



*Looking ahead:
'major' farm animal welfare issues, and
how/what research could assist...*

@AWSC
Farm Animal Research Planning Seminar
– 5 December 2008

How do we decide what is 'major'?

Limited resources, so...

Criteria includes:

- Largest number of individuals affected
- Greatest confirmed suffering (time, degree)
- Prospects for change

Thus – we do already focus much of our attention on farm animals – though as a peak body we advocate for reform on a whole raft of issues.

Scientific research and development can assist us...

First - to make decisions about what to focus on
– i.e. scientific evidence of suffering and its degree,
and

Second - to assist us to argue for reform

- confirming the problem and
- to show how change can occur, e.g. to develop alternatives and/or to demonstrate the advantages of an alternate system

Looming issues for the next 5 years?

1. Factory farming - confinement



Looming issues for the next 5 years?

2. Transport
– esp.
long
distance/
live export...



Looming issues for the next 5 years?

2. Transport
(continued)
and esp.
bobby calf
transport.



Looming issues for the next 5 years?

3. Surgical mutilations

– dehorning,
castration,
tail docking,
teethclipping,
debeaking etc



Research?

Not all require 'more' research – a political decision is the best solution in our view for some

e.g. live export should be banned because we cannot significantly further reduce the on-board suffering, nor control what occurs in other lands, and battery caging of hens and sow stalls should be banned because they demonstrably cause suffering etc.

What we do see as important:

- Research and development of training to assist factory farming enterprises to successfully and humanely convert to freer systems of husbandry.
- Research to find genetic or other (e.g. husbandry changes/skills) solutions to current mutilations (e.g. dehorning, debeaking, mulesing etc).
- Development of practical effective analgesics for mutilations whilst they remain in use.
- **Gain and retain welfare reforms against looming pressures of climate change and economic downturn.**