French Reference Centre for Animal Welfare

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Edito

Revision of European regulations on animal welfare: update

From the FRCAW infographic

When the EU's draft regulations on animal transport and the welfare of dogs and cats were published last December, the FRCAW brought out a special newsletter on the revision of the European regulations on animal welfare, describing the actions already taken and what was still to come. June's European elections meant that the revision project was put on hold, but now that the new Parliament has been elected and the President of the European Union, Ursula von der

Leyen, has been reappointed, we can provide you with an updated infographic on the legislation's progress.

In the work programme issued by Hungary on taking over the Presidency of the European Union on 1 July 2024, mention is made of the aim 'to continue negotiations on legislative proposals relating to [...] the protection of animals during transport [...] and the welfare of dogs and cats'.

However, the other welfare regulations that were initially slated as part of the revision (livestock, welfare at the time of killing, labelling) make no appearance in either Ursula von der Leyen's political guidelines or the Hungarian Presidency's work programme, while the legal action launched in March 2024 against the European Commission for its failure to honour the commitments made following the "End the Cage Age" European citizens' initiative is still ongoing.

For its part, the EFSA is continuing with the expert assessment work that will provide the necessary scientific evidence base for the Brussels lawmakers. It has just published two further opinions that deal with the killing of animals on farm : Welfare of sheep and goats during killing for purposes other than slaughter and The use of high expansion foam for stunning and killing pigs and poultry (see below).

Publication of two EFSA opinions on animal protection during on-farm killing

Image from the EFSA website

The roadmap of future mandates to EFSA in the field of animal welfare, published in October 2021 (see FRCAW infographic), included the planned publication in 2024 of a trio of scientific opinions on the protection of animals during on-farm killing for purposes other than slaughter ('slaughter' is used here in the sense of killing for human consumption). On-farm killing may involve individual animals (e.g. injured or terminally ill animals), groups of individuals, or even entire herds (e.g. during epizootic outbreaks).

The first of the two opinions, published on 26 June, concerns small ruminants. It identifies hazards and their welfare consequence, determining the associated animal-based indicators for all processes

in the procedure, from handling and moving the animals to the killing place and their restraint, to their stunning and the act of killing itself. It sets out preventive and corrective measures for welfare hazards, offering conclusions and recommendations for each process. The report stresses the need for animals to be effectively stunned so that they do not regain consciousness before being killed. Among the Opinion's general conclusions, lack of staff skills and training and, to a lesser extent, poorly designed or constructed facilities are considered to be the causes of most of the risks identified.

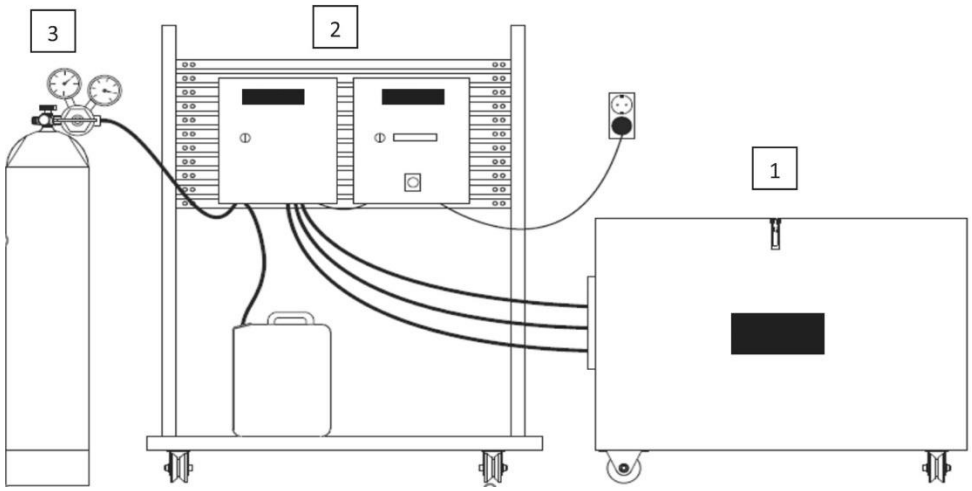

Image from the EFSA's opinion on the use of high expansion foam as a new method of stunning and killing pigs and poultry

1 : Container with foam generator, lid and closable air valves (flap door in the lid).
2 : Control cabinet, for operational control.
3 : Distribution cabinet containing pump, gas solenoid valve and preset regulator distributing gas and foaming liquid into the container.

A second Opinion has been issued following the application by a private company for an evaluation of the use of high expansion foam in a container as a new method of stunning and killing poultry and pigs. It is necessary for EFSA to deliver an Opinion before the European Commission can consider adding any new method to the list of stunning and killing methods authorised by Regulation 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing.

The method is described as follows in the Opinion :

> The method can be applied to an individual animal (an injured animal) or in small groups (depopulation) depending upon the users' requirement or the container size. [...] The method is based on the rapid displacement of oxygen by purging the air from a container with foam filled with N_2 and afterwards bursting the foam bubbles with a jet of nitrogen gas, resulting in an anoxic atmosphere with less than 2% residual oxygen in nitrogen and maintaining anoxia until the animals are dead. The high-expansion foam is used to deliver and distribute the nitrogen throughout the chamber. [...]The foam works as a carrier displacing the air without mixing nitrogen with it, as it fills the chamber from the bottom upwards and pushes the displaced air out through the ventilation holes (a flap door) in the ceiling of the container.

The scientific data available enabled conclusions to be reached only for laying hens and broilers and for pigs weighing between 15 and 41 kg. For the killing of these individuals, the method using expanding foam in containers was deemed to be an effective alternative more likely than not to provide a welfare level at least equivalent to currently prescribed procedures, provided that the specified technical conditions and procedure are strictly followed, and that staff are trained.

French Reference Centre for Animal Welfare

Table of contents

Arthropods

14/06/2024 : Conscience et douleur chez les insectes

Document type: News item from **FC3R GIS** (in French)

Author: GIS FC3R

Preview: In experimental research, insects are increasing used in fields as varied as genetics, infectiology and environmental studies. They are commonly used in "relative replacement" experimentation, being considered less sensitive than other species. Although not protected by EU Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes, recent advances in knowledge have raised ethical questions on whether we should we re-evaluate our practices regarding the use of insects *Animal consciousness: we can generalize, but should remain cautious*We use the term consciousness to refer to the process by which an animal experiences perceptions and emotions via the material substrate of its nervous system **(Irwin et al. 2022**). Since Darwin's theory of evolution, research into consciousness has extended to various animal species. The scientific study of consciousness has undergone a resurgence in the 21st century. In the animal phylogenetic tree, consciousness features independently in at least three different clades (vertebrates, arthropods and cephalopod mollusks) with very different neuronal architectures. According to **Barron et al. 2016**, insects could thus have subjective experiences analogous to those of vertebrates. According to INRAE's **2017 collective expertise** on animal consciousness, we need to know whether the cognitive capacities at the origin of consciousness can result from evolutionary processes, and whether these capacities could be the product of evolutionary convergences in unrelated species faced with similar environmental constraints. In April 2024, 287 experts signed the **New York Declaration**, establishing an emerging consensus on the reality of consciousness in some vertebrates and invertebrates, including insects. This position underlines the imperative of giving a prominent place to the consideration of animal consciousness in our reflections and actions in favor of animal protection. [...*]Pain in insectsProof*of the existence of pain*in*insects is still subject to debate. In order to understand the current state of evidence for pain in these invertebrates, an in-depth review of over 300 studies on six insect orders was carried out by **Gibbons et al.** in 2022. Eight criteria based on nociception, analgesia and behavior were used to assess pain. [...]Despite the lack of sufficient scientific data, the study by Gibbons et al. concludes that several insect orders are likely to feel pain. The strongest evidence comes from adult flies (Diptera) and cockroaches (Blattodea), which are well-studied species. Bees, wasps and ants (Hymenoptera) have also shown signs of pain, but with fewer criteria met. Importantly, no adult insects convincingly failed the criteria. However, there are gaps in the evidence, as pain-related neurobiology and behavior have not been sufficiently studied in most insects.

Cognition-Emotions

11/07/2024 : Equine Wellness: How Horses See Color

Document type: Article published in **The Northwest Horse Source**

Authors: Michael Hipp, Victoria Doulgerakis

Preview: Certain Colors in a Horse's Environment Can Affect Behavior How horses see color has been a much-studied topic in recent years. Not only does it matter what colors horses see, it matters how they see them.

How Horses See Color

The retina is the major factor in vision, and the horse's rectangular pupil extends their area of visual perception beyond a human's. Color is perceived in the retina by cones. While humans have three types of cones, which sense blue, red, and yellow-green light, horses only have two types of cones, which sense blue and green, and variations of these two colors, but they do not sense red or shades of red. However, it is not just what colors horses see, but how they interact with those colors which determine behavior.

Horses Prefer Colors in Their Spectrums

Researchers determined that horses prefer colors that are within their spectrum and avoid those that they cannot see. This was verified by one study using different color water buckets, where horses tended to prefer blue colored buckets over red ones, and light-colored buckets over darker colors. For many decades in horse jumping, how horses perceive the colors of the poles was never considered. More recently science has helped show designers construct jumps with different colored poles for improved visibility and performance. In one study, the color of the poles determined take off angles, length of jumps, and landing distances.

Because horses are prey animals and always desire to feel safe, we are learning that most of the time they prefer colors in the spectrums they see to provide a safe environment.

Choosing The Right Colors Can Help Behavior

A client expressed concern when her mare would not leave her stall at night to relieve herself. Every morning the stall was filled with urine and manure requiring new bedding every day. She asked why the horses in the barn stalls stayed inside at night and were messier than the horses in the pasture stalls that regularly left their stalls at night and kept cleaner bedding. It was explained that the reason was the lighting.

In the barn a white light was being left on so the client could see in an emergency. However, this white light was also taking away the night vision from the horses in the barn. As a result, they were staying inside where it was safe from predators they couldn't perceive in the dark. It was suggested that a red light be used instead of white because horses cannot see red and thus the red light would help them preserve their night vision. After making the change the horses felt safe to roam freely and the stalls were easier to clean each day.

Choosing the right colors can also change the behavior of more than just horses. On another visit it was suggested to a client to paint the ceiling a certain shade of blue. This shade has been shown in architectural history to confuse both bees (or wasps) and birds that sometimes plague areas inside our barns by making them think they are outside instead of safely in a barn, so they do not build nests inside.

Conferences – Seminars - Training

03-04/12/2024 : Prochaine session de la formation "Entrainement aux soins des équidés"

Document type: Training announcement published on the Animal Welfare Chair from VetAgro Sup (in French)

Author: Animal Welfare Chair (La Chaire Bien-être Animal)

Summary: Equine care training, 3 - 4 December,2024, Nouzilly (37): training to improve effectiveness and safety of care provision.

Objectives

* Know the techniques of care training and the associated theoretical learning framework.

* Describe common manipulations that cause stress and anxiety in equids, thereby potentially creating safety issues for animal and operator
* Apply the principles of equid-related learning to the context of care
* Learn to break down the steps required to carry out a daily care routine, adapting to the equid and its environment

Target audience : All equestrian professionals, e.g. animal handlers, grooms, technicians, veterinarians, scientists, breeders, teachers, farriers, etc.
Course coordinator: Prof Alice de Boyer des Roches (VetAgro-Sup)
*Contact - Registration:*registration deadline, November 01, 2024 - Register and pay online
email: **formation.continue@vetagro-sup.fr**
Link to brochure

16/10/2024 et 12/11/2024 : Formation de formateurs "Référent bien-être animal en élevage de ruminants"

Document type: Training announcement published on the **Idele** website (in French)

Author: Idele

Preview: This train-the-trainer course (on 16/10/2024 in Lyon (69) and on 12/11/2024 in Villers-Bocage (14)) enables participants to obtain the Vivéa and OCAPIAT "animal welfare training" stamp of approval for training animal welfare advisors on livestock farms. Under the terms of Decree 2020-1625, each farm must have an animal welfare advisor. On poultry and pig farms, this animal welfare advisor is required to follow a training course. However, on ruminant farms, training of the animal welfare advisor is not compulsory, but voluntary.
Objectives: (1) Explain animal welfare and its aspects to farmers. (2) Observe and measure welfare assessment indicators, particularly those relating to the animal itself. (3) Integrate animal welfare issues into existing technical training courses.
Target audience: Livestock technicians, advisors and veterinarians providing training for cattle, sheep or goat farmers on the following technical topics: lameness control, mastitis management, rearing of young animals, health, reproduction management, layout and management of livestock buildings, de-budding of young calves, animal handling, etc., who wish to obtain Vivea / Ocapiat certification.
Program:

- Animal welfare context and issues
- Defining animal welfare and its dimensions
- Evaluate animal welfare:
    - indicator categories
    - the objectives of the BEA assessment
    - the main existing tools
- Linking the content of the technical training provided to animal welfare: workshop based on training programmes provided by individual participants, group discussion, reports from individual participants.
- Didactics of animal welfare: how to approach divisive subjects and socially sensitive issues

Teaching methods: Lectures and discussions - Group work in workshops - Analysis of videos and photos
Assessment of prior learning: Questionnaire
Reference: FORBE
Training coordinator: Béatrice Mounaix

Link to registration form (16/10/2024)
Link to registration (12/11/2024)

14/10/2024 : Evaluation du bien-être animal en pisciculture - Webinaire 24 octobre 10h00-12h00

Document type: Webinar annoncement from Itavi (in French)

Author: Itavi

Preview: Presentation of the "EBENE® Trout" approach and pilot tool to assess the welfare of farmed trout; work on other fish species
Cost €40 incl. VAT / pers (no concessions)
Webinar to take place on Clickmeeting. You will be sent the link the day before the event. Register here

13/09/2024 et 27/09/2023 : Formation "Evaluer et améliorer le bien-être animal en élevage bovin avec Boviwell"

Document type: Training announcement published on the Idele website (in French)

Author: Idele

Preview: These training courses (09/13/2024 in Nandax (42) and 09/27/2024 in Albi (81)) are necessary to be able to carry out assessments under the new CBPE approach or for the Label Rouge beef label.
Objectives: (1) Define animal welfare and know the assessment indicators used by the beef industry, (2) Carry out a welfare assessment of livestock using the Boviwell-CBPE tool, (3) Interpret the Boviwell results and identify areas for improvement
Target audience: Technicians carrying out CBPE or Label Rouge beef audits. A basic knowledge of cattle behavior (how they perceive their environment, how to approach them, etc.), animal welfare, and of indicators such as NEC (fat cover), lameness and animal cleanliness is recommended.
Program:

