06/12/2021 Animal Welfare Committee Evidence session

Organiser **Stewart Forsyth** Animal Welfare Team, Scottish Government

Chair Peter Jinman.

First off, I’m confused that this was organised by SG – was it for Scots to provide evidence to Animal Welfare Committee or for everyone as there were representatives from Wales (Kate Hovers), Red tractor, Compassion in World Farming, RSPCA, some universities (surrey RVC). Never sure with these meetings.

Meeting based on FAWC report, and principle of Replacement, Reduction, Refinement.

**Mutilations**

In August the AWC asked for views on castration and tail docking. SVS responded to this questionnaire.

The main questions were:

Is there a feeling that castration and tail docking should continue?

NFU – serves different purposes and decisions are made at farm level.

But it needs to be considered as part of the production system and all farms need to review castration and tail docking.

Other species are castrated but routinely receive pain relief (dogs, horses, cattle) So why not sheep?

The Muslim faith holds the view that one should first do no harm – so should mutilations be phased out? And farmers need to be educated why it can be avoided which is a discussion as part of a flock health plan – will it become RT requirement?

CWF suggested that breeding for resistance to fly strike should be explored, Other felt that there are underlying reasons for increased flies was perhaps more relevant.

Pain relief – further work needed on analgesics and availability, currently limited by options available under cascade. Then there is issue of needing both short acting and long-acting relief (RSPCA scheme requirement)– are two jabs feasible.

Why can’t govt fund pharma company to develop what is needed???

Some farmers have turned to clamp castrations – same issue with analgesics.

Numnuts can only be used in larger lambs so legislation needs changing to allow this and anyway the 7-day limit is arbitrary… there is no evidence to support that.

Immuno castration also discussed – but would that be acceptable to consumer and labelling would become complex to describe if meat from male/ female, castrated/ method used etc.

NFU resists mandatory labelling as too much detail at farm level required.

Not sure what recommendations or actions came out of this meeting