



PAINFUL REALITY

Why painful mutilations of animals
must be reviewed



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September 2006

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of this report
- 1.2. Why are painful mutilations carried out?
- 1.3. General assessment of the pain and distress caused
- 1.4. The need to prohibit painful mutilations

2. ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL MUTILATIONS

2.1. CASTRATION

2.1.1. Calves

- *Current status of castration of calves*
- *Pain caused by castration of calves*
- *Is the castration of calves necessary?*

2.1.2. Lambs

- *Current status of castration of lambs*
- *Pain caused by castration of lambs*
- *The need to end routine castration of lambs*

2.1.3. Piglets

- *Current status of piglet castration*
- *Pain caused by castration of piglets*
- *Alternatives to castration of piglets*

2.1.4. Equines, dogs and cats

2.2. TAIL-DOCKING

2.2.1. Lambs

- *Current status of tail-docking of lambs*
- *Pain caused by tail-docking of lambs*
- *The need to end tail-docking of lambs*

2.2.2. Piglets

- *Current status of tail-docking of piglets*
- *Pain caused by tail-docking of piglets*
- *Is tail-docking of piglets necessary?*
- *The need to enforce the law*

2.2.3. Puppies

- *Current status of tail-docking of puppies*
- *Pain caused by docking puppies' tails*
- *Health and welfare problems associated with tail-docked dogs*
- *Is the tail-docking of puppies necessary?*
- *Views of veterinary and related professions*

2.3. REMOVAL OF HORNS: disbudding and de-horning

2.3.1. Calves and older cattle

- *Current status of de-horning*
- *Pain caused by disbudding and de-horning*
- *Avoiding the need for horn removal*

2.3.2. Sheep and goats

2.3.3. Deer (antler removal)

2.4. BRANDING, TATTOOING, EAR-NOTCHING or PUNCHING and EAR-TAGGING

- *Branding and tattooing*
- *Ear-notching or punching*
- *Ear-tagging*

2.5. DEBEAKING (BEAK-TRIMMING) OF POULTRY

- *Current status of de-beaking*
- *Pain caused by de-beaking*
- *Methods of avoiding de-beaking*

2.6. DE-SNOODING, DUBBING, DE-SPURRING, DE-CLAWING and TOE-CUTTING

2.6.1. Turkeys

2.6.2. Chickens

2.7. NOSE-RINGING

- *Pain and disability caused by nose-ringing*
- *The need to end nose-ringing*

2.8. CUTTING OFF TEATS

2.9. TOOTH-CLIPPING OR GRINDING ('tooth resection')

2.9.1. Piglets

- *Pain caused by tooth-cutting*
- *The need to avoid tooth-cutting*

3. YOUNG ANIMALS' CAPACITY TO FEEL PAIN

4. SOME VIEWS ON THE UNDESIRABILITY OF MUTILATIONS

- Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC)
- Scottish Executive's Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD)
- Council of Europe
- National Animal Welfare Advisory Council, New Zealand

5. CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

6. References

APPENDIX

[Summary of mutilations, current regulations, quality assurance standards and Advocates' recommendations](#)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Painful Reality examines a large number of mutilations that are performed on animals in Scotland today, mainly in the farming industry. The Scottish Executive proposes to legislate to exempt these procedures, and a number of others, from the general ban on mutilations provided by Section 20 of the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006.

The Scottish Executive consultation paper can be viewed at:

<http://www.Scotland.gov.uk/consultations>

(Consultation period 16 October 2006 to 5 January 2007)

Mutilations covered by this report

Painful Reality assesses the purpose and animal welfare implications of a number of the mutilations covered in the consultation: most of these originated in traditional practices many generations ago, at times when scientific understanding of pain in animals, knowledge of their capacity to suffer, and the public's ethical sense of responsibility to animals were all very different from what they are today.

Castration of young farmed animals (principally calves and lambs, although castration of piglets is also permitted) is carried out to reduce male-related behaviour such as fighting; to encourage fattening; and to improve meat quality. It is widely acknowledged that castration causes severe pain, regardless of the method used, and currently the law does not require anaesthetic to be used for very young animals. Scottish Executive Codes of Recommendations on Welfare advise stock-keepers that the need for castration should be considered carefully.

Tail-docking of young animals is carried out for a number of reasons. Lambs are tail-docked to avoid the accumulation of faeces around the sheep's tail, which increases the risk of fly-strike (maggot infestation). Piglets are docked to prevent tail-biting, which is often related to the stress of rearing in a barren environment. Advocates believes that flock and herd management could be adapted to reduce the perceived need to dock these animals. Puppies are docked either for cosmetic reasons or with the aim of avoiding injury to working dogs. Docking causes pain, but there is no legal requirement to use anaesthetic or analgesia (although puppies may only be docked by a veterinary surgeon who, it is to be hoped, might consider it an obligation to provide pain relief). Advocates strongly supports the Scottish Executive's intention to ban the tail-docking of all puppies.

Disbudding and de-horning of calves and adult cattle is carried out to avoid the risk of animals injuring each other, and to make them easier to handle and to transport. Both are scientifically recognised as being painful and for surgical removal of horns it is a legal requirement that anaesthetic must be used, although longer-term pain relief is not required. Unqualified persons may carry out the procedures. Advocates believes that the current law is inadequate to protect calves from pain and distress.

Methods of identification that involve mutilations include branding, tattooing, ear-notching or punching, and ear –tagging. Advocates believes that all of these are outdated and inhumane, and should be replaced by more modern techniques such as microchipping.

De-beaking of poultry is still carried out to prevent feather-pecking and cannibalism in intensive rearing systems, although it will become illegal after 2010.

Other procedures carried out on very young poultry without pain relief include: de-snooding, dubbing, de-spurring, de-clawing and toe-cutting.

Nose-ringing is carried out on pigs and bulls. The management objective is either to make the animal easier to handle (bulls and occasionally boars), or to prevent the animal from damaging vegetation in its outdoor environment (breeding sows). Nose-ringing works by causing pain and is advised against, wherever possible, by the Scottish Executive: Advocates believes that it should be prohibited.

Supernumerary (extra) teats on young calves' udders may be removed by a non-veterinarian, using scissors, without anaesthetic, up to the age of three months. Advocates believes that if this procedure is considered necessary, it should only be done by a veterinarian, and pain relief must be provided.

Tooth-clipping or grinding is carried out on piglets with the intention of preventing damage to their mothers' teats when they suckle, or to prevent damage through biting of tails or ears. Biting problems are particularly associated with barren intensive rearing systems, where the sow or litter-mates cannot get away from the biting. It is a very painful mutilation used as a solution to management problems. Advocates believes that, if tooth-clipping or grinding is ever absolutely unavoidable, it should only be done by a veterinary surgeon using suitable local anaesthetic and analgesia.

Given that pain relief and alternative management practices are available, the way that many mutilations are carried out appears inconsistent with the spirit of current legislation.

The Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 imposes a duty of care on animal-keepers.

The Welfare of Farmed Animals (Scotland) Regulations 2000 state that owners and keepers shall take all necessary steps to ensure that animals under their care are not caused any unnecessary pain, suffering or injury (Regulation 3(1)).

Conclusion

Advocates for Animals believes that three important principles should be given absolute priority in the new legislation:

- (i) No mutilation that causes pain should be permitted unless adequate anaesthesia and continuing pain relief (analgesia) are given;**
- (ii) No mutilation that causes pain should be carried out by an unqualified person, and ideally all procedures should be carried out by a qualified veterinary surgeon.**
- (iii) No mutilation that causes a deterioration in the animal's quality of life, for example by preventing some aspects of natural behaviour, should be permitted other than in exceptional individual circumstances.**

Advocates for Animals urges the Executive to:

- **initiate an urgent review of the scientific and practical evidence in relation to each mutilation listed in the draft Prohibited Procedures (Exemptions) Scotland Regulations 2007;**
- **assess the animal welfare implications of each procedure; and**
- **incorporate principles (i) to (iii) above into the new Regulations.**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The purpose of this report

This report has been produced by Advocates for Animals in advance of secondary legislation on mutilations (the Prohibited Procedures (Exemptions) (Scotland) Regulations), to be considered by the Scottish Parliament in 2006/2007. The secondary legislation arises from a proposed general ban on mutilations, apart from exempted procedures, under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act.

Advocates welcomes the Scottish Executive's approach to the tail-docking of dogs, which recognises that animals should not routinely have body parts removed without there being over-riding welfare reasons to do so. Advocates believes that this approach should be extended to all mutilations of animals.

Advocates acknowledges that, for market and commercial reasons, many farmers who normally support initiatives to improve animal welfare believe that mutilations such as castration, tail-docking and disbudding/de-horning are unavoidable until better solutions can be found. Advocates believes that stronger legislation on mutilations would support the position of those farmers who wish to achieve the highest welfare standards for their animals. In addition to legislation, it is essential that adequate funding is provided for research into breeding and husbandry methods that address the management problems that mutilations are intended to solve.

Advocates considers that, rather than legislating to permit a wide range of mutilations, the Scottish Executive ought to review: the current use of each of these procedures; the welfare cost of the procedure; whether it is necessary for them to continue, and on what grounds; and what alternatives are available.

Advocates believes that:

- If a mutilation is permitted under current legislation but is no longer practised, there is no need to legislate for it to continue.
- If a change of husbandry or management system would obviate the need for a mutilation, and there is no other over-riding factor in its favour, there is no need to legislate for it to continue.
- As long as any mutilation is allowed to continue, there should be an obligation to use the least painful method.

This report considers the significant body of evidence that many mutilations are painful to animals, whether this pain can and should be mitigated by the use of anaesthesia and analgesia, or whether the procedure ought to be banned. The recommendations contained in the report refer specifically to the procedures that cause pain, and these will be referred to hereafter as painful mutilations.

Advocates for Animals submits this report in the hope that it will lead to a review of all painful mutilations before legislation to allow them to continue is passed.

1.2. Why are painful mutilations carried out?

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons defines 'mutilations' as *"all procedures, carried out with or without instruments, which involve interference with sensitive tissues or the bone structure of an animal, and are carried out for non-therapeutic reasons."*¹ Mutilation procedures are carried out on farmed animals, working animals, animals used in sport and entertainment and companion (pet) animals, including dogs, cats, horses, birds, fish and reptiles.

Some of these procedures, such as the castration of piglets, calves and lambs without pain relief, cause great suffering to large numbers of young animals every year, while others, such as the nose-ringing of breeding sows or the de-beaking of laying hens can be sufficiently painful and disabling to prevent the animals from engaging in their full repertoire of natural behaviour for the rest of their lives.

These procedures are carried out for a number of reasons, some economic, some intended to aid the practical management of animals and some predominantly traditional. The current law allows many of the mutilations that are done annually in Scotland to be performed without any pain relief and often to be carried out by unqualified persons rather than by veterinary surgeons.

Many of the most common mutilations have been criticised both in principle and in practice by veterinarians, animal welfare scientists and animal welfarists for nearly two decades.^{1, 2, 3, 4} Most of the mutilations of animals that are currently practised originated in traditional practices many generations ago, at times when both the scientific understanding of pain in animals and their capacity to suffer, and the public's ethical sense of responsibility to animals were very different from what they are today. It is now time to re-assess all mutilations that cause either short-term or long-term pain or suffering to animals.

Painful or disabling mutilations are often proposed as acceptable solutions to perceived or real problems in managing animals and are claimed to be in the animals' best interests (for example by preventing injury from fighting), but this claim cannot always be justified. The problems that mutilations were intended to address can almost always be solved by better management practices and/or the application of new technology. In the case of farming (the sector in which most of the mutilations are carried out), it is notable that most of the mutilations discussed in this briefing are already banned under organic farming standards. Given the current growing demand for organic food products, it is clear that farming can be carried out successfully without resorting to mutilations.

Advocates for Animals is very disappointed that the draft Prohibited Procedures (Exemptions) (Scotland) Regulations published by the Scottish Executive, would allow all existing animal mutilations to continue in their present form. There is no scientific or practical basis for a blanket endorsement of currently-practised mutilations. The acceptance of such a proposal would continue to allow the painful cutting, piercing, crushing, burning and removal of sensitive tissue of the genitals, tails, ears, skin, horns, beaks and teeth of large numbers of animals that are in the care or keeping of humans (Schedule 1 of draft Regulations).

1.3. General assessment of the pain and distress caused

In 2005 the New Zealand National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) published a general assessment of 'painful husbandry procedures' (i.e. painful mutilations carried out on farmed animals) and a Code of Welfare. NAWAC stated *"Many of these procedures can cause significant anxiety, fear, discomfort, pain or distress. ... There are also different types of pain resulting from different stimuli of cutting, searing, constricting or crushing (mediated by different pain receptors and nerves)."* These pain-causing stimuli are listed as: mechanical (impact,

squeezing, stretching), thermal (excessive heat or cold), chemical (caustic chemicals or chemicals released from damaged tissue), eschaemic (blocked blood flow).⁵

According to NAWAC, *“the durations of short-term or acute behavioural or physiological changes indicating significant pain and distress in animals operated on without pain relief include:*

Tail-docking – usually up to 1-3 hours with rings or docking iron, but up to 6-8 hours when removed surgically;

Castration – usually up to 4 hours, but up to 8 hours depending on the species and method;

Disbudding – up to 4 hours; and

Dehorning – up to 7-8 hours.

After this acute phase, there is a period of up to 4 or more weeks when healing occurs, during which the normal patterns of growth and behaviour of the animal can be affected.”⁵

An important point is that an animal's pain may not always be obvious to a human observer. This may account for the fact that some proponents of mutilations deny that they cause significant pain. Animals are stoical, and prey species such as farmed animals in particular have evolved to hide pain or disability, in order to avoid giving signs of weakness to any potential predator. Some animals are thought to suffer pain from mutilations for the rest of their lives.

1.4. The need to prohibit painful mutilations

With the enactment of the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act, there is an important opportunity for each of the currently practised mutilations to be re-assessed on a case-by-case basis. Such a re-assessment should cover the latest scientific evidence of pain, distress or disability caused to the animal, and alternative solutions to the problems the mutilations were intended to solve. Advocates for Animals believes that legislators have an obligation to make the most of this opportunity to reduce animal suffering.

The assessment should also look at anomalies in the legal position regarding different species; for example why dogs may only be castrated with anaesthetic by a veterinary surgeon, while equally sentient animals such as piglets, calves and lambs have no such protection. Veterinary scientists at the University of Edinburgh have described mutilations such as tail-docking and castration of lambs and castration of calves as *“unequivocal examples of animals in pain”* and point out that *“it seems reasonable that those carrying out such practices should be aware of how much pain they cause, and that they should support efforts to find the most humane ways of carrying them out.”⁶*

Another apparent anomaly is that the current law assumes that very young animals feel pain less than slightly older or adult animals and so do not require pain relief. This distinction between pain in very young and slightly older animals can no longer be upheld scientifically. The modern scientific consensus is that very young animals are equally or even more susceptible to pain⁷ and it is important that this understanding is incorporated into any new legislation to protect animals.

Advocates for Animals believes that three important principles should be given absolute priority in the new legislation:

(i) No mutilation that causes pain should be permitted unless adequate anaesthesia and continuing pain relief (analgesia) are given;

(ii) No mutilation that causes pain should be carried out by an unqualified person, and ideally all procedures should be carried out by a qualified veterinary surgeon.

(iii) No mutilation that causes a deterioration in the animal's quality of life, for example by preventing some aspects of natural behaviour, should be permitted other than in exceptional individual circumstances.

Given that pain relief and alternative management practices are available, these mutilations appear inconsistent with animal-keepers' duty of care and with the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Scotland) Regulations 2000, which state that owners and keepers shall take all necessary steps to ensure that animals under their care are not caused any unnecessary pain, suffering or injury (Regulation 3(1)). Advocates for Animals urges the Executive to initiate an urgent review of the scientific and practical evidence in relation to each mutilation listed in the draft Prohibited Procedures (Exemptions) Regulations, on a case-by-case basis, and to incorporate the principles above into the new Regulations.

2. ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL MUTILATIONS

2.1. CASTRATION

Castration is included in the Executive's draft Regulation (Schedule 1) under the heading 'Control of reproduction'. While this may often be true in the case of companion animals, in the case of the farming industry the reasons given for castration are usually a combination of management convenience (to reduce male-related behaviour such as fighting), to encourage fattening and to improve meat quality. The majority of castrated farmed animals are intended for slaughter for meat production before they are of an age to reproduce. There are of course very much greater numbers of farmed animals than companion animals which are castrated.

2.1.1. Calves

Current status of castration of calves

Male calves intended for meat production are often castrated in Scotland at an age ranging from less than 1 week up to over 6 months, according to a 1996 survey carried out by the University of Edinburgh⁸. Under current law calves over 2 months old can only be castrated by a veterinary surgeon using anaesthetic.⁹ This allows young calves up to 8 weeks old to be castrated by an unqualified person without anaesthetic or other pain relief.

The main methods of castration used are: A tight rubber ring or similar device is applied to the neck of the scrotum above the testes and cuts off the blood supply to the scrotum, so that the tissue below the ring atrophies and subsequently falls off. This procedure is only allowed without anaesthetic for calves under 1 week of age, presumably because it is known to be very painful. A second method is the use of a 'bloodless castrator' or crusher (Burdizzo) which instantly crushes the spermatic cords, including the associated nerves. Evidence shows that this method, although immediately very painful, produces the shortest duration of pain and lowest level of post-procedure complications.¹⁰ The third method is surgical castration (cutting into the scrotum and then exposing and cutting the spermatic cords).

Pain caused by castration of calves

Scientists agree that all these methods cause acute and sometimes chronic pain to calves. This is shown by a large amount of research from various countries, including Scotland¹¹, and New Zealand¹² and is not in dispute. The Farm Animal Welfare Council, a government advisory body, concluded in 1997 *Report on the Welfare of Dairy Cattle*: "irrespective of the age of the calf, all three methods of castration would appear to cause acute pain."¹⁰ In 2001, the EU's Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare (SCAHAW) report on beef cattle concluded; "Castration causes severe pain and distress."¹³ According to the 2006 report of the

European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Panel on Animal Health and Animal Welfare (AHAW) on calf rearing, *“Castration is painful whatever the method used and whatever the age of the calf. Acute pain is deduced from the observation of increase in blood cortisol and abnormal postures (immobility), and behaviours such as foot stamping and kicking. Chronic pain is deduced from the observation of activities targeting at the site of castration (e.g. licking, head turning, alternate lifting of the hind legs, and slow movements of the tail) as well as abnormal standing”*.¹⁴ According to research both at the University of Edinburgh and in Switzerland the rubber ring method causes calves to show behaviour indicating pain for several weeks.^{11, 15} According to 1996 research, around a third of farmers use the rubber ring method⁸, although scientists believe it is one of the more painful methods.

Because of the undisputed pain caused, most of the experts who have studied the effects of castration on calves now believe that both a local anaesthetic and a long-lasting (24 hr +) anti-inflammatory analgesia should be given, since these have been shown to reduce the acute pain during castration.¹⁴ EFSA recommended that if cattle were to be castrated *“appropriate anaesthesia and analgesia”* should be given, such as a local anaesthetic injected into each testicle and a systemic analgesic such as ketoprofen injected intravenously 20 minutes before the castration.¹⁶ It is also generally agreed that the youngest calves also experience pain and should be given pain relief in the same way as older calves. This implies that the distinction in current law is scientifically and ethically untenable. According to SCAHAW, *“When providing pain relief [to calves] no distinction should be made on the basis of age as animals from as early as 4 hours after birth exhibit cortisol responses to mutilations.”*¹³

It is important to realise that castration is not painless even when local anaesthetic is given.¹⁵ Castration can cause long-term pain and it is likely that the handling and injection associated with castration cause considerable distress and some pain. The most humane approach is therefore to avoid castration.

Is the castration of calves necessary?

Although the castration of male calves is traditional, the Scottish Executive’s Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Cattle (2005) states that, *“Stock-keepers should consider carefully whether castration is necessary”* (para 116).⁹ Change in farmers’ practice has been achieved in Switzerland, which now has a policy that all calves should be given anaesthetic when castrated. The 2001 Animal Protection Ordinance removed the castration of calves (and lambs) from the list of exceptions to the law that painful procedures must be carried out by a veterinarian, wherever practical, under general or local anaesthetic.^{17,18} A 2004 survey showed that farmers were changing their practices in response to this, becoming more likely to use a veterinarian or a local anaesthetic, and some abandoning castration altogether.¹⁹

The evidence above emphasises that if calves are to be castrated at all, this procedure must only be performed by veterinarians and not by unqualified people. The FAWC concluded in 1997 that *“Castration is an undesirable mutilation which should be avoided if at all possible.”*¹⁰

2.1.2. Lambs

Current status of castration of lambs

Most male lambs intended for meat are castrated, even though many are sold for slaughter before they have reached sexual maturity. A number of reasons are given for castration, including easier handling and reduced aggression and to avoid a strong smell in the meat (although it is unclear whether consumers can actually perceive this difference between meat from castrated or uncastrated lambs). Under current law lambs can be castrated by an

unqualified person and without the use of anaesthetic up to the age of 3 months; after that time castration must be done by a veterinarian using anaesthetic.

Methods of castration used for lambs are similar to those used for calves (see above); using either a tight rubber ring placed above the testicles, or the Burdizzo (bloodless castrator) that crushes the spermatic cords without breaking the skin, or surgical castration by cutting open the scrotum, and exposing and cutting the spermatic cords. The very painful rubber-ring method is only permitted to be carried out without anaesthetic in the first week of a lamb's life.²⁰

Pain caused by castration of lambs

Research carried out in several countries, including Scotland and New Zealand, leaves no doubt that castration causes pain and distress to lambs whichever method is used. According to a review of the subject from the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, all methods have disadvantages for the lambs. Surgery may entail not only pain but inflammation, infection and bleeding before the wound heals. The Burdizzo clamp method *“produces a burst of intense pain as it is applied, which should be short lived but is followed by considerable pain from tissues damaged at the line of the crush”*²¹ With the rubber ring method, *“the lambs experience acute pain for up to 2 hours, followed by chronic inflammation, sepsis and pain until the affected parts fall off and healing occurs. This can take more than 6 weeks for lambs with large scrotums.”*²¹ The Burdizzo is sometimes applied before the rubber ring or the knife in order to desensitize the nerves, but this still involves *“a brief shock of intense pain experienced by the lambs as the instrument is applied.”*²¹

Scientists in New Zealand, among many others, have studied the behaviour of lambs subjected to castration. They found that castration (and tail-docking) using either the rubber ring method or a knife caused *“significant”* or *“severe”* distress to the lambs.²² Some lay on their sides, writhed and kicked.²³ They repeatedly lay down and stood up again, up to 40 times more often than normal, for the first hour after the operation. When a knife was used, the lambs walked with splayed legs or stood completely still, seemingly unaware of their surrounding (‘statue standing’), behaving abnormally during the 4 hour observation period.²³ The operations caused large increases in the concentration of cortisol (a stress hormone) in the lambs' blood.²² A 2002 paper from the Animal Welfare Science and Bioethics Centre, Massey University, reported that all methods of castration caused significant rise in cortisol levels, *“and by inference pain and distress”*, but that this could be eliminated by giving the lambs a local anaesthetic and an anti-inflammatory analgesic. It has been found that local anaesthetic by itself is not sufficient to remove the pain of surgical or clamp castration.¹²

Although the scientific evidence shows that pain relief is essential if lambs are to be castrated without unavoidable suffering, pain-killing injections in themselves are likely to be painful. Castration is always likely to cause some pain and distress to lambs and a better solution would be to avoid it altogether.

The need to end routine castration of lambs

Castration without pain relief causes much avoidable suffering to perhaps over 1 million male lambs each year in Scotland. This is not an acceptable situation when anaesthesia and analgesia are available, effective and relatively simple to administer. An objection might be raised on the grounds that providing the necessary pain relief would cost farmers time and money. With this in mind it must be questioned whether it is really necessary to castrate male lambs routinely, or whether this is a traditional practice that should end.

The Scottish Executive's Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Sheep (2005) states that, *“Farmers and shepherds should consider carefully whether castration is necessary within any particular flock. Castration is unlikely to be necessary where lambs will be finished and sent to*

slaughter before reaching sexual maturity. The procedure should only be carried out when lambs are likely to be retained after puberty and where it is necessary to avoid welfare problems associated with the management of entire males."²⁰ Additional problems can be caused by the stress and potential for infection caused by gathering and handling large numbers of lambs, and the "real risk of mismothering which may lead ultimately to starvation and death."²⁰ Modern breeds of lamb are ever-faster growing, which makes it more feasible to slaughter the majority before sexual maturity could cause problems for management or meat quality.²¹ Since most lambs are fattened in lowland areas, it should be possible to group and manage them in ways that avoid any problems caused by developing sexual characteristics in those that are slaughtered at a later age.

According to a veterinary scientist at the University of Edinburgh, "*The easiest, quickest and cheapest approach to this problem could be to adopt production aims and husbandry methods that do not require these procedures* [castration and tail-docking]."²¹ Abandoning routine castration of lambs would save farmers much time-consuming and presumably unpleasant work. On the rare occasions when castration is deemed unavoidable, it should be carried out by a veterinary surgeon using anaesthetic and analgesic.

Advocates for Animals believes that the recommendations in the Scottish Executive's Sheep Code do not provide enough incentive to farmers to end the practice of castrating lambs, and are thus inadequate to protect lamb welfare. Advocates is concerned that, without stronger regulation through legislation, the practice of routinely castrating male lambs will continue, thus causing them much avoidable suffering.

