking parlours and milking equipment should be properly designed, constructed and maintained to prevent injury and distress.
66. It is essential to ensure that milking machines are functioning correctly by proper maintenance and adjustment of vacuum levels, pulsation rates and ratios, taking account of manufacturers' recommendations.

### **HAZARDS**

67. To minimise the risk of sheep being trapped in snow or being unable to gain shelter, great care should be taken in siting shelters, shelter belts and fences. As far as practicable, sheep should be prevented from gathering in places where they may be buried by snow; they should be shepherded into safer areas when possible. All sheep should be removed from areas which are in danger of being flooded.
68. Young lambs should be protected as far as possible from hazards such as open drains and predators.

69. Any dog is a potential hazard to sheep and should be kept under control on agricultural land. Sheep dogs should be properly trained so that they do not grip sheep.
70. When sheep are near built-up areas, greater care, supervision and more frequent inspections will be necessary.

## **MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES**

71. All equipment and services including drinkers, milking machines, ventilating fans, heating and lighting units, fire extinguishers and alarm systems, should be cleaned and inspected regularly and kept clean and in good working order. Any automated equipment should incorporate a fail-safe device maintained in good working order and, where the sheep's welfare is dependent upon such equipment, an alarm system should be regularly tested. Defects should be rectified immediately or alternative measures taken to safeguard the health and welfare of the sheep.
72. All electrical installations at mains voltage should be inaccessible to sheep, well insulated, safeguarded from rodents, and properly earthed.

## **FIRE AND OTHER EMERGENCY PRECAUTIONS**

73. Farmers should make advance plans for dealing with emergencies such as fire, flood or disruption of supplies, and should ensure that all staff are familiar with the appropriate emergency action. At least one responsible member of staff should always be available to take the necessary action.
74. Fire precautions should be a major priority for the good stockmen. The provisions of Section 1.3 of British Standard BS 5502 should therefore be followed. Expert advice on all fire precautions is obtainable from the States Fire Brigade.
75. In the design of new buildings or alterations of existing ones, there should be provision for livestock to be released and evacuated quickly in case of emergency. Materials used in construction should have sufficient fire resistance. Adequate doors and other escape routes should be provided to enable emergency procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.
76. All electrical, gas and oil services should be planned and fitted so that if there is overheating, or flame is generated, the risk of flame spreading to equipment, bedding or the fabric of the building is minimal. Consideration should be given to installing fire alarm systems which can be heard and acted upon at any time of the day or night.
77. In case a 999 call has to be made, notice should be prominently displayed in all livestock buildings stating where the nearest telephone is located. Each

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77. In case a 999 call has to be made, notice should be prominently displayed in all livestock buildings stating where the nearest telephone is located. Each telephone should have fixed by it a notice giving instructions for the Fire Brigade on the best route to the farm and a description of the location of the telephone.

## REFERENCES

1. The Veterinary Surgery & Animal Welfare Ordinance 1987 prohibits freeze dagging and short-tail docking unless sufficient tail is retained to cover the vulva in the case of female sheep and the anus in the case of male sheep.
2. Under The Veterinary Surgery & Animal Welfare Ordinance 1987 it is an offence to tail dock or castrate lambs, which have reached the age of 2 months without the use of an anaesthetic. Furthermore the use of rubber ring or other device to restrict the flow of blood to the tail or scrotum is only permitted without an anaesthetic if the device is applied within the first week of life. Under The Veterinary Surgery & Animal Welfare Ordinance 1987 only a veterinary surgeon or veterinary practitioner may castrate a ram which has reached the age of 2 months or dehorn or disbud a sheep, except the trimming of the insensitive tip of an ingrowing horn which, if left untreated, could cause pain or distress.



# **CODE OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WELFARE OF GOATS**

## **PREFACE**

The Code of recommendations for the welfare of goats is intended to encourage all those responsible for looking after these animals to adopt the highest standards of husbandry. It takes account of five basic animal needs: freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition; appropriate comfort and shelter; the prevention, or rapid diagnosis and treatment of, injury, disease or infestation; freedom from fear; and freedom to display most normal patterns of behaviour.

The Code is backed up by the Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance 1987. To cause unnecessary distress to any farm animal is an offence under the Protection of Animals Ordinance 1976, and the breach of a Code provision, whilst not an offence in itself, can nevertheless be used in evidence as tending to establish the guilt of anyone accused of causing suffering or cruelty.

Without good stockmanship, animal welfare can never be adequately protected. The Code is designed to help stockmen, particularly the young and inexperienced, to reach the required standard.

For the purposes of this Code the word 'goat' refers to all caprine stock, and an animal under six months is considered to be a kid.

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. Goats in Guernsey cover a variety of breed types each with its own unique characteristics. The recommendations in this Code are appropriate to goats under various husbandry systems, and their application will help to ensure that the welfare of the stock is safeguarded.
2. The goat has a natural tendency to browse and range for its food and these factors should be taken into account in deciding on a suitable environment. Many breeds of goat require more protection from inclement weather than cattle or sheep and, whatever husbandry system is adopted, some form of shelter should be provided.
3. Goats, being gregarious animals, prefer to live in social groups and appear to enjoy human contact. If kept singly, they require more frequent contact with, and supervision by, the stockman. They should always be treated as individuals, even then kept in large herds. When forming new groups, care should be taken to avoid fighting and stress if adult animals are mixed (see paragraph 30). Goats prefer to be led but can be driven if care is taken.
4. The number and type of goats kept and the stocking rate should depend on the suitability of the environment and the skills of the stockman.

5. Although very large herds can be managed successfully, in general the larger the size of unit, the greater the degree of skill and conscientiousness needed to safeguard welfare. The size of a unit should not be increased nor should a large unit be set up unless it is reasonably certain that the stockman in charge will be able to safeguard the welfare of the individual animal.

## **HEALTH**

6. The stockman should know the normal behaviour of goats and recognise the signs which indicate good health. These include good appetite, alertness, good coat condition, absence of lameness, firm round droppings (similar to those of a sheep or a rabbit) and no visible wounds, abscesses or injuries. Purchased stock should be healthy and free from infectious disease
7. Goats should be inspected regularly, particularly for foot condition (see paragraph 50) and parasitic infections of the skin (eg lice and mange), to which they are susceptible.
8. The health of the goat should be safeguarded by the appropriate use of preventive measures such as parasitic control and vaccinations programmes based on veterinary advice (see paragraph 14).
9. When goats are ill they soon lose the will to live. The stockman should identify the cause of the goat's deterioration, should separate injured or ailing goats and take immediate remedial action. Prompt veterinary advice should be obtained if the goat appears to be seriously ill or in pain, the cause of the deterioration is not clear or if the stockman's action is not effective.
10. If a goat has to be destroyed on the farm, this must be done humanely, and, where possible, by a person who is experienced in both the technique and the equipment used for slaughtering goats such as a veterinary surgeon or the States knackerman.

## **FEED AND WATER**

11. Goats should receive daily a balanced diet which is adequate to maintain full health and vigour. They should have access to sufficient fresh, clean water at all times. If this is impossible for any reason, such water should be provided at least twice daily. Goats prefer water which is not excessively cold.
12. Feed should be palatable and should be placed in suitable racks or containers. Stale and fouled food should be removed.

13. Goats need a comparatively large quantity of bulky feed. They have a preference for coarse forages and tree branches. Suitable foods for housed goats include pea and bean haulm, clover, lucerne and meadow hay and silage(s) and coarse, flaky or pelleted concentrated food. Care should be taken not to over-feed certain foods, for example concentrates, as this can lead to such problems as bloat, acidosis, laminitis and obesity.

## **GRAZING**

14. Grazing should include a variety of plants to ensure an adequate intake of roughage and minerals. If grazing is poor, supplementary feeding may be required. Goats should be moved at appropriate intervals to clean pastures to control parasite infestation and this should be combined with a regular parasite control programme (see paragraph 8).
15. Being browsing animals, goats should be denied access to poisonous shrubs, trees and plants within grazing areas. Well-known examples that are poisonous are rhododendron, yew, laurel and bracken but there are many others and expert advice should be sought where necessary.

## **FENCING**

16. Goats have a tendency to jump and clamber. Fencing should be strong enough and of sufficient height (at least 1.2m) to prevent them from escaping. It should be designed, constructed and maintained so as to avoid the risk of injury.
17. Electric fences should be so designed, installed and maintained that contact with them does not cause more than momentary discomfort to the goat. Electric mesh type fences are not suitable for horned goats and young kids.

## **TETHERING**

18. Outdoor tethering, if carried out, requires a high degree of supervision with inspections at frequent intervals. Tethered goats are particularly vulnerable to worrying by dogs and teasing by children. Goats should not be tethered where there are obstacles and a risk of the chain becoming entangled. Tethers should be designed and maintained so as not to cause distress or injury to the goats. Collars should be light but substantial and attached to a strong chain not less than 3 metres in length with at least two swivels. Particular care should be taken to provide food, water and shelter.
19. Kids should never be tethered.

## HOUSING, BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT

20. Advice on welfare aspects should be sought when constructing and modifying buildings. The lying area should be covered, dry and well-lit with sufficient ventilation which does not cause draughts at animal level. Goats are very inquisitive and all gate/door fastenings should be goat-proof.
21. Fittings and internal surfaces of all buildings and equipment to which goats have access should not have sharp edges or projections. Fittings should be so arranged as to avoid injury.
22. Surfaces should not be treated with paints or wood preservatives which may cause illness or death. There is a risk of lead poisoning from old paintwork especially when second hand materials are used.
23. Hay racks and nets should be properly positioned and designed to avoid the risk of injury, in particular to the eyes of all types of goats. Hay nets should not be used for young kids and horned goats as there is the danger of them becoming entangled.
24. When goats are fed in groups, there should be sufficient trough space or feeding points to avoid undue competition for food.
25. Water bowls and troughs should be constructed and sited so as to avoid fouling and to minimise the risk of water freezing in cold weather. They should be kept thoroughly clean and be checked at least once daily, and more frequently in extreme weather conditions, to ensure that they are in working order.
26. Floors should be designed, constructed and maintained so as to avoid discomfort, stress or injury to the goats. Solid floors should be well drained. Sufficient clean dry bedding incorporating straw or other suitable material should be provided to ensure comfort and reduce the risk of injury to the udder.
27. If housed, male goats should be within sight and sound of other goats or other animals and in strongly constructed buildings which allow sufficient room for exercise.
28. Housed goats should have access to a yard or pasture.
29. The space allowance when penned should be calculated in relation to the age, size and class of stock. This and the size of the group should be based on appropriate advice. Horned and polled goats should not be put in the same pen unless reared together.

30. The introduction of a new goat or goats to an existing group can result in bullying. This may be alleviated by increasing the space allowance or by penning the new animal adjacent to the existing group for a short period.
31. All electrical installations at mains voltage should be inaccessible to goats, well insulated, safeguarded from rodents and, properly earthed <sup>(1)</sup>.

### **MECHANICAL SERVICES AND EQUIPMENT**

32. All equipment and services, including drinkers, milking machines, ventilating fans, heating and lighting units, fire extinguishers and alarm systems, should be kept clean, inspected regularly and kept in good working order. Alternative ways of milking and maintaining a satisfactory environment should be available in case of failure.

### **PREGNANCY AND KIDDING**

33. Heavily pregnant females should be handled with care to avoid distress and injury which may result in premature kidding.
34. Pregnant and nursing females should receive sufficient food to maintain the health and bodily condition of the goat and ensure the development of healthy kids. This is particularly important during the last 6 weeks of pregnancy. Water should always be available.
35. Stockmen should pay particular attention to cleanliness and hygiene. Every effort should be made to prevent the build up and spread of infection by ensuring that kidding pens are provided with adequate clean bedding and are regularly cleansed and disinfected. A kidding pen within sight and sound of other goats is desirable. Any dead kids should be removed without delay.
36. Stockmen should be sufficiently familiar with problems arising at kidding to know when to summon help. Veterinary advice should be sought when the need arises.
37. It is vital that every newly-born kid receives colostrum from its dam or from another source as soon as possible and in any case within 6 hours of birth. Adequate supplies of colostrum should be stored for emergencies but pooled colostrum, for example, from other premises, may constitute a disease risk.

### **ARTIFICIAL REARING**

38. Artificial rearing can give rise to problems and, to be successful, requires close attention to detail and high standards of supervision and stockmanship. Particular attention should be paid to cleanliness and hygiene.

39. Young kids should always have access to milk or milk substitutes or be fed at least 2 to 3 times each day. Milk from other dams could constitute a disease risk. Fresh fibrous food should be available from 1 to 2 weeks of age.
40. Some form of safe supplementary heating, particularly in the early days of life, may be necessary.
41. A dry bedded lying area and adequate ventilation should be provided at all times.

#### **DISPOSAL OF UNWANTED KIDS**

42. Unwanted kids should be treated as humanely as those being kept for rearing and, if they are to be killed, arrangements should be made for this to be done as humanely as possible (see paragraph 10).

#### **MILKING**

43. The stockman should be aware of the specific problems of a lactating goat and the ways in which these problems can be avoided or alleviated. Veterinary advice should be sought where necessary.
44. Special attention should be paid to milking techniques so that injury to teats can be avoided. Good milking practices should include careful handling, an examination of foremilk and the avoidance of excessive stripping.
45. Before and after milking, hygienic measures should be adopted to reduce the spread of disease. Failure to attend to hygiene and to the efficient functioning of milking machines can lead to mastitis and damage to teats.
46. Goats can milk through to 24 months but this should be supported by adequate nutrition (see paragraph 11).
47. Lactating goats should be milked daily or sufficiently often according to yield.

