

Universities Federation for Animal Welfare News-Sheet, Spring 2007

Garden Bird Health Initiative
Disease outbreak investigated



Quality of Life: The Heart of the Matter
Over 230 delegates from 22 countries attend successful symposium



Vacation Scholars Meeting
The 9th annual meeting at the University of Newcastle



The Animal Welfare Act
New responsibilities



Letter from the Chairman

It was a very great pleasure to be elected Chairman of Council at the AGM last October, and I am very mindful of the challenges which flow not only from following in the footsteps of Peter Biggs, but also the many challenges which face UFAW as we strive to better the lot of animals which share this planet with us. This News Sheet brings you a flavour of the activities to which I refer. The very successful Quality of Life symposium is testimony to the effectiveness of the UFAW staff in promoting wide understanding of issues surrounding the wellbeing of animals. It is three years since the garden bird health initiative was launched and already some important findings have emerged relating to the impact of such practices on the health of our wild bird

population; UFAW is working to identify means by which such problems can be minimized. The University Links Scheme continues to grow and attracts interest from youngsters who will shortly be in a position to contribute to animal welfare in their own professional careers.

Whilst the dedication and hard work of UFAW staff can go far to advance our cause, the charity needs the support of all those interested in this field and I urge you to find out more about our activities (www.ufaw.org.uk) and to support us in any way that you can.

B R How



Garden Bird Health initiative tackles disease outbreak

During the summer of 2006 reports began to come in of widespread unusual mortality incidents in garden birds. This was investigated through the GBHi surveillance and research network coordinated by Becki Lawson and Andrew Cunningham at the Institute of Zoology.

Many of the incidents were found to be caused by the unicellular parasite – *Trichomonas*. This is a well-known parasite of pigeons, doves and gamebirds but it has not been previously observed to cause such widespread disease in finches: greenfinches and chaffinches being the species most commonly affected. Because of the existence of the GBHi scheme it was possible to rapidly identify the cause, to track the spread and pattern of this disease (cases occurred in many parts of the UK), and to provide information to the public and guidance about minimising the risks to garden birds (see the UFAW GBHi website).

From the number of reports received, it would appear that very large numbers of birds were affected. The disease has major welfare implications. *Trichomonas* lives mainly in

the upper digestive tract of its hosts and it seems likely that it is spread mainly through food or water contaminated by the saliva of affected birds. Bird feeder and water bath hygiene are therefore very important.

UFAW established the GBHi about three years ago to investigate problems such as this, which might be related to the scale and methods of garden bird feeding, and to develop ways to tackle and prevent them. The activities of humans often affect the quality of lives of wildlife much more than is generally known and the GBHi is pioneering research in this field: to find welfare friendly ways to co-exist.

We are most grateful to CJ Wildbird Foods Ltd, Gardman Ltd, Cranswick Pet Products, The Birdcare Standards Association, The British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Foundation, the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and the RSPB for their generous support of the GBHi.

photos: Chaffinch, John Harding/BTO;
Greenfinch mortality, Becki Lawson, ZSL



Quality of Life: the heart of the matter

The UFAW/BVA Ethics Committee 2006 International Symposium

In September, UFAW in conjunction with the British Veterinary Association Ethics Committee, held a symposium on 'quality of life' at The Royal Society, London. Over two hundred and thirty leading scientists, practicing veterinarians, ethicists, animal keepers and others interested in the field from 22 different countries attended. A wide range of talks over two days from a distinguished line-up of international speakers addressed issues as to what quality of life is and its relation to welfare, methods by which it can be assessed and promoted, and some of the ethical dilemmas that are faced when making inference-based judgements on the future care and treatment of animals.

One of the themes that emerged from the symposium was the paradigm shift that the use of the term 'quality of life' encompasses – the need to focus on the promotion of positive states and experiences in addition to the traditional focus on avoidance of negative states, suffering and harm. Indeed, it is the term and concept of 'quality of life' that is beginning to be widely used by those who are seeking this shift.

This shift towards a more positive, dynamic approach to considering welfare is an important one because of the way it influences expectations as to how we should treat and care for animals. Welfare assessment within this context becomes concerned with determining what individual animals like or prefer doing, what their interests are, and what opportunities they have to fulfill these interests; in other words the quality of an animal's entire relationship with its environment, and of how it lives its life.

A number of the speakers discussed the need to develop new measures of animal welfare which should be at least able to measure an animal's affective state before suffering occurred and that weighed the balance between the pleasant and unpleasant affect in the animal over a range of outcomes, such as behaviour, physiology, brain function, immune system function, damage, etc.

Other speakers then discussed some of the challenges in developing such quality of life measures, including the time-frame over which assessment occurs and the role of proxies – stand-ins, such as pet owners – who are able to speak on behalf of the animal and its existing quality of life.

The symposium finished with discussions as to the practical implications for veterinarians of quality of life and of the forthcoming 'duty of care' within the Animal Welfare Act.

The symposium proved to be of substantial interest to the media and both the *New Scientist* and the *Veterinary Record* reported at length on the meeting and its main themes.

For those interested in finding out more about talks given at the symposium, proceedings of the meeting will be published in May 2007.



top: Professor Peter Biggs, then Chairman of UFAW, at the podium with Baroness Warnock

below: Lord Soulsby welcomes delegates to the reception at the Houses of Parliament

The success of these large international meetings is dependent upon the hard work and support of many different people and organisations. We would therefore like to extend our thanks to all those who helped with or contributed to the symposium, most especially to the speakers, poster presenters and those who chaired the symposium sessions. Special thanks are also due to the The Donkey Sanctuary (Sidmouth, Devon) and the Vet Drug (Allan White) Educational Trust for their generous support of the meeting, to the British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Foundation for their contribution towards the costs associated with the production and distribution of the proceedings, and to Dr Douglas Naysmith MP and the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee of the House of Commons for kindly hosting a reception for the symposium delegates at the Houses of Parliament. Such support is essential if UFAW is to continue to hold these successful meetings on a regular basis.

Research Awards

Three Rs Liaison Group broadens research support

For the last eight years UFAW has run a scheme in which pharmaceutical industry and animal welfare members contribute funds, materials and expertise to support post-graduate research to improve laboratory animal welfare.

This year, UFAW changed the name of the scheme to 'the UFAW Three Rs Liaison Group' reflecting our desire to broaden the scope of research funded under the scheme to include all aspects of the Three Rs. Thanks to the continuing generous support of the members (for a full list see <http://www.ufaw.org.uk/phhsc.php>), we are delighted to have been able to advertise a fifth award to commence in October 2007.

The rebadging has resulted in an increase in the numbers of preliminary applications submitted, many of which are of very high quality. Existing students under the scheme have been active, giving papers on their research at international conferences, contributions to training programmes for animal care workers and peer reviewed publications.

Seventh Research Training Scholarship

UFAW runs the prestigious Research Training Scholarship scheme to provide support for promising young graduates to pursue a PhD, researching animal welfare. The scheme helps to train the animal welfare scientists of the future and also results in original research. Awards are given as and when funds become available, so we were very pleased this year to be able to announce a call for applications for the seventh award. There is keen competition for the awards, and UFAW received 30 concept note applications. The winner will be announced later in the year.

International development of the Three Rs *The Professor William Russell Fund*

UFAW has established a new Fund to commemorate the life and work of Professor William Russell who sadly died in July 2006.

While working at UFAW in the 1950's, Bill Russell, along with his assistant Rex Burch, began a project which was to culminate in the publication in 1959 of *The Principles of Humane Experimental Technique*. This book established the principles of the Three Rs – Replacement, Reduction and Refinement – that have had, and continue to have, a huge impact on the welfare of animals in biomedical research throughout the world.

The Three Rs were first publicly described by Professor Russell at a meeting in Birkbeck College, London in May

9th UFAW Vacation Scholarship Meeting, University of Newcastle

This year, Dr Melissa Bateson and Dr Candy Rowe of the University of Newcastle's Division of Psychology kindly agreed to host the annual UFAW Vacation Scholarship Meeting. The high standard of the presentations that has become the hallmark of these meetings was maintained, with scholars discussing their studies on subjects as diverse as the welfare impact of the capture and handling of European Storm petrels (Emma Rosenfeld, University of Cardiff) and the use of cladistics to evaluate the components of a successful dog toy (Marian Bond, Anglia Ruskin University).

Dr Fritha Langford (Scottish Agricultural College) and Professor Hannah Buchanan-Smith (University of Stirling) were the two invited speakers. Dr Langford talked about her work on the relationship between sleep and animal welfare that she undertook as part of her UFAW Research Training Scholarship. Professor Buchanan-Smith, current supervisor of Three R's Liaison Group student Verity Bowell and Stirling University link representative, talked about the use of behaviour to assess welfare, most specifically about her current work with Verity on the use of anticipatory behaviour as a means of assessing welfare in laboratory-housed marmosets.

UFAW would like to thank all those at Newcastle who helped in the organisation of the meeting and everyone who attended or spoke at the meeting and made the day a success.



1957. It is fitting therefore that the Professor William Russell Fund is to be introduced in this 50th anniversary year.

The aim of the new Fund is to support a Research Fellowship for high quality research, in the UK or abroad, that will advance the international development and application of any aspect of the Three Rs.

Two of this year's Vacation Scholarship projects are outlined below

Preventing resistance to anthelmintics in sheep

Anthelmintic resistance in nematodes is becoming an increasing threat to the health of farmed animals. Grazing animals, such as sheep, are presently regularly dosed or 'drenched' with anthelmintics to control such parasitic worm infestation and then turned out onto 'clean' pastures. The drawback of this regime is that if all the nematodes carried by a treated flock are not killed during drenching, then those worms that survive – that have resisted the anthelmintic – are the ones that found the next generation of nematodes.

One suggested way to combat such selection for resistance is to ensure that nematodes that are susceptible to anthelmintics are also maintained within the flock. Matthew Peace (University of Bristol) modelled the impact that selective treatment of individual sheep for nematode infection within a flock would have.

Matthew found that the only way to determine levels of infestation for the sheep studied was to collect a faecal sample, which necessitates handling and an invasive procedure. However, based upon his simulations, Matthew concluded that it was possible to selectively treat only 20% of the sheep in a flock with the highest levels of infestation for the health of the flock to be maintained. Such selective treatment allows the number of eggs per gram to be kept at below 1000; the cut-off level used by Matthew as an indicator of good health. Moreover this regime has the desirable effect of ensuring that a large residual population of nematodes is maintained within a flock that has not been exposed to anthelmintic, thus limiting development of resistance.

Improving the rearing environment for dairy calves

Veterinary student Ana Maxwell (University of Glasgow) carried out a survey of current calf rearing practices on

Scottish organic dairy farms and investigated their use or willingness to adopt the welfare-friendly extended suckling system of rearing. In extended suckling systems, calves are either allowed to remain with their mothers and suckle, concurrent with the milking of the female, for 3-4 weeks or placed in foster groups of 3-4 with a nurse cow for up to six months. This contrasts with conventional systems where calves are removed from their mother at birth and hand reared.

From a survey and telephone contact of 21 members of the Scottish Organic Milk Suppliers Co-operative, Ana found that three-quarters of the farmers interviewed had already previously heard about extended suckling systems and two-thirds were interested in trying them. Indeed, six of the farms were already occasionally using some form of multi-suckling. Notwithstanding this finding, the most common calf rearing practice was to remove calves within 24 hours of birth and to pen them individually (14/21). These were then either bucket or teat-fed.

The high interest shown by the farmers interviewed in trying an extended suckling system, with its possible attendant benefits to calf health, may reflect that health and productivity issues were the main considerations in choice of rearing system. Farmers were much less concerned about the 'naturalness' and behavioural benefits of the extended suckling system, even though support for organic principles was a commonly cited reason for becoming an organic farmer. Ultimately however, and despite the high level of expressed interest, most farmers reported that the financial outlay and attendant costs associated with its implementation would constrain them from putting extended suckling systems into operation. As Ana concludes, it is such financial constraints and overall economic viability that are the key to ensuring the successful uptake and implementation of welfare-friendly systems of management. Interest in itself is not sufficient, even amongst those farmers that might be regarded as being particularly open to such change.

photos: sheep, Matthew Peace; calf, nursing cow, Ana Maxwell



UFAW University Links Scheme

The UFAW University Links Scheme, which seeks to establish a network of UFAW representatives in UK universities and colleges to promote animal welfare science and UFAW's objectives and activities, has recently expanded. In addition to the 11 participating institutions, we would like to welcome Dr Britta Osthaus (Department of Psychology) of the University of Exeter, Dr Lynne Sneddon (School of Biological Sciences) and Dr Carol Grey (Faculty of Veterinary Science) of the University of Liverpool, and Dr David Arney (Moulton College) of the University of Northampton. We thank them for agreeing to become link representatives at their respective universities and look forward to reporting on animal welfare science related activities at these.

Dr Christine Moinard has also kindly agreed to be the University of Edinburgh's joint representative with Professor Vince Molony. Dr Lottie Hosie is to provide maternity cover for Dr Tessa Smith at the University of Chester.

Some recent link activities:

● University of Stirling

Stirling's Behaviour and Evolution Research Group seminar series is held weekly and is well attended, by both academics and those who work directly with animals on a daily basis. Details can be found at: <http://www.psychology.stir.ac.uk/news/SeminarProgramme-Spring2005.php>

Ten students from Stirling, led by Caroline Ogden, recently undertook varied fundraising activities at the university and very kindly donated the monies raised to UFAW. In total they raised £163; '.....not bad for an afternoon's work' as Caroline wrote. Thanks to Caroline and the others on behalf of UFAW.

If any students or others are interested in raising awareness of UFAW on their campuses, we are happy to support you in your activities on our behalf.



Stirling fundraiser. Clockwise from front: Caroline Ogden (Panda), Rosie Noyce (Bunny ears), Fiona Noble (Cow), Suzanne Niven, Matthew Preston, Paula Simms, Jareena Pradhan, Gillian Scott, Jacqueline Scott.

● University of Lincoln

Lincoln will continue to support a series of regular UFAW seminars. Further details of these can be obtained by contacting Lincoln University (details on the UFAW website).

● University of Edinburgh

● University of Glasgow

Following on from last year's successful visit by Professor Marc Bekoff (University of Colorado, Boulder), Edinburgh and Glasgow are to help fund a visit by Professor Peter Sandøe (Professor in Bioethics at The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Copenhagen, Denmark). Professor Sandøe, who has a particular interest in ethical issues related to animals, biotechnology and food and combining perspectives from natural science, social sciences and philosophy, will speak at Glasgow on the 25th April on *Veterinary treatment of companion animals - What are the ethical limits?* Anyone wishing to attend this talk should contact UFAW for further details.

● University of Bristol

Bristol, who also supported the visit by Professor Bekoff, awarded prizes to undergraduates in recognition of their achievements in the field of animal welfare science. Congratulations are extended to Sophia O'Doherty (BVSc, year 1 - The welfare of timber elephants in Myanmar), Victoria Roper (Veterinary Nursing, year 3 - Welfare issues involved in the breeding of Bulldogs) and Claire Cooke for the highest marks in the dissertation for the degree of BSc (Hons) Behaviour and Welfare.

New SAWI Fund scholarship

A new scholarship scheme has been introduced under the UFAW SAWI Fund as part of the Fund's aim of promoting animal welfare in Israel.

The scheme will enable veterinary, agriculture or other biological science graduates in Israel to travel to the UK to undertake postgraduate courses relevant to animal welfare science – for example the MSc in Applied Animal Behaviour and Animal Welfare at the University of Edinburgh Veterinary School.

The UFAW SAWI Fund will consider meeting the costs of travel, accommodation and living expenses, and of tuition fees, to enable committed and suitably qualified students to undertake courses of up to one year in the UK.

Looking for ways to improve welfare aspects of rodent control

The UFAW Working Group on rodent control methods, which first met in January 2006, is continuing to work to find routes to improve the welfare of rodent control methods. Work has started on guidance notes for the public on welfare aspects of dealing with rats and mice and, through discussions during the year, various other important issues have been brought into focus.

One of these is that regulatory and economic constraints tend to act to channel research into development of new generation versions of traditional chemical methods and to discourage attempts to develop wholly new and more welfare-friendly approaches. Anticoagulant rodenticides are the most widely used agents and these are described in the Pesticide Safety Directorate's (1997) 'Assessment of Humaneness of Vertebrate Control Agents' as 'markedly inhumane'.

The problem is that severe pain is an inevitable side effect of agents that cause internal haemorrhage if the bleeding occurs (as it often does) into joints or intracranially. The Group is considering therefore either how the painful consequences of anticoagulants might be alleviated or if there is a way to facilitate and stimulate research into completely new methods. This may be expensive but it is important to find a way forward. There is a massive welfare problem that needs to be addressed here and which, once solved, will be of benefit to hundreds of millions of rodents year upon year.

Another of the issues that the Group has identified and will be giving thought to is the, perhaps rather surprising, absence of a national body for keeping welfare aspects of vertebrate pest control under review and for providing independent advice on the subject. It seems somewhat inconsistent that there are national animal welfare advisory bodies on farm animals (FAWC), laboratory animals (APC), companion animals (CAWC), and zoo animals (Zoos Forum), but that, despite the very large numbers of animals involved and the severity of the welfare challenges, no such body exists to keep under review welfare issues regarding wild animals.

New responsibilities under the Animal Welfare Act

The new Animal Welfare Act includes a 'duty of care' provision. This makes it the responsibility of the owner of an animal, and of those in temporary charge of it, to ensure that the needs of an animal are met to the extent required by good practice.

Currently there is no legal requirement for those giving advice on behavioural disorders to possess any relevant knowledge or skill, and veterinary referrals are often made to 'pet behaviourists' with little regard to their academic background, training or experience. The concern in such cases is that the behavioural disorder is not effectively treated or even exacerbated, possibly leading to the animal being neglected, given up for re-homing or, in the most serious cases such as aggression, euthanased.

