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INTERIM REPORT

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Agriculture,
Fisheries and Food

on animal welfare policy

Rapporteur: Mr Richard J. SIMMONDS

PE 87.333/fin.

Or. En.

At its sitting of 25 October 1984, the European Parliament referred the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr WOLTJER and others on animal welfare (Doc. 2-807/84) pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure to the Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Food as the committee responsible and to the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection for an opinion.

At its meeting of 20 November 1984, the Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Food decided to draw up a report and appointed Mr SIMMONDS rapporteur on the 23 January 1985.

The committee considered the draft report at its meetings of 1 February 1985, 28 March 1985, 23 April 1985, 15 May 1985. At the last meeting it adopted the motion for a resolution as a whole unanimously.

The following took part in the vote: Mr TOLMAN, Chairman; Mr EYRAUD, first Vice-chairman; Mr GRAEFE ZU BARINGDORF, second Vice-chairman; Mr SIMMONDS, rapporteur; Mr ABENS (deputizing for Mr SUTRA DE GERMA), Mrs CASTLE, Mr CHRISTENSEN, Mr CLINTON, Mr DALSSASS, Mrs EWING (deputizing for Mr MacSHARRY), Mr FRÜH, Mr GATTI, Mr GUARRACI, Mr HAPPART, Mr KLINKENBORG (deputizing for Mr WETTIG), Mr LEMMER (deputizing for Mr BOCKLET), Mr MAFFRE-BAUGÉ, Mr MAHER, Mr MARCK, Mr MERTENS, Mr MUHLEN (deputizing for Mr DEBATISSE), Mr McCARTIN (deputizing for Mr N. PISONI), Mr MORRIS, Mr NEWENS (deputizing for Mrs CRAWLEY), Mr PRANCHÈRE, Mr PROVAN, Mrs ROTHE, Mr SAKELLARIOU (deputizing for Mr ROMEOS), Mr SPATH (deputizing for Mr F. PISONI), Mr STAVROU, Mr TAYLOR (deputizing for Mr BATTERSBY), Mr THAREAU, Mr VERNIMMEN, Mr WOLTJER.

The opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection will be published separately.

The report was tabled on 31 May 1985.

The deadline for tabling amendments to this report will be indicated in the draft agenda for the part-session at which it will be debated.

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The Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Food hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

A

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on animal welfare policy

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the European Convention for the protection of animals during international transport (No. 65),
 - having regard to the European Convention for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes (No. 87),
 - having regard to the Motion for a Resolution by Mr WOLTJER and others on animal welfare policy (Doc. 2-807/84),
 - having regard to the Interim Report of the Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection (Doc. A 2-62/85),
- a) whereas the past decades have seen significant developments in the business structure of agriculture, in particular in the (intensive) animal rearing sector,
- b) whereas these developments have brought about great changes in the living conditions and welfare of the animals concerned,
- c) recognizing that it is an economic advantage for producers in many cases to make use of technical possibilities,
- d) aware, however, that recent developments in the animal rearing sector have rightly given rise to concern, which requires a response at policy level,
- e) whereas improvements in the welfare of farm animals frequently have economic repercussions,

- f) whereas measures to improve the welfare of farm animals can have effects on the formation of consumer prices and the quality of some products in the intensive animal rearing sector,
- g) realizing, therefore, that legislation in this area should preferably be framed at Community level.
1. Hopes that in those cases where measures relating to animal welfare conflict with cost-benefit considerations and where there are considerable differences in Member States' legislation in this area, the Commission will bring forward directives aimed at achieving the most favourable level of harmonization possible;
 2. Believes that future directives must be based on the definition of welfare as adopted by the Council of Europe (Convention 87, Article 3), while at the same time recognising that it is normal practice in some regions of the Community not to house animals at any time of the year;
 3. Hopes that the Council of Europe Convention 87 (on animal welfare) and 65 (on animal welfare during transport) will be ratified by the European Community, as a starting point for further developments in animal welfare policy and of decisive action in the Community, and calls on the Commission to investigate which of the ten Member States who have ratified the Convention have taken any concrete action to implement its contents;
 4. Calls for future research to be coordinated and initiated on a joint basis to a greater extent than in the past, and to include research into ways in which agriculture subsidies policy can reinforce policies for animal welfare;
 5. Hopes that it may be made easier for the existing group of scientific experts on animal welfare to perform their coordinating and consultative rôle;
 6. Considers that with the help of these experts, the Commission should lay down the guidelines for future necessary research and, should:
 - assess whether or not specific research projects are consistent with the policy guidelines,
 - endeavour to reach agreement on criteria for assessing research findings and to ensure their dissemination,
 - initiate cooperation if the intended research project is beyond the capabilities of one institute or one Member State,
 - ensure that research findings from outside the Community are also used for the benefit of the Commission's policy;

7. Takes the view that the broad lines of research activity should be defined by the Commission, which is and should remain responsible for matters of animal welfare policy;
8. Calls on the Commission to publish annually a report of the progress made in its research activities;
9. Believes that the broad acceptance of Convention 87 and 65 of the Council of Europe should be followed by more specific legislation covering the following aspects:
 - trade conditions (marketing and transport)
 - farm conditions (housing, feeding, treatment/care)
 - implementation and enforcement
 - slaughter-house conditions (handling and stunning);
10. Calls for the laying down of welfare standards for the rearing of various categories of farm animals, which should serve as a framework for the development of new techniques or methods of animal rearing;
11. Believes that real progress in animals welfare can only be achieved by a broad policy approach based on scientific evidence plus considerations of commercial viability, availability of finance, knowledge of economic and trade effects, as well as norms of acceptability;
12. Considers that such a broad policy approach is only possible if the Commission indicates its importance by creating a special policy section to deal with animal welfare matters;
13. Takes the view that this section must be staffed by people from the appropriate professional disciplines;
14. Is aware that an effective policy in this area is only possible if the Community is prepared to provide sufficient financial support both for the functioning of the group of experts on animal welfare and for the special policy section of the Commission;
15. Calls on the Commission to bring forward proposals to ensure that new directives are observed in the Member States and that appropriate controls and inspection procedures will be established to ensure implementation of Community legislation;

16. Considers that measures in the field of animal welfare should be accompanied by measures aimed at avoiding distortion of the conditions of competition between the animal rearing sector in the Community and in non-member countries;
17. Calls on the Commission to initiate, as part of its policy, a consumer-orientated information campaign to explain to consumers the reasons for the measures to improve animal welfare and the consequent improvements in quality, and also the reasons why the prices of some products from the intensive animal rearing sector have been affected;
18. Calls on the Commission to initiate, as part of its policy, a consumer and producer-orientated information campaign to explain the link between animal welfare and consumers' and producers' interests - animal welfare in fact amounts to a policy concerned with quality and the choice of production methods favouring small farmers;
19. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTINTRODUCTION

The subject of animal welfare is very wide. It includes the treatment of wild animals, including seals and whales, birds, including migratory species, endangered species of animals, blood sports, pets and food animals. The report drawn up by Mr SPINELLI on European Union states in Article 59 that 'the Union shall take measures designed to provide for animal protection'.¹ However, the present report exclusively concerns food animals, with particular reference to cattle, horses, pigs and hens. It does not include the question of goose cramming, which has been dealt with in a separate report², or topics such as deer farming or the more recent subject of frogs legs, and does not go into the subject of animals used for experimental purposes, although this is an important subject of its own, or into questions concerning companion animals, i.e. pets. It also does not cover the subject of the use of hormones in livestock farming, which is being dealt with in a separate report³.

METHODOLOGY

It is proposed to treat the subject in two stages, with a view to producing a final report for submission to Plenary in Autumn 1985. The Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has decided to hold a Hearing on four specific subjects in the middle of 1985. These subjects are:

- i) the keeping of hens in cages;
- ii) transport of live animals;
- iii) tethering of pigs;
- iv) crating of veal calves.

Once the views of the experts have been heard, the Committee will proceed to detailed recommendations in each of these fields, but the rapporteur believes that these recommendations should be seen in the context of an overall policy on animal welfare which has still to be drawn up. The present interim report is therefore designed to demonstrate the scale of the problems

¹ Doc. 1-1200/83, adopted by the European Parliament on 14.2.1984

² PRUVOT report, Doc. 1-686/82

³ COLLINS report

which exist, highlight difficulties both in the field of research and in implementation of existing Community legislation, and suggest ways in which a broad Community policy could be set up, funded, staffed, implemented and controlled.

BACKGROUND

The enormous advances in technology during the years since World War II have brought about many changes in the rearing and housing methods of farm livestock. The increasing mechanisation of agricultural production in all its branches is partly the result of economic necessity for rationalisation but it also corresponds to our general way of thinking in the field of economics, according to which things must be produced in ever greater quantities, ever more cheaply and ever more quickly.

The confined management of domestic animals did not become possible until the ideas of technology and industry were also applied to animal production. Here too the primary considerations were the rationalisation of animal management and the advantages from the economic point of view. The needs of the animals themselves were only considered insofar as was necessary for maintaining their productive capacity. Systems of management developed with this end in view may indeed be technically perfect and labour saving but they create an extremely artificial environment in which it can be practically impossible for the animals to live according to behaviour patterns natural to their species. Since many of the natural needs of the animals cannot be fulfilled under such management systems they frequently give rise to behavioural disturbances.

In recent years criticisms of this development have become increasingly loud not only in scientific circles but also among the general public. The realisation that man's responsibility to those animals that he exploits for his own advantage must not be forgotten even if productive efficiency has to be one of the criteria, has led to a demand that the conditions of management should conform to the natural needs of the different species.

Animal welfare and protection is often regarded as an emotive issue of secondary importance, but it is clear that an increasing tide of public opinion is mounting up on this subject and there is even greater need for action to improve our treatment of animals, and to explain methods to the public at large.

Criticism has come from the agricultural sector itself and from ethologists but also from the consumer. Policy-making bodies in various Community countries have identified the problems of animal welfare involved in modern animal rearing and consequently research in these countries into the effects of current production methods on animal welfare has begun slowly but surely. Very little research is being done, however, at international level. Exchanges of data and coordination of research work generally take place via personal contacts. One is bound to conclude, apart from the lack of coordination, that the importance attached to the problems of farm animals is not the same in all Member States.

It has to be said that much of the criticism has gained momentum from the activities of pressure groups, some of which have taken an extreme line in these matters. Thus, in certain sectors of the Community, the debate has moved on from animal welfare to animal rights, and the unrestrained action of certain groups has achieved a notoriety for the subject, which may not truly reflect the general views of the public. Your rapporteur believes that it is worth sounding this note of caution, without wishing to set himself up as a judge of the rightness or wrongness of the case set forth by certain of these groups. The job of the Parliament is to express public opinion, by reacting to it in a reasonable and positive way. It should not be a forum on which certain of the more extreme pressure groups can parade their views.

Thus, your rapporteur does not wish to enter into arguments about whether our attitude to animals consists of 'speciesism' (akin to racism) but would draw attention to the fact that in many countries there is an increasing number of allegations of cruel or inhuman methods used in the rearing of farm animals, combined with an understanding that this trend is due to continued economic pressures which mean that the farmer has to obtain the highest possible yields in every sector.

THE FACTS

Within the ten countries of the Community there are approximately 80 million head of cattle (of which 23 million are calves and 25 million milking cows), approximately 79 million pigs (9 million breeding sows), 290 million laying hens, 1,500 million broiler hens (chicks born) and 64 million sheep and goats.

As the bulk of these animals are maintained in one or more of the extreme intensive systems (for example 80% of those hens kept to produce eggs are maintained in battery cages) it is apparent that the problem is enormous in terms of the number of animals and also in terms of the economic implications.

The problems, specifically, concern the following areas:

i) Intensive production systems

a) Hens in battery cages

Low space allowance per bird; wire mesh floors; no nesting areas; no dust-bathing facilities and the ability to wing-flap and perch is denied. Beak trimming is frequently employed as a means of controlling excessive feather pecking. Risk of impaired physical condition (e.g. skeletal abnormalities).

b) Breeding sows

In many modern systems, the pregnant sow is restrained for most of her pregnancy, within a stall or cubicle. Normal exercise, exploratory behaviour and social contact are denied.

Sleeping and dunging areas are not separated. No bedding or nesting material is provided. Abnormal behaviour patterns associated with these deprivations are frequently observed e.g. bar chewing, foot stamping and tongue sucking. In addition, skeletal abnormalities and skin lesions are commonplace.

c) Veal calf units

Housed individually - social contact denied; inadequate space allowance; inability to turn round and groom properly; slatted floors; no bedding; iron deficient food; lack of roughage in diet; reduced lighting. Individual calf crates encourage behaviour abnormalities, such as bar chewing and increase the risk of physical problems (e.g. skeletal abnormalities, hair balls in the stomach).

ii) Transportation

General considerations covering cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, horses and ponies

Pre-transportation handling. Loading and unloading facilities. Excessive distances. Overlong periods between feeding, watering and resting. Inadequate inspection facilities at frontier crossing posts. Difficulties in enforcing existing regulations.

LACK OF PROGRESS

Various explanations have been given for slow progress in improving matters.

Despite certain Community action on the treatment of animals in transport⁴, this slowness has been attributed to economic problems in different areas of the Community, as well as traditional management attitudes by those directly responsible for treatment of animals, differences in public opinion on the importance of the subject, and lack of coherent scientific advice on the subject. There is also an information gap which means that Community measures are simply not translated down to those responsible for the animals, who are, after all, the most important people concerned, nor is there an effective system of policing existing regulations.

However, it is not intended to enter into detail at this stage in the report on these various subjects. On the one hand, Parliament has already expressed an opinion on the transport of horses⁵ and on the keeping of hens in cages⁶. On the other hand, as was stated previously, the Committee is proposing to hold Hearings on specific aspects of these problems, so that concrete suggestions can be made at a later stage. The purpose of mentioning the specific reasons for concern in these fields is to show that it would appear that enough is already known, with sufficient certainty, for action to be commenced to reduce unnecessary suffering to animals.

RESEARCH

A research programme is currently in hand at the Commission.⁷ This is concerned with precise and detailed observations of animals used for farm purposes. However, it is important for us to look at the basic concepts which are used, in order to be able to interpret these scientific research findings, or we run the risk of making false conclusions from the scientific evidence. . We need, therefore, to look at some epistemological concepts:

Some basic concepts

The basis of all current legislation in Member States, and of Council of Europe recommendations is that 'unnecessary suffering' should be avoided. This concept, which is based on utilitarian philosophy, recognizes that

⁴ Directive 77/489/EEC and Directive 81/389/EEC

⁵ HERKLOTZ report, Doc. 1-229/83/Corr.

⁶ TOLMAN report, Doc. 1-95/82

⁷ For initial results, see Farm Animal Evaluation Programme 1979-83

animals are fodder, or produce fodder, and that suffering cannot be avoided, but simply states that more suffering than necessary should be avoided. This however leaves open the question of what is necessary or unnecessary. Further, it leaves open the question of what suffering in animals is. The question of recognition of suffering is quite distinct from the question of toleration of suffering. This latter depends on our conception of economic priorities, moral and philosophical standpoints etc. but the first necessity is to identify suffering in order to establish acceptable welfare standards.

The second basic concept used in legislation is 'appropriateness'. Treatment of animals should be 'appropriate' to their needs. But what is appropriate?

In 1976, the Council of Europe published a Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for farming purposes (Convention No. 87). These two principles were at the heart of the Convention:

Article 3 states:

Animals shall be housed and provided with food, water and care in a manner which ... is appropriate to their physiological and ethological needs...

Article 4 states:

1. The freedom of movement appropriate to an animal ... shall not be restricted in such a manner so as to cause it unnecessary suffering or injury.
2. Where an animal is continuously ... confined, it shall be given the space appropriate to its physiological and ethological needs ...'

On 19 June 1978 the EEC Council of Ministers became a signatory to the Convention, thereby signifying agreement with its principles, although the Convention is not legally ratified by this decision.

However, the practical effects of the Convention have been small.

The Convention differs from other Council of Europe Conventions on for example the 1968 Convention for the Protection of Animals during International Transport (Convention No. 65), which specifies conditions for length of travel times, intervals between feeding etc. The 'general' nature of the 1976 Convention was of course in part deliberate - the Convention is a 'framework' Convention - and the setting up of a Standing Committee to oversee application of the Convention was intended to try and implement the general principles in specific cases. It therefore required a great deal of work for the Committee to produce its first draft recommendation, which concerned the conditions in which battery hens are kept.

This draft recommendation has however been blocked because the Standing Committee is waiting for the Council of the European Communities to make a decision on the Commission's proposal, particularly concerning cage sizes. Representatives of the Member States working in the Committee in Strasbourg are unable to discuss the matter further since competence in this matter has been passed to the Community, the Council of which refuses to make the necessary decision. The Parliament has already expressed an opinion on the question of cage sizes⁸, and it now behoves the Council to make a decision on this important matter, probably the most controversial of the current animal welfare topics.

The subject is one which leads to highly emotional debate, on the lines of 'How would you like to be kept in a box, without daylight, fresh air, unable even to lie down, from the day you are born to the day you die?' It seems to your rapporteur that the subject must be examined, as objectively as possible, on the basis of scientific evidence to date, and analysed carefully.

An attempt at solving this problem has been made by the suggestion that animal welfare should be determined by the concept of what is 'natural'. In 1972, the Federal German Parliament passed an animal welfare law (The Animal Protection Act) which provided that anyone keeping an animal should 'provide accommodation which takes account of its natural behaviour'. The argument that 'unnaturalness' leads to suffering also derives strength from studies of animal behaviour, such as sheep flocking, or the social behaviour of birds (the famous 'pecking order' etc.). From this it follows that practices now standard must be 'wrong' since they cause suffering - e.g. calves are removed from their mother after the first three days of their life, and hens are kept in cages where they cannot flap their wings, cannot nest, must lay their eggs standing up, cannot dustbathe, have nowhere to roost etc.

However, closer examination of this concept, which has considerable 'common sense' appeal, proves that it is by no means conclusive. It is based on three major assumptions - first, that there are no significant genetic or environmentally produced differences between wild and domesticated forms, second, that if an animal behaves differently from its wild counterpart, it is suffering, and the third is that wild animals do not suffer because they are in a 'natural' state.

⁸TOLMAN Report, Doc. 1-95/82

All three of these assumptions need to be challenged:

(a) Are there differences between animals in 'natural' and 'unnatural' conditions?

Very briefly, (because this is not the place for a disquisition on the subject), it can be shown that domestication of animals, either genetically or environmentally, alters their behaviour. Thus, it is likely that the degree to which an animal suffers would appear to depend on what it has experienced previously. Tests have been conducted, both behaviouristic and organic, on animal preferences and these have shown that in some cases at least, what the animal regards as 'natural' is what it has known previously. Battery hens which are released and offered food in an outside run with grass or alternatively in another battery cage may choose the cage, at least initially. There is the phenomenon of 'imprinting' on ducklings; the way a mother rhesus monkey treats her baby depends on what it herself experienced when an infant. There are hundreds of cases which serve as examples, and prove that the process is two-way: the puppies of a domesticated dog may to all intents and purposes grow up with the behaviour of wild dogs if kept apart from humans during their first 14 weeks. These tests are not conclusive, but they suffice to show that more research is necessary.

(b) Do animals suffer because they cannot behave 'naturally' (i.e. as though not subject to controls on natural instinctive behaviour)?

The second assumption is that if animals are behaving unnaturally, it is because they are suffering. Again, objectively, it has been shown that unnatural behaviour is not in itself an indication that an animal is suffering. It is easy to talk about 'suppression of instinctive drives' and conjure up an image of thwarted animals prevented from doing what they desperately want to do. But these are images derived from what philosophers call the 'argument from analogy', not objective studies or even cool thinking. There are hundreds of examples of unnatural behaviour in animals which are quite clearly not caused or linked with suffering - from chimpanzees in zoos aiming jets of urine at spectators, or elephants flicking water at them, to studies in the wild of herring gulls and lesser black-backed gulls which deliberately approach a predator such as a fox, for what looks like the 'thrill'. Here again, more research is necessary to establish what 'disturbed' or 'unnatural' behaviour is.

(c) Is a 'natural life' free from suffering?

The third assumption is that if animals can live naturally, they are not suffering. Yet surely 'nature red in tooth and claw' is not exactly easy for animals. As Charles Darwin said: 'What a book a devil's chaplain might write on the clumsy, wasteful, blundering, low and horribly cruel works of nature!'

What is animal suffering?

Having examined the concept of welfare, and found that it is not easy to determine from behaviour patterns what constitutes suffering, one might perhaps say that surely it is possible to determine whether an animal suffers by studying the chemical changes that have occurred in its body from a non-suffering condition. A great deal of work has been done in this field, measuring stress by examining hormone reaction, body responses, heart rates, adrenaline and non-adrenaline levels and so on. For example, studies of hormone levels in sheep which had been subject to routine procedures such as being put into a truck, dipped or chased by a dog showed a rise in cortisone type hormones but the factor which produced more stress, or suffering, was to separate a sheep from the flock. Thus, shearing a sheep, which means that it is taken away from the flock, produced higher hormone levels even than slaughtering it, when the animals are kept together, i.e. by this criterion, we are causing the animal more suffering when it is sheared than when it is killed.

The Commission has carried out studies on the bone condition of hens kept in different cage sizes⁹, but is the fact that the bones of one bird are weaker, or its breast less developed, than that of another kept in a different cage, an indication of suffering, or simply that it has adapted, per force, to its conditions?

It will be seen from the above that this area of the discussion is one in which it is very difficult to be categorical or even totally clear. What does emerge is the need for continued research. The most glaring lacuna is that even if it is accepted that the research shows that current methods lead to cruelty to or abnormality in animals, it has not yet demonstrated conclusively that there is an alternative system which could be adopted for the economic production of any of the animals in question. What we therefore need is guidelines which can be laid down for the establishment of welfare standards

⁹ Farm Animal Evaluation Programme 1979-83

for rearing the various categories of farm animals, and these guidelines could also serve as a framework for future research through the development of new techniques and methods of animal husbandry. These standards must emanate from the Commission, and be applicable throughout the Community. Action at national level has not been, and cannot be, sufficient. There are a number of reasons for this:

Although there are a number of countries where research into animal welfare is accorded due importance, there are others where virtually nothing is done. Attempts to expand research tend to be frustrated by high costs, the shortage of qualified researchers and the lack of adequate equipment; added to these problems in many cases is the problem of poor coordination. This in turn leads to a poor flow of information and unnecessary duplication of effort.

A further point which should be mentioned is that not everyone uses the same methods or exercises the same care, with the result that in many cases different answers are given to the same questions. Policy makers can do nothing with research of this kind. Consequently it is most important that research work in the various Member States and at the various institutes should be coordinated. The aim of this coordination should be to increase the effectiveness of work done and help to cut costs.

Thus, the basic point which your rapporteur would wish to stress is that there is a fundamental distinction between scientific research, on the one hand, and welfare policy on the other. The scientists provide evidence based on objective studies. Welfare policy is made up on the basis of this evidence, plus considerations of commercial viability, availability of finance, knowledge of economic and trade effects, as well as norms of acceptability. It is not for the scientists to make welfare policy, because that is not their job. Welfare policy is drawn up in the Commission, by one person, or, (if your rapporteur understands correctly) by one-third of a person. More will be said later about the need for additional staff; at this stage, your rapporteur wishes only to stress that this distinction between research and policy-making should be maintained, and not emanate from the same source.

Action to be taken

In the light of these considerations, the following action needs to be taken at Community level:

The existing group of scientific experts concerned with animal welfare has an important role to play, and should be responsible for making sure that research results from non-Community countries are evaluated in the same way as results from research carried out in the Member States. The ultimate aim of the efforts towards coordination of research, as described above, is to increase the Commission's capacity for effective action.

The purpose of research should be to provide the Commission with data enabling it to frame uniform legislation on a sounder basis and more rapidly than in the past. Defining research guidelines is a task for the Commission itself. The group should therefore work closely with a separate policy-making group which should be created by increasing staff to form a specialised service.

This specialised service of the Commission should have functions which include the following:

- laying down the guidelines for the desired research,
- assessing whether specific research projects are consistent with the policy guidelines,
- attempting to reach agreement on how to evaluate results,
- accrediting results and ensuring their dissemination,
- initiating cooperation if the planned research project is beyond the capabilities of a single institute or Member State.

Thus, the policy-making group, or specialised service, would be responsible for the development of policy and legislation in respect of farm animal welfare, and would require sufficient financial support to ensure that its work, in harmony with that of the Scientific Committee on Agricultural Research, would ensure the continued functioning of the Scientific Research Programme which is in hand.

NEED FOR A BROAD POLICY APPROACH

It will be apparent that the key problem is to achieve a broad policy approach which will enable animal welfare issues to be taken into account whilst preventing economic hardship to certain sectors, damaging consumer interests and preventing distortions of trade.

Your rapporteur believes that the action which should be taken should be broadly along the following lines:

(a) Ratification by the Community of Council of Europe Convention No. 87 (on animal welfare) and 65 (on animal welfare during transport)

These two Conventions have been approved by the Community¹⁰ but nor formally ratified. While this may appear to be a simple technicality, it is in fact an important commitment. It will then be necessary to frame farther-reaching legislation as soon as possible, to deal with all stages in the rearing of livestock from birth to (where appropriate) slaughter. These may include conditions at the farm and during transport, marketing and slaughtering. The aspects which should be considered include housing, care, transport and stunning.

Legislation should also take into account the fact that the capital invested by producers in their holdings has a long amortization period.

(b) Continuation of research and collection of data

Quite clearly it is imperative that research work should be continued and adequately funded. The Commission's proposal for common agricultural research programmes for the period 1984/1988 was discussed by the Council on 15 November 1983 and an amount of 30 mECUs was agreed instead of the 65 mECUs proposed by the Commission. However, the Council stated that if the Commission provides a report on the use of funds before 1985, the Council will consider increasing this amount. The allocation of funds to different sections has been left to the Commission, but clearly the amount which is available for research into animal welfare issues is small, and, from what has been said above, needs to be increased. It is known that the previous Commissioner for Agriculture laid great emphasis on this agricultural research programme¹¹, pointing out that it encouraged research in Member States, brought together interested scientists, and by editing publications of the results of this work, it constituted a valuable source of information by those persons who are actually running farms and looking after animals.

¹⁰ Council Directive of 12 May 1981, OJ L 150, p.1, 6 June 1981, and Council Decision of 19 June 1978, OJ L 233, p.12, 17 November 1978

¹¹ See Speech by Mr DALSAGER to 7th Plenary Session of Eurogroup, 5.11.83

(c) Implementation at Community Level

Animal welfare policy is not very comprehensive in most Member States of the Community. This is hardly surprising when one considers that quite a few measures aimed at improving welfare go further than what is required from a strictly economic viewpoint. National authorities are understandably reluctant to adopt legislation which will increase costs unless the other Member States do likewise, especially where taking an independent line is likely to affect the competitive position of their own animal rearing sector. Because of these factors it is infinitely preferable to formulate animal welfare policy at Community level. However, the European Community is not in a position at the moment to initiate a dynamic policy. The current situation is characterized by an ad hoc approach without any underlying vision. The main reason for this is the lack of officials responsible for formulating policy and ensuring that it is enforced. A complex question of this nature requires a professional approach.

If the countries of the European Community seriously intend to do something about the situation of farm animals, then a broad policy approach is necessary. Such a policy should include not only veterinary, but also legal, agricultural and economic aspects. It should also devote sufficient attention to informing consumers and producers.

As the rapporteur has indicated, if all these aspects are to be covered, a special section needs to be set up within the Commission to deal with the whole area of farm animal welfare policy. This section must have enough specialist staff to be able to take adequate account of the above-mentioned aspects when drawing up policy.

Increasing the size of the staff concerned with this sector should make it possible to create a link between Community requirements, research and uniform legislation. The policy to be framed should include the definitions of welfare as set out in the Council of Europe Conventions 87 and 65. Once these conventions have been ratified, more specific legislation can then be adopted, which should include the following aspects:

- transport conditions (marketing and trade)
- farm conditions (housing, treatment/care)

In order to avoid the continued introduction of systems or techniques which fail to take account of welfare, it is necessary to lay down welfare standards as soon as possible. These welfare standards should serve as the framework for the development of new methods and or techniques both in animal rearing and in research.

(d) Inspections

Legislation in the welfare field is pointless without guarantees that such legislation will be observed. Effective checks and sanctions in the case of infringements are an essential component of such legislation. In certain Member States, checks on the observance of national legislation are relatively well organized. In the Netherlands, for instance, the Netherlands Association for the Protection of Animals has certain powers in this area as do inspectors from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Part of the Commission's task is to accompany new Community legislation in the field of animal welfare, with proposals for an adequate system of controls, not only in respect of the legal measures taken by the Member States to apply Community legislation, but also to check the practical application of this legislation on the spot.

(e) Public involvement

The whole question of animal welfare should be aired in public, and in a responsible fashion. It is for this reason that your rapporteur has laid particular emphasis on the value of the Hearing, which will hopefully achieve some public awareness, without being involved in the insanities of the more extreme liberationists. The work of the European Parliament's Intergroup for Animal Welfare has been extremely valuable, and provides a forum for ongoing discussion of issues of importance. As a corollary to this activity, it is essential for the Commission to create a consumer orientated information campaign to explain to consumers not only the reasons for the measures to improve animal welfare and the consequent improvements in quality, but also the possible effects on the prices of some products from the intensive animal rearing sector, and the long-term implications for agricultural production systems.

(f) Training of farmers and handlers

As has already been outlined, your rapporteur is convinced that the most important person who can assure the welfare of animals is the person who is in daily contact with them. All farmers and managers of

animal product establishments should therefore be trained in animal welfare, and agricultural advisers and veterinary surgeons as well. Commission publications can serve as a basis for this action, but positive training is essential although expensive. Perhaps the best and most practical way would be to establish manuals on good practice for the protection of animals. These manuals could function as guides for standards of agricultural production, to help technicians, managers, farmers, transporters and others. It should also be remembered that all Community action need not be legislative. There is considerable scope for voluntary improvements.

Improvements on a voluntary basis should be considered in cases where measures to improve animal welfare have little or no impact on the profitability of the livestock holding. Ignorance among livestock farmers must be dispelled by education and information. Virtually all Member States of the Community suffer from this problem, although some more than others. Furthermore, there is still some uncertainty among those responsible for information, research and education about the possibilities of improving animal welfare by relatively simple means.

(g) Effect on exports

Welfare legislation could also have an adverse effect on exports to countries outside the Community. In such cases, it would be a matter of deciding whether or not the conditions of competition could be restored by introducing export subsidies. In addition, proper information on the underlying reasons for animal welfare legislation would probably help to increase consumer awareness and thereby in the longer term contribute to improvements in the selling price.

(h) The question of distortion of trade

Community legislation as described here may affect the conditions of competition between producers in the Member States of the Community and those in non-member countries. Community producers' production costs will increase somewhat in certain cases, which may put them in a slightly more difficult position when it comes to selling their products. Although protective measures at Community borders should only be entertained in extreme cases, this is such a case. Where the introduction of legislation on welfare improvements affects production costs, the Commission should impose a levy on products from outside

the Community. This levy should be equal to the actual increase in cost prices and naturally would lapse once the country concerned had introduced legislation similar to that within the Community.

CONCLUSION

It should be remembered that this report is an interim report, and that specific proposals on the four areas in which the Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is holding a Hearing will be made in Part II of this report. Nevertheless, it should be clear that the first priority is to agree on a broad policy approach, on the lines suggested above, and within this, to aim to achieve progress in specific sectors by specific proposals, which have a broad measure of support and are therefore likely to be implemented.

tabled by Mr WOLTJER, Mr EYRAUD, Mrs VAN HEMELDONCK, Mrs MAIJ-WEGGEN, Mrs CRAWLEY, Mrs ROTHE, Sir John STEWART-CLARK, Mr BEYER DE RYKE, Ms QUIN and Mr LALOR pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure on animal welfare policy

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the European Convention for the protection of animals during international transport (No. 65),
 - having regard to Recommendation 641 on animal welfare in intensive rearing,
 - having regard to the proposal for a Council decision adopting joint research programmes and programmes for coordinating agricultural research,
- (a) whereas the past decades have seen significant developments in the business structure of agriculture, in particular in the (intensive) animal rearing sector,
- (b) whereas these developments have brought about great changes in the living conditions and welfare of the animals concerned,
- (c) recognizing that it is an economic necessity for producers in many cases to make use of technical possibilities,
- (d) aware, however, that recent developments in the animal rearing sector have rightly given rise to concern, which requires a response at policy level,
- (e) whereas improvements in the welfare of farm animals frequently have economic repercussions,
- (f) whereas measures to improve the welfare of farm animals can have effects on the formation of consumer prices and the quality of some products in the intensive animal rearing sector,
- (g) realizing, therefore, that legislation in this area should preferably be framed at Community level.
1. Hopes that in those cases where measures relating to animal welfare conflict with cost-benefit considerations and where there are considerable differences in Member States' legislation in this area, the Commission will bring forward directives aimed at achieving the most favourable level of harmonization possible;
 2. Believes that future directives must be based on the definition of welfare as adopted by the Council of Europe (Convention 641, Article 3):
 3. Hopes that the Council of Europe Conventions 641 (on animal welfare) and 65 (on animal welfare during transport) will be adopted by the Communities;

4. Is of the opinion that research has provided sufficient findings to enable legislation to be adopted at an early date;
5. Calls for future necessary research to be coordinated and initiated on a joint basis to a greater extent than in the past;
6. Hopes that it may be made easier for the existing group of experts on animal welfare to perform their coordinating and consultative role;
7. Considers that this group of experts should lay down the guidelines for future necessary research and, under the responsibility of the Commission, should:
 - assess whether or not specific research projects are consistent with the policy guidelines,
 - endeavour to reach agreement on criteria for assessing research findings and to ensure their dissemination,
 - initiate cooperation if the intended research project is beyond the capabilities of one institute or one Member State,
 - ensure that research findings from outside the Community are also used for the benefit of the Commission's policy;
8. Takes the view that the broad lines of research activity should be defined in close consultation with the Commission, which is and should remain responsible for matters of animal welfare policy;
9. Calls on the Commission to publish annually a report of the progress made in its research activities;
10. Believes that the broad acceptance of Conventions 641 and 65 of the Council of Europe should be followed by more specific legislation covering the following aspects:

- farm conditions (housing, treatment/care)
- trade conditions (marketing and transport)
- slaughterhouse conditions (treatment and stunning);

11. Is of the opinion that the introduction and use of medicines and hormones may only be allowed to protect the health of animals and human beings;
12. Calls for the laying down of welfare standards for the rearing of various categories of farm animals, which should serve as a framework for the development of new techniques or methods of animal rearing;
13. Believes that a broad policy approach is necessary for real progress to be achieved in the field of animal welfare;
14. Considers that such a broad policy approach is only possible if the Commission indicates its importance by creating a special policy section to deal with animal welfare matters;
15. Takes the view that this section must be staffed by at least one or more veterinarians, legal experts, economists, agricultural and information experts;
16. Is aware that an effective policy in this area is only possible if the Community is prepared to provide sufficient financial support both for the functioning of the group of experts on animal welfare and for the special policy section of the Commission;
17. Calls on the Commission to bring forward proposals to ensure that new directives are observed in the Member States and that an appropriate control will be established;
18. Considers that measures in the field of animal welfare should be accompanied by measures aimed at avoiding distortion of the conditions of competition between the animal rearing sector in the Community and in non-member countries;
19. Calls on the Commission to initiate, as part of its policy, a consumer-orientated information campaign to explain to consumers not only the reasons for the measures to improve animal welfare and the consequent improvements in quality, but also the possible effects on the price formation of some products from the intensive animal rearing sector;
20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