- Boviwell's place and role in CBPE and Label Rouge
- A reminder of the BEA definition and its indicators
- Overview of the various stages of Boviwell-CBPE diagnosis:
  - software architecture and ergonomics
  - indicators related to structure, conduct and census
- Case study on a livestock farm :
  - scoring of animal indicators (wounds, NEC, lameness, cleanliness, human-animal relations) on a small batch of animals
  - entering information into Boviwell-CBPE
- For each of the 4 "areas of freedom" in the diagnosis :
  - score presentation (calculation methods and comparison with benchmarks)
  - identifying areas for improvement
  - existing resources for further study

Teaching methods: Presentations and discussions - Work in sub-groups - Carrying out a diagnosis on a livestock farm
Assessment: Questionnaire
Partners: Training organized with the support of Cniel, Interbev and CNE
Reference: BOWEL

Training coordinator: Béatrice Mounaix
Register (on 09/13/2024)
Register (on 09/27/2024)

Animal husbandry and Human-animal relationships

02/07/2024 : Family pigs' and dogs' reactions to human emotional vocalizations: a citizen science study

Document type: Scientific article published in **Animal Behaviour**

Authors: Fanni Lehoczki, Paula Pérez Fraga, Attila Andics

Preview: Human distress vocalizations elicit an increase in dogs' stress responses. This modulation of behaviour to match one's emotional state to that of another individual is often described as emotional contagion. Whether this phenomenon is promoted by the dogs' selection for cooperation with humans or is rooted more generally in the universal vocal signals of emotion is unclear. To test this, we compared the reactions of companion dogs, *Canis familiaris*, and companion pigs, *Sus scrofa domesticus* (which are popular companion animals but whose domestication history lacks selection for cooperation), to human sound playbacks of crying, a high-arousal, negatively valenced sound, and humming, a low-arousal, less emotionally valenced sound, in a citizen science study. Dogs exhibited higher levels of behaviours associated with increased arousal and negative emotional states and vocalized more in response to crying compared to humming. In contrast, pigs showed more negative and high-arousal behaviours in response to humming than to crying. The fact that dogs seemed to have been affected by and reacted accordingly to the emotional content of human vocal sounds is in line with previous works and the emotional contagion account. In contrast, pigs' elevated stress to the low-arousal humming sound compared to the negative and high-arousal crying sound, cannot be fully explained by emotional contagion but rather by the novelty of the sound (neophobia). Selection for cooperation with humans may thus be key for promoting human sound-induced emotional contagion in domestic mammals.

Publication in an article in Nature on 16 July 2024: **Dogs might have evolved to read your emotions**

Precision farming

02/07/2024 : Review: Exploring the use of Precision Livestock Farming for small ruminant welfare management

Document type: Review article published in **Animal**

Authors: C. Morgan-Davies, G. Tesnière, J.M. Gautier, G.H.M. Jørgensen, E. González-García, S.I. Patsios, E.N. Sossidou, T.W.J. Keady, B. McClearn, F. Kenyon, G. Caja, L. Grøva, M. Decandia, L. Cziszter, I. Halachmi, C.M. Dwyer

Preview: Small ruminant (sheep and goat) production of meat and milk is undertaken in diverse topographical and climatic environments and the systems range from extensive to intensive. This could lead to different types of welfare compromise, which need to be managed. Implementing Precision Livestock Farming (PLF) and other new or innovative technologies could help to manage or monitor animal welfare. This paper explores such opportunities, seeking to identify promising

aspects of PLF that may allow improved management of welfare for small ruminants using literature search (2 reviews), workshops in 9 countries (France, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Norway, Romania, Spain, and the United Kingdom) with 254 stakeholders, and panels with 52 experts. An investigation of the main welfare challenges that may affect sheep and goats across the different management systems in Europe was undertaken, followed by a prioritisation of animal welfare issues obtained in the 9 countries. This suggested that disease and health issues, feed access and undernutrition/malnutrition, maternal behaviour/offspring losses, environmental stressors and issues with agonistic behavioural interactions were important welfare concerns. These welfare issues and their indicators (37 for sheep, 25 for goats) were categorised into four broad welfare indicator categories: weight loss or change in body state (BWC), behavioural change (BC), milk yield and quality (MY), and environmental indicators (Evt). In parallel, 24 potential PLF and innovative technologies (8 for BWC; 10 for BC; 4 for MY; 6 for Evt) that could be relevant to monitor these broad welfare indicator categories and provide novel approaches to manage and monitor welfare have been identified. Some technologies had the capacity to monitor more than one broad indicator. Out of the 24 technologies, only 12 were animal-based sensors, or that could monitor the animal individually. One alternative could be to incorporate a risk management approach to welfare, using aspects of environmental stress. This could provide an early warning system for the potential risks of animal welfare compromise and alert farmers to the need to implement mitigation actions.

26/06/2024 : Application of deep learning for livestock behaviour recognition: A systematic literature review

Document type: Systematic literature review published in **Computers and Electronics in Agriculture**

Authors: A. Bohan, M.S. Rafaq, M.J. Hasan, F. Asghar, A.K. Bashir, T. Dottorini

Preview: Livestock health and welfare monitoring is a tedious and labour-intensive task previously performed manually by humans. However, with recent technological advancements, the livestock industry has adopted the latest AI and computer vision-based techniques empowered by deep learning (DL) models that, at the core, act as decision-making tools. These models have previously been used to address several issues, including individual animal identification, tracking animal movement, body part recognition, and species classification. However, over the past decade, there has been a growing interest in using these models to examine the relationship between livestock behaviour and associated health problems. Several DL-based methodologies have been developed for livestock behaviour recognition, necessitating surveying and synthesising state-of-the-art. Previously, review studies were conducted in a very generic manner and did not focus on a specific problem, such as behaviour recognition. To the best of our knowledge, there is currently no review study that focuses on the use of DL specifically for livestock behaviour recognition. As a result, this systematic literature review (SLR) is being carried out. The review was performed by initially searching several popular electronic databases, resulting in 1101 publications. Further assessed through the defined selection criteria, 126 publications were shortlisted. These publications were filtered using quality criteria that resulted in the selection of 44 highquality primary studies, which were analysed to extract the data to answer the defined research questions. According to the results, DL solved 13 behaviour recognition problems involving 44 different behaviour classes. 23 DL models and 24 networks were employed, with CNN, Faster R-CNN, YOLOv5, and YOLOv4 being the most common models, and VGG16, CSPDarknet53, GoogLeNet, ResNet101, and ResNet50 being the most popular networks. Ten different matrices were utilised for performance evaluation, with precision and accuracy being the most commonly used. Occlusion and adhesion, data imbalance, and the complex livestock environment were the most prominent challenges reported by the primary

studies. Finally, potential solutions and research directions were discussed in this SLR study to aid in developing autonomous livestock behaviour recognition systems.

Ethics – Sociology – Philosophy

14/07/2024 : Reconnaissance d'une personnalité juridique aux animaux : une solution conservatrice ?

Document type: Article published in The Conversation (in French)

Author: Isabelle Doussan

Preview : Recognition of the legal personhood, or personallity, of animals is often perceived as a progressive, even revolutionary position. Yet this solution is far more conservative than it seems. The legal treatment of animals is rarely thought of in relational terms, even though the relationships between humans and animals fall under diverse categories - utility, threat, protection, attachment, etc. This diversity should not, however, blind us to the fact that the law is also an instrument of the power exercised by humans over animals. The latter's sentience, often recognised by the law as an inherent property, can call this power relationship into question.

In "Droit et animal : pour un droit des relations avec les humaines", published by Quae, jurist Isabelle Doussan, a Research Director at INRAE, looks at the treatment of domestic and wild animals within the purview of the law. However, she does not succumb to the temptations of legal personhood. She explains why in the following excerpt:

The recognition of legal personhood for animals is often presented as progressive, in line with the increased regard in which they are held. Yet, beneath its revolutionary appearance, this solution seems to us to be profoundly conservative, preserving an established order. To think of animals in terms of the subject/object dichotomy confirms this dichotomy as the legal framework for reading the world. In so doing, we reinforce the dominant paradigm which adopts a binary approach to our relationship with the world.

It is precisely the case of animals that anthropologist Charles Stépanoff (2021) chooses to highlight the duality of approaches in our Western societies. A utilitarian perception of animals, thought of as consumer goods and without internal worlds of their own, is contrasted with the contemporaneous perception of animals as beings endowed with individuality and the innocent victims of human powers.

The author describes these visions as complementary poles, Siamese twins, highlighting the dissociation of these two moral universes, presented in the West as two disjunctive poles, as separate moral mutually exclusive universes, even though it is not hard to see that real-life situations are far more complex and their boundaries more porous.

This approach echoes the writings of Philippe Descola (2005), where "nature to be exploited" and "nature to be protected" are simply two sides of the same coin - the dualism that characterizes the Western worldview, which he terms naturalism.

Animals as, objects or subjects in law? The ambivalence of our relationship with the living world [...]

09/07/2024 : Le respect dû aux animaux désormais au programme du CP

Document type: News from La Fondation Droit Animal, Ethique et Sciences (in French)

Author: Léa Le Faucheur

Preview: A new moral and civic education (EMC) curriculum was published in France on June 13, 2024, following a stakeholder consultation phase overseen by the French Ministry of Education. The LFDA had responded to the consultation, pointing out that awareness-raising modules on respect for pets required by the 2021 law against animal abuse had still not become part of the curriculum. The final version of the curriculum has now been amended to include a reference to animal ethics.

Animal ethics enters the curriculum

This is a welcome step forward. The EMC program for children entering their first year of education (CP), which will come into effect at the start of the 2024 school year, has been expanded to include a learning pathway on "Addressing the issue of the respect due to companion animals" as part of the "Collective rules and autonomy" competency. In this keystage, teachers are more broadly invited to introduce pupils "to the distinction between personal and collective ownership" and to help them "understand the respect that is due to the environment and to living beings, from spaces within the home to the more distant spaces involving the common good". The curriculum also indicates that the first year in school constitutes a stage in the reinforcement of "first steps in developing the respect owed to others and learning to live in society". Animal ethics is thus employed more as a gateway to the acquisition of essential psychosocial and prosocial skills that benefit both humans and other animals. [...]

The goal has yet to be achieved

This module mentions only companion animals (as required by law) and includes them in the concept of "common goods". This reinforces the way in which animals are already presented in other taught subjects. They are thus either considered solely in their relationship with humans as part of a utilitarian vision, or, conversely, as part of the greater whole of "biodiversity". This approach reinforces an anthropocentric vision of animals and fails to allow us an apprehension of human-animal relations on a comprehensive ethical and scientific basis, in contrast to the content of the Declaration of Animal Rights, for example. In practice, we could look on this module as an opportunity to invite students to go beyond these concepts and address what also makes the animal an individual. Here, indeed, not only does the curriculum encourage children to learn more about their own individuality, but the closeness they feel with the pets around them, who are generally treated as full-fledged family members, can help them identify the interests of their companions. Conversely, in subsequent years of education, an awareness of respect for animals is not as clearly included in the EMC program. Animals are mentioned for students as they begin to move towards the Baccalaureat, but in order to illustrate one form of civic engagement (in this case, animal welfare activists), and, a year later, in the context of environmental law and the status of animals as "objects of law".

It should be remembered that the French Education Code specifies that EMC modules devoted to raising awareness of respect for animals must "present companion animals as sentient beings and contribute to the prevention of all acts of animal abuse" (Article L312-15). As matters stand, this goal has not yet been achieved. We shall have to await the next curriculum update (the last one was in 2019) to fulfil any hope that it might comply with the essence of the law.

Animal welfare assessment and labelling

11/07/2024 : Animal-based welfare indicators for dairy cows and their validity and practicality: a systematic review of the existing literature

Document type: Systematic review of the literature published in Frontiers in Veterinary Science

Authors: Jenny Linstädt, Christa Thöne-Reineke, Roswitha Merle Roswitha Merle

Preview: Animal welfare is of increasing importance, with consumers preferring animal products made with ethical practices due to growing awareness. This shift highlights the need for reliable methods to evaluate welfare. This systematic review aims to assess the validity of current animal-based welfare indicators for dairy cows to aid farmers and agricultural professionals in evaluating and improving welfare amidst the lack of a clear legislative definition. The literature search spanned five databases: CAB Direct, PubMed, Scopus, Google Scholar and Livivo, covering publications in English and German from 2011 to 2021. Specific search terms were employed, and abstracts were screened for relevance. Publications were categorized based on exclusion criteria, with a final verification process conducted by three independent scientists. Research highlights correlations between welfare measures, farm characteristics and innovative indicators like hair cortisol concentration. Farming systems and housing methods significantly affect welfare, with pasture-based systems generally resulting in reduced lameness and improved behavior. Proper housing design and management practices are important, as they influence indicators like lameness and cleanliness. Heart rate variability and heart rate monitoring provide insights into dairy cow stress levels during milking and other stressors, making them valuable for welfare assessment. Biomarker research emphasizes the need to balance productivity and health in breeding strategies, as high milk production alone does not indicate good welfare. Behavioral studies and the human-animal relationship are key to understanding welfare. Precision Livestock Farming offers real-time assessment capabilities, although validation is needed. Stress physiology is complex, and while cortisol measurement methods are promising, further research is necessary. Assessment tools like the Animal Needs Index and routine herd data analysis are valuable for identifying welfare concerns. Key findings highlight the WQ® protocol's effectiveness and versatility, the challenge of its time demands, and the DCF protocol's promise for more practical and efficient welfare assessments. Commercial animal welfare audits should prioritize easily observable indicators and herd records due to logistical constraints in measuring biomarkers or heart rate variability. This focus on easily accessible indicators, such as body condition score, lameness, claw health, cleanliness, and somatic cell count allows effective welfare assessments, enabling prompt action to enhance wellbeing.

Animal welfare initiatives

14/07/2024 : Calf health and welfare research funding announced

Document type: News from **Teagasc** (Irlande)

Author: Teagasc

Preview: Announced as part of the 2023 DAFM Thematic Research Call, funding has been provided to WELCalf – a research project with the overall objective of improving the health and welfare of calves born on dairy farms.

Lead by Dr Emer Kennedy, Senior Researcher in Teagasc Moorepark, the collaborative project between Teagasc, University College Dublin and the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF) has been awarded funding and will focus on calves that remain on their farm of origin, move to beef farms and those which travel to other EU member states.

This research will focus on five key areas. Firstly, an application to collect real-time, animal level metrics relating to key welfare traits (e.g. calf vigour, illness) will be developed. This information will be used to create a feedback loop to help farmers identify the risk factors associated with poor health and welfare.

Secondly, researchers will visit both dairy and dairy calf-to-beef farms to determine their management practices and facilities, the breeding policies of dairy farmers and the requirements of dairy calf-to-beef farmers to encourage the purchasing of calves.
A 'Calf Health Toolkit' will also be developed and implemented on farms. The success of such will be assessed to determine its suitability for national rollout. Additionally, the research aims to determine the risk factors associated with summer scour syndrome.
In terms of intra-community trade, the project will investigate the health and welfare status of unweaned dairy calves undergoing long-distance transportation by road/ferry and road/air to continental Europe, while also developing a model to determine the emissions costs of same.
To maximise the impact of this research, the sharing of results will begin from an early stage. Additionally, the knowledge outcomes will inform policy, change practice, drive more research and be used for education purposes. Furthermore, the technologies developed during the course of this project can be used beyond the lifetime of this project to continue to provide ways of improving calf welfare.

12/07/2024 : International welfare group calls for worldwide end to the use of images of dogs with extreme body shapes in advertising

Document type: Press release issued by the **International Collective on Extreme Conformations in Dogs** (ICECDogs)

Author: ICECDogs

Preview: The International Collective on Extreme Conformations in Dogs (ICECDogs) is a multinational group formed to address the escalating global welfare issues and suffering caused by extreme conformations (body shapes) in dogs.
ICECDogs defines extreme conformation in dogs as: A physical appearance that has been so significantly altered through selection by humankind away from the ancestral natural canine appearance that affected dogs commonly suffer from poor health and welfare, with negative impacts on their quality and quantity of life.
Increasingly over the past decade, owners have been choosing to acquire dogs with extreme conformations such as very flat faces, no or deformed twisted tails, shortened twisted legs and deep skin folds. These and other extreme conformations are all linked with high risk of serious health and welfare problems for these dogs that often last for the lifetime of the dog and severely reduce their quality of life.Much of this increased public demand for dogs with extreme conformation that causes so much suffering is believed to result from the commonplace use of images of dogs with extreme conformations as promotional aids in advertising and social media that has now resulted in normalisation of these harmful body shapes.
With the goal of reducing the unnecessary suffering of dogs internationally that results from the unintended promotion of canine extreme body shapes in advertising and social media, ICECDogs hereby calls on all advertisers and public/social media users worldwide to stop using images of dogs with extreme conformation unless such use is directly aimed at animal health and welfare protection.In support of this worldwide call to end the inappropriate use of images of dogs with extreme conformation in advertising and social media, ICECDogs has produced detailed guidance to assist advertisers and social media users to understand and apply the new guidelines. In their new guidance document, International Guidelines on the Use of Imagery of Dogs with Extreme Conformations in Advertising, ICECDogs outlines the basic physical attributes and abilities that any dog must have to ensure their capacity to enjoy a full canine life experience without limitation from health and welfare issues linked to extreme conformations. Common examples of such health and

welfare issues linked to extreme conformation include chronic pain (e.g., eye ulcers because of protruding eyes) or physical incapacity (e.g., unable to sleep or exercise fully due to breathing difficulties from being flat-faced).

08/07/2024 : Animal Welfare Guidelines for International Development Organisations in the Global South

Document type: Review article published in **Animals**

Authors: Paul Ssuna, Andrew Crump, Karin Siegmund

Preview: International development organisations have improved billions of human lives in the Global South. However, in both their projects and advice to governments, most of these organisations neglect animal welfare. This blindspot matters. Poor welfare standards risk the organisation's reputation, particularly with donors; they reduce livestock lifespans and productivity, harming recipients; and they cause animals unnecessary pain and suffering. Here, we set out animal welfare guidelines for international development organisations. They were developed through extensive stakeholder engagement with organisations, donors, and recipients, especially in Africa. To comprehensively cover animal welfare, the guidelines encompass governance structure within the organisation, staff training, standard operating procedures, water, food, housing, social isolation, enrichment, drainage and waste disposal, disease, invasive procedures, transport, slaughter, breeds, record-keeping, and monitoring and evaluation of success. We urge international development organisations to adopt and institutionalise these guidelines, so they promote good animal welfare.

01/07/2024 : Newsletter – EURCAW Ruminants & Equines – Volume 6

Document type: Newsletter #6 from **EURCAW-Ruminants & Equines**

Author: **Gillian Power**

Preview: Welcome to the Summer 2024 edition of the newsletter! In this edition, we share details on our recent outputs since March 2024, Meet the Scientist, Inspector@work, and latest news related to ruminants and equines welfare. Since March 2024, EURCAW Ruminants & Equines has published the following outputs:

- Thematic and Indicator Factsheets on Fitness for Transport
- Thematic and Indicator Factsheets on Colostrum Feeding for Calves
- **French language versions of Thematic and Indicator Factsheets on enrichment**
- Portuguese language version of Thematic Factsheet on enrichment
- Q2E: Official Training and Certification
- Q2E: Electrical Devices
- Inspector@Work article from Sweden

Link to the Newsletter

19/06/2024 : Maltraitance animale : le premier numéro d'appel national lancé ce lundi

Document type: Article publihed on **TF1 Info** (in French)

Author: Dimodi Epee

Preview: While it was already possible to report animal abuse online, it will now be possible to do so by telephone. The first dedicated telephone hotline for the public to report this type of incident will

be launched on Monday June 24. It will operate as a friendly ear and regulator and will offer guidance.
The four-digit number, 3677, which is short and easy to remember, has been launched by the **Conseil national de la protection Animale (CNPA)** and will be the first telephone line devoted solely to reports of animal abuse. As of Monday June 24, when a caller dials this number, they will be directed to a platform that is open 365 days a year, 7 days a week. Each issue reported will be logged separately and callers will be directed to the right organisation, professional or authority, whether this is an association, a veterinary surgeon or the police. Partly intended to prevent reports by witnesses who don't know who to contact from slipping through the cracks, 3677 will make the work of government services and associations easier. It will also help to establish reliable statistics. These statistics will be fed back to the government and will be used to support the development of public policies in favor of animal welfare.
A price tag of 300,000 euros
Almost 230,000 French citizens from all round the country have signed a petition calling for the creation of this single emergency number. According to a survey of 3,000 participants carried out by Woopets, only 27% of people who had already reported abuse had found it easy to find the right way to report it. The CNPA says that a telephone hotline with direct human contact is the best way to report abuse. Although the system has cost the association nearly 300,000 euros, the investment will quickly pay for itself, according to Loïc Dombreval, President of the CNPA. Each call will in fact be billed by the platform, whether the abuse case is proven or not.

Housing and Enrichment

26/06/2024 : Plan de filière : un objectif de 90% de poules pondeuses hors cage d'ici 2030

Document type: Article published in **Le Point Vétérinaire.fr** (in French)

Author: Tanit Halfon

Preview: The egg interprofessional group (CNPO) has just unveiled its new industry plan for 2030. Its overriding aim is to consolidate its favorable position in the market, by strengthening existing moves to ensure the sustainability of farming systems. Indeed, as we are reminded, eggs are "popular with consumers": household egg purchases are up, by 3% in volume for 2023 compared to 2022, "driven by the increase in purchases of eggs from hens housed on the ground (+22.4%) and outdoors (+13.2% excluding Label Rouge)". The trend is set to continue during 2024. In addition, a survey carried out in 2023 revealed that more than 7 out of 10 French consumers, or 71% of those questioned, considered eggs to be a useful product during difficult times; and 87% considered them to be an inexpensive option for the consumption of animal proteins. By 2023, with 14.9 billion eggs produced, France will have regained its position as Europe's leading egg producer (closely followed by Spain and Germany). In this context, which is also characterized by potential competition from low-cost imports, the interprofession has decided to move forward "by collectively setting new voluntary objectives to guarantee the country's food sovereignty with quality products adapted to market expectations, produced with respect for animal welfare and the environment, and in a manner that ensures sufficient revenues at all levels of the sector".
Towards the end of cage farming: The plan is built around four pathways. One key point is the intention to create 300 new hen barns by 2030 "to keep pace with the increase in French consumption". The plan also sets a target that 90% of laying hens should be housed in alternative systems (excluding cages) by 2030, whether using ground-based, free-range or organic methods.

Other highly practical measures include a 40% target for farmers to carry out an initial environmental assessment of their farms using the CAP2ER tool, a 50% target for farmers to use EBENE, the self-diagnosis application for animal welfare, and the installation of photovoltaic panels on 20% of buildings, meaning that the laying hen sector "could contribute 10% to the overall objective of 20,000 ha of solar panel installations promised by France at COP 21". Among other measures, the industry seeks to roll out vaccinations against salmonella, with government support, and set up an observatory on the use of antibiotics "to provide evidence for the continued low use of antibiotics". Traceability will also be strengthened, with the extension of the "Œufs de France" initiative to all agri-food businesses.

Link to the CNPO industry planLien vers le Plan de filière du CNPO

24/06/2024 : Time budgets and 24 h temporal patterns variation of activities in stabled dairy dromedary camels

Document type: Scientific article published in **Applied Animal Behaviour Science**

Authors: Chayma Chaouch Aoun, Moufida Atigui, Marwa Brahmi, Eya Gherairi, Mohamed Hammadi

Preview: Time budgets can be used to determine the amount of time camels allocate to different behaviors throughout the day and can be a useful tool to evaluate animals' management systems. This work investigated time budgets and temporal dynamics of dairy camels' activities in intensively farms. Nine clinically healthy dairy camels (11.7 ± 1.9 years, 437.8 ± 12.0 kg and 72.6 ± 7.1 DIM) housed in a loose stall barn were monitored for 6 consecutive days. An ethogram of 16 behavioral activities was developed. Behavioral observations were continuously recorded. The mean duration for major behavioral activities was calculated to obtain the time-budget. Temporal pattern distribution of each activity was evaluated and their relationships were analyzed using Spearman correlations. Results showed that camels spent most of their time in a standing position feeding. Rumination remained high from late evening until early morning and reached maximum levels around 4:00. During 24 h, camels were standing and lying for 54% and 38% of their time, respectively. Data revealed that main behavioral activities expressed were feeding (35.5%) followed by rumination (24.5%). Walking activity remained low along the day and represented only 2% of the total time budget of stabled camels. Coprophagy was detected in subordinate camels which spent 10.3 ± 1.7 min/day searching fresh feces. These results suggested that time budgets and daily patterns of behavioral activities should be taken in consideration to improve management conditions in stabled dairy camels.

24/06/2024 : How is pig welfare assessed in studies on farrowing housing systems? A systematic review

Document type: Scientific article published in **Applied Animal Behaviour Science**

Authors: Bianca Vandresen, Jen-Yun Chou, Maria José Hötzel

Preview: Farrowing crates restrict sows' movement during farrowing and lactation, compromising their welfare and raising public concern. Unlike the gestation stalls, farrowing crates have been banned in only a few countries, yet many others have begun discussing phasing out this system. Scientific evidence on pig welfare should guide the transition towards sustainable farrowing housing systems, and it is essential to ensure sound scientific methodologies are in place behind the evidence. This systematic review, therefore, aims to investigate how sow and piglet welfare in different farrowing housing systems has been assessed in peer-reviewed empirical studies and to discuss the implications of animal welfare science for driving changes in farrowing housing systems. The current review did not include piglet crushing because this topic has been systematically

reviewed. Literature searches in Scopus and Web of Science identified 708 articles, of which 65 were retained after screening for inclusion criteria. Loose farrowing pens, group housing, outdoor farrowing, hinged crates, and ellipsoid crates were identified in the reviewed literature as alternatives to the conventional farrowing crates. The parameters used to measure animal welfare were based on behaviour, physiology, performance, and health. No study investigated the impacts of farrowing housing systems on emotional indicators of sow welfare, and studies rarely assessed the sow-piglet interactions. Within the same housing type, studies varied in their design and management practices (e.g., bedding and enrichment provision), which made cross-study comparisons difficult. Based on the existing evidence, more research is needed to determine which alternative farrowing system promotes better overall sow and piglet welfare. This systematic review identified structural knowledge gaps in the scientific assessment of pig welfare in farrowing housing systems. We propose how future research can address these gaps and how study designs should focus on specific housing aspects to allow an overall conclusion on the effect of farrowing housing systems on pig welfare. We also highlight the importance of considering the public's expectations while meeting the needs of animals and producers so that the proposed alternative farrowing systems can be sustainable and prevent economic losses for the pig industry's supply chain in the long term.

21/06/2024 : Enrichissement du milieu ou aires d'exercice : mieux connaître le milieu de vie des chevrettes pour proposer des solutions adaptées

Document type: Announcement of **Idele** (in French)

Authors: Renée de Crémoux, Marianne Berthelot

Preview: Whether they are looking to enrich their animals' environment or provide access to exercise areas, goat farmers are making use of a variety of innovative ways to improve the living environment and welfare of the kids in their care. A survey is being conducted by the ANSES in collaboration with INRAE to gain a better understanding of the facilities on offer, and to collect the views of farmers on their use and relevance. Environmental enrichment can be defined as the provision of features, objects or stimuli (auditory, physical, chemical, biological, olfactory) that go beyond those found in standard animal management practice and intended to improve the animals' physical or psychological welfare. In this area of study with regard to goat kids, the main focus is on the birth-weaning period. Little information is available on enrichment after weaning, and no practitioner feedback from experience with young goats is available on exercise areas (outdoor living areas adjoining the building).

Survey on the development of the living environment for young goats

The ANSES (Niort site) is therefore carrying out a survey on the development of the living environment for young goats. It is aimed at all goat farmers, whether they have set up exercise areas for their young goats or not, and whether or not they have enriched their animals' living environment.

The objectives are as follows:

- To identify the enrichments used by farmers for kids at each development stage (from birth to first kidding) and the obstacles to their implementation (generally or at particular life stages). A summary of this experience-based information will be produced and distributed. It will enable farmers to see what enrichments can be offered to kids at different life stages, what the constraints are, and what avenues can be explored to encourage their adoption and/or continued use following weaning.
- To describe the exercise areas on farms where kids are given access and the factors that prevent their use where they are not. The responses from farmers will provide the starting point for reflection and discussion on the design of areas suitable for goat kids.

How you can help:

- Click on the link to complete the survey: Enquête Enrichissement du milieu des chevrettes
- Time needed: 10 - 20 minutes maximum
- NB Don't forget to save your answers at the end of the questionnaire by clicking on the "Save" button.

Find out the results You can sign up to receive updates and the final summary.
Pass it on! If you know any farmers who would like to contribute, please feel free to send them the link to the online survey. Thank you in advance for helping us.
Any questions?: If you have any questions, please e-mail to one of the following team members: Marianne Berthelot marianne.berthelot(at)anses.fr Carine Paraud : carine.paraud(at)anses.fr One Welfare

12/07/2024 : Assessment of Production Technologies on Dairy Farms in Terms of Animal Welfare

Document type: Review article published in **Applied Sciences**

Authors: Marek Gaworski, Pavel Kic

Preview: Dairy production on farms is based on properly selected technologies implemented in various areas of the barn and outside the livestock buildings. These technologies are subject to assessment, for example, to determine the possibilities of their further improvement in the given production conditions of the farm. When assessing dairy production technology on a farm, human interests are taken into account, including workload, time and access to modern tools supporting the control of production processes. The aim of this review is to identify and discuss factors in dairy production technologies that may affect the welfare of dairy cattle. The considerations indicate that in the technologies of cow feeding, watering and housing, the priority is to improve the technology in terms of ensuring the comfort of animals using feed, water and a place to rest. However, in the case of the assessment of milking automation, the key importance of increasing human comfort was indicated, taking into account the comfort of cows, which is an additional factor justifying the implementation of technical progress in milking. The assessment of various dairy production technologies on farms is an excellent opportunity to develop discussions on the place of dairy cattle welfare in the sustainable development of farms and the priorities set for improving dairy production.

08/07/2024 : Animal welfare group clashes with European poultry trade organisation

Document type: News from **Poultry World**

Author: Tony Mcdougal

Preview: Animal welfare group Compassion in World Farming has hit back at claims by the Association of Poultry Producers and Poultry Trade in EU Countries (AVEC) around the additional costs linked to the European Chicken Commitment.
In a report produced by UK consultants ADAS, AVEC said fully transitioning to European Chicken Commitment standards would result in:
- An additional production cost of 37.5% per kg of meat.
- A 35.4% increase in water consumption, equating to an additional 12.44 million cubic metres annually.
- A 35.5% increase in feed consumption, amounting to an additional 7.3 million tonnes.
- A 24.4% rise in greenhouse gas emissions per kg of meat produced.
- A reduction of 44% in the total meat produced compared to standard production methods at present in existing EU growing space (>30kg/m²).

- The necessity to construct 9,692 new poultry houses, with an estimated cost of €8.24 billion, to maintain current production levels.

Informed decision-making

AVEC's president, Gert-Jan Oplaat, emphasised the importance of consumer choice and informed decision-making: "While the European Chicken Commitment aims to improve animal welfare, it is crucial to recognise that these improvements come with significant economic and environmental implications. Knowing that EU poultry consumption is predicted to grow in the EU in the next 10 years, consumers should have the choice to select higher welfare products if they wish, but it's crucial that standard, affordable options remain available."

Commercially and environmentally viable

But Compassion said the reported had attempted to model the economic and environmental costs of European Chicken Commitment production but had fallen short in accounting for the benefits associated with higher welfare production – including lower mortality, reduced antibiotic use and better meat quality, which could significantly offset some of these economic and environmental impacts.[...]

Cost-reduction strategies or the broader positive impacts [...]

By excluding the breeding and processing phases, the report overlooked areas where European Chicken Commitment systems can outperform conventional systems, such as a better productivity of the parent stock, lower rejection rates in slaughterhouses and fewer carcass downgrades due to meat quality issues, leading to a reduction in food waste. In addition, European Chicken Commitment flocks typically report much lower mortality rates (while the AVEC report uses a mortality rate 0.5% lower for European Chicken Commitment flocks based on "industry views", scientific literature reports a greater difference of up to 9% lower).

The increase in production costs must be absorbed across the entire food chain, not just by producers or consumers, while transition periods are also crucial when modelling the economic impact of a move to European Chicken Commitment production – two key aspects which were unfortunately left out of the AVEC report.

18/04/2024 : Considering the human-animal bond in developing One Health guidelines and standards for companion animals in humanitarian crises

Document type: Review article published in **CABI One Health**

Authors: Andrew O'Carroll, Carrie La Jeunesse, Lynn Lieberman Lawry

Preview: Establishing international One Health guidelines and standards for the evacuation and care of small companion animals in humanitarian crises is essential to protect the overall well-being of people and pets impacted, improve efficacy and safety of response operations, safeguard public health and biosecurity, and mitigate the impacts of free-roaming pets on the environment and biodiversity. Given predictably larger scale and more frequent crises due to climate change and human conflict or violence, it is increasingly important to consider and plan for the impacts that invariably result when both people and pets are displaced.

One Health impact statement

Currently, there is a prominent focus on One Health approaches to plan for and respond to emerging infectious disease threats as they impact human physical and public health. Much less attention has been paid to all-hazards disaster preparedness and planning (DPP) that comprehensively addresses the myriad additional ways humans, other animals, and the environment are impacted by co-displacement of pets and people.

If applied, One Health approaches to DPP for humanitarian crises would address a broader range of risks and harms and build the cross-disciplinary collaborations and platforms necessary to truly plan and prepare for “all hazards.” This approach also provides an exceptional opportunity to elevate One Health understanding among both professionals and the public when disaster planning initiatives are developed with, and shared among, communities around the world.

Prise en charge de la douleur

12/06/2024 : Effects of different tooth grinding procedures on the occurrence of tooth injuries, skin lesions, performance and behaviour of suckling piglets

Document type: Scientific article published in **Porcine Health Management**

Authors: Franziska Anna kleine Kruthaup, Michaela Fels, Carolin Bernarda Timphaus, Fritjof Freise, Swetlana Herbrandt, Elisabeth große Beilage

Preview: Immediately after birth, newborn piglets fight to establish a teat order. During this process, lesions appear on the piglets’ faces and on the sows’ teats, which is why tooth resection is carried out on many farms in Germany even though it is known that this procedure is frequently resulting in pulp openings. The opening of a pulp cave is suspected to cause painful tooth alterations and may be an entrance for infectious agents. The purpose of this study was to analyse the effect of tooth resection on skin lesions, development of bodyweight and behaviour in suckling piglets. Four days prepartum, 110 sows in farrow-to-finish production were assigned to one of three treatments. Litters had their teeth left intact (control group, CG), ground with a tea-cup roller head (Tea-cup head grinder group, TCG, Wilofa Diamant, D-56,133 Fachbach, Germany) or ground with a diamond rolling head (rolling head grinder group, RG, IBS/E Company Proxxon GmbH, 54,343 Föhren, Germany). The number of pulp openings in the RG and TCG was examined using a random sample. Piglet body weight and skin lesion scores were recorded within the first 24 h after birth and during each week of the suckling period. Each sow’s udder was examined before farrowing, in the second week of lactation and at weaning. The behaviour of the litters from nine sows was video-recorded throughout the suckling period. The aim of this study was to investigate the effects of tooth grinding by a tea-cup head (compared to grinding by a diamond roller head and no grinding [control group]) on the behaviour and average daily gain of piglets as well as on skin lesions on sow udder. The number of dental injuries was significantly greater in the RG than in the TCG ($p \leq 0.01$). Head lesions on piglets were significantly more common in the CG than in the RG ($p = 0.02$). Compared to CG piglets, TCG piglets had a significantly greater weight at the end of the suckling period ($p = 0.02$). No significant difference between treatments was found in the sows’ udder (parenchyma, skin, or teat) or in the behaviour of the litters. As tooth grinding is frequently inducing pulp openings, the necessity of the procedure should be carefully and critically scrutinised. In case tooth resection seems inevitable until the underlying management problems have been solved, the Tea-cup grinding head should be used due to significantly fewer pulp openings.

