

FRCAW Newsletter 45

May 2024

Editorial

Changes to legislation on animal welfare in EU Member States

Since the first Council of Europe Directive 91/630/EEC of November 19, 1991, laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs, European laws on pig welfare have continued to evolve. A [report published early this month](#) has mapped the evolution of pig welfare legislation in 13 EU countries over the period 1991-2020. The study focuses on six key aspects likely to impact the economic performance and international competitiveness of the pig production sector – sow housing during gestation, sow housing during lactation, housing of growing-finishing pigs, weaning age, tail docking and manipulable materials. The report shows that implementation of the EU legislation by individual states has become more stringent over time, with EU minimum standards rapidly exceeded in Sweden, Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland and the UK. Meanwhile, other countries, such as Belgium, France and Germany, were found to have shown strict adherence to European Directives without introducing additional requirements with respect to the six key aspects of pig welfare in the period studied. Events in Belgium have not stood still, though, and on 2 May 2024, the country followed five other Member States in voting to include [animal sentience in its Constitution](#). Article 7 of the Belgian Constitution now includes the sentence: "In the exercise of their respective powers, the Federal State, the Communities and the Regions ensure the protection and welfare of animals as sentient beings." The next day, May 3, saw the [Brussels Regional Parliament](#) vote through a ban on the sale of live animals at markets and fairs in the Brussels municipalities. Then, on May 9, the [Flemish Regional Parliament](#) took its own action, incorporating an animal welfare code into its legislation. Defending the view that an animal is a sentient being, the new code also bans live animal markets in Flanders, as well as the home slaughter of certain animals, and requires an end to the use of hen cages by 2036. Elsewhere, the United Kingdom – which has now departed the EU – voted on May 14 to [ban the export of live farmed animals](#) from or via the UK to third countries. At European level, the Commission had elected not to bring forward a legislative proposal on this subject in its proposed [revision of the regulations at the end of 2023](#), preferring instead to tighten requirements for the humane treatment of animals during transport.



Image from [L'Avenir](#) website

Anses proposes harmonized labelling for products of animal origin

Labelling systems that are intended to provide consumers with information on the welfare of animals raised for human consumption (in the form of meat, dairy and eggs) often apply criteria that vary from one system to another or are tailored to the production of a particular animal, creating a considerable degree of confusion among consumers. An [article published in Dairy Global](#) looks at the shortcomings of current labelling systems, where most labels are based solely on farming conditions, and at efforts to improve them. To help consumers make a properly informed choice, the French food, environmental and health safety agency, [Anses, has published guidance](#) on the harmonisation of labelling for products of animal origin, proposing 5 animal welfare classifications to indicate an animal's welfare levels during rearing, transport and slaughter (A: highest - E: lowest). These welfare classifications should be based on scientific indicators measured directly on the animals and should also take into account the living conditions of the previous generation.



Image from the [Anses](#) website

Action to combat pet abandonment and abuse continues in France

The [FRCAW's Opinion](#) on the first actions to be taken by the new OCAD (Observatory for the Protection of Domestic Carnivores) tells us that over 200,000 dogs and cats are abandoned every year in France. Since the launch of the government [action plan against pet abandonment](#) by the Minister for Agriculture in December 2020, [Law no. 2021-1538](#) has entered the French statute books, voted in by the National Assembly and Senate on November 30 2021, with the stated intention to combat animal abuse and strengthen the bond between animals and humans. Now, in a press release published on May 22 on its website, the French Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty has announced the [launch of a National Plan for the welfare of companion animals](#), an initiative intended to continue the positive momentum built up since 2020. With a focus on awareness-raising and the provision of information to stakeholders, this national plan aims to prevent and combat pet abandonment and abuse, and to improve the management of stray dogs and cats. In addition, the Ministry has recently announced [an online tool to facilitate the monitoring](#) that is now a legal requirement for all online public communication services and advertising sites carrying offers of dogs, cats and ferrets. Access to this tool should enable these services and sites to comply with the regulations. In addition, [cross governmental training courses](#) will be set up for officials from ministries involved in the fight against animal abuse.



Image from the French [Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty](#) website

Invertebrate welfare in the news

Although some invertebrates are already farmed for use in foods and feeds, European legislation on farm animal welfare does not extend to this group. The current debate on the advantages and disadvantages of industrial insect production as an alternative protein source for humans and

animals has earned a [recent report in Food Ingredients First](#), with explicit reference to welfare concerns for these new farm animals. Meanwhile, the question of invertebrate pain is of sufficient importance for a group of prominent experts to have issued the [New York Declaration on Animal Consciousness](#) on April 19, asserting that the empirical evidence points to a realistic possibility of conscious experience in decapod crustaceans, insects and some molluscs. In recent years, scientific evidence has provided growing support for the hypothesis that [pain is experienced by crustaceans and insects](#), prompting researchers to investigate rapid and efficient [killing techniques for decapod crustaceans](#), and to identify reliable indicators of unconsciousness. One such study has recently focused on an edible mollusc, the land snail, whose economic importance is increasing as its farming and consumption figures grow. [The study published in Scientific Reports](#) provides preliminary baseline data to assess the efficacy of a stunning method for edible snails involving immersion in refrigerated, CO₂-supplemented water, which was shown to be preferable to the traditional method of immersion while conscious in boiling water. Last, in the UK, an [article published on The Fish Site](#) reports that expected legislation on the welfare of decapod crustaceans is slow in making an appearance. Although recognized as sentient beings under UK law since April 2022, these animals do not yet benefit from specific regulations for their protection along the seafood supply chain.



Image from [The Fish Site](#), © Shutterstock



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Arthropods

[16/05/2024 : Animal advocates call for crustacean welfare codes](#)

Document type: article published in [The Fish Site](#)

Author: The Fish Site

Abstract: In April 2022, decapod crustaceans such as lobsters, crabs, prawns, and langoustines, were recognised as sentient in UK law. Following this, decapod crustaceans were not added to the Animal Welfare Act, but a set of voluntary decapod welfare codes were proposed by the seafood industry - made up of the Shellfish Association of Great Britain (SAGB), the industry-led Crab and Lobster Management Group (CMG), and Seafish. A set of regulations was expected to be consolidated by the end of 2023, to be implemented across the shellfish supply chain to create best animal welfare practices however, months later, these regulations are still yet to appear. In a report from Crustacean Compassion - an advocacy organisation for the welfare of crustaceans - it was estimated that UK vessels alone landed into UK ports each year over 420 million crabs, lobsters, langoustine, prawns, and shrimp. Crustacean Compassion claim that, without the application of welfare regulations, that could mean that vast numbers of decapods have been torn apart whilst alive, mutilated, crushed during transport, stored alive on ice, and boiled alive because no one wants to take responsibility for the welfare practices of these sentient animals. Whilst the wait for the regulations continues, some supermarkets are applying their own stringent policy, such as Marks and Spencer, who have committed to higher welfare standards such as electrical stunning and the elimination of mutilations through their supply chains. However, this is not the case across much of the supply chain, as many companies are choosing to do nothing until the release of the industry codes. "The Conservative government has really dropped the ball on animal welfare. We have a situation where companies like Marks and Spencer are leading on decapod welfare and the government just looks the other way," said Dr Ben Sturgeon, chief executive of Crustacean Compassion, in a press release. "Where there needs to be clear legislation to ensure all sentient animals are protected equally under animal welfare law, the government has abdicated responsibility to the seafood industry who are also delaying the inevitable, that decapods need to be part of this country's animal welfare legislation," he added.

[06/05/2024 : Insect farming dispute: Alternative protein pathway or industrialized animal suffering?](#)

Document type: article published in [Food Ingredients First](#)

Author: Joshua Poole

Abstract: Insect protein is widely touted as a scalable solution for more sustainable food systems, but animal protection groups have questioned the true ecological impact and morality of this burgeoning industry. Food Ingredients First hears arguments for and against industrialized insect production from the International Platform of Insects for Food and Feed (IPIFF) and Eurogroup for Animals. The debate centers around the fact that insect protein is currently mainly produced for animal feed, leading critics to suggest the sector is simply serving to reinforce conventional animal

agriculture. However, industry advocates argue insect farming could be crucial to meeting the world's growing demand for sustainable protein through animal feed and human nutrition products. (...)

Appetite and affordability (...)

Insect welfare concerns (...)

[19/04/2024 : Insects and Other Animals Have Consciousness, Experts Declare](#)

Document type: article published in [Quantamagazine](#)

Author: Dan Falk

Abstract: A group of prominent biologists and philosophers announced in a declaration a new consensus: There's "a realistic possibility" that insects, octopuses, crustaceans, fish and other overlooked animals experience consciousness.

[Link to the New York Declaration on Animal Consciousness](#)

[09/04/2024 : Towards the humane slaughter of decapod crustaceans: identifying the most effective indicators of insensibility following electrical stunning](#)

Document type: article published in [Frontiers in Animal Science](#)

Authors: Douglas M. Neil, Endre Putyora, Amaya Albalat

Abstract: Decapod crustaceans provide a valuable food source worldwide, both through wild capture and captive rearing. They are also used extensively in scientific research, both as subjects for the investigation of basic biological processes and as model organisms for the detection of environmental changes. There is now an increasing acceptance that decapod crustaceans are sentient, and legislation is being introduced in numerous countries to ensure crustacean welfare when they are harvested or held captive. Moreover, methods for the humane slaughter of these animals are being developed, and of these electrical stunning is a prime candidate. Optimisation of electrical stunning is underway for a range of commercially-exploited or scientifically-important species, and the present study contributes to that process by examining further crab (*Carcinus maenas*) and lobster (*Homarus gammarus*) species using a rigorous neurophysiological approach. By recording nerve activity in both the central and peripheral nervous systems, we have found that electrical stunning with a standard commercial instrument arrests nerve activity in both these species at all levels: sensory, motor and central, rendering the animals neurologically insensible. This methodology is the most direct and effective way to establish if insensibility is successfully achieved. However, ultimately the routine monitoring of effective stunning in commercial and laboratory settings will have to depend on simple, yet reliable physiological or behavioural indicators, following their calibration against neurological methods. Monitoring heartbeat is used widely to establish metabolic activity, locomotory performance, agonistic interactions and responses to environmental conditions. We have therefore assessed the potential to use cardiac activity as an indicator for the state of sensibility. We recorded the heartbeat in both *C. maenas* and *H. gammarus* before and after electrical stunning, but find that in many cases even though nerve activity has ceased both centrally and peripherally, cardiac activity actually continues (though at a reduced rate) for a substantial time

(≥ 1 h). The heartbeat is therefore not a reliable indicator of the state of sensibility, making it an unsuitable indicator of effective stunning. Possible reasons for these findings, and ways to validate behavioural measures that may be more appropriate for routinely establishing effective electrical stunning, are discussed.

Cognition-emotions

[29/04/2024 : Exploration of skin redness and immunoglobulin A as markers of the affective states of hens](#)

Document type: scientific article published in [Applied Animal Behaviour Science](#)

Authors: Delphine Soulet, Anissa Jahoui, Rodrigo Guabiraba, Léa Lansade, Marie-Claire Blache, Benoît Piégu, Gaëlle Lefort, Vanaique Guillory, Pascale Quéré, Karine Germain, Frédéric Lévy, Scott A. Love, Aline Bertin, Cécile Arnould

Abstract: Non-invasive markers of affective states can help understanding animals' perception of situations and improving their welfare. These markers are scarce in avian species. In this study, we investigate the potential relation between alterations in facial skin redness in hens and their corresponding affective states. Six hens were filmed in both naturally unfolding scenarios and controlled tests designed to elicit various affective states. The facial skin redness was measured from images extracted from the videos. Our observations revealed that hens exhibited the highest degree of facial skin redness in negative situations of high arousal, a high redness in positive situations of high arousal, and the lowest in positive situations of low arousal. In a second study, we further examined whether facial skin redness and secretory immunoglobulin A (S-IgA) can serve as markers for the quality of the human-animal relationship. Two groups of hens, one habituated to humans ($n=13$) and one non-habituated ($n=12$), were compared for general fearfulness in an open field test and for fear of humans in a reactivity to human test. In the open-field test, there were no statistical differences in general fearfulness, facial skin redness or S-IgA concentrations between both groups. However, habituated hens exhibited significantly lower fearfulness and facial skin redness in the presence of humans compared to non-habituated hens in the reactivity to human test. Additionally, habituated hens showed significant lower S-IgA concentration in lachrymal fluid in the presence of humans, with no significant differences in saliva or cloacal samples. We propose that changes in facial skin redness reflect variations in affective states and can be used as a marker for assessing the quality of the human-hen relationship. The relationship between S-IgA concentrations and affective states requires further investigation.

Conferences-Seminars-Training

[06/05/2024 : Webinaire le 5 juin : Développement des très grands troupeaux laitiers dans différents pays du monde : forces motrices, enjeux et impacts](#)

Document type: webinar announcement published on the [Académie d'Agriculture de France](#) website

Host: André Pflimlin

Abstract: The issues surrounding very large dairy farms would seem to be almost taboo in France since the disappearance of the '1000-cow project', the only one of its kind in this country, but the rapid development of such farms in the USA and China and their spread to other continents raises a number of questions. The aim of this webinar session is to provide an initial overview of the situation, attempting to explain the reasons for the proliferation of these very large herds in different parts of the world, and to understand what future there is for them, looking at their advantages and their limitations given the diversity of the pedoclimatic, socioeconomic and cultural contexts in which they are created. In the United States, these very large herds are mainly found in the West of the country but, with an increased risk of water shortages and the resultant loss of forage security, many have migrated to the crop-growing areas of the Midwest and are now establishing themselves in the Northeast, supplanting family farms. In China, in the wake of the melamine scandal, the government has supported a restructuring policy that is highly favorable to high-tech dairy mega-farms to ensure the country's self-sufficiency. Still a rare sight just fifteen years ago, farms with more than 1,000 cows now account for almost half the country's livestock and more than half the milk brought to market. Conversely, India has become the world leader in microherd milk production, providing a livelihood for nearly a hundred million families. Despite the announcement of the development of a future export sector based on large herds, the latter remain rare, with their development hampered by numerous constraints. In Europe, these large herds have barely developed outside the Eastern Member States, where they are a legacy of collective farming. However, the end of quotas has rekindled the race for expansion, with a new class of herds of over 500 cows developing rapidly, particularly in Northern Europe and Spain, but not in France. Beyond this country-by-country analysis and an examination of the driving forces at work, we'll be looking at the contribution of such mega-farms to the challenges of food security and employment, but also to human and animal welfare, as well as environmental and climate conservation. After this broad overview, we'll try to draw some lessons for France, and make a few more concrete recommendations.

Live on our YouTube channel from 2.30pm:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxERz8wtBBH9VXfqJOfVODA>

[15/04/2024 : Fiche pédagogique et MOOC - Focus sur les bonnes pratiques au pâturage](#)

Document type: Educational fact sheet published on the VetAgro Sup [Animal Welfare Chair](#) website

Author: Animal Welfare Chair

Preview: Are you interested in grazing and do you plan to introduce it on your farm? Would you like to discover its benefits and find out what to watch out for? Our educational fact sheet from the MOOC on the welfare of dairy cattle is your answer. The MOOC on the welfare of dairy cattle was developed by Danone Produits Frais France, the Institut de l'Élevage (Idele), Phylum and the Chaire bien-être animal: it is free to all comers and you can register on the [Animal Welfare Chair's training](#)

[platform](#). Join us for a 2-hour training session on the welfare of dairy cattle and on animal welfare in general. The session can last longer if participants are interested.

[Link to pdf](#)

[25/09/2023 : Formation "Maîtriser les boiteries en troupeaux de vaches laitières"](#)

Document type: Training announcement published on the [Idele](#) website

Author: Idele

Summary: "Controlling lameness in dairy herds": from identification to on-farm advice. This training course provides the knowledge needed to set up an identification system for the risk factors for the occurrence of foot lesions on cattle farms, with both theoretical and practical work. Participants are provided with a treatment procedure and software to assess the impacts of lameness.

[Link to registration](#)

Animal husbandry and Human-animal relationships

[29/04/2024 : Dairy farmers' preferences for immediate versus late calf separation](#)

Document type: Scientific article published in [Preventive Veterinary Medicine](#)

Author: Albert Boaitéy

Preview: The practice of separating calves from their dams right after birth is one of the main dairy cattle welfare concerns among the public. Farmer perceptions about the practice and the available alternative contact systems in the US are however, not well understood. Using data from a sample of Wisconsin dairy farmers, the study examines farmer preferences for different prolonged (relative to immediate separation) contact systems and the potential role of farm structural and individual-level specific factors. Four alternative hypothetical systems - free dam, half day, foster cow, and restricted suckling systems – differing on the basis of calf access to dam-were considered. The analysis controls for farm size, production system (conventional, organic, grazing), farmer socio-demographic characteristics in addition to farm animal welfare perceptions. The findings indicate that amongst the set of alternative practices considered, foster cow system is most preferred alternative to the conventional early separation practised by most farmers. This is followed by restricted suckling systems. The least ranked alternative system is free calf-dam contact. The analyses further indicate that calf contact duration is negatively associated with herd size. Relative to conventional farms, calf-dam pairs on grazing, organic and mixed farms are less likely to be separated immediately after birth. Prolonged calf-dam contact is also prevalent amongst older farmers. Overall, the findings imply that farming system and structural considerations may be the

key drivers of transition to prolonged contact systems in dairy production. Foster cow systems may offer the most feasible pathway for achieving this objective.

[22/04/2024 : Barriers and drivers of farmers to provide outdoor access in pig farming systems: a qualitative study](#)

Document type: qualitative study published in [Animal](#)

Authors: S. Brajon, C. Tallet, E. Merlot, V. Lollivier

Preview: Part of the farmers have chosen to raise pigs with outdoor access. However, providing outdoor access to pigs is not a simple matter, and many farmers are hesitating or feel powerless to engage in this transition. A better understanding of their needs and challenges could facilitate the development of innovations that generate commitment. This survey aimed to identify the French pig farmers' barriers to and drivers for providing outdoor access to pigs. A total of 36 farmers, aged 25–60, who worked in all types of pig farming systems (from full indoor to free-range) participated in a semi-structured interview that lasted 1.25–2.25 h. The topics covered included a historical overview, a description of the farm and practices, as well as opinions about the impact of outdoor access on farmers, animals, production and economic performance, environment, and society. Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis. Most of the participants agreed that rearing pigs indoors is a different job from that of rearing pigs with outdoor access and that it is above all a matter of choice, farmer work conception, and work comfort. Farmers generally agreed that working outdoors is particularly arduous, but this could be compensated by the satisfaction of being in contact with nature and seeing animals in a more complex environment. A large majority of farmers managing a system with outdoor access raised the issue of lack of support, highlighting the need for refinement and diffusion of guides of practices as well as day-to-day support. The impact of outdoor access on the health and welfare of pigs was discussed, especially regarding climatic hazards and the risk of zoonoses, and several outdoor farmers explained how their relationship with the animals changes when pigs are raised outside. Given that zootechnical performance may significantly decrease in farms with outdoor access, various strategies can be employed to maintain profitability, such as feed production, circularity, direct sales, or work diversification. They could be either motivating or demotivating factors depending on the individuals. Concerns about social criticism were prominent among many indoor farmers while farmers providing outdoor access generally felt more serene and proud. Overall, this study can serve as a basis to identify levers that could remove barriers, foster the adherence of more farmers, and facilitate the transition towards more pig farming systems with outdoor access, provided that those systems are viable and beneficial for the welfare and health of the animals and farmers.

[11/04/2024 : Producer perceptions of dairy calf management, behavior, and welfare](#)

Document type: online prepublication of a scientific article in [Journal of Dairy Science](#)

Authors: S.B. Doyle, C.L. Wickens, J.M.C. Van Os, E.K. Miller-Cushon

Preview: Approaches for raising calves vary across commercial dairy farms and relate to behavioral opportunities and animal welfare. The objectives of this study were to evaluate how US dairy

producers and calf managers perceive 1) welfare implications of varying management practices (including social housing and milk allowance) and behaviors in dairy calves, and 2) aspects of the human-animal relationship in calf rearing and relationships with on-farm management and personal calf handling habits. Survey questions were primarily quantitative (e.g., Likert scales) and addressed how common calf management practices and observed calf behaviors were related to aspects of welfare, including calf health and comfort. We additionally posed questions addressing respondent habits, management protocols, and perceptions related to human-animal interaction. Responses from 93 dairy producers and calf managers were collected via digital surveys. Social housing was viewed as being generally positive for both calf comfort and health, although this view was stronger with respect to calf comfort. Respondents from farms using social housing (56%) had more positive perceptions of social housing, viewed social play as being associated with better calf comfort and health, and considered access to other calves and “freedom to express natural behavior” as being more important for calves, compared with respondents from farms not providing social housing. Providing greater milk allowances (≥ 7.6 L/d) was viewed as being good for both calf comfort and health, although respondents from farms providing these milk allowances (59%) had more positive perceptions than those who provided lesser allowances. Abnormal oral behaviors were viewed as being associated with both poor calf comfort and health. The welfare importance of various resources which may reduce abnormal oral behaviors (including hay and brushes) was perceived more ambiguously, although respondents from farms providing these resources, compared with those who do not, generally viewed them as more preferred by calves. We observed a positive relationship between how respondents perceived the human-animal bond (i.e., that calves enjoy contact with humans) and stated personal behavior related to calf contact (frequency of contacting calves to scratch or pet them). Respondent demographics were not related to perceptions of the human-animal relationship, but respondents identifying as female described more frequent positive calf interactions. Described aspects of human-animal interactions were not related to implementation of social housing on-farm. Job satisfaction was positively related to perception of the human-animal relationship. Overall, these results suggest that most calf management personnel place a high value on calf welfare, although farms implementing social housing appear to place a greater value on subjective calf well-being and individual perceptions of animal welfare may depend on practical experience.

Precision farming

[11/05/2024 : A scoping review of the use of bioacoustics to assess various components of farm animal welfare](#)

Document type: scientific synthesis published in [Applied Animal Behaviour Science](#)

Authors: Mathilde Coutant, Avelyne S. Villain, Elodie F. Briefer

Preview: Recording and analyzing animal sounds, including vocal and non-vocal cues, is a relevant tool to access and monitor different aspects of animal physiology, behaviour and general welfare in a remote, non-invasive and continuous fashion. This field, known as bioacoustics, is considerably growing, notably due to the development of machine learning techniques. Yet, applications of these methods in animal husbandry remain limited, and their potential may not be fully acknowledged. This

review aims to present the potential of bioacoustic tools to monitor various aspects of the welfare of farm animals, and focuses on studies published since 2010. The first section of the review introduces the concept of bioacoustics, describes the different parameters that can be extracted from the sounds of animals, and explains how they can be analysed. The potential of these measures to inform about the physical characteristics, individuality, health, physiology, behaviour, and affective states of different species of farm animals are then presented, through a contemporary overview of the research field. Although this analysis identifies a variety of applications of bioacoustics tools in relation to the assessment and monitoring of farm animal welfare, it also points out the current scarcity of methods implemented in practice and available to farm management. Barriers to the development of bioacoustics measures in conventional farming are also discussed, and future directions for this field of research are suggested.

[10/05/2024 : Accelerometers Contribution to the Knowledge of Domestic Cats' \(*Felis catus*\) Behavior: A Comprehensive Review](#)

Document type: scientific synthesis published in [Applied Animal Behaviour Science](#)

Authors: Serena Prigent Garcia, Alia Chebly

Preview: Even though cats inhabit a large number of our homes, their activity patterns, biological rhythm and behavior are still under-described and, therefore, poorly understood. This lack of knowledge is partly explained by the limited number of tools available for observing cats with limited effort and minimal disturbances to their routines. To this day, we still lack a faithful description of what constitutes a “normal behavior” of a domestic cat. Bio-loggers have been proven to help researchers decipher the individual and group behaviors of wild animals, and are starting to emerge as a tool for monitoring pets' health as well. These tools have been used not only to analyze cats' activity patterns but also examine their detailed activities, such as eating and walking. Bio-logging coupled with data analysis and Artificial Intelligence tools give hopeful perspectives on more complex activities such as grooming, jumping, social interaction, etc. In this review, our aim is to offer an overview of the contribution of bio-logging devices to the current knowledge and understanding regarding the cat's behavior, and their detailed activities. We specifically focus on the knowledge brought to the understanding of cats' biological rhythm and behavior by accelerometry. This review will provide insight into the major advances facilitated by this tool, its limitations, as well as the possible future development in this field of study.

[17/04/2024 : Quantification of play behaviour in calves using automated ultra-wideband location data and its association with age, weaning and health status](#)

Document type: scientific article published in [Scientific Reports](#)

Authors: J. A. Vázquez-Diosdado, C. Doidge, E. V. Bushby, F. Occhiuto and J. Kaler

Preview: Play behaviour can act as an indicator of positive animal welfare. Previous attempts to predict play behaviour in farmed calves are limited because of the classification methods used, which

lead to overestimation, and the short time periods that calves are observed. The study aimed to automatically classify and quantify play behaviour in farmed calves using location data from ultra-wide band sensors and to investigate factors associated with play behaviour. Location data were collected from 46 calves in three cohorts for a period of 18 weeks. Behavioural observations from video footage were merged with location data to obtain a total of 101.36 h of labelled data. An AdaBoost ensemble learning algorithm was implemented to classify play behaviour. To account for overestimation, generally seen in low-prevalence behaviours, an adjusted count technique was applied to the outputs of the classifier. Two generalized linear mixed models were fitted to investigate factors (e.g. age, health) associated with duration of play and number of play instances per day. Our algorithm identified play behaviour with > 94% accuracy when evaluated on the test set with no animals used for training, and 16% overestimation, which was computed based on the predicted number of samples of play versus the number of samples labelled as play on the test set. The instances and duration of play behaviour per day significantly decreased with age and sickness, whilst play behaviour significantly increased during and after weaning. The instances of play also significantly decreased as mean temperature increased. We suggest that the quantification method that we used could be used to detect and monitor other low prevalence behaviours (e.g. social grooming) from location data, including indicators of positive welfare.

Ethics-sociology-philosophy

23/04/2024 : Monetizing Animal Welfare Impacts for Benefit-Cost Analysis

Document type: pre-publication in [SSRN](#) of a scientific article to be published in [Journal of Benefit-Cost Analysis](#)

Authors: Budolfson Mark, Espinosa Romain, Fischer Bob, Treich Nicolas

Preview: Animal welfare is often ignored in decision making, despite widespread agreement about its importance. This is partly because of a lack of quantitative methods to assess the impacts of policies on humans and nonhumans alike on a common scale. At the same time, recent work in economics, philosophy, and animal welfare science has made progress on the fundamental theoretical challenge of estimating the well-being potential of different species on a single scale. By combining these estimates of each species' well-being potential with assessments of how various policies impact the quality of life for these species, along with the number of animals affected, we can arrive at a framework for estimating the impact of policies on animal health and well-being. This framework allows for a quantifiable comparison between policies affecting humans and animals. For instance, it enables us to compare human QALYs to animal QALYs (AQALYs) tailored to specific species. Hence, the intrinsic value of animal welfare impacts of policies can be monetized on the same scale as market and non-market impact for humans, facilitating benefit-cost analysis. Many challenges remain though, including issues of population ethics, political feasibility, and new complexities in addressing equity and uncertainty.

Animal welfare assessment and Labelling

[13/05/2024 : Spain highlights fish welfare as a crucial element for sustainability with new aquaculture guidelines](#)

Document type : article published in [Weareaquaculture](#)

Author: Louisa Gairn

Preview: A set of new guidelines focusing on the welfare of key Spanish aquaculture species, sea bass and gilthead sea bream, have been recently been launched through a collaboration between the Spanish government and industry representatives, scientists and animal welfare organisations. These comprehensive guidelines, available in both Spanish and English, focus on the welfare of sea bass (*Dicentrarchus labrax* - known as lubina in Spanish) and gilthead sea bream (*Sparus aurata*, or dorada in Spanish), offering fish welfare indicators and outlining critical welfare points in production systems. The guidelines also describe best practices to enhance fish breeding conditions, while providing training proposals and analyzing challenges and opportunities.

Aim to influence future fish welfare regulations

The new guides are directed primarily at aquaculture companies and those working in the industry, as well as public authorities and the general public. They aim to influence future regulations and establish fish welfare as a crucial element of sustainability. The guidelines, presented on 29 April at the General Secretariat of Fisheries in Madrid, result from a collaborative effort by APROMAR, Compassion in World Farming, the Animal Welfare Observatory, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA), and various scientific institutions. The work was funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the European Union's Maritime, Fisheries, and Aquaculture Fund. Further guides for other species, including rainbow trout and turbot, are planned for the coming years.

The complete guidelines can be accessed [here](#).

[13/05/2024 : Why current animal welfare labelling is not enough](#)

Document type: article published in [Dairy Global](#)

Author: Ruud Peys

Preview: Regarding animal welfare, the labelling of food products like meat, dairy products and eggs should not be based on the rearing conditions but on an assessment based on scientific indicators measured directly on the animals. Such a system should not only take account of the living conditions of the food-producing animals themselves, but of those of their parents, too, says Anses, the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety. Consumers are increasingly concerned about the living conditions of the animals used to produce foodstuffs of animal origin. Anses is therefore publishing guidelines for labelling products of animal origin specifically with respect to farm animal welfare. Implementing this proposal would harmonise current and future labelling systems, the agency says. Labelling systems designed to inform consumers about the welfare of food-producing animals are on the rise in Europe. However, the criteria used vary widely from one labelling system to another and causes a high degree of confusion for consumers. The European Union is planning to harmonise labelling. Anses has thus carried out an expert appraisal to establish a scientific basis for animal welfare labelling that can be put forward to players in the livestock sector.

5 animal welfare levels

The Agency recommends adopting a system of 5 welfare levels, from the highest (A) to the lowest (E). Level E corresponds solely to compliance with the requirements imposed by European legislation on animal welfare, whether during rearing, transport or slaughter. This classification, which is easy for consumers to understand, should also help producers to gradually take better account of animal welfare. Most current animal welfare labels only consider the rearing methods used and the means employed to improve them, Anses says. “That’s not enough,” explains Julie Chiron, expert appraisal coordinator, adding, “A laying hen farm may have perches, but if the hens do not use them because they are not easily accessible, for example, this feature will not contribute to their welfare.” The scientists in the Anses working group therefore recommend that the indicators should focus primarily on the animal’s welfare status, i.e., be based on measurements taken on the animal itself. This system is based on the definition of animal welfare proposed by Anses in 2018: “The welfare of an animal is its positive mental and physical state related to the fulfilment of its physiological and behavioural needs and its expectations. This state varies according to the animal’s perception of the situation.”

Breeding animals

Furthermore, the assessment of animal welfare should also include the selective breeding and reproduction farms that are designed to improve genetic characteristics and supply food-producing animals. “In some sectors, breeding animals are reared abroad and little is known about their living conditions,” explains Chiron. “This criterion will require the sectors to ensure that they have this information. We cannot claim that a production process respects animal welfare if we know nothing about the living conditions of the previous generation, whose rearing is subject to specific constraints, particularly health constraints.” When no information on parents is available, the experts consider that products should not be given a classification higher than level C. (...)

[02/05/2024 : Bien-être des animaux : quels critères scientifiques pour construire un étiquetage des produits alimentaires ? Rapport de l'Anses](#)

Document type: expert report published on the [Anses](#) (Agence nationale de sécurité sanitaire de l'alimentation, de l'environnement et du travail) website

Author: Anses

Preview: When buying meat, dairy products or eggs, consumers are increasingly concerned about the living conditions of the animals from which foodstuffs are derived. Anses has published guidelines for the development of specific animal welfare labelling for products of animal origin. Implementing this proposal would harmonize labels now and in the future. A major feature is that these are based on scientific indicators of animal welfare, measured directly from the animals themselves, not just the conditions under which they are farmed. Another is that they take into account not only the living conditions of food-producing animals, but also those of their bloodlines.

[Link to the collective scientific assessment](#)

[30/04/2024 : A field approach to observing changes in behavioural welfare indicators over 2 years in stabled horses](#)

Document type : scientific article published in [Animal](#)

Authors: A. Ruet, J. Lemarchand, C. Briant, C. Arnould, L. Lansade

Preview: In stabled horses, several behaviours are considered to be important indicators of the state of welfare at the individual level: stereotypies, aggressive behaviours towards humans and the “withdrawn”, alert, sternal, lateral and observation postures. Until now, these behaviours have been extensively studied in relation to different horse management practices. However, little is known about their changes or consistency over time. This study aimed to investigate differences in the expression of these behaviours assessed on 44 stabled horses during an initial 3-month period and then again on the same individuals 2 years later. Out of the six behaviours studied, two showed significant differences between the 2 years with medium effect sizes: the levels of aggressiveness towards humans increased (Wilcoxon signed-rank test: $V = 65$, $P = 0.005$) and those of recumbent rest during the day decreased ($V = 416$, $P \leq 0.001$) over time. The results also suggested limited evidence of major changes over time in the expression of stereotypies, the “withdrawn”, alert and observation postures. However, the principal component analyses carried out on all the behaviours showed that alert and observation postures may slightly decrease over time for some individuals. Regarding stereotypies and the “withdrawn” posture, the results mainly suggested a change at the individual level in the expression of these behaviours over time. This study provided new insights into the dynamic nature of several behaviours when the horses' living conditions are not fundamentally altered and raised hypotheses about the state of welfare of stabled individuals over a 2-year period.

[25/04/2024 : Food giants failing implementation of animal welfare ambitions](#)

Document type : article published in [Food and Drink International](#)

Author: Tess Egginton

Preview: Today's publication of the Business Benchmark on Animal Welfare ([BBFAW](#)) reveals that most global food giants (95%) acknowledge the importance of animal welfare and are addressing it with policy commitments and clearer governance. Few however are reporting successful implementation of these ambitions with 93% given the lowest ratings ('E' or 'F') for 'Performance Impact' – i.e. an assessment of the tangible impacts on the lives of farm animals reared for food in corporate supply chains. (...) BBFAW was originally launched in 2012 and remains the leading global assessment of companies' farm animal welfare policies and practices. It is supported by partners. (...) This year's benchmark found several encouraging signs as it set a new baseline for corporate performance, including:

- The vast majority of benchmarked companies (95%) now identify farm animal welfare as a relevant business issue, up from 79% in 2012.
- Three companies (Marks & Spencer, Premier Foods, Waitrose) achieved 'Tier 2' status, therefore demonstrating leadership in making farm animal welfare integral to their business strategy.

- The highest scoring companies on 'Performance Impact' – a measure for how well businesses demonstrate actual welfare benefits for farm animals in their global supply chain – were the six companies (4%) that achieved a 'C' rating: Marks & Spencer (UK), Groupe Danone (FR), Premier Foods (UK), Waitrose (UK), Cranswick PLC (UK) and Migros-Genossenschafts-Bund (Switzerland).
- There are generally high levels of ambition on cage-free eggs, with 73% of the 141 companies that have eggs in their supply chains now having cage-free egg commitments. (...)

However, many findings in this year's benchmark also showed the work that still needs to be done by the food sector:

- Implementation lags commitment (...)
- No (...) formal farm animal welfare policy
- Close confinement: (...)
- Routine mutilation: (...)
- Live transport: (...)
- Antibiotics: (...)

"As an investor which regularly engages with companies operating in the global food sector, the BBAW helps to shine a light on those which are making critical progress towards addressing these challenges and enables us to analyse management quality in a systematic and consistent manner."

[31/01/2024 : Assessing Giraffe Welfare During Seasonal Habitat Changes in Northern US Zoos](#)

Document type: scientific article published in [Journal of Zoos and Aquarium Researches](#)

Authors: Razal, C., Bryant, J., & Miller, L.

Preview: Although there has been an increase in research studying the impact of housing on zoo animal welfare, there is still a lack of literature regarding the impact of seasonal housing differences on animal welfare. In northern American zoos, animals native to warmer climates inhabit an outdoor habitat during the summer and an indoor habitat during the winter. These habitats usually vary in size, in the amount of naturalistic habitat features and in the provision of diet. This study utilised a multi-faceted approach of behavioural observations, hormone monitoring and recumbency rates to assess giraffe welfare comparing outdoor, summer habitats and indoor, winter habitats at multiple institutions. A total of 13 giraffe were examined at four zoological institutions. Active non-forage behaviour was significantly higher in the outdoor habitat versus the indoor habitat ($Z=2.34$, $P=0.02$), and active forage behaviour was significantly higher in the indoor habitat versus the outdoor habitat ($Z=2.27$, $P=0.02$). In addition, higher levels of recumbency were exhibited in the indoor habitat than in the outdoor habitat. No significant differences were found for the other behavioural categories (inactive, abnormal) or for faecal glucocorticoid metabolite concentrations between the two seasons. With positive welfare implications displayed in both indoor and outdoor habitats, these results suggest that housing giraffe indoors likely does not compromise their welfare. Future research should continue utilising multi-faceted approaches across multiple institutions that will help in the management of species that could be impacted by differing seasonal habitats.

Population management and animal welfare

[27/04/2024 : Animaux en captivité : souffrance évidente ou solution de préservation ?](#)

Document type: article published in [Ouest France Le Mag des Animaux](#)

Author: Laetitia Cochet

Preview: Keeping animals in captivity is a source of much debate and emotion. The issue is complex, calling for a thorough exploration of animal welfare implications, without neglecting the importance of conservation efforts and the role played by human society in the management of other species.

Negative consequences of captivity for animals

The keeping of animals in captivity raises worrying questions about their psychological and physiological welfare. (...)

Merits of the keeping of animals in captivity

The practice is not altogether bad, though. Animal captivity can be defended because it contributes to the conservation of endangered species. (...)

The future ban on the keeping of certain animals in captivity in France

In 2020, France announced a landmark legislative measure to ban the keeping of certain wild animals in captivity in circuses and for other entertainment purposes by 2027. (...)

Educating the public

It should not, however, be forgotten that zoos and wildlife parks play an essential educational role by bringing animals closer to the public. (...)

Can quality of life be better for captive animals?

In some cases, the quality of life of animals in captivity can be better than that of their wild counterparts, particularly in cases where their natural habitat is severely compromised. (...)

The debate on animal captivity is still ongoing. On the one hand, captivity is seen as an essential strategy for the safeguarding of certain endangered species, providing a controlled environment for reproduction and preserving genetic diversity. On the other, this same captivity can compromise the welfare of the animals, depriving them of their natural freedom and imposing living conditions on them that may sometimes be inappropriate for their species. The issue of human responsibility towards other living beings is more acute than it has ever been. The keeping of animals in captivity, especially for entertainment, is increasingly called into question, not least from an ethical point of view. This undoubtedly prompts our societies to reflect on our conservation priorities: should we prioritize species preservation at all costs, even to the detriment of individual welfare? A growing number of voices are promoting alternatives to captivity, such as the protection of natural habitats to achieve better in situ conservation, or the creation of reserves. These approaches promise to be more effective in the long term for species conservation. Although there is still a long way to go, the situation is certainly becoming more favorable to animal welfare.

Animal welfare initiatives

[06/05/2024 : Reconsidering welfare principles in aquaculture](#)

Document type: article published on [The Fish Site](#)

Authors: Jonah van Beijnen, Kyra Hoevenaars

Preview: Opinions vary strongly on precisely what proper welfare in aquaculture entails. Even basic principles, such as whether fish are sentient beings that can feel pain, are debated. This has limited progress, both in terms of legislation and in terms of incorporating welfare assessments and programmes across the sector. With seafood buyers and consumers demanding more transparency in terms of the products they buy; a more proactive approach is needed. We spoke with two experts that are taking an active stance in developing solid welfare principles in aquaculture: Dr Maria Filipa Castanheira, standards coordinator at the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), and Dr Heather Browning, lecturer on animal welfare at the University of Southampton. Dr Browning tries to engage the aquaculture sector by publishing position papers on animal welfare. In February 2023 she published an important essay in *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* titled [Improving welfare assessment in aquaculture](#). "There remains relatively little attention given to the assessment of animal welfare within aquaculture systems. However, as the sector is growing and expanding quickly, it is crucial that animal welfare concerns are central in the development and implementation of aquaculture," she argues. "If welfare assessments are not prioritised early on, it becomes much more difficult to adapt in future," she adds.

Defining welfare (...)

A highly diverse sector

Once the definition of welfare has been agreed upon, a set of indicators for welfare needs to be set and it needs to be determined how to measure these indicators objectively. This is a challenge because aquaculture encompasses a wide range of genera and species. (...) Simultaneously aquaculture involves a variety of production systems, ranging from offshore cages and earthen ponds to land-based indoor recirculating systems. While most catfish would feel at home in a muddy pond, a coral grouper – which typically lives around reefs – would not. The farmers themselves are also a very diverse group, with a wide range of resources at their disposal. So how to develop a uniform approach to welfare in such a varied sector?

Welfare assessment tools

Dr Browning explains that any strong welfare assessment should consider completeness, validity, feasibility, and setting of reasonable thresholds for acceptable welfare. But where to start as a sector? (...) "Examples of morphological scoring parameters include assessing eye or skin damage, deformities, and changes in colouration. Behavioural scoring and mortality are dependent on the type of species. If downward trends are observed, farmers must investigate the situation and assess their farming density and modify accordingly," says Dr Castanheira. Meanwhile, Dr Browning refers to most of such indicators as partial indicators. (...) She ultimately recommends using whole-animal measures, as "these use a single measure to represent the entire state of welfare for the animal. This has the obvious benefit of being a complete welfare measure, inclusive of all the external and internal states that are impacting an animal's welfare. Examples of whole-animal indicators of welfare that may work for fish include qualitative behavioural analysis (QBA), cognitive bias, laterality, and skin mucosa". These whole-animal measures can be harder to measure, and in most cases do require more training. (...)

[04/05/2024 : Une source de stress : les animaux vivants ne pourront plus être vendus sur les marchés de Bruxelles](#)

Document type : article published in [l'Avenir](#)

Auteur : Belga

Preview: Annual fairs and markets in the Brussels administrative areas will no longer be able to offer live animals for sale. This was decided by the Brussels Parliament at its last session on Friday May 3, 2024. The independent MP was joined in her proposal by a number of elected representatives from both sides of the house, following the failure of an attempt to put the Animal Welfare Code proposed by Minister Clerfayt to the vote, and had achieved a broad consensus.

Dogs kept locked up

With the elections just around the corner, the majority party's socialist partner opted to take a temporary back seat, to avoid the risk of the debate on the question of slaughter with or without stunning returning to the floor, by tabling amendments that some still considered possible. According to Austraet, one of the main causes for reports of animal abuse received by Brussels Environment's animal welfare department is the keeping of dogs in poor conditions, such as being attached to a chain or confined in a continuous or unusual manner. However, veterinary inspectors are limited in what they can do, as they have no legal basis on which to issue official reports. Friday's legislative amendment will provide a legal basis for intervention by police officers and veterinary inspectors.

Continuity

An exception is nevertheless made for approved animal establishments, insofar as animals are held there on a temporary basis, and insofar as these establishments are already subject to a specific legal framework. The ban on the sale of live animals on markets is in line with the ban on the sale of dogs and cats, which has been in place for almost 40 years. The ban also applies to the sale of new pets, for whom markets, fairs and shows are a source of stress. The same applies to farm animals. The measure is supported by the Conseil du Bien-être Animal.

30/04/2024 : Newsletter EURCAW-Poultry-SFA - Edition 8

Document type: Newsletter of the [EURCAW-Poultry-SFA](#)

Author: EURCAW-Poultry-SFA (European Union Reference Centre for Animal Welfare for Poultry and other small farmed animals)

Summary: In this issue 8 of the EURCAW-Poultry-SFA Newsletter, four data sheets are available in French:

– [Fiche méthode pour l'évaluation des niveaux de gaz en poulet de chair](#)

– [Fiche méthode pour l'évaluation des niveaux de gaz en système hors cage de poules pondeuses](#)

– [Fiche indicateur pour l'évaluation de l'état de conscience des poulets de chair \(électronarcose par bain d'eau\) \(available in English\)](#)

– [Fiche de bonnes pratiques pour les enrichissements et le jardin d'hiver en élevage de dindes](#)

[Link to the pdf of the Newsletter](#)

30/04/2024 : Podcast : "Bien-être animal : une priorité pour la filière laitière"

Document type: podcast broadcast on the [Phylum website](#)

Author: Phylum

Preview: A brand new podcast from La Clé des Champs discusses animal welfare with Phylum, Danone, Idele (Institut de l'Élevage) and a farmer. This 50-minute episode is divided into 2 parts:
- A round-table discussion with François Gary, representing Phylum, and Valérie David, Danone's Regenerative Agriculture project manager, addressing the following questions: What is animal welfare? What are the associated challenges? What is the role and contribution of a group like Danone?

- An interview with a dairy farmer in the Pas-de-Calais region of France, sharing her experiences as a participant in the Ecosystem Fund's animal welfare support program, which she has followed with her Danone dairy. Listen to the full program on a La Clé des Champs hosting platform [by clicking here](#).

[29/04/2024 : Hopping to the rescue: a discussion on rabbit welfare](#)

Document type: article published in [Eurogroup for Animals](#)

Author: Rabbit Welfare Association & Fund

Preview: (...) *When did [Rabbit Welfare](#) join Eurogroup for Animals and why? What were Rabbit Welfare's main achievements in 2023? (...)*

Educating and supporting rabbit owners is key to improving welfare (...)

Farm parks, petting zoos and animal encounters (...)

Not all vets are rabbit savvy

Because of their complex care needs, rabbits are classed as an exotic pet, which is a surprise to many owners. Whilst in training, vets spend a worryingly little amount of time learning about rabbits. This does vary between vet schools, but to become rabbit savvy, it means the vet has to go out of their way to do more training and continual professional development (CPD) on rabbits. We have a rabbit friendly vet list on our website and a big part of our resources are dedicated to keeping the list online and up to date. (...)

Lack of enforcement

Local Authorities are supposed to enforce the legislation that does exist to protect rabbits. We report many cases a year where for example a farm park has poor welfare. Sadly the results are usually disappointing. Local authorities have limited resources, and priorities mean they do not enforce the legislation. Different authorities can also have very different approaches, which we think should be standardised. In 2024 we aim to produce a pack for anyone who works with rabbits so they can see which legislation applies to them. This will provide clarity and should help with enforcement.

Brachycephalic (flat faced) breeds (...)

How can the public act for Rabbit Welfare?

We would love for everyone to [add their signature to our petition](#) to amend legislation to ensure rabbit breeders require the same licensing as dog breeders. We're close to 100,000 signatures! (...)

[19/04/2024 : Newsletter EURCAW-Pigs – Edition 11](#)

Document type: Newsletter of the [EURCAW-Pigs](#)

Author: EURCAW-Pigs (European Reference Centre for Pig Welfare)

Preview:

- Podcast series Pig Welfare in Action
- Q2E on stocking density calculation
- Benefits, challenges and practicalities of conducting inspection in pairs
- New Master's in animal welfare assessment
- [Substrate-based enrichment for sows during pregnancy](#)
- Agenda
- [How to cool pigs and their environment?](#)
- Pre-transport fasting and implications for pig welfare

[10/04/2024 : Animaux de ferme : plaidoyer pour des refuges](#)

Document type: article published in [Sésame](#)

Author: Anne Judas

Preview: In 1961, in Nice, Jacqueline Gilardoni rescued a donkey from an abattoir and, with a group of friends, including a lawyer and a veterinarian, founded the Œuvre d'Assistance aux Bêtes d'Abattoirs (OABA). This association carries out both scientific and ethical research, and works to improve the conditions under which animals are farmed, transported and slaughtered. In recent years, the numbers of abandoned animals and animals being badly looked after on farms have risen steadily. There are many reasons for this, and different sorts of farmers are involved. While procedures do exist for these animals, they are clearly insufficient to cope with the numbers of goats, horses and cattle being taken in. This conversation with OABA Director Frédéric Freund, first appeared Sesame #14.

Housing and Enrichment

[10/05/2024 : Impact of farrowing system and prepartum nest-building material on nest-building behaviour and farrowing in SOWS](#)

Document type: scientific article available before publication in [Animal](#)

Authors: V.M. Hukkinen, C. Munsterhjelm, M. Kurtti, N. Immonen, A. Valros

Preview: Farrowing crates are widely used as the main housing system for farrowing and lactating sows on commercial farms although they have a negative impact on sow welfare and behaviour. One of the main reasons for using farrowing crates is to reduce piglet mortality during farrowing and lactation. We compared the effects of temporary crating (TC) versus free farrowing (FF) with different nest-building materials on production and welfare measures. Sows were investigated using a 2 x 3 factorial design. Sows were allocated to two farrowing treatments: FF sows were not crated around farrowing, and TC sows were crated from 2 days before expected farrowing until 3 days after farrowing, when the crate was opened. In both farrowing treatments, the nest-building material was given from 7 days prior to farrowing as follows: 1) 1 L of straw twice per day, 2) 1 sheet of newspaper

twice per day or 3) fastened jute fabric to the farrowing crate. The study consisted of two parts; part 1 included a total of 87 sows for data on piglet mortality and growth, and part 2 included data on nest-building and farrowing behaviour from a subset of these sows ($n=34$). Farrowing treatment affected piglet mortality; FF sows had a lower number of stillborn piglets than TC sows ($p=0.04$), but the number of crushed piglets was higher ($p\leq 0.01$). Nest-building material tended to have an impact on total number of crushed piglets ($p=0.08$) and piglets that died during 3 days of lactation ($p=0.09$). Litter growth was better in the FF group than in the TC group from piglet age of 1 day to three weeks ($p=0.04$). Overall, little nest-building-related behaviour occurred, probably due to the small amount of nest-building material. The usability of the nest-building material varied with farrowing treatment; FF sows used newspaper most for nest-building, while TC sows used straw and jute fabric ($p=0.01$). There were no differences in the piglet birth intervals or the farrowing duration. In conclusion, free farrowing can have positive effects on piglet growth but negative effects on piglet survival in early lactation. Different nest-building materials have different effects depending on the type of farrowing system.

[30/04/2024 : Influence of deep-litter bedding materials on environmental and welfare-related factors in boar studs](#)

Document type: scientific article published in [Applied Animal Behaviour Science](#)

Authors: Anine Riedel, Laura Pieper, Matthias Lautner, Claus Leiding, Markus Jung, Martin Schulze

Preview: In recent years, it has become increasingly difficult for artificial insemination (AI) centers to procure high-quality bedding materials. The aim of this study was to investigate influences of bedding materials on selected environmental and welfare-related aspects in breeding boars. Including seasonal changes, two trial runs were conducted in winter (T1) and summer (T2) to compare five deep-litter bedding materials (wood shavings (WS), hemp straw (HS), linen straw (LS), spelt husks (SH), and regional wood shavings (RWS)). The cleanliness of the boar pens was visually assessed at the end of T1 and T2 using a 4-point scale (1 = $\geq 75\%$, 2 = 75–51%, 3 = 50–25%, and 4 = $\leq 25\%$ clean surface). Simultaneously, a body position score for each boar was assessed (1 = lying on flank, 2 = lying on belly, 3 = sitting, and 4 = standing). Temperatures of bedding at 5 cm and 15 cm depth were determined using a thermometric probe at week 6 and 16 after initial bedding replacement. Ambient temperature and relative humidity were measured at the same time. Simultaneously, fecal samples were collected and analyzed for oocysts in T1. To include flies as a health hazard and nuisance, sticky traps were evaluated in T2. Generalized linear mixed models and a two-way ANOVA were calculated for the statistical evaluation of observations. Cleanliness evaluation showed differences among bedding materials in T1 ($P = 0.004$) but not in T2 ($P \geq 0.05$). There were no differences in the body position score among the materials. WS and RWS were generally cooler at the start of T1 and T2. The greatest difference of 7°C in means was detected between RWS and SH at the start of T2 and 15 cm depth ($P \leq 0.001$). Oocyst counts revealed no difference among bedding materials in T1. In T2, fly numbers differed for time of bedding period and for the interaction term between time of bedding period and material ($P \leq 0.05$). In conclusion, the results demonstrate clear differences between materials in terms of temperature, cleanliness of pens (T1), and partially fly burden (T2). Considering heat is a great stressor for most animals, we favor wooden materials as deep-litter bedding for AI boars compared to others due to lower heat

development during the bedding period. Moreover, we recommend avoiding replacement of deep-litter bedding during hot summer months in AI centers to reduce excessive heat development.

[24/04/2024 : Improving Welfare for Stalled Horses with Selected Nature Sounds and Music](#)

Document type : article published in [The Horse](#)

Author: Christa Lesté-Lasserre

Preview: Researchers believe that nature sounds—such as running water, chirping birds, and a gentle breeze through tree leaves—might encourage horses to relax and chew forage. However, they might appear more frustrated than usual when listening to jazz music. Eleven years ago, British researchers found that horses in stalls seemed calmer when listening to country or classical music compared to jazz or rock. Today it seems there's perhaps an even better sound for stalled horses: the sounds of nature. (...) Bolanos, who works under the leadership of Amy McLean, PhD, presented at the 2024 19th Conference of the International Society for Equitation Science (ISES), held March 14-16 in Cambridge, New Zealand. Stalled horses often show signs of frustration, such as pawing or kicking, and some even express stereotypies—repetitive behaviors that don't seem to have a purpose—such as crib-biting, windsucking, or stall weaving, Bolanos said. Enriching the stall environment with objects such as mirrors, fixed brushes, and toys can help reduce frustration, she said, but so might various sounds. Bolanos and her fellow researchers tested the responses of six Warmblood horses to different kinds of prerecorded sounds: jazz, country, nature sounds, lullabies, and classical music. None of the recordings included singing or other vocals, and the team played the recordings and observed the horses for one hour twice a day for two weeks. (...) On average the horses showed frustration behaviors more than twice as often when listening to jazz compared to the first day of the study when they heard no recordings, said Bolanos. (...) During the jazz sessions the horses kicked more and were more aggressive with their neighbors, McLean added. Plus, the horses that cribbed did so more when jazz was playing. Even so, it's possible the horses were reacting to that specific jazz playlist, she explained. By contrast, when listening to nature sounds, the horses spent about 15% more time foraging than they did on Day 1, she said. Foraging time was about the same as Day 1 for all other sound treatments. In general, the horses showed far less frustration on the last day of the study—when no sound recordings were playing—than the first day of the study—which also involved no recordings. This suggests that two weeks of sound enrichment might be beneficial for the welfare of stalled horses, regardless of the sounds played. (...)

[21/04/2024 : Social buffering of behavioural stress response in two fish species, Nile tilapia \(*Oreochromis niloticus*\) and koi carp \(*Cyprinus carpio*\)](#)

Document type: scientific article published in [Ethology](#)

Authors: Santiago Pintos, Tyrone Lucon-Xiccato, Luisa María Vera, Luis Conceição, Cristiano Bertolucci, Javier Sánchez-Vázquez, Paulo Rema

Preview: While studies on social buffering effects have typically focussed on single species, marked interspecific differences can exist. Here, we conducted an analysis of social buffering of stress

response in two of the most extensively farmed fish, the Nile tilapia and the koi carp. Subjects were exposed to a behavioural stress response assay (open-field test) in three conditions simulating increasing levels of social enrichment: isolation, pairs, or shoals of five fish. We obtained five stress indicators from the assay: thigmotaxis (*preference for staying in close proximity to the edge/side and avoiding the central open areas, editor's note*), freezing (*total motionless, editor's note*), activity, erratic movements and interindividual distance in conditions with more than one fish. In both species, erratic movements significantly decreased with increasing levels of social enrichment, suggesting a similar social buffering effect. However, other indicators revealed species differences. Koi carp, but not Nile tilapia, showed a socially-mediated reduction in thigmotaxis, whereas Nile tilapia, but not Koi carp, showed a socially-mediated reduction in freezing behaviour. Furthermore, social enrichment determined opposite effects on the activity of the two species: Nile tilapia were more active as group size increased, whereas the opposite trend was found in koi carp. Finally, Nile tilapia showed increased interindividual distance with increasing social group size, whereas no changes were observed for koi carp. Our study indicates that the buffering effects of social enrichment on the behavioural stress response do not completely overlap between different fish species, highlighting the importance of developing finely-tuned species-specific enrichments and welfare indicators.

[18/04/2024 : The potential of pumice as a litter material and its influence on growth performance, carcass parameters, litter quality traits, behavior, and welfare in broiler chickens](#)

Document type: scientific article published in [Tropical Animal Health and Production](#)

Authors: Duman, M., Şekeroğlu, A. & Tainika, B.

Preview: This study evaluated the possibilities of pumice (light stones) as litter material in broiler production. Experimental treatments included wood shavings (WS), acidic pumice (AP), and basic pumice (BP) alone, and in combination; wood shaving + acidic pumice (WSAP) and wood shaving + basic pumice (WSBP) in a ratio of 1:1. Two trials were performed, one in summer, and the other in winter. Each trial involved 750 mixed-sex Ross (308) broilers. Also, there were 15 replicate pens with 50 broilers and a stocking density of 12.5 birds/m² for each pen at the beginning of each trial. Performance, litter quality, carcass parameters, body and leg abnormalities, body temperature, fear and stress responses, proportional asymmetry, and some behavior expressions were investigated. The litter treatment influenced the final live body weight, litter moisture, ammonia concentration, footpad dermatitis, hock burn, breast blister, hot carcass yield, heart, liver, spleen, abdominal fat, wing and neck ratio, breast and back cleanliness, and the expression of dust bathing and foraging behaviors ($P \leq 0.01$; $P \leq 0.05$). Furthermore, there was a seasonal effect on live body weight, feed conversion ratio, livability, litter pH, 42-day litter moisture, hot carcass yield, back cleanliness, footpad dermatitis, hock burn, footpad temperature, heterophil-to-lymphocyte ratio, and expression of pecking behavior ($P \leq 0.01$; $P \leq 0.05$). It is suggested that acidic pumice stone alone or in a mixture with wood shavings could be used as a reliable litter material, alternative to wood shavings.

[09/04/2024 : Burlap and buddies: the effects of social enrichment \(preweaning mixing\) and object enrichment \(burlap\) on piglet behavior and welfare in the postweaning environment](#)

Document type: scientific article published in [Translational Animal Science](#)

Authors: Ashlyn Scott, Arielle Le Heiget, Reyna Stefanson, Jamie Ahloy-Dallaire, Meagan King

Preview: The process of weaning piglets in commercial swine operations subjects them to numerous abrupt and stressful changes often resulting in negative welfare consequences. The objective was to study the postweaning effects of early-life (1 to 3 d of age) preweaning socialization in multi-litter groups as well as object enrichment (burlap sheet) in the pre- and postweaning environment by comparing six treatments that combined mixing of one vs. two vs. four litters mixed preweaning with and without burlap provision. An ANOVA linear model was run on all normal data, expressed per experimental unit (and behavior data were averaged over time), while non-normal data were analyzed using the Kruskal–Wallis test. Non-enriched groups of piglets were observed manipulating pen objects more often than the enriched groups ($P = 0.005$). Biting behaviors, including the chewing of ears and tails of pen-mates but excluding fighting, were observed the least in groups of pigs of four litters mixed preweaning, while piglets that were not mixed preweaning were observed biting the most ($P = 0.03$). Piglets who were not mixed preweaning also manipulated the burlap more frequently than the piglets from groups of 4 litters mixed preweaning ($P = 0.02$). Biting ($P \leq 0.001$) and displacements ($P = 0.03$) and fighting ($P = 0.002$) throughout the pen were observed less in the enriched groups. There were fewer lesions per pig in the enriched groups vs. non-enriched groups initially ($P = 0.07$) and 1 wk after weaning ($P = 0.10$). Furthermore, pigs mixed in groups of four litters preweaning also tended to have lower lesion scores ($P = 0.07$) 1-wk postweaning compared to the other treatments. However, there were no differences between treatments in the proportion of piglets resting, eating/drinking, being active, or using the burlap, or for the observed frequency of displacements at the feeder, social behaviors, or belly nosing ($P \geq 0.10$). Overall, social enrichment encourages socialization with unfamiliar conspecifics at a younger age while object enrichment allows pigs to redirect their attention toward objects such as burlap. Both may improve pig behavior and welfare after weaning.

[23/03/2024 : Enrichment materials for sows during pregnancy - Short review](#)

Document type: scientific and technical summary published on the [EURCAW-Pigs website](#)

Authors: Schubbert Antje, Spoolder Hans, Pedersen Lene

Preview: This short review provides background on the behavioural needs of sows in terms of feeding and exploring and describes different types of enrichment materials. Furthermore, it highlights different methods to offer enrichment material to sows during pregnancy.

[11/03/2024 : Review on cooling technologies for pigs](#)

Document type: scientific and technical summary published on the [EURCAW-Pigs website](#)

Authors: Vermeer Herman, Hoofs Anita

Preview: With increasing global temperatures, the risk of heat stress for farm animals is growing. As pigs are not able to sweat and in livestock houses they generally do not have the opportunity to wet themselves, an ambient temperature above the upper critical temperature (UCT) leads to reduced welfare and performance. In this review, technologies are described on cooling the pig (sprinkler/shower, floor cooling, fans for air circulation) and on cooling the environment (heat exchanger, fog/mist, cooling pads, air conditioner, underground tubes, underfloor air inlet) for pigs kept on farms. The knowledge in this review aims to support welfare inspectors in the field of climate control on pig farms, in particular at high temperatures.

One Welfare

[15/05/2024 : Climate change, public health, and animal welfare: towards a One Health approach to reducing animal agriculture's climate footprint](#)

Document type: scientific synthesis published in [Frontiers in Animal Science](#)

Authors: Verkuijl Cleo, Smit Jessie, Green Jonathan M. H., Nordquist Rebecca E., Sebo Jeff, Hayek Matthew N., Hötzel Maria José

Preview: Animal agriculture contributes significantly to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions—an estimated 12%-20% of total anthropogenic emissions. This has led both governmental and private actors to propose various ways to mitigate those climate impacts. This paper applies a One Health lens to the issue, arguing that the choice of solutions should not only consider the potential to reduce GHG emissions—which is not always a given—but also the implications for public health and animal welfare. With this perspective, we examine the potential public health and animal welfare impacts of three types of strategies that are often proposed: (1) “sustainable intensification” methods, aimed at maintaining or increasing production while limiting emissions and avoiding further land conversion; (2) “species shift” approaches, which focus on changing diets to consume meat from animals produced with lower GHG emissions instead of that of animals associated with higher emissions; and (3) “systemic dietary change” approaches that promote shifts towards whole plant-based foods or novel alternatives to conventional animal products. We discuss how some approaches—particularly those associated with sustainable intensification and species shift—could introduce new and significant risks to public health and animal welfare. Promoting systemic dietary change helps to overcome some of these challenges, but requires careful attention to equity to ensure that vulnerable populations still have access to the nutrients they need. We end with recommendations for a more holistic approach to reducing emissions from farmed animals that can help avoid trade-offs and increase synergies with other societal goals.

[26/04/2024 : Face au changement climatique, quelles stratégies d'atténuation et d'adaptation pour les productions avicoles ?](#)

Document type: scientific review published in [INRAE Productions Animales](#)

Authors: Anne Collin, Vincent Coustham, Jacob Kokou Tona, Sophie Tesseraud, Sandrine Mignon-Grasteau, Bertrand Méda, Anaïs Vitorino Carvalho, Yann Guyot, Sandrine Lagarrigue, Frédérique Pitel, Tatiana Zerjal

Preview: What mitigation and adaptation strategies for poultry production in the face of climate change?

Poultry meat and eggs are major sources of animal protein for human consumption worldwide. Their production has increased rapidly in recent decades. However, poultry production is vulnerable to climate change, in particular to global warming and its direct and indirect consequences. To cope with this, it is necessary to implement adaptation strategies at the animal level, in particular by improving the resilience of the animals; these strategies require, on the one hand, a better understanding of the physiology of the birds (thermoregulation, efficiency for meat and egg production, etc.) and, on the other hand, the search for innovations in relation to nutrition, health, early reprogramming or genetics (integration of new adaptive traits in selection strategies). Solutions also need to be found at the production systems level to take into account the changes in the geographical distribution of diseases linked to climate change and to introduce mitigation practices to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Interdisciplinary research focusing on genetics, technical methods (such as early thermal programming), engineering solutions, nutritional innovations and new breeding strategies is being developed. These strategies consider the growing social demand for ethical animal production in the perspectives of the "One Health" and "One Welfare" concepts and limit the feed-food competition in the context of climate change. This review illustrates through a few examples the levers of improvement and combined adaptive strategies that can be considered to make poultry production systems more resilient in the context of climate change.

[31/03/2024 : The meaning of animal well-being for farmers and dairy farm employees](#)

Document type : survey report published in [Agricultural and Food Science](#)

Authors: Axelsson L., Arvidsson-Segerkvist K., Pálsdóttir A. M., Ljung M.

Preview: Dairy farms in Sweden have undergone a structural change. The number of family farms has decreased, while the number of large dairy farms with employees caring for the animals has increased. This changing situation has created a new farming landscape. From that perspective, it is crucial to gain insight into what factors contribute to the well-being of humans and animals on big dairy farms. Twenty-three semi-structured interviews were conducted on three farms. Farmers and employees were interviewed. The material was analysed using a qualitative approach inspired by qualitative content analysis. For the farmers and employees, animal well-being was central for various reasons and from different perspectives. Despite the differences, the impact of animal well-being was interlinked between the two groups. An increased and deeper understanding of the different perspectives and needs arising from the different roles of farmers and employees can provide new knowledge about factors important for improving animal well-being.

[21/03/2024 : Colloque BOW : Le bâtiment d'élevage, point de rencontre entre l'homme et l'animal](#)

Document type: Conference proceedings from the BOW conference held on February 14 and 15, 2024 (Rennes) published on the [Idele](#) website ((Joint Technology Networks [One Welfare](#) and [BATICE](#)))

Authors: Yannick Ramonet, Frédéric Kergourlay, Vanessa Lollivier

Preview: Designing buildings to improve human-animal relationships while balancing the different aspects of One Welfare: an overview of approaches in France and abroad. And, looking to the future: training as a tool for reflection on buildings and welfare issues, and the pathways that have been opened up by innovations and new knowledge on the emotional states of animals. The most recent updates on research and development project results, scientific and technical knowledge, reports and feedback from producers, diagnostic and advisory tools, all concerning the issue of animal housing, living conditions and working conditions for livestock farmers and, more generally, how welfare and building are interconnected.

[Link to proceedings \(pdf\)](#)

Pain management

[03/05/2024 : Spain abolishes National Bullfighting Award amid animal welfare concerns](#)

Document type: article published in [Murcia Today](#)

Author: Murcia Today

Preview: The Spanish Ministry of Culture has taken a monumental step away from the nation's bullfighting tradition by deciding to scrap the National Bullfighting Award permanently, breaking a streak dating back to the award's creation in 2011.

[24/04/2024 : Fin du tatouage : c'est pour bientôt](#)

Document type: article published in [La Dépêche Vétérinaire](#)

Author: Maud Lafon

Preview: The first "Assises de l'animal en ville", [an event created to discuss future policy directions for animals in towns], held in Paris on April 16, gave the French Minister of Agriculture, Marc Fesneau, the opportunity to make a number of announcements concerning initiatives to support animal welfare actions and the fight against companion animal abuse. These included the promotion of pet identification and its harmonization across Europe. To this end, tattooing, currently a French exception, is soon to be abandoned and replaced by electronic identification alone, which can only be carried out by veterinarians.

[16/04/2024 : Lameness in beef cattle: Effect, causes and treatment](#)

Document type: article published in [Farmers weekly](#)

Author: Hannah Fitzsimmonds

Preview: A study by vet Jay Tunstall, published by the University of Liverpool, estimated the mean prevalence of lameness in the UK beef herd at 8.3% in finishing cattle (with a range of 2% to 21.2%) and 14.2% in suckler cows (ranging from 0% to 43.2%). What is interesting about these figures is the range, with some finisher and suckler cow herds having really low lameness prevalence. This is great, and it shows there are farms that we (as vets and farmers), can learn from to support the reduction of lameness on some holdings with higher lameness levels.

Financial effect of lameness

Lameness is a welfare problem – whatever the initial cause, it is largely a painful condition. It also affects the efficiency of meat production, with beef finishing cattle in the UK showing an average 240g reduction in daily liveweight gain if they are lame once they are in the finishing period. (...)

What is causing the lameness?

The University of Liverpool research showed that for sucklers and finishers, having a white line disease lesion or overgrown claws are two major causes of lameness. Digital dermatitis can, anecdotally, be an important cause of lameness to get on top of in some beef herds. (...)

Handling facilities

Having the means to safely lift all four feet for inspection is important: while hind limb lameness is more common, we see more lameness in front feet in beef cattle than their dairy counterparts. (...)

Practical tips for reducing lameness in the beef herd

- Use herd health planning time with the vet to look at the beef herd with a pair of fresh eyes. This will help to establish a benchmark figure of lameness
- Farmers in England can use the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway grant to work with your vet on lesion identification and treatment protocols
- Attend a foot first aid course, run by many vets across the country, to refresh your knowledge and upskill for when you are trimming your cattle's feet
- Make use of the various grants available to upgrade handling facilities for safe examination of all four feet so you can treat lame cattle promptly
- Enroll the services of a qualified foot-trimmer (check the Cattle Hoof Care Standards Board or National Association of Cattle Foot Trimmers for locating qualified trimmers), especially if handling facilities are a challenge or there are several cattle to examine.

[04/04/2024 : How does chronic pain impact the lives of dogs: an investigation of factors that are associated with pain using the Animal Welfare Assessment Grid](#)

Document type: scientific article published in [Frontiers in Veterinary Science](#)

Authors: Rachel Malkani, Sharmini Paramasivam, Sarah Wolfensohn

Preview: Chronic pain can profoundly affect the wellbeing of dogs and our understanding is limited regarding the multidimensional impact it has on dog quality of life. This study aimed to assess the factors that are significant and predictive of behavior problems in dogs using the Animal Welfare Assessment Grid (AWAG) to further understand what factors influence their welfare. Seventy-six AWAG assessments were undertaken across 46 dogs that clinicians diagnosed as having musculoskeletal conditions that caused chronic pain. Wilcoxon-rank sum tests were used to assess the difference in scores between dogs with behavior disorders and a cohort of healthy dogs (n = 143). All physical factors besides body condition, and all psychological, environmental, and procedural factors were significantly different between healthy dogs and dogs with chronic pain,

evidencing how chronic pain impacts all domains of a dog's life. Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient (RS) revealed several significant strong positive correlations such as the association between the severity of clinical symptoms with poorer mobility and the frequency at which the dog experienced fearful stimuli. Logistic regression showed that fears and anxieties frequency, the dog's reaction to stressors, engagement with enrichment, and social interactions were significant predictors of chronic pain in dogs. This highlights that typical signs of musculoskeletal disorders such as gait changes, stiffness, lameness might manifest after behavioral changes such as increased fearfulness, prolonged recovery from a stressful event, a reduced interest in social interactions, toys or play. Owners only seeking veterinary attention when the presence of physical signs of disease are evident may result in a delayed veterinary attention resulting in reduced welfare. Regular veterinary assessments combined with use of the AWAG can proactively identify these behavioral indicators and result in prompt treatment and improved quality of life.

[31/01/2024 : Immunocastrer les porcs, qu'en pensent les consommateurs ?](#)

Document type: article published on the [Ifip](#) website

Authors: Leroux M, Hémonic A, Tallet C

Preview: Immunocastration is a method of castration unknown to consumers. However, some reluctance to consume meat from immunocastrated pigs can be overcome by providing information.

[Link to the article published in Réussir Porc-Tech Porc, n° 315, January 2024, p. 29](#)

Regulation

[24/05/2024 : Une formation interministérielle sur la lutte contre la maltraitance animale](#)

Document type: article published in [Presse Agence](#)

Author: Floriane Dumont

Preview: Pet welfare is a Government priority, with strong expectations from the general public. Significant steps have already been taken. Since 2020, thanks to the France Relance plan, more than 36 million euros have been allocated to assist animal protection associations in their work and enable their professionalisation, and to support access to veterinary care. For example - 416 sterilization campaigns have been financed; - a guide and webinars have been made available on the regulations applicable to animal protection associations; - the relaunched "Vétérinaires Pour Tous" association has organized free care for over 3,000 animals from Ukraine since the conflict began through Operation Solidarité Vétérinaire Ukraine. Since November 30, 2021, with the adoption of the law to combat animal abuse, four implementing decrees and six ministerial orders have been published. They have enabled the measures contained in the law to be implemented, for example, stepping up training for staff working with pets, providing information to new purchasers, checking the identification of dogs and cats advertised online, increasing penalties for acts of abuse, and setting up the new national advisory commission for captive wildlife and the specialized training it

provides.

Facilitating synergies between those involved in animal protection

Development of a cross-governmental training course on combating animal abuse, open to MIOM-MASA-MTECT-MJ agents

The MIOM-MASA-SPA partnership has created an online training course on the procedures to follow in combating animal abuse using Mentor (a cross-governmental training platform). Intended primarily for law enforcement officers, the training will also be accessible to agents working for MASA, MTECT and MJ. The level one training provides information on how to react and which partner to contact in the event of animal abuse. A second training level is planned for animal welfare advisors in law enforcement agencies, supplemented by practical information sheets. Subsequently, a "train the trainer" set of materials will enable training to be rolled out more widely within law enforcement agencies. This training will be available online in autumn 2024.

22/05/2024 : Bien-être animal : lancement du plan national pour améliorer le bien-être des animaux de compagnie

Document type: press release issued by the [Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty](#) (MASA)

Author: MASA

Preview: Pet welfare is a government priority. A plan dedicated to this issue was published on May 22, to extend the positive momentum begun in 2020. A national monitoring committee involving four ministries, as well as professionals and civil society players, has been set up to ensure that the plan's actions are properly coordinated. In partnership with long-standing players such as animal protection associations and veterinary organizations, the government has drawn up an action plan to improve the well-being of companion animals. For the State, the aim is to support and make the most of current and future actions in three areas:

- preventing and combating pet abandonment;
- improving the management of canine and feline straying;
- preventing and combating pet abuse.

The measures in this plan go beyond the historical framework of public action in the field of animal welfare, namely the enactment of regulations and verification of their proper application. It is intended to be broader in its approach, incorporating information and awareness-raising through, for example, the notion of a "responsible acquisition path", aimed at making the general public understand what it means to welcome an animal into a home. More broadly still, this plan aims to raise the fundamental question of the position and role of pets in society, particularly in terms of health. This action plan is structured around concrete measures contributing to five main areas:

1. Understand the situation and identify levers for action.
2. Inform, question and train.
3. Facilitate synergies between players involved in animal protection.
4. Make regulations more protective.
5. Renew financing mechanisms.

[Consult details of actions](#)

(...)

[Link to the press release - Animal welfare: launch of the national plan to improve the welfare of companion animals](#)

[Link to the National plan to improve the welfare of companion animals](#)

[15/05/2024 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-003741/2023 : Aide aux aviculteurs qui enrichissent l'environnement de leurs volailles](#)

Document type: response from the [European Commission](#) to question E-003741/2023

Authors: question: Annika Bruna (ID). Answer: Mme Kyriakides on behalf of European Commission

Question: If poultry welfare is to be improved, advancements must be made with in-ovo sexing, debeaking must be eradicated, space and brightness increased, and access to outside space and nutrition improved.

The environment birds are kept in also needs to be improved to make it possible for them to behave naturally – exploring, scratching and biting – by installing perches, straw bales and pecking blocks. All these efforts require major investment for our poultry farmers, who do not receive enough national or EU aid.

In the absence of mirror clauses to impose the same production conditions, imports of Ukrainian and Brazilian poultry products are increasing, to the detriment of:

- our farmers (in France, 52% of chicken is imported);
- animal welfare (cages, higher stocking density, poor transport conditions);
- the environment (carbon balance, manure, deforestation);
- consumer health (owing to the use of growth stimulant, such as flavomycin).

In the context of its revision of Directive 98/58/EC concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes, will the Commission:

1. introduce mirror clauses for imported poultry products?
2. suspend those imports as a matter of urgency if the conditions for European poultry sectors deteriorate further?

Answer: In 2023, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published scientific opinions on the welfare of poultry^[1] as part of the revision of the existing EU animal welfare legislation^[2]. The Commission is considering EFSA's recommendations and the socio-economic impact of the envisaged measures in the ongoing preparatory work. No date of adoption has been decided. One of the policy options in the impact assessment^[3] is to introduce equivalent measures for imported products, as the phasing-out of cages, in compliance with EU international obligations. In addition to the application of tariff preferences on imports of some poultry products subject to compliance with relevant EU animal welfare requirements^[4], the draft Mercosur agreement contains bilateral safeguard clauses specifically for agricultural products, including products under tariff rate quotas such as poultry. Under the draft Regulation that would extend beyond 5 June 2024 Autonomous Trade Measures^[5] granted to Ukraine, the expected safeguard measure would be activated in case of adverse effect on the Union market or on the market of one or more Member States, and an automatic safeguard for poultry would cap the level of imports. Ukraine is making important progress in aligning to EU legislation according to the Sanitary/Phytosanitary roadmap, following the

implementation of the commitments under the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). For example, Ukraine is on track to align EU animal welfare standards by 1 January 2026. Besides bilateral agreements in place, in situations where an increase of imports causes or threatens to cause serious injury to domestic producers, safeguard measures may be introduced in line with the relevant EU and World Trade Organisation rules.

[1] Broilers: <https://doi.org/10.2903/j.efsa.2023.7788>; layers: <https://doi.org/10.2903/j.efsa.2023.7789>; ducks, geese et quails:

<https://doi.org/10.2903/j.efsa.2023.7992>

[2] Anticipated in the Farm to Fork Strategy: https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-05/f2f_action-plan_2020_strategy-info_en.pdf

[3] https://food.ec.europa.eu/document/download/f9fcb5fd-0495-47c0-aba9-4b3630a61b52_en?filename=aw_eval_revision_iaa_food-labellingq.pdf

[4] Council Directive 1999/74/EC of 19 July 1999 laying down minimum standards for the protection of laying hens (OJ L 203, 3.8.1999, p. 53).

[5] Regulation (EU) 2023/1077 on temporary trade-liberalisation measures supplementing trade concessions applicable to Ukrainian products under the Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and Ukraine, of the other part (OJ L 144, 5.6.2023, p. 1).

[14/05/2024 : Le Royaume-Uni interdit l'exportation d'animaux d'élevage vivants, se démarquant ainsi de l'Union européenne](#)

Document type: article published in [RTBF Actus](#)

Author: AFP

Preview: The British Parliament voted on Tuesday to ban the export of live farm animals, a pioneering move from the UK that sets it apart from the European Union, where the practice is still legally permitted. The Livestock Welfare Bill is intended to put an end to the export of thousands of cattle, pigs, goats, sheep, wild boar and horses for slaughter or fattening from or via England, Wales and Scotland. Already approved by elected representatives in the House of Commons, the text was adopted by the House of Lords on Tuesday. It will be enshrined in law once it has received the Royal Seal, a formality. The proposal was first formulated in 2017 by the British Conservatives and presented as a "Brexit benefit", as EU trade rules prevent Member States from banning live animal exports to other EU countries. During the vote on Tuesday, several members of the House of Lords expressed their regret that the law would not apply in Northern Ireland where, under post-Brexit rules, certain EU regulations still apply, particularly in trade matters. Farm animal welfare NGOs have been urging the EU to also ban the export of live animals to third countries, but this option was recently ruled out by the Commission. In its regulatory revision proposals published at the end of 2023 and still under negotiation, the Commission chose instead to tighten requirements on the living conditions on board vessels and the welfare treatment of animals on board.

[Link to the text of the Animal Welfare \(Livestock Exports\) Act, 2024](#)

[09/05/2024 : La Flandre se dote d'un nouveau code sur le bien-être animal](#)

Document type: article published on the [RTL Info website](#)

Author: Agence Belga

Preview: On Wednesday night, the Flemish Parliament adopted an animal welfare code, sponsored by the minister responsible, Ben Weyts. Opposition support was necessary, as coalition partners CD&V and Open VLD were opposed to the status quo principle in the decree stating that animal protection cannot deteriorate. The two parties warned against the broad legal scope of this principle, and therefore sought to remove it from the code. Several CD&V members either abstained or voted against the bill, which nevertheless received the green light from the Flemish Parliament. According to Minister Ben Weyts, the Code is "the cherry on the cake" of Flanders' animal welfare policy. "The cake may not be perfect and neither is the cherry. Some believe the code to go too far, others, not far enough. But I'm a man of my word, and this code is a big step forward for animal welfare ", he commented. The Flemish code brings together existing and new regulations in this area: for example, it bans animal markets and the home slaughter of certain animals (such as pigs, sheep and goats). It also makes provision to end poultry cages, as poultry farms gradually transition to aviary systems. Poultry cages will no longer be accepted in the North of the country from 2036. It replaces the Flemish legislation on animal welfare established forty years previously. The code defends the view that every animal is a living being endowed with feelings, specific needs and intrinsic value. It follows that animals must be adequately protected, and any neglect of their needs must be punished.

[07/05/2024 : La justice suspend un arrêté autorisant à abattre des chiens errants en Aveyron](#)

Document type: article published in [Le Parisien](#)

Author: Le Parisien

Preview: "Criminal initiatives" exposed by the Brigitte Bardot Foundation . The Toulouse Administrative Court (Haute-Garonne) on Tuesday suspended a controversial prefectural decree temporarily authorizing the killing of stray dogs in the Aveyron, La Dépêche has reported. In its ruling, the Court expressed "serious doubt as to the legality of this decision", according to the daily. The decision had been taken in the wake of several attacks on herd animals since the beginning of the year, notably in the Larzac region. "Saarloos" dogs - a breed closely related to the wolf - had been spotted "roaming in the area of the attacks", according to the Prefecture, which authorized the killing of stray dogs at night for a period of one month.

" A satisfaction"

This measure had been strongly opposed by animal protection organizations. In particular, the Brigitte Bardot Foundation called on Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin "not to let Prefects play cowboy", and denounced what it called "criminal initiatives". In a letter to the Minister, Brigitte Bardot reminded him that "the Foundation is working in many countries to put an end to the killing of dogs (...) but it is in France that we encounter every barbarity, from bullfighting to hunting with hounds,

not forgetting force-feeding". At the end of April, two petitions for suspension were lodged by the French Animal Protection Society and the Stéphane Lamart Association. Lamart welcomed the administrative court's decision on Tuesday, telling La Dépêche that he was "very satisfied". "In human terms, it is unacceptable for senior civil servants to issue such orders to shoot dogs or any other animal on the grounds of protecting flocks", he said, pointing out that "it is illegal to kill with a firearm in the open countryside".

03/05/2024 : Animal sentience included in Belgian Constitution

Document type: news item from [Eurogroup for Animals](#)

Author: Eurogroup for Animals

Preview: After years of campaigning, the sentience of animals is now officially recognised in the Constitution of Belgium. The Constitution takes precedence in the hierarchy of Belgian legal norms, and now includes a reference to ensure the protection and well-being of animals. (...) Belgium is now the 6th EU Member State to include animals in its Constitution, following Italy, Germany, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Austria. Other nations have also acted to enshrine constitutional animal sentience, including Switzerland, Egypt, Brazil and India. The following passage has now been officially added to Article 7 of the country's Constitution: "In the exercise of their respective powers, the Federal State, the Communities and the Regions ensure the protection and well-being of animals as sentient beings."

02/05/2024 : Brief research report: the evolution of animal welfare legislation for pigs in 13 EU member states, 1991-2020

Document type: scientific synthesis published in [Frontiers in Animal Science](#)

Authors: Anna Wallenbeck, Anette Wichman, Lisa Höglind, Sigrid Agenäs, Helena Hansson, Shon Ferguson

Preview: This brief report characterizes and maps changes in six key aspects of pig animal welfare (AW) legislation in 13 countries in the European Union (EU) during the period 1991-2020, focusing primarily on aspects of AW likely to impact the economic performance and international competitiveness of the pig production sector. National AW legislation in the selected EU member states that exceed the EU minimum levels within the six selected key areas are also mapped. Analysis of changes in AW over time, using legislative texts, academic literature, and an expert survey, revealed that AW-legislation at the national level has generally become more stringent, in line with EU directives, and that a number of member states have introduced additional AW legislation that exceed EU minimum levels. This review helps to uncover historical changes in and can form the basis for further research investigating effects of changes in AW legislation.

26/04/2024 : Inspector@Work, une plateforme de partage d'expériences des inspecteurs officiels sur l'application de la réglementation relative au bien-être animal en Europe

Document type: article published on the [Interbey](#) website

Author: EURCAW Ruminants & Equines

Summary: The European Union Reference Centre for animal welfare (EURCAW) Ruminants & Equine was appointed in May 2021 by the European Commission to support the competent authorities of EU Member States in the implementation of current regulations on animal welfare. EURCAW has recently added a new feature, Inspector@Work, to its work program. It describes the experience of Official Inspectors working across the EU as they implement animal welfare regulations in the ruminant and equine sectors. Inspector@Work provides a platform for individuals to share ([see article](#)) some of their learnings, anecdotes and examples illustrating good practice and challenging situations across these regulatory areas.

16/04/2024 : Evaluate the effectiveness of official controls to protect the welfare of cattle kept for beef production

Document type: audit report published on the [Commission européenne](#) website

Authors: DG Health, European Commission

Preview: This report describes the outcome of an audit of Belgium, carried out remotely from 6 to 10 and on-the-spot from 13 to 17 March 2023 as part of the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety's work programme. The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of the official controls on the protection of cattle kept for beef production and to gather information related to the protection of that livestock. The audit concluded that the assurance provided by the animal welfare controls on cattle kept for beef production was generally satisfactory. Authorities conduct a high number of animal welfare controls. Their effectiveness, efficiency and consistency are however reduced due to the weaknesses in instructions, enforcement, verification and coordination. While there is no single central competent authority for animal welfare, each of the three Regions is an independent competent authority. The Regions delegate planning and performance of routine controls to the Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC) that is responsible for checks on animal health and identification, and on food safety. The coordination between authorities is complex and challenging. Despite the existing mechanisms for that coordination, there are gaps affecting the control verification procedures, the planning of risk-based controls, the enforcement, the consistent consideration of third-party quality schemes and the use of outcome of the internal audits to improve the systems. Planned controls are frequent and effective at identifying the most evident non-compliances. However, their effectiveness is hindered by the limited guidance and training provided by the Regions for interpreting legal requirements and on how to perform the checks. The regions perform mainly reactive controls, responding to complaints and notifications, and are also the only ones with enforcement powers. When a serious non-compliance is detected, enforcement is robust for reactive controls, but it is delayed for other non-compliances due to limitations of the procedures for coordinating the segregation of inspections and enforcement responsibilities. There is routine use of c-section in farms with cows of Belgian Blue breed to protect those cows and their calves from unnecessary suffering and related health issues. This is needed due to the likely calving difficulties caused by breeding procedures which are not covered by the official controls. Dehorning of cattle or disbudding of young calves are frequently conducted. They are generally performed in compliance with the national legislation although the audit identified some weaknesses in their control and occasional failures in their implementation. Belgian rules establish

the role of private veterinarians ensuring links between farmer and veterinarian. Authorities use that link for confirming information during the official controls, and enforcement follow-up. The report contains recommendations to the competent authorities aimed at addressing areas in which further improvements are required or to address the shortcomings identified.

[Link to the Competent Authority response to recommendations in report](#)

Transport, Slaughter, Pick-up

[12/05/2024 : "Nous faisons très attention au bien-être animal", comment la transhumance se modernise grâce aux bétailières](#)

Document type: article published in [France3 Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur](#)

Author: Mélanie Philips

Preview: At the 3rd annual Semaine Provençale in Salon-de-Provence, the spotlight is on transhumance, the seasonal droving of livestock, celebrating UNESCO's recognition of this ancient practice as part of the "intangible cultural heritage of humanity". To mark the occasion, on May 11, the Château de l'Empéri was transformed into a vast sheepfold, and a livestock truck was on hand to raise awareness on the subject. Last December, transhumance was placed on the representative list of the "intangible cultural heritage of humanity" by UNESCO. This ancestral practice was honored during the 3rd annual celebration of the Semaine Provençale in Salon-de-Provence. As Claire Dallemagne, in charge of "La routo" at the Maison de la transhumance, so aptly recalls, this practice involves the movement of flocks from one piece of land to another, over long distances (100 km) in search of grazing. "Our sheep eat fresh grass, and in Provence, during the summer, our grass is very dry. So we go up to the mountains and stay there in summer. It's a cycle that follows the growth of the grass", she explains .

"We're under increasing pressure from animal rights activists"

While the droving used to be done on foot, in today's world it has been modernized and uses animal transport vehicles. That's why, for this third event, we are here in Salon-de-Provence, "to show the general public what it's like, because there are a lot of questions asked surrounding the road transport of animals", Claire comments. Many people think that sheep are transported in poor conditions. Émilie Proust Imbert, a ewe farmer and transporter from Salon, was on hand with her livestock truck to tell us what she has to put up with on a daily basis. "On the roads, we're increasingly subjected to pressure from animal rights activists", she says. However, in her view, this is a positive thing: "They find it hard to understand that nowadays, the animals arrive directly at the mountain pastures within 4 hours, whereas before, they had to walk for 15 - 17 days." Claire adds that "when the herds walk on surfaced roads, their hooves bleed. It's not pleasant to have to walk for several days, every day, on tarmac. It's very hot." "Animal transport vehicles are a bit of a bête noire for the livestock industry because [the public] think the animals are mistreated. But we're transporting farmers' assets, so we're obviously very careful about animal welfare," continues the transporter. We don't stop on the motorways any more, because we've had people try to open the doors to let the animals out, people who stop us at the tolls. She adds that the lorries are equipped with fans that move the air continuously. And when the hot weather arrives, they adapt their transport routines.

"We load up at 2-3am, and arrive around midday, before it gets too hot", she explains. Claire Dallemagne raises another difficulty in trying to continue traditional droving methods. "Ewes have a very particular way of walking: they walk very early in the morning, then they take a break all day, then they walk again in the evening. And while they're not doing anything, they need grassy areas where they can eat, rest and drink. And that's no longer possible." Every year, 600,000 ewes leave our region for the Alps.

[26/04/2024 : Analyse d'impact ex post de trente ans de recherche et développement sur les conditions de pré-abattage des ruminants](#)

Document type: scientific synthesis published in [INRAE Productions animales](#)

Authors: Christine BERGER, Laëticia CLAVEL, Barbara DUCREUX, Valérie DAVID

Preview: What has been the impact of R&D work carried out over the past thirty years on attention to animal welfare needs? In the case of ruminant conditions pre-slaughter, we use an *ex-post* analysis to show that the impacts of the changes observed among the main beneficiaries (transporters and workers in abattoirs) have been mainly social, and have had a secondary economic effect on the sector's sustainability.

[26/04/2024 : Analysis of current methods and Welfare concerns in the transport of 118 horses by commercial air cargo companies](#)

Document type : scientific article published in [BMC Veterinary Research](#)

Authors: Felici M., Cogger N., Nanni Costa L., Riley C.B., Padalino B.

Preview: Studies on equine air transport practices and consequences are scarce. This prospective study aimed to describe horse and air journey details and practices, document how horse behavior and health changed during the air transport phases, quantify the occurrence of welfare issues, and identify possible associations between horse and journey details, air transport practices, and welfare issues. Data were collected from before departure to five days after arrival on 118/597 horses traveling on 32 commercial air journeys on different routes, varying in duration and conditions. Most horses were middle-aged warmblood females, 26% of which were pregnant, and being moved by air for sales. Before flying, most were quarantined (median: 18; IQR: 9–53 days), and their fitness for travel was certified by veterinarians. At the departure airports, external temperatures varied from – 6 °C to 33 °C, and horses were loaded by experienced flight grooms (median: 35; IQR: 15–40 years) into jet stalls (three-horse: 87%, two-horse: 13%). During the flights, horses were regularly watered (water intake median: 14 L) and fed *ad libitum* (feed consumption median: 8 kg). At the arrival airport, horses were unloaded from the jet stalls, and external temperatures ranged from – 5 °C to 32 °C. Then, all horses were transported to arrival quarantine by road. Air transport phases affected horses' health status and behavior; increased heart and respiratory rates and behaviors, such as pawing, head tossing, and vocalization, were mainly identified at departure and arrival. Horse interaction, nasal discharge, increased capillary refill time (CRT), and abnormal demeanor

were observed more often one hour before landing while resting and normal capillary refill time were more often displayed five days after arrival (all $P \leq 0.01$). One hour before landing, horses with bad temperament and horses of unknown temperament were more likely to develop nasal discharge when transported in winter and autumn ($P \leq 0.001$). The likelihood of an increased CRT was associated with shorter flights in horses of unknown travel experience ($P \leq 0.001$). Ten horses were injured, and 11 developed pleuropneumonias (i.e., shipping fever). Air transport is a complex procedure with several different phases affecting horse health and behavior. Therefore, experienced staff should carefully manage each horse before, during, and after air journeys to minimize welfare hazards.

[23/04/2024 : Décision de justice n° 2200604 : l'État condamné pour défaut de contrôle à l'abattoir de Cuiseaux](#)

Document type: court decision published on the [Doctrine website](#)

Author: Tribunal administratif de Dijon

Preview: Following the transmission of an investigation filmed in 2021 at the Bigard abattoir in Cuiseaux (Saône-et-Loire), where numerous infractions relating to the treatment of animals could be observed, L214 lodged a liability claim against the State. In a decision dated April 23, communicated to L214 on Thursday, the Dijon Administrative Court ordered the French government to pay €2,000 to L214 in compensation for the moral prejudice caused by the negligence of its veterinary services in failing to monitoring the abattoir.

Link to the [Decision of the Dijon Administrative Court, 2nd Chamber, April 23, 2024, no. 2200604](#)

[10/04/2024 : Welfare of invertebrates: a pilot study on a new land snail stunning technique](#)

Document type: scientific article published in [Scientific Reports](#)

Authors: Fossati P., Stefanini F.M., Ravasio G., Coerezza U.

Preview: The almost complete absence of regulations to protect invertebrates is a common condition in legal systems, including the European one, especially when it comes to invertebrates intended for human consumption. Thus, in the vast majority of cases, edible invertebrates do not receive even the most basic protection at slaughter. Despite recent research indicating that invertebrates are capable of feeling pain and stress, the humane step of stunning is not used on them. This is also the case for land snails, which are gastropod invertebrates whose consumption has now reached significant levels, already involving tonnes and that is expected to increase significantly as edible snail farming becomes more popular as a relatively low-cost, easy-to-perform, and sustainable alternative animal husbandry, thereby making land snails an increasingly economically important species. This paper presents and investigates a proposed stunning method based on the immersion of mollusks in CO₂-supplemented and refrigerated water that could be used in the snail meat production chain to reduce the slaughter suffering of millions of these invertebrates. To this end, body condition descriptors (hemolymph parameters) in snails were determined before

and after CO₂ treatment in cold water, while generating useful data for defining a preliminary set of reference intervals for basal values.

11/03/2024 : Sheep fatigue during transport: Lost in translation?

Document type: qualitative study published in [Animal Welfare](#)

Authors: Colitti K, Mitchell M, Langford F.

Preview: Although sheep are commonly transported long distances, and sheep welfare during transport is a topic of research and policy discussion, the subject of their fatigue during transport has been under-researched. The current qualitative study, focused on the EU and UK, aimed to critically analyse stakeholder views on issues relating to sheep fatigue, including behavioural indications of fatigue, the interplay between fatigue and other factors, and the practicalities of identifying fatigue in commercial transport conditions. Insight into stakeholder perceptions of these issues could contribute to the body of knowledge regarding sheep fatigue during transport, potentially playing a part in future efforts to improve fatigue understanding and detection. Eighteen experts from different stakeholder groups were interviewed. Reflexive thematic analysis of interview data yielded four themes and three sub-themes. The first theme, “Let’s anthropomorphise it a little bit”, underscores the pervasiveness of anthropomorphism and suggests using it in a conscious and deliberate way to drive stakeholder engagement and policy change. The second theme, “We think that they’re like we are and they’re not”, cautions against wholesale transfer of human experiences to animals. The third theme, ‘See the whole animal’, advocates using Qualitative Behaviour Analysis (QBA), proven reliable in other contexts, to deepen and enrich our current understanding of fatigue. The fourth theme, ‘Fatigue “never comes up”’, highlights the fact that fatigue is rarely if ever discussed in the context of sheep transport. These themes suggest several avenues for future research, including developing QBA-based assessments for fatigue to improve welfare during transport.