French Reference Centre for Animal Welfare

FRCAW Newsletter 51
December 2024 – January 2025

Editorial

For this first issue of the year, the FRCAW team would like to send you our warmest wishes and thank you for your continued interest in our newsletter. We are introducing a new two-monthly schedule this year, so you can expect to receive the next issue at the end of March.
In the meantime, we hope you enjoy the following selection of scientific, technical and regulatory items from the past two months' animal welfare news. You will notice that two of our website categories now look a little different: arthropods are now under 'invertebrates', and we have added AI to the precision farming category.

Happy reading!

Balancing animal health and welfare at the heart of environmentally-friendly farming systems

Image from Réussir.fr. © Ambitious Studio* - Rick Barrett

How can animal health and welfare be jointly improved in the transition of livestock production systems towards sustainability? A group of INRAE researchers tackle this question in INRAE Productions Animales, in a piece adapted from an invited review published by the authors in Animal. Positive and negative interactions between animal welfare and animal health are discussed, and acceptable compromises are identified. In considering how to support the transition of livestock farming systems, the group takes the view that 'unlocking' research pathways are called for, opening up change through the integration of interdisciplinary research in the human, economic, animal and

veterinary sciences. They assert that the construction of new systems for a multi-performance agroecological transition can only be achieved by engaging the various stakeholders (professionals in the sector, younger trainees, consumers) in a common vision of environmentally friendly livestock farming, where animal health and welfare become opportunities for transition.

Forms of farm management that balance climate change with profitability, animal welfare and ecosystem health have also been the subject of a **UK study**, published in December in Animal. The study, carried out on sheep farms, shows that impaired welfare scenarios (lameness, parasites, inadequate feeding, insufficient shelter provision, lamb mortality) increase the product-level emission intensity of greenhouse gases (GHG) by reducing resource use efficiency. This study shows how system-specific interventions to improve animal welfare can benefit the reduction of emission intensity and emphasises the advantages of integrating animal welfare into GHG mitigation strategies.

Transport of animals in extreme temperatures

Image from Euractiv website

Across the world, climate disruption is introducing episodes of extreme temperature, affecting both humans and the animals who depend on them. For farm animals, these extreme conditions add to the many stressors they already face, particularly during transport. Last October the **Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union** proposed the introduction of in-vehicle temperature monitoring systems during live animal transport that would alert drivers when temperatures reach 0°C or +35°C. This regulatory measure had not been included in the proposed **revisions to European Parliament and Council Regulation (EC) 1/2005** concerning the protection of animals during transport that were published in December 2023 and has been broadly welcomed by Member States. Nevertheless, concerns have been raised over the lack of clarity in the measure on the actions to be taken by drivers when these temperature thresholds are reached.

This regulation of the transport of live animals forms part of the wider update to animal welfare legislation that **Olivér Várhelyi**, the recently appointed European Commissioner for Animal Health and Welfare (2024-2029), has now been tasked to oversee. His **mission statement** is available on the European Commission's website.

In anticipation of these revisions, research on the transport of live animals in extreme temperatures is expanding. Last December saw the publication of a **study** assessing the impact of winter transport on pig welfare and meat quality. The researchers found that, once outside temperatures fell close to 0°C during transport, pigs on an upper transporter deck showed more signs of fatigue on arrival than those on lower decks. On examination, the recorded temperatures for the upper deck indeed proved significantly lower. This finding provides supporting evidence for the new measure proposed by the EU Council whereby sensors should be placed in those parts of lorries that are most exposed to extreme temperatures.

AI and animal observation

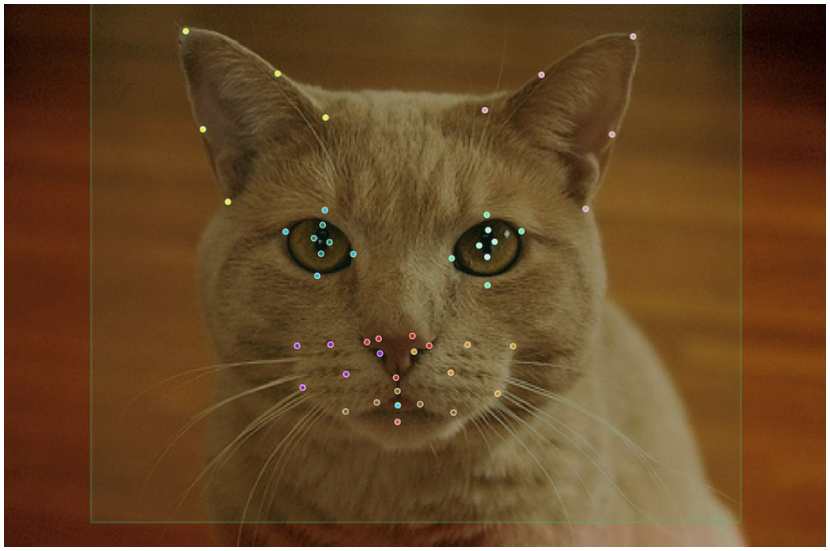

Image from the **Science** website (**Martvel et al. 2024**)

A study that appeared at the beginning of January in Scientific Reports has used artificial intelligence to detect **pain in sheep** following surgery. Surprisingly, an AI system based on the CLIP encoder outperformed human experts in assessing pain using the facial expression scale and was a match for standard behavioural scoring. Other researchers have been exploring a similar use of AI to detect facial cues involved in affiliative interactions in **cats**. The research team identified rapid facial mimicry (RFM) as an essential element of social bonding, using AI for the automatic detection of the facial cues produced when pairs of affiliated or unaffiliated cats came face to face, tracking the synchronicity of micro-movements undetectable by the human eye. The results reveal more frequent RFM in affiliative contexts, particularly in ear movements immediately followed by positive interaction (play).

The use of AI to observe animals has many potential practical applications, helping to understand their emotions and needs, relieve their pain, prevent conflicts between unaffiliated individuals and improve their welfare. There is also growing interest in animal-computer interactions. A **scientific synthesis** has recently extended this user-based approach to farm animal settings, exploring the potential of human-computer and animal-computer interactions in the context of precision livestock farming and AI to enhance individual animal welfare.

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Positive animal welfare: consensus on a definition

Historically, the science of animal welfare has sought to reduce animal suffering to a minimum, but scientists are taking an increasing interest in the promotion of positive experiences, referred to collectively as 'positive animal welfare', or PAW. In an article published this month in **Biology Letters**, an interdisciplinary group come to a consensus on the definition of this term, defining positive animal welfare as '*the animal flourishing through the experience of predominantly positive mental states and the development of competence and resilience. PAW goes beyond ensuring good physical health and the prevention and alleviation of suffering. It encompasses animals experiencing positive mental states resulting from rewarding experiences, including having choices and opportunities to actively pursue goals and achieve desired outcomes*'.

EURCAW-Aqua's website creation

EURCAW Aqua

The European Reference Centre for Aquatic Animal Welfare (EURCAW-Aqua) now has its own **website**. EURCAW-Aqua, **established on January 17, 2024** in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council, is responsible for supporting horizontal activities of the European Commission and Member States in the area of welfare requirements for fish, cephalopods and decapods.

FRCAW's Knowledge Hub

New documents of scientific, technical, and regulatory interest are regularly added to the FRCAW Knowledge Hub:
https://www.cnr-bea.fr/en/plateforme-de-ressources/

FRCAW's Expert opinions and reports

All the expert reports produced by the FRCAW can be accessed here:
https://www.cnr-bea.fr/en/expertise-avis-travaux/

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Animal feed

18/01/2025 : Q2E on nutrition and tail biting - EURCAW-Pigs

Document type: Answer to a question published by EURCAW-Pigs

Author: EURCAW-Pigs

Preview: EURCAW-Pigs received a question on the relationship between nutrition and tail biting. In short, the answer is:
Access to sufficient amounts of good quality water (e.g. the number of drinking points) and feed is important to prevent tail biting. Exact diet recommendations for preventing tail biting are difficult to make because the optimum depends on the current requirements of the pigs, the feed composition and the method of feed delivery. However, abrupt changes in dietary composition may increase the risk of biting. There are some indications that dietary fibre reduces the risk of biting. Related to this: additional roughage is known to reduce pen mate directed behaviour, and thus tail biting. Low levels of amino acids are associated with tail biting behaviour, and this is worsened when health challenges are present. Offering licking blocks (salt) may help to reduce biting.
The full answer: Nutrition and tail biting (Q2E-Pigs-2023-012): question to EURCAW-Pigs

Cognition-Emotions

22/01/2025 : A consensus on the definition of positive animal welfare

Document type: Opinion article published in Biology Letters

Authors: Rault Jean-Loup, Bateson Melissa, Boissy Alain, Forkman Björn, Grinde Bjørn, Gygax Lorenz, Harfeld Jes Lynning, Hintze Sara, Keeling Linda J., Kostal Lubor, Lawrence Alistair B., Mendl Michael T., Miele Mara, Newberry Ruth C., Sandøe Peter, Špinka Marek, Taylor Alex H., Webb Laura E., Whalin Laura and Jensen Margit Bak

Preview: The concept of animal welfare is evolving due to progress in our scientific understanding of animal biology and changing societal expectations. Animal welfare science has been primarily concerned with minimizing suffering, but there is growing interest in also promoting positive experiences, grouped under the term positive animal welfare (PAW). However, there are discrepancies in the use of the term PAW. An interdisciplinary group arrived at a consensus that 'PAW can be defined as the animal flourishing through the experience of predominantly positive mental states and the development of competence and resilience. PAW goes beyond ensuring good physical health and the prevention and alleviation of suffering. It encompasses animals experiencing positive mental states resulting from rewarding experiences, including having choices and opportunities to actively pursue goals and achieve desired outcomes'. The definition also considers individual and species-specific differences. It provides a framework for researchers to investigate PAW and thereby generate innovative, informative and reproducible science. Studies of PAW can contribute to a richer picture of an animal's life and may elucidate the biological foundations of happiness. The definition creates opportunities to inspire scientific progress in animal biology and to align animal care practices, legislation and markets with societal expectations.

12/12/2024 : Animaux d'élevage : prendre en compte leurs ressentis

Document type: article published in Afis Science (Association française pour l'information scientifique)

Authors: Rachel Degrande, Juliette Cognié, Véronique Deiss, Angélique Favreau-Peigné, Valérie Fillon, Plotine Jardat, Christine Leterrier, Frédéric Lévy, Odile Petit, Freddie-Jeanne Richard

Preview: In everyday language, the term "farmed animals" refers to species raised for food production. In livestock farming, the living environment of these animals imposes what are sometimes severe constraints and restrictions in order to maximize production. These low-quality living conditions have long been criticized by voices in civil society. Changes in the answers given to surveys show that, in France, respondents are increasingly concerned by issues relating to animal living conditions in general, and farm animal welfare in particular. But what precisely is animal welfare? An in-depth definition that takes into account not only an animal's physical condition but also its feelings and state of mind, has recently been published by the French National Agency for Food, Environmental and Workplace Safety (Anses). This article wil first give a brief history of the evolution of the concept of animal welfare to the present day, and will then give insights into the scientific basis for considering the feelings, and hence the welfare, of farm animals' feelings, by examining their cognitive and emotional capacities.

24/10/2024 : Towards a task to assess boredom-like states in pigs–Stimulus validation as a basis

Document type: scientific article published in PLoS ONE

Authors: Hintze S, Heigl H, Winckler C

Preview: Animal boredom is a potentially prevalent, but underresearched animal welfare concern. To study the characteristics of boredom and its welfare consequences, we need to be sure that animals are actually bored and do not suffer from other negatively valenced states like apathy and depression. Animals' responses towards stimuli of different valence (positive, ambiguous, negative) have been suggested to help differentiating between these states. Apathetic animals are hypothesised to show a decreased interest in stimuli of all valences, whereas depressed animals are thought to be less interested in positive stimuli only, due to anhedonia, a key symptom of depression. In contrast, bored animals are hypothesised to show an increased interest in all types of stimuli, including negative ones. To ensure that the applied stimuli are indeed judged as positive, ambiguous or negative by the animals, we aimed to validate the valence of a range of stimuli in domesticated pigs, a species commonly kept under barren and monotonous conditions likely to induce boredom, as a basis for developing a task to distinguish between different negative states. Applying a within-subject design, 39 pigs (20 weaned piglets, 19 gilts) were individually exposed to twelve stimuli pre-classified as positive, ambiguous or negative in an approach-avoidance paradigm. The effects of stimulus, age (piglet, gilt) and their interaction on various approach and avoidance measures were analysed. Stimulus had a statistically significant effect on all measures and the observed pattern was according to pre-classification for many stimuli, but not all, resulting in a re-classification of the valence of five stimuli. The significant interaction between stimulus and age for some outcome measures indicates that age differences should be considered. Our study paves the ground for the selection of stimuli as well as outcome measures of future tasks aiming to differentiate between boredom, depression and apathy in pigs.

08/10/2024 : Animal affect, welfare and the Bayesian brain

Document type: scientific synthesis published in Animal Welfare

Authors: Lecorps B, Weary D.

Preview: According to the Bayesian brain hypothesis, the brain can be viewed as a predictive machine, such that predictions (or expectations) affect how sensory inputs are integrated. This means that in many cases, affective responses may depend more on the subject's perception of the experience (driven by expectations built on past experiences) rather than on the situation itself. Little research to date has applied this concept to affective states in animals. The aim of this paper is to explore how the Bayesian brain hypothesis can be used to understand the affective experiences of animals and to develop a basis for novel predictions regarding animal welfare. Drawing from the literature illustrating how predictive processes are important to human well-being, and are often impaired in affective disorders, we explore whether the Bayesian brain theories may help understanding animals' affective responses and whether deficits in predictive processes may lead to previously unconsidered welfare consequences. We conclude that considering animals as predictive entities can improve our understanding of their affective responses, with implications for basic research and for how to provide animals a better life.

Conferences-Seminars-Training

20/01/2025 : Audioblog - Le Podcast de la SFECA

Document type: Podcasts published by SFECA on Arte Radio AUDIOBLOG

Author: SFECA (French Society for the Study of Animal Behavior)

Preview: In each episode, meet an animal behavior researcher. You'll learn about their background, their work and their vision of ethology.

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

Document type: training announcement published by Idele

Author: Idele

Preview: This train-the-trainer course enables participants to obtain the Vivéa and OCAPIAT "animal welfare training" label for training animal welfare referents on livestock farms. Under the terms of Decree 2020-1625, each farm must have a BEA referent. On poultry and pig farms, this BEA referent is obliged to follow a training course. However, on ruminant farms, the training of the animal welfare referent is not compulsory, but voluntary.

- On 11/02/2025 in Paris (75) : register
- April 01, 2025 in Le Rheu (35) : register

Objectives

- Explain animal welfare and its dimensions to farmers.
- Observe and measure welfare assessment indicators, particularly those relating to animals.
- Integrate animal welfare issues into existing technical training courses

Public

Livestock technicians, advisors and veterinarians providing training for cattle, sheep or goat farmers on the following technical topics: lameness control, mastitis management, rearing young animals,

health, reproductive management, layout and management of livestock buildings, disbudding young calves, animal handling, etc., and wishing to obtain Vivea / Ocapiat certification.
Prerequisites: None
Program
- Context and challenges of animal welfare
- Definition of animal welfare and its dimensions
- Assessing animal welfare : families of indicators, BEA assessment objectives, main existing tools
- Building links between the content of technical training courses and animal welfare : workshop work based on training programs provided by each participant, collective reflection, individual reporting
- Finalizing standard technical training programs enriched with an animal welfare dimension.
- Didactics of animal welfare: how to approach divisive subjects and socially sensitive issues?
Teaching methods
- Presentations and discussions
- Group work in workshops
- Analysis of videos and photos
Assessment of acquired knowledge: Questionnaire
Training coordinator: Béatrice Mounaix

Other training on the same topic: **Cattle welfare during rearing**

20/11/2024 : Retour sur les Journées LIT Expert 2024 - LIT Ouesterel

Document type: presentation slides from the LIT EXPERT event, published by **LIT Ouesterel**

Author: Lit Ouesterel

Preview: On 22 and 23 October 2024, LIT OUESTEREL organized the 4th LIT EXPERT Day in Rennes. This year, with the theme of "animal welfare, its place and benefits; driving a renewed sense of purpose in the workplace?", we were delighted to welcome nearly 200 people and some thirty speakers. If you missed it, there is still the chance to access the **program** and **presentation slides**.

