French Reference Centre for Animal Welfare

FRCAW Newsletter 50
November 2024

Editorial

On-farm innovations to improve animal welfare

Image from the webinar run by LIT OUESTEREL

The European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders (EFFAB) describes itself as the voice of European animal breeding and reproduction organisations. It has recently published its **European Animal Breeders Vision for 2030**, as reported in **Trade Magazin**, underlining the importance of technological innovations for the improvement of animal welfare and health, the reduction of environmental impacts and the sustainability of the food supply. The sharing of innovations to improve farm animal welfare is also a goal for the European **WelFarmers** project and for the French initiative, LIT OUESTEREL (the Local Innovation Laboratory for farming in the West of France), created in 2020 by EUREDEN, INRAE and TERRENA. The innovations can relate to technical, organisational and digital aspects of farming practice. While some may have been introduced by public or private R and D initiatives, others will have been developed and implemented by farmers on the ground. Adopting a *One Welfare* focus on animal welfare and working conditions for farmers, **LIT OUESTEREL has been tracking these innovations down and sharing them** on its website. This month, for example, **pig farmers are featured** talking about the 'Maternité liberté' post-farrowing systems they have put in place, where sows are free to move around, and describing the effects of these new systems on the animals and on their own work.

Regulations on piglet tail docking

Image from the Réussir Porc website. © A. Puybasset

Answers were sought from the European Commission on the illegal continuation of the routine practice of piglet tail docking in some EU Member States, notably in the Netherlands, by an MEP from The Left in September (Question E-001586/2024). The Commission has now replied, confirming that it is indeed now forbidden, under Council Directive 2008/120/CE to carry out systematic tail docking on piglets and that the practice is permitted only where there is incidence of tail-biting on a farm, and then only after alternative upstream prevention measures have been taken. On the basis of the quality audits known as Fitness checks required by the European legislation on animal welfare, the Commission also acknowledges that there is a lack of uniformity in the way that Member States implement this ban on systematic tail docking for pigs. It states that it is continuing its efforts to harmonise legislation across Member States through the use of a number of instruments and forums and the creation of an animal welfare expert group that met for the first time in September.

This topic also features in the range of on-farm pig welfare training sessions available from the IFIP (French Pig Institute). The session to be held on 12 December 2024, will address the provision of support for the staged reduction of piglet tail docking.

Adapting Environmental enrichment to the needs of individual species

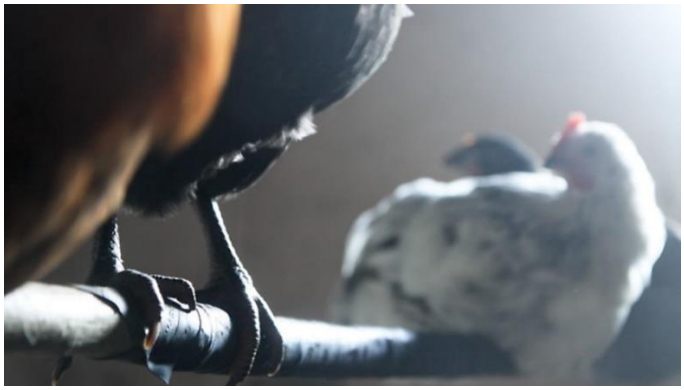

Image from The Country Smallholder website. © Archant

Environmental enrichment holds great promise for the improvement of living conditions for farm animals, and the requirements of each species differ in this regard. Scientific studies published this month have examined the enrichments that are appropriate for species as diverse as **laying hens** (perches) **dairy cows** (automatic brushes) and **rabbits** (additional food resources, human attention). Elsewhere, a scientific review article in Fish and Fisheries examines the variety of work on physical enrichments (substrate preferences, shelter, objects, etc.) intended to improve **fish** welfare in aquaculture. Although research on fish welfare remains limited, the authors note a rise in publications on the subject in recent years. They suggest that efforts should be made to extend the range of enrichments that are tested and that their effects should be evaluated on a wider range of species. They also point to the need to increase the number of indicators used, going beyond than the current basic measures of growth and behaviour, stressing that such indicators should be considered in relation to each other.

Has the time come to be concerned about invertebrate welfare?

Image from the **Sciences et Avenir** website. © Roni Hendrawan/Solent New/SIPA

Rapid growth in insect farming for animal and human consumption has put this sector's welfare ethics and regulations in the spotlight. The **New-York Declaration on Animal Consciousness,** issued on 19 April 2024 by a group of prominent experts, would appear to have helped to embed the idea that a form of consciousness is present in insects and other invertebrates such as decapod crustaceans. An **article has been published in Ambrook Research** on the subject, commenting that the sector currently lacks regulation, remaining broadly focused on the optimisation of production, although there is a growing awareness that such issues exist. It cites the establishment of the Anthropoda foundation, created this year to provide financial support for research on insect welfare. Equally, Entosystem, a Quebec business that breeds black soldier flies, is making efforts to take the flies' welfare into account by reproducing their natural living conditions and killing them as humanely as possible (through the application of extreme heat for larvae and extreme cold for adults). Meanwhile, an Indiana University laboratory has **published recommendations** on the grinding of farmed black soldier fly without cruelty and is currently working on recommendations for mealworms.

For decapods, a **study published this month** has adapted the General Welfare Index to farmed whiteleg shrimp, *Penaeus vannamei*, combining 31 specific and measurable indicators for this species in order to improve measures for their welfare in aquaculture.

French Reference Centre for Animal Welfare

Study grant

Students from UFAW LINK universities can apply for a **study grant** to follow an 8-week placement on a topic related to animal welfare. French members of the group are AgroParis Tech and INRAE are members of the UFAW LINK group. The deadline for applications is 28 February 2025.

French Reference Centre for Animal Welfare

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Arthropods

29/10/2024 : Insights into Decapod Sentience: Applying the General Welfare Index (GWI) for Whiteleg Shrimp (*Penaeus vannamei* - Boone, 1931) Reared in Aquaculture Grow-Out Ponds

Document type: scientific article published in **Fishes**

Authors: Pedrazzani, A.S.; Cozer, N.; Quintiliano, M.H.; Ostrensky, A.

Abstract: The rapid growth of shrimp farming, particularly of *Penaeus vannamei*, accounts for about 80% of the global production of farmed shrimp and involves the cultivation of approximately 383 to 977 billion individuals annually, which highlights the urgent need to address the ethical and technical implications of raising potentially sentient beings. This study builds on the state-of-the-art assessment of sentience, consciousness, stress, distress, nociception, pain perception, and welfare to adapt the General Welfare Index (GWI) for farmed shrimp. The GWI is a quantitative index developed by our research group to measure the degree of welfare in aquaculture, and it has been previously applied to grass carp and tilapia. Using the PRISMA methodology and the creation of a hypothetical shrimp farm, the GWI, with 31 specific and measurable indicators across various welfare domains, is adapted to *P. vannamei*, offering a comprehensive assessment framework. The inclusion of quantitative welfare indicators promises to improve living conditions in alignment with legislation adopted on decapods' sentience and contemporary scientific advances.

19/10/2024 : Is It Time to Care About Insect Welfare?

Document type: article published in **Ambrook Research**

Author: Moira O'Donovan

Preview: Insects are excluded from welfare protections, but with a rapid expansion in the number of insects being farmed, scientists and producers say that may need to change.

Consider an insect; maybe there's one buzzing around your head right now. It's likely that few people would dwell deeply on the ethical implications of swatting that fly. Even concerns about practices that deliberately harm insects, like pesticide use, are rarely couched in welfare terms. But as insects come to occupy a new position — largely as farm animals for livestock feed — welfare questions are coming to the fore. Worldwide, roughly 1.2 trillion insects are already raised annually, a number that is expected to increase by orders of magnitude as more insects are farmed for pet food, livestock feed, and human consumption (compare that to the approximately 1.55 billion cattle worldwide, in 2022). With that expansion imminent, researchers and farmers are attempting to answer an existential question: Do we need to care about insect welfare — and what, exactly, does welfare look like for a bug? As it stands, there are no welfare protections for insects. "Insects just aren't animals, from the perspective of policy," said Bob Fischer, professor of philosophy at Texas University and president of the Anthropoda Foundation, which was established this year to support funding for insect welfare research. "It's really the Wild West when it comes to these agricultural practices." The U.S. Animal Welfare Act doesn't include invertebrates, for example, nor does its counterpart in the UK. Fischer said some producers are doing their best, but in the absence of regulations there's nothing to stop producers from focusing on maximizing production — which may not always align with welfare considerations. One of the companies attempting to do its best is Entosystem — a black soldier fly farm located in the Canadian province of Quebec. Entosystem, which raises flies for use in animal feed and fertilizer, stands to become the largest black soldier fly facility in North America

when it reaches full capacity (currently it's operating at around 40 percent). Chief science officer Christopher Warburton said that when he started working in insect farming eight years ago, welfare wasn't considered an issue. At first, Warburton said he felt irked by those focused on it, given the harm done to insects by conventional agriculture through the use of insecticides. But given that he'd gotten into insect farming to do good for the planet, "You do have to start thinking about: Are you harming them?" Entosystem takes this into account by killing larvae and adults in what they believe to the most humane ways — high heat for larvae, extreme cold for adults — and mimicking natural living conditions for different life stages. Yet there are still many unknowns, said Warburton.
Insects just aren't animals, from the perspective of policy. (…)
At the end of the day, we are raising insects and we are killing them, and so you have to be careful of not having an impact on your business either. (…)
It's hard to see why we would be particularly anxious about regulation for some new species. (…)

Cognition-Emotions

31/10/2024 : Effects of changing veterinary handling techniques on canine behaviour and physiology Part 2: Behavioural measurements

Document type: scientific article published in **Animal Welfare**

Authors: Squair C, Proudfoot K, Montelpare W, Doucette T, Overall KL

Preview: Signs of distress in dogs during veterinary visits are often normalised rather than viewed as welfare concerns. Interventions designed to reduce fear during veterinary visits were evaluated to see if they affected dogs' behaviours compared to dogs without interventions. Twenty-eight dogs were examined at four visits across eight weeks. Dogs were randomised into intervention (distress reduction/adaptive care) and control groups (standard care) and evaluated via the Working Dog Questionnaire – Pet Dog Version (WDQ-Pet). At visit 1 (baseline) all dogs received the control protocol. Homework was assigned following visit 1 to practice collaborative examination (intervention) or to pet the dog (control) for the same allotted time. At each visit, behaviours were scored (clinical stress score) via video and in-person observations when dogs entered the hospital, stepped onto a scale to be weighed, entered the exam room, at the beginning and end of examination, and after venipuncture. There were no differences between groups at visit 1, or across visits entering the hospital or exam room. At visit 4, intervention scores either decreased or remained low when weighed, and at the beginning and end of the physical exam. Control scores were significantly higher than the intervention scores during these periods. Reduced clinical stress scores indicate intervention dogs had improved care experience compared to the control. The study results highlight the value of applying simple and adaptable interventions, ultimately leading to improved animal care and welfare.

Conferences-Seminars-Training

12/11/2024 : Elevages herbivores : les apports de la biodiversité, des sols aux territoires - Carrefours de l'Innovation Agronomique le 12 décembre 2024

Document type: annoucement of a seminar published by the **CIAG** (Carrefours de l'Innovation Agronomique)

Authors: Inrae, Agreenium, GIS avenir élevage, PEPR Agroécologie et numérique, Institut Agro de Rennes Angers

Preview: The development of agroecological farming practices is a necessity, both for adapting agri-food systems to climate change and its hazards and for mitigating the environmental impacts of these practices. Biodiversity is identified as a key factor for the sustainability of livestock systems as part of their environmental ecosystems, coupling the genetic diversity of domestic species with that of wild species. This Carrefour de l'Innovation (Innovation Forum) will present findings on domestic species biodiversity in herbivore livestock farming and on the surrounding environmental biodiversity that is both impacted and can be brought to bear, on scales ranging from the soil to local landscapes. The event will be held on December 12, 2024, in a blended face-to-face (Institut Agro Rennes - 65 Rue de Saint-Brieuc, 35042 Rennes) and remote format.

The program (talks in French):

8:30 a.m. – coffee and registration

9:00 a.m. – Introduction (Claire Rogel-Gaillard – Deputy Scientific Director of Agriculture Inrae, René Baumont Inrae and Gis Avenir élevages)

9:10 a.m. – Contexte scientifique (Thierry Caquet – Directeur Scientifique Environnement)

9h30 – La biodiversité source de production, de qualité et de durabilité – Conception des systèmes d'élevage autonomes pour l'alimentation animale valorisant la biodiversité végétale et animale en zone tropicale humide – Harry Archimède – UR ASSET – Relation entre diversité floristique des prairies et leur performance productive, leur capacité de stockage de carbone – Gaetan Louarn – URP3F – OasYs : un dispositif expérimental pour concevoir et évaluer un système bovin laitier agroécologique adapté au changement climatique – Sandra Novak – UE Ferlus – Diversité microbienne du sol au lait en Franche Comté et massif central : Nicolas Chemidlin-Bouré – UMR Agroécologie, – Ressources génétiques pour régénérer la diversité en élevage – Alicia Jacques – UR GABI – General discussion with participants

11.00 – Break

11.20 – L'élevage source de biodiversité – Pâturage et biodiversité dans les zones AOP du Massif Central – Bertrand Dumont UMR Herbivores, – Recouplage culture-élevage – Etienne Verrier – AgroParisTech – Zones de marais, rôle de l'élevage dans leur maintien, entretien – Servane Lemauviel Lavenant – Université de Caen, – Prairies du marais de Brouage : une ressource pour l'élevage et la biodiversité – Eric Kernéis – UE Saint Laurent de la Prée, – Systèmes d'élevage et biodiversité : des antogonismes aux synergies – Gilles Martel – UMR BAGAP – Échanges avec la salle

12.40 – Evaluation, mesures de la performance de l'élevage en fonction du degré de biodiversité-Performance environnementale de fermes d'élevage favorisant la biodiversité – Hayo van Der Werf – UMR SAS – Gis Avenir élevages et Grandes cultures – étude sur l'évaluation de la biodiversité – Joel Aubin – UMR SAS

13.10 – Presentation of the work of students from the Institut Agro Angers-Rennes – Justine Faure

13.15- Lunch break

14.30 – Biodiversité et la santé animale – Praidiv : produire des références inédites sur le potentiel santé des prairies pour l'animal et des pratiques permettant de l'utiliser – Sébastien Couvreur – ESA Angers, – Biodiversité et maladies émergentes – Jean-François Guégan – IRD, – Résilience du microbiote intestinal chez les chevaux au pâturage – Nùria Mach – UMR IHAP – Discussion with participants

15.00 – Verrous et leviers du changement des pratiques – (obstacles and levers for changes to practices) Round Table chaired by Christian Huyghe – Directeur Scientifique Agriculture with : – Marie-Bénédicte Peyrat – Ministère en charge de l'Agriculture, – René Baumont – GIS Avenir

Elevages, – Frédéric Signoret – Paysans de nature, – Justine Faure – Institut Agro Rennes Angers, – Geneviève Aubin-Houzelstein – FRCAW.
16.10 – Le projet européen Grazing4Agroecologie – (Arno Krause General Manager Center for grasslands, Allemagne)
16.40 – Closing remarks (Christian Huyghe, Directeur scientifique Agriculture Inrae)
16.55 – Updates on Carrefours de l'innovation
Link to the flyer
Link to register

02/11/2024 : Universities Federation for Animal Welfare — Animal Welfare Student Scholarship

Document type: ad published by **Terra Viva Grants Directory**

Author: Ilka Westermeyer

Preview: Animal Welfare Student Scholarships enable students to develop their interests in animal welfare science. Students are encouraged to carry out their own projects (whether research or educational) with the aim of contributing to our growing knowledge of how best to assess, or improve, the welfare of animals (for example, farm animals, animals in zoos, pets, or wild animals). Projects may be carried out anywhere in the world. Applicants must either be studying at a UFAW LINK university or be supervised by someone from a UFAW LINK university. In France, Agro Paris Tech and INRAE are UFAW LINK universities. Applications are welcome from undergraduate or MSc students. Support is provided for up to 8 weeks up to a maximum of £2,800. The closing date for applications is 28 February 2025. **Animal Welfare Student Scholarship**

Animal husbandry and human-animal relationship

18/11/2024 : Positive welfare in dairy cows: role of the vet

Document type: review article published in **In Practice**

Authors: Russell, A ; Randall, L ; Green, M ; Thompson, J

Preview: The livestock industry should ensure positive welfare for animals within its care, over and above the five freedoms. It is important that the general public approves of conditions that livestock inhabit for them to continue to purchase these products and feel positive in doing so. As custodians of animal health and welfare, veterinary clinicians must be equipped to advocate for improvements to welfare, as well as conventional herd health and individual case approaches. The environment an animal inhabits will impact its heath and production, but improvements to living conditions will also support positive welfare. Assessment of the environment is an essential step to identify areas to improve in the system; this will allow for subsequent advances in overall living conditions. This article provides an overview of positive welfare and assessment in dairy cows and guides production animal vets on how to undertake evaluations on farm. It also informs practitioners on developments in the research of positive welfare in dairy cows and discusses how positive welfare opportunities can be provided on farms.

24/10/2024 : On your terms or mine: pigs' response to imposed gentle tactile contact vs. free form interaction with a familiar human

Document type: scientific article published in **Scientific Reports**

Authors: Truong, S., Schmitt, O. & Rault, JL.

Preview: Positive human–animal interactions (HAIs) can be intrinsically rewarding and facilitate positive human–animal relationships. However, HAI paradigms vary across studies, and the influence of different interaction paradigms on the animal's response has been overlooked. We compared the behavioural responses of pigs ($n = 28$) individually tested with two types of gentle tactile interactions with a familiar human: 'free form (FF)' where the pig could voluntarily approach and interact as they normally would, and 'imposed contact (IC)' where the human imposed tactile contact on the pig according to a standardised protocol. Pigs did not differ in their level of engagement with the human between the two types of interactions. However, they differed in their behaviour as they explored the pen more during the FF test, while they emitted more low-pitched vocalisations (grunts) during the IC test. These differences can likely be imputed to the IC test differing to the pigs' habituation to human contact, which could have evoked greater attention to the human or triggered frustration due to violation of expectation. These findings highlight the influence of the predictability of the interaction or level of agency provided to the animal in HAI tests and relation to their previous experience of interacting.

Precision farming

08/11/2024 : L'IA au service du bien-être des vaches… et du portefeuille des éleveurs

Document type: article published in **La Terre de Chez Nous**

Author: Sophie Lachapelle

Preview: Images captured by cameras scrutinizing the slightest movements of cows. This is the basis of a major study currently being carried out by the Innovation Research Chair in Animal Welfare and Artificial Intelligence (WELL-E), jointly created by McGill University and UQAM. Established with $5 million in funding, one of the Chair's objectives is to identify predictors of changes in the mental and physical health of cows. "We want to detect any deviation before it is perceptible to the naked eye, and AI [artificial intelligence] will be able to help us develop early indicators," explained Elsa Vasseur, Associate Professor in the Department of Animal Science at McGill University and co-holder of the Chair, in an interview on the program La Semaine verte. The ultimate goal? Better profitability for agricultural producers. "There's a misconception that the most productive cows are the most profitable, but that's not the case," explains Elsa Vasseur's research assistant, Rachel Van Vliet. "These highly productive cows are also sick more often, and that costs money. What's more, a healthier cow will have a longer life expectancy, and that translates into gains."

The images, in which cows are individually identified, are first analyzed by animal health researchers at McGill University. They determine which behaviors and movements it will be useful to observe. This can be, for example, ear movements, which are very revealing of a cow's emotional state. We can also note very subtle changes in the way a cow walks before she becomes obviously lame. This is important, given that we know lameness to be the number one cause of cows being taken out of service. The analysis is then transmitted to researchers in the UQAM computer science department, so that they can model the data and enable computer learning on a larger scale.

For now, the study, which involves about fifty researchers, is taking place on two experimental farms, one in Quebec (the Macdonald farm attached to McGill University) and the other in Ontario. But in 2025, the University of Montreal will recruit around twenty farm businesses in Quebec to take part in this living lab. "One of the things we're going to study in the field," Rachel Van Vliet explains, "is the impact on the cows of moving from tie-stalls to free housing." The long-term goal is not for every

livestock farm to be equipped with cameras to manage its herds. “We want to work with the technologies that they already have, or to identify what the minimum requirement would be”. Dr Van Vliet goes on to explain that the idea of the cameras is to learn, through the videos, about best practices in terms of welfare. "As with humans, we ensure the welfare of cows by meeting their physical and psychological needs. This can include the need for stimulation, curiosity, socialization, etc." The research team plans to analyze the impact of adding certain positive elements to the living environment that could improve animal welfare, such as scratching posts or colored toys for animals. Rachel Van Vliet emphasizes that this is one of the innovative aspects of the research. "We already know that negative factors, such as moving or too much handling, can affect their welfare. Now, we're going to see how we can add potentially positive enrichment and measure the effect that this can have." (...)

16/10/2024 : A review and future trends of precision livestock over dairy and beef cow cattle with artificial intelligence

Document type: scientific synthesis published in **Logic Journal of the IGPL**

Authors: Álvaro Michelena, Óscar Fontenla-Romero, José Luis Calvo-Rolle

Preview: The demand for meat and dairy products is expected to rise significantly in the current demographic and economic growth context. Concurrently, various factors, including financial crises and reduced profitability, have decreased the number of livestock farms. Consequently, the livestock industry is undergoing intensification, with an increased number of cows per farm. This shift makes the management of animals increasingly complex. Amid these challenges, the society’s growing concern for animal health and welfare and the quality of consumed products underscores the importance of systems that aid in the individual and herd-level monitoring and control within livestock operations. In this scenario, precision livestock farming has become essential with the emergence of new sensors and technologies and the evolution of artificial intelligence. Against this backdrop, this paper reviews systems and techniques used in precision livestock farming to detect anomalies caused by reproductive processes and diseases in dairy and beef cattle. The article analyzes sensors and technologies employed, presents key studies conducted, and discusses the most commonly used artificial intelligence techniques in detecting prevalent anomalies.

Ethics-Sociology-Philosophy-Animal rights

24/09/2024 : Discourses on Positive Animal Welfare by Sheep Farmers and Industry Actors: Implications for Science and Communication

Document type: scientific article published in **Veterinary Sciences**

Authors: Muhammad, M., Stokes, J.E., Manning, L., Huang, I.Y.

Preview: This research examines how sheep farmers and industry actors in the United Kingdom (UK) understand and conceptualize what animal welfare scientists term ‘positive animal welfare’. It explores their awareness of the concept, and how they interpret it using a qualitative approach. Participants were recruited using a snowballing, purposive sample approach, resulting in 25 sheep farmers and 11 industry actors (veterinarians, farming organizations, advisors, and supply chain) being interviewed. To collect data, a combined approach involving semi-structured interviews and a facilitated workshop were used between April 2021 and March 2022. Data were then thematically analyzed using a hybrid of inductive and deductive coding process. The findings suggested that the perceptions of farmers and industry actors in the study regarding positive welfare differ from

contemporary academic discourses. Overall, around 7 of the farmers equated positive welfare with "positive stockmanship", while six of them expressed "good animal welfare" definitions associated with the Five Freedoms. In contrast, most industry actors (6) expressed interpretations associated with high welfare standards (going above minimum recommended practices) and positive mental experiences (3). Emerging discourses revealed the link between self-identity, social identity and what positive welfare is, the importance of knowledge exchange, and the need for practical indicators through language rephrasing. There is a clear need to enhance and improve knowledge dissemination strategies, particularly in the UK, where much research is being conducted on positive animal welfare.

Animal welfare assessment and Labelling

31/10/2024 : L'Association Étiquette Bien-Être Animal dévoile son référentiel innovant pour les poules pondeuses !

Document type: press release published on **Animal Welfare label**

Author: Étiquette Bien-Être Animal

Preview: The Association Étiquette Bien-Être Animal has unveiled an innovative quality standards system for laying hens. Following similar initiatives for broilers and pigs, the Association Étiquette Bien-Être Animal has now developed a quality reference system for the labelling of products from laying hens. Representing a genuine step forward for the industry, the system assesses indicators for both methods and outcomes, with direct observations of the animals themselves, ensuring traceability from birth to slaughter. This move forms part of a drive to meet the growing consumer demand for products that show greater respect for animal welfare: in March 2023, 82% of the French public supported the introduction of mandatory labelling information on farming methods. This quality assurance system applies to shell eggs, egg products and all products containing eggs. It includes the assessment of performance indicators, such as Animal Based Measures, in line with ANSES recommendations.

The Animal Welfare Label for laying hens: a comprehensive tool for transparency and traceability

With 144 criteria, the technical standards established evaluate the level of welfare of parents, chicks, pullets and laying hens, from birth to the end of production. This welfare quality reference framework, the product of close collaboration between those involved across the entire production chain and animal welfare NGOs, is also the result of extensive external consultation to guarantee that it is both appropriate and operable.

Why choose the French Animal Welfare Label?

1- Enhanced consumer information: the label provides a quality assurance for standards of animal welfare that goes well beyond simple standards for eggs that refer only to farming methods.

2- Visibility of the supply chain: it ensures complete traceability from birth to the birds' place of slaughter.

3- Promotion of existing practices: innovative animal welfare initiatives are scored higher, encouraging their adoption.

4- A solid foundation for the future: these quality standards are part of a continuous improvement process, and take into account the latest scientific advances. This trailblazer meets all French and European recommendations in terms of animal welfare labelling.

Key figures for the new laying hen technical standards

144 detailed criteria including:

- 26 criteria for parental stock and hatcheries
- 23 criteria for pullet rearing

- 86 criteria for laying hen rearing
- 9 criteria for collection and traceability

Farms providing access to the open air can claim lower levels A and B. Flooring systems with verandas, recognized as providing a significant improvement to layer welfare, can be classed as level C. The technical guidelines are available **here**.

We invite professionals to join us

Participation in the labelling system is voluntary, and can be carried out one product range at a time. Every year, 100% of layer farms are inspected by independent, qualified auditors.

Recent roll-out statistics

In just five years, the Animal Welfare Label Association has already brought together 24 member groups, including animal protection NGOs, members of from the distribution, retail and catering sectors, and producer and processor organizations. The label has been rolled out widely in the broiler chicken sector, with nearly 40% of French farmers audited and the involvement of 70% of retailers. More than thirty labelled product ranges are now on the shelves.

Our next step: the dairy cattle sector

Following the successful co-construction of these three reference systems for standards (poultry, pigs and eggs), the Association Étiquette Bien-Être Animal has announced the launch of work to prepare a welfare quality label for the dairy cattle sector, continuing its commitment to animal welfare. We invite professionals to join us in this innovative project and become part of the collective drive for farm animal welfare!

21/10/2024 : Consommation de viande : le revers de la volaille

Document type: article published in **Libération**

Author: Olivier Monod

Preview: Cheaper, healthier than red meat and with a lower environmental impact, sales of chicken meat and eggs are on the rise. But these positive figures are driven by sectors that show less concern for animal welfare, and are not so very "green". Chicken rules the roast. In the face of inflation, an increase in vegetarianism and a growing awareness of the environmental impact of livestock farming, one meat is holding its own, with rising consumption figures: chicken. In 2023, sales were up by 3.7%, while total meat consumption in France - including poultry - was down by 1.4%, compared to 2022. The French appetite for this product, unhampered by religious restrictions, is a core trend. In the course of 2021, French people consumed 28.3 kg of chicken per person, compared with 21.4 kg in 2000. This represents an increase of 32%, whereas total meat consumption - including poultry - fell by 6%. The same pattern is seen in egg sales worldwide. Forecasts are good, and French producers don't want to miss out. By 2030, no fewer than 700 hen houses are projected to have sprung up all over the country: Of these, 300 will produce eggs and 400 will supply thighs, fillets and wings.

How do we eat our chicken?

Those consumers who prefer Red Label, free-range eggs and organic produce are not representative of the chicken market. In fact, while more than half of all whole chickens purchased are either organic or red label, retail purchases are in the minority. Thus, "organic chicken accounts for 1% of French chicken consumption, red label for 9%, and other certifications for 3%", as Vincent Chatellier, a research engineer at Inrae specializing in agricultural economics, pointed out in Libé at the beginning of September. The remainder of chickens consumed are so-called 'standard chickens'. "They live for around 40 days, fatten four times faster than in 1950, and are crammed together with, on average, 20,000 birds per building and no access to the outside," accuses Brigitte Gothière, co-founder of the L214 Association. Most poultry protein is consumed in "commercial catering" (RHD) or in processed food products. (...)

(Rest of article for subscribers only)

Genetics

28/10/2024 : Animal welfare and sustainability – A vision for European livestock farmers until 2030

Document type: article published in **Trade Magazin**

Author: STA

Preview: The "Voice of European Animal Husbandry" group of like-minded EU partners active in the livestock food chain presents the main elements of the European livestock breeders' vision of the sector until 2030, published by the European Livestock Breeders Forum, in its new communication material. The European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders (EFFAB – European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders), which represents European animal breeding and breeding organizations in the EU, presented the document entitled "The vision of European Animal Breeders until 2030". The material outlines the strategic vision until 2030 with the most important achievements, priorities and objectives of the sector, defining the direction of the future of European animal husbandry and aquaculture. EFFAB has developed a roadmap to achieve these goals while working closely with policy makers, stakeholders and farmers across Europe to promote food and nutrition security, in order to ensure a sustainable, competitive and resilient future for the European livestock sector. The material highlights the key role of genetic selection in improving the sustainability of livestock farming systems.

Responsible animal husbandry strategies can improve sustainability, animal welfare and health

Recognizing the need to move towards more responsible and balanced breeding strategies – that improve animal welfare and health, reduce resource use and mitigate the sector's climate impact, and preserve genetic diversity – EFFAB developed the EFABAR Code, which aims to to show how breeders today incorporate all these elements into their breeding programs with the sole aim of contributing to improving the sustainability of all livestock systems. Ensuring access to safe and nutritious food is a key issue, as livestock producers are the starting point of European food systems. By developing balanced and responsible breeding strategies, breeders aim to provide farmers in all farming systems with reliable access to appropriate genetic improvements in various local and commercial breeds to improve food security and food quality. Genetic development and breeding techniques are essential tools for improving the welfare and health of farm animals, and they play a prominent role in the creation of strategies. Between 2008 and 2018, many improvements in animal welfare were achieved, which significantly reduced mortality in herds and the need to use antimicrobials. For example, in the poultry sector, 40% of the regulations laid down in breeding programs are aimed at improving bird welfare, leg strength, heart and lung function, and ensuring stable, healthier flocks in the long term. Similarly, between 2015 and 2020, the use of balanced breeding programs further increased the pre-weaning survival rate of piglets, and in salmon farming, mortality in herds decreased by more than 90% over the years.

Innovation and modern technologies can improve the quality of animal husbandry and animal welfare

The developed vision supports a balanced approach that integrates animal health and well-being, as well as environmental and economic sustainability. The environmental benefits of modernizing farming include a 1% annual reduction in methane emissions and a 3.5% reduction in nitrogen excretion every five years. 30% less feed consumption than 30 years ago has a positive environmental and economic impact on farms. Continuous advances in animal genetics, genomics, precision farming tools, artificial intelligence and machine learning enable EU livestock farmers to analyze vast amounts of data, leading to a better understanding of animal needs, reactions, production traits and increasingly responsible breeding practices. Innovation and advanced

technologies can improve livestock production efficiency and animal welfare, and through continuous research and development, the EU can maintain its global competitiveness.

Policy initiatives must be based on responsible breeding

A scientifically based, flexible, proportionate and coherent regulatory framework is needed to improve the sustainability of all livestock systems and maintain competitiveness. Regulations need to be designed in such a way that they can be quickly analyzed and adapted to the latest scientific findings, in order to ensure a safe operating space and the competitiveness of EU livestock farmers both in the EU and worldwide. Europe needs to invest in an ambitious EU research and innovation framework, including in animal husbandry, as the vision holds that the potential for competitive and sustainable growth, better circularity and improving the resilience of livestock systems lies in genetics.

Link to the document "European animal breeders vision for 2030" (pdf)

30/09/2024 : Managing large litters - Short review (version 1.0)

Document type: summary published by **EURCAW-Pigs**

Authors: Pedersen, L.J., Hoofs, A., Kongsted, H.

Preview: This review gives an overview of the development in litter size and its consequences for sow and pig welfare. Selection for large litters has resulted in sows giving birth to several pigs exceeding the number of functional teats available at the sow's udder.

Link to pdf

Population management and Animal welfare

26/10/2024 : La filière de faisans et perdrix « chair à canon » pour la chasse dans le viseur d'une association

Document type: article published in **20 minutes**

Author: Elsa Provenzano

Preview: Every year, between 400 and 500 breeders produce between 10 and 20 million game animals in France. These figures make France the top game producer in Europe. The Nos Viventia (We the Living) association has just made public a year-long investigation into the partridge and pheasant farming industry, intended to draw attention to the little-known practices involved. According to Nos Viventia, the birds raised are destined to become "cannon fodder" for shoots whose available sport has been declining alongside biodiversity since the 1970s. In the words of representatives of the hunting industry, the association presents a "distortion of reality", suggesting that the industry's operations are "virtuous" and "controlled". The wild animals the industry raises in captivity are released on a massive scale into the wild on weekends between September and November, right across France.

"Lack of care" on pheasant farms?

The association has filed a complaint with the Agen and Nantes public prosecutors' offices, claiming "lack of care" at two production sites concerning which it has been able to gather concrete evidence, with the help of whistle-blowers based in the Loire-Atlantique and Lot-et-Garonne. "It has also launched an online petition that attracted over 4,000 signatures, with the ultimate aim of banning the raising of animals as game. We didn't target any specific companies; we filmed there because we had the chance to," explains Pierre Rigaux, ecologist and founder of Nos Viventia. But we know that all these companies follow the same procedures." In response, Jean-Christophe Chastang, President of InterProchasse, retorts that he is "not troubled by the rantings of a pseudo-naturalist."

He asserts that game breeders, who are licensed, treat their animals when they are sick, and use a state-appointed veterinary inspector. He says that he suspects the association of wanting to discredit "nature and animal lovers".

Birds that respond badly to captivity

The Nos Viventia images show birds crammed into pens, some with injuries and visibly hostile to one another. "They find captivity harder than chickens, for example. They're very territorial and still have their wild character that makes them attack each other frequently", points out Pierre Rigaux. Once they have grown to a certain size and the weakest among them have already been culled, the farmers ring partridges and use beak covers on pheasants to reduce deaths. "Without the beak covers, they'd kill each other," says Pierre Rigaux. "Pheasants are a little more aggressive than partridges, but breeders don't systematically fit them with beak covers," comments the head of the inter-professional group. In the wild, these animals live in small social groups, whereas in captivity, according to the association, they come into contact with thousands of fellow-birds of the same age. The animals are kept in huge 200-meter-long pens mimicking their habitat in the wild," hits back Jean-Christophe Chastang. The density of the animals is extremely low, and they are raised in the open air - this is not intensive farming."

Profitability at the expense of animal welfare?

But according to the association, these farms must necessarily be intensive if they are to be profitable. "Losses are built into their model. If they were aiming for zero aggression, they'd only need a few birds per pen, and that wouldn't work," says Pierre Rigaux. The farmers never treat them all, because otherwise it wouldn't be profitable. It can't work any other way." These claims are denied by the profession, which claims in turn that there is no excess mortality on its farms. The practice of raising animals as game is controversial within the hunting community itself. Some consider that it is not "real hunting". And when you see animals wandering and a little lost after being unloaded into the natural environment, you might consider that not much "fair play" is involved in such releases. According to the association's estimates, only two out of every ten birds released may actually be hunted, while very few survive in the wild. Even more worryingly, recent studies have shown that an ecosystem will suffer when large numbers of birds appear in a small area, because, for example, they they have a negative impact on already fragile populations such as lizards and snakes. And when birds bred in captivity interbreed with wild birds, they contribute to a genetic weakening of their breed. "They produce young that are less able to resist disease or digest their food, etc.", asserts the ecologist.

Animal welfare initiatives

07/11/2024 : La newsletter d'Octobre - Chaire bien-être animal

Document type: October Newsletter of the **Animal Welfare Chair** of VetAgro Sup

Author: Luc Mounier

Preview: At a time when opinion is becoming more important than fact, when we can make assertions and are not required to demonstrate their validity, when extremes are exacerbated, science and scientific facts are under threat. Yet they are all the more necessary. It is of prime importance to draw on science, observation and facts in the fight against lies and preconceptions .. and doing so is essential if we are to be able to exchange ideas constructively, even if doing so is becoming increasingly difficult. The study of animal welfare is a science that is founded on experimentation, observation and open minds. It does not involve opinions or principles that are not grounded in the science. The accessibility of science to stakeholders, political decision-makers and the general public is key, and its communication must be based on fact. This then allows decision-

makers and citizens to establish political positions, in full knowledge of the facts. It is the core activity of the Animal Welfare Chair, which uses scientific research and its expertise to educate and inform and to make animal welfare issues accessible ... this scientific evidence base was important in the past but is essential today.

In the spotlight:

- Agroecology: a collective effort focused on the living world
- Medical training
- Farming summit: exchanges on the evolution of European animal welfare regulations
- **Adoption and dog training: an ethologist's point of view**
- **Myth of the month: Can all animals be pets?**
- and a selection of press articles...

04/11/2024 : Traque aux innovations – LIT Ouesterel

Document type: directory of innovations identified by **LIT OUESTEREL**

Author: LIT OUESTEREL

Preview: En Working with INRAE, the LIT OUESTEREL is carrying out an "innovation hunt", tracking down useful innovations to share, seeking out solutions that "work" but lack visibility and analysis, amplifying 'over the farm gate' information-sharing among farmers, and identifying trends or new knowledge that could result in the practices of the future.

What we call an innovation

An innovation is a process by which individuals or organizations put something new in place for the first time (including the "rediscovery" of "old" know-how that has regained relevance). These new practices can have many aspects, whether technical, digital, organizational, or commercial, etc., but they also involve "incremental" processes (sharing tips and tricks, best practices, techniques, etc.), or can even be "disruptive" (changing the system).

How we track down innovations

We identify innovations in two ways:

- We use what can be described as a 'top down' bibliographical approach to identify innovations that have originated in the field of Research-Development-Innovation, both public and private.
- We use a 'bottom up', on the ground approach to seek out innovations that have been thought up and implemented by those on the ground, through visits and interviews

Getting the benefit of the innovations we discover

The aim of farming innovations, for whatever species, is to improve the welfare of livestock farming. To achieve this, they focus on the physical health of the animals, the expression of their natural behaviors, their access to water and feed, their mental health, their comfort, as well as the living and working conditions of operators. These areas for improvement shape the project's objectives, all of which must be met to be successful if the original intention is to be achieved. Each objective is assigned a set of strategies (involving the animal, its diet, etc.) and actions that can be improved by the innovation.

View the innovations

First select a species from the list on the right to access all the innovations discovered for that species. You can then click on further choices to narrow down your search, selecting objectives, strategies and actions. These take you to the innovations that meet that set of criteria. Please note, each innovation can satisfy several objectives.

22/10/2024 : Près de 63 millions de Fcfp consacrés au bien-être animal

Document type: article published in **Tahitinews.co**

Author: S. Antonin

Preview: French Polynesia's Animal Welfare Grants Awarding Committee (CASE) has just approved the award of grants totalling 62,655,000 F CFP to associations supporting animal welfare. The ad-hoc committee's task was to examine the dossiers submitted by the associations and evaluate them against government objectives. In line with these, funding could be awarded to projects involving the sterilization of stray and stray dogs, or those belonging to families with limited resources; the euthanasia or placement of litters of ownerless newborns; the euthanasia of animals in a state of physiological or dangerous distress; the systematic identification of animals belonging to families with limited resources; and awareness-raising and communication campaigns promoting animal welfare.
(...) These projects will now have to be approved by the budgetary and financial control commission of the Assembly of French Polynesia (APF) and then by the Council of Ministers. The Minister took advantage of this meeting to discuss with the DIREN and the members of the Assembly the upcoming deadlines in terms of animal welfare. In particular, he pointed out that the Advisory Committee for animal welfare would shortly be called upon to give its opinion on the decree concerning the organization of campaigns to manage domestic carnivore populations. Among other things, this decree will enable associations to call on foreign volunteer vets when local vets are unable to offer suitable rates for campaigns financed by the country. Other avenues of work will of course be submitted to this advisory committee, made up of representatives of the member countries, the French State, local authorities and associations.

Housing and Enrichment

18/11/2024 : Social networks of pregnant gilts during outdoor feeding and the effects on their offspring

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

Authors: Leandro Sabei, Marisol Parada Sarmiento, Cihan Çakmakçı, Sharacely de Souza Farias, Thiago Bernardino, Rosangela Poletto, Erika Alejandra Becerra Mendez, Beatriz Kaori, Adroaldo José Zanella

Preview: Social relationships are important aspects of the behavioural biology of pigs and can be affected by the type of housing pigs are kept in. Exploring agonistic interactions and affiliative behaviours can reveal effects on adult pigs and their descendants. This research investigated the social dynamics among gilts throughout pregnancy during collective feeding in an outdoor housing system and the effects of these dynamics on the stability of the group and the offspring of the group members. For this study, 15 gilts were oestrus synchronised and artificially inseminated with three different semen pools. The paddocks where the gilts were housed contained a mud pool, natural tree shade, and two nipple drinkers. Two daily meals (~2.5 kg/day/gilt) were provided to the group on the floor. Feeding behaviour was recorded for three continuous days (20 min in the morning and again in the afternoon) every gestational (a total of 42 h of video recording). Saliva samples were collected at 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on these same days. A trained observer evaluated all the videos using Boris software to determine agonistic and affiliative behaviours. After farrowing, the piglet data collected included sex, mortality, and body weight (BW) at 10, 25, 29, and 36 d of age. Elo scores were calculated to quantify the relative hierarchy among the gilts based on the behaviour assessment. Generalised linear mixed models (GLMMs) were used for data analyses, and the significance of fixed effects was determined at $p \leq 0.05$. The tendency of the gilts to feed together decreased as gestation progressed. Heavier gilts had lower salivary cortisol concentrations, and higher gilt rank was correlated with higher morning salivary cortisol concentrations and heavier

piglets. Maternal modulation of offspring performance in pigs warrant further investigation. Assessment of gilts' social feeding behaviours is relevant for considering pigs' behaviour in genetic selection and improving commercial facilities and management practices to improve animal welfare.

04/11/2024 : Thoughtful or distant farmer: Exploring the influence of human-animal relationships on rabbit stress, behaviour, and emotional responses in two distinct living environments

Document type: scientific article published in **Animal Welfare**

Authors: Manon Fetiveau, Davi Savietto, Andrew M Janczak, Laurence Fortun-Lamothe and Valérie Fillon

Preview: Both the nature of the human-animal relationship (HAR) and housing conditions significantly impact the welfare of farmed animals. To evaluate the influence of HAR on the behaviour, emotions and stress of rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) in two distinct outdoor living environments, we allocated 144 young rabbits to four groups (CPX-H, CPX-N, SPL-H, SPL-N) differing in the living environments (CPX for complex, and SPL for simple). The treatment by human (H) involved daily provision of additional food resources and stroking (thoughtful farmer). It commenced at 49 days of age and lasted for 16 days. N groups did not receive the treatment (distant farmer). The rabbits were observed between 48 and 73 days of age. Their behavioural responses to human presence were evaluated at 48 and 68 days using Qualitative Behaviour Assessment (QBA) and scan sampling. A set of tests was conducted at 68 days of age to assess their reactions to a novel object and human presence. Stress levels were measured by analysing corticosterone concentrations in their hair. Rabbits in the SPL environment spent significantly more time near the novel object than those in the CPX environment (24.7 vs 17.2%). Additionally, rabbits in the H treatment group spent more time near the human than those in the N treatment group (28.2 vs 17.1%) and accepted more strokes (90.2 vs 45.9%). Following the HAR treatment, rabbits in the H group were significantly more likely to be described as 'Affectionate/Interested' than those in the N treatment. Rabbits in the N treatment were described as 'Indifferent' significantly more in the SPL environment. However, there were no significant differences in hair corticosterone concentrations between the groups. These findings indicate that rabbits' responses are influenced by both their living environment and the quality of their relationship with humans. Encouraging positive interactions with animals may enhance their welfare and facilitate daily care from farmers.

29/10/2024 : Closing the Gaps in Fish Welfare: The Case for More Fundamental Work Into Physical Enrichment

Document type: scientific synthesis published in **Fish and Fisheries**

Authors: Helen C. Spence-Jones · Joachim G. Frommen · Nick A. R. Jones

Preview: Billions of fishes are kept in captivity for research and food production world-wide, with a strong impetus for maintaining high welfare standards. Accordingly, the importance of empirical research into the welfare and husbandry of captive fishes is increasingly acknowledged in both science and aquaculture, alongside growing public and governmental interest. Physical enrichment can have an important influence on welfare in of captive fishes, but many questions remain. Here, we summarise the current state of research and outline knowledge gaps in the area of physical enrichment, which is a fundamental aspect to improving welfare of captive fishes. To explore the level of research interest this area across time we conducted a series of surveys, using the number of papers published per year as a metric. These surveys highlight that work on fish welfare, while

representing a relatively low proportion of fish research overall, is increasing rapidly. For species that are of aquaculture importance or used commonly as laboratory subjects, we show a positive relationship between general research interest and number of welfare-related papers. However, for many, particularly relatively less studied, species the proportion of papers on enrichment remains low, with a slower increase compared to welfare-related papers in general. In terms of common metrics used to quantify fish welfare, there is a reliance on growth and behaviour, with scope for inclusion and combination of a more comprehensive range of reproducible measures. We finish by highlighting recent progress, promising areas for future research and suggestions for advances in this area.

28/10/2024 : Perch shape and material affect perch use and health parameters of laying hens during the rearing and laying phase

Document type: scientific article published in **Journal of Applied Poultry Research**

Authors: Ariane Stratmann, Nadine Ringgenberg

Preview: Perches are an important resource for laying hens and differ in characteristics like shape, material and diameter. In this study, different perches were tested in regard to animal welfare, focusing specifically on the behavior and health of laying hens during rearing and lay. Five perches, i.e., square-fiber, mushroom-metal, mushroom-plastic, round-plastic and round-metal perches, were installed in 15 experimental pens with 1 perch type per pen. Each pen was populated with 20 hens (10 Lohmann Selected Leghorn and 10 Lohmann Brown hens) and kept in the same pen from d 1 until 40 wk of age. Different behaviors and health parameters (i.e., keel, footpad and plumage condition) were assessed at various ages by scan sampling and continuous observations of video recordings and live assessments, respectively. Perch use was affected by age, hybrid and perch type: it increased with age, white birds used perches more than brown birds, the round-metal perch was used the least and the mushroom-metal perch the most. In more than 50% of observed walking bouts on perches, balance movements occurred. These were observed more during the dusk phase and on the mushroom-shaped perches while birds with the round-metal perch had the least balance problems but also the least number of walking bouts. All health parameters were of minor severity. They were however influenced by perch type and age, where all of them increased with age and in birds with mushroom-metal perches. Hen behavior and health were affected by perch type, highlighting its significance for laying hen welfare.

24/10/2024 : Enhancing Welfare for Aquarium Fishes with an Ecologically Relevant Environment

Document type: scientific synthesis published in **Animal Behaviour and Welfare Cases**

Author: Paul Rose

Preview: Aquarium fish keeping is an incredibly popular hobby. Despite this popularity, fishes can suffer poor welfare due to being housed in an inappropriate environment, lack of owner knowledge that perpetuates misconceptions, and our perception of them as “lower vertebrates”. This article examines the complexity of fish biology and behaviour to support appropriate care of fishes within home aquaria. It focuses on the importance of evidence for what fish need and how to use such evidence in the domestic aquarium. In the UK, around 21% of households maintain an indoor aquarium and 13% of households have an outdoor pond. This equates to many millions of individual fish in private households. Approximately 70% of fishes in home aquaria are tropical freshwater species. Although fishes may appear easy pets to keep, being cheap to buy and readily available in

different outlets, many common-in-the-home-aquarium species have specific requirements (from their water chemistry, physical environment, and social grouping) that they require to thrive, and owners should be aware of their natural biology and wild ecology when setting up an aquarium and maintaining a social group. Inaccuracies and misrepresentations abound when non-specialists think about fishes; they have no memory, they only grow to the size of the tank they are provided with, they do not feel pain and therefore are disposable. Fishes have complex physiologies that enable them to live in an environment alien to us as terrestrial mammals. They also display a diverse array of behaviours that provide them with fitness benefits within their habitat. Alongside essential aquarium considerations (heating, filtration, water quality), aquarium fish owners need to provide a suitably enriched environment for the species being housed. This case study considers simple steps that owners can take to improve welfare, health, and longevity of aquarium fishes through better knowledge of their natural history, the provision of a more ecologically relevant environment, and the maintenance of correct social groupings.

17/10/2024 : Le replay du webinaire « Maternité liberté » du 27/09/24 est disponible - LIT Ouesterel

Document type: notification of availability of webinar recording from **LIT OUESTEREL**

Author: LIT OUESTEREL

Preview: On September 27, LIT OUESTEREL jointly organized a webinar with Brittany's Regional Chamber of Agriculture, entitled "Maternité liberté: Témoignage d'éleveurs sur la mise en place de maternité liberté et ses impacts sur le travail et les animaux", with reports from farmers on their use of free-range maternity systems. The event brought together some thirty participants (farmers, veterinarians, engineers, technicians, teachers and students). Following a presentation by Nicolas VILLAIN (Chambre d'Agriculture Régionale de Bretagne) on the results of a survey on the subject, 3 farmers shared their own experiences using free-range maternity systems (commercial model with early socialization of piglets; in-house prototyping and group lactation; access to the outdoors). A recording of this webinar, held on 27/09/24, is now available on the LIT OUESTEREL Youtube channel: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yX1D2OUwnUo**

14/10/2024 : Des marraines pour éduquer les chevrettes

Document type: article published in **Réussir La Chèvre**

Author: Damien Hardy

Preview: For two months, Inrae placed adult goats with female kids on a diet of reconstituted milk. The aim was to add social enrichment, that could potentially help the kids.

Results of exploratory trials

Most farmers separate kids from their mothers at birth, mainly to limit the transmission of diseases such as CAEV or Johne's disease. While colostrum and milk can be replaced by thermized colostrum or reconstituted milk, the mother's other functions, such as provision of care, soothing body contact and socialization, are not always compensated for. By observing and imitating their mothers, youngsters gradually learn to eat solids and identify hazards. On the basis of previous research on lambs and the views of goat farners, INRAE, in partnership with the Anses and the Institut de l'élevage, tested the rearing of young goats in the presence of non-lactating adult goats. At the experimental unit in Bourges (Cher), twelve young female goat kids were placed with two non-lactating adult goats that had previously given birth, the "godmothers". These "godmothers" stayed with the kids for sixty days, then were removed one week before weaning. A second batch of twelve kids remained without a godmother. INRAE operators noted the animals' behavior every five minutes for six hours a day on two days a week.

A love-hate relationship

"Overall, the goat kids with godmothers spent more time resting," explains Raymond Nowak, the INREA researcher. They also played, ran or jumped less than those without godmothers." In the experiment, the goat kids had a space where only they could go, separated from the godmothers by barriers with closely-spaced bars. The kids with godmothers spent less time in this protected area than did those without godmothers. Once the godmothers had been removed from the pen, the kids even reclaimed the space. (...) Social contact sometimes involved avoidance, and two kids were never seen interacting with the godmothers. The interactions are different from those with mothers," observes Raymond Nowak. Between the godmothers and the kids, it's a bit of a love-hate relationship."

More curious kids, but no bigger

Contrary to the initial hypothesis, the presence of the godmothers did not significantly influence solid food consumption, and the growth of the kids was similar in both groups. However, the hindquarters of kids reared with godmothers appeared cleaner at certain times. This effect, which could be linked to a sharing of microbiota with adults, suggests a better overall health status. Behavioral tests carried out after a month and a half of group living showed that kids raised with godmothers bleated less when isolated in an unfamiliar corridor. They were more inquisitive and explored the environment more when placed between two boxes containing either the godmothers or unknown goats. They also spent more time close to the godmothers than the standard formula-fed kids. Despite the low level of social interaction observed in the rearing pen, the godmothers were attractive and reassuring to their kids in uncomfortable situations. "Living together works well, and we can assume that the adults are enriching the goat kids' intestinal flora", sums up Raymond Nowak. This initial exploratory study will continue, with a particular focus on post-weaning behavior and the effects on adult health. The godmothers were immune to CAEV but not Johne's disease. The goat kids will have serological samples taken for at least three years to check for possible contamination. The technique has yet to be evaluated in a commercial farm setting, and it remains to be seen, in particular, how many godmothers are required to have an effect on the transmission of microbiota to the young.

07/10/2024 : Effects of Using Mechanical Brushes on the Productive Performance of Dairy Cows

Document type: scientific article published in **Veterinary Sciences**

Authors: Li, H.; Zhang, R.; Li, H.; Yuan, H.; Zhang, R.; Ren, H.; Xiao, J.; Li, Z.; Wang, A.; Jin, Y.; Lin, P.

Preview: Intensive farming can reduce production costs and maximize animal production efficiency; however, it also causes many adverse effects on the welfare of dairy cows. A mechanical brush is an automated grooming device that promotes the grooming behavior of dairy cattle, thereby helping to alleviate stress. In the present study, we evaluated the effects of using mechanical brushes on the production performance of dairy cows by comprehensively analyzing their milk production, health status, and reproductive performance. The cows were assigned to 6 groups: 109 lactating dairy cows (brush treatment) and 105 controls (without brush treatment), 64 dry milk dairy cows (brush treatment) and 49 controls (without brush treatment), and 198 perinatal cows (brush treatment) and 65 controls (without brush treatment). We found an increasing trend in the daily utility time and usage frequency of mechanical brushes for each cow during the lactating period (7.73 ± 4.02 min/d and 2.90 ± 1.22 times/d, respectively), dry period (15.97 ± 14.16 min/d and 4.21 ± 2.91 times/d, respectively), and perinatal period (25.15 ± 19.05 min/d and 5.45 ± 3.83 times/d, respectively) ($p \leq 0.01$ and $p \leq 0.05$, respectively). The installation location of the mechanical brush significantly affected the frequency of its usage during the different periods. The head was the preferred body part for using the mechanical brush during the lactation and dry periods (59.32% and 44.54%,

respectively), while the hip was the main preferred grooming part during the perinatal period (40.17%). Overall, the time, frequency, and preferred body part of dairy cows that used mechanical brushes varied across different physiological stages. Additionally, mechanical brush use in lactating and dry dairy cows significantly improved cleanliness of the body's surface ($p \leq 0.05$) and enhanced milk production of lactating cows ($p \leq 0.01$), particularly for cows with four and five parities. Thus, the use of mechanical brushes could improve the production performance of dairy cows and enhance sustainability of large-scale farms.

Pain management

31/10/2024 : Comparison of the Competitiveness for Danish, Dutch, and German Piglet Producers under Consideration of Country-Specific Methods of Piglet Castration with Anesthesia

Document type: technical-economic summary published in **Agriculture**

Author: Mandes Verhaagh

Preview: Pig producers in Europe adopt different production methods for male pig fattening. More than half of the animals are surgically castrated. The different interpretations of animal welfare in different countries lead to market differentiation and economically different production conditions, which do not restrict trade, but economically lead to drastic competitive changes for local producers. While the Netherlands has already implemented surgical castration for the export market, using CO2 narcosis (NL), Denmark and Germany are each introducing their strategies with local anesthesia (DK) and isoflurane anesthesia (DE), respectively. Using typical pig farms from the agri benchmark Pig Network, the additional costs and economic impacts of animal welfare regulations are calculated. In Germany, isoflurane anesthesia increases costs by EUR 28.54 to EUR 49.86 per sow, or EUR 1.93 to EUR 3.81 per male piglet. This corresponds to a cost increase of around 5% per piglet. In Denmark, the costs of local anesthesia with procaine increase more moderately by EUR 3.55 to EUR 5.05 per sow, or around EUR 0.30 per male piglet. The cost increase here is less than 1% per piglet. The additional costs are leading to a loss of competitiveness for Denmark and Germany compared to the Netherlands. However, Germany is also losing profit significantly compared to Denmark. This study highlights that animal welfare regulations can negatively impact the competitiveness of the pig sector. It emphasizes the need for countries to implement such regulations carefully, ensuring that they do not lead to the loss of production or international competitiveness. A balanced approach that supports both animal welfare and economic sustainability is essential.

27/10/2024 : Development of the calf grimace scale for pain and stress assessment in castrated Angus beef calves

Document type: scientific article published in **Scientific Reports**

Authors: Farghal, M., Pajor, E., Luna, S.P.L., Pang D., Windeyer M.C. & Ceballos M.C.

Preview: Grimace scales have been used to assess pain in various animal species. This study aimed to develop the calf grimace scale (CGS), evaluate its responsiveness and the effect of external factors (change of environment and dam separation, and restraint) on CGS. Sixty-nine Angus calves, 6–8 weeks old, were randomly allocated into castrated ($n = 34$) and sham castrated ($n = 35$) groups. Images were extracted from videos pre- (M1-M4), during- (M5), and post-castration/sham castration (M6, M7). Six facial action units (FAUs) were identified: ear position, orbital tightening, tension above the eye, nostril dilation, straining of chewing muscle, and mouth opening. Final CGS median scores increased after castration ($P \leq 0.001$) for both non-restrained (M7 versus M2) and restrained (M6

versus M3) calves, indicating scale responsiveness. Final CGS median scores increased ($P \leq 0.001$) when calves were subjected to external factors before castration (M1 [baseline] versus M2 and M3). However, there was no difference ($P \geq 0.05$) in CGS median scores before and after sham castration, regardless of restraint (M3 versus M6, and M2 versus M7), indicating that the external factors may have reached a maximum effect. The CGS is composed of six FAUs, responsive to acute pain and can identify stress unrelated to pain.

Regulation

18/11/2024 : Animal Welfare Expert Group - European Commission

Document type: announcement published by the European Commission

Author: European Commission

Preview: In 2024, the European Commission established the Animal Welfare Expert Group to assist the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety in the preparation of legislative proposals and policy initiatives, as well as in the preparation of delegated acts in the field of animal welfare.
The expert group, consisting of Member States and EEA/EFTA countries, will also be a forum for exchanges on matters related to the enforcement and application of the EU animal welfare legislation, to ensure a more harmonised approach to official controls and a more coherent compliance with the common rules.
Link to the minutes of the 16 September meeting

08/11/2024 : Compassion in World Farming appelle à une amélioration du bien-être animal

Document type: article published in Eureporter

Author: Martin Banks

Preview: Le Campaign group Compassion in World Farming c is calling for improved animal welfare at EU level. It wants European lawmakers to ensure that such action “is central” to the new Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare’s role in the new mandate and not just to the job title, in the confirmation hearings which start this week (4 November).
The NGO is urging MEPs to ensure that the next set of Commissioners is “fully dedicated to delivering the ban on caged animal farming it promised.”
It also wants them to “align EU animal welfare legislation with the latest scientific evidence by 2026 at the very latest”, as recommended by the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of the EU Agriculture.
In answer to written questions ahead of the hearings, Animal Welfare Commissioner-candidate Olivér Várhelyi, committed to following up on the End the Cage Age ECI and modernizing rules on animal welfare to match the latest science. But the group says he “failed to provide a clear timeline”.
A spokesman said: “While Compassion welcomes this commitment, it expects more ambition and clarity on the files pending to deliver on its promises. “This includes the ban on caged animal farming, the review of EU animal welfare laws as well as on the delivery of species-specific legislation laying down minimum standards for the protection of laying hens, broilers, pigs, calves, rabbits and fishes.”
The NGO also wants the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to be reviewed to align with these objectives and provide support for farmers “who commit to phasing out cages, improving welfare standards and promoting regenerative agriculture.” Vinciane Patelou, head of EU at Compassion in World Farming, said: “For the first time, animal welfare is central to a Commissioner’s title, matching citizens’ demands for better animal welfare standards, but this cannot be just window dressing.” (...)

In response to the successful End the Cage Age European Citizens' Initiative, signed by over 1.4 million EU citizens and led by Compassion in World Farming, the European Commission made a commitment in 2021 to introduce legislative proposals by 2023 to end caged farming by 2027. It also announced it would ensure all imported products in the EU comply with future cage-free standards. Regrettably, the previous Commission has not delivered a proposal to ban cages.

07/11/2024 : Une première : un commissaire en charge du bien-être animal en Europe

Document type: article published in **30 Millions d'Amis Foundation**

Author: Fondation 30 Millions d'Amis

Preview: On November 6, 2024, European Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi (Hungary) presented MEPs with his strategy for managing the animal health and welfare portfolio under his responsibility for the 2024-2029 term. (...)

Unprecedented! This is the first time that animal welfare has appeared in the title of a European Commissioner. A quick look in the rear-view mirror: in mid-September 2024, Ursula Von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, unveiled the distribution of the various Commissioners and the portfolios she wished to assign to them for her next term of office (2024-2029). Among them is Olivér Várhelyi, the current European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy. He has been appointed to manage the health and... animal welfare portfolio. A hopeful title. However, does this appointment mean that the European Union (EU) is - at last - recognizing the importance of the subject? (...)

Many challenges await

It will be the end of 2023 before the Commission presents two proposals for European regulations: one "on the welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability", the other "on the protection of animals during transport ". These texts are now on the agenda of the Council of the EU and the European Parliament, where Fondation 30 Millions d'Amis is working to strengthen the proposals before they are adopted. In addition to the two aforementioned regulations, the European Commission will have to respond to **European Citizens' Initiatives (ECI)** for the removal of animals from cages, the end of fur farming and marketing, the development of alternatives to animal experimentation... These are all important issues for a Commissioner in charge of "animal welfare": the Fondation 30 Millions d'Amis will be vigilant to ensure that concrete action is taken! "If the new Commissioner for Animal Health and Welfare fails to remedy [the confinement of farm animals in cages], his title will be derided," insists Dr. J. Swabe.

A strong signal, but...

If animal welfare finally makes its appearance in the title of a Commission portfolio, it remains to be seen whether Olivér Várhely will be able to translate into decisive, concrete measures all that this represents in terms of hope for improving the lot of hundreds of millions of animals in Europe. As far as I know, he has no specific interest or track record in this area," says HSI's Director of Public Affairs. Especially since Hungary does not support a ban on cages in Europe." According to a ranking carried out by CIWF, the country continues to confine almost 73% of farm animals. For animal protection associations, however, the inclusion of animal welfare in the title of a European Commissioner is seen as a first step: "We are at the dawn of a new era for animal rights in Europe," declared Michel Vandenbosch, president of the Belgian association GAIA, in September 2024. (...)

