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Delivering Good Animal Welfare

A draft delivery strategy under the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy

November 2006

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Published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Section 1 - Summary

1.1 Introduction

As noted in the Brambell Report¹ on the welfare of animals in intensive livestock systems, the evolution of our society has historically been marked by increasing concerns for the welfare of animals. This concern has been reflected by successive Governments in legislation; the UK was the progenitor of welfare legislation in the mid-nineteenth Century, and since then has developed a strong body of domestic legislation, as well as playing a major role in its development at European level.

Animal welfare is essentially about the quality of life of animals. The Farm Animal Welfare Council's Five Freedoms express a standard of welfare in terms of ideals. They state that animals should be free from hunger and thirst; discomfort; pain, injury or disease; from fear and distress; and free to express normal behaviour.

However, policy decisions on welfare also involve value judgements based on a range of factors (including environmental, cultural, religious, social and economic considerations), which must be weighed against each other. The outcome of these judgements over time has established a baseline of required animal welfare standards which is encapsulated in the body of legislation society has today.

The Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain (AHWS) (www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/ahws/ahws.pdf) set out in broad terms a vision which includes animal welfare, and planned animal welfare outcomes and targets. Actions to deliver the AHWS in England were set out in an implementation plan (http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/ahws/strategy/implementation_plan.pdf) delivery of which is monitored by an independent advisory group known as the England Implementation Group (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/ahws/eig/index.htm>).

A number of stakeholders have said that they would like to see greater detail on the Government's goals for animal welfare. This draft Animal Welfare Delivery Strategy is consistent with the overarching AHWS but sets out in more detail our priority areas of focus, and our vision for how welfare should be delivered in the future.

¹ *Report of the Technical Committee to Enquire into the Welfare of Animals kept under Intensive Livestock Husbandry Systems*, chaired by Prof. F.W.Rogers Brambell, F.R.S. Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in December, 1965. Reprinted 1980.

1.2 A new approach

Legislation has played a key role in achieving progress to date, along with advances in veterinary medicine, technology and best practice in animal keeping. The draft Delivery Strategy sets out Government's view that success in the future will mean a move away from the traditional legislative approach, towards delivery of outcomes through other, more innovative means. This will mean effective enforcement of existing regulations, but also a greater emphasis on stakeholders and Government working together to deliver good welfare, with clarity about their respective roles and responsibilities.

1.3 Benefits

This Strategy should bring real benefits:

- A clear national framework for action to deliver good animal welfare, which defines clear roles and responsibilities for all those involved in the care of animals;
- Clear focus and principles with which to prioritise future resource decisions;
- Validated and trusted national assurance schemes for welfare, which are easily identified and understood by consumers;
- Improved capture of information on existing animal welfare standards and trends over time;
- An agreed policy framework for the identification of research priorities, taking account of international developments, with the results of research put into practice and used to inform policies;
- A proportionate and targeted enforcement approach;
- Minimised administrative burdens on businesses;
- An increased recognition across society of the need to care for the welfare of animals; and
- Realised economic benefits from good welfare systems for producers.

1.4 Work elsewhere

The draft Delivery Strategy covers England only, but it cannot be implemented in isolation. The Scottish Executive and National Assembly for Wales are considering similar issues themselves, and Defra will facilitate joint working with them, to monitor progress and to share best practice.

In implementing the Delivery Strategy account must also be taken of international thinking, both at EU level and further afield. In particular the objectives and areas for action in the EU Community Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2006-2010 (www.europa.eu.int/comm/food/animal/welfare/actionplan/actionplan_en.htm). Account must also be taken of ongoing work in the Council of Europe, including on the Conventions for the Protection of Animals during Transport for Farming Purposes, at Slaughter, and Protection of Pet Animals, and OIE, for example welfare chapters including Transport of animals by Road, Rail and Sea and at Slaughter and Killing.

1.5 Consultation

It is important that the Strategy is developed in an open and transparent manner. Initial thinking was informed by informal consultation with a small number of key welfare stakeholders including welfare groups, industry and enforcement bodies. The detailed draft was subsequently developed with a small Advisory Group, which comprised members of the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy England Implementation Group (EIG), Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC), Companion Animal Welfare Council (CAWC), the Zoos Forum and Defra representatives.

1.6 Action plan

Following publication of the final Delivery Strategy, a specific Action Plan will be established beneath it, setting out key targets and actions, timescales, the names of those responsible for delivering them, and resource commitments. This detailed Action Plan will be agreed through consultation with those responsible for delivery and resources. It will be a living document, adapted as objectives are met, new priorities identified and new thinking emerges, and it will be published on-line. Some example action tables are set out at the end of the Strategy, in order to stimulate thinking about the kinds of commitments that could be included in the Plan.

1.7 Monitoring progress

The EIG has responsibility for monitoring progress on implementation of the AHWS and its Implementation Plan in England. It will have a similar responsibility for the Delivery Strategy and Action Plan, overseeing the progress made by Government, industry and others responsible for delivering good animal welfare.

Section 2 - The Delivery Strategy

2.1 Scope

The Delivery Strategy applies to vertebrate² animals, which is used here to mean those for which humans have responsibility or over which they have control. Specifically, it covers:

- farm animals³;
- animals used for entertainment and recreation;
- companion animals;
- animals used in sport (whilst under the control of humans whether on a permanent or temporary basis);
- working animals;
- animals of a kind that are commonly domesticated that are living in the wild⁴; and
- wild animals, when under the control of humans.

It does not cover:

- wild animals, when not under the control of humans;
- animals involved in the normal course of fishing;
- animals used in research⁵.

The scope is consistent with that of the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy (AHWS). Government policy on diseases of wild animals will be set out in its forthcoming Wildlife Health Strategy. A further welfare strategy, which will focus on the welfare of wild animals under the influence of man, will be developed in due course.

² Currently considered to be the only demonstrably sentient animals, and evidenced to be capable of experiencing pain or suffering from poor standards of welfare.

³ Including farmed fish.

⁴ In line with the scope of the Animal Welfare Act, this covers animals that are of a kind commonly domesticated in the British Islands, whether they can be said to be under the control of man or not. This means that, for example, stray dogs and feral cats are covered. Kinds of animals which are to be considered commonly domesticated in the British Islands are those whose collective behaviour, life cycle, or physiology has been altered as a result of their breeding and living conditions being under human control, in the British Islands, for multiple generations. Animals of a kind not commonly domesticated in the British Islands are only covered to the extent that they are under the control of man or are not living independently in the wild. It also covers animals that are not living in a wild state, meaning those which have ceased to be under the control of man but are not yet living wild, including (though not limited to) animals which have escaped, for example from a zoo or circus.

⁵ The use of animals in scientific procedures is regulated by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

QUESTION 1:

- i) Does the scope proposed cover the right ground?**
- ii) Is it right that it applies only to vertebrate animals? Which if any other groups of animals should be included and why?**

2.2 Vision

All those who care for animals understand, accept and meet their responsibility to ensure good standards of welfare for them, and have the necessary skills and knowledge to manage and minimise risks of harm (including through the prevention of preventable problems), and to recognise and deal promptly with other problems as they arise.

Good animal welfare provides a range of indirect benefits to society. It can support delivery of environmental goals (examples include the benefits of locally-assured production); social goals (farming for example is an integral part of rural communities and companion animals and those used for sport and recreation make a significant contribution to all communities); and economic goals (relating as it does to the viability of numerous industries in the UK).

In addition to these benefits, the Government believes that those who care for animals have a duty to ensure that they are treated appropriately and humanely, and that they are not subjected to cruelty or abuse. In addition they must meet their needs and must take the necessary steps to manage and minimise the risk of harm to them. What constitutes 'appropriate' levels of treatment will vary depending on factors such as species and the nature of the relationship between the animal concerned and humans – for example whether they are kept for food production or as pets.

Good welfare should apply across an animal's lifetime, including in the manner and timing of its death. Use of euthanasia, or killing an animal for other reasons, when carried out humanely, does not compromise good animal welfare.

The approach of successive Governments to welfare problems has been to develop and enforce, with partners here and in international fora, policies and legislation that have traditionally been aimed at achieving progressive improvements in welfare (recognising that a balance must be struck between welfare considerations and related economic and social goals). There is now, therefore, a significant body of European and domestic welfare legislation in place, and the available evidence suggests that this has been broadly successful at improving measurable standards of welfare in the UK.

However there are some areas where despite legislation significant welfare problems remain. Examples include the incidence of lameness in dairy cattle and the severe genetic problems associated with the selective breeding of certain companion animals. It is time to assess the current approach to welfare with a view to making progress in these areas.

QUESTION 2:

- i) Is the vision sufficiently challenging/aspirational?***
- ii) Is the word “care” used here sufficiently strong?***
- iii) Is the emphasis on the individual responsibility of animal keepers right?***

2.3 A new approach

This Strategy sets out a new approach for the future, one that moves beyond legislation - led as it is by Government - and utilises novel, creative and innovative delivery mechanisms.

These delivery mechanisms could include:

- For food and animal products, assured welfare standards that are trusted and demanded by an informed consumer and which incentivise producers with tangible benefits;
- Codes of Practice setting out requirements for good welfare and which promulgate best practice;
- Simple, co-ordinated communications providing information and advice to animal keepers; and
- Training and education, again including dissemination of best practice.

It will continue to be Government’s role to enforce appropriate baseline standards of welfare through regulation. Animal welfare legislation is also not set in stone, and will be amended if there are significant changes in our knowledge of the welfare needs of animals, in production systems or in society’s wishes. Wherever possible, Government will pursue any new legislative proposals at EU level, and in the appropriate international fora.

However, standards above this baseline should be delivered by stakeholders, facilitated by Government, with an increasing emphasis on sharing responsibility for achieving good animal welfare. In some cases Government may have a critical role, working with stakeholders (for example in EU negotiations on standards and labelling); in others it may be appropriate for Government to act simply as a facilitator, bringing together interested parties and providing guidance and information or backing for initiatives that are entirely stakeholder-owned. ‘Stakeholders’ here means all those who keep or interact with animals - including but not limited to companion animals, farmed animals including fish, animals that perform and those that are kept in zoos.

This approach should help to achieve the aim set out in the vision, which is to engender a greater sense of responsibility for ensuring good standards of welfare amongst animal carers and all those who interact with animals.

The most appropriate way to pursue improvements in welfare will depend on the issue concerned, and resources will be targeted to ensure best effect. Criteria for prioritising areas of focus are set out in more detail below.

QUESTION 3:

- i) To what extent will the proposed new approach help to improve achievement of good standards of animal welfare?***
- ii) Which of the proposed alternative delivery mechanisms would be most successful, in your view? Can you suggest any others?***

Current good practice

Many of the production industries are already proactively pursuing improvements in welfare and significant action is underway in several areas. Examples include:

- Standards for mortality in transport in the meat chicken industry have been set, through contracts with retailers⁶;
- A high welfare, high throughput stun/kill system for trout has been developed, tested and put into commercial use by the inland farmed fish industry. Further work is being done for other fish species, including halibut;
- Training schemes/qualifications for pig keepers are being developed by the pig sector, which qualify the stock-keeper for a certificate of competence. The scheme focuses on making career recognition and continuing professional development available for the whole industry;
- Assurance schemes that are recognised by all parties as adding value to the legal welfare requirements. These are subject to both internal and external auditing to ensure that standards are met. Examples include Assured Chicken Production under the Assured Food Standards umbrella and the RSPCA Freedom Food mark;

⁶ Mortality levels are currently 0.5% per consignment.

For companion and other non-farmed animals there have been similar proactive moves by stakeholders to improve welfare practice. Examples include:

- The wealth of guide books and advice produced by welfare organisations and professional associations;
- The use of accredited breeding schemes (for example on the control and elimination of inherited dog diseases);
- Developments in veterinary medicine, including improved analgesics and anaesthetics, the reduction of common companion animal diseases through the introduction of vaccines, and improvements in the diets of companion animals; and
- The development of vocational courses aimed at improving the competency of those involved in the care of animals.

2.4 Roles and responsibilities

All those who interact with animals or who benefit from products made from them have responsibilities to consider, and in some cases provide for, their welfare.

Specific responsibilities for each of the main groups with an interest are set out below:

Individual animal owners and users of animals and animal products should fulfil a duty of care for animals in their charge and have a responsibility as members of the community for the welfare of animals. This duty of care includes:

- Understanding, supporting, and complying with animal welfare best practice contained in relevant legislation, codes of practice, guidelines and quality assurance programmes;
- Ensuring that the management of their animals does not impact adversely on other animals; and
- Having regard to the welfare provenance of the animals and products that they buy.