2.1.3. Piglets

Current status of castration of piglets

In the international pig industry male piglets are routinely castrated in the first days of life, for the purpose of avoiding management problems caused by sex-related behaviour and also to avoid the 'boar-taint' that can affect the taste of meat from entire male pigs. The castration of piglets without any pain relief is legal up to 7 days of age in Scotland. After 7 days, castration must be carried out only by a veterinarian in accordance with the Protection of Animals (Anaesthetics) Act 1954.²⁴ The majority of pigs are not, however, castrated in the UK and Ireland because they are slaughtered typically at just under 100kg weight (ie they are less mature), rather than the higher weights typical in most countries where castration is routine.²⁵ However, there is concern that competitive pressures in the global pig industry may persuade the UK industry to rear pigs to higher weights, and so lead to a resumption of castration. Therefore there is a need to consider piglet castration in the context of Scottish law.

The castration is usually done with a knife and involves cutting open the scrotum and then pulling out and severing the spermatic cords. Scientists do not dispute that it causes both acute and long-term pain to piglets. Because of widespread concern about the welfare implications of castrating, without pain relief, around 100 million piglets a year in Europe, the European Food Safety Authority produced a 100-page report and an Opinion in 2004 on piglet castration and possible alternatives. According to the EFSA, "*Castration is painful, regardless of the surgical procedure. Physiological and behavioural reactions indicative of pain are numerous during the process and in the first hours following surgery but decrease thereafter. Some behavioural alterations persist for several days, indicating that animals suffer from long-term pain.*"²⁶

Pain caused by castration

Scientific studies leave no doubt that castration causes pain to piglets. As early as the mid-1980s, scientists in the Netherlands observed that piglets' screams increased by 1000 Hz in frequency when the first cut was made and increased again when the second cut was made.

Up to a week after the operation, male piglets were less active than their female littermates, and showed more trembling, leg shaking, sliding on their hindquarters and tail-jerking. Some vomited and they lay down slowly, sparing their hindquarters.²⁷ Studies in Canada have found that piglets cried out most when the spermatic cord was pulled out of the scrotum and cut, and that these vocalisations (or screams) were significantly different from piglets that were merely picked up and handled but not castrated.²⁸ Similar studies in Germany concluded that the piglets' high frequency calls during castration are *"indicators of pain and suffering."*²⁹ A recent review by scientists from France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Norway, Denmark, Belgium and Spain records that in the days following castration piglets are observed to spend less time at their mother's teats, to be less active when awake, to show more pain-related behaviour such as prostration, stiffness, trembling and tail-wagging.³⁰ According to EFSA, pain perception during castration is not likely to be lower in pigs under 7 days old, and in addition castration at 1 to 3 days old may cause more complications than if the operation is done at a later age.²⁶ This evidence emphasises that it is important that piglet castration does not resume in Scotland.

The scientific consensus is that, if castration of piglets is to be done, it must be done with pain relief. EFSA's review led to the recommendation that both local anaesthesia and analgesia should be used 'to prevent pain in piglets which are castrated'.²⁶ French scientists who observed piglets still in pain, four days after castration, concluded that their results *"emphasise the necessity to develop analgesis protocols or alternative methods to castration."*³¹ In Norway, piglet castration already has to be done by a veterinarian with the use of anaesthetic; although farmers were initially negative about this change, it has been found that only 1/3 of them were negative after two years' experience of the new policy.³² As an alternative to injection (which is painful in itself), inhaler devices have been developed which have been found to induce rapid and safe anaesthesia for piglets undergoing castration.^{33, 34}

Alternatives to physical castration of piglets

Canadian scientists who have made detailed studies of pain during piglet castration have concluded, *"Rather than focus on pain control, welfare problems associated with castration may be better reduced by using non-surgical approaches, or by eliminating the need for castration in the first place."*²⁸

Surgical castration of pigs can be avoided by various strategies:

- Rearing pigs to lower slaughter weights (as current practice in the UK and Ireland)
- Improved hygiene and other management changes
- Immunocastration

Entire male pigs are in some ways more advantageous for farmers, in that they are leaner, have a higher growth rate and are more efficient at feed conversion. However, the main stated motivation for the castration of pigs at the present time is the avoidance of perceived 'boar-taint', which can occur in the meat of entire male pigs. This is perceived to be a urine or faeces-like smell when the meat is cooked. Boar-taint appears to be primarily caused by the compounds androstenone (a hormone found in sweat) and skatole. Higher levels of androstenone or skatole are linked to pigs being kept on soiled floors, getting over-excited and fighting, mixing with unfamiliar pigs, wallowing in excreta, high energy diets, and genetics. It is therefore likely that the occurrence of boar-taint could be reduced by changes in management practices as well as breeding pigs with lower levels of these compounds. According to EFSA, boar-taint is not considered a problem in European pig industries where carcass weights are kept to under 80 kg (pigs at slaughter weighing under 106 kg). Detection methods could also be devised at slaughterhouses to identify pig carcasses that are affected by boar-taint before they reach the consumer.^{25, 26}

There are also chemical alternatives to surgical castration of pigs. In Australia, around 25% of pigs are castrated by immunocastration, which uses a vaccine to inhibit the development of the testes by neutralising the relevant hormones. Individual meat processors have encouraged the use of immunocastration to differentiate their products in the marketplace and pay part of the cost of the vaccine.²⁵

2.1.4. Equines, dogs and cats

Horses, ponies, mules, donkeys, dogs and cats are only permitted to be castrated by a veterinary surgeon, using an anaesthetic.^{35, 36} This situation is in contrast to the current laws for farmed animals, which allow the castration of calves, sheep and pigs by unqualified persons, without anaesthetic, and highlights the inconsistencies that still exist in animal protection law.

Advocates for Animals is in favour of neutering companion dogs and cats, for reasons of individual health and over-population, provided they receive high quality veterinary care during and after castration (or spaying). However, further regulation may be necessary to ensure that the castration of any animals should be carried out under conditions that achieve the best outcome and the least distress for the animal, rather than the lowest veterinary cost for the owner. Research has shown that castration of horses by the cheaper method, in which the horse is castrated standing and the scrotal wound is left unsutured, is considerably more likely to lead to complications compared to the more costly method in which general anaesthesia is used in aseptic conditions.³⁷

2.2. TAIL-DOCKING

2.2.1. Lambs

Current status of tail-docking of lambs

Many lambs are routinely tail-docked (although hill ewes are often not docked). The main reason given is to avoid the accumulation of faeces around the sheep's tail end, which increases the risk of fly strike (severe maggot infestation). There is also a traditional perception among farmers that if lambs destined for slaughter are not docked in the conventional manner they may be harder to sell.

Tail-docking is usually done without pain relief by putting a tight rubber ring on the tail which cuts off the blood supply to the lower end of the tail. The tail subsequently shrivels and falls off. Other methods are to cut off the tail with a sharp knife or a hot iron that also cauterises the wound. Male lambs are often tail-docked and castrated at the same time. It is illegal to use the rubber ring method for tail-docking (or castration) without anaesthetic for lambs after 7 days of age.²⁰ This allows docking by other methods to be carried out on lambs younger or older than 7 days without anaesthetic. A further constraint is that it is illegal to cut the tail so short that the anus (for males) and vulva (for females) are not covered. Unqualified persons are permitted to tail-dock lambs of any age.

The current situation does not even conform to the very limited recommendation of the FAWC in their 1994 report to government on sheep welfare. FAWC recommended that tail-docking by any method by a non-veterinarian should be limited to lambs under 6 weeks old and that over this age any docking should be carried out by a veterinarian with use of anaesthetic, and for therapeutic purposes only.²

Pain caused by tail-docking of lambs

According to the FAWC's 1994 report on sheep, there is "no doubt" that tail-docking causes "pain and distress" to lambs.² Pain and distress caused by tail-docking have been demonstrated, both before and after FAWC's report, by a number of scientific studies of changes in the lambs' behaviour (restlessness, abnormal lying, walking and standing) and the cortisol response of tail-docked lambs. These studies show that the lambs' abnormal behaviour and the cortisol response can be much reduced by administering local anaesthetic. Studies in New Zealand showed that in the first 45 minutes after the operation, nearly all the walking and standing behaviour of lambs tail-docked by the ring method or the hot iron method was abnormal and lambs tail-docked by the ring method also spent time lying abnormally still on their sides.²² Combined tail-docking and castration by the ring method has been shown to cause severe pain and distress that is more severe than either of the two procedures performed alone.⁶ ²² According to scientists at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, Edinburgh, "*Intense noxious stimulation by castration and tail docking leads, in some lambs, to periods of inert lying during which it can be difficult to elicit any evidence of conscious awareness. Some ewes paw at their lambs when they see them lying immobile in this lateral posture; this seems to be a way of evoking activity to help alleviate the ewe's concern for the 'state' of its offspring.*"⁶

The need to end tail-docking of lambs

The scientific evidence on the pain caused by tail-docking makes it clear that the procedure should never be undertaken without local anaesthetic and long-term analgesia. Administering anaesthetic to large numbers of lambs effectively and without causing additional pain and distress from injection would clearly be a challenge for the sheep farming industry. A better approach might be for the industry to seek ways of successfully keeping lambs without removing their tails, and that this practice should become accepted within the industry. The FAWC in 1994 stated, "*we hope that as many [farmers] as possible will choose to avoid tail docking and castration.*"² The Scottish Executive's Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Sheep states that "*Farmers and shepherds should consider carefully whether tail docking within a particular flock is necessary. Tail docking may be carried out only if failure to do so would lead to subsequent welfare problems because of dirty tails and potential fly strike.*"²⁰

The farmer's assessment of the need for tail-docking should presumably include the actual risk of fly strike in any particular area, and would include possible improvements to management. Management to reduce fly risk would include avoidance of wounds caused by shearing, ear-tagging or other injuries, soiled rears, diarrhoea caused by worms, sores caused by footrot or other bloody or dirty sites that could attract flies, together with the possible use of effective insecticides such as pour-ons. If tail-docking without anaesthetic becomes unacceptable or illegal, it might be sensible to discontinue sheep rearing in areas where there is a high concentration of flies if farmers are unable to keep sheep clean and uninjured.

Advocates for Animals believes that the recommendations of both the FAWC and the Scottish Executive's Sheep Code have proved to be inadequate to change sheep farming practice. Advocates is concerned that, unless legal steps are taken, farmers will continue to tail-dock lambs routinely on the grounds that they are preventing the risk to welfare of fly-strike. It is currently too easy for the present situation to continue unless farmers are given a strong enough incentive to invest in seeking alternatives.

Advocates for Animals believes that announcing a date for a phase-out of routine tail-docking would be likely to provide an incentive for change. Any tail-docking after that date should be permitted only when carried out by a veterinary surgeon, using appropriate pain relief.

2.2.2. Piglets

Current status of tail-docking of piglets

It is illegal to tail-dock pigs routinely under the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2003 (and it has been illegal since 1994). In spite of this, the tail-docking of piglets is still routine in the pig industry.⁴ The main reason given for tail-docking is to avoid pigs biting other pigs' tails, which can cause wounds, suffering and even death. Tail-docking is in principle only allowed if there is evidence of tail-biting among the pigs, and other methods to stop the tail-biting have been tried.. Current law allows unqualified people to tail-dock piglets up to one week old without anaesthesia. After that age, docking must be done by a veterinary surgeon using anaesthetic and additional prolonged analgesia.²⁴

Piglets are very small and easy to handle when they are born. Partly for this reason, it may be tempting for farmers to continue with the relatively quick and easy procedure of routine tail-docking without giving sufficient thought to management changes that would allow the practice to be discontinued.

Pain caused by tail-docking of piglets

Piglets' tails are usually cut to around half or less of their normal length in the first days of life, using a knife, pliers or a hot docking iron which also cauterises the wound. Some farmers claim that the procedure is hardly painful. However, scientific evidence shows that tail-docking causes pain to pigs both at the time of docking and often in the long term. Scientists at the French national agricultural research institute (INRA), an institution not always known for its concern with animal welfare, found that piglets docked by a hot iron the day after birth struggled and howled and subsequently wagged and jerked their tails. These reactions were concluded to be likely to be due to pain, since they could be reduced by the use of an analgesic spray.³⁸

Tail-docking also causes long-term sensitivity in the pig's tail. A piglet's tail has nerves that extend to the end of the tail, and these can be seen when the tail is cut off. The normal uncut tail-tip is not very sensitive but the formation of neuromas (clumps of sensitive nerve fibres) at the point where the wound is healing make the pig's tail more sensitive for the rest of its life and may therefore cause it to avoid being bitten by other pigs.³⁹ According to detailed studies funded by the UK Government's Department for Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) at CAMBAC Research and the Veterinary Laboratory Agency, a variety of pathological changes occur during the healing process and the amputated stump of the tail never manages to grow the original pattern of nerves. The cut nerves heal only by formation of a neuroma which extends to the tip of the tail.⁴⁰ In addition, the dirty environment that pigs are often kept in means that the wounds may take time to heal and become infected.

Is tail-docking of piglets necessary?

Tail-biting is recognised by scientists as a symptom of problems or inadequacies in the management and welfare of pigs. The European Food Safety Authority's 130-page report on the welfare of weaners and rearing pigs concluded in 2005 that abnormal behaviour such as tail-biting "*indicates that the perpetrator's welfare is poor.*"⁴¹ Tail-docking should not be permitted as a solution to a management problem. According to the Scottish Executive's Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Pigs, "*Tail biting and other vices, such as ear and flank biting, are associated with some form of stress...Routine tail docking is not permitted. Tail docking is only permitted as a last resort after improvements to the pigs' environment and management have proved ineffectual.*"²⁴

Pigs are intelligent and exploratory animals. Numerous studies have shown that tail biting is associated with pigs being bored, overcrowded, inadequately fed or kept in barren conditions. According to the EU Scientific Veterinary Committee, "*Other methods for the reduction of tail-*

biting exist. When pigs with intact tails are fed an adequate diet, provided with sufficient water, provided with straw or other manipulable materials, or earth for rooting, and kept at a stocking density which is not too high, tail-biting is seldom serious. Tail biting is an indication of an inadequate environment and indicates that welfare is poor in the animal carrying out the biting.”
39

The results of a UK survey of nearly 28,000 pigs from 450 farms, published in 2001, show clearly that better husbandry conditions can do as much as tail-docking to reduce tail-biting. The survey found that when pigs were provided with straw and natural ventilation the level of tail-biting was 4.3% among pigs with intact tails compared to 1.2% among docked pigs. In contrast, when pigs were kept with no straw and in housing with artificial ventilation, 3.9% of tail-docked pigs were tail-bitten; ⁴² this is almost the same level of tail-biting as when undocked pigs are kept in better conditions. This confirms that that good husbandry can be as effective in reducing tail-biting as the practice of tail-docking.

The need to enforce the law

Commission Directive 2001/93/EC provides a replacement Annex to Council Directive 91/630/EEC laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs.

Article 4 of the Annex provides that “pigs must have permanent access to a sufficient quantity of material to enable proper investigation and manipulation activities, such as straw, hay, wood, sawdust, mushroom compost, peat or a mixture of such...”.

It is known that high standards of husbandry and welfare make tail-docking unnecessary. Yet it is believed that routine tail-docking continues in Scotland without farmers being obliged, or being given sufficient incentives, to improve their husbandry systems. Although the provision of straw or similar material for exploration is mandated by law, many pigs are still kept on slatted floors or bare concrete without access to these materials. Changes in husbandry practice to fully implement the law on provision of straw or similar materials would go a long way to eliminating tail-biting.

Advocates for Animals believes it is unacceptable that, due to non-compliance with a law which is intended to improved pig welfare, tail-docking of pigs remains a matter of routine.

2.2.3. Puppies

Current status of tail-docking of puppies

It has been illegal for a non-veterinarian to dock dogs' tails since 1993. The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons has banned veterinarians from docking of dogs' tails for cosmetic or breed-standard reasons (or any reason other than for 'therapeutic or truly prophylactic') for decades, deeming it “*conduct disgraceful in a professional respect.*” ⁴³ However, the practice has continued up to now, and has been carried out on whole litters of puppies without pain relief (under the Protection of Animals (Anaesthetics) Act 1954, docking is allowed without anaesthetic before a puppy's eyes are open). Non-therapeutic docking has long been opposed by all dog welfare organisations and most scientists ⁴⁴ and has been made a 'prohibited procedure' in the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006.

Pain caused by docking puppies' tails

Tail-docking involves the amputation of most or part of a dog's tail. The amputation is usually done when puppies are between two and five days old, using scissors or nail-clippers or sometimes a tight rubber band that cuts off the blood supply to the tail. Neither anaesthetic nor analgesia is generally used. Between 50 and 60 of the 200 dog breeds eligible for registration by the Kennel Club have customarily been docked.

The tail forms the hindmost part of the dog's backbone and usually consists of between 6 and 23 mobile vertebrae, enclosed in muscle that is served by 4 to 7 paired nerves. The tail muscles are located on the hind part of the dog's back as well as on the tail itself, and are attached to the tail vertebrae by tendons. Docking length varies, but short-docked dogs such as Rottweilers may be left with only 1 or 2 tail vertebrae. Tail-docking therefore involves the cutting through or crushing of skin, muscles, up to 7 pairs of nerves and bone and cartilage connections. A review of the scientific evidence by the Animal Welfare Veterinary Division of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs concluded in 2002 that *"tail docking definitely causes pain in neonatal puppies."*⁴⁵

Observations of the behaviour of 50 Doberman, Rottweiler and Bouvier puppies aged 3-5 days undergoing tail-docking made at the Department of Companion Animal Medicine and Surgery, University of Queensland, found considerable evidence of pain: *"All pups appeared distressed by the amputation of the tail. Relatively continuous mild vocalizations during the preparation of the tail turned dramatically to repeated and intense shrieking vocalizations at the moment the tail was docked. ...At the moment of piercing the skin for suture placement [the tails were short-docked, requiring stitches] vocalizations again returned to levels comparable with the amputation. Similar intense vocalizations were noticed when pressure was placed on the suture material as the knot was tied. The average number of shrieks made during the amputation of the tail was 24 (range of 5 of 33). The average number of whimpers made during the amputation of the tail was 18 (range of 2 to 46). All pups exhibited some degree of bleeding from the stump following docking."* They were separated from their mothers at this point, because the mother dog tended to lick the tail stump, causing further vocalization by the pup.⁴⁶

It is sometimes suggested that because puppies fall asleep or suckle within minutes of tail-docking they cannot be in pain. However, the reverse may be true. There are likely to be evolutionary reasons for puppies sleeping and suckling after injury or stress, to conserve their strength. It is also known that the act of suckling stimulates the release of endogenous opioids (endorphins) that produce analgesia.⁴⁷

Tail-docking can also cause long-term pain and injury to dogs. Occasionally puppies die from shock or blood loss as a result of docking. Dogs may also suffer from types of 'pathological' long-term pain as a result of tissue damage from docking, including:^{45, 48}

- Spontaneous pain (in the absence of an obvious cause)
- Flare reaction (widening of the painful area)
- Exaggerated response to a painful stimulus (hyperalgesia)
- Referred pain (pain spreads from site of injury to other tissues)
- 'Sympathetic dystrophy' (a pathological interaction between the sensory and the sympathetic nervous system, that controls many of the body's organs and glands)

A substantial proportion of dogs, like humans, may experience 'phantom limb' pain or stump pain for a long time after amputation. In addition, they may have pain from neuromas (bundles of regenerating nerve fibres) created by docking that produce increased sensitivity or pain in the tail stump long after it has apparently healed. There is evidence that chronic pain from neuromas may cause behavioural problems that in turn may lead to dogs being euthanased.⁴⁷

Health and welfare problems associated with tail-docked dogs

Because of the relationship between the muscles in the dog's tail, back and pelvic area, tail-docking can have long-term consequences for the functioning of the muscles associated with the rectum, anus and pelvis. Chronic health problems associated with damage or degeneration of the tail and pelvic muscles include an increased risk of faecal incontinence, acquired urinary incontinence and perineal hernia (where the rectum, abdominal contents or pelvic contents

break through the muscular wall of the pelvic cavity). Urinary incontinence in bitches has been found to be more common in breeds such as the Old English Sheepdog, Rottweiler and Doberman, which are traditionally docked, compared to Labrador Retrievers and German Shepherd Dogs, which are traditionally undocked. Boxers, which are traditionally docked, have a predisposition to perineal hernia.^{47, 48} In large breeds it has been estimated that the incidence of urinary incontinence in spayed female dogs is as high as 30% and a 1997 review in *The Veterinary Record* concluded that “Docking itself appears to be a risk factor.”⁴⁹

Tail-docking can also have adverse effects on the dog’s movement, communication and behaviour. A tail supports and stabilises the back and aids balance in various activities.^{45, 47} In addition, the tail (i.e. carriage and movement) is very important in communicating the dog’s emotional state, including friendliness, dominance, submission and antagonism. This applies both to the dog’s relationship with other dogs and with people. Removing a tail deprives the dog of what the British Veterinary Association has called a “*vital form of canine expression*” and this can lead to misunderstandings in social interaction which could have serious consequences.

The socialisation of puppies may be negatively affected by the pain and distress of tail-docking, which is typically carried out before the critical formative period of a dog’s life, when social skills are established. A 2003 review of the issues points out, “*Since the impact of chronic pain on our own ability to function is unquestioned, the justification for subjecting any dog to this experience needs careful consideration.*”⁴⁷

Is the tail-docking of dogs necessary?

A common argument from the proponents of tail-docking is that dogs with undocked tails are likely to suffer tail injuries. This view is not supported by the evidence that exists from records of dogs attending veterinary clinics, which indicate that tail injury requiring veterinary attention is a relatively rare event. The relative rareness of injury has been shown by studies of veterinary clinic records at the Royal (Dick) School at Edinburgh (47 cases in records of 12,000 dogs),⁵⁰ in Denmark (26 cases in records of 70,000 dogs)⁵¹ and in Australia (3 cases in 2000 visits to an animal emergency clinic, all of them due to problems just post-docking).⁴⁷ Although there is a lack of large-scale controlled studies of docked and undocked dogs of the same breed, the evidence that exists does not support the claim that undocked dogs are at higher risk of tail injury.

A second argument put forward is that the lifestyle of dogs of ‘working breeds’ puts them at increased danger of tail injury. This is unconvincing for a number of reasons. Firstly, the vast majority of dogs of traditionally working breeds are now kept as companion animals or for showing, not for work. According to DEFRA’s review of the issues in 2002, “*It is both improper and unsubstantiated to suggest that all puppies in any litter, working or non-working, will suffer tail injury in later life and thus should all be docked soon after birth as a precautionary measure.*”⁴⁵ There is a large amount of inconsistency in the arguments put forward for docking certain breeds rather than others, suggesting strongly that the real reasons for docking are tradition and ‘look’ rather than a real need to prevent injury. A 2003 review in the *Australian Veterinary Journal* has pointed out that for almost every breed that is traditionally docked, there is another similar breed that is traditionally undocked, which “*calls into question the veracity of the argument.*”⁴⁷

DEFRA’s Animal Welfare Veterinary Team pointed out several inconsistencies in their 2002 review, including the following: foxhounds and sheepdogs are undocked, yet work in scrubland and woodland; some breeds of spaniels and terriers are traditionally docked, but others (e.g. the Cavalier King Charles spaniel, the Dandie Dinmont terrier) are traditionally undocked; the Old English Sheepdog is traditionally docked, but other large breeds used to guard sheep such as the German Shepherd and the Pyrenean, are undocked; the fox itself is a canine that moves

underground and in woodland with a full tail. While docking is sometimes rationalised as preventing long-haired breeds becoming soiled by their faeces, Afghan hounds, Bearded Collies and Maltese terriers have long coats and yet are traditionally undocked.⁴⁵

This evidence therefore suggests that docking is being carried out mainly for cosmetic reasons.

On the basis of the evidence on the impact of tail-docking on dogs' health and welfare, Advocates for Animals believes that the approach taken in the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 is correct, and that all tail-docking of dogs should be prohibited except for the therapeutic docking of an injured or diseased tail.

Views of the veterinary and related professions

The statements below make it clear that informed and professional opinion in the UK is firmly opposed to the tail-docking of dogs.

The **Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons** statement of 2005 includes the following: *"The Royal College has for many years been firmly opposed to the docking of dogs' tails, whatever the age of the dog, by anyone, unless it can be shown truly to be required for therapeutic or truly prophylactic reasons. Docking cannot be defined as prophylactic unless it is undertaken for the necessary protection of the given dog from risks to that dog of disease or injury which is likely to arise in the future from the retention of the entire tail. The test of likelihood is whether or not such outcome will probably arise in the case of that dog if it is not docked. Faecal soiling in the dog is not for this purpose a disease or injury, and its purported prevention by surgical means cannot be justified. Similarly, docking cannot be described as prophylactic if it is undertaken merely on request, or just because the dog is of a particular breed, type or conformation. Council considers that such docking is unethical."*⁵²

The **British Veterinary Association** stated in 1997, *"The BVA is opposed to the docking of puppies' tails. BVA believes that puppies suffer unnecessary pain as a result of docking, and are deprived of a vital form of canine expression. Chronic pain can arise from poorly-performed docking. BVA would reiterate that surgical operations should not be undertaken unless necessary for therapeutic purposes and that docking should be banned as a procedure other than for veterinary medical reasons."*⁵³

The statement of the **British Small Animal Veterinary Association** on the draft Animal Welfare Bill for England in 2004 included the following: *"BSAVA is very concerned that...there may be some exemptions to a ban on the docking of dogs' tails. BSAVA considers that scientific evidence shows clearly that docking is a painful procedure and that there is no credible evidence of its necessity in any dog.*

*"BSAVA therefore urges government to take this opportunity to institute a complete ban on docking other than for therapeutic reasons."*⁵⁴

The **Animal Welfare Veterinary Team of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs** (DEFRA) concluded in 2002: *"The arguments put forward by those who wish docking to be continued are unsound from a scientific viewpoint, are contrary to accepted standards for the welfare of the dog(s) and serve only to contribute to artificial physical breed standards."*⁴⁵

The **Companion Animal Welfare Council** (CAWC) response to Defra's consultation on an Animal Welfare Bill included the following: *"Given the continuing prevalence of dogs with docked tails, we are not convinced that the RCVS Guidance is being uniformly adhered to by the profession. We urge, therefore, that consideration be given to increasing the accountability of veterinary surgeons in this regard. One way forward may be to make docking of a dog's tail*

illegal unless the veterinary surgeon can demonstrate reasonable grounds for believing that there are truly (although the word “genuinely” might be preferable) therapeutic or prophylactic reasons for carrying out the procedure on the particular animal.”⁵⁵

The Scottish SPCA Veterinary Team has made the following comments on tail-docking of dogs: *“We see thousands of dogs coming through our Animal Welfare Centres annually. Amongst those animals, tail injuries are virtually non-existent. In fact, the tail injuries we do see are normally in dogs that would not normally be docked anyway, particularly Greyhounds and Lurchers. We see more injuries relating to tail docking that has been done badly, or has gone wrong, and in some cases wound infections have been almost life threatening. The Scottish SPCA’s policy is that we oppose the routine docking of dogs’ tails. The Society cannot see any justifiable reason for docking a dog’s tail on cosmetic grounds. Moreover, it appears that there are many good arguments against docking.*

“The Scottish SPCA would like to see legislation imposed clarifying that it is an offence for anyone – vet or otherwise – to dock a dog’s tail except on therapeutic grounds (e.g. emergency pain relief). While supporting a ban on prophylactic docking, the Society believes that, as long as veterinary surgeons do continue to dock tails, they must issue a certificate explaining the clinical reason for the procedure.”⁵⁶

Other jurisdictions have already prohibited the tail-docking of dogs, in whole or in part. These include: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy (Turin and Rome), Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden, Australia, Iceland, Israel, Norway, South Africa, Switzerland and the Virgin Islands.

2.3. REMOVAL OF HORNS: disbudding and de-horning

2.3.1. Calves and older cattle

Current status of de-horning

Cattle have their horns removed to avoid the risk of animals injuring each other, which is an economic as well as a welfare concern, and to make them easier to handle and to transport. The horn grows from a layer of skin around its base and until about 2 months of age the developing horn (horn bud) is free-floating in the skin and is not attached to the skull. Horn removal by burning or cutting off the horn-growing skin at this stage is known as dis-budding (or sometimes de-horning). When the growing horn attaches to the skull the horn core becomes a bony extension of the skull and the hollow centre of the core opens directly into the frontal sinuses of the skull (on the forehead). At this stage the procedure is known as de-horning and requires the horns to be cut off with a saw, horn shears or cutting wire and the exposed blood vessels cauterised to prevent bleeding.¹⁰

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, in its review of mutilations, states of dehorning: *“Since in both species [cattle and goats] potentially painful exposure of the frontal sinuses [in the forehead] occurs as a result of the operation it should be carried out by a veterinarian and only if he considers it essential.”¹* It is currently legal in Scotland for an unqualified person to carry out both disbudding and de-horning on calves or cattle of any age.

Pain caused by disbudding and dehorning

Disbudding and dehorning are scientifically recognised as being painful, whatever method is used. For surgical removal it is a legal requirement that anaesthetic must be used during the procedure, although analgesic for longer-term pain relief is not required. The Code of

Recommendations also cautions that, *“The person doing the disbudding or de-horning should always allow enough time for the anaesthetic to numb the area before they begin.”*⁹

However, it is legal to disbud calves by chemical cauterisation (using for example a caustic paste) without anaesthetic within the first week of life. (Chemical cauterisation is only permitted during the calf’s first week of life.) This method has been condemned by the FAWC and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. The FAWC in its 1997 report recommended that *“The pain and stress which can be caused by chemical cauterisation mean that the method should not be used.”*¹⁰ The RCVS concluded that caustic chemicals should not be used *“because of the risk of excessive pain both to treated animals and to their pen mates.”*¹ The Scottish Executive’s Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Cattle states merely that *“It is strongly recommended that chemical cauterisation should not be used.”*⁹

Caustic paste is a particular risk if the user is inexperienced or even careless, as it can be accidentally transferred onto other sensitive tissue on the calf or on other animals, especially in wet or crowded conditions. Because of the danger of misuse, Advocates for Animals believes caustic paste should not be used, even if a local anaesthetic is used.

Disbudding can also be done by cauterising the horn bud and a surrounding ring of skin (to remove all horn-forming tissue) with a red hot iron. The Code of Recommendations states that *“Disbudding should only be carried out with a heated iron, under local anaesthetic”*, implying that other methods such as using a curved knife or ‘scoop’ de-horning are not acceptable. The Code suggests that disbudding at under 2 months of age is preferable to de-horning. During hot-iron disbudding, the cauterising iron is rolled over the horn bud several times so that a ring around the bud is burnt through the full thickness of the skin to ensure that the horn-growth tissue is destroyed.⁵⁷ This method causes no bleeding. (After de-horning, if the wound is not cauterised it will bleed and can become infected or attract flies.)

Pain caused by disbudding or de-horning is long-lasting. Studies in a number of countries show that calves should be given a systemic analgesic as well as local anaesthetic to alleviate the longer-term pain of disbudding or de-horning. Research at the University of British Columbia showed that calves of 4 to 8 weeks de-budded by the hot iron method with a local anaesthetic showed signs of pain such as increased ear shaking up to 12 hours later and ear flicking up to 24 hours later. These signs were almost absent when the calves were also given a systemic analgesic.⁵⁸ Similar results showing that both anaesthesia and long-lasting analgesia are necessary were found in New Zealand for 6 month old calves.⁵⁹ Current evidence shows that calves and cattle of all ages should receive a sedative, a local anaesthetic and analgesic if they are to be disbudded or de-horned.^{60, 58, 61}

These scientific conclusions are endorsed by welfare advisory bodies. The SCAHAW investigation of the welfare of beef cattle conclude in 2001 that, *“De-horning by any amputation method causes severe pain and distress. Local anaesthesia and systemic analgesia can reduce, in the short term, the pain caused by de-horning”* and that *“When providing pain relief no distinction should be made on the basis of age”*.⁶²

The FAWC made several recommendations on dehorning in 1997, none of which has since been put into law:¹⁰

- *De-horning must be carried out only by a veterinary surgeon and then only when deemed necessary. It should not be a routine procedure. The Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 should be amended accordingly.*
- *If de-horning has to be carried out, pain control methods such as analgesics should be used in addition to local anaesthesia.*

- *The relevant legislation must be reviewed and the maximum age of which disbudding can be performed by non-veterinarians should be stated. The calf must be no more than two months of age.*
- *Chemical cauterisation should not be used.*

Advocates for Animals believes that the current law on disbudding and de-horning is inadequate to protect calves from pain and distress. At the very least the new regulations should incorporate the FAWC recommendations (with the proviso that disbudding of a calf of any age must only be carried out by a veterinary surgeon).

Avoiding the need for horn removal

In view of the pain caused to calves by removing their horns, these operations are clearly unacceptable as routine mutilations from the animal welfare point of view. In this connection, the FAWC in 2003 recommended to government that horned cattle, or recently dehorned animals with unhealed wounds, should not be presented for slaughter except for some defined specialist breeds for which specific arrangements should be made.⁶³

Advocates for Animals believes that horn removal should be avoided by breeding for naturally polled (without horns) cattle or by changing farm management systems to accommodate breeds of horned cattle.

2.3.2. Sheep and goats

Similar considerations of pain and distress apply to the dehorning or disbudding of sheep and goats. An apparent inconsistency in the law is that according to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 sheep and goats, in contrast to cattle, may only be disbudded or dehorned by a veterinary surgeon.²⁰ This difference is likely to be due to the need for greater skill because the animals' skulls are much thinner than those of calves, risking damage to the brain,⁵ but clearly calves should have the same level of protection from pain as lambs and kids.

2.3.3. Deer (antler removal)

A male deer grows a new set of antlers every year after the old antlers have been stripped of 'velvet' and 'cast'. While the new antlers are growing ('in velvet') it is illegal to cut them off unless this is done by a veterinarian,³⁶ for therapeutic reasons. When the antlers have been stripped of velvet and have hardened, in the late summer, it is usual to remove antlers from farmed stags before the rut begins.⁶⁴ This is done mainly for the safety of people working with the stags, and presumably also to prevent the animals from injuring each other.⁶⁵ The stag may be restrained in a 'crush' or tranquillised.⁶⁶ The hard antlers can be sawn off without causing pain at this stage, although the handling is likely to cause some stress

The Health and Safety Executive has suggested that disbudding of male deer calves would be a safe alternative to the risks of handling adult stags.⁶⁵

In view of the clear evidence of the pain and distress caused by disbudding, which is a mutilation involving living and growing tissue, Advocates for Animals believes that disbudding of deer calves should be specifically prohibited in Scottish law.

2.4. BRANDING, TATTOOING, EAR–NOTCHING or PUNCHING and EAR–TAGGING

People have been marking their animals for identification by various physical means over centuries, including by branding and cutting of ears, and some of these old practices continue today. Currently ear-tagging with approved identification tags is required by European law for identification and traceability of animals intended for human consumption.

While traceability is clearly desirable for protection of both animal welfare and food safety, the current methods of identification undoubtedly cause pain, discomfort and, often, injury to animals. The procedures must serve to increase the animals' distrust of and fear of contact with people, impose avoidable stress on them and hence make them harder to handle in the long term. Given that relatively painless and more secure and technologically advanced alternatives such as microchipping exist, it is time to review the welfare aspects of potentially cruel systems such as branding, tattooing, ear-tagging and ear-notching and replace them with methods that avoid causing pain or injury to the animals.

Branding and tattooing

Both branding and tattooing involve damaging or piercing the animal's skin in order to produce a permanent mark on its body. According to current law, these can be used without pain relief for a range of species including sheep (ear tattooing)²⁰, pigs (ear or body tattooing, slap marking²⁴), horses (freeze branding, hot branding, lip tattooing³⁵) and fish (freeze branding⁶⁷).

Pigs at a few days of age and breeding sows are tattooed for farm identification, by piercing their skin with needle points. Pigs about to be sent for slaughter are 'slap marked' (tattooed by 'slapping' a block holding sharp spikes in the configuration of the required letters or numbers onto the pig's shoulder or back).²⁴ Clearly this would be unacceptable treatment of a dog or cat.

According to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, tattooing and freeze-branding cause discomfort and hot branding causes pain and discomfort "*operatively and post-operatively*".¹ With modern techniques of electronic identification available, these practices should be prohibited.

Ear-notching or punching

Current law allows owners to mark an animal for identification purposes by cutting pieces out of its ears without pain relief, for example by taking several cuts out of the edges of a pig's ears in a manner that indicates a numerical code²⁴ or by punching or notching pieces out of the ears of sheep²⁰, cattle, pigs or deer.⁶⁷

According to the RCVS, ear punching "*undoubtedly causes pain.*"¹ The RCVS recommends that "*Ear notching and clipping procedures are only acceptable when they are essential and there is no alternative method*". The EU Scientific Veterinary Committee report on pig welfare concluded in 1997 that, "*Well designed ear tags cause a small area of damage to the ear. Ear notches cause a larger area of damage and would appear to be entirely unjustifiable.*"³⁹ Since painless electronic methods are now available, the practice of ear-notching or punching should be prohibited.

These medieval practices can be contrasted with the marking by ear tipping of feral cats when they have been neutered and returned to their living site (the top of the left ear is cut off to indicate that the individual has been neutered). This is done under anaesthetic.

Ear-tagging

Approved ear tags are made of either plastic or metal and are attached through the tissue of animals' ears by a sharp spike, inserted by use of a stapler-like instrument without pain relief. Tags consist either of two pieces (front and back, joined by forcing a spike on one half of the tag through the animal's ear into a slot in the other half of the tag) or one piece with a spike at one end (fitted in a ring or folded conformation through the ear).

Ear tags cause bleeding at the time of fitting, which can lead to infection and attracts flies, causing irritation and potentially leading to fatal maggot infestation (fly strike) in sheep. The Scottish Executive's Codes of Recommendation state that farmers should avoid 'main blood vessels and ridges of cartilage' when stapling on the tags, that tags should be positioned to allow room for growth of the ear, and that tagging should be avoided during the fly season.^{9, 20} Tags can also get snagged on bushes, wires, etc. and be torn off, damaging the animal's ears in the process. Many farmers are very critical of ear tags because of the welfare problems they can cause, as well as the extra work caused to themselves in attaching the tags. Because tags often fall off or are torn off, some animals may be subjected to several more ear-tagging sessions that are required by law. Young lambs, piglets and calves are also subjected to painful ear-tagging.

Some tags already incorporate microchips which allow a multitude of data about the animal to be input and accessed instantaneously by owners, workers or officials when suitable electronic reading equipment is installed. Rather than microchips being incorporated into a physical tag, with inevitable welfare problems, they could be implanted relatively painlessly under the animal's skin, as is now common practice for domestic dogs and cats.

Advocates for Animals believes that the current system of tagging is primitive and unacceptable from the animal welfare point of view and should be replaced by routine microchipping of animals when traceability is required by law.

2.5. DE-BEAKING (BEAK-TRIMMING) OF POULTRY

Current status of de-beaking

It has been traditional to cut off part of the upper and lower beaks of egg-laying hens and the male breeding birds in the meat-chicken industry,⁶⁸ turkeys (and also some ducks kept for meat). This mutilation is routinely carried out without pain relief in hatcheries on day-old chicks intended for egg production or breeding. It is used for birds intended for rearing in battery cages, barns or in free-range systems. Scottish law states that, "*In order to prevent feather pecking and cannibalism, until 31st December 2010 beak-trimming of birds is permitted on chicks under 10 days old that are intended for laying*".⁶⁹ It is legal to remove up to one third of the length of the beak of hens⁶⁹ and turkeys⁷⁰ and to remove the rim at the front of the upper bill of a duckling.⁷¹ Laying hens are by far the largest group of poultry subject to de-beaking.

De-beaking (also known as beak-trimming) is done in order to prevent hens from pecking each other's feathers or rear, which can result in wounding or mass attacks of birds on each other, sometimes leading to death. Pecking is a natural behaviour of hens, which in natural conditions spend a large proportion of their time using their beak for exploration and foraging for food. Feather-pecking is a feature of poultry-keeping that does not occur among the wild ancestors of domestic chickens. It can occur in all the main husbandry systems (cages, barns or free-range). Feather-pecking can also occur among de-beaked hens.⁷² While de-beaking is very common

in the industry as a whole, it is not true that it is essential for poultry-keeping. Many organic or premium free-range egg producers already manage their laying hens without de-beaking. The European Food Safety Authority reviewed the evidence on de-beaking in 2005 and noted that it is already banned in Norway, Finland and Sweden.⁷²

Pain caused by de-beaking

De-beaking is usually done with a hot cutting blade in order to cauterise the wound. The procedure is painful to chicks because the beak contains soft tissue and nerves. It is known that the severed nerves tend to form neuromas (bundles of sensitive nerves) which can cause lasting sensitivity or pain in the beak, which discourages the hen from using it for her normal behaviour (as well as preventing harmful pecking of other hens). Animal welfare scientists in the UK and Canada have concluded, *"It is clear that beak-trimming (or de-beaking as it is sometimes called) shows all signs of being a painful operation with prolonged painful effects as well as effects on feeding and exploratory behaviour."*⁷³ Methods using a laser beam or infrared radiation have also been tested, although it is not yet clear how the pain and neuroma formation produced by these methods compares with the hot blade method.⁷²

Methods of avoiding de-beaking

An approach which is consistent with the natural behaviour of birds is to provide hens with abrasive materials that will blunt the tips of their beaks and so could reduce the damage caused by any feather-pecking that does occur.⁷² Research has taken place in the Netherlands and the UK, which seems promising^{72, 74} and this method could be useful as a management aid when de-beaking is prohibited.

While feather-pecking can cause great suffering to hens, it has now been recognised that husbandry changes, rather than mutilation, should be used to solve the problem. With the agreement of the UK industry, beak-trimming (de-beaking) of laying hens is being phased out by the end of 2010. The Welfare of Farmed Animals (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2002 permit de-beaking of laying hens only until 31st December 2010, in order to prevent feather pecking and cannibalism.⁶⁹

This phase-out has required considerable research by the UK egg industry into management systems that minimise the likelihood of feather-pecking, including breeding hens with a low propensity to feather-peck, providing food that takes longer to eat and so satisfying foraging instincts, provision of litter material, and environmental enrichment.^{72, 75, 76}

It is not acceptable that essentially soluble management problems are cited as excuses for a severe mutilation such as de-beaking.

Advocates for Animals believes that if de-beaking, a very widely practised mutilation, can be legally ended with the cooperation of the industry, the other painful or disabling mutilations discussed in this report can likewise be phased out in a short period of time.

2.6. DE-SNOODING, DUBBING, DE-SPURRING, DE-CLAWING and TOE-CUTTING

These procedures are currently carried out on young poultry without pain relief.

2.6.1. Turkeys

De-snooding is the removal of the snood, a long fleshy appendage on the front of the turkey's head, usually carried out when turkey chicks are very young. De-snooding is done by hand or using an instrument. The stated reason for removal is that the snood can be damaged by frost or fighting and lead to infection. Toe-cutting of turkeys is the removal of the last joint of the

inside toes of male breeding turkeys. The stated reason is to avoid damage to females during mating although artificial insemination rather than natural mating is more usual in the turkey production industry.

Under current law it is legal for an unqualified person to de-snood turkeys within the first 21 days of life without pain relief (after which time the operation must legally be done by a veterinary surgeon). Toe-cutting of male breeding turkeys likewise can be performed legally by an unqualified person without pain relief within the first 72 hours of life.⁷⁰

Since these procedures involve tearing or cutting living, sensitive tissue of the young birds, they inevitably cause pain. Advocates for Animals believes these procedures should be prohibited or permitted only by a veterinary surgeon using pain relief, for chicks of any age.

2.6.2. Chickens

Dubbing is the removal of all or part of the male chicken's comb, usually done with scissors. De-spurring is the removal, usually at a day old, of the spur bud on the back of the male chicken's leg, using a heated wire. This is done in chicks intended for breeding, to avoid damage to the female during mating. De-clawing is the removal of the dew claw and/or pivot claw from the feet of male chickens, again with the intention of avoiding damage to females during mating. In addition, some chickens have toes removed for purposes of identification.⁷⁷

Under current law, it is legal for an unqualified person to cut the combs and cut off the toes of chickens up to the age of 72 hours without pain relief (after which time the operation must be done by a veterinary surgeon).⁷⁷

These are examples of inhumane and unnecessary traditional practices that should be ended. According to both the FAWC and the Scottish Executive's Code of Recommendations, dubbing, de-spurring, de-clawing and toe removal have little justification and should be avoided or phased out.

According to the Code of Recommendations, "*Removal of the comb has few, if any, welfare advantages in comparison with the disturbance and pain likely to be caused and should be avoided.*" On de-spurring, the Code recommends breeding birds with short, blunt spurs, so that it should not be necessary. On toe-removal, the Code states that "*Toe removal (cutting) for purposes of identification is an unnecessary mutilation and should be avoided.*"⁷⁷ On de-clawing, the Code states, "*The removal of the pivot claw has little justification in welfare terms and should be avoided.*"⁷⁷

The FAWC, in its report on the welfare of broiler breeders (meat chickens used for breeding) recommended in 1998:⁷⁸

- *The dubbing of broiler breeders should be discontinued. The primary breeding companies should be encouraged to educate their customers that this practice is not necessary.*
- *Routine de-spurring should not be necessary. The government should press all breeding companies to pursue development of genotypes with short, blunt spurs and so remove the need for de-spurring.*
- *The practice of removing the pivot claw should be phased out within three years.*
- *Toe removal for purposes of identification must be discontinued within one year.*

In view of these expert recommendations from 1998, Advocates for Animals believes it would be inconsistent for the Scottish Executive to permit these mutilations to continue.

2.7. NOSE-RINGING

Nose-ringing is the procedure of putting a metal ring (or rings) through the tissue of the noses of pigs and bulls. The management objective is either to make the animal easier to handle (bulls and occasionally boars) or to prevent the animal from damaging vegetation in its outdoor environment by rooting (breeding sows).

Breeding sows kept outside are quite often nose-ringed. The sows have one ring put through the nasal septum (bull ring) or a number of finer wire rings put through the upper rim of the end of the snout (clip rings). Under current law non-veterinarians, are permitted to insert nose rings without the use of anaesthetic.²⁴

This painful mutilation is not necessary for successful pig breeding. The FAWC noted in 1996 that while some pig farmers claim that nose-ringing is essential to protect their pasture, other pig farmers manage equally well without ringing their sows.⁷⁹ Nose-ringing is not permitted in organic farming, which is a sector currently enjoying considerable growth in consumer demand.

Pain and disability caused by nose-ringing

Nose-ringing is likely to cause acute and long-term pain to pigs and therefore prevents them from carrying out normal foraging and rooting behaviour. It is a mutilation that is both painful and disabling. According to the EU Scientific Veterinary Committee (SVC), the nose tip is highly innervated and so will be sensitive to pain during and after the insertion of rings.³⁹ The SVC report concluded, *“If a nose ring was pulled it would be very painful so this should never be done. It is sufficiently painful to prevent nose-ringed sows from rooting in the ground. Rooting is a behaviour which pigs have a strong preference to perform so there will be an adverse effect on their welfare if they are unable to root.”*³⁹ Research at the University of Hull has shown that both types of ring completely stopped sows from digging in the ground with their snouts in the month after ringing,⁸⁰ and both types of ring made the sows pick up their solid feed (‘roll nuts’) *“more tentatively than unringed pigs”* and they ate more slowly. The ringed sows’ feeding efficiency was thus reduced, which could affect both their welfare and their productivity.⁸¹

The FAWC concluded in 1996, in its report to government on outdoor pig production, *“the ring is inserted with the specific intention of it causing discomfort should the sow attempt to dig and root. Ringing in itself can result in considerable distress to the sow when the procedure is carried out, especially when wire rings are lost and have to be regularly replaced and this type of ring is particularly inappropriate.”*⁷⁹

The need to end nose-ringing

It is clear from the fact that many pig breeding units do not use nose rings that they are not essential for pig farming. Research has also shown that various strategies can be combined to reduce the effect of rooting on the paddock, such as the provision of an area of root crops, the provision of an area of edible enrichment such as grass silage on the ground,^{82, 83} lowering the stocking density, and improving the management of the pasture.⁸⁴

The Scottish Executive’s Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Pigs states that *“Nose ringing is a mutilation and should be avoided wherever possible.”*²⁴ Since nose ringing is a mutilation that is both intentionally painful and prevents natural behaviour, Advocates for Animals believes that the practice can no longer be justified and should be prohibited. The ‘bull ring’ and the ‘boss ring’ are already prohibited in the Netherlands,⁸⁴ which has a pig industry that produced nearly 60% more pigs than the UK in 2005.⁸⁵

Nose rings used on bulls are similarly intended to cause pain when pulled and so make the bull easier to control or restrain.

Advocates for Animals believes that no animal should intentionally be caused pain in order to make its management easier and that nose-ringing of either pigs or cattle should be seen as completely unacceptable.

2.8. CUTTING OFF TEATS

Calves are sometimes born with one or more extra (sometimes non-functional) teats on their udders. These are not harmful but can leak during milking and can become infected and cause health and welfare problems when the calf matures. (These are referred to as ‘supernumerary teats’.)¹⁰ In current law it is legal for these teats to be cut off by a non-veterinarian, without the use of anaesthetic, up to the age of 3 months. Usually scissors would be used for this. As we have seen, scientific evidence suggests that younger animals are as sensitive to pain as older ones, if not more so, and therefore does not support the assumption that calves under 3 months of age will feel pain on teat removal any less than calves of over 3 months of age. The FAWC in its 1997 report on dairy cows recommended that an effective local anaesthesia should always be used, but this is not so far a legal requirement.

The Scottish Executive’s Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Cattle states that the operation should be done at an early age, recommends the use of local anaesthetic and antiseptic, and states that bleeding should be stopped immediately.⁹

These recommendations alone appear to Advocates to Animals to be entirely inadequate to prevent avoidable suffering in calves and should be replaced by a legal requirement for teat removal at any age to be carried out only by a veterinary surgeon, using an anaesthetic and suitable longer-term pain relief.

2.9. TOOTH-CLIPPING OR GRINDING (‘tooth resection’)

Piglets

Piglets routinely have their teeth (usually the pointed corner teeth) clipped or ground down to about half their original length, with the intention of preventing the piglets damaging their mothers’ teats when suckling or damaging each other by biting each other’s tails or ears. Under current law, this procedure can be carried out by a non-veterinarian using clippers or a grinder, without pain relief, on piglets up to 7 days of age.

Pain caused by tooth-cutting

Tooth-clipping or grinding undoubtedly causes pain. The 1996 FAWC report on pigs kept outdoors recognised that tooth-cutting causes both short-term and long-term pain to piglets, and recommended that methods of pain relief should be researched.⁷⁹ According to the EU Scientific Veterinary Committee report on pigs (1997), *“The clipping or grinding exposes the dentine which is innervated...in many other studies of mammalian teeth, any damage which exposes dentine is painful and the pain persists for some hours or days. There is no reason to presume that piglets do not feel pain when their teeth are severely damaged.”*³⁹

The need to avoid tooth-cutting

Problems of biting are associated particularly with intensive pig breeding systems. The SVC commented that it was not clear that teeth-clipping is very effective in preventing serious harm to sows or other piglets when pigs are born and suckled in outdoor systems, where the sow is able to get away from the piglets if their teeth are hurting her, and the piglets can escape from each

other.³⁹ In contrast, the farrowing crate system, in which the sow has difficulty standing up and cannot turn around, means neither the sow nor the piglets have any room to move away from each other. The SVC commented, *“Tooth-clipping or grinding should not be carried out unless there is a substantial advantage for it. It seems unlikely that the causing of pain in every tooth of every piglet could be justified by the relatively minor advantages which occur as a consequence of the practice.”*³⁹

Tooth-clipping or grinding is a very painful mutilation used as a solution to management problems which could and should be solved by other means. According to the law, tooth-cutting, like tail-docking of piglets, should not be carried out routinely but *“only where there is evidence that injuries to a sows’ teats or to other pigs’ ears and tails have occurred.”* Even then, *“no tooth reduction may be carried out unless other measures to improve environmental conditions or management systems have been taken”.*⁸⁶

If it is ever absolutely unavoidable to cut the teeth of particular piglets which are causing problems, Advocates for Animals believes this should only be done by a veterinary surgeon using suitable local anaesthetic and analgesia.