18/11/2024 : Se former au bien-être animal - Bien vivre le bien-être animal

Document type: training information published on the **Well-being animal welfare** by the **Chambers of Agriculture**

Author : Chambers of Agriculture

Preview: animal welfare is one of farmers' daily concerns. It is a training subject in its own right, embracing the understanding of societal and economic issues, familiarisation with the regulations, and learning about animal behavioral needs. Animal welfare is also an issue in a number of other training areas, such as building management, animal handling and medical or surgical interventions, animal health, etc.
Training on animal welfare is also a regulatory requirement for animal welfare advisers on pig and poultry farms. These courses must be run by recognized providers, and the training must be validated by VIVEA or OCAPIAT. The Chambers of Agriculture offer accredited training in most livestock sectors and regions. These accredited courses cover a wide range of livestock-related topics: health, design and management of buildings and housing, behaviors, feeding, etc.

Animal husbandry and human-animal relationship

30/12/2024 : Key Concepts for Enhancing Zoo Animal Welfare: Coping, Comfort, Choice, Control, Challenge, and Compassion

Document type: scientific synthesis published in Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science

Authors: Rose, P. E., & Lewton, J.

Preview: Zoo animal welfare is subject to increasing scrutiny by many audiences. Although zoo husbandry and management techniques have progressed, common welfare issues are still apparent. To encourage further improvements, converting theoretical welfare definition into practical application is key. This paper evaluates a familiar definition to form a baseline for practical welfare assessment that benefits animals and zoo operations. If we consider coping and comfort as measurable indicators, plus choice and control to cement autonomy for the animal, achieving positive welfare is more likely. Providing positive cognitive challenge results in improvements to behavioral diversity. When husbandry is ecologically relevant, this welfare-friendly approach evolves into husbandry-based evidence, further justifying approaches to animal care. The human element of husbandry (e.g., development and training of personnel) impacts on welfare, necessitating a compassionate approach to daily operations. Compassion – for animal and human wellbeing – ultimately embeds welfare as a core zoo goal. The unique environment of the zoo, with its mix of wild species, human workforce and visitors, coupled with the amount we still must learn about species' husbandry needs emphasizes continual development of welfare approaches.

04/07/2024 : The human-animal relationship in zoo-housed mammals: Behavioral and physiological responses to visitor and keeper interactions

Document type: scientific synthesis published in Journal of Animal Behaviour and Biometeorology

Authors: Domínguez-Oliva, A., Marcet-Rius, M., Gómez-Medina, C., Olmos-Hernández, A., Gutiérrez, Q., & Mota-Rojas, D.

Preview: Human-animal relationships (HARs) and interactions strongly influence animal welfare. Thus, advocating for positive HAR is essential for maintaining positive physical and mental health. In particular, zoo–housed species not only are exposed daily to unfamiliar humans (visitors) but also need to routinely interact with zookeepers, veterinarians, trainers, and other staff. In contrast to those in livestock and companion animals, HARs in zoos have not been extensively studied, although it is known that negative interactions can elicit stress-related behavioral and physiological responses. The present review aims to address the importance of positive HAR in wildlife species under human care. The main behavioral and physiological responses to interactions with familiar and unfamiliar humans will be discussed for a wide range of species (because HARs can also be influenced by animal-related factors). Moreover, potential alternatives to address and promote positive HAR in zoo-housed animals (e.g., environmental enrichment and positive reinforcement training) will be addressed. The HAR is part of the Five Domains Model of Animal Welfare. Therefore, recognizing that caregivers/medical staff and visitors' presence can affect an animal's emotional state is important for establishing beneficial relationships for wildlife under human care.

Precision farming and AI

03/01/2025 : Comparison between AI and human expert performance in acute pain assessment in sheep

Document type: scientific article published in Scientific Reports

Authors: Marcelo Feighelstein, Stelio P. Luna, Nuno O. Silva, Pedro E. Trindade, Ilan Shimshoni, Dirk van der Linden & Anna Zamansky

Preview: This study explores the question whether Artificial Intelligence (AI) can outperform human experts in animal pain recognition using sheep as a case study. It uses a dataset of N = 48 sheep undergoing surgery with video recordings taken before (no pain) and after (pain) surgery. Four veterinary experts used two types of pain scoring scales: the sheep facial expression scale (SFPES) and the Unesp-Botucatu composite behavioral scale (USAPS), which is the 'golden standard' in sheep pain assessment. The developed AI pipeline based on CLIP encoder significantly outperformed human facial scoring (AUC difference = 0.115, $p \leq 0.001$) when having access to the same visual information (front and lateral face images). It further effectively equaled human USAPS behavioral scoring (AUC difference = 0.027, $p = 0.163$), but the small improvement was not statistically significant. The fact that the machine can outperform human experts in recognizing pain in sheep when exposed to the same visual information has significant implications for clinical practice, which warrant further scientific discussion.

14/11/2024 : Human-computer interactions with farm animals-enhancing welfare through precision livestock farming and artificial intelligence

Document type: scientific synthesis published in Frontiers in Veterinary Science

Authors: Neethirajan S, Scott S, Mancini C, Boivin X, Strand E.

Preview: While user-centered design approaches stemming from the human-computer interaction (HCI) field have notably improved the welfare of companion, service, and zoo animals, their application in farm animal settings remains limited. This shortfall has catalyzed the emergence of animal-computer interaction (ACI), a discipline extending technology's reach to a multispecies user base involving both animals and humans. Despite significant strides in other sectors, the adaptation of HCI and ACI (collectively HACI) to farm animal welfare—particularly for dairy cows, swine, and poultry—lags behind. Our paper explores the potential of HACI within precision livestock farming (PLF) and artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance individual animal welfare and address the unique challenges within these settings. It underscores the necessity of transitioning from productivity-focused to animal-centered farming methods, advocating for a paradigm shift that emphasizes welfare as integral to sustainable farming practices. Emphasizing the 'One Welfare' approach, this discussion highlights how integrating animal-centered technologies not only benefits farm animal health, productivity, and overall well-being but also aligns with broader societal, environmental, and economic benefits, considering the pressures farmers face. This perspective is based on insights from a one-day workshop held on June 24, 2024, which focused on advancing HACI technologies for farm animal welfare.

11/11/2024 : Computational investigation of the social function of domestic cat facial signals

Document type: scientific article published in Scientific Reports

Authors: George Martvel, Lauren Scott, Brittany Florkiewicz, Anna Zamansky, Ilan Shimshoni & Teddy Lazebnik

Preview: There is growing interest in the facial signals of domestic cats. Domestication may have shifted feline social dynamics towards a greater emphasis on facial signals that promote affiliative bonding. Most studies have focused on cat facial signals during human interactions or in response to pain. Research on intraspecific facial communication in cats has predominantly examined non-affiliative social interactions. A recent study by Scott and Florkiewicz (1) demonstrated significant differences between cats' facial signals during affiliative and non-affiliative intraspecific interactions. This follow-up study applies computational approaches to make two main contributions. First, we develop a machine learning classifier for affiliative/non-affiliative interactions based on manual CatFACS codings and automatically detected facial landmarks, reaching above 77% in CatFACS codings and 68% in landmarks by integrating a temporal dimension. Secondly, we introduce novel measures for rapid facial mimicry based on CatFACS coding. Our analysis suggests that domestic cats exhibit more rapid facial mimicry in affiliative contexts than non-affiliative ones, which is consistent with the proposed function of mimicry. Moreover, we found that ear movements (such as EAD103 and EAD104) are highly prone to rapid facial mimicry. Our research introduces new possibilities for analyzing cat facial signals and exploring shared moods with innovative AI-based approaches.

This study was the subject of an article in Science on 14/01/2025.

Ethics-sociology-philosophy-law

29/11/2024 : The beauty of the beast: Suggestions to curb the excesses of dog breeding and restore animal welfare – Invited review

Document type: scientific review published in Veterinarni Medicina

Author: C Diederich

Preview: *Dog. Specifically created to save its master's life. – (The dog is the ideal) Friend of man, (because it is his devoted slave)* (source: Gustave Flaubert, Dictionnaire des Idées Reçues). But is man the best friend of the dog? This question is legitimate when we consider living situations to which modern domestic dogs are exposed. They often do not satisfy basic animal needs. In this narrative review, the author revisits the history of the dog's presence alongside humans, in the light of current knowledge. The modern dog (breed standards and their interests in canine research) and its breeding strategy, including extreme breeding, will then be given particular attention. Dysfunctional human psychological processes will be explored to make it possible to grasp why the breeding of the modern dog is undergoing such a transformation. Finally, based on these factual and conceptual insights, suggestions to improve canine welfare will be proposed. To be effective, all these must be assessed against real-world conditions.

16/09/2024 : Neutralisation techniques used by defendants charged with animal welfare offences in Finland

Document type: scientific article published in Animal Welfare

Authors: Valtonen E, Hänninen L, Valros A, Koskela T.

Preview: Animal welfare offences encompass a heterogeneous range of crimes, including violence and various forms of negligence toward animals' needs. However, there is limited understanding of the offenders' rationalisations concerning their criminal behaviour against animals, despite this information being essential for enhancing the prevention of these crimes. Our data comprised 1,443 judgements in animal welfare offences in Finland between January 2011 and May 2021. We categorised the rationalisations used by defendants and identified differences between offender profiles according to the offence type. Nearly all defendants responded to the charges. Overall, defendants appealed most often to their challenging circumstances, e.g. a lack of resources. Defendants charged with offences against production animals offered more explanations than the other defendants and often denied their responsibility for the animals, or having caused them any harm, and appealed to financial problems, weather conditions, and having too many animals. Moreover, they frequently challenged the norms, appealing in particular to the immorality of the authorities, who were mostly official veterinarians. Defendants charged with animal hoarding offences rationalised their actions similarly to animal farmers, whereas those charged with violent crimes against animals more often cited provocative or otherwise problematic behaviour of the animal victim. Our results support the observation that farmers may perceive official animal welfare supervision negatively. Violent animal welfare crimes and animal hoarding stand out as distinctive types of crime at the level of rationalisations. The differences between offence types and offenders' underlying motivations should be considered when developing animal welfare control, agricultural support systems, and crime prevention.

Animal welfare assessment and labelling

13/01/2025 : Modèles comportementaux à l'origine des morsures de queue chez le porc

Document type: article published in 3trois3 - Le site de la filière porc

Author: G. Gambarini

Preview: Tail biting on pig farms is a well-known problem, and is both an economic and an animal welfare issue (Schrøder-Petersen & Simonsen, 2001). Indeed, as well as being a sign that animals are suffering, tail biting is in itself a cause of stress and pain for them and can lead to infection and disease. It also results in economic losses as medicines are required, weight gain is reduced, and carcasses can be rejected (Arnott et al., 2014). In ethological terms, it is a hetero-directed abnormal behavior that occurs sporadically and unpredictably, with risk factors being related to both the environment and the characteristics of individual animals (Ursinus et al., 2014). In general, tail-biting events are triggered in two key sets of circumstances (Valros A., 2017):

- various risk factors increase animals' stress levels;
- high levels of stress affect several motivational systems, including those that regulate exploratory behaviors, social behaviors, feeding behaviors and thermoregulation.

More specifically, three different motivational levers have been identified, each corresponding to a specific behavioral pattern (Taylor et al., 2010):
- two-stage
- sudden-forceful
- obsessive

Two-stage model

This is the most widely studied model and is characterized by two phases, the first of which is a pre-injury phase, with actual lesions following later. In the first phase, a pig manipulates the tail of another pig with its mouth, without causing injury and without provoking any reaction from the pig being manipulated (tail-in-mouth phase). Further manipulation leads to the formation of small abrasions or lesions, which can be severe, and these cause bleeding. At this point, the pig under attack displays an avoidance reaction. The cause of this pattern seems to be the absence of appropriate substrate allowing exploratory behaviors, leading the pig to explore its pen-mate's tail as the only "material" available. Providing animals with adequate environmental enrichment may be a good preventive strategy, although it's not clear how effective this can be in a situation where biting is already underway. It is also advisable to remove the biting animal from the group.

Sudden-forceful model

The second pattern is less studied and is often described as cannibalism. It involves aggressive behavior manifested by a sudden, violent bite, resulting in immediate injury to the tail and a subsequent reaction by the bitten animal. In this case, the cause appears to be lack of access to resources, and the preventive strategy is therefore to reduce competition for space, a place to rest, feed, drinking water or enrichment. In this case too, it may be advisable to remove the biter from the group.

Obsessive model

The third pattern occurs when a pig repeatedly grasps and pulls at the tail of another pig, causing the victim to react. The biter engages in this behavior repeatedly and is constantly looking for a tail to bite, indicating obsessive behavior. The cause is unknown, but could be linked to the individual's intrinsic characteristics, possibly related to the way the biter metabolises protein or its state of health (Czycholl et al., 2023). It may be possible to reduce tail biting by identifying and culling pigs with this sort of tendency.

Some researchers have been able to identify a fourth behavioural pattern, characterized by a sudden event that provokes tail damage, both mild and severe, and spreads rapidly within and between pens. It appears to be caused by sudden changes to the living environment, e.g. feed or temperature, which should therefore be avoided to prevent the occurrence of this phenomenon (Valros A., 2018).

For all models, it is clear that a significant attraction to blood is involved (albeit with great variability among individuals), which would explain why even a minor injury will increase the motivation to bite, even in pigs who did not cause the initial injury (Fraser, 1987). Imitation, which for pigs is fundamental to the process of learning, also plays a role in the spread of an outbreak. Identifying the behavioural model involved is important in deciding what measures to take. Manipulable materials should always be provided to reduce competitiveness for food and space, but above all, farmers should intervene rapidly as soon as the phenomenon is identified.

30/12/2024 : Measuring on-farm welfare in rabbits: a review with emphasis on animal-based indicators

Document type: scientific synthesis published in **World Rabbit Science**

Authors: Trocino A, Tolini C.

Preview: Based on current definitions, animal welfare has to be linked to a life worth living, as perceived by animals, thanks to positive experiences rather than to the mere absence of negative ones. The measure of on-farm welfare of livestock is crucial to improve farming systems, identify critical points and compare different farming systems in view of welfare labelling protocols. To this end, species-specific protocols are necessary, which should use different types of indicators, i.e. resources-based indicators, management-based indicators and, especially, animal-based indicators. These indicators should work under different farming systems and for different animal categories and can be used to assess welfare in the short term or during the productive life of the animal. Last but not least, indicators should be able to measure the affective state of animals in terms of positive emotions. In this scenario, rabbits are quite unique, as little information is available about i) their behavioural needs under farming conditions; ii) the degree of suffering associated with the behavioural restrictions that can occur under farming conditions; iii) the indicators to be used in the very different housing and management conditions in which rabbits can be farmed; and iv) the relationships between emotions and affective states of animals as well as the effect on resiliency of rabbits under different conditions. In this context, the present review is aimed at summarising the state of the art and designing a road map for assessing on-farm rabbit welfare based on the most recent knowledge and approaches with special emphasis on candidate animal-based indicators for measuring both negative and positive affective states of rabbits. The identification of positive welfare indicators is a big challenge, given the biological and behavioural characteristics of rabbits. Accordingly, a comprehensive and robust assessment of rabbit welfare on farms cannot do without structure- and management-based indicators, which should be included in validated and standardised protocols using a multi-indicator approach.

13/12/2024 : Is the UK egg sector on track to be cage-free by 2025?

Document type: article published in **Poultry World**

Author: Tony Mcdougal

Preview: Food companies have called on the government to bolster action on the phasing out of cages just weeks before a voluntary retail pledge to be cage-free by 2025 comes into effect. In a letter to environment secretary Steve Reed, food companies Waitrose, the Co-op, Marks and Spencer, Morrisons, Greggs and Mitchells & Butler said they had all eliminated caged egg-laying hens or committed to do so by the end of 2025, but were concerned that there would still be 4 million UK laying hens. This, they argued in the letter, would create an unlevel playing field in the industry. Time is indeed running out for UK retailers who pledged to be cage-free by 2025, according to a poultry welfare charity that has been campaigning on the issue for nearly 2 decades. Since 2005, the British Hen Welfare Trust has been encouraging consumers to influence hen welfare with their purses by opting for the best eggs they could afford in the supermarket, as “change happens best from the ground up”. The campaign, with support from other welfare groups, led retailers such as Tesco, Aldi and Lidl in 2016 to vow to stop selling eggs laid by caged hens by 2025. The pledge is entirely voluntary and there are no boundaries in place on exact timeframes and whether this means both sell eggs and eggs for ingredients.
The British Hen Welfare Trust has been looking at the latest situation and has determine the following:
- Tesco says on its website that it is committed to being “cage-free” by December 2025 for both shell and ingredient eggs.

- Lidl has similar aspirations, saying, “We are committed to working with our suppliers to phase out the sale of eggs from caged hens in our stores by 2025. This commitment covers both shell eggs and eggs used as an ingredient in our products.”
- Asda has said it is committed to growing cage-free egg sales and sourcing cage-free shell eggs by 2025 and is working with suppliers on improving the welfare of the laying hens. “We are also committed to using eggs used as ingredients from cage free systems by 2025.”
Even if the retailers in question do meet their commitments, the British Hen Welfare Trust questions what it actually means for hens. It says barn eggs will be increasingly offered on retail shelves. Latest statistics on the number of barn eggs produced in the UK show a doubling between 2022 and 2023.
Defra statistics show the total market for 2023 was made up of:
- Free-range (60%)
- Cage (23%)
- Barn (13%)
- Organic (4%)

The British Hen Welfare Trust said that while it was pleased to see the production of caged eggs falling significantly in the UK over the past decade, it wanted to see all hens kept in higher welfare free-range organic systems.
Cage bans are already in place in Luxembourg, Switzerland and Austria and bans are set to come into force in Germany (2026), Czechia (2027) and Slovakia (2030).

06/12/2024 : A Review of Animal-Based Welfare Indicators for Calves and Cattle

Document type: scientific synthesis published in **Ruminants**

Authors: Harris, S.; Shallcrass, M.; Cohen, S.

Preview: As the human population continues to rise, so does the consumption of animal proteins and products. To meet this demand, animal agriculture has intensified. Simultaneously, there are increased public concerns related to improving calf and cattle welfare to ensure ethical and sustainable livestock production. To meet these expectations, it is essential to maintain high standards of cattle (*Bos taurus* and *Bos indicus*) welfare. The use of animal-based welfare indicators is critical when assessing and developing assessments for animal welfare. A review of calf and cattle animal-based individual and herd health indicators in the scientific and grey literature was conducted. Indicators were initially grouped into the categories of behavioral, physiological, or physical indicators and further analyzed to determine potential affective states, ease of training, cost, special equipment, time, and current use as herd health indicators. The indicators identified in this review have the potential to inform future research priorities, improve animal welfare assessment, and support uplift in animal welfare in cattle production and research to better meet societal expectations of animal care and use.

06/12/2024 : Amendments made to UK's welfare standards for laying hens

Document type: article published in **Poultry World**

Author: Tony Mcdougal

Preview: Unprecedented concerns from UK farmers over proposed changes to the RSPCA’s Welfare Standards for Laying hens have led to a further climbdown by the assurance scheme. Earlier this year, RSPCA Assured announced it would be pausing the implementation date of the

new standards to allow it more time to provide tailored support for members. It has now said that the strength of feeling and feedback from farmers has led to a number of amendments and clarifications to the standards. Kelly Grellier, RSPCA Assured's chief commercial officer, said the strength and scale of feeling and feedback on the original proposed standards had been unprecedented: "Our members are fundamental in helping us improve hen welfare and we have listened and taken action. We've made a number of amendments and clarifications to the standards. We hope these amendments will alleviate concerns and provide greater support to our members so they can achieve the new standards." These amendments include:

- The implementation date has been extended from 1 February 2025 to 1 May 2025.
- The implementation date for the introduction of natural daylight for all systems has been extended by 1 year (from 2031 to 2032), giving members 7 years to take this forward. The charity said it understood that many farmers had questions and concerns about the implementation and management of the standards on natural daylight and that it would commission an independent researcher to help develop in-depth case studies from farms that were already achieving 3% natural daylight. These studies would be published on the RSPCAs new laying hen hub page, which would also include an online calculator to enable farmers to calculate their current natural daylight provision through popholes. The laying hen industry has also started the process for commissioning research in this area, having sent RSPCA Assured an initial proposal, which is under review.
- The new standards no longer require fences on the range to have a gap of 45cm underneath them. In line with the Egg Marketing Inspection (EMI) free-range assessment guidance, the standards will not require that any fencing or restrictions on the range must not inhibit the hens' ability to access the range area.
- For existing buildings, standards previously stated that where the base of a pophole is more than 40cm from the house floor, ramps or platforms must be provided. This has now been increased by 5cm in line with the industry standard pophole base height. RSPCA Assured has also noted that the standard does not currently apply to newly-approved buildings where at least one of the following conditions applied prior to 1 May 2025 and can clearly be evidenced: (1) An existing written contract with an egg packer is already in place. (2) Planning permission has already been submitted to erect the building. (3) Significant capital has been invested in the affected building or its infrastructure.
- The implementation date for the provision of 20% natural cover has been extended for an additional year from 1 May 2026 to 1 May 2027 to allow members 2 full planting seasons to grow the required trees and shrubs.
- No free-range members are required to install verandas, which is a change from original proposals which said that any new or existing members carrying out a major refurbishment needed to install one. RSPCA Assured and the RSPCA charity will jointly engage with the industry to conduct an in-depth review of installing verandas on free-range systems. Barn members must install verandas on all buildings by 1 January 2030 with the assurance scheme now saying the requirement for newly-approved buildings to install verandas from 1 May 2024 had been removed, providing additional time for both existing and new producers. (…)

03/12/2024 : Évaluation du bien-être des chevaux sur le terrain : protocoles disponibles, conditions et limites d'utilisation

Document type: scientific article published in **INRAE Productions Animales**

Authors: Briant, C., Riou, M., & Ruet, A.