#### **Milking Parlours and Equipment**

48. Pens, ramps, milking parlours and milking equipment should be properly designed, constructed and maintained to prevent injury and distress.
59. It is essential to ensure that milking machines are functioning correctly by proper maintenance and adjustment of vacuum levels, pulsation rates and ratios, taking account of manufacturer's recommendations.

## **FOOT CARE**

60. Close attention should be given to the condition of the feet and, where necessary, regular foot trimming should be carried out. Goats should be kept in accommodation which is dry underfoot.

## **DISBUDDING AND DEHORNING**

51. These operations must be carried out by a veterinary surgeon. <sup>(2)</sup> If disbudding is to be carried out, this should be done at the earliest possible age; 2-3 days is ideal but not later than 10 days. Dehorning an adult goat is a stressful procedure and should be avoided.

## **CASTRATION**

52. Castration, if necessary, must be carried out by a trained operator or veterinary surgeon in strict accordance with the law. <sup>(3)</sup>

## **SHEARING AND COMBING (FIBRE PRODUCTION)**

53. When shearing, care should be taken not to nick or cut the skin. Where a wound does occur, immediate treatment should be given.
54. The goat is particularly susceptible to changes in temperature. Unless housed, goats should only be shorn in suitable weather conditions. Combing is preferable to shearing in adverse weather conditions.
55. Protection by housing or by the use of a coat should be provided if inclement weather occurs after shearing.

## **FIRE AND OTHER EMERGENCY PRECAUTIONS**

56. Stockmen should make advance plans for dealing with emergencies such as fire, flood or disruption of supplies, and should ensure that all staff are familiar with the appropriate emergency action. At least one responsible member of staff should always be available to take the necessary action.
57. Fire precautions should be a major priority for the good stockman. The provisions of Section 1.3 of British Standard BS5502 should therefore be followed. Expert advice on all fire precautions is obtainable from the States Fire Brigade.
58. In the design of new buildings or alteration of existing ones there should be provision for livestock to be released and evacuated quickly in case of emergency. Materials used in construction should have sufficient fire resistance. Adequate doors and other escape routes should be provided to enable emergency procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

59. All electrical, gas and oil services should be planned and fitted so that if there is overheating, or flame is generated, the risk of flame spreading to equipment, bedding or the fabric of the building is minimal. It is advisable to site power supply controls outside buildings. Consideration should be given to installing fire alarm systems which can be heard and acted upon at any time of the day or night.
60. In case a 999 call has to be made, notices should be prominently displayed in all livestock buildings stating where the nearest telephone is located. Each telephone should have fixed by it a notice giving instructions for the Fire Brigade on how to reach the buildings where the goats are housed.

## REFERENCES

- (1) Any installation or extension involving mains electricity should comply with the Regulations for the Electrical Equipment of Buildings issued by the Institution of Electrical Engineers.
- (2) Under the Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance 1987 the dehorning or disbudding of a goat, except the trimming of the insensitive tip of an ingrowing horn which, if left untreated could cause pain or distress, must be carried out by a veterinary surgeon with the use of an anaesthetic.
- (3) Under the Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance 1987 it is an offence to castrate a goat which has reached the age of 2 months without the use of an anaesthetic. Furthermore the use of a rubber ring or other device to restrict the flow of blood to the scrotum, is only permitted without an anaesthetic if the device is applied during the first week of life. Only a veterinary surgeon may castrate a goat after it has reached the age of 2 months.



# **CODE OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WELFARE OF HORSES**

## **PREFACE**

The Code of recommendations for the welfare of horses is intended to encourage all those responsible for looking after these animals to adopt the highest standards of husbandry. It takes account of five basic animal needs; freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition; appropriate comfort and shelter; the prevention, or rapid diagnosis and treatment of, injury, disease or infestation; freedom from fear; and freedom to display most normal patterns of behaviour.

The Code is backed up by The Veterinary Surgery & Animal Welfare Ordinance 1987. To cause unnecessary pain or unnecessary distress to any farm animal is an offence under The Protection of Animals Ordinance, 1976, and a breach of a Code provision, whilst not an offence in itself, can nevertheless be used in evidence as tending to establish the guilt of anyone accused of causing suffering or cruelty.

Without good stockmanship, animal welfare can never be adequately protected. The Code is designed to help stockmen particularly the young and inexperienced to reach the required standard.

For the purposes of this Code the word horse refers to all equine stock and an animal under 12 months is considered to be a foal. Reference to 'horse' and 'horses' should be taken to include ponies, donkeys, hinnies and mules.

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. Horses include a variety of breed types each with its own unique characteristics. The recommendations in this Code are appropriate to horses under various husbandry systems, and their application will help to ensure that the welfare of the stock is safeguarded.
2. The basic requirements for the welfare of horses are a husbandry system appropriate to the health and, so far as practicable, the behavioural needs of the animals and a high standard of stockmanship.
3. Stockmanship is a key factor because, no matter how otherwise acceptable a system may be in principle, without competent, diligent stockmanship, the welfare of the horses cannot be adequately catered for. The recommendations which follow are designed to help all stockmen to attain the required standards. The part that training has to play in the development of the stockman's awareness of welfare requirements cannot be overstressed. Detailed advice on the application of the code in individual circumstances is readily available from the States Veterinary Officer and the States Agricultural Officer.

4. Nearly all husbandry systems impose restrictions on the stock and some of these can cause an unacceptable degree of discomfort or distress by preventing the horses from fulfilling their basic needs. Provisions meeting these needs, and others which must be considered, include -
  - \* comfort and shelter;
  - \* readily accessible fresh water and a diet to maintain the animals in full health and vigour;
  - \* freedom of movement;
  - \* the company of other animals, particularly of like kind;
  - \* the opportunity to exercise most normal patterns of behaviour;
  - \* light during the hours of daylight, and lighting readily available to enable the animals to be inspected at any time;
  - \* flooring which neither harms the animals, nor causes undue strain;
  - \* the prevention, or rapid diagnosis and treatment, of vice, injury, parasitic infestation and disease;
  - \* the avoidance of unnecessary mutilation, and
  - \* emergency arrangements to cover outbreaks of fire, the breakdown of essential mechanical services and the disruption of supplies.
5. Many breeds of horse require more protection from inclement weather than cattle or sheep and, whatever husbandry system is adopted, some form of shelter should be provided.
6. Horses, being gregarious animals, prefer to live in social groups and appear to enjoy human contact. If kept singly, they require more frequent contact with, and supervision by, the stockman. They should always be treated as individuals, even when kept in large groups. When forming new groups, care should be taken to avoid fighting and stress if adult animals are mixed (see paragraph 30). Horses prefer to be led but can be driven if care is taken.
7. The number and type of horses kept and the stocking rate should depend on the suitability of the environment and the skills of the stockman.
8. Although large groups can be managed successfully, in general the larger the size of unit the greater the degree of skill and conscientiousness needed to safeguard welfare. The size of a unit should not be increased nor should a large unit be set up unless it is reasonably certain that the stockman in charge will be able to safeguard the welfare of the individual animals.

## **HEALTH**

9. The stockman should know the normal behaviour of horses and recognise the signs which indicate good health. These include good appetite, alertness, good coat condition, absence of lameness, firm droppings and no visible wounds, abscesses or injuries. Purchased horses should be healthy and free from infectious disease.
10. Horses should be inspected regularly, particularly for foot condition (see paragraph 50) and for internal parasites (e.g. Roundworms and Tapeworms).
11. The health of the horse should be safeguarded by the appropriate use of preventive measures such as parasitic control and vaccination programmes based on veterinary advice (see paragraph 14).
12. When horses are ill they soon lose the will to live. The stockman should identify the cause of the horses deterioration, should separate injured or ailing horses and take immediate remedial action. Prompt veterinary advice should be obtained if the horse appears to be seriously ill or in pain, the cause of the deterioration is not clear or if the stockman's action is not effective.
13. If the horse has to be destroyed on the farm, this must be done humanely, and, where possible, by a person who is experienced in both the technique and the equipment used for slaughtering horses such as a Veterinary Surgeon or the States Knackerman.

## **FEED AND WATER**

14. Horses should receive daily a balanced diet which is adequate to maintain full health and vigour. They should have access to sufficient fresh, clean, water at all times. If this is impossible for any reason, such water should be provided at least twice daily.
15. Feed should be palatable and should be placed in suitable racks or containers. Stale and fouled food should be removed.
16. Horses need a comparatively large quantity of bulky feed. Suitable foods for housed horses include meadow hay and coarse, flaky or pelleted concentrated food. Care should be taken not to over-feed certain foods, for example concentrates, as this can lead to such problems as bloat, acidosis, laminitis and obesity.

## **GRAZING**

17. Grazing should ensure an adequate intake of roughage and minerals. If grazing is poor, supplementary feeding may be required. Horses should be moved at appropriate intervals to clean pastures to control parasite infestation and this should be combined with a regular parasite control programme (see paragraph 8).
18. Horses should be denied access to poisonous shrubs, trees and plants within grazing areas. Well-known examples that are poisonous are rhododendron, yew, laurel and bracken but there are many others and expert advice should be sought where necessary.

Ragwort is a common poisonous plant of meadow land in Guernsey, and is specially dangerous in hay as it is palatable in the dried state, but retains its poisonous properties.
19. Fencing should be strong enough and of sufficient height to prevent horses from escaping. It should be designed, constructed and maintained so as to avoid the risk of injury.
20. Electric fences should be so designed, installed and maintained that contact with them does not cause more than momentary discomfort to the horse. Electric mesh type fences are not suitable for horses.

## **TETHERING**

21. Outdoor tethering, if carried out, requires a high degree of supervision with inspections at frequent intervals. Tethered horses are particularly vulnerable to worrying by dogs and teasing by children. Horses should not be tethered where there are obstacles and a risk of the chain becoming entangled. Tethers should be designed and maintained so as not to cause distress or injury to the horse. Collars should be light but substantial and attached to a strong chain not less than 5 metres in length with at least two swivels. Particular care should be taken to provide food, water and shelter.
22. Foals should never be tethered.

## **HOUSING, BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT**

23. Advice on welfare aspects should be sought when constructing and modifying buildings. The lying area should be covered, dry and well-lit with sufficient ventilation which does not cause draughts at animal level.

24. Fittings and internal surfaces of all buildings and equipment to which horses have access should not have sharp edges or projections. Fittings should be so arranged as to avoid injury.
25. Surfaces should not be treated with paints or wood preservatives which may cause illness or death. There is a risk of lead poisoning from old paint work especially when second hand materials are used.
26. Hay racks and nets should be properly positioned and designed to avoid the risk of injury, in particular to the eyes of all types of horses.
27. When horses are fed in groups, there should be sufficient trough space or feeding points to avoid undue competition for food.
28. Water bowls and troughs should be constructed and sited so as to avoid fouling and to minimise the risk of water freezing in cold weather. They should be kept thoroughly clean and be checked at least once daily, and more frequently in extreme weather conditions, to ensure that they are in working order.
29. Floors should be designed, constructed and maintained so as to avoid discomfort, distress or injury to the horse. Solid floors should be well drained. Sufficient clean dry bedding incorporating straw or other suitable material should be provided to ensure comfort and reduce the risk of injury.
30. The space allowance when penned should be calculated in relation to the age, size and class of stock. This and the size of the group should be based on appropriate advice.
31. The introduction of a new horse or horses to an existing group can result in bullying. This may be alleviated by increasing the space allowance or by penning the new animal adjacent to the existing group for a short period.
32. Special care must be taken to separate individual animals. These are:
  - a) Stallions
  - b) Rigs
  - c) Mares heavily in foal or with foal at foot.
  - d) Fractious animals which could bully or injure; and
  - e) Horses whose hind feet are shod.
33. Clipped horses need enhanced protection from the weather, either by housing them in covered, and preferably enclosed accommodation, or by use of a warm rug, or both.
34. All electrical installations at mains voltage should be inaccessible to horses, well insulated, safeguarded from rodents and, properly earthed. (1).

## **MECHANICAL SERVICES AND EQUIPMENT**

35. All equipment and services, including drinkers, ventilating fans, heating and lighting units, fire extinguishers and alarm systems, should be kept clean, inspected regularly and kept in good working order.

## **PREGNANCY AND FOALING**

36. Heavily pregnant females should be handled with care to avoid distress and injury which may result in premature foaling.
37. Pregnant and nursing females should receive sufficient food to maintain the health and bodily condition of the horse and ensure the development of healthy foals. This is particularly important during the last 6 weeks of pregnancy. Water should always be available.
38. Stockmen should pay particular attention to cleanliness and hygiene. Every effort should be made to prevent the build up and spread of infection by ensuring that foaling pens are provided with adequate clean bedding and are regularly cleansed and disinfected. A foaling pen within sight and sound of other horses is desirable. Any dead foals should be removed without delay.
39. Stockmen should be sufficiently familiar with problems arising at foaling to know when to summon help. veterinary advice should be sought when the need arises.
40. It is vital that every newly-born foal receives colostrum from its dam or from another source as soon as possible and in any case within 6 hours of birth. Adequate supplies of colostrum should be stored for emergencies but pooled colostrum, for example, from other premises, may constitute a disease risk.

