

Animal Welfare Content for Websites



Animal Welfare Act 2006

Prior to the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), animal welfare law was largely reactive, and action could only be taken once an animal had suffered unnecessarily. The 2006 Act has introduced an important and new concept for pet owners, people responsible for other domestic animals, like dog breeders, and those who have working animals or farm animals in England and Wales.

Preventing animals suffering

Enforcement agencies and vets can now act by ***advising and educating owners*** before their animals suffer unduly. If this advice is not followed or the animal's needs are not being met, then action can be taken, whether through a formal warning or in some cases a prosecution.

What does the law actually say?

The Animal Welfare Act places a duty of care on people to ensure they take reasonable steps in all circumstances to meet the welfare needs of their animals to the extent required by good practice. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45/section/9>

What does this mean for those responsible for animals?

In short it means they must take positive steps to ensure they care for their animals properly and in particular must provide for the five welfare needs, which are:

- The need for a suitable environment
- The need for a suitable diet
- The need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
- The need to be housed with, or apart from other animals
- The need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury, and disease

Where can owners and farmers get advice about the welfare of their animals?

Your vet will always be happy to advise you about the care of your animals.

In addition, the government has created codes of recommendations for the welfare of different species of farmed animal, which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/farm-animals-looking-after-their-welfare>

What should I do if I'm worried about the welfare of someone else's animal(s)?

You can report concerns about an animal or group of animals owned by someone else to the RSPCA: <https://www.rspca.org.uk/reportaconcern> or the APHA:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-farm-animal-welfare-concerns>