Preview: Horse welfare is a major concern for owners and users. To optimize welfare, it is essential to be able to assess the physical and mental state of the animals objectively, using validated

protocols, so that current practices can be improved. This article describes the three main available assessment protocols. The first (SEBWAT) is designed for animals in low- and middle-income countries, where the overall level of welfare is somewhat low. It includes only indicators observed from the animals, with few indicators of mental states, and can only be carried out by trained assessors. The other two (AWIN Horse and Cheval Bien-être) are better-suited to horses in high-income countries and are aimed at all owners. They include indicators observed from both the animals and their environments. The most recent, the Cheval Bien-être protocol, is in French and has incorporated new indicators of negative mental states. Both protocols could benefit from adjustments to some of the indicators andthe inclusion of indicators of positive mental states.
The French protocol to assess a horse's welfare can be found on **Equipédia** :
Cheval Bien-Être, un nouveau protocole et une application pour évaluer le bien-être des chevaux
User guide (in French)
Evaluation grid (in French)
Free app (in French)

20/11/2024 : Le Conseil fédéral recommande de rejeter l'initiative foie gras

Document type: Press release **Conseil Fédéral de la Confédération suisse**

Author: Swiss Federal Council

Preview: At its meeting on November 20, 2024, the Swiss Federal Council adopted its dispatch to Parliament concerning the popular initiative "Yes to a ban on foie gras imports (foie gras initiative)". It recommends that Parliament should reject the initiative, making no direct or indirect counter-proposal. It nevertheless wishes to address the concerns in the request made by the initiative's authors, by requiring a compulsory declaration to be made for products derived from force-feeding, in order to ensure transparency for consumers. The Federal Council intends to regulate this matter by an amended ordinance. On December 28, 2023, Alliance Animale Suisse had tabled the popular initiative "Oui à l'interdiction d'importer du foie gras" (the "foie gras initiative"), which aimed to enshrine a ban on the import of foie gras and foie gras products in the Federal Constitution The ban was also intended to apply to private individuals, who would no longer be able to import these products for their own personal use. At its meeting on November 20, 2024, the Federal Council conveyed its message to Parliament, with the recommendation that the initiative be rejected without a direct or indirect counter-proposal.
Incompatibility with international obligations
The fattening of domestic poultry, known as "force-feeding" ("gavage" in French), has been banned in Switzerland for over 40 years for animal welfare reasons. The initiative also seeks to ban imports of foie gras and foie gras-based products such as magret and confit. The Federal Council states that it considers the initiative's demand to be understandable from an animal protection point of view. However, an import ban is hard to reconcile with international treaties and agreements concluded by Switzerland, such as the World Trade Organization's General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and the free trade agreement with the EU. In principle, import bans can only be imposed if less restrictive measures, such as labelling requirements, have not achieved the desired objective. Furthermore, acceptance of the initiative would make it impossible to consume foie gras in Switzerland, thereby limiting consumer choice.
More transparency through mandatory labelling

In order to recognise the request formulated by the initiative while continuing to respect Switzerland's international obligations, the Federal Council intends to introduce a mandatory declaration system for products derived from force-feeding animals. Consumers will then be able to identify the method by which food is produced, and this transparency will raise awareness of the issue of force-feeding. The mandatory declaration will be enshrined in legislation through an ordinance that should come into force in mid-2025. At the same time, the Federal Council will implement other labelling requirements linked to production methods. Animal products obtained without anesthesia will also be subject to mandatory declaration. This could apply to frogs' legs, for example. This is the response of the Federal Council to the request made in CSEC-E motion 20.4267 "Declaration of production methods prohibited in Switzerland", adopted by Parliament.
This press release was discussed in an article article published in La Liberté on 20/11/2024

Animal welfare initiatives

20/12/2024 : EURCAW Ruminants & Equines Newsletter - Volume 08

Document type: Newsletter 8 from EURCAW-Ruminants & Equines

Author: EURCAW-Ruminants & Equines

Preview: Season's Greetings! This is the fourth edition of the newsletter in 2024. In this edition, we share details on our outputs since September 2024, this year in numbers, Meet the Scientist, a request for feedback on Inspector@work, a report on the annual meeting with Competent Authorities, the next work programme, the pilot of the Community of Practice, how to find translated factsheets on the website and latest news related to ruminant and equine welfare.
Since September 2024, EURCAW Ruminants & Equines has published the following outputs:
- Indicator and Thematic factsheets on Lameness in dairy cattle
- Indicator factsheet on Fitness for transport for small ruminants
- Review on Horse confinement
- Q2E on Slaughter of lamoids
- Q2E on Wind turbine effects on bovines
- Q2E on Small trailers for horse transport

16/12/2024 : Newsletter EURCAW-Poultry-SFA - Edition 10

Document type: Newsletter from EURCAW-Poultry-SFA

Author: EURCAW-Poultry-SFA

Preview: In Issue 10 of the