



Notes For MarketWatch Groups

On 25th March 1993, Animal Aid launched its campaign against livestock markets following an undercover investigation into conditions and mistreatment of animals at several of Britain's weekly auctions. Out of the furore that greeted our report has grown a national network of MarketWatch monitors – ordinary people who have committed themselves to improving conditions at their local marts.

Introduction

MarketWatchers are from every kind of background. Some are experienced campaigners. Others are starting from scratch. What unites them is a determination to achieve tangible gains for the animals. They do this by bearing witness and disseminating news of what they have seen through local media. Groups try to form a dialogue with market officials, vets, the RSPCA, and Trading Standards Officers. Where necessary, they argue their case before their local councils. Some go to sales every week – with video or still cameras. Others go less frequently – any level of commitment is valuable. To all groups we offer specialist back-up and support.

As a first step, MarketWatch is fighting to ensure all animals are given water – as the law demands. We are also determined to end the physical violence and to push for alternatives – such as computer and video sales – to live auctions.

Forming a MarketWatch groups is a practical way of helping animals in a stressful and strange environment. Almost all monitors have found that the animals start to be treated with more respect after only a short period of time. It is a legal means of rendering direct aid to millions of animals, offering many opportunities for exposing an integral part of the miserable trade in animals for butchery. The work can take time and effort, but is well worth it.

If you find infringements of the law or poor conditions, they should be reported immediately to the relevant local authority Trading Standards Officer. Please also send a copy of anything you report to us, as we are maintaining a dossier on market cruelty.

1. Important Background

The key legislation governing the treatment of animals at market are two Orders made under the 1981 Animal Health Act. They are *The Welfare of Animals at Markets Order 1990* (ISBN 01100571139) and *The Welfare of Animals at Markets (Amendment) Order 1993* (ISBN 0110340310). Both are available from HMSO book shops.



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factfile



The Orders are backed by *The Code of Practice on Welfare of Animals in Livestock Markets* – available from DEFRA publications, London SE99 7TP. The Code does not carry the force of law but is often used in court cases to support a prosecution.

Also useful is the Farm Animal Welfare Council's Report on *The Welfare of Livestock at Markets* (1986, ISBN 0112427642) from HMSO book shops.

Please contact Animal Aid if you have trouble obtaining any of these documents.

2. The Animals You Will See At Market

Sheep

The sheep markets change with the season: spring lambs to catch the Easter-trade, later in the year come sales of tegs or hoggets (older lambs), and cull ewes or rams of declining reproductive capacity and diseased or infirm (e.g. 'broken-mouthed'). Many of the old sheep go for religious slaughter. Orphan lambs should not appear at market. Sheep should have enough tail to cover their anus (rams and wethers) and vulva (ewes); animals without this protection suffer from flies.

Pigs

Many stockmen and vets will agree that pigs are too easily excitable for the stresses of market. They are very sensitive animals who are easily frightened. Some pigs will have mutilations and wounds from intensive farming methods. Some farmers illicitly inject pigs (often with dirty needles) with tranquilliser just before market and slaughter. The 'pig improvers' have produced many breeds so delicate that they are susceptible to death from heart-attacks during the stresses of transport and marketing. Pigs are very susceptible to cold and heat. Gentle, warm sprays calm them (this trick is used in some slaughterhouse lairages).

Cattle

You will see all kinds of cattle, ranging in age from a few days to worn-out breeding animals of 6 years or more. They will come from beef and dairy herds, with some of the younger animals being sold on to another farmer for fattening and others going directly for slaughter.

Breeding animals, whether from the dairy or beef sectors, frequently arrive at market in appalling condition. This is because once over 30 months they cannot go into the food chain but must be incinerated under the BSE emergency regulations. Compensation is paid to the farmer but at a level that discourages many from properly feeding and caring for their animals, which is why a number will arrive diseased, injured, emaciated and infertile.

The BSE crisis has also suppressed demand for baby calves – a 'waste by-product' of the dairy industry. Many of these feeble and confused animals will be seen at the sales. Some will be slaughtered, others will be 'reared on' as milk-producing animals while others will join beef herds.

