

REPORT ON PRIMARY LEGISLATION BY THE ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND COUNTRYSIDE COMMITTEE

The Animal Welfare Bill

The Bill was remitted to the Committee following the plenary debate on the Queen's Speech on 21 June 2005. Committee had previously scrutinized and reported on the draft Bill on 25 February 2005.¹

The Committee considered the Bill at its meeting on 19 January 2006 in accordance with its protocol for handling scrutiny primary legislation. The Committee did not propose any amendments to the Bill.

Members welcomed the principle of the Bill as providing the Assembly, as the appropriate national authority, with wide enabling powers to decide its own priorities for promoting welfare standards. Members also welcomed that the Bill streamlines existing legislation, and that it would facilitate the prosecution of those responsible for perpetrating cruelty against animals.

With regard to Clause 5 (4) on mutilations, Members were assured that powers with regard to tail docking of sheep and lambs would be devolved to the Assembly. On the issue of the tail-docking of dogs, Members were concerned that, should the practice be banned in Wales, but not so in England, dogs could be reared in England in order to have their tails docked as puppies and then brought in to Wales. There was also concern with regard to the cross-border selling of dogs, where dog tails had not been docked in Wales. The Chief Veterinary Officer undertook to consider this issue in drafting the relevant subordinate legislation.

On the codes of practice on the welfare of farmed animals, these would remain under Assembly control. Members referred to other codes of practice that would be necessary in due course, to cover practices such as indiscriminate breeding and hip displacement.

On the issue of inspections and entry into a private dwelling, which is covered by Clause 16, inspectors would require a warrant before entering a private dwelling.

The Committee was content with the Bill as drafted and noted its wish to scrutinise the subordinate legislation emanating from the Act.

A verbatim transcript of Committee's consideration of the Bill is available at

¹ The Committee's report can be found under documents laid at
<http://www.wales.gov.uk/assemblydata/N000000000000000000000000028968.rtf>

<http://assembly/rop/ROP/Committees/EPC/EPC060119qv7.htm>

Glyn Davies AM
Chair, Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee