



**Workshop
'Animal welfare and innovation'**

Hanover, Germany
9-11 May 2023



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Introduction to the workshop topics

Paolo Ferrari
Support Facility 'Innovation & Knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI'

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Higher welfare standards

- › 94% of people in Europe believe protecting the welfare of farm animals is important, and 82% believe farm animals should be better protected (Special Eurobarometer 442, 2016).

Farmers' concerns

- › **CHALLENGE:** Further complication of the rules imposed on farms. Additional production cost
- › **OPPORTUNITY:** Consider animal welfare even as a basic condition to improve farm efficiency and to differentiate livestock production to meet societal and market demand for animal friendly food

Question for discussion

- › *To what extent do higher animal welfare standards affect farm productivity and profitability, farmers' job satisfaction, and societal acceptance of livestock farming?*



3 topics addressed by the workshop:

1. Cage-free production systems
2. Animal welfare indicators and monitoring methods for practical use on the farm
3. Meeting societal demands: Animal welfare labelling and certification





Cage-free production systems

- Animal welfare scientists agree that confining animals in cages seriously harms their welfare.
- After the European Citizens' Initiative 'End the Cage Age' the EC committed to table by the end of 2023 a legislative proposal to phase out the use of cage systems for laying hens, sows, calves, rabbits, quail, ducks and geese
- Some EU Member States already introduced national legislation to ban certain forms of caged farming (banned for laying hens in AT and LU and committed to from 2025 DE Germany, 2027 in CZ and 2030 in SK; banned for sows in SE and committed to in DE for sows stalls in 2030 and for restricting time spent in farrowing crates to a maximum of 5 days from 2035)

Farmers' concerns

- Investing in new cage-free housing systems
- Building permits to widen livestock buildings to reduce animal density while maintaining the same production capacity in rural areas subject to planning restrictions



Cage-free production systems

Farmers' concerns

- › Staff experience and capacity in managing cage-free systems
- › Increased mortality of birds in cage-free production. Schuck-Paim et al. (2021) however showed that mortality rate depends on a farmer's years of experience with the indoor cage-free system rather than on the type of housing system.

Questions for discussion

- › ***What kind of innovative cage-free systems exist?***
- › ***What are the main challenges that farmers face in switching from one farming system to a more animal-friendly one?***
- › ***What kind of support do farmers need to switch from one farming system to a more animal-friendly one?***



Animal welfare indicators and monitoring methods for practical use on the farm

- Animal-based measures are the most appropriate indicators of animal welfare and a carefully selected combination of animal-based measures can be used to assess the welfare of a target population in a valid and robust way
- The most appropriate combination of animal-based measures will depend on the purpose of the welfare assessment. In some situations, feasibility and economic aspects may be most important, whereas in others sensitivity and specificity may take priority
- Both animal-based measures and input factors (resource- and management-based measures) should be used in combination when monitoring animal welfare



(EFSA, 2012)



Animal welfare indicators and monitoring methods for practical use on the farm

- **Iceberg animal-based indicators** can provide valuable information on two important aspects of the life of production animals (FAWC, 2009; Grandin, 2017):
 1. welfare problems that occur during the growth of fattening animals on the farm
 2. recent acute or traumatic conditions that were associated with pre-slaughter operations such as transport, lairage, and slaughter
- Real-time sensor-based data on laying hens could support daily farm management and facilitate early recognition of decreased hen health and welfare, by providing continuous insight into the flock's status



Animal welfare indicators and monitoring methods for practical use on the farm

Farmers' concerns

- › Cost and timing of AB measurements which may affect the results (e.g. season/climate)
- › Training for assessors to provide reliable, valid and comparable results
- › Farmers consider animal welfare assessment useless to them if it does not produce real-time information useful for identifying problems, their causes and the actions needed to solve them in practice (Welfare Quality®, 2010)
- › Sensor-based monitoring techniques are still marginally used to detect welfare problems on laying hen farms because: 1. no universal overview of current health and welfare problems; 2. accuracy and validity of monitoring techniques and 3. acceptability of monitoring techniques by stakeholders of the livestock sector (Van Veen et al. 2023)

Question for discussion

- › ***What kind of innovative solutions exist regarding monitoring indicators?***



Animal welfare labelling and certification

- Consumers are prevented from making informed purchase choices of “animal welfare friendly products” because not properly and clearly informed about the conditions under which animals are kept
- Several different animal welfare labelling schemes, providing unequal guarantees, confusing consumers and leading to unfair market conditions for businesses operating in different EU Member States (EC, 2021)

Farmers' and chain actors' concerns (EconWelfare, 2011)

- Voluntary schemes + labelling
- Social/economic incentives and fair share for farmers
- Info/education for consumers
- Training for chain actors



Animal welfare labelling and certification

Questions for discussion

- *To what extent are retailers and consumers open to buying more expensive animal welfare labelled products?*
- *How to face market values, current prices, and innovative animal welfare practices in the current economic circumstances*





Thanks for your attention



EU CAP Network workshop

‘Animal welfare and innovation’

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All information on the workshop is available on the event webpage:

https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/events/eu-cap-network-workshop-animal-welfare-and-innovation_en

