

Angora Welfare Assessments at the Feixian Farm, China

The area of assessing welfare standards in China is one that is exceptionally difficult. Not least because of the distances involved in getting over to the farms which are producing angora wool.

We were able to gain access to the Feixian Farm in February 2014 and conduct a thorough and extensive assessment of the living conditions for the tens of thousands of angora rabbits that currently supply Orkney Angora (UK) and Royal Angora (Romania) with wool. It was essential that we could assess (and be seen to assess) the welfare standards so that customers could be satisfied that the animals who were being reared for commercial purposes were being treated fairly and humanely.

Our assessment showed that in the main the rabbits were being well-fed and watered and sheared rather than plucked. There were some issues around cage sizes and cleaning rotas but these were highlighted to the farm owner who identified the actions he would take to deal with these issues. See attached report.

Our strategy for future assessments is that William Sichel, assessor and the designer of the standards, which are based on the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), "Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Rabbits" will physically visit the farm every 5 years. This will of course be more frequent if funding becomes available for an annual visit. There are discussions to see if a consortium of angora wool users might be able to contribute to the costs of these visits.

In the meantime, a local contact is being trained to carry out an annual inspection in the interim years to assess the areas where standards have not reached the required level and ensure that where existing standards are at a good level they remain so. The contact will then report back on their findings with videos, photos and written reports. The next scheduled assessment is February 2016 and will focus on cage sizes, cleaning rotas and temperature controls.

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*Working in partnership with commercial
angora farmers for a better life for rabbits*



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