05/11/2024 : Assemblée nationale : réponse écrite à la question n°1069 : Transition hors-cage des élevages avicoles

Document type: Answer to question n°1069 published in the **Official Journal of the French Republic**

Authors: question : Mme Béatrice Roullaud Seine-et-Marne (6th district) - Rassemblement National.
Answer: Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry

Question: Mme Mme Béatrice Roullaud alerts Mme la ministre de l'agriculture, de la souveraineté alimentaire et de la forêt to the necessary and unavoidable transition of poultry farming away from cages. France must take a firm stance on banning the rearing of egg-laying hens in cages, and stop playing the double game of claiming to be the world's most virtuous poultry farm, while continuing to produce eggs in cages. It should be remembered that battery hens never see the light of day, are kept in cages of less than 750 cm2 per animal, are kept on wire mesh floors, have their beaks burned without anaesthetic to prevent injury due to the cramped conditions, some lose their feathers and die from trampling, and that as a result, the risk of being contaminated by Salmonella bacteria is very high with battery eggs. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the European Commission's scientific body, has deemed the cage system obsolete and unsuitable. Nevertheless, while the European executive committed itself in 2021 to presenting a legislative proposal by the end of 2023 to improve farm animal welfare, including a ban on cages by 2027, the revision of European legislation presented in October 2023 contained no proposals on livestock farming, apart from those relating to animal transport, in defiance of the expectations of a majority of Europeans. Against this backdrop, it is most regrettable to learn that on December 4, 2023, the Conseil d'État rejected the joint petition lodged by nine animal protection organizations for partial annulment of the decree of December 15, 2021 concerning the reorganization of cage rearing buildings for laying hens, thus ignoring the substantiated opinion of the public rapporteur, who explained on November 10 that this decree, by allowing reinvestment in cage buildings for laying hens, contravened the 2018 Egalim law, which aims precisely "to put an end to cage rearing while giving farmers time to adapt to these changes". She therefore asks what measures the Government intends to implement to respect its commitments and find, with the poultry industry, the appropriate support levers to definitively move away from the cage system. While Germany has committed to this transition by 2025, she asks whether the Government is ready to set a course for poultry farming that respects animal welfare, as the French people wish.

Answer: The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) "End the Cage Age" calls on the European Commission to propose legislation banning the use of: - cages for laying hens, rabbits, pullets, broiler breeders, layer breeders, quail, ducks and geese; - farrowing pens and stalls for sows; - and individual pens for calves. In its response to the European Citizens' Initiative, the European Commission undertook to present a legislative proposal to phase out and eventually ban the use of cage systems for all the animals mentioned in the initiative. France supports the approach proposed by the European Commission to determine the modalities for phasing out cages, based on scientific advice and an impact analysis. Pending the draft European regulations resulting from the revision of the texts, France has taken up the issue. Improving animal welfare and combating animal abuse are government priorities. There is a strong and growing societal expectation on the part of consumers and citizens regarding animal welfare issues, and this must be met. Several principles underpin the government's action. Firstly, one of the challenges is to prevent any distortion of competition. To this end, we are focusing on two levers: supporting European harmonization of legislation, and ensuring that stricter animal welfare requirements within the European Union are accompanied by equivalent rules for animals whose products are imported. Secondly, transition has a cost. This additional cost must be shared with all players in the livestock industry, including distributors and consumers. Lastly, the government wishes to provide sufficient visibility for operators, particularly the new generations, so that they can plan ahead and invest. With this in mind, the government is supporting a number of research projects, some of which are aimed at ending the use of cages: - the project led by the

French poultry farming technical institute (ITAVI) to develop collective pens for fattening rabbits, backed by the ministerial announcement of public support for the rabbit farming sector of 500,000 euros per year, made to protection associations and professionals in September 2023. By June 2023, "cage-free" rabbit farming was estimated at 10-12%; - the CAREFUL project aims to create a cage-free industry for fattened palmipeds. Progress has already been made in some sectors; in the laying hen sector, for example, the objective of reducing the number of hens kept in cages has been steadily falling since 2018. As early as October 2019, the Comité national pour la promotion de l'œuf (CNPO) had announced that it was ahead of schedule in meeting its commitment to have 50% of hens from farms alternative to intensive cage production. Today, poultry farms are constantly adapting, and less than 33% of laying hens in France will still be raised in cages, i.e. almost 2/3 of hens raised in alternative systems to cages by 2022, compared with 58% in Europe by 2021. France is therefore ahead of its European partners, and well on the way to ending the use of caged laying hens.

05/11/2024 : Assemblée nationale : réponse écrite à la question n°1282 : Torture animale sur les îles de La Réunion et de Mayotte

Document type: Answer to question n°1282 published in the **Official Journal of the French Republic**

Authors: question : Mme Béatrice Roullaud Seine-et-Marne (6th district) - Rassemblement National.
Answer: Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry

Question : Mme Béatrice Roullaud draws the attention of the French Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry to acts of animal torture committed by organized gangs on the islands of Reunion and Mayotte. Indeed, it is with absolute horror that we observe and denounce the practices of rare cruelty that young people, often minors, indulge in with stray or stolen dogs: after having "stored" them in squats or camps hidden in the forest, they chain them up or put them in cages to then indulge in the worst abuses: strangulations, burns, disembowelments, mutilations, enucleations, decapitations, etc. This scourge, which affects these islands, is one of the most serious in the world. This scourge, which has been affecting these islands of Reunion and Mayotte since 2015, has recently become more widespread: by way of example, in two years, over 1,000 reports of mistreatment, i.e. almost 10 a week, have been received by the Reunion-based association APEBA (Association pour l'éducation à la bienveillance animale), which has rescued 150 animals from squats and wild storage. However, animal protection associations in Reunion and Mauritania, who are on the front line when it comes to the atrocities discovered every day in the field, feel particularly abandoned and helpless, as they have no financial support to collect and care for tortured animals, cannot fight the crimes of these extremely violent gangs alone, and complain of a lack of criminal prosecution. While since 2015 animals have been "living beings endowed with sentience" (article 515-14 of the French Civil Code), political inaction in the face of this alarming situation is hard to understand. Without massive involvement from public authorities and local communities to re-establish a rule of law, dogs and cats will continue to be slaughtered with impunity in overseas departments. There is indeed cause for alarm, given that 98% of studies on the subject establish a link between acts of cruelty committed against animals and aggressive behavior towards humans. "The death of human empathy is one of the first and most revealing signs of a culture on the verge of sinking into barbarism" (Hannah Arendt). She therefore asks what measures the government intends to take to curb this scandal of animal torture, through actions that must be taken both in the field of education and repression.

Answer: The fight against animal abuse remains a priority for the Government, which has undertaken numerous actions in this direction in recent years. Law no. 2021-1539 of November 30,

2021, aimed at combating animal mistreatment and strengthening the bond between animals and humans, has already made it possible to toughen the penalties incurred in cases of animal mistreatment. Article 521-1 of the penal code has been amended. In addition, a national division to combat animal abuse was set up in 2023 by the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas France. Comprising 15 specialized agents (gendarmes, police officers and a veterinarian), this division deals with large-scale cases and alarming signs of abuse, such as pet trafficking, in conjunction with the national veterinary and phytosanitary investigation brigade of the Ministry of Agriculture. In this way, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry and the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas Territories are working together to combat these unbearable acts of cruelty. More generally, 4,000 gendarmes are currently undergoing training as part of a national partnership with the Society for the Protection of Animals, and animal welfare referents have been appointed in all gendarmeries and police stations. These referents work in liaison with the departmental directorates responsible for population protection, the French Office for Biodiversity and animal protection associations. Since the publication of the national plan for the well-being of companion animals on May 22, 2024, this partnership has been extended to the ministries in charge of the environment and justice, to reinforce the fight against mistreatment, abandonment and the management of animal straying. Funded by the France Relance plan, the Brigitte Bardot Foundation also carried out an audit of animal straying in the French overseas departments and regions. The report, submitted to the French Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry, is currently being finalized and will be presented to local stakeholders. The recommendations will be carefully studied, and will provide food for thought for government action in these departments. This action will rely primarily on local associations. For example, the sterilization of stray animals, to avoid overpopulation, and raising awareness of the need to respect animals, from an early age, seem to be major factors in the fight against animal abuse.

05/11/2024 : Assemblée nationale : réponse écrite à la question n°793 : Protection et accueil des chats errants

Document type: Answer to question n°793 published in the **Official Journal of the French Republic**

Authors: question : M. Gérard Leseul Seine-Maritime (5th district) - Socialistes et apparentés. Answer: Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry

Question: Mr. Gérard Leseul draws the attention of the French Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry to the protection and care of stray cats. He expresses his concern about the limited resources made available by the government to help associations that take in stray cats. The number of places available to associations to take in these animals is very limited, as are their financial resources. Faced with an upsurge in the number of abandoned cats in France, these organizations are working hard among themselves to take in as many animals as possible, so that they can be cared for, sterilized and then offered for adoption. According to those working in the field, reception facilities are saturated and financial resources are increasingly limited. Law no. 2023-1322 of December 29, 2023 provides an initial solution, with the creation of an endowment for the care of stray cats in communes, and the introduction of an animal referent in police stations. He would like to know how and when these measures will be implemented.

Answer: Under current legislation, stray animals are impounded under the authority of the mayor, but elected officials are under no obligation to sterilize stray or feral cats within their municipality. As an alternative, under article L. 211-27 of the French Rural and Maritime Fishing Code, cats living in groups may be captured, sterilized and then released. This solution has the advantage of preventing the recolonization of sites. It does, however, require monitoring of the released population, and a budget for capture, veterinary procedures and proper feeding. Funding is provided by town councils

and animal protection associations, in varying proportions. Law no. 2021-1539 of November 30, 2021, aimed at combating animal mistreatment and strengthening the bond between animals and humans, provided for the Government to draw up two reports on the subject of stray cats. The first, presenting a quantified diagnosis of the stray cat population in France and containing recommendations and funding proposals, is currently being finalized by the Ministry of Agriculture. It is based on interviews with local players, elected representatives, animal protection associations and veterinarians. It also aims to identify the various avenues for improving and financing actions to reduce feline straying. Article 12 of law no. 2021-1539 provides for an experiment enabling communes, which have stray cat management as one of their prerogatives, to sign an agreement with the State representative in the region concerning the management of stray cats. Working groups have already been set up with representatives of the regional and departmental governments (Direction régionale de l'alimentation, de l'agriculture et de la forêt and Direction départementale en charge de la protection des populations) and local authorities. The second report will focus on the results of this experiment. Ahead of the publication of these reports, and in order to take swift action, the Ministry of Agriculture has launched several initiatives to combat feline abandonment and straying. A budget of 30 million euros (M€) has been earmarked for animal protection associations that take in abandoned dogs and cats or sterilize stray animals. In addition, on September 2, 2024, the French Ministry of Agriculture launched a call for projects to support local authorities and public establishments for inter-communal cooperation (EPCI) that volunteer to manage stray cats. Pursuant to the Finance Act for 2024, the Ministry is mobilizing a €3m envelope for this purpose. Requests for funding mainly concern veterinary procedures for identifying and sterilizing stray cats, and any associated costs. The funding rate is set at 100% of eligible expenses, subject to a ceiling of €100,000 for the largest projects. In addition, special arrangements may be put in place under the responsibility of regional prefects in overseas departments and regions (DROM). Depending on the specific features of these territories, domestic dogs may also be eligible. This funding is allocated as part of the experiment provided for in the aforementioned law of November 30, 2021, which provides for the establishment of agreements between the State and mayors or presidents of territorial authorities and EPCIs volunteering to improve the management and care of stray or stray cat populations and to articulate the skills and resources of each signatory with this objective in mind. To apply for a grant, local authorities had to respond to the call for projects on the page entitled "Support for stray cat management projects", for which applications were open until October 10, 2024. This support is fully in line with the Government's national plan to improve the welfare of companion animals, one of whose objectives is to improve the management of canine and feline strays in France.

29/10/2024 : Meat lobby's pushback against EU animal welfare reforms

Document type: article published in **Brussels Morning**

Author: Martin Banks

Preview: New documents are said to “shed light” on a “pushback” from industry lobbyists against recent advancements in animal welfare science. Obtained through Freedom of Information Requests, the papers challenge the latest scientific opinions issued by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the EU’s food watchdog. Investigative journalist Thin Lei Win secured the documents as part of an in-depth investigation conducted last year and published by Lighthouse Reports in collaboration with the Guardian, a UK newspaper, and other media outlets. The exposé claims to reveal how the “meat lobby exerted significant pressure on the European Commission and its agencies, contributing to a legislative standstill in the much-anticipated revision of the EU animal welfare laws, including the Commission’s commitment to ban caged farming.” The 27 newly released

documents claim to raise “critical” questions about the influence of industry lobbyists on policy-making in the EU. Tactics employed by what is called “Big Agriculture” include “aggressively dismissing scientific evidence.” Notable excerpts from the alleged communications compiled by campaigners include:
- “…the recommendations are reflecting a lack of understanding of modern breeding technics, heritability of traits and sparse scientific evidence.”
- “Relevant studies should be performed instead of using unrelevant studies.”
- “The scientists, with their high-level expertise, have overlooked the facts, and provide instead their own opinions on what they thought might be the case. The estimates of the scientists, conflict with reality. They are also in conflict with the publications they have put forward themselves. […] The fact that EFSA puts this forward as a scientific opinion could be strongly questioned whether this is in line with science ethics. It suggests that the EFSA opinion is science and that it can be seen as a welfare advice, while it is not.”

Olga Kikou, Director of Advocacy at The European Institute of Animal Law & Policy and organizer of the ‘End the Cage Age’ European Citizens’ Initiative, commented on the findings. She stated: “These new documents reveal the meat lobby’s aggressive attempts to undermine the robust scientific evidence on animal welfare presented by the European Food Safety Authority. “Europeans have a profound concern for animal welfare, yet EU animal protection laws have been stagnant for over a decade, despite claims to the contrary. “We commend journalists for shedding light on the industry’s dirty lobbying tactics. “It is essential for us, citizens, to ensure that politicians prioritize the public interest over the demands of a select few, whose primary goal is to avert progress for the sake of private profits,” said Kikou.

29/10/2024 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-001586/2024 : Illegal docking of piglet tails in the Netherlands

Document type: Response from the **European Commission** to question E-001586/2024

Authors: question: Anja Hazekamp (The Left). Answer: Mrs Kyriakides on behalf of the European Commission

Question: Routine docking (burning off or clipping) of piglets’ tails has been banned in the EU since 1991.[1] 89 % of Europeans support a ban on the cutting off of body parts of animals.[2] Moreover, EFSA has confirmed that the practice of tail docking should not be carried out.[3] In almost all EU Member States, the relevant legislation is being infringed. In the Netherlands, 99 % of piglets still have their tails burnt off or clipped without anaesthetic. As a result, complaints have recently been lodged with the European Commission.[4][5]

1.How does the Commission assess the implementation of Directive 2008/120/EC, which bans the routine docking of piglet tails?

2.Will the Commission take steps against the EU Member States concerned, in the form of fines or other sanctions, to enforce implementation of the directive in the short term?

3.After having spent years carrying out activities that have not led to concrete improvements, including performing audits, developing educational materials, promoting best practices, pushing for action plans and repeatedly engaging in dialogue with EU Member States, does the Commission deem it necessary to initiate infringement proceedings against EU Member States that fail to comply with the legislation?

[1] Directive 2008/120/EC, Annex I, point 8.

[2] Special Eurobarometer, Attitudes of Europeans towards Animal Welfare, March 2023.

[3] EFSA Scientific Opinion, Welfare of pigs on farm, June 2022.

[4] https://eerstekamer.partijvoordedieren.nl/nieuws/partij-voor-de-dieren-eerste-kamer-dient-klacht-in-bij-europese-commissie-over-illegaal-afbranden-biggenstaartjes

[5] https://www.animalrights.be/animal-rights-dient-klacht-bij-europese-commissie-over-illegaal-afbranden-biggenstaartjes-belgië

Answer: 1. The recent Fitness Check of the EU Animal Welfare legislation[1] concluded that there is a lack of uniform enforcement regarding the ban on the routine tail docking of pigs.
2. The Commission has no power to impose fines or other economic sanctions on a Member State to enforce the implementation of the directive. Financial sanctions may be ordered by the Court following a request by the Commission in the context of an infringement procedure concerning a failure by a Member State to comply with a judgment of the Court.
3. In line with the Commission enforcement strategy, infringement proceedings are launched as a means of last resort, whereas the Commission continuously seeks to achieve faster and efficient compliance from the Member States by exploring all appropriate tools to achieve legal compliance. For this reason, the Commission continues efforts to work closely with the Member States through a variety of instruments and fora to ensure the proper implementation of EU animal welfare legislation. In that context, the Commission recently has set up an animal welfare expert and an animal welfare working group[2] to pursue discussions with all Member States. One of the main topics of discussion is the enforcement of the ban on routine tail docking of pigs.
[1] Commission Staff Working Document Fitness Check of the EU Animal Welfare legislation: https://food.ec.europa.eu/document/download/b9cc1000-c978-4895-8e9b-c2e1296adbfe_en?filename=aw_eval_revision_swd_2022-328_en.pdf
[2] Animal Welfare Expert Group

Transport, slaughter, Pick-up

04/11/2024 : L'invité du 8:30 : Florian Jean, exploitant référent de "L'abattoir mobile du Lubéron"

Document type: podcast broadcast on Alpes 1 mag

Author: Alpes 1 mag

Preview: This mobile slaughterhouse project has been underway since 2018, but it is encountering difficulties in its implementation. It is now 6 ears since the project began: involving a semi-mobile rural abattoir in the Lubéron, covering the Alpes de Haute-Provence area in particular. The project is run by the association "L'abattoir mobile du Luberon", whose members are goat and sheep farmers. To support the project, click on this link.

Link to podcast

08/10/2024 : Abattage des bovins : contrôle de l'état de conscience et fluidité industrielle

Document type: scientific article published in Activités

Author: Jourdan Félix

Preview: Cattle slaughter: monitoring consciousness and industrial fluidity
This article examines how the control of animal consciousness, prescribed by EC regulation no. 1099/2009 on animal welfare, fits in with the objective of industrial fluidity in cattle slaughterhouses. Based on observations made in 12 slaughterhouses and a corpus of 30 interviews with industrialists and state officials in charge of animal welfare inspections, the article outlines the difficulties posed by the implementation of this requirement, and reports on the strategies developed by actors in an attempt to reconcile production continuity with regulatory compliance. The article shows that the monitoring of animals' state of consciousness enters into tension with the objective of industrial

fluidity because it introduces uncertainty into the slaughtering process, particularly in the case of ritual practices carried out without stunning. Highlighting these standardization difficulties leads us to discuss this prescription for monitoring of cattle end-of-life from the angle of a paradoxical injunction.

31/07/2024 : Animal welfare during transport, evolution, and perspectives of European Union Legislation and Policy

Document type: scientific synthesis published in Open Veterinary Journal

Authors: Massimo Giangaspero and Pasquale Turno

Preview: In the one health approach, which summarizes the concept that human, animal, and plant health are interdependent and linked to the ecosystems in which they exist, animal welfare assumes an important role. In addition, the Farm to Fork Strategy of the European Union recognizes animal welfare as an essential component. Transport of animals involves a number of issues related to welfare. Animals are subjected to continuous stress, not only during transit on vehicles, vessels, trains, or airplanes, but also during loading and unloading operations. The handling and transport conditions have improved from basic and relatively rudimentary systems, with elements to attenuate the discomfort of animals having been gradually introduced, especially for long-distance transport. Despite several improvements in animal welfare standards during transportation there are still pressing issues in current EU legislation which deserve reviewing. Recently, several scientific opinions on animal welfare, including during transport, have been published by the European Food Safety Agency, following requests by the European Commission. In addition, the European Court of Auditors published its last report focused on animal welfare during transport. These reports underline the need to review current legislation governing the topic and highlight a number of outstanding issues in the European Union and in Third Countries. This article summarizes the history and current status of this complex issue.

Working animals

04/11/2024 : Welfare and stress of horses used for Equine-assisted services: A systematic review

Document type: scientific synthesis published in Applied Animal Behaviour Science

Authors: Bethany H. Baxley, Howard Rodriguez-Mori, Nichole C. Anderson

Preview: Interest in Equine assisted services (EAS) has grown over the past two decades, with research highlighting the benefits for participants in ridden, or mounted services. However, there is a notable lack of studies focusing on the welfare of the horses involved in these services. As research in this area continues to develop, a review is necessary to evaluate the quality of existing studies about the welfare of horses in the EAS industry. Systematic reviews provide a structured approach to organizing current literature and identifying gaps in the research. The goal of this systematic review is to summarize the existing literature on the stress and welfare of horses in EAS and pinpoint areas requiring further investigation. Following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines, five databases were searched using terms relevant to EAS. Of the search result, 28 papers met the criteria for inclusion, requiring research to be published in English, in a peer-reviewed journal, studying EAS and its effects on equine welfare. Of the 28, 24 articles focused on quantitative data, including behavioral and physiological indicators of stress and welfare. The remaining 4 articles were survey and EAS module analysis, providing qualitative data about EAS horses. From the selected papers, we found the following trends related

to EAS horse stress indicators. First, 20 (71.4 %) papers investigated physiological indicators, and 16 (57.1 %) investigated behavioral indicators. The sample size in 16 (57.1 %) articles was ten or fewer animals. The results in 17 (60.7 %) of the articles found that there was no significant difference in horses' stress or that no conclusions could be drawn regarding the horses' stress and welfare. A survey conducted by Rankins et al. (2021) revealed that the most common problems EAS centers face are behavioral and soundness issues leading to high horse turnover. Despite these findings, many studies found a lack of significant differences in their results, likely due to limitations in study design, highlighting significant gaps in the research. We also identified several inconsistent factors that are likely to affect and confound the results of EAS research. Therefore, given the limited knowledge about the welfare of horses working in EAS and the confounding factors that are likely to influence the results of studies, more robust research is needed to better understand the challenges of horses working in EAS and their welfare.