Stakeholder organisations (including industry groups and welfare organisations) should:

- Represent their interests and responsibilities on animal welfare issues in relevant fora in an appropriate way;
- Participate in the development of legislation, codes, policies and programmes aimed at delivering appropriate animal welfare outcomes;
- Promote and seek to ensure the implementation of the welfare standards required of industries, and co-ordination of such activities to achieve consistent, open and transparent action and to encourage best practice;
- Engage effectively with enforcement agencies at all levels;
- Encourage the adoption of best practice, national codes and standards;
- Provide their members, animal keepers and the wider public with information, education and training;
- Sponsor or undertake high quality scientific research and surveillance activities to improve understanding of existing standards and of trends and to help define effective solutions;
- Participate in the regular evaluation of action to deliver good welfare;
- Work effectively with other interested parties to achieve the best possible results from action to improve animal welfare.

Central Government (including its agencies, where appropriate) should:

- Use its unique position and expertise to drive forward collective action to improve achievement of welfare outcomes;
- Promote the UK's position on animal welfare in international fora and conduct negotiations;
- Prepare and implement legislation and codes of practice when necessary, and promote them to the public and stakeholders, including through early consultation;
- Consider and pursue alternatives to regulation where appropriate, with a view to minimising burdens, including through the provision of joined-up advice;
- Co-ordinate enforcement bodies to achieve consistent, open and transparent enforcement, and encourage best practice;
- Identify, resource and facilitate high quality scientific research and surveillance activities to improve understanding of existing standards and of trends and to help define effective solutions;
- Facilitate provision of information, education and training to animal keepers and the wider public;
- Develop and co-ordinate a national approach to emergency animal welfare planning, preparedness and response;
- Observe appropriate standards of welfare in its direct dealings with animals;
- Regularly evaluate action to deliver good welfare and modify policies or activities as needed;
- Work effectively with other interested parties to achieve the best possible results from action to improve animal welfare.

Local Authorities (including LACORS) should:

- Enforce animal welfare legislation and ensure consistency of enforcement approach across different Local Authorities;
- Participate in the development of codes, policies and programmes aimed at delivering appropriate animal welfare outcomes;
- Provide data to determine baselines and participate in on-going surveillance, monitoring of standards and evaluation of enforcement delivery;
- Provide their staff and the community with factual information on animal care and good welfare and encourage the adoption of best practice;
- Facilitate provision of information, education and training to animal keepers and the wider public, including those in schools and colleges;
- Work effectively with other interested parties to achieve the best possible results from action to improve animal welfare.

QUESTION 4:

- i) Is the proposed balance of responsibilities between Government and stakeholders right?***
- ii) Would you add or exclude any specific responsibilities from any of the groups? (please indicate to which group your suggestions refer)***
- iii) Are the responsibilities proposed by Defra reasonable expectations for all animal keepers, including those individuals who purchase and care for their animals on a non-commercial basis (for example pet owners)?***
- iv) Is it reasonable to require consumers of animals and animal products to 'have regard to' the welfare provenance of their purchases? Here 'have regard to' is used to mean 'consider'.***

2.5 Prioritisation

Success - meaningful improvements in welfare in the UK - will come only if collective efforts are focused on areas of agreed priority. The choice of priority areas for action will involve difficult judgements between competing demands. In making these difficult decisions, Government and its partners will be guided by the following agreed principles:

- The number of animals affected;
- The duration of the welfare problem experienced by each affected animal;
- The impact of the problem on, separately, freedom from:
 - Hunger and thirst
 - Discomfort
 - Pain and injury
 - Disease
 - Ability to express normal behaviour
 - Fear and distress;
- Whether or not improvement is achievable and measurable; and
- For notifiable diseases, the welfare impact of imposing statutory control measures on animals not affected by the disease.

QUESTION 5:

Which of these principles are the most important (e.g. can you give a top 3?)

2.6 Strategic goals

The Vision may be achieved in the following ways (please note that these goals are **not** listed in a priority order):

Goal 1

Those who interact with animals have the necessary skills and knowledge to ensure appropriate standards of animal welfare.

Further improvements in welfare require a better understanding and acceptance of welfare responsibilities by individual animal keepers and the wider public. Many bodies currently provide information, advice and training targeted to specific groups of animal keepers. These include breeder's organisations, the professional associations of those working in the animal industries, and the Land-based and Environment Sector Skills Council (LANTRA), amongst others.

In addition, knowledge transfer is an important element of the Government's approach to animal welfare, as set out in the 'prevention is better than cure' theme in the AHWS. Government provides expert advice through roadshows, workshops and publications. In particular, the Government promotes good husbandry advice to farmers on a variety of topical welfare issues each year, including through seminars.

However individual animal keepers are often targeted by multiple initiatives, and can receive information and training from a variety of sources, whilst others may receive none at all. This may lead to overlaps, contradictions or gaps and may not provide clear and comprehensive messages on welfare responsibilities.

Government will increasingly work with others, and will seek to facilitate joined-up working and 'one-stop-shop' type initiatives that improve the ease of access for the user and minimise burdens. The Action Plan will set out the key priority areas as agreed with partners, which could include raising public awareness on welfare issues, including through the school system, the provision of advice/guidance on breeding policies and on the ways animals should be kept, and formal welfare training schemes.

Moving towards joint working in this area, with greater co-ordination, should improve animal welfare by assuring the quality of information being communicated, and improving the penetration, coverage and ease of access of initiatives.

QUESTION 6:

- i) To what extent will improving the quality, coverage and penetration of information/training/education available to animal keepers help drive improvements in animal welfare?***
- ii) Is the approach appropriate for all types of animal keepers, including non-commercial owners?***

Goal 2

Animal welfare policy based on sound scientific research, practical experience and other relevant evidence.

Robust measurements and indicators of animal welfare, surveillance to allow benchmarking of standards across the board, and observance of trends are all crucial tools for improving welfare, particularly for identifying sectors/areas where priority action is needed. There are some good examples of surveillance currently undertaken by independent researchers, stakeholders and by Government, but it is striking that at present there is no robust, co-ordinated, shared data set available with which to baseline existing standards. A first priority for this goal should therefore be efforts to develop robust welfare indicators, interpretation tools and surveillance techniques.

Equally important is the thorough evaluation of whether actions taken have led to improvements. The impacts of this Delivery Strategy and its Action Plan on welfare will therefore be assessed, and lessons learnt incorporated into future work.

Government will continue to support research and will increasingly look to stakeholder groups for input – for example on identification of research priorities and selection of project proposals and to take the lead on funding in some areas.

‘Pure’ scientific research will continue to be vital but this Strategy seeks progress across a range of disciplines, including social and economic research and other sources of knowledge relevant to improving welfare.

Work to improve the evidence base will take account of action at EU level, including plans to develop standardised European welfare indicators under the EU’s Community Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals.

Current good practice

There are some examples of good practice in the sponsorship and use of evidence by stakeholders, and of joint working between stakeholders and Government in this area. These include:

- Sponsorship of fundamental and applied research projects and PHD placements by welfare groups, independent trusts and the Research Councils;
- Voluntary at-slaughter surveillance schemes that provide information on welfare issues to individual producers;
- Forthcoming mandatory checks for all species at slaughter houses to ensure compliance with welfare legislation, the results of which will be fed back to producers and to Government;
- Jointly-funded LINK projects providing useful outputs for both Government and industry. An example is the Robust Dairy Cow project;⁷
- Good practical collaboration between research contractors and individual producers, for example during the data collection phase of Government-funded research projects;

QUESTION 7:

Do you agree with the supposition that there is no shared, robust data with which to baseline existing standards?

⁷ The Robust Dairy Cow project brings together Government, academic researchers, industry organisations and an animal welfare body. The project, which started in 2004, aims to increase the welfare and longevity of dairy cows by including traits underlying 'robustness' in breeding indices, and to identify an indicator of environmental sensitivity that would allow breeders to select bulls that are environmental 'specialists' or 'generalists'.

Goal 3

Economic markets which function effectively and transparently so customers can make informed choices based on welfare provenance.

This goal aims to improve the provision of information to consumers on the welfare provenance of the animals and animal products that they intend to purchase, so that they can make informed choices and so that high welfare standards can contribute to a competitive and sustainable UK farming sector and animal industries. Whilst it does cover the provision of suitable information on, for example, prospective pets, it will more frequently be relevant to the provision of information to consumers when purchasing food and other products made from animals.

In a market where good welfare represents added value for consumers, products from animals raised according to high welfare standards should command a premium. These benefits must properly incentivise good welfare practices by producers, and rewards should be returned to them. Industry can and should make better use of assurance schemes and labelling, to ensure clear, consistent and trusted messages for consumers about the welfare provenance of the animals and products that they value, and retailers should ensure that rewards are returned to the producer.

The UK farming industry should be able to compete on this basis in a fair and equal way with its international competitors, with UK consumers able to make informed choices on the basis of clear welfare standards. Welfare rules in the UK and other Member States of the EU should therefore be fully aligned to provide for good animal welfare without disadvantaging UK producers. EU welfare rules must be based on sound evidence and be risk-based and implementable. They must provide measurable welfare outcomes and compliance across the EU must be consistent and assured, whilst avoiding the export of welfare problems to other continents or the displacement of EU production by imported animals or products of lower welfare provenance.

QUESTION 8:

- i) Will the provision of more comprehensive and standardised information on welfare provenance facilitate consumer selection of animals and products on welfare grounds?***
- ii) Can you suggest how better use could be made of assurance schemes and/or labelling?***

Goal 4

Compliance with welfare rules, with efficient and effective enforcement, using risk-based assessments, and avoiding unnecessary burdens on animal keepers.

This reflects the AHWS vision that legislative controls must be appropriate, and must be consistently and effectively enforced by all enforcement bodies in a risk-based manner. Enforcement is not just about prosecution and penalties, but includes the provision of suitable advice and guidance to animal keepers.

The application of welfare standards and enforcement are not limited to Government, but encompass the work of a number of stakeholder groups, including self-regulation by industry and companion animal organisations and breed societies, assurance schemes, and the contractual requirements imposed by retailers on producers. Action by all those with an enforcement role will therefore be crucial.

Achieving this goal will bring benefits for both enforcers and keepers. Risk-based assessments carry inherent benefits for those who comply, since inspections are targeted towards those less likely to meet their responsibilities, and compliant individuals will therefore require fewer checks. They also carry benefits for the enforcement agent, since risk-based checks allow better targeting of limited resources.

Reducing unnecessary burdens on keepers could potentially include a wide range of initiatives. These could include reducing multiple checks/assessments by statutory regulators; provision of comprehensive information on legislative requirements in an easy to access, 'one-stop-shop' format; publication of open and transparent enforcement policies by regulators; reducing the burden of data provision on producers and of licensing/registration requirements; and assessment of the burden of existing and forthcoming EU legislation, with a view to simplification where possible.

QUESTION 9:

- i) Is there room for greater self monitoring/regulation by stakeholder organisations? If so, how?***
- ii) Can you suggest other ways of reducing the burden of compliance with legislation on animal keepers?***

Goal 5

Globally accepted animal welfare standards that are embedded in international legislation and agreements.

People across the globe interact with animals in a variety of ways, and animal welfare is a shared concern that goes beyond national or regional boundaries. In defining and agreeing common welfare standards the significant social, economic, religious and cultural differences between societies must be recognised, but these should not deter the international community from the pursuit of humane care and treatment for all animals, wherever they are kept.

Collaborative progress towards mutually acceptable global standards is essential, in order to drive improvements where they are needed, and to acknowledge best practice where it is observed.

The Government recognises the need to work with other countries and international organisations to develop agreed standards as a basis for lateral and multilateral agreements, and will continue to work for such standards with its international partners and to support the work of the EU, Council of Europe, the OIE and others, where they promote collaboration between players.

Standards must be appropriate to local production systems and should reflect the inherent differences between them, including the specifics of where welfare is likely to be promoted or disadvantaged in a particular area. Furthermore, it is vital that any agreed international standards do not compromise producers in developing countries, or constitute a barrier to trade.

QUESTION 10:

Should non-Governmental and stakeholder organisations have a role in representing the UK in international fora? If so, how should these organisations and Government work together to get the best results internationally?

QUESTION 11:

- i) Is the focus of these 5 Goals right? Do they cover the most strategically important areas? Is anything missing?*
- ii) Should the 5 Goals be put into a priority order? If so, in what order would you list them?*

2.7 Responsibility sharing and implementation: the way forward

This Strategy outlines a new approach to the delivery of good animal welfare. It sets out Government's vision for a new relationship with stakeholders, one that will lead to a more appropriate balance in responsibilities between stakeholders and Government. Increasingly the focus will be on delivery of welfare outcomes through joint working, or by stakeholder-owned initiatives. This shared responsibility will also require shared accountability, and the performance of all participants will need to be independently monitored and assessed.

For its part, Government will commit to a more open decision-making process, with stakeholders involved from an early stage in prioritisation and in resource allocation. Sharing responsibility in this new way is consistent with both the vision set out in the AHWS and the Government's cost and responsibility sharing agenda, which is being taken forward in relation to wider animal health activities, and on which the Government plans to consult towards the end of 2006.

Responsibility sharing on welfare should not involve significant additional costs or burdens for stakeholders. Commitments will be developed and agreed with them as part of the Action Planning process, which will focus at first on identifying, bringing together and improving co-ordination between existing initiatives. The Action Plan will be a living document, to be revised over time as priorities and delivery of objectives are assessed.

The Action Plan will contain detailed objectives and actions, each with timescales, budgets and lead delivery agents. Below are tables giving example actions for each Strategic Goal, for stakeholders and for Government. Please note that they are **examples** only and are included for illustrative purposes. The detail of the Action Plan will be developed with stakeholders and published separately from this Strategy as a stand-alone document.

Goal 1 <i>Those who interact with animals have the necessary skills and knowledge to ensure appropriate standards of animal welfare.</i>	
Objective: Those who interact with animals understand their specific responsibilities	
Action – Government: Provision of training to statutory enforcement bodies on requirements of Animal Welfare Act	Action – Stakeholder: Welfare organisations to update the content of their education programmes to reflect the Animal Welfare Act
Outcomes expected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement bodies know and understand changes that the Animal Welfare Act will make, and what their powers and responsibilities are; • Clarity on which body has the lead interest on each of the activities covered by the Act; • Act does not place an additional burden on the police; • Written concordat outlining which organisation does what 	Outcomes expected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised information packs for schools, colleges and the general public; • Revised syllabuses for animal husbandry courses; • Improved understanding and knowledge about the required standards of animal care, amongst the general public and animal keepers
Priority: High	Priority: High
Target date: April 2007	Target date: April 2007

Goal 2 <i>Animal welfare policy based on sound scientific research, practical experience and other relevant evidence</i>	
Objective: An improved evidence base	
Action – Government: Set up new sectoral working groups, to include welfare research, to determine funding priorities	Action – Stakeholder: Red Meat Code Sectoral Group
Outcomes expected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders engaged in determining research priorities • Greater acceptance and uptake of research outputs 	Outcomes expected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red meat industry have a suitable forum with which to engage with Government on key regulatory issues
Priority: High	Priority: High
Target date: End 2007	Target date: March 2007

Goal 3 <i>Economic markets which function effectively and transparently so customers can make informed choices based on welfare provenance</i>	
Objective: Animal products labelled with clear, consistent information on welfare provenance	
Action – Government: Liaise with major retailers to agree support for a consistent labelling framework	Action – Stakeholder: Freedom Food activity to support development of farm assurance schemes internationally, through use of their international networks and training through Member States and Accession Countries
Outcomes expected: • Discussions with retailers initiated	Outcomes expected: • Profile of industry standards raised and minimum legal framework enhanced
Priority: Medium	Priority: Medium
Target date: Summer 2007	Target date: 2008

Goal 4 <i>Compliance with welfare rules, with efficient and effective enforcement, using risk-based assessments, and avoiding unnecessary burdens on animal keepers</i>	
Objective: Effective and consistent enforcement of legislative requirements	
Action – Government: 80% of inspections under cross-compliance to be risk-based	Action – Stakeholder: Self-regulation by game bird industry under the Animal Welfare Act
Outcomes expected: • Inspections targeted to farms where risks of welfare problems are greatest	Outcomes expected: • Self-regulation by industry using Defra-published Code of Practice
Priority: Medium	Priority: Medium
Target date: January 2007	Target date: Early 2009

Goal 5 <i>Globally accepted animal welfare standards that are embedded in international legislation and agreements</i>	
Objective: International recognition that animal welfare is a public good	
Action – Government: Promote and support EC, OIE and Council of Europe (CoE) initiatives to develop standards and guidelines on animal welfare	Action – Stakeholder: World Society for the Protection of Animals initiative to gain agreement to a United Nations declaration on animal welfare
Outcomes expected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement of Directive on Meat Chickens • Agreement on new CoE recommendations for killing of farmed fish • Revisions to OIE guidelines on slaughter and killing and on transport by road and sea 	Outcomes expected <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A universal declaration for animal welfare agreed and supported by the UN • Increased numbers of Governments worldwide implementing effective national legislation that protects all animals from cruelty and abuse.
Priority: High	Priority: High
Target date: end 2007	Target date: 2030 (long term)

QUESTION 12:

- i) Does the proposed structure of the action tables cover all of the important issues?*
- ii) Can you suggest any specific actions that your organisation is/could commit to taking forward as part of the Action Plan?*

QUESTION 13:

Do you have any other general comments not reflected elsewhere in your response?