## **ARTIFICIAL REARING**

41. Artificial rearing can give rise to problems and, to be successful, requires close attention to detail and high standards of supervision and stockmanship. Particular attention should be paid to cleanliness and hygiene.
42. Young foals should always have access to milk or milk substitutes or be fed at least 2 to 3 times each day. Milk from other dams could constitute a disease risk. Fresh fibrous food should be available from 1 to 2 weeks of age.
43. Some form of safe supplementary heating, particularly in the early days of life, may be necessary.
44. A dry bedded lying area and adequate ventilation should be provided at all times.

## **FOOT CARE**

45. Close attention should be given to the condition of the feet and, where necessary, regular foot trimming and shoeing should be carried out. Horses should be kept in accommodation which is dry underfoot.

## **CASTRATION**

46. Castration, if necessary, must be carried out by a Veterinary Surgeon in strict accordance with the law (2).

## **TAIL DOCKING**

47. The removal of any bone or part of a bone from the tail of an equine animal, or severance of any tendon or muscle in the tail of an equine animal is an offence under the Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance 1987.

## **FIRE AND OTHER EMERGENCY PRECAUTIONS**

48. Stockmen should make advance plans for dealing with emergencies such as fire, flood or disruption of supplies, and should ensure that all staff are familiar with the appropriate emergency action. At least one responsible member of staff should always be available to take the necessary action.
49. Fire precautions should be a major priority for the good stockman. The provision of Section 1.3 of British Standard BS5502 should therefore be followed. Expert advice on all fire precautions is obtainable from the States Fire Brigade.
50. In the design of new buildings or alteration of existing ones there should be provision for livestock to be released and evacuated quickly in case of emergency. Materials used in construction should have sufficient fire resistance. Adequate doors and other escape routes should be provided to enable emergency procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.
51. All electrical, gas and oil services should be planned and fitted so that if there is overheating, or flame is generated, the risk of flame spreading to equipment, bedding or the fabric of the building is minimal. It is advisable to site power supply controls outside buildings. Consideration should be given to installing fire alarm systems which can be heard and acted upon at any time of the day or night.
52. In case a 999 call has to be made, notices should be prominently displayed in all livestock buildings stating where the nearest telephone is located. Each telephone should have fixed by it a notice giving instructions for the fire Brigade on how to reach the buildings which the horses are housed.

## TRANSPORT

53. Horses are frequently transported to shows in the Island, and are sent to England for sale.
54. A poorly driven or badly maintained horse box or trailer, with inadequate accommodation, can lead to extreme stress and injury. (3)
55. Not only can poor standards of care during loading, unloading and carriage be against the law (3) and (4), but will almost certainly adversely affect the condition of the horse.
56. Straw, or other suitable material, should be used on ramps or other surfaces where necessary, to prevent the risk of injury.
57. The following classes of animals should not be transported or sent for sale out of the Bailiwick.
  - a) Unfit horses. An unfit animal can be one which is diseased, ill, injured, lame, deformed, emaciated, weak or exhausted. It is not possible to list all the various degrees and types of injury, illness, etc. To avoid the risk of prosecution and animal suffering, only fit and healthy horses should be sent, transported, or accepted at markets or other sales.
  - b) Mares likely to give birth. Mares should not be exported or presented for sale during the last month of pregnancy.
  - c) Foals under 4 months of age other than at the foot of their dams.
58. Everyone who handles, transports, buys or sells horses has a duty of care towards the animals and is potentially liable to prosecution where injury or unnecessary suffering has been caused or is likely to occur.
59. Horses in transit should be offered water within periods no longer than 8 hours. The person in charge of each horse should bear this in mind particularly if an animal is being transported to or from the Bailiwick by sea. Clean wholesome water should be given frequently enough to prevent the horse becoming thirsty. This is particularly important during hot weather. Animals can become hot and distressed when travelling by sea, particularly during hot weather, and the person in charge of each horse should inspect, and offer the animals water during the crossing, on at least one occasion.
60. Suitable food and water should be provided to the horses on arrival at their destination. If the journey is likely to take more than 15 hours from the time that the animals were last fed then the person responsible should offer suitable palatable and wholesome food to the horse. Suitable hay nets or racks must be provided, and animals should not be fed off the floor.



## **CONTROL AND HANDLING**

61. Horses require calm, sympathetic and unhurried handling, by persons competent and experienced with horses. Handlers should think ahead to ensure that horses are not panicked by an unexpected occurrence.
62. Halter broken horses should be led by a suitable bridle, head collar or halter; rope, plastic string or baler twine are not acceptable. Unbroken horses should not be led.
63. When leading or driving horses the following should not be used:
  - a) excessive force;
  - b) electric prods or goads; or
  - c) sticks, whips, crops or other implements (such as plastic piping) to hit or prod horses.
64. Sticks should only be used as an extension of the arm for persuasion and encouragement, and not as an implement to beat animals. Flags or cloths tied to the ends of sticks or other forms of encouragement can be employed to move unbroken horses.
65. Do not kick, punch or drag animals.

## **RIDING OR DRIVING HORSES**

66. Horses should only be ridden or handled on the road by experienced people.
67. It is an offence under the Protection of Animals Ordinance to over-ride, over-drive, or over load an animal.

## **REFERENCES**

1. Any installation or extension involving mains electricity should comply with the regulations for the electrical Equipment of Buildings issued by the Institution of Electrical Engineers.

2. The Castration of a horse, pony, ass or mule must be carried out by a Veterinary Surgeon. (The Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance, 1987).
3. Under the Protection of Animals Ordinance 1976, it is an offence to "convey or carry, or cause or procure, or, being the owner, permit to be conveyed or carried, any animal in such a manner or position as to cause that animal any unnecessary suffering.
4. Under the Protection of Animals Ordinance 1976 it is an offence to cruelly beat, kick, or ill treat an animal.

# **CODE OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WELFARE OF FARMED DEER**

## **PREFACE**

The Code of Recommendations for the welfare of farmed deer, is intended to encourage all those responsible for looking after these animals to adopt the highest standards of husbandry. It takes account of five basic animal needs; freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition; appropriate comfort and shelter; the prevention, or rapid diagnosis and treatment of, injury, disease or infestation; freedom from fear; and freedom to display most normal patterns of behaviour.

The Code is backed up by the Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance 1987. To cause unnecessary distress to any farm animal is an offence under the Protection of Animals Ordinance 1976, and the breach of a Code provision, whilst not an offence in itself, can nevertheless be used in evidence as tending to establish the guilt of anyone accused of causing suffering or cruelty.

Without good stockmanship, animal welfare can never be adequately protected. The Code is designed to help stockmen, particularly the young and inexperienced, to reach the required standard.

This Code applies to all farmed deer although it is not intended to apply to feral deer which may be on agricultural land but are not within the occupier's control.

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. The Code relates to all farmed deer but, bearing in mind that the majority of species farmed are red or fallow deer, the recommendations have been drafted with these species particularly in mind.
2. The welfare of deer can be safeguarded and their behavioural needs met under a variety of management systems. The system and the number and stocking rate of deer kept at any one time should depend on the suitability of the conditions and the skill of the stockman. All stockmen should be familiar with the behaviour of deer and must be competent in their handling and management to safeguard the welfare of the herd and individual animals.
3. In general, deer are highly strung, nervous animals which can be easily excited or frightened. When accustomed to the sight and sound of man, wild deer can be tamed to a considerable degree. Hand-reared animals may become exceedingly tame. Nonetheless, they have different behavioural characteristics from other farmed animals.

4. Account should be taken of the different behavioural characteristics within the species most commonly 'domesticated', e.g. Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*, Sika *Cervus nippon*, Fallow *Dama dama*. Red deer can become relatively tame. Fallow deer are very flighty in behaviour and much less tractable than Red deer; this is an important consideration when deciding which species to farm.
5. Badly managed deer do not thrive and the stockman needs to watch for signs of disease or distress. The good stockman will be able to recognise trouble in its early stages and may be able to identify the cause and put matters right immediately. If the cause is not obvious, or if the stockman's immediate action is not effective, veterinary or other expert advice should be obtained as soon as possible.
6. The signs of ill-health may include listlessness, loss of appetite (except natural seasonal inappetence), failure to cud, lameness, persistent coughing, swollen joints and discharge from the nostrils and/or eyes. Calves being artificially reared indoors should be inspected twice daily for signs of scouring or respiratory disorders which may spread rapidly.

## HANDLING AND INSPECTION

7. Handling and movement of deer require special skills and they should be handled gently and never rushed. It is helpful to train deer, particularly as calves, to respond to a distinctive call or inducement, such as feed, and to continue this practice throughout their life.
8. It is best if there is a minimum of disturbance of hinds during the calving season and if the stockman is known to the hinds concerned. He should be experienced and competent in the techniques of calving and should pay particular attention to hygiene, especially at assisted calvings. If assistance at calving is deemed necessary, it must be realised that hinds so assisted may abandon their calves; facilities for artificial rearing should therefore be available.
9. For breeding, sires should be carefully selected taking into account breed, size, age and previous record, so as to reduce the likelihood of subsequent calving difficulties. Sires from larger breeds should not be used for hinds less than three years of age. Hinds should be managed so as to be in suitable bodily condition at the time of calving.
10. Adult stags must be considered as potentially dangerous at all times and their handling during the rut should be kept to a minimum (see paragraphs 14-17 on darting).

11. The preferred method of handling small deer is to cradle them in the arms with hands positioned around the hind quarters and around the brisket. If of an appropriate size, deer can also be safely and effectively handled by restraining them against the wall of a handling pen by putting an arm around the neck, pressing as close to the animal as possible and using a leg to restrain the rear end just in front of the stifle.
12. Deer should be inspected daily when housed as well as in other special circumstances, e.g. at calving time.
13. For the safety of handlers and the welfare of animals, it may be necessary to remove antlers above the pedicle as soon as they are out of velvet. <sup>(1)</sup>

#### **Use of dart guns**

14. Darting to sedate the deer will sometimes be necessary but should be carried out under the supervision of a veterinary surgeon. The use of dart guns should however be limited only to essential circumstances, e.g. when the transportation of a deer cannot be accomplished in safety for both the deer and the handler. <sup>(2)</sup>

#### **Handling Pens**

15. When deer are to be handled, properly constructed handling pens should be provided. There is a wide range of satisfactory designs and layouts and it is recommended that specialist advice is sought before constructing new facilities.
16. Where deer are to be confined, pens should have solid sides with no projections so as to minimise the risk of injury to the deer. It is essential that they are of an adequate height, not only to prevent escape but also to discourage any attempt to escape, thereby preventing possible injury. Walls need to be higher for Fallow deer than for Red deer.
17. All species of deer handle better in subdued light. It is strongly recommended that close handling pens be covered to achieve this effect.
18. Provision for segregation should be made but it is desirable that segregated animals are able to see their fellows otherwise they may panic.
19. There is a tendency for deer to rush at any open fences in the handling area. To avoid the risk of injury, the approach fences to pens should be of close mesh or covered with a suitable material such as hessian.
20. Properly designed and constructed loading facilities should be incorporated in the handling pens where possible.

## **STOCKING RATES**

21. Most types of land can be used and the number of stock held will relate to such factors as the type and quality of the vegetation, the season, disease risks, etc.
22. Overstocking, particularly during the calving period, may lead to behavioural vices, eg. hinds beating and trampling calves.

## **PROVISION OF SHELTER**

23. Deer, not being well insulated, are particularly sensitive to weather conditions and, if adequate topographic or vegetative shelter is not available, the provision of suitable artificial shelter is recommended.
24. Calving hinds and calves tend to seek solitude in natural cover, for example in patches of bracken. Where this is absent, suitable cover should be provided well in advance of calving so that the hind is used to her surroundings.

## **FENCING**

25. To prevent escape, a high standard of perimeter fencing, of around 2.0m (6ft.6in.) high, is essential. A wide range of fence types if available and advice should be sought as to the most appropriate type for specific conditions.
26. When deer are driven alongside fences, leading towards handling pens, they may seek to escape and injure themselves. Such fences therefore need to be of a suitable mesh, covered with hessian or other suitable materials to prevent the deer seeing through the fence, and be free of projections.
27. Deer which have not been used to electric fencing are best run in a non-electrified enclosure until they have settled down.

## **FEED AND WATER**

28. In all systems, deer must receive a daily diet which is adequate to maintain health and well-being.
29. Feeds used for other ruminant livestock are generally suitable for adult deer but care must be taken to ensure that the content of compound feeds does not include any substance harmful to deer. Because of winter inappetance, special care is required to ensure that deer do not lose excessive condition before and during this period.
30. Deer must have access to a plentiful supply of fresh, clean water.

31. Deer calves should receive colostrum from their dams, and should therefore have suckled before weaning. Calves can subsequently be artificially reared. During the first five to eight weeks of life calves should receive liquid food, of a type suitable for this species, for example sheep or goat milk or milk substitute. (Calf food substances formulated for bovines are not suitable.) Such calves should have access to a palatable feed compound and clean water and also have access to roughage from an early age.
32. Changes in diet need to be introduced gradually; sudden changes may cause digestive problems and even death.
33. Arrangements should be made in advance to ensure that adequate supplies of suitable food are made available to deer in emergencies (eg. in heavy snow).

## HOUSING

34. Adult deer are normally not required to be housed but provision should be made for bullied, injured or sick animals to be protected and separated - preferably where they can still see other animals. Adult deer may also be housed temporarily just before or after transport.
35. On farms prone to severe climatic conditions or where competition for grazing or food may occur, consideration should be given to housing calves in particular, and also for winter housing of all classes of deer.
36. Most conventional farm buildings can be used for deer but may require modification. Advice on welfare aspects should be sought before housing deer.
37. Pen sides should be of sufficient height to discourage escape, without projections or sharp edges and with fittings arranged so as to avoid injury. It is preferable for side partitions to be of solid construction to limit the spread of disease or vice and minimise the possibility of broken limbs.
38. Floors should be designed, constructed and maintained to avoid discomfort or injury and be adequately drained. The use of clean, dry bedding is desirable but part of the floor area may be kept free of bedding as a hard surface will contribute to maintaining sound feet.
39. Adequate ventilation should be provided with particular care being taken to avoid draughts.
40. Orphaned or hand reared calves may be housed in pens or kept in outside runs with adequate shelter. It is helpful when housing any deer for them to be able to see other deer or general farm activity to prevent boredom and encourage tameness.

41. If for any reason deer are continuously housed, they should be kept in small groups of 10-15 and balanced for size and weight. Housed, mature stags (three years or over) in antler must be penned individually.
42. The floor space allowance should take into account the age, sex, weight and the environmental conditions. There should be sufficient trough space or feeding and water points to avoid undue competition for food, especially when foods are rationed.
43. Paints and wood preservatives which may be toxic to deer should not be used on surfaces accessible to them. Particular care is necessary to guard against the risk of lead poisoning from old paintwork in any part of a building or where secondhand building materials are used.
44. All electrical installations at mains voltage should be inaccessible to deer, well insulated, safeguarded from rodents, and properly earthed. (2)

### **Fire and Other Emergency Precautions**

45. Farmers should make advance plans for dealing with emergencies such as fire, flood, disruption of supplies, and should ensure that all staff are familiar with the appropriate emergency action. At least one responsible member of staff should always be available to take the necessary action.
46. Fire precautions should be a major priority for the good stockman. The provisions of Section 1.3 of British Standard BS5502 should therefore be followed. Expert advice on all fire precautions is obtainable from the States Fire Brigade.
47. In the design of new buildings or alterations of existing ones, there should be provision for livestock to be released and evacuated quickly in case of emergency. Materials used in construction should have sufficient fire resistance. Adequate doors and other escape routes should be provided to enable emergency procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.
48. All electrical, gas and oil services should be planned and fitted so that if there is overheating or flame is generated, the risk of flame spreading to equipment, bedding or the fabric of the building is minimal. It is advisable to site power supply controls outside buildings. Consideration should be given to installing fire alarm systems which can be heard and acted upon at any time of the day or night.
49. In case a 999 call has to be made, notices should be prominently displayed in all livestock buildings, stating where the nearest telephone is located. Each telephone should have fixed by it a notice giving instructions for the Fire Brigade on the best route to the farm and a description of the location of the telephone.



## FIELD SLAUGHTER

50. Humane slaughter of deer can be achieved by accurate shooting using a suitable rifle and ammunition.
51. Where a rifle is used safety is of paramount importance and the marksmen should be trained and proficient in the use of firearms. <sup>(3)</sup> Shooting at short range facilitates accuracy and safety.
52. A safe backstop for the bullet is needed and care must be taken in shooting one deer not to injure others. Shooting from an elevated position such as a high seat or trailer is often helpful in these respects.
53. Sensible precautions for public safety include shooting in the early morning when few people are around; walking the perimeter fence of small farms or paddocks on large farms to ensure all is clear; shooting away from roads, houses and gardens.
54. Where deer are so tame and quiet that they present a stationery target at close range (10 to 20m), a frontal head shot by an expert marksman is wholly effective. With semi-wild deer up to 40m range, a high neck shot (to break the spinal cord) is also suitable. Shooting at more distant targets in excess of 40m on deer farms should be attempted only in exceptional circumstances by proven marksmen.
55. Shooting should be undertaken, preferably by the regular stockmen, when deer are quiet, as will occur at a selected regular feeding site when they are being hand fed. Under such circumstances it may be possible to shoot 10 or more deer from a large group before the remainder become unduly disturbed. Factors to take into account in assessing the effect shooting will have on the rest of the herd and deciding the number to shoot include the size of the original group, stocking density and the amount of cover. Care should be taken not to leave too few since small numbers become unsettled and try to escape. There is also a risk of panic if too small a paddock is used.

## REFERENCES

- (1) The removal of antlers in velvet is prohibited by the Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance 1987.
- (2) Any installation or extension involving mains electricity should comply with the Regulations for Electrical Equipment of Buildings issued by the Institution of Electrical Engineers.
- (3) The British Deer Society runs courses which include instructions for marksmen who wish to shoot deer.

# **CODE OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WELFARE OF DOMESTIC FOWLS**

## **PREFACE**

**This preface is not part of the Code, but is intended to explain its purpose and to indicate the broad considerations upon which it is based.**

The basic requirements for the welfare of livestock are a husbandry system appropriate to the health and, so far as practicable, the behavioural needs of the animals and a high standard of stockmanship.

Stockmanship is a key factor because, no matter how otherwise acceptable a system may be in principle, without competent, diligent stockmanship the welfare of the birds cannot be adequately catered for. The recommendations which follow are designed to help stockmen, particularly those who are young or inexperienced, to attain the required standards. The part that training has to play in the development of the stockman's awareness of welfare requirements cannot be overstressed.

Nearly all livestock husbandry systems impose restrictions on the stock and some of these can cause an unacceptable degree of discomfort or distress by preventing the birds from fulfilling their basic needs. Provisions meeting these needs, and others which must be considered, include:

- \* comfort and shelter;
- \* readily accessible fresh water and a diet to maintain the birds in full health and vigour;
- \* freedom of movement;
- \* the company of other birds particularly of like kind;
- \* the opportunity to exercise most normal patterns of behaviour;
- \* light during the hours of daylight, and lighting readily available to enable the birds to be inspected at any time;
- \* floors/perches which neither harm the birds, nor cause undue strain;
- \* the prevention, or rapid diagnosis and treatment, of vice, injury, parasitic infestation and disease;
- \* the avoidance of unnecessary mutilation, and
- \* emergency arrangements to cover outbreaks of fire, the breakdown of essential mechanical services and the disruption of supplies.

Not all husbandry systems in use for domestic fowls equally meet the physiological and behavioural needs of the birds. An attempt has been made on the basis of the latest scientific knowledge and the soundest current practices, to identify those features of husbandry systems which place the welfare of birds at risk unless precautions are taken. The Code sets out what these precautions should be, bearing in mind the importance to the birds of their total environment and the fact that there is often more than one way in which their welfare can be safeguarded.

Certain aspects of livestock husbandry can present hazards to the health and safety of the stockman. Advice on these matters is available from the States Safety Executive.

The practice of rearing quail and other game birds for the table is on the increase. Much of the advice in this Code can be applied to the rearing of such birds and rearers should at all times bear in mind the needs of the birds which generally may be met by following the spirit of the Code.

## INTRODUCTION

1. The welfare of domestic fowls can be safeguarded and their physiological and behavioural needs met under a variety of management systems. The system, and the number and the stocking rate of birds kept at any one time, should depend on the suitability of the conditions and the skills of the stockman.
2. Consideration should be given to the question of animal welfare before installing more complex or elaborate equipment than has previously been used. In general the greater the restriction imposed on the bird and the greater the complexity of the system or of the degree of control which is exercised over temperature, air flow or food supply, the less the bird is able to use its instinctive behaviour to modify the effect of unfavourable conditions and the greater the chance of suffering if mechanical or electrical failures occur. Thus systems involving a high degree of control over the environment should only be installed where conscientious staff skilled in both animal husbandry and the use of the equipment will always be available.
3. Large flocks can be managed successfully, but in general the larger the size of unit the greater the degree of skill and conscientiousness needed to safeguard welfare. The size of a unit should not be increased nor should a unit be set up unless it is reasonably certain that the stockman in charge will be able to safeguard the welfare of the individual bird.
4. All stockmen should know the normal behaviour of domestic fowls and watch closely for signs of distress or disease and, where necessary, take prompt remedial action.
5. The good stockman will know the signs which indicate good health in domestic fowls. He should be able to recognise impending trouble in its earliest stages and may often be able to identify the cause and put matters right immediately. If the cause is not obvious, or if the stockman's immediate action is not effective, veterinary or other expert advice should be obtained as soon as possible.
6. Important indications of health are alertness, clear bright eyes, good posture, vigorous movements if unduly disturbed, active feeding and drinking, and clean and healthy skin, shanks and feet. Attention should be paid to any departure from the normal.

7. The early signs of ill-health may include changes in food and water intake, in preening, in "chatter" and in activity. In laying birds there may also be a drop in egg production, and changes in egg quality such as shell defects.
8. Ailing birds, and any birds suffering from injury such as open wounds or fractures, or from prolapse of the vent should be segregated and treated or, if necessary, be humanely killed without delay.

## HOUSING

### General

9. Advice on welfare aspects should be sought when new buildings are to be constructed or existing buildings modified. Some intensive systems depend on specialised buildings and complex mechanical and electrical equipment, which require a high level of technical and managerial skills to ensure that husbandry and welfare requirements are met. Consideration should be given to the incorporation of weighing, handling and loading facilities.
10. Ventilation, heating, lighting, feeding, watering and all other equipment should be designed, sited and installed so as to avoid risk of injuring birds.
11. All floors, particularly slatted or metal mesh ones, and perches should be designed, fitted and maintained so as to avoid distress or injury to the birds. Remedial action should be taken if any of these occurs.
12. Even where ladders are provided, nest boxes, roosting areas and perches should not be so high above floor level that birds have difficulty in using them or risk injury.
13. The design and usage of some battery cages of the kind at present in use for laying hens places severe restrictions on the birds' freedom to turn round without difficulty, groom themselves, get up and sit down, rest undisturbed, stretch their legs and body and perform wing-flapping and dust-bathing behaviour as well as to fulfil other health and welfare needs. Cages should be designed and maintained so as to minimise discomfort and distress and to prevent injury to the birds being caused by such restrictions. (See paragraph 75.)
14. The type and arrangement of cages should allow for efficient working and for each bird to be properly inspected; birds in bottom cages are often difficult to see and should not be neglected. In addition, where cages are kept in more than three tiers adequate provision should be made for the inspection of all tiers for example by the installation of gantries, or platforms. (See also paragraphs 30 and 40).

15. Cages should be of sufficient height to allow standing birds free movement of the head and neck.
16. The fronts of rearing cages should be equipped and maintained so that birds have access to feed and water but cannot escape and fall to the floor.
17. Droppings should not be allowed to fall on birds in lower tiers of cages. Dropping pits below battery cages should be closed off to prevent birds gaining access.

### **Fire and other emergency precautions**

18. Farmers should make advance plans for dealing with emergencies such as fire, flood or disruption of supplies, and should ensure that all staff are familiar with the appropriate emergency action. At least one responsible member of the staff should always be available to take the necessary steps.
19. Fire precautions should be a major priority for all stockmen. The provisions of Section 1.3 of British Standard BS 5502 relating to fire precautions should therefore be followed. Expert advice on all fire precautions is obtainable from the States Fire Brigade.
20. In the design of new buildings or alteration of existing ones there should be provision for livestock to be released and evacuated quickly in the case of an emergency. Materials used in construction should have sufficient fire resistance and adequate doors and other escape routes should be provided to enable an emergency procedure to be followed in the event of a fire. Where possible straw storage should be separated from livestock accommodation to reduce the risk to stock from fire and smoke.
21. All electrical, gas and oil services should be planned and fitted so that if there is overheating, or flame is generated, the risk of flame spreading to equipment, litter or straw (where used) or to the fabric of the building is minimal. It is advisable to site main power on/off controls outside buildings. Consideration should be given to installing fire alarm systems which can be heard and acted upon at any time of the day or night.
22. In case a 999 call has to be made, notice should be prominently displayed in poultry houses stating where the nearest phone is located. Each phone should have fixed by it a notice giving instructions to the Fire Brigade on how to reach the poultry houses.

23. There is usually some warning of interruptions in the supply of feeding stuffs and, so far as possible, arrangements should be made to lay in adequate stocks of feed or water to offset the worst effects of such a contingency.

### **Ventilation and temperature**

24. Ventilation rates and house conditions should at all times be adequate to provide sufficient fresh air for the birds. In particular, accumulations of ammonia, hydrogen sulphide, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and dust should be avoided. (1)
25. Care should be taken to protect confined birds from draughts in cold conditions.
26. Birds, particularly those in cages, should not be exposed to strong direct sunlight or hot surroundings long enough to cause heat stress as indicated by prolonged panting.
27. A newly hatched bird has poor control of its body temperature. Environmental conditions during the early part of a chick's life should therefore allow it to maintain its normal body temperature without difficulty. Whatever method of heating is used, the behaviour of the chick should be regarded as the best indicator of the adequacy of the environment. Young chicks should not be subjected to conditions which cause either panting due to overheating or prolonged huddling and feather ruffling due to under-heating. After about four to five weeks birds can tolerate a fairly wide range of temperatures; but every effort should be made to avoid creating conditions which will lead to chilling, huddling and subsequent smothering.
28. Close confinement affects the birds' ability to maintain their normal body temperature, but under any management system ambient temperatures hot enough to cause prolonged panting may occur, particularly when humidity is relatively high. All accommodation should therefore be so designed that even when fully stocked its ventilation is adequate to protect the birds from overheating under any weather conditions that can reasonably be foreseen.

### **Lighting**

29. Provision should be made for a period of darkness in each 24-hour cycle, but where birds do not have access to daylight they should be given at least eight hours lighting per day.
30. Enough light should be available to enable all birds to be seen clearly when they are being inspected. Supplementary lighting may be needed for the inspection of birds in the bottom tier in cage systems (see also paragraphs 14 and 40).

### **Mechanical equipment and services**

31. All equipment and services including feed hoppers, drinkers, ventilating fans, heating and lighting units, fire extinguishers and alarm systems should be cleaned and inspected regularly (at least once daily) and kept in good working order. All automated equipment should incorporate a fail-safe device and, where the birds' welfare is dependent upon such equipment, an alarm system to warn the stockman of failure. Defects should be rectified immediately or other measures taken to safeguard the health and welfare of the birds. Alternative ways of feeding and of maintaining a satisfactory environment should therefore be ready for use. All equipment should be constructed and maintained in such a way as to avoid subjecting the birds to excessive noise.
32. All electrical installations at mains voltage should be inaccessible to the birds and properly earthed. (2)

### **Stocking rates**

33. Irrespective of the type of enclosure or system of management used, all domestic fowls should have sufficient freedom of movement to be able, without difficulty, to stand normally, turn around and stretch their wings. They should also have sufficient space to be able to perch or sit down without interference from other birds.
34. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that birds kept under any system can be prone to stress, injury and disease if management and husbandry are not of a high standard. Within the present limits of scientific knowledge it is not possible to relate stocking rate to welfare in any simple manner. Stocking rate is only one aspect of a complex situation involving such things as breed, strain and type of bird, colony size, temperature, ventilation, lighting and quality of housing. The observance of any particular rate cannot, by itself, ensure the welfare of the birds.
35. The following figures are a guide to the maximum stocking rates acceptable in most circumstances for domestic fowl husbandry systems in current use. (3) Apart from cage systems, these rates may be safely increased where suitable perching is provided. A perch of not less than 15 cm is generally appropriate for a bird but, even where such perching is provided for every bird, stocking should not be at more than 25 birds per square metre of available floor space.

| SYSTEM                                   | DENSITY<br>(Liveweight in relation<br>to floor area)                                 | QUALIFICATIONS                             |
|--|--|--|
| <b>Cages</b>                             |  |  |
| Birds being reared<br>for laying         | 250 cm <sup>2</sup> /kg  | For birds between 1 and<br>2 kg liveweight |
| Adult laying birds                       | These will be subject to<br>legal minimum requirements<br>with effect from 1.1.1998. |  |
| <b>Deep Litter</b>                       |  |  |
| Birds being reared<br>for laying         | 17 kg/m <sup>2</sup>   |  |
| Adult laying birds                       | 17 kg/m <sup>2</sup>   | No more than 7 birds/m <sup>2</sup>        |
| Table Chickens                           | 34 kg/m <sup>2</sup>   |  |
| <b>Straw yards</b>                       |  |  |
| Birds being reared<br>for laying         | 10 kg/m <sup>2</sup>   |  |
| Adult laying birds                       | 8 kg/m <sup>2</sup>  | No more than 3 birds/m <sup>2</sup>        |
| <b>Housing for free-<br/>range birds</b> | As for Deep Litter<br>systems  |  |

36. If disease (particularly respiratory) or any vice becomes evident, by observation or by receipt of unsatisfactory grading returns from egg packing stations or by rejections from processing plants, expert qualified advice should be sought to deal with the problem. Stocking and ventilation rates should also be checked and variations in stocking and ventilation should be considered in order to minimise the likelihood of recurrence of the problem.



## **FEED AND WATER**

37. Birds should have easy access to adequate, nutritious, and hygienic feed each day, and to adequate fresh water at all time except in the case of therapeutic or prophylactic treatment. Care should be taken at each change of system to ensure that the birds find the feed and water points. Birds in cages should be provided with a minimum length of 10 cm feed trough space per bird; each bird should also have access to two drinkers unless each cage is provided with a water trough of the same length as the feed trough. Systems which call for the regular complete withholding of feed and water on any day should not be adopted. (See also paragraph 39 on induced moulting). However, feed, but not water, may be withheld for up to 12 hours prior to slaughter.
38. Stale or contaminated feed or water should not be allowed to accumulate and should be replaced immediately. Efforts should be made to minimise the risk of drinking water freezing.
39. In no circumstances should birds be induced to moult by withholding feed and water.

## **MANAGEMENT**

### **General**

40. Frequent inspection of the stock is essential because the condition and reactions of the birds are the main guides to their welfare. An inspection must be made at least once daily in addition to the looking-over which birds receive during routine management work (see also paragraphs 14 and 30). Injured or dead birds should be removed promptly, as should individual sick birds.
41. It is desirable to establish a regular work routine. Care should be taken not to frighten the birds with sudden unaccustomed movement or noise, but without placing too much emphasis on quietness.
42. Precautions should be taken by adequate control measures to protect the birds from and avoid disturbance by rodents and other animals.
43. Mouldy litter should not be used. There should be frequent checks to ensure that litter does not become excessively wet or dry, or infested with mites or other harmful organisms.
44. Premises and equipment should be regularly cleansed. Thorough disinfection should be carried out before restocking and at other suitable times to reduce the danger of continuing infection.

45. Vaccinations, injections and similar procedures should be undertaken by competent, trained operators. Care should be taken to avoid injury and unnecessary disturbance of the birds.
46. Artificial insemination is a highly-skilled procedure and should be carried out only by competent, trained personnel maintaining a high standard of hygiene and taking care to avoid injury and unnecessary disturbance of the birds.

#### **Beak trimming (4)**

47. Beak trimming should be carried out only as a last resort, that is, when it is clear that more suffering would be caused in the flock if it were not done.
48. When an outbreak of vice occurs it should be tackled immediately by appropriate changes in the system of management, for example, by reduction of the lighting intensity.
49. If beak trimming is necessary it should be done by a skilled operator or under his supervision.

#### **Dubbing (5)**

50. If dubbing is necessary it must be done within the first 72 hours of life, using curved scissors. Dubbing of older birds is a difficult and severe operation which must be done only by a veterinary surgeon.

#### **Toe cutting (5)**

51. To avoid injury to hens during mating, the last joint of the inside toes of male breeding birds may be removed. This must be done within the first 72 hours of life. A veterinary surgeon must carry out the operation if it is performed after the first 72 hours of life.

#### **Dewinging (6)**

52. Dewinging, pinioning, notching or tendon severing, which involve mutilation of wing tissues, must not be undertaken. When it is necessary to reduce the effects of flightiness, the flight feathers of one wing may be clipped.

#### **Blinkers (6)**

53. The use of blinkers which pierce the nasal septum is illegal. Other forms of blinkering are not recommended.

#### **Castration and devoicing (6)**

54. Surgical castration and devoicing must not be undertaken.

## **DISPOSAL OF UNWANTED CHICKS AND HATCHERY WASTE**

55. Unwanted chicks awaiting slaughter should be treated as humanely as those intended for retention or sale.
56. Chicks should always be killed by a skilled operator. The method which should be used is to place them in an atmosphere with the highest obtainable concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> and a source of 100% CO<sub>2</sub> should therefore be used as the disposing agent. This is the most humane method and detailed advice on its use is given in ADAS advisory publication P568. However, where very small numbers of chicks are involved they may be killed humanely by dislocation of the neck or by decapitation. Whatever method is used the chicks should be thoroughly inspected afterwards to ensure that all are dead.
57. Methods of killing which involve suffocation by tightly packing the unwanted chicks in a confined space, or by drowning, or in which irritant liquids such as carbon tetrachloride are allowed to come into direct contact with the chicks, are inhumane and must not be used.
58. All hatchery waste should be treated (for example, by rapid maceration) so as to kill instantaneously any living embryos.

## **HANDLING AND TRANSPORT OF STOCK ON THE PREMISES (7)**

### **General**

59. The proper handling of birds requires skill, and it should be undertaken only by competent persons who have been appropriately trained. It should be carried out quietly and confidently, exercising care to avoid unnecessary struggling which could bruise or otherwise injure the birds. Care must be taken in catching birds in loose-housed systems in order to avoid creating panic and subsequent injury to and smothering of the birds. Particular care is also needed so as to avoid injury to birds being placed in or removed from cages, especially where the whole of the cage front does not open.

### **Day old chicks**

60. Chicks for despatch should be healthy and vigorous, and should be placed in suitably ventilated boxes without overcrowding. Care should be taken to ensure adequate ventilation of the boxes, particularly when they are stacked, and to protect the chicks from direct sunlight and cold draughts.
61. Packing materials used inside boxes should be dry and free from moulds.
62. Chicks should be transferred to the brooders as soon as possible.

## **Growing and adult birds**

63. The design, size and state of repair of any container used to carry birds should allow them to be put in, conveyed and taken out without injury. Care should also be taken when crates are loaded on to vehicles, and in their transportation and unloading. Adequate ventilation for the birds is essential at all times.
64. Birds should be protected from bad weather and from excessively hot or cold conditions. They should not be allowed to become distressed (as indicated by prolonged panting) by being left in containers exposed to strong direct sunlight.

## **ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### **(i) RANGE BIRDS**

#### **Management**

65. Land on which range birds are kept for prolonged periods may become "fowl sick", i.e. contaminated with organisms which cause or carry disease to an extent which could seriously prejudice the health of poultry on the land. The time taken for land to become fowl sick depends on the type of land and density of stocking. A European Community Regulation (1943/85) (3) on the labelling of eggs requires that eggs labelled 'free range' must originate from a range system with a stocking rate not exceeding 1,000 birds per hectare. It is recommended that this standard be adopted in Guernsey.

The EC Regulation also requires the ground to which such birds have access to be mainly covered with vegetation. The stocking rate to be used in Guernsey should generally be lower. Factors such as soil type, drainage and size of colony and frequency of flock rotation are very important in deciding the number of birds that a particular area can carry. Heavy poorly drained soil can carry fewer birds than land which is light and well drained. In general land can be stocked more heavily by birds in small flocks of 100 or so when accommodated in well spaced and regularly moved houses than when kept in larger flocks in static houses. (See paragraph 35). Flocks and portable houses should be moved regularly to avoid fowl sick or continuously muddy conditions leading to ill-health or discomfort of the birds.

66. It is important to ensure that the land to which the birds have access is adequately covered with suitable, properly managed vegetation.
67. Precautions should be taken to protect the birds against foxes, other predators, dogs and cats.
68. Shelter from rain and sun should always be available. Windbreaks should be provided on exposed sites.

69. Attention is also directed to the relevant recommendations in paragraphs 40 to 54 inclusive.

### **Housing**

70. Housing used by range birds should be of a sufficient standard to ensure that the birds are not subject to distress caused by extremes of temperature.
71. When birds are transferred to range houses, precautions should be taken to avoid overcrowding and suffocation, particularly during the first few nights. Cannibalism is a danger under this system, and birds should not be confined for too long during hours of daylight or subjected to direct sunlight during confinement. Attention is also directed to paragraph 12.
72. All birds must have ready access to range and there should be sufficient openings so spaced and of sufficient size to allow a reasonable proportion of the birds to enter or leave at any one time.
73. Unless the house is moved frequently it is good practice to protect the ground immediately adjacent to it, e.g. by providing slatted or wire mesh platforms, covered verandahs or areas of gravel.

### **Feed and water**

74. Feed and water should never be allowed to remain in a stale or contaminated condition. In freezing conditions, particular attention should be given to the provision of water. (See also paragraphs 23 and 37).

### **(ii) CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH LAYING HENS IN BATTERY CAGES MUST BE KEPT**

75. All cages must comply with the following requirements:
- a) the cage area, measured in a horizontal plane, for each laying hen shall be not less than -
    - i) 100 cm<sup>2</sup> where one hen is kept in the cage,
    - ii) 750 cm<sup>2</sup> where two hens are kept in the cage,
    - iii) 550 cm<sup>2</sup> where three hens are kept in the cage, and
    - iv) 450 cm<sup>2</sup> where four or more hens are kept in the cage;
  - b) the minimum cage area for each laying hen shall be capable of being used without restriction and may include the area where the non-waste deflection plate (otherwise known as the egg guard) is placed so long as that area is capable of being used;

- c) a feed trough of a length of not less than 10 cm multiplied by the number of hens in the cage and capable of being used without restriction shall be provided;
  - d) except where nipple drinkers and drinking cups are provided, the cage shall have a continuous drinking channel which shall be not less than 10 cm multiplied by the number of hens in the cage, and capable of being used without restriction;
  - e) where drinking points are plumbed in, there shall be a minimum of two nipple drinkers or two drinking cups within reach of the cage;
  - f) the height of the cage, for 65% of its area, shall be not less than 40 cm, and for the remainder of the area, shall be not less than 35 cm (the height being obtained by a vertical line from the floor to the nearest point in the roof and the area being obtained by multiplying  $450 \text{ cm}^2$  by the number of birds kept in the cage);
  - g) the floor of the cage shall be constructed so as to support adequately each of the forward facing claws of each foot;
  - h) the slope of the floor shall not exceed 14% or 8 degrees, when made of rectangular wire mesh, and 21.3% or 12 degrees for other types of floor.
76. Battery cages shall be designed, constructed and maintained in such a way and materials used shall be such as to prevent any injury or unnecessary suffering to laying hens to the extent possible in the existing state of technology.
77. The design and size of the cage opening must be such that laying hens can be put in or taken out without causing injury or unnecessary suffering. In particular there must be no sharp edges or protrusions which are likely to cause injury or unnecessary suffering or allow laying hens to become trapped.
78. The cages must be suitably equipped and maintained to prevent escape
79. Except in the case of therapeutic or prophylactic treatment, all laying hens shall have access to adequate, nutritious and hygienic feed each day in sufficient quantity to maintain them in good health and to satisfy their nutritional needs, and to adequate fresh drinking water at all times.
80. Insulation and ventilation of the building must ensure that air velocity, dust level, temperature, relative air humidity and gas concentrations are kept within limits that are not harmful to the laying hens.
81. In the case of artificial lighting, the laying hens must have an appropriate resting period each day during which the light intensity must be reduced in such a way that they can rest properly.