Small Animals

Most poultry go straight from the rearing unit to slaughter. But considerable numbers still pass through markets. Some will be slaughtered on site (by wringing or jerking their neck – very difficult with geese, and dubiously 'humane', although not illegal). Rabbit sales may be halted if an animal shows symptoms of myxomatosis (a viral disease which is often fatal). These include conjunctivitis, gummed eyelids, and a swelling of the nose and muzzle. Billies (uncastrated male goats) may become especially excited and stressed in the presence of other male and mature female goats.

3. MarketWatch Action

When making an 'official' MarketWatch visit, go with at least one other person. If you see an animal who is sick, injured or being ill-treated, one can keep watch while another seeks out one of the following: a TSO (Trading Standards Officer – or sometimes an Animal Health Inspector or Environmental Health Officer will be present), a vet, or an RSPCA inspector. If none is present call the market employee charged with overseeing welfare. His/her name should be posted in a prominent place and s/he should be clearly identified.

The job of the vet is to come to a professional judgement about the fitness of an animal. S/he has various powers, such as to order that an unfit animal be immediately slaughtered. The TSO's job is to enforce the law. Most markets allow the presence of RSPCA inspectors who usually act through the market vets, but know a great deal about local affairs.

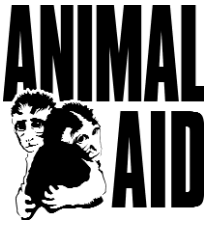
When monitoring a market, try to keep as calm as possible. Do your best to win the support of the vet, TSO and RSPCA officer, even though they might at first be unsupportive and perhaps hostile. Don't assume the auctioneer will necessarily be your enemy. Some welcome the chance to have outside pressure brought upon the more wayward farmers and hauliers, whom they are not able directly to rebuke in case they lose their business.

When reporting an incident, try to identify the individuals responsible: they may be employees of the auctioneers, or farmers or dealers.

- It's a good idea to keep a diary of your visits so that you can easily refer back if necessary.
- Try to cultivate local media contacts and keep them up to date with any developments.
- Write formal letters containing suggestions and complaints with copies to the TSO, vet and auctioneer. Seek the support of one or more local councillors, especially those on the committee governing the market's activities. Keep a copy of all your correspondence.

Basic Demands To Establish

- **The provision of water for all animals**
- **The end of physical violence**



- Training for drovers
- Fewer animals per pen
- Straw or other material laid down where animals are repeatedly slipping

Please keep Animal Aid up to date with all key developments and let us know what the situation is at your market. We are here to give you back up and support. Evidence from as many markets as possible will strengthen our case and prove that changes are urgently needed, with the long-term aim of phasing out markets altogether.

4. Using A Camera

The most effective progress can often be made through the use of a video camera. If you are unable to obtain one, useful evidence can still be recorded through taking still photographs. However, market officials will typically be reluctant to allow filming or photographing to take place. If the market is situated on private property, officials may ask you to leave unless you stop filming. It's really a case of playing it by ear and exercising a certain degree of caution – the main thing is that you are able to continue visiting the market and that the authorities accept your presence at least to the extent that you are able to monitor effectively.

If you have access to a camera, do try to use it, keeping a certain distance from the farmers. Don't worry if an unofficial person (e.g. farmer using the market) tells you not to use it, but if a market official specifically tells you to stop, do as they say for the time being, and then try to discuss camera usage at another time. Explain that you are only checking for breaches of the law, and that if the market is shown to be run to high welfare standards, this will be to their advantage.

5. Dealing With Aggression And Violence

Quite often, the last thing buyers, sellers and auctioneers want to see is a group of people monitoring their performance. This means that in some markets, you may be greeted with hostility. Whilst this is by no means always the case (in many towns MarketWatch groups have been tolerated and gradually accepted), it is something which you need to be prepared for. It is one reason why it is important not to visit a market on your own. The support which you will gain from one another by monitoring in small groups, or at least in pairs, is vitally important. In general, the best group size is between 2 and 5 people. If there are more of you, split into smaller groups in order to maintain a discreet approach.

You will often find that people using the market will start attacking your beliefs – it's very easy to spend the majority of your visit having a heated debate with a farmer about the merits of vegetarianism. Although in some situations you will feel the need to defend your point of view, try to steer clear of confrontation

and remain calm if at all possible. In a very few instances, members of MarketWatch groups have faced physical abuse. This is certainly not something to be expected when you form a MarketWatch group, it is just best to be aware that on rare occasions people at the market have felt so angry at being watched that they have resorted to violence.

