**UFAW NEWS-SHEET March 1998**

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**WHAT's NEW?**

**UFAW moves to Wheathampstead**



UFAW and its partner organization, the Humane Slaughter Association, have both expanded over the years - finally outgrowing the old buildings in South Mimms. After searching for suitable premises for much of last year, the opportunity to purchase the Old School House at Wheathampstead arose and we moved in on 8 January 1998. Thanks to excellent organization by Sir Michael Simmons and Donald Davidson and the cooperation of all involved, business proceeded with hardly a moment's pause during the relocation.

The Old School was built around 1810. Although this fine and striking building was recently modernized extensively- and is fully equipped for the electronic information age - it retains many of its original Victorian school features: heavy classroom doors, arched corridors and even a bell-tower! It suits UFAW perfectly and will provide an excellent base for our endeavours into the new millennium.

**New award scheme for animal welfare research**

This February, as part of its efforts to encourage high calibre science likely to lead to substantial advances in animal welfare, UFAW introduced a scheme to award **Animal Welfare Research Training Scholarships**. These will enable promising graduates to undertake three-year research programmes leading to doctoral degrees. The first of these scholarships will be awarded this July.

We are particularly keen to receive applications for studies that: i) may lead to significant developments in assessing animal welfare; or ii) aim to provide new insights into those subjective mental experiences of animals which are relevant to their welfare. The latter is a priority because such insights are fundamental to progress in the assessment of welfare and the development of measures to improve it. However, recognizing that important breakthroughs can come from unforeseen quarters, projects investigating other aspects of animal welfare science will be considered.

Supervisors are initially required to submit a brief concept note; then selected applicants will be invited to submit more detailed proposals, jointly prepared by the supervisor and PhD candidate. We have been able to launch this scheme thanks to the generous legacy Dr Mary Dawson bequeathed to UFAW in 1996. Dr Dawson was well known for her work on tissue culture methods for replacing animals in research.

Subject to adequate levels of funding, we aim to offer at least one scholarship per year in the future. Further support for the scheme is being sought.

**Staff changes in 1997/98**

In the course of the year, UFAW saw several changes of staff. Donald Davidson replaced Dennis Gray as Secretary over the summer, and Laura Beveridge's post as Editorial Assistant was taken over by Helen O'Leary in September. Vicky Taylor, our long-established Development Officer, left in January 1998 to take up a research assistantship at the Royal Veterinary College.

**Council changes at the 1997 AGM**

We regretfully record the resignation of Mr Graham Fuller from Council. No replacement was nominated. Dr J L Hurst, Dr G D Sales and Dr J Sanford were duly re-elected to Council under Article 45 of the Constitution.

**Death of Mrs J M Hume**

It is with great sadness that we record the death of Mrs J M Hume, widow of UFAW's founder Major Charles Hume. Mrs Hume was a highly esteemed member - and loyal supporter - of UFAW. Her funeral was attended by the President Emeritus, President and other members of UFAW Council and staff.

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**LABORATORY AND COMPANION ANIMALS**

**Primate welfare**

A collaborative project, developed by UFAW, Oxford University and CBD Porton Down to assess conditions experienced by primates imported into the UK for biomedical research, has been granted £52000 by the Animal Procedures Committee. This will fully fund the first year's work.

Each year, the UK imports approximately 2000 long-tailed macaques for biomedical research - most transferred by road and rail to the UK after flights to European destinations. Little is known about the effects of transport on non-human primates, or of the environmental conditions to which they are exposed. Our study will develop a recording device to monitor a broad range of environmental factors during transport . This will provide a sound basis for developing a more formal audit trail to improve conditions for primates where necessary. The data collected could also be used to allow the Home Office to produce a more complete cost-benefit analysis for primates used in research procedures.

**UFAW/RSPCA rabbit meeting**

The annual *UFAW/RSPCA Rabbit Behaviour and Welfare Group* meeting was held in London in December. The group brings together experts from different fields of rabbit husbandry to promote rabbit welfare. Seven speakers presented excellent papers on the use of rabbits for fur and meat farming, and laboratory use. Dr Anna Meredith described some of the very severe health problems that can arise from poor nutrition in pet rabbits, including eye damage from maloccluded incisors.

**European laboratory animal housing standards update**

The 11-year-old European convention covering the use of animals in experimentation or for other scientific purposes, is being updated. The minimum standards for the housing and husbandry of laboratory animals which it lays down, will eventually have an impact on the national legislation of the member states of the Council of Europe. This consultation is an excellent opportunity to incorporate new knowledge, as well as accepted 'best practice', into the convention - so we are pleased that UFAW staff/representatives will contribute to working groups considering the housing of dogs and cats, rodents and rabbits, and primates.

**New pharmaceutical steering group**

UFAW is setting up a new group to reach a degree of consensus within industry on the most pressing areas of welfare research needed in pharmaceutical studies. Once this has been achieved, the group aims to find ways of expediting this research and using its findings. We see this as an exciting new initiative for working with animal users to improve animal welfare.

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**ZOO AND WILD ANIMALS**



**Endangered orangutans flee fires**

Last year's forest fires on the islands of Borneo and Sumatra threatened the survival of some of Indonesia's unique wildlife. The loss of vast areas of rainforest habitat placed a large number of injured, orphaned and displaced baby orangutans in urgent need of food and help.

In response to a crisis appeal by The Orangutan Foundation, UFAW was able to assist with the cost of rescuing, treating and rehabilitating these animals within Tanjung Puting National Park. Further information on how you can help is available on receipt of an SAE sent to: The Orangutan Foundation, 7 Kent Terrace, London NW1 4RP.

**Government reviews zoos**

The UK *Zoo Licensing Act 1984* came into force 15 years ago. The Government recently reviewed the operation of the Act and, after preliminary consultations, the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions has published proposals for action. These include plans to improve the consistency of standards and for a review of the Secretary of State's *Standards of Modern Zoo Practice* - the document which forms an important foundation for the inspection process.

It is also clear that the Government wishes to see zoos doing all they can to promote conservation. A 'Zoos Forum', with broad and representative membership is planned to oversee the future running of the Act. UFAW welcomes these measures and will take a keen interest in the detailed plans for the Forum - upon which its effectiveness will depend. The Government would also like to see an EU Directive on zoo standards, and it is encouraging that the European Parliament voted in favour of this on 29 January.

**Marine mammal disturbance**

The indiscriminate use of underwater noise may affect the welfare and conservation of various marine species particularly porpoises and seals. UFAW, with the Seals Group of Wildlife and Countryside Link, has highlighted some of the issues involved, and provided input to a consultation document on fish farming in which the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) argue that the use of acoustic harassment devices might usefully be the subject of a Code of Environmental Best Practice. Collaboration between UFAW, the International Marine Mammal Association (IMMA) and the INO Institute of Physics in the Netherlands also produced a short paper on this topic in the 1997 *Proceedings of the Underwater Bio-Sonar and Bioacoustics Symposium*, published by the Institute of Acoustics.

**1998 UFAW Zoo Awards**

The deadline for British zoos to apply for the 1998 [UFAW Zoo Animal Welfare Awards](http://www.ufaw.org.uk/waw-award.php) is 31 March 1998. The major award is for a new or updated exhibit which improves the animals' welfare and helps the public appreciate their needs. The second, smaller award, is for a simple innovative idea or piece of equipment which improves welfare and could easily be replicated elsewhere.

Contact UFAW for the **new** application forms before 31 March 1998, or later in the year for details of the 1999 awards schedule.

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**FARMED ANIMALS**

**Tail-biting dilemma**



A recent survey to assess the effectiveness of docking pigs' tails as a method of reducing tail-biting, found that pigs are three times more likely to have their tails bitten if they are not docked. The study, conducted by Cambac JMA Research and funded by UFAW and the RSPCA, examined 40,788 pigs.

A follow-up postal survey of the suppliers to four of the five abattoirs studied, also investigated certain on-farm management practices. Providing pigs with straw bedding did not influence levels of tail-biting, although specific factors relating to feeding practices and ventilation had some effect. In a letter to *The Veterinary Record* (10.1.98) Dr Jane Guise and Professor Richard Penny, two of the researchers, summarize the dilemma: '...docking, although a mutilation, seems the lesser of two evils....Despite many anecdotes concerning cause and cure, tail-biting remains an intractable problem.'

**Farmed rabbits**

A European meat rabbit farm.

Most UK rabbit meat is imported from Europe where standards of housing are often even lower than the minimum standards given in the MAFF Code of Practice

UFAW's interest in rabbit welfare recently extended to include rabbits farmed for meat. Although the British industry is relatively small, we still use far more rabbits for meat than in laboratory research.

Public pressure has produced strict legislation and studies aimed at improving the housing and care of laboratory rabbits, but responsibility for ensuring proper welfare standards for meat rabbits has largely been left to individual rabbit farmers. Without access to the latest information and research, many of the current housing and management systems do not adequately meet rabbits' basic physical and behavioural needs.

With the co-operation of the British Commercial Rabbit Association (BCRA), UFAW has visited rabbit farmers in different areas of Britain to discuss the welfare implications of current management practices and to stress the importance of good welfare.

Articles in the BCRA journal The Rabbit Farmer and talks at various meetings attended by rabbit farmers, vets and researchers have also raised awareness of key issues.

Foster-mums may miss out!

An estimated 10-25 per cent of lambs born in the UK die within three days. To ameliorate these losses, many farmers opt for fostering single lambs from triplet births to maintain maximum economic output (two lambs per ewe) from each nursing ewe. However, little is known about the effectiveness of different fostering methods or the welfare implications for the confined ewes producing these triplets.

UFAW-funded research at Edinburgh University found that fostering success was influenced by many factors, including the time since the ewe gave birth and the level of supervision on farms at lambing time. It was clear that group-housed ewes were better managed than ewes penned individually. Two of the three farms studied failed to provide food or water to penned ewes with lambs - potentially compromising welfare. If penned ewes have restricted access to food and water it is essential that an effective fostering method is used, allowing return to the main flock as quickly as possible. Further work is needed to establish how this is best achieved.

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**UFAW AND YOU**

**Teaching animal welfare at universities**

UFAW regards the promotion of teaching in animal welfare science at universities as a very high priority. A series of up-to-date, introductory lectures in animal welfare science, which are suitable for veterinary and other biological and agricultural science undergraduate courses are under development. James Kirkwood and Robert Hubrecht will be presenting these lectures on a number of courses this year - and would be pleased to discuss the possibility of contributing to others on request. Please contact UFAW (ufaw@ufaw.org.uk) for details.

**1998 Spring Appeal for UFAW Vacation Scholarships**

This year's proceeds will go to the [Vacation Scholarship Award Scheme](http://www.ufaw.org.uk/vacation-scholarship.php). The scheme was established to encourage students to think about animal welfare and to provide them with the opportunity to conduct relevant research. It is extremely worthwhile, resulting in a high standard of project reports and a number of significant findings of practical benefit to the welfare of animals.

Please support the scheme by contacting UFAW and making a donation!

**...And response to the 1997 Autumn Appeal**

Thanks to all who generously supported the **Autumn Appeal** for the ***Zoo Animal Welfare Awards***. Approximately £4000.00 has been raised so far.

**Legacies**

UFAW relies on legacy income to fund its ongoing charitable work. An advice leaflet on how to leave a gift to UFAW in your Will is available on request - please contact UFAW (ufaw@ufaw.org.uk) to request a copy.

**Notification for election to Council at the 1998 AGM**

In accordance with Article 46 of the Constitution, members' nominations for election to Council at the 1998 AGM must reach the UFAW office between 4 August and 1 September 1998. Further information may be obtained from the UFAW Secretary.

**1998 Annual General Meeting**

This year's AGM will be held on Wednesday 14 October 1998 at King's College, London. Full details of the exact venue, time and business of the meeting will be sent to members in due course.

**Do you want to hear more about UFAW's work?**

UFAW's approach to animal welfare leads to real improvements. Can you help spread our message? As part of our drive to promote interest in - and understanding of - animal welfare, UFAW staff are pleased to provide thought-provoking and informative lectures to interested WI, Probus and other groups. If you belong to a group that would like a speaker, give us a ring or drop us a line.