3. YOUNG ANIMALS’ CAPACITY TO FEEL PAIN

There is general agreement among scientists who have studied mutilations that young animals feel pain as much, and perhaps even more, than older ones. According to evidence to the House of Commons Committee on the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in 2004, given by an expert on animal pain from the University of Birmingham Centre for Biomedical Ethics, *“very young animals are likely to feel more pain than older animals”.*⁷ In 2002 the SCAHAW report on beef cattle concluded that *“no distinction should be made on the basis of age”* when providing pain relief.⁶² The EFSA investigation into the castration of piglets similarly concluded in 2004 that *‘There are no clear data demonstrating that pain perception related to surgical castration is lower in pigs younger than 7 days of age than in older ones.’*²⁶ There is a consensus that procedures such as castration, disbudding, tail-docking, de-beaking and teeth-cutting cause pain to the very young animals they are carried out on without anaesthetic or other pain relief.

Younger animals may also express pain differently from older ones, although they feel it equally. The New Zealand National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) concluded in 2005, *“NAWAC is confident that animals experience pain at any age, and that the pain associated with procedures such as castration and dehorning is significant.”*⁸⁷ According to the NAWAC report, *“While it is generally believed that painful husbandry procedures are best performed on young animals, the rationale for this is not entirely clear.”* Apart from practical considerations, it could be due to *‘a belief that young animals do not experience pain the same as do older animals, possibly because the expression of pain may differ with age.’*⁸⁷

Advocates for Animals is concerned that the current distinctions between the pain relief required for young or older animals undergoing mutilations are not based on scientific knowledge about their capacity to feel pain. It is more likely that they are based merely on a pragmatic assessment of the size and/or mobility of an animal that an unqualified person will in practice be capable of controlling in order to perform, say, castration, without anaesthetic. For example, one stockman can easily pick up and immobilise a young piglet held between his knees for the operation.

Advocates for Animals believes that the Scottish Executive’s new Regulations should end the artificial and unscientific distinction between the pain relief required for younger or older animals.

4. SOME VIEWS ON THE UNDESIRABILITY OF MUTILATIONS

Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC)

“Mutilations can cause considerable pain and therefore constitute a major welfare insult to farm animals. FAWC considers that, on ethical grounds, the mutilation of livestock is undesirable in principle.”⁷⁹

Environment and Rural Affairs Department, The Scottish Executive (SEERAD)

“Mutilations can cause considerable pain and therefore constitute a major welfare insult to farm animals. They are undesirable in principle and should only be carried out where it is necessary to avoid a worse welfare problem. Producers should consider carefully the necessity of performing any mutilation.”⁷⁷

Council of Europe

The European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals (ETS 125, 1987) states in Article 10 (Surgical operations) that:

“Surgical operations for the purpose of modifying the appearance of a pet animal or for other non-curative purposes shall be prohibited.”

New Zealand National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC)

“Economically viable and practicable farming systems and practices not requiring the routine use of painful husbandry procedures should be adopted in preference to those requiring routine painful husbandry procedures. Painful husbandry procedures should be looked upon as transitional management practices. ...Breeding programmes, management systems, and technologies (e.g. polled cattle, short-tailed sheep, slaughtering animals before puberty, and using intensive grazing systems that result in reduced aggressive behaviour) should continue to be developed and used so that painful husbandry procedures can be phased out in the future.”⁵

5. CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

This briefing has set out the evidence that mutilations such as castration, tail-docking, de-horning, nose-ringing, tooth-cutting and de-beaking involve cutting, piercing, crushing, burning and removal of sensitive living tissue and are scientifically recognised to cause pain and distress to animals. Such mutilations are currently, in many cases, legal when carried out by unqualified persons without pain relief. Even where anaesthesia is used for the operation itself, it is likely that the animal experiences longer-term pain for which no pain relief is provided. Although these painful mutilations are often justified by their proponents as necessary for animal management reasons, it would nearly always be possible to avoid them by improving management or husbandry practices.

Farmers who have studied these issues believe that it is both feasible, and urgent, to breed cattle without horns (polled) and sheep with naturally short tails, which would remove the management problems that de-horning and tail-docking are intended to solve. In the case of laying hens, the already agreed phase-out of de-beaking by 2010 has already stimulated research into both breeding and husbandry. For this to be achieved, adequate funding for research and development is essential. But until then, Advocates for Animals believes that animals must be legally protected from suffering by a requirement that no painful mutilation is permitted, unless carried out by a veterinary surgeon providing effective pain relief.

Funding should be made available by industry and government for research and development of breeding and husbandry methods that address the management problems that mutilations are intended to solve.

Some mutilations are almost certainly still being carried out as a matter of routine although the law states clearly that they should only be used as a last resort, when all other methods of dealing with the problem have been tried. It is clear that in these cases the current law is inadequate to protect the welfare of the animals.

Two particular anomalies need to be dealt with:

(i) The legal requirements for veterinary expertise and pain relief are often much greater in the case of companion animals compared to farmed animals. This distinction may originally have been based on practical considerations, but no longer has an adequate scientific or ethical basis.

(ii) The current law in several cases assumes that very young animals do not need pain relief, even if pain relief is required for the same or similar operation carried out on slightly older animals. This distinction may also have purely pragmatic origins, but has an inadequate scientific basis and should be abandoned.

Advocates for Animals believes that the general public is unaware of the range and extent of mutilations performed on animals and the pain and sometimes disability that they cause, and would support the phase-out of these practices. Retailers have a role in reducing the use of traditional mutilations in farming, by specifying to their suppliers that their animals should not be subjected to mutilations, and in a similar way, farm assurance schemes can set stringent standards. Consumers have a similar role and could for example choose meat from naturally polled cattle such as the Aberdeen Angus, the Galloway and polled Hereford.

Advocates for Animals believes that the Scottish Executive's Regulations should be based on the following criteria and should set a phase-out date or dates after which these conditions should be met:

- No painful mutilation should be carried out on any sentient animal of any age after birth (or the onset of sentience) except by a veterinary surgeon using anaesthesia and appropriate follow-up analgesia for as long as is necessary to prevent suffering.
- No mutilation that causes intentional long-term pain or sensitivity, such as nose-ringing, or which compromises natural behaviour, should be permitted except in exceptional individual circumstances.
- Ear-notching (except for feral cats under anaesthesia), branding and tattooing should be prohibited, and ear-tagging should be replaced by microchipping.

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PAINFUL REALITY: Appendix

Summary of mutilations, current regulations, quality assurance standards and Advocates for Animals' recommendations

The mutilations listed below are some of those that the Scottish Executive proposes to allow to continue under new exemption Regulations. They can all be classified as either somewhat painful or very painful and distressing if carried out without pain relief. Even when local anaesthetic and analgesia are used, some pain and distress is likely to be involved, for example during handling or when injecting local anaesthetic into sensitive tissue. Long-term pain also may be involved for days or weeks either during healing or if the wound become infected, or even indefinitely.

The Table below shows:

- Type of mutilation
- Type of animal it is used on
- Procedure for mutilation
- Consequence in terms of pain or disability
- Whether there is currently a legal requirement for pain relief
- Whether there is currently a legal requirement for a veterinary surgeon
- Whether the principal farm assurance schemes permit the mutilation
- Comments from government codes of welfare
- Advocates' recommendations

Figures in column 2 refer to the relevant section in the main report.

Key to quality assurance schemes mentioned:

QMS = Quality Meat Scotland
RT = Red Tractor Assured Food Standards
Lion = Lion Quality Eggs
ACP = Assured Chicken Production
ABP = Assured British Pigs (Quality Ham, Quality Pork and Quality Bacon)
FF = RSPCA 'Freedom Food' welfare standards
SA = Soil Association organic standards

Mutilation	Animal	Procedure	Pain or disability involved?	Pain relief required by law?	Veterinarian required by law?	Allowed by quality assurance standards?	Discouraged by SEERAD/DEFRA Code of Recommendations?	What should be done?
Castration	calves 2.1.1	By use of tight rubber ring, Burdizzo (bloodless castrator) clamp or knife	Pain	Rubber ring can be used without anaesthetic under 1 week of age. Anaesthetic required for all methods after 2 months of age.	Only after 2 months of age. Under 2 months, castration can be carried out by an unqualified person.	QMS: permitted RT: permitted FF: permitted by ring or bloodless castrator SA: permitted, but need must be justified.	Yes: 'Stock-keepers should consider carefully whether castration is necessary.' [1]	Routine castration of calves is unnecessary and should be ended. Calves of any age should only be castrated by a veterinarian using an anaesthetic and analgesia for post-operative pain.
	lambs 2.1.2	As above	Pain	Rubber ring can be used without anaesthetic under 1 week of age. Anaesthetic required for all methods after 3 months of age.	Only after 3 months of age. Under 3 months, castration can be carried out by an unqualified person.	QMS: permitted RT: permitted FF: permitted by ring or bloodless castrator SA: permitted	Yes: 'Farmers and shepherds should consider carefully whether castration is necessary within any particular flock. Castration is unlikely to be necessary where lambs will be finished and sent to slaughter before reaching sexual maturity.' [2]	Routine castration of lambs is unnecessary and should be ended. Lambs and sheep of any age should only be castrated by a veterinarian using an anaesthetic and analgesia for post-operative pain
	piglets 2.1.3	By knife. By tearing of tissues (eg spermatic cords) not permitted. Castration not currently carried out routinely in the UK	Pain	Anaesthetic not required under 7 days of age. Over 7 days, anaesthetic required Note (1)	Under 7 days, castration can be carried out by an unqualified person. Over 7 days of age, veterinarian required.	QMS: Not permitted RT/ABP: not permitted FF: not permitted SA: not permitted	Yes: 'Stockkeepers should consider carefully whether castration is necessary. Castration is a mutilation and should be avoided wherever possible.' [3]	Routine piglet castration should not be permitted to resume in Scotland. Meat pigs should be slaughtered at sufficiently low live weights to avoid boar taint. Piglets and pigs of any age should only be castrated by a veterinarian using an anaesthetic and analgesia for post-operative pain.
	equines, dogs and cats 2.1.4	Surgery by veterinarian		Yes	Yes			Regulation may be needed to ensure methods that involve least distress, post-operative pain and complications

Mutilation	Animal	Procedure	Pain or disability involved?	Pain relief required by law?	Veterinarian required by law?	Allowed by quality assurance standards?	Discouraged by SEERAD/DEFRA Code of Recommendations?	What should be done?
Tail-docking	lambs 2.2.1	Use of tight rubber ring, knife or docking iron	Pain	Rubber ring can be used without anaesthetic only under 1 week of age. No legal requirement for anaesthetic for other methods	No: Permitted by unqualified person for lambs of any age	QMS: permitted RT: permitted FF: permitted but discouraged SA: permitted	Yes: 'Farmers and shepherds should consider carefully whether tail docking with a particular flock is necessary. Tail docking may only be carried out if failure to do so would lead to subsequent welfare problems because of dirty tails and potential fly strike.' [2]	Routine tail-docking of lambs is unnecessary and should be ended. For lambs and sheep of any age, tail-docking should be prohibited except when carried out by a veterinarian using anaesthetic and analgesia for post-operative pain.
	piglets 2.2.2	By knife or docking iron	Pain, including permanently increased sensitivity to pain in the tail stump	No anaesthetic required up to 7 days of age. After 7 days, anaesthetic and prolonged analgesia required	Permitted by unqualified person up to 7 days of age. After 7 days, veterinarian required	QMS: not specified RT/ABP: permitted FF: not permitted except by special permission of RSPCA SA: not permitted	Yes: 'Routine tail docking is not permitted. Tail docking is only permitted as a last resort after improvements to the pigs' environment and management have proved ineffectual.' [3]	Routine tail-docking of piglets is already illegal, but continues. The law should be enforced and husbandry methods improved to eliminate need for docking.
	puppies and dogs 2.2.3	By knife, scissors, etc.	Pain (can include chronic pain or permanently increased sensitivity to pain in tail stump), reduced communication abilities, and possible behavioural problems	Anaesthetic rarely used. Not legally required before puppy's eyes open Note (1)	Yes: Illegal if done by non-veterinarian since 1993			Tail-docking of dogs will be a 'prohibited procedure' under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006. Tail-docking is unnecessary and should not be permitted (except for therapeutic reasons).

Mutilation	Animal	Procedure	Pain or disability involved?	Pain relief required by law?	Veterinarian required by law?	Allowed by quality assurance standards?	Discouraged by SEERAD/DEFRA Code of Recommendations?	What should be done?
Dis-budding	calves 2.3.1	By hot iron or by cutting, or by caustic chemical (paste). Caustic chemical method only permitted in first week of life.	Pain	Anaesthetic is legally required, with the exception that it is legal to use caustic chemical without anaesthetic in the first week of life. Sedation and analgesia for post-operative pain are not legally required.	No: Permitted by unqualified person for calves of any age	QMS: permitted, anaesthetic required RT: recommended for all calves. Anaesthetic required. FF: permitted by hot iron up to 5 weeks of age with local anaesthetic SA: permitted under 2 months of age. Over 3 months of age, must be carried out only by veterinarian	'It is strongly recommended that chemical cauterisation should not be used.' [1]	Dis-budding should be replaced by the use of naturally polled cattle, or by special arrangements for specialist horned breeds. Dis-budding should be prohibited except when carried out by a veterinarian using a sedative, anaesthetic and analgesia for post-operative pain. Because of risk of misuse, caustic chemicals should be prohibited.
	Lambs and goat kids 2.3.2			Yes	Yes			Post-operative analgesia should be provided in addition to anaesthetic
	deer calves 2.3.3							Dis-budding of male deer calves should be prohibited.
De-horning	Older calves and cattle 2.3.1	By saw, horn shears or wire, and using cauterisation of exposed blood vessels	Pain	Yes	No: Permitted by unqualified person	QMS: Permitted. If calf over 5 months, must be discussed with veterinarian RT: permitted. Only by veterinarian if calf over 5 months	Yes: 'De-horning should not be a routine procedure.' [1]	De-horning should be replaced by the use of naturally polled cattle, or by special arrangements for specialist horned breeds. De-horning should be prohibited at any age except when carried out by a veterinarian using a sedative, anaesthetic and analgesia for post-operative pain.

Mutilation	Animal	Procedure	Pain or disability involved?	Pain relief required by law?	Veterinarian required by law?	Allowed by quality assurance standards?	Discouraged by SEERAD/DEFRA Code of Recommendations?	What should be done?
	Sheep and goats (not routine)			Yes	Yes	FF: permitted only by veterinary surgeon SA: permitted only by veterinary surgeon for cattle over 3 months of age		Post-operative analgesia should be provided in addition to anaesthetic.
	2.3.2 Farmed male deer (antler removal) Only hardened antlers are permitted to be cut, unless for therapeutic reasons	Hardened antlers cut off annually (using a saw)	No pain if antler hardened, but some distress caused by handling, restraint and tranquillisation.	No, if antler hardened. Note (2)	Unqualified person permitted to cut off hardened antler. Note (2)			
Branding /tattooing	cattle 2.3.3 2.4	Freeze branding, tattooing	Pain or discomfort	No	No: permitted by unqualified person			Branding and tattooing that involve damage to skin or other tissue that is sensitive should be prohibited
	pigs 2.4	Tattooing, slap marking	Pain	No	No: permitted by unqualified person	QMS: slap marking required ABP: permitted FF: permitted		As above
	sheep and goats 2.4	tattooing	Pain	No	No: permitted by unqualified person			As above

Mutilation	Animal	Procedure	Pain or disability involved?	Pain relief required by law?	Veterinarian required by law?	Allowed by quality assurance standards?	Discouraged by SEERAD/DEFRA Code of Recommendations?	What should be done?
	horses 2.4	Freeze branding, hot branding, tattooing	Pain or discomfort	No	No: permitted by unqualified person			As above
	deer 2.4	Tattooing	Pain	No	No: permitted by unqualified person			As above
	fish 2.4	Chemical branding, freeze branding	Pain or discomfort	No	No: permitted by unqualified person			As above
Ear-notching, punching or clipping	cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, horses, deer 2.4		Pain	No	No: permitted by unqualified person	ABP: permitted FF: permitted for pigs		Ear cutting of any kind should be prohibited except when performed by a veterinarian using anaesthetic.
	feral cats 2.4	Tip of ear cut off to indicate that cat has been neutered before returning to colony site			Ear-tipping carried out by veterinarian using anaesthetic at the same time as the cat is being neutered			
Ear-tagging	cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, horses, deer (including very young animals) 2.4	Tag fitted through ear by piercing ear tissue.	Pain, possibly including that due to infection and infestation of ear wound, and later injury through snagging of tag, etc	No	No: permitted by unqualified person		'Ear tags should be fitted by a properly trained and competent operator, so that the animal does not suffer any unnecessary pain or distress – either when the tags are fitted or later.' [1]	Ear-tagging for traceability is currently required by EU law. Ear-tagging should be replaced by microchipping. Ear-tagging should not be permitted without the use of local anaesthetic.
De-beaking (beak-trimming)	laying hens, breeding chickens, turkeys	Normally cutting by hot blade. Infra-red	Pain, probably including long-term	No	No: permitted by unqualified person	ACP: permitted with written veterinary	Phase-out of de-beaking for laying hens agreed. Permitted until 31 st December 2010 under	De-beaking of all poultry should be prohibited and replaced by improved management/breeding

Mutilation	Animal	Procedure	Pain or disability involved?	Pain relief required by law?	Veterinarian required by law?	Allowed by quality assurance standards?	Discouraged by SEERAD/DEFRA Code of Recommendations?	What should be done?
	2.5	radiation and laser beam also used	increased sensitivity of beak tip to pain, which may inhibit natural foraging behaviour			approval Lion: permitted FF: permitted, only on direction of veterinarian SA: not permitted	Welfare of Farmed Animals (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2002 'if behavioural problems occur, they should be tackled immediately by appropriate changes in the system of management.... Research also indicates that availability of good quality litter, particularly shavings, encourages foraging and dust-bathing and hence reduces the feather-pecking tendency.' [4]	strategies, including possible use of abrasive materials in environment to blunt beaks naturally
Bill-trimming	ducks 2.5	Cutting off rim of bill	Pain, probably including long-term increased sensitivity of bill to pain, which may inhibit natural foraging behaviour	No	No: permitted by unqualified person	FF: not permitted SA: not permitted	Yes: 'Bill trimming should be carried out only when it is clear that more suffering would be caused in the flock if it were not done.' [5]	Bill cutting should be prohibited and replaced by improved management/breeding strategies
De-snooding	Turkeys 2.6.1	Pulling or cutting off fleshy appendage (snood)	Pain	Anaesthetic not legally required up to 21 days of age	Unqualified person permitted to de-snood turkeys up to 21 days of life. After 21 days of life, may only be carried out by veterinarian	FF: not permitted SA: not permitted	Yes: 'Mutilations can cause considerable pain and therefore constitute a major welfare insult to farm animals. They are undesirable in principle and should only be carried out where it is necessary to prevent a worse welfare problem. Producers should consider carefully the necessity of performing <u>any</u> mutilation.' [6]	De-snooding should be prohibited unless carried out by a veterinarian using anaesthetic and analgesic, for turkeys of any age

Mutilation	Animal	Procedure	Pain or disability involved?	Pain relief required by law?	Veterinarian required by law?	Allowed by quality assurance standards?	Discouraged by SEERAD/DEFRA Code of Recommendations?	What should be done?
Dubbing	Male breeding chickens 2.6.2	By scissors to remove all or part of male's comb	Pain	Anaesthetic not legally required up to 72 hours of age	Unqualified person permitted to dub chickens up to 72 hours of life. After 72 hours of age, may only be carried out by veterinarian	FF: not permitted SA: not permitted	Yes: 'The removal of the comb offers few, if any, welfare advantages in comparison with the disturbance and pain likely to be caused and should be avoided.' [7]	Dubbing is unnecessary and should be prohibited unless carried out by a veterinarian using anaesthetic, for chickens of any age.
De-spurring	Male breeding chickens (usually day-old) 2.6.2	By heated wire	Pain	No	No: permitted by unqualified person	FF: not permitted SA: not permitted	Yes: 'Selection of male breeding stock with the genotype of short, blunt spurs should be encouraged, so that routine de-spurring should not be necessary.' [7]	Routine de-spurring should be prohibited, and de-spurring should only be permitted to be carried out by a veterinarian using pain relief
Toe-cutting	Male breeding chickens 2.6.2	Cutting off a toe (usually for purposes of identification)	Pain	Anaesthetic not legally required up to 72 hours of age	Unqualified person permitted to cut chickens' toes up to 72 hours of age. After 72 hours of age, may only be carried out by veterinarian	FF: not permitted SA: not permitted	Yes: 'Toe removal (cutting) for purposes of identification is an unnecessary mutilation and should be avoided.' [7]	Toe-cutting is unnecessary and should be prohibited, unless carried out by a veterinarian using pain relief
	Male breeding turkeys 2.6.1	Cutting off last joint of inside toes	Pain	Anaesthetic not legally required up to 72 hours of age	Unqualified person permitted to cut turkeys' toes up to 72 hours of age. After 72 hours of age, may only be carried out by veterinarian	FF: not permitted SA: not permitted	Yes: 'Mutilations can cause considerable pain and therefore constitute a major welfare insult to farm animals. They are undesirable in principle and should only be carried out where it is necessary to prevent a worse welfare problem. Producers should consider carefully the necessity of performing any mutilation.' [6]	Toe-cutting should be replaced by improved management/breeding strategies. It should be prohibited unless carried out by a veterinarian using pain relief

Mutilation	Animal	Procedure	Pain or disability involved?	Pain relief required by law?	Veterinarian required by law?	Allowed by quality assurance standards?	Discouraged by SEERAD/DEFRA Code of Recommendations?	What should be done?
De-clawing	Male breeding chickens 2.6.2	Cutting or breaking off dew claw and sometimes pivot claw	Pain	No	No: permitted by unqualified person	FF: not permitted SA: not permitted	Yes: 'The removal of the pivot claw has little justification in welfare terms and should be avoided.' [7]	De-clawing is unnecessary and should be prohibited, unless carried out by a veterinarian using pain relief
Nose-ringing	Pigs kept outdoors 2.7	Piercing either nasal septum or rim of snout to insert metal rings	Pain, including long-term increased sensitivity of snout, inhibiting natural foraging behaviour	Anaesthetic not legally required	No: permitted by unqualified persons	RT/ABP: permitted FF: not permitted except by special permission of RSPCA SA: not permitted	Yes: 'Nose ringing is a mutilation and should be avoided wherever possible.' [3]	Nose-ringing of pigs should be prohibited and replaced by environmental enrichment and improved environmental management.
	bulls 2.7	Piercing nasal septum to insert metal ring	Pain and long-term increased sensitivity to pain in nose.	Anaesthetic not legally required See Note (3)	No: permitted by unqualified persons See Note (3)		See Note (3)	Nose-ringing of bulls should be prohibited
Teat-cutting	dairy calves 2.8	By scissors to cut off extra (supernumerary) teats	Pain	Local anaesthetic not legally required for calves under 3 months of age. Local anaesthetic required for calves over 3 months of age.	Unqualified person permitted to remove teats from calf under 3 months of age. Veterinarian required for calves over 3 months of age.	RT: permitted FF: permitted up to 5 weeks of age with local anaesthetic		Teat-cutting should be prohibited except when carried out by a veterinarian using anaesthetic and analgesia, for calves and cattle of any age
Tooth cutting or grinding	Piglets in first 7 days of life 2.9.1	Teeth clipped or ground down to half original	Pain, both short-term and long-term	No pain relief provided	No: permitted by unqualified person	QMS: not specified RT/ABP: permitted	Yes: 'Routine clipping or grinding of teeth is not permitted. Tooth reduction to the upper and lower corner teeth ("eye" or canine teeth) of	By existing law, should not be routine procedure. Tooth grinding and clipping should be replaced by improved management/husbandry

Mutilation	Animal	Procedure	Pain or disability involved?	Pain relief required by law?	Veterinarian required by law?	Allowed by quality assurance standards?	Discouraged by SEERAD/DEFRA Code of Recommendations?	What should be done?
		length, exposing innervated dentine. Clipping may shatter teeth.				FF: not permitted except by special permission of RSPCA SA: not permitted	piglets should only be used as a last resort.' [ref 23]	methods and should be prohibited unless carried out by veterinarian using anaesthetic and analgesia.

(1) In accordance with the Protection of Animals (Anaesthetics) Act 1954.

(2) Growing antlers ('in velvet') may only be cut off by a veterinarian using anaesthetic, and for therapeutic reasons.

(3) Nose-ringing of bulls is not mentioned in the Scottish Executive's Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Cattle, despite being a very common procedure and causing pain.

References

- [1] Scottish Executive. Environment and Rural Affairs Department. *Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Cattle*. 2004
- [2] Scottish Executive. Environment and Rural Affairs Department. *Code of Recommendation for the Welfare of Sheep*. 2002
- [3] Scottish Executive. Environment and Rural Affairs Department. *Code of Recommendation for the Welfare of Pigs*. 2004
- [4] Scottish Executive. Environment and Rural Affairs Department. *Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Laying Hens*. 2004
- [5] DEFRA *Codes of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock. Ducks*. 1987.
- [6] DEFRA. *Codes of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock. Turkeys*. (Draft revised Code.) 2004
- [7] Scottish Executive. Environment and Rural Affairs Department. *Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Meat Chickens and Breeding Chickens*. 2004.