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To: Organisations listed in the Appendix

5 December 2011

Dear Sir/Madam

FARM ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE OPINION ON THE WELFARE OF FARMED DEER

In September 2011 the Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC) began a two year study leading to an 'Opinion' (a short report) on the Welfare of Farmed Deer. The review will be carried out by FAWC's Ruminants Standing Committee, chaired by Huw Davies. [The Farm Animal Welfare Committee succeeded the Farm Animal Welfare Council on 1 April 2011 following a review of public bodies.]

Aim of the study

Since the Farm Animal Welfare Council last reported on the welfare of farmed deer in 1985 there will have been many changes both in the understanding of deer welfare and in the industry. It is therefore appropriate to review progress in science and husbandry as well as new and emerging issues.

The Opinion will cover all deer on farms and in enclosed parks which are kept for food production, and cover all aspects of management in breeding animals and youngstock through to slaughter.

To help inform this work we would welcome your views on the key welfare issues affecting farmed deer, and in particular we would appreciate your views on the following questions.

1. Farmed deer may appear tame but they are essentially wild animals and must be managed appropriately. How do the various management interventions impact on farmed deer welfare?
2. Farmed deer are handled and restrained for a number of reasons including, uniquely, for the removal of antlers. In your experience, what is best practice and how are standards monitored?

3. Deer are classed as wild animals; does housing have an impact on their welfare, e.g. their ability to behave normally?
4. Are there welfare implications of transporting deer, and in particular deer in antler?
5. Diseases such as Chronic Wasting Disease of captive mule deer and paratuberculosis are a major threat to farmed deer in the UK. What other disease challenges are facing the industry and how are these being addressed?
6. What are the main welfare issues for deer at the time of killing both in the field and in the slaughterhouse?
7. There are only a limited number of vets specialising in farmed deer; is this a concern for the industry, if so how might continuity of veterinary expertise be ensured?
8. Are there concerns about availability of licensed veterinary medicines to protect the health and welfare of farmed deer?
9. What are the main issues surrounding breeding, calving, rearing and feeding?

Additional question

The Farm Animal Welfare Council's "Report on the Welfare of Farmed Deer" (www.fawc.org.uk/reports.htm) made a number of recommendations for Government. In what areas has deer welfare improved most since the 1985 report, and where are there still gaps in knowledge or practice?

How to respond

You are invited to submit your comments on all or some of the questions in this consultation. Please email your responses to fawcsecretariat@defra.gsi.gov.uk by **27 February 2012**.

Or send to

FAWC Secretariat, Defra, 8B Millbank, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR

In addition to this consultation, as the work progresses, we may write to some organisations with specific questions. Some organisations may be invited to discussions with the Group.

We expect also to hold a public consultation meeting in 2012, and will write again with information in due course.

It is usual to include in FAWC reports the names of those organisations and interested individuals who have contributed evidence. If you prefer that your name is excluded, please let us know when you reply.

If you are aware of any relevant consultees who we may have omitted please let us have contact details.

Further information about FAWC can be found at www.defra.gov.uk/fawc/

Yours faithfully

Brenda Rawson

FAWC Secretariat
020 7238 4926

APPENDIX

ADAS
OneKind
Aldi Stores
All Party Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare
Animal Health Trust
Animal Rights Law Centre
ASDA Group Plc
Associated British Foods
Association of Deer Management Groups
Association of Scottish Colleges
Assured Food Standards
AWSELVA
Babraham Institute
Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)
British Association for Shooting and Conservation
British Deer Farms and Parks Association
British Deer Society
British Institute of Agricultural Consultants
British Retail Consortium
British Society of Animal Science (BSAS)
British Veterinary Association (BVA)
Budgen Stores Ltd
Centre for Alternative Land Use
Compassion in World Farming
Conservative Animal Welfare Group
Consumers Association
Consumers in Europe Group
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
Co-operative Group (CWS) Ltd
Deer Commission for Scotland
Defra
English Nature
Eurepgap
Eurogroup for Animal Welfare
Farm Animal Care Trust
Farm Animal Initiative
Farm Animal Welfare Network (FAWN)
Farm Assured Welsh Livestock
Farmers' Union of Wales
Federation of Veterinarians in Europe
Food and Drink Federation
Food Aware
Food Standards Agency
Freedom Food Ltd
Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust
Hannah Research Institute

Humane Slaughter Association
Institute for Animal Health
Institute of Biology
Institute of Food Research
Institute of Grocery Distribution
Institute of Trading Standards Administration
International Fund of Animal Welfare (IFAW)
J Sainsbury plc
John Lewis plc
LACORS
Lantra
Marks & Spencer plc
National Association of Local Councils
National Consumer Council
National Consumer Federation
National Council of Women of Great Britain
National Farmers Union
National Farmers' Union of Scotland
National Farmers' Union (Wales)
National Federation of Meat & Food Traders
National Federation of Women's Institutes
National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs
National Office of Animal Health Ltd (NOAH)
National Proficiency Tests Council (NPTC)
Nuffield Council on Bioethics
Organic Food Federation
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
Professional Deer Management Services
Roslin Institute (Edinburgh)
Rowett Research Institute
Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
Royal (Dick) College of Veterinary Studies
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)
Royal Veterinary College
Safeway Stores plc
Scottish Agricultural College
Scottish Centre for Animal Welfare Science
Scottish Consumers Council
Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
Scottish Government
Silsoe Livestock Systems
Soil Association
Somersfield Stores Ltd
SUSTAIN - The Alliance for Better Food & Farming
Tesco Stores Ltd
The Deer Initiative
Universities Federation for Animal Welfare
University of Aberdeen
University of Bristol

University of Cambridge
University of Edinburgh
University of Exeter
University of Glasgow
University of Leeds
University of Liverpool
University of Newcastle upon Tyne
University of Nottingham
University of Oxford
University of Plymouth
University of Reading
University of Stirling
University of Wales, Aberystwyth, Bangor
Vegetarian Economy & Green Agriculture (VEGA) Research
Veterinary Deer Society
Veterinary Laboratories Agency
Veterinary Medicines Directorate
WM Morrison Supermarkets Ltd
Waitrose Ltd
Welsh Consumer Council
Welsh Government
Welsh Local Government Association
Women's Food & Farming Union
World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA)