

Farm animal welfare in the U.S.A.: Farming practices, research, education, regulation, and assurance programs

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Abstract

What impact has the Brambell Report, and the growth of the field of applied ethology, had on the United States of America? There has been increasing public awareness of farm animal welfare issues and a concomitant increase in animal welfare research and teaching activities. This has occurred more slowly in the U.S.A. than in Europe, but is now gathering momentum as the agricultural industries and food retailers write guidelines and implement animal welfare auditing programs in an attempt to reassure consumers that farm animals are raised and slaughtered humanely. Applied ethologists have played an important role in these advances, not just in terms of providing relevant scientific research results, but also as consultants and members of advisory committees. This is likely to continue, although the long-term effectiveness of depending upon voluntary standards and auditing programs to foster sustained industry-wide improvements in farm animal welfare and to reassure consumers remains to be seen.

Keywords: Animal welfare; Legislation; Audit; Ethology; Teaching

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