Réglementation

15/07/2024 : Conseil "Agriculture et pêche" du 15 juillet 2024 : présentation du programme de travail de la Présidence hongroise de l'Union européenne

Document type: News frome the **Council of the European Union**

Author: Conseil de l'Union européenne

Preview: The Hungarian presidency presented its work programme for the coming semester, outlining its main priorities in the field of agriculture and fisheries.
A farmer-focused EU agricultural policy is one of the seven overarching priorities of the Hungarian presidency. This goal is closely interlinked to two other presidency cross-cutting priorities, namely competitiveness and addressing demographic challenges. […]
In addition, promoting sustainable agriculture is a key priority of the presidency with the aim being to strike a balance between the strategic goals of the European Green Deal, the stabilisation of agricultural markets, and a decent standard of living for farmers.
Link to the work programme of the Hungarian Presidency
Editor's note: On page 26 of the work programme, you will find the following information: "The Hungarian Presidency aims to continue negotiations on legislative proposals relating to […] the protection of animals during transport, new genomic techniques and the welfare of dogs and cats."

01/07/2024 : European Parliament: Written answer to question E-001241/2024: Adoption of legislation to make it possible to bring pets into the workplace

Document type: Answer from the **European Commission** to question E-001241/2024

Authors: question : Matteo Gazzini (PPE). Réponse : Mr Schmit au nom de la Commission européenne

Question : A recent study conducted by the University of Milano-Bicocca has highlighted the positive connection between a good state of mind and job performance in people who come to work with their pets. There were also found to be benefits for the pets themselves, when these might otherwise be forced to spend hours on their own, waiting for their owner to return home. The strong bond between humans and their pets is increasingly leading countries to adopt legislation that promotes this connection. Such is the case in Chile, which at this very time is deciding whether to adopt a law granting a day of bereavement and justified absence from school for anyone whose pet has died.
Can the Commission therefore state whether, in light of the above, and to foster the benefits deriving from the positive connection between owners and their pets, it will consider adopting EU legislation to facilitate the presence of pets at the workplace?

Answer: The Commission does not currently have plans to consider adopting EU legislation to facilitate the presence of pets at the workplace. It is also not aware of any specific legislation regarding pets in the workplace at the Member State level.
Employers could set their own policies regarding pets at work, in dialogue with workers and their representatives, provided that they are in line with other applicable EU and national legislation.
In effect social dialogue and collective bargaining play a central role in adapting working conditions to meet new and emerging needs.
The Commission is supporting social dialogue through various actions, including through the recent Council Recommendation on strengthening social dialogue [1] and in the context of the European Semester.
Under EU legislation [2], employers have a duty to assess occupational health and safety risks and to put in place the resulting preventive and protective measures.

Moreover, when implementing possible changes to working conditions, employers would also need to safeguard health and safety of workers, considering the specific characteristics of their tasks and their workplace. Additionally, the EU and national rules related to animal welfare may apply.
The Commission is also mindful of the importance of mental health, including at the workplace. In June 2023, the Commission adopted a communication for a comprehensive approach on mental health [3] featuring several actions to address psychosocial risks at the workplace, and including a peer review on legislative and enforcement approaches in the Member States.
Transport, abattage, ramassage

12/07/2024 : The use of high expansion foam for stunning and killing pigs and poultry

Document type: Scientific opinion published in **EFSA Journal**

Authors: EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW)

Preview: The EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) was asked to deliver a scientific opinion on the use of high-expansion foam for stunning and killing pigs and poultry. A dossier was provided by the applicant as the basis for an assessment of the extent to which the method is able to provide a level of animal welfare at least equivalent to that ensured by the currently allowed methods for pigs and poultry. According to legislation, to be approved in the EU, new stunning methods must ensure (1) the absence of pain, distress or suffering until the onset of unconsciousness, and (2) that the animal remains unconscious until death. An ad hoc Working Group set up by EFSA performed the assessment as follows: (1) The data provided were checked against the criteria laid down in the EFSA Guidance (EFSA, 2018), and was found to partially fulfil those criteria; (2) extensive literature search; (3) data extraction for quantitative assessment; (4) qualitative exercise based on non-formal expert elicitation. The assessment led to conclude that it is more likely than not (certainty > 50%–100%) that high-expansion foam for stunning and killing pigs and poultry, named NEFS in container (Nitrogen Expansion Foam Stunning in container), provides a level of welfare at least equivalent to one or more of the currently allowed methods listed in Annex I of Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009. The overall assessment of EFSA is valid only under the technical conditions described in this Opinion for laying hens, broiler chickens of all age and pigs weighing 15–41 kg in situations other than slaughter. The overall assessment of EFSA is that NEFS can be suitable for depopulation using containers for pig and poultry farms respecting the technical conditions and the categories and types of animals defined in this Scientific Opinion.

Link to the **Plain Language Summary of the use of high expansion foam for stunning and killing pigs and poultry**

26/06/2024 : Welfare of sheep and goats during killing for purposes other than slaughter

Document type: Scientific opinion published in **EFSA Journal**

Authors: EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW)

Preview: Sheep and goats of different ages may have to be killed on-farm for purposes other than slaughter (where slaughter is defined as killing for human consumption) either individually (i.e. on-farm killing of unproductive, injured or terminally ill animals) or on a large scale (i.e. depopulation for disease control purposes and for other situations, such as environmental contamination and disaster management) outside the slaughterhouses. The purpose of this opinion was to assess the hazards and welfare consequences associated with the on-farm killing of sheep and goats. The whole killing procedure was divided into Phase 1 (pre-killing) – that included the processes (i) handling and

moving the animals to the killing place and (ii) restraint of the animals before application of the killing methods and Phase 2 – that included stunning and killing of the animals. The killing methods for sheep and goats were grouped into three categories: (1) mechanical, (2) electrical and (3) lethal injection. Welfare consequences that sheep and goats may experience during each process were identified (e.g. handling stress, restriction of movements and tissue lesions during restraint) and animal-based measures (ABMs) to assess them were proposed. During application of the killing method, sheep and goats will experience pain and fear if they are ineffectively stunned or if they recover consciousness. ABMs related to the state of consciousness can be used to indirectly assess pain and fear. Flowcharts including ABMs for consciousness specific to each killing method were included in the opinion. Possible welfare hazards were identified for each process, together with their origin and related preventive and corrective measures. Outcome tables linking hazards, welfare consequences, ABMs, origins, preventive and corrective measures were developed for each process. Mitigation measures to minimise welfare consequences were proposed.
Link to the pdf

Travail des animaux – dont équidés et animaux de loisir/sport/travail

20/06/2024 : Exploring the relationship between horse-owner attributes and their approach to horse training

Document type: Scientific article published in le **Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science**

Authors: E. Bartlett, E. J. Blackwell, L. J. Cameron, J. Hockenhull

Preview: The way horses are trained has implications for equine welfare and training success, yet little is known about the factors that influence horse-owners' choice of training approach (TA). Limited understanding in this area will hinder the development and dissemination of evidence-based training advice to owners. Consequently, this study aims to identify demographic and attitudinal factors that influence horse-owner TA selection. A 22-question online survey collected information from 1,593 horse-owners about their demographics, equestrian activities, goals and beliefs. Participants rated how likely they were to use six different horse TAs on a five-point scale. Multinomial regression analysis and Spearman's correlation coefficients were used to identify factors associated with their likelihood of using each TA. Several factors were associated with reported TA use, including age, gender identity, goals, activities, industry role and whether they had training in animal behavior. Beliefs about equine sentience, cognitive ability and whether science should inform horse training correlated with likelihood of applying aversives. This study provides insight for further research and development of educational strategies to reduce the use of training approaches that may compromise equine welfare.