Dr Stephen Wickens, UFAW's Development Officer, has been addressing this issue for some time, as Secretary of the ASAB Accreditation Committee which runs a voluntary

Notification for election to Council at the 2007 AGM

In accordance with Article 46 of the Constitution, members' nominations for election to Council at the 2007 AGM must reach the UFAW office between 7th August and 4th September 2007. Further information is available from the UFAW Secretary.

2007 Annual General Meeting

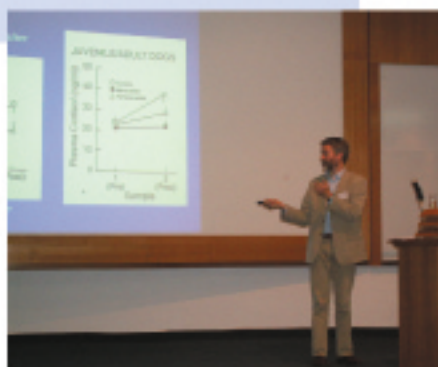
This year's AGM will be held in the afternoon of Tuesday 16th October 2007 at the Womens' Institute Hall in Wheathampstead. Full details of the time and business of the meeting will be sent to members in due course.

Staff

We welcome Steve Weddell who joins us as our Editorial Assistant, replacing Louise Wiskin who left us in May 2006. Liz Carter also joined us in December 2006 from her previous temporary position with the Humane Slaughter Association.

Robert Hubrecht, Deputy Director of UFAW, speaking on the subject of refinement of housing and husbandry at the Israeli Laboratory Animal Forum (ILAF) meeting in Tel Aviv, December 2006.

UFAW staff regularly speak at a very wide range of meetings and symposia all over the world.



certification scheme for clinical animal behaviourists (for further details visit: www.asab.nottingham.ac.uk).

It is the contention of this Accreditation Committee, that under the new 'duty of care' provision, good practice in the giving of advice on behaviour and behavioural disorders demands the same high level of professionalism and due diligence as in the treatment of physical illness, and that veterinarians and others who are referring on animals with behavioural problems should check on the standard of knowledge and skills of the person they are referring to. Whenever possible, they should seek to use individuals who are members of nationally recognised bodies or accreditation schemes that set standards for those practicing in this field.

Spring Appeal

Help support the new Professor William Russell Fund for research that may be carried out anywhere in the world to advance the Three Rs

The new international **Professor William Russell Fund** will be used to support a Research Fellowship for high quality research, in the UK or elsewhere, leading to advances in the international development and application of the Three Rs.

2007 is the 50th anniversary year of a meeting at Birkbeck College, London, at which William Russell first described the principles of the Three Rs – Replacement, Reduction and Refinement. He and his assistant, Rex Burch, were working on a project at UFAW which culminated in the 1959 publication of *The Principles of Humane Experimental Technique*, establishing the concept of the Three Rs which has had, and continues to have, a profound impact on the welfare of animals in research throughout the world.

Sadly, Professor Russell died last July and it is fitting that his life and work is commemorated with the new Fund.

Your support of the William Russell Fund will not only be a tribute to Russell but will support the continuation of his important work that benefits both animals and people worldwide.

If you would like to contribute please send a donation to the Spring 2007 Appeal at the UFAW office address. Many thanks!

Thanks to all those who contributed to the Autumn 2006 Appeal in support of UFAW initiatives for humane rodent control.

Other ways you can support the work of UFAW

UFAW's work relies on the support and generosity of members and donors, and this support is greatly appreciated. In addition to our Spring and Autumn Appeals, here are some other ways you can help promote animal welfare and animal welfare science:

Become a member

Individual membership is just £10 a year (£5 for students). Corporate membership from £20 a year.

Recruit a member

If you are already a member, why not recruit a colleague or friend?

Support the University Links

There are currently 14 academic institutions represented. You can participate in their activities and help promote UFAW's objectives.

Subscribe to Animal Welfare

The quarterly scientific and educational journal now has full online access and back issue search facility for subscribers.

Join our Regular Giving programme

Regular monthly donations greatly help us to plan UFAW activities.

Pledge a legacy

Over the years legacies have been extremely important to UFAW's work. An information leaflet on leaving a legacy is available free from UFAW.

Sponsor an activity

There are frequent opportunities to sponsor particular activities, events or projects of interest to institutional or corporate organizations.

Shop at UFAW

from our exclusive range of clothing, stationery, gifts and cards that also help promote UFAW.

For more information on any of these contact the UFAW office:



The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare
The Old School, Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead, Herts. AL4 8AN, United Kingdom

Tel: +44(0)1582 831818, Fax: +44(0)1582 831414

Email: ufaw@ufaw.org.uk www.ufaw.org.uk

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