If any signs of physical aggression occur, contact the police immediately. Contact Animal Aid if you are in any doubt as to how to proceed.

Remember – all you are doing is peacefully monitoring your local market as part of the national MarketWatch network. No one has the right to behave aggressively towards you.

6. What Is The Current Legislation?

Treatment of animals at markets is governed by the *Welfare of Animals at Markets Order 1990* and the *Welfare of Animals at Markets (Amendment) Order 1993*. Both were made under the Animal Health Act of 1981 and both carry the force of law – it being a criminal offense to breach their various provisions.

Guidance as to what the government regards as good welfare practices are contained in DEFRA's *Code of Practice on the Welfare of Animals in Livestock Markets*. While this does not carry the force of law, it is often used in court cases to support a prosecution. The Code states '...it is possible that the provisions of the Code may be brought to the Court's attention during any legal proceedings under the Order.'

A good understanding of the law is invaluable if MarketWatch groups wish to be taken seriously, and to achieve real gains for the animals. Even the minimal welfare legislation is routinely flouted, and people working at markets will be more conscientious if they know that they are being watched.

The following provides a summary of the *Welfare of Animals at Markets Order*, and the accompanying Code of Practice:

a) Unfit Animals

Unfit animals may not be exposed for sale in a market. In addition, an animal should not be exposed for sale if it is likely to give birth while it is there. An unfit animal can be diseased, ill, injured, lame, deformed, emaciated, weak or exhausted.

The Code adds '*It is not possible to list the various degrees and types of injury, illness etc. So to avoid causing animals suffering and the risk or prosecution, owners and hauliers must ensure that only fit, healthy animals are sent to market. Auctioneers and other market operators should make it very clear that unfit animals will not be accepted in their markets.*'

b) Protection Of Animals From Unnecessary Suffering

No one is allowed to cause or permit injury or 'unnecessary' suffering to an animal in a market.



The person in charge of the animal in a market should ensure that such an offense is not caused by exposure to the weather, inadequate ventilation, the animal being hit or prodded by any instrument or 'other thing'; or by any other cause.

c) Handling Of Animals

No animal should be lifted, dragged, or carried by the head, neck, horns, legs, feet, tail, fleece or wing.

The Code expands '*...everyone should think carefully about whether animals are being caused pain or discomfort. For instance, the temptation to lift calves by any neck tie should be resisted, as should twisting their tail and 'wheel-barrowing'.*

The Order states that poultry should not be tied up by the neck, leg or wing. They may, however, be lifted or tied by the leg if being weighed, and geese may be lifted off the ground by the base of both wings. A lead sheep or goat may be guided or moved by the horns or neck fleece, but should not be dragged.

d) Control Of Animals

Nobody is allowed to use '*excessive force*' to control any animals in a market. Instruments which give electric shocks may not be used on animals, nor should pigs be hit or prodded with anything other than a flat slap stick or a slap marker. Electric goads may be used on the hindquarters of cattle over the age of six months or on adult pigs, but only if they are '*refusing to move forward when there is space for them to do so*'. Calves should not be hit or prodded in any way.

Nobody should drive or lead any animal over ground/floor which may cause the animal to slip or fall.

e) Droving

The Code of Practice goes into some detail about droving, specifying that the job requires '*calm, sympathetic, unhurried handling by persons competent and experienced with livestock*'. The animals should have one unobstructed way forward.

The Code adds that sticks '*should only be used as an extension of the arm for persuasion and encouragement and NOT to beat animals with*'. Sticks with nails or other sharp points or projections should not be used, and animals should not be struck with plastic piping, or kicked, punched or dragged.

f) Obstruction And Annoyance Of Animals

Animals should not be knowingly obstructed when being driven or led through markets, says the Order, nor should they be '*wantonly or unreasonably*' annoyed.

g) Penning And Caging

The market operator must ensure that no animal is kept '*in a pen, cage, or hutch which is unsuitable for the size and species of that animal*'.

A pen for calves or pigs should be big enough for all of them to lie down at the same time. A cage or hutch for rabbits or poultry should be big enough to enable poultry to stand '*in their natural position*' or to enable all rabbits to sit upright on all four feet without their ears touching the top of the cage/hutch.

When animals are kept in pens, they must be separated according to species. Animals with young at foot should not be kept in the same undivided pen as any other animals unless they are of the same species and of a '*mutually acceptable disposition*'. Fractious animals should be kept in a separate pen, cage or hutch from any other animal.

The Code states that any unfit animals must be kept apart from other animals, in special pens where they can be tended. It also specifies '*Sheep should not be penned too tightly, and special attention should be paid to heavily fleeced sheep in warm weather. Recently-shorn sheep (and any animals used to covered accommodation) may require shelter in adverse weather conditions*'.

h) Feeding And Watering Of Animals

The person in charge of an animal is obliged to provide '*an adequate quantity of wholesome water as often as is necessary to prevent it suffering from thirst*'. '*Adequate facilities*' in the form of troughs, buckets etc., should also be provided. Animals spending prolonged periods of time in a market (i.e. overnight) must also be provided with food.

As the Code explains: '*Potentially, a long time could elapse without animals being fed and watered, from their last feed on the vendors' farm, during journeys to and from the market, and in the time spent there. This situation must be avoided. It is not safe to assume that animals have recently been fed and for the person currently in charge to leave the responsibility to someone else... Clean water should be available to all animals at risk of becoming thirsty. It is especially important to provide water to lactating animals, and that during hot weather all livestock are carefully watched and provided for... During any market day, vendors and auctioneers should be in no doubt who is to provide suitable food and water to animals on arrival or during their stay at the market.*'

i) Provision Of Lighting And Bedding

Adequate lighting must be provided to enable animals to be inspected and to be fed and watered. Adequate bedding must be provided for calves, pigs, dairy cattle in milk or calf, goats in milk or kid, and lambs or kids under 4 weeks (unless the lamb is kept at the foot of its mother).

j) Calves, Lambs And Kids

No calves younger than 7 days old or with wet or unhealed navels can be brought to market. Calves under 12 weeks old cannot be marketed twice in any 28 day period. They must be removed from the



market within 4 hours of the last calf sale. They must not be tied or muzzled when in their pens.

Following the introduction of the *Welfare of Animals at Markets (Amendment) Order* in 1993, it is now an offense to expose for sale a lamb or kid with an unhealed navel. (Navels usually heal when the lamb or kid is between two and seven days, but spray products are now available that cause the navel to dry out more rapidly.)

The Code adds *'It should not be necessary for unaccompanied young lambs and kids to be subject to the rigours of market day'*. But if they are, they should be penned in *'draught-free, well-strawed, covered accommodation with room to lie down in comfort'*. They should be sold in the pen and removed quickly from the market (max. 6 hours stay there).

k) Covered Accommodation

The market authority must provide covered accommodation for calves, pigs, goats, dairy cattle in milk, rabbits and poultry, as well as for lambs less than 4 weeks old, unless the lamb is kept at the foot of its mother (see above). The market operator must ensure that these animals are kept in the provided accommodation.

l) Sale Rings

The Code requires rings to be kept clear, with not more than two people inside, and unobstructed entrances, exits, and passageways. The habitual hitting or goading of animals within the sale ring should not be permitted. The Code states *'The auction ring is an unfamiliar and noisy environment for animals in which they may be isolated from others and kept on the move. The need for calm, considerate handling is therefore particularly important at this point'*.

m) Milking

The Code says that lactating animals should not be allowed to become overstocked with milk, which is an offense if it causes *'unnecessary suffering'*. These animals should be milked before they come to market, sold quickly, and then taken away from the market. If an animal must be milked, this should be done by skilled personnel.

7. Summary: Key Things To Look Out For

Loading And Unloading

These are usually the most stressful times for the animals, especially loading at the end of a long day when inspectors have often gone and drovers and hauliers are usually tired and impatient.

- Are ramps too steep, unstrawed or slippery?
- Are the animals dragged from the lorries?
- Do the stockmen work calmly and sympathetically, as the Code recommends? Are sheep dragged, lifted and thrown by their fleece? Pigs should be

handled intelligently, otherwise they will take fright, pile up and rebel, which often provokes aggressiveness on the part of the stockman.

Droving And Handling

Good handlers should be able to manage animals without shouting or use of sticks. The market authorities should keep all stressful noises to a minimum. These include the clanging of metal gates and roaring of lorry engines.

- Are any animals being lifted off the ground, or dragged by means of the neck, ears, horn, legs, feet, tail, fleece or wing?
- Are electric goads being used on any animals (other than on the hindquarters of adult cattle, or on adult pigs over the age of 6 months)?
- Are sticks with nails or sharp points or projections being used? Are animals being struck with plastic piping, or kicked and punched?
- Are animals being *'knowingly obstructed'* or *'wantonly or unreasonable annoyed'*?
- Are animals slipping or falling because of slippery ground?

Calves And Lambs

Identify and note the numbers of calves you think are unfit for market. (The staff paste on numbers as the animals arrive). Report your information and pursue it with the auctioneers etc.

- Are any calves being prodded or hit?
- Are calves being removed from the market quickly (within 4 hours of the last calf sale)?
- How long are orphan lambs spending in market?
- Are orphan lambs being kept in well-strawed, draught-free covered pens?

General

- Is water made available for the animals? Do they have direct access to it?
- Do all animals look fit and healthy? Watch for animals who are panting, gasping, 'down', in convulsions, or dead. Watch also for prolapses, deformities, filth, lameness, baldness, and infestations by flies, maggots, as well as wounds and injuries. Unfit animals may appear dull and listless. Look for signs of scour (diarrhoea) and rawness around the anus.

Animals who are unfit should not be accepted for sale, but any who are refused should also be watched – the vet should ensure that the farmer doesn't just try to pass them off somewhere else.

- Is covered accommodation available for calves, pigs, goats, dairy cattle in milk, rabbits, poultry, and lambs without their mothers who are less than 4 weeks old?
- Are adequate pens provided for the animals? Pens should not be too crowded – this may prevent sick animals from being spotted.



8. Additional Background To Livestock Markets

- The RSPCA conducted the first major examination of animal markets in modern times in 1982/3. Nearly 300 establishments responded to a lengthy questionnaire, and an unspecified number of markets were investigated in person.

The report commented *'We have heard it said too often in our evidence that "they are only animals anyway" and that, "they are only going to slaughter so what does it matter". It is this attitude to animal welfare which needs drastically altering'. Animals have a testing day at market – 'removed from their farm environment and contact with their own kind and forced into an unnatural, strange and stressful one, harassed by man, sticks, and sometimes dogs, vehicle noise and movement... into a penned system to await further transit to an unknown destination. In welfare terms, the slaughterhouse is not always an unwelcome end.'*

- In 1986, the government's own Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) produced the Report on the *Welfare of Livestock at Markets*, which came forward with 119 recommendations. These formed the basis of the 1990 *Welfare of Animals at Markets Order*.

Although the report concluded that *'...the majority of animals passing through markets are treated in a caring and humane way'*, the authors were concerned that *'Over zealous attempts to drive animals off lorries are all too common. The excessive use of sticks and goads, shouting and the resort on occasion to force serve only to frighten and confuse animals further. They frequently have to negotiate steep and perhaps slippery ramps ... We are also concerned about the unnecessary stress and suffering caused by driving sick or injured animals off vehicles.'*

- There are alternatives to subjecting animals to the stresses of the market. One option is for farmers to 'produce' directly for a retail outlet – typically a supermarket chain.
- In April 1989, another alternative to livestock markets was opened up – the first electronic sales were initiated. Bidding was by computer screen, with abattoir managers buying direct from farmers, according to pre-supplied specifications. Electronic selling still represents a minority of sales, and is confined almost entirely to livestock who are ready for slaughter, rather than animals who are sold by one farmer to another for fattening. At the moment, electronic sales total less than 1 million, whereas in 2004, the country's live markets recorded a 'throughput' of 2.11 million cattle and calves, 12.6 million sheep, 136 thousand pigs.

The electronic system is not a flawless one. It allows a slaughterer in, say, Tyneside to purchase animals from a farmer as far away as Devon – all with the push of a button. This saves time and effort for the farmers, but it is the animals who subsequently pay the price with marathon truck journeys to their place of death.

But on balance, selling animals in this way is more humane than forcing them to endure the torment of the market. Animals have to face truck journeys to and from the marketplace, and must also experience the squalid conditions, shouting and physical abuse so typical in today's British live stock auctions.

If you would like any more information on marketwatching, please contact us at:

**Animal Aid, The Old Chapel, Bradford Street,
Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1AW
Tel: 01732 364546 Fax: 01732 366533**