



## UNIVERSITIES FEDERATION FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

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### Media Release

**From the  
Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW)**

**20 January, 2006**

**For Immediate Release:**

### **Promoting a Scientific Approach to Animal Welfare: the Eighth Annual UFAW Vacation Scholarship Meeting**

The eighth annual Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) Vacation Scholarship Meeting was held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2005 at the Department of Biological Sciences of the University of Bristol. Scientific and education animal welfare charity UFAW funds short research projects, aimed at improving our understanding of animals' needs and how they can be met, undertaken by students during their summer vacation. The annual meeting provides a platform for the students to present and discuss the findings of their studies.

The staff and students of Bristol and 11 other universities, colleges and institutions, were treated to talks, introduced in his inimitable style by Professor John Webster, covering topics as diverse as measuring the welfare of horses used in therapeutic riding programmes, investigating and comparing water related and other behaviours of ducks kept in organic, barn and free range systems and the impact on parasitic load and welfare of mixed species housing of zoo animals.

Vacation scholar Lauren Horton of the Royal Veterinary College was one of those who contributed to the meeting. She discussed the results of her study of '*The effect of tree cover on the ranging and welfare of free-range layer hens*' in 14 free-ranging hen flocks. She reported that ranging behaviour was observed in a consistently higher number of hens in those flocks provided with tree cover (cover accounting for a minimum of 20% of the range). Hens with cover were also observed to range further and to make better use of the whole of their outdoor run, compared to those without cover who tended to use only the edges of the run. Tree cover was also found to significantly lower the proportion of aggressive behaviour observed. Lauren concluded that this study suggests tree cover on the range improves hen welfare by encouraging ranging activity and reducing both aggressive behaviour and fear of novel situations.

(continues...)

### SCIENCE IN THE SERVICE OF ANIMAL WELFARE

Chief Executive and Scientific Director: James K Kirkwood BVSc PhD CBiol FIBiol MRCVS

Secretary: Donald C Davidson

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Since its launch in 1983, over 200 students at British universities and academic institutions have taken advantage of the UFAW vacation scholarship awards, and a large number have gone onto to undertake further study and even supervise scholars themselves. Applications are currently being sought for the 2006 vacation scholarship awards. The closing date for applications is 28<sup>th</sup> February 2006.

*If you would like further information about the UFAW Vacation Scholarship, please contact UFAW's Development Officer, Stephen Wickens ([wickens@ufaw.org.uk](mailto:wickens@ufaw.org.uk))*

**ENDS**

**Media Contact: Stephen Wickens, UFAW Development Officer, tel: 01582 831818, email [Wickens@ufaw.org.uk](mailto:Wickens@ufaw.org.uk)**

### **Picture captions:**

1. Hens (Strain: Hy-Line Brown) ranging under tree cover
2. Lauren Horton and 'co-worker'

### **Background Notes:**

1) **The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) founded in 1926, is an internationally recognised, independent, scientific and educational animal welfare charity concerned with promoting high standards of welfare for farm, companion, laboratory and captive wild animals, and for those animals with which we interact in the wild. UFAW works to improve animal lives by:**

- promoting and supporting developments in the science and technology that underpin advances in animal welfare,
- promoting education in animal care and welfare
- providing information, organising meetings, and publishing books, videos, articles, technical reports, and the leading quarterly scientific journal *Animal Welfare*
- providing expert advice to government departments and other bodies and helping to draft and amend laws and guidelines
- enlisting the energies of animal keepers, scientists, veterinarians, lawyers and others who care about animals

2) **The UFAW Vacation Scholarship award** scheme was initiated in 1983 and aims to provide opportunities for students to develop their interests in animal welfare, encourage a scientific approach to the issues, and establish a starting point for further, longer-term research into improving the lives of animals. Over 200 undergraduate students have been awarded scholarships through this scheme, and submitted reports on their wide-ranging work to UFAW. Applications are now being sought for consideration for the 2005 awards. The closing date for applications is 28<sup>th</sup> February 2006.

3) Examples of the some of the wide range of species and issues that have been investigated since 1983:

- Investigation into the "bird table effect" and salmonellosis in British garden birds (Rosie Allister, 2003)

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- Stone chewing in outdoor pigs: a stereotypy arising from food restriction and frustrated foraging or boredom due to lack of novelty? (Jayne Stamp, 2000)
- Does attaching bells to domestic cats reduce their predatory threat to wildlife (Jessica Windham Wright, 1999)
- Can mirrors reduce the incidence of stereotypic “weaving” in stabled horses? (Lisa MacDonald, 1998)
- Factors predisposing dogs to separation problems. (Alexander Christians, 1993)
- The effect of releasing captive hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) into the wild. (Sam Munn, 1990)
- A comparison of the welfare of laying hens in battery cages and in a perchery. (Kirsty McLean, 1985)

***"Improvements in the care of animals are not now likely to come of their own accord, merely by wishing them: there must be research ... and it is in sponsoring research of this kind, and making its results widely known, that UFAW performs one of its most valuable services."***

Sir Peter Medawar CBE FRS, 8th May 1957

Nobel Laureate (1960), Chairman of the UFAW Scientific Advisory Committee (1951 - 1962)

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