82. The laying hens shall be cared for by a sufficient number of personnel with adequate knowledge and experience of laying hens and of the production system used.
83. The flock or group of laying hens shall be inspected thoroughly at least once a day. A source of light (whether fixed or portable) shall be available which is strong enough for each bird to be seen clearly and, if need be, thoroughly inspected at any time.
84. Accommodation comprising more than three tiers of cages shall not be used unless suitable devices or measures make it possible to inspect thoroughly all tiers without difficulty.
85. When laying hens do not appear to be in good health or show behavioural changes, steps shall be taken to establish the cause and appropriate remedial action shall be taken, e.g. treatment, isolation, culling or correction of environmental factors. If the cause is traced to an environmental factor in the production unit which it is not essential to remedy immediately, remedial action shall be taken as soon as practicable and in any event when the accommodation is next emptied and before the next batch of laying hens is put in.
86. All automatic equipment must be thoroughly inspected at least once daily. Where defects are discovered these must be rectified immediately or, if this is impracticable, appropriate steps taken to safeguard the health and welfare of the laying hens until the defect has been rectified. Alternative ways of feeding and of maintaining a satisfactory environment must be available for use in the event of a breakdown.
87. There shall be an alarm system to warn the stock-keeper of failure of any essential automated ventilation equipment.
88. The alarm referred to in paragraph 13 above shall be tested by a stock-keeper or other competent person not less than once every seven days in order to check that there is no defect in it and, if any defect is found in such alarm (whether or not on it being tested in accordance with this paragraph) it shall be rectified forthwith.
89. Every time all the cages housed together are emptied they shall be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected before the next batch of laying hens is put in. While the cages are occupied, the surfaces and all equipment shall be kept satisfactorily clean.
90. No person shall apply an electrical current to laying hens for the purposes of immobilisation.

## REFERENCES

- (1) The Health and Safety Executive recommends that, for human safety, the following levels should not be exceeded.

| Name of gas       | Long term exposure<br>limit (ppm)<br>(8 hour day) | Short term exposure<br>limit (ppm)<br>(10 minutes) |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Ammonia           | 25  | 35   |
| Carbon Monoxide   | 50  | 400  |
| Carbon Dioxide    | 5,000   | 5,000  |
| Hydrogen Sulphide | 10  | 10   |

- (2) Any installation or extension involving mains electricity should comply with the Regulations for the Electrical Equipment of Buildings issued by the Institution of Electrical Engineers.

- (3) For labelling purposes only, it is recommended that the Commission Regulation (EEC) No. 1943/85 (OJ No. L 181 of 13.7.85) is followed. This requires that poultry enterprises must comply with the following minimum criteria in order to mark their small egg packs with the terms shown:

a) 'Free-range eggs':

- \* Hens to have continuous daytime access to open-air runs
- \* The ground to which hens have access is mainly covered with vegetation.
- \* The maximum stocking density is not greater than 1,000 hens per hectare of ground available to the hens or one hen per 10 m<sup>2</sup>
- \* The interior of the building must satisfy the conditions at (c) or (d).

b) 'Semi-intensive eggs':

- \* Hens have continuous daytime access to open-air runs
- \* The ground to which hens have access is mainly covered with vegetation
- \* The maximum stocking density is not greater than 4,000 hens per hectare of ground available to the hens or one hen per 2.5 m<sup>2</sup>
- \* The interior of the building must satisfy the conditions at (c) or (d).



c) 'Deep-litter eggs':

- \* The maximum stocking density is not greater than seven hens per square metre of floor space available to the hens.
- \* At least a third of this floor area is covered with a litter material such as straw, wood shavings, sand or turf
- \* A sufficiently large part of the floor area available to the hens is used for collection of bird droppings.

d) 'Perchery eggs (Barn eggs)':

- \* The maximum stocking density is not greater than 25 hens per square metre of floor space available to the hens
- \* The interior of the building is fitted with perches of a length sufficient to ensure at least 15 cm of perch space for each hen.

- (4) Beak-trimming (sometimes known as debeaking) means the removal from a bird of not more than one-third of the beak, measured from the tip towards the entrance of the nostrils. The operation, if not undertaken by a veterinary surgeon, must be carried out as prescribed in the Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance, 1987.
- (5) The Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance 1987 permits only a veterinary surgeon to remove the combs or to cut the toes of a domestic fowl which has reached the age of 72 hours.
- (6) The Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance 1987 prohibits the fitting of blinkers to poultry by a method involving the penetration or other mutilation of the nasal septum, operations on birds (other than feather clipping) to impede their flight and the devoicing or surgical castration of male birds.
- (7) The Protection of Animals Ordinance 1976 states that a person shall be guilty of an offence of cruelty if he shall convey or carry, or cause or procure, or being the owner, permit to be conveyed or carried, any animal in such a manner or position as to cause that animal any unnecessary suffering.

# **CODES OF RECOMMENDATION FOR THE WELFARE OF TURKEYS**

## **PREFACE**

**This preface is not part of the Code, but is intended to explain its purpose and to indicate the broad considerations upon which it is based.**

The basic requirements for the welfare of livestock are a husbandry system appropriate to the health and, so far as practicable, the behavioural needs of the animals and a high degree of stockmanship.

Stockmanship is a key factor because, no matter how otherwise acceptable a system may be in principle, without competent, diligent stockmanship the welfare of the birds cannot be adequately catered for. The recommendations which follow are designed to help stockmen, particularly those who are young or inexperienced, to attain the required standards. The part that training has to play in the development of the stockman's awareness of welfare requirements cannot be overstressed.

Nearly all livestock husbandry systems impose restrictions on the stock and some of these can cause an unacceptable degree of discomfort or stress by preventing the birds from fulfilling their basic needs. Provisions meeting these needs, and others which must be considered, include:

- comfort and shelter;
- readily accessible fresh water and a diet to maintain the birds in full health and vigour;
- freedom of movement;
- the company of other birds particularly of like kind;
- the opportunity to exercise most normal patterns of behaviour;
- light during the hours of daylight, and lighting readily available to enable the birds to be inspected at any time;
- flooring which neither harms the birds, nor causes undue strain;
- the prevention, or rapid diagnosis and treatment of vice, injury, parasitic infestation and disease;
- the avoidance of unnecessary mutilation; and
- emergency arrangements to cover outbreaks of fire, the breakdown of essential mechanical services and the disruption of supplies.

Not all husbandry systems in use for turkeys equally meet the physiological and behavioural needs of the birds. An attempt has been made, on the basis of the latest scientific knowledge and the soundest current practices, to identify those features which could place the welfare of birds at risk unless precautions are taken. The Code sets out what these precautions should be, bearing in mind the importance to the birds of their total environment and the fact that there is often more than one way in which their welfare can be safeguarded.

Certain aspects of livestock husbandry can present hazards to the health and safety of the stockman. Advice on these matters is available from the States Health and Safety Executive.

## INTRODUCTION

1. The welfare of turkeys can be safeguarded and the physiological and behavioural needs met under a variety of management systems. The system, and the number and stocking rate of birds kept at any one time, should depend on the suitability of the conditions and the skills of the stockman.
2. Consideration should be given to the question of animal welfare before installing more complex or elaborate equipment than has previously been used. In general the greater the restriction imposed on the bird and the greater the complexity of the system or of the degree of control which is exercised over temperature, air flow or food supply, the less the bird is able to use its instinctive behaviour to modify the effect of unfavourable conditions and the greater the chance of suffering if mechanical or electrical failures occur. Thus systems involving a high degree of control over the environment should only be installed where conscientious staff skilled in both animal husbandry and the use of the equipment will always be available.
3. Large flocks can be managed successfully, but in general the larger the size of the unit the greater the degree of skill and conscientiousness needed to safeguard welfare. The size of a unit should not be increased nor should a unit be set up unless it is reasonably certain that the stockman in charge will be able to safeguard the welfare of the individual bird.
4. All stockmen should know the normal behaviour of turkeys, watch closely for signs of distress or disease and, where necessary, take prompt remedial action.
5. The good stockman will know the signs which indicate good health in turkeys. He should be able to recognise impending trouble in its earliest stages and may often be able to identify the cause and put matters right immediately. If the cause is not obvious, or if the stockman's immediate action is not effective, veterinary or other expert advice should be obtained as soon as possible.
6. Important indications of health are alertness, clear bright eyes, good posture, vigorous movements if unduly disturbed, active feeding and drinking, and clean healthy skin, shanks and feet. Attention should always be paid to any departure from the normal.
7. The early signs of ill-health may include changes in feed and water intake, in preening, in 'chatter' and in activity. In laying birds there may also be a drop in egg production, and changes in egg quality such as shell defects.

8. Ailing birds, and any birds suffering from injury such as open wounds or fractures or from prolapse of the vent, should be segregated and treated or, if necessary, be humanely killed without delay.

## **HOUSING**

### **General**

9. Advice on welfare aspects should be sought when new buildings are to be constructed or existing buildings modified. Some intensive systems depend on specialised buildings and complex mechanical and electrical equipment, which require a high level of technical and managerial skills to ensure that husbandry and welfare requirements are met. Consideration should be given to the incorporation of weighing, handling and loading facilities.
10. Ventilation, heating, lighting, feeding, watering and all other equipment should be designed, sited and installed so as to avoid risk of injuring birds.
11. All floors, particularly slatted or metal mesh ones, should be designed, fitted and maintained so as to avoid injury or distress to the birds. Remedial action should be taken if either of these occurs.
12. Nest boxes, (and perches if used), should not be so high above floor level that birds have difficulty or risk injury in using them.
13. Accommodation should be designed and maintained so as to minimise discomfort, distress or injury to the birds.
14. The type and arrangement of accommodation should allow for efficient working and for each bird to be properly inspected. (See also paragraph 29).
15. Accommodation should be of sufficient height to allow standing birds free movement of the head and neck. Part of the floor area for adult birds should be solid. In the case of adult breeding males the whole of the floor area should be solid.
16. The fronts of rearing cages should be kept properly adjusted so that birds have access to feed and water but cannot escape and fall to the floor.

### **Fire and other emergency precautions**

17. Farmers should make advance plans for dealing with emergencies such as fire, flood or disruption of supplies, and should ensure that all staff are familiar with the appropriate emergency action. At least one responsible member of the staff should always be available to take the necessary action.

18. Fire precautions should be a major priority for all stockmen. The provisions of Section 1.3 of the British Standard BS 5502 relating to fire precautions should therefore be followed. Expert advice on all fire precautions is obtainable from the States Fire Brigade.
19. In the design of new buildings or alteration of existing ones there should be provision for livestock to be released and evacuated quickly in the case of emergency. Materials used in construction should have sufficient fire resistance and adequate doors and other escape routes should be provided to enable an emergency procedure to be followed in the event of a fire. Where possible straw storage should be separated from livestock accommodations to reduce the risk to stock from fire and smoke.
20. All electrical, gas and oil services should be planned and fitted so that if there is overheating or flame is generated, the risk of flame spreading to equipment, litter or straw (where used) or to the fabric of the building is minimal. It is advisable to site main power on/off controls outside buildings. Consideration should be given to installing fire alarm systems which can be heard and acted upon at any time of the day or night.
21. In case a 999 call has to be made, notices should be prominently displayed in turkey houses stating where the nearest phone is located. Each phone should have fixed by it a notice giving instructions for the Fire Brigade on how to reach the turkey houses.
22. There is usually some warning of interruptions in the supply of feedingstuffs and, so far as possible, arrangements should be made to lay in adequate stocks of feed or water to offset the worst effects of such a contingency.

### **Ventilation and Temperature**

23. Ventilation rates and house conditions should at all times be adequate to provide sufficient fresh air for the birds. In particular, accumulations of ammonia, hydrogen sulphide, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and dust should be avoided. (1)
24. Care should be taken to protect confined birds from draughts in cold conditions.
25. Birds, particularly those in cages, should not be exposed to strong direct sunlight or hot surroundings long enough to cause heat stress as indicated by prolonged panting.

26. A newly hatched bird has poor control of its body temperature. Environmental conditions during the early part of a poult's life should therefore allow it to maintain its normal body temperature without difficulty. Whatever method of heating is used, the behaviour of the poult should be regarded as the best indicator of the adequacy of the environment. Young poults should not be subjected to conditions which cause either panting due to overheating or prolonged huddling and feather ruffling due to under-heating. After about four to five weeks birds can tolerate a fairly wide range of temperatures; but every effort should be made to avoid creating conditions which will lead to chilling, huddling and subsequent smothering.
27. Close confinement affects the birds' ability to maintain their normal body temperature, but under any management system temperatures hot enough to cause prolonged panting may occur, particularly when humidity is relatively high. All turkey accommodation should therefore be so designed that even when fully stocked its ventilation is adequate to protect the birds from overheating under any weather conditions that can reasonably be foreseen.

### **Lighting**

28. Provision should be made for a period of darkness in each 24-hour cycle, but where birds do not have access to daylight they should be given at least 8 hours lighting per day.
29. Enough light should be available to enable all birds to be seen clearly when they are being inspected. (See also paragraph 39)

### **Mechanical equipment and services**

30. All equipment and services including feed hoppers, drinkers, ventilating fans, heating and lighting units, fire extinguishers and alarm systems should be cleaned and inspected regularly, at least once daily, and kept in good working order. All automated equipment should incorporate a failsafe device and, where the birds welfare is dependent upon such equipment, an alarm system to warn the stockman of failure. Defects should be rectified immediately or alternative measures taken to safeguard the health and welfare of the birds. Alternative ways of feeding and of maintaining a satisfactory environment should therefore be ready for use.
31. All electrical installations at mains voltage should be inaccessible to the birds and properly earthed. (2)

## Stocking rates

32. Irrespective of the type of enclosure or system of management used, all turkeys should have sufficient freedom of movement to be able, without difficulty, to stand normally, turn round and stretch their wings. They should also have sufficient space to be able to perch or sit down without interference from other birds.
33. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that birds kept under any system can be prone to stress, injury and disease if management and husbandry are not of a high standard. Within the present limits of scientific knowledge it is not possible to relate stocking rate to welfare in any simple manner. Stocking rate is only one aspect of a complex situation involving such things as breed, strain and type of bird, colony size, temperature, ventilation, lighting and quality of housing. The observance of any particular rate cannot, by itself, ensure the welfare of the birds.
34. The following figures are a guide to the minimum available floor area per bird which is acceptable in most circumstances:

### Rearing

|   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Broiler-type housing                                | 260 cm <sup>2</sup> per kg. |
| Tier brooders                                       | 515 cm <sup>2</sup> per kg. |
| Carry-on cages                                      |                             |
| Hay boxes raised on wire or slats,<br>and verandahs | 300 cm <sup>2</sup> per kg. |
| Pole barns  | 410 cm <sup>2</sup> per kg. |
| Enclosed range areas                                | 10 m <sup>2</sup> per bird  |

### Breeding

#### On floors

|  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Hens kept for insemination, and hens and<br>males kept together for natural mating | 515 cm <sup>2</sup> per kg. |
| Males kept for artificial insemination   | 1 m <sup>2</sup> per bird   |

#### In individual pens

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Hens                    | 345 cm <sup>2</sup> per kg.                           |
| Males                   | 1 m <sup>2</sup> per bird                             |
| In enclosed range areas | 17 m <sup>2</sup> per bird<br>(590 birds per hectare) |

35. If disease (particularly respiratory) or vice becomes evident, by observation or by rejections from processing plants, expert qualified advice should be sought to deal with the problem. Stocking and ventilation rates should also be checked and variations in stocking and ventilation should be considered in order to minimise the likelihood of recurrence of the problem.

## **FEED AND WATER**

36. Birds should have easy access to adequate fresh feed each day and to adequate fresh water at all times. Care should be taken at any change of system to ensure that the birds find the feed and water points.
37. Stale or contaminated feed or water should not be allowed to accumulate and should be replaced immediately. Efforts should be made to minimise the risk of drinking water freezing.
38. In no case should birds be without feed or water for more than 24 hours.

## **MANAGEMENT**

### **General**

39. Frequent inspection of the stock is essential because the condition and reactions of the birds are the main guides to their welfare. An inspection must be made at least once daily in addition to the looking-over which birds receive during routine management work (see also paragraph 29). Injured or dead birds should be removed promptly, as should individual sick birds.
40. It is desirable to establish a regular work routine. Care should be taken not to frighten the birds with sudden unaccustomed movement or noise, but without placing too much emphasis on quietness.
41. Adequate control measures should be taken to protect the birds from disturbance by rodents and other animals.
42. Mouldy litter should not be used. There should be frequent checks to ensure that litter does not become excessively wet or dry, or infested with mites or other harmful organisms.
43. Premises and equipment should be regularly cleansed. Thorough disinfection should be carried out at suitable times (for example, before restocking) and to reduce the danger of continuing infection.



44. Land on which range birds are kept for prolonged periods may become 'fowl sick', i.e. contaminated with organisms which cause or carry disease to an extent which could seriously prejudice the health of poultry on the land. The time taken for land to become fowl sick depends on the type of land and the stocking rate. Flocks and portable houses should be moved with sufficient regularity to avoid fowl sick or continuously muddy conditions leading to ill-health or discomfort of the birds.
45. Vaccinations, injections and similar procedures should be undertaken by competent, trained operators. Care should be taken to avoid injury and unnecessary disturbance of the birds.
46. Artificial insemination is a highly-skilled procedure and should be carried out only by competent, trained personnel maintaining a high standard of hygiene and taking care to avoid injury and unnecessary disturbance of the birds.

#### **Saddling of hens**

47. Before hens are mated they should be fitted with strong saddles, made for example of canvas, to prevent injury to the backs and sides by the males.

#### **Toe cutting (3)**

48. To avoid injury to hens during mating, even when saddled, the last joint of the inside toes of the male breeding birds should be removed. This must be done within the first 72 hours of life. A veterinary surgeon must carry out the operation if it is performed after the first 72 hours of life.

#### **Beak trimming (4)**

49. When birds are kept in daylight conditions they can be vicious, and beak trimming is an essential aid to management. It is usual to trim beaks as a routine measure before birds leave the brooder or the rearing accommodation and normally it need be done only once in the lifetime of the stock.
50. When birds are kept in building with a light control system, beak trimming should be carried out only when it is clear that more suffering would be caused in the flock if it were not done.
51. Beak trimming should be done by a skilled operator or under his supervision.

#### **Desnooding (5)**

52. When desnooding is done, this should be as soon as possible after hatching. A veterinary surgeon must carry out the operation if it is performed after the first 21 days of life.

## **Dewinging (6)**

53. Dewinging, pinioning, notching or tendon severing, which involve mutilation of wing tissue, must not be undertaken. When it is necessary to reduce the effects of flightiness, the flight feathers of one wing may be clipped.

## **DISPOSAL OF UNWANTED POULTS AND HATCHERY WASTE**

54. Unwanted poultts awaiting slaughter should be treated as humanely as those intended for retention or sale.
55. Poultts should always be killed humanely by a skilled operator. The method which should be used is to place them in an atmosphere with the highest obtainable concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> and a source of 100% CO<sub>2</sub> should therefore be used as the disposing agent. This is the most humane method and detailed advice on its use is given in ADAS advisory publication P568. However, where very small numbers of poultts are involved they may be killed humanely by dislocation of the neck or by decapitation. Whatever method is used the poultts should be thoroughly inspected afterwards to ensure that all are dead.
56. Methods of killing which involve suffocation by tightly packing the unwanted poultts in a confined space, or by drowning, or in which irritant liquids such as carbon tetrachloride are allowed to come into direct contact with the poultts, are inhumane and should not be used.
57. All hatchery waste should be treated (for example, by rapid maceration) so as to kill instantaneously any living embryos.

## **HANDLING AND TRANSPORT OF STOCK ON THE PREMISES (7)**

### **General**

58. The proper handling of birds requires skill, and it should be undertaken only by competent persons who have been appropriately trained. It should be carried out quietly and confidently, exercising care to avoid unnecessary struggling which could bruise or otherwise injure the birds. Care must be taken in catching birds in loose-housed systems in order to avoid creating panic and subsequent injury to or smothering of the birds. Particular care is also needed so as to avoid injury to birds being placed in or removed from cages, especially where the whole of the cage front does not open.

### **Day-old poultts**

59. Poultts for despatch should be healthy and vigorous, and should be placed in suitably ventilated boxes without overcrowding. Care should be taken to ensure adequate ventilation of the boxes, particularly when they are stacked, and to protect the poultts from direct sunlight and cold draughts.

60. Packing materials used inside boxes should be dry and free from moulds.
61. Poults should be transferred to the brooders as soon as possible.

### **Growing and adult birds**

62. The design, size and state of repair of any container used to carry birds should allow them to be put in, conveyed and taken out without injury. Care should also be taken when crates are loaded on to vehicles and in their transportation and unloading. Adequate ventilation for the birds is essential at all times.
63. Birds should be protected from bad weather and from excessively hot or cold conditions. They should not be allowed to become distressed (as indicated by prolonged panting) by being left in containers exposed to strong direct sunlight.

### **REFERENCES**

1. The Health and Safety Executive recommends that, for human safety, the following levels should not be exceeded.

| Name of gas       | Long term exposure<br>limit (ppm)<br>(8 hour day) | Short term exposure<br>limit (ppm)<br>(10 minutes) |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Ammonia           | 25  | 35   |
| Carbon Monoxide   | 50  | 400  |
| Carbon Dioxide    | 5,000   | 5,000  |
| Hydrogen Sulphide | 10  | 10   |

2. Any installation or extension involving mains electricity should comply with the Regulations for the electrical Equipment of Buildings issued by the Institution of Electrical Engineers.
3. The Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance 1987 permits only a veterinary surgeon to remove the combs or to cut the toes of a turkey which has reached the age of 72 hours.
4. Beak trimming (sometimes known as debeaking) means the removal from a bird of not more than one-third of the beak measured from the tip towards the entrance of the nostrils. The operation, if not undertaken by a veterinary surgeon, must be carried out as prescribed in the Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance, 1987.

5. The Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance 1987 permits only a veterinary surgeon to desnood a turkey which has reached the age of 21 days or to cut the toes of a turkey which has reached the age of 72 hours.
6. The Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance, 1987 prohibits the fitting of blinkers to poultry by a method involving mutilation of the nasal septum, operations on birds (other than feather clipping) to impede their flight and the surgical castration of male birds.
7. The Protection of Animals Ordinance 1976 states that a person shall be guilty of an offence of cruelty if he shall convey or carry, or cause or procure, or being the owner, permit to be conveyed or carried, any animal in such a manner or position as to cause that animal any unnecessary suffering.

# **CODE OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WELFARE OF FARMED RABBITS**

## **PREFACE**

This preface is not part of the Code, but is intended to explain its purpose and to indicate the broad considerations upon which it is based.

The basic requirements for the welfare of livestock are a husbandry system appropriate to the health and, so far as practicable, the behavioural needs of the animals and a high standard of stockmanship.

Stockmanship is a key factor because, no matter how otherwise acceptable a system may be in principle, without competent, diligent stockmanship the welfare of the animals cannot be adequately catered for. The recommendations which follow are designed to help stockmen, particularly those who are young or inexperienced, to attain the required standards. The part that training has to play in the development of the stockman's awareness of welfare requirements cannot be overstressed

Nearly all livestock husbandry systems impose restrictions on the stock and some of these can cause an unacceptable degree of discomfort or distress by preventing the animals from fulfilling their basic needs. Provisions meeting these needs, and others which must be considered, include:

- \* comfort and shelter;
- \* readily accessible fresh water and a diet to maintain the animals in full health and vigour;
- \* freedom of movement;
- \* the company of other animals particularly of like kind;
- \* the opportunity to exercise most normal patterns of behaviour;
- \* light during the hours of daylight, and lighting readily available to enable the animals to be inspected at any time;
- \* flooring which neither harms the animals, nor causes undue strain;
- \* the prevention, or rapid diagnosis and treatment of vice\*, injury, parasitic infestation and disease;
- \* the avoidance of unnecessary mutilation, and
- \* emergency arrangements to cover outbreaks of fire, the breakdown of essential mechanical services and the disruption of supplies.

\* Vice means vices and viciousness. It includes bad habits such as tail biting in pigs, sucking in calves, feather picking and cannibalism in poultry, and kicking in horses.

Not all husbandry systems in use for rabbits equally meet the physiological and behavioural needs of the animals. An attempt has therefore been made on the basis of the latest scientific knowledge and soundest current practices, to identify those features which could place the welfare of rabbits at risk unless precautions are taken.

The Code sets out what these precautions should be, bearing in mind the importance to the animals of their total environment and the fact that there is often more than one way in which their welfare can be safeguarded.

The Code is backed up by law. To cause unnecessary pain or unnecessary distress to any farm animal is an offence under The Protection of Animals Ordinance, 1976 as amended in 1986; and The veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance, 1987. The breach of a Code provision, whilst not an offence in itself, can nevertheless be used in evidence as tending to establish the guilt of anyone accused of causing suffering.

Certain aspects of livestock husbandry can present hazards to the health and safety of the stockman. Advice on these matters is available from the States Health and Safety Executive.

## INTRODUCTION

1. The welfare of rabbits can be safeguarded under a variety of management systems. The system employed should be appropriate to the health and behavioural and physiological needs of the rabbit. This, together with the facilities available and the skill of the stockman, will determine the number of animals kept at any one time and the way in which they are grouped. Rabbits are animals which need individual and frequent attention. It is essential that the stockman should watch for signs of distress or disease and take prompt remedial action.
2. The signs which, taken together, indicate good health in a rabbit colony are set out in paragraph 3. The stockman should be able to recognise impending trouble in its earliest stages and may often be able to identify the cause and institute remedial measures, failing which veterinary or other expert assistance should be quickly obtained.
3. Important indications of health are alertness, clear bright eyes, good posture, vigorous movements if unduly disturbed, active feeding and drinking, firmish dark-coloured pelleted stools, clean and healthy fur and skin, and grooming. Ear mite infestation is a common debilitating and disfiguring disease of rabbits and it is important that the external ear canals and ears should be free of debris and encrustations. Attention should be paid to any departure from the normal.

4. The signs of ill health may include listlessness, dullness in the eyes, tucked-up posture and grinding teeth, shaking of the head (suggesting ear canker), loss of appetite, running eyes and tear-stains, nasal discharge, abdominal distention, scouring, stained fur, the presence of wet droppings, sneezing and snuffles, scratch marks (suggesting ectoparasites), swelling of the face (suggesting myxomatosis), sore hocks and lameness.
5. Ailing or injured rabbits should be segregated wherever possible and treated or, if necessary, be killed humanely without delay.

## **HOUSING**

### **General**

6. Advice on welfare aspects should be sought when new buildings are to be constructed or existing buildings modified.
7. Problems can arise if total air space in the rabbitry is either inadequate or excessive and the building is not correctly ventilated, and therefore careful attention should be paid to these aspects of welfare during planning.
8. Internal surfaces of housing, pens, hutches or cages should be of materials which can be effectively cleaned and disinfected, or easily replaced when necessary.
9. Ventilation, heating, lighting, feeding and watering equipment, electrical installation and all other equipment should be designed, sited and installed so as to avoid risk of injuring the rabbits.
10. Material containing paint and wood preservatives which may be toxic to rabbits should not be used on surfaces accessible to them. Particular care is necessary to guard against the risk of poisoning from old paintwork in any part of the building or when second-hand building materials are used.

### **Fire and other emergency precautions**

11. Farmers should make advance plans for dealing with emergencies such as fire, flood or disruption of supplies, and should ensure that all staff are familiar with the appropriate emergency action. At least one responsible member of the staff should always be available to take the necessary action.
12. Fire precautions should be a major priority for all stockmen. The provisions of Part 23 of British Standard BS5502 (particularly Section 5) relating to fire precautions should therefore be followed. Expert advice on all fire precautions is obtainable from the States Fire Brigade.

13. In the design of new buildings, or alteration of existing ones, there should be provision for livestock to be released and evacuated quickly in the case of an emergency. Materials used in construction should have sufficient fire resistance and adequate doors and other escape routes should be provided to enable an emergency procedure to be followed in the event of a fire. Where possible straw storage should be separated from livestock accommodation to reduce the risk to stock from fire and smoke.
14. All electrical, gas and oil services should be planned and fitted so that if there is overheating or flame is generated, the risk of flame spreading to equipment, litter or straw (where used) or to the fabric of the building is minimal. It is advisable to site main power on/off controls outside buildings. Consideration should be given to installing fire alarm systems which can be heard and acted upon at any time of the day or night.
15. In case a 999 call has to be made, notices should be prominently displayed in rabbit houses stating where the nearest phone is located. Each phone should have fixed by it a notice giving instructions to the Fire Brigade on how to reach the rabbit houses.
16. There is usually some warning of interruptions in the supply of feedingstuffs and, so far as possible, arrangements should be made to lay in adequate stocks of feed or water to offset the worst effects of such a contingency.

#### **Accommodation**

17. Accommodation should be designed and maintained so as to avoid injury or distress to the rabbits.
18. The type and arrangement of accommodation should allow for efficient working and for each rabbit to be properly inspected.
19. In open-sided buildings or other enclosures which are exposed to the weather, rabbits in cages should be provided with adequate protection from the elements.



## **Floors**

20. All floors on which rabbits are kept should be designed, constructed and maintained so as to avoid injury or distress to the rabbits. For welded wire floors, mesh of suitable size should be used. Square mesh should not exceed 19 mm x 19 mm and rectangular mesh should not exceed 75 mm x 12.5 mm. Wire of not less than 2.64 mm diameter is recommended and should not in any case be less than 2.032 mm. The mesh should be flat and any rough spots arising during manufacture or from wear during subsequent use should be smoothed off.
21. The adults of some strains, particularly of the larger breeds, may need to be kept on solid floors. Wherever solid floors are used an ample supply of clean bedding should be provided to ensure a dry lying area. Likewise, in other systems, the use of straw or similar material in the lying area is strongly recommended.

## **Ventilation and temperature**

22. Ventilation rates and house conditions should at all times be adequate to provide sufficient fresh air for the rabbits. In particular accumulations of ammonia, hydrogen sulphide, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and dust should be avoided. (1) Care should be taken to ensure that the ventilation system allows adequate air flow below cages, and dwarf walls or solid sides should be avoided wherever possible. There should be an alarm system to warn the stockman of failure of any automated equipment. Expert advice may be necessary to ensure correct temperature, airflow and humidity.
23. Care should be taken to protect confined rabbits from draughts in cold conditions.
24. Extremes of temperature should be avoided. Excessive heat loss should be prevented by the structural insulation of external walls and roof of the building, or by the provision of adequate bedding. It is essential to avoid conditions which could cause chilling in young rabbits just leaving the nest. Appropriate measure should be taken to prevent temperatures rising to the point where heat stress, indicated by prolonged panting, occurs. As a general guide the aim should be to achieve a temperature range of 10°C - 20°C.

## Lighting

25. During the hours of daylight the level of indoor lighting, natural or artificial, should be such that all rabbits can be seen clearly. However it may be advantageous to cover the nest box at the time of kindling. There should be a period of darkness in each 24 hour cycle. In addition, adequate lighting should be available for satisfactory inspection at any time.

## Mechanical equipment and services

26. All equipment and services including feed hoppers, drinkers, ventilating fans, heating and lighting units, fire extinguishers and alarm systems should be cleaned and inspected regularly and kept in good working order. All automated equipment should incorporate a fail-safe device and, where the rabbits' welfare is dependent upon such equipment, an alarm system to warn the stockman of failure. Defects should be rectified immediately or alternative measures taken to safeguard the health and welfare of the rabbits. Alternative ways of feeding and of maintaining a satisfactory environment should therefore be ready for use.
27. All electrical installation at mains voltage should be inaccessible to rabbits and properly earthed. (2)

## Space allowances

28. When planning new accommodation or modifying existing buildings account should be taken of the size of the breed and natural behaviour of the animals, which includes hopping, sitting with ears erect, and play.
29. The total floor area should be sufficient to enable the rabbits to move around and to feed and drink without difficulty. Accommodation should allow sufficient area so that all the rabbits can lie on their sides other than at times when nesting boxes are used. The following space allowances, which are in use commercially, should be regarded as absolute minima:

| SYSTEM | MINIMUM FLOOR SPACE |
|--------|---------------------|
|--------|---------------------|

---

**In cages**

|                                      |                                |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Doe and litter to 5 weeks of age     | 0.56 m <sup>2</sup> total area |
| Doe and litter to 8 weeks of age     | 0.74 m <sup>2</sup> total area |
| Rabbits 5 to 12 weeks of age         | 0.07 m <sup>2</sup> per rabbit |
| Rabbits 12 weeks and over            | 0.18 m <sup>2</sup> per rabbit |
| (other than those used for breeding) |                                |
| (multiple occupation cages)          |                                |
| Adult does and bucks for breeding    | 0.56 m <sup>2</sup> per rabbit |

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### **In hutches**

|                                    |                                |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Doe and litter to 5 weeks of age   | 0.75 m <sup>2</sup> total area |
| Doe and litter to 8 weeks of age   | 0.93 m <sup>2</sup> total area |
| Rabbits 5 to 12 weeks of age       | 0.09 m <sup>2</sup> per rabbit |
| Adults does and bucks for breeding | 0.75 m <sup>2</sup> per rabbit |

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30. Accommodation for rabbits over 12 weeks of age should be not less than 45 cm high, or of sufficient height to allow rabbits to sit upright with ears fully erect.
31. The nest box should be large enough to enable the doe to get into and out of it to feed the young without injuring them. As a guide, the nest box should be a minimum length of 30 cm and have a minimum floor area of 0.08 m<sup>2</sup> but a larger area should be allowed for giant breeds.
32. The lowest side or end of an open-topped nest should be low enough to enable the doe to enter or leave the nest without risk of injury to herself or her litter, but sufficiently high to prevent the young from leaving the nest prematurely. As a guide, for most breeds of rabbits the height of the lowest side or end of the nest box should not be less than 15 cm. The nest should have an entrance of not less than 0.023 m<sup>2</sup> in area and be sufficiently large for the doe to pass through without difficulty or risk of injury. Sunken nests have the advantage that very small rabbits can find their way back to the nest.

### **FEED AND WATER**

33. Whatever feeding is adopted, all rabbits should receive a daily diet which is nutritionally adequate to maintain health. A new type of feed should be introduced over a period of a few days.
34. A plentiful supply of clean fresh water should be easily accessible to the rabbits at all times. For example a lactating doe with a large litter, close to weaning, may drink up to 4.5 litres of water a day. To enable all rabbits to drink satisfactorily the nipple drinker should be above 25 cm from the bottom of the cage. Efforts should be made to minimise the risk of drinking water freezing.
35. Stale or contaminated feed or water should not be allowed to accumulate.
36. Where bowls are used for either feed or water they should be of impervious material and of a design which cannot be knocked over and can be cleaned easily.

37. When fed by any system which does not allow continuous and unrestricted access to feed, all rabbits in the group should be able to feed at the same time. The feeding of a small quantity of hay or straw in addition to the normal diet may be beneficial and provide activity for the rabbits.

## MANAGEMENT

### General

38. Each rabbit should be inspected frequently during the day because, once ill, rabbits deteriorate rapidly.
39. It is desirable to establish a regular work routine. Care should be taken not to frighten the rabbits with sudden unaccustomed movement or noise, but without placing too much emphasis on quietness.
40. Adequate control measures should be taken to avoid disturbance by rodents and other animals.
41. Frequent checks should be made on the state of the bedding (see paragraph 21).
42. Premises and equipment should be regularly cleaned and thoroughly dried before restocking. Thorough disinfection should be carried out at suitable times to reduce the danger of continuing infection.
43. Vaccinations, injections and similar procedures should be undertaken by competent, trained operators. Care should be taken to prevent injury and unnecessary disturbance of the rabbits.
44. Artificial insemination is a highly skilled procedure and should be carried out with the advice of a veterinary surgeon by competent, trained personnel maintaining a high standard of hygiene and taking care to avoid injury and unnecessary disturbance of the rabbits.
45. Mating should be supervised, and to minimise the possibility of fighting, does should be taken to the buck.
46. Litters under a week of age should be disturbed as little as possible and young rabbits should not be weaned before four weeks of age.
47. Overgrowth of incisors can sometimes interfere seriously with feeding and cause damage to the rabbit's lips. The provision of wooden gnawing blocks particularly for breeding stock, can avoid the necessity to undertake tooth-trimming. Where tooth-trimming is necessary, it should be performed by a veterinary surgeon or by a competent trained operator.

### **Toe nail trimming**

48. Toe nails of confined adult rabbits should be trimmed periodically to prevent toe damage from overgrown nails catching on the hutch or cage. Care is needed when trimming to avoid damage to sensitive tissue.

### **Marking**

49. Where it is necessary to mark rabbits for permanent identification tattooing is preferable to tagging which may result in damage to the ear being caused; a ring above the hock may be used but must be checked regularly to ensure it does not become tight, causing injury. Marking should be carried out by competent operators taking care to avoid unnecessary pain or distress to the rabbits.

### **Handling and slaughter of stock on the premises**

50. The proper handling of rabbits requires skill, and it should be undertaken only by competent persons. Rabbits should be lifted by grasping the loose skin at the back of the neck and supported by placing the hand under the hindquarters. Handling should be carried out quietly and confidently exercising care to avoid unnecessary struggling which could bruise or otherwise injure the animal.
51. When rabbits are killed on the farm this must be done humanely.

### **Rabbits kept out of doors**

52. Attention is drawn to the relevant recommendations in paragraphs 33 - 51 inclusive.
53. Precautions should be taken to protect rabbits from predators.
54. Shelter from sun, rain and wind should always be available, and the hutch or pen roof should be extended sufficiently to ensure this.
55. Accommodation should be so designed and maintained as to avoid draughts. Rabbits should have access to a dry-bedded lying area.

## REFERENCES

1. The Health and Safety Executive recommends that, for human safety, the following gas levels should not be exceeded:

| Name of Gas       | Long term exposure<br>limit (ppm)<br>(8 hour day) | Short term exposure<br>limit (ppm)<br>(10 minutes) |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Ammonia           | 25  | 35   |
| Carbon Monoxide   | 50  | 400  |
| Carbon Dioxide    | 5,000   | 5,000  |
| Hydrogen Sulphide | 10  | 10   |

2. Any installation or extension involving mains electricity should comply with the Regulations for the Electrical Equipment of Buildings issued by the Institution of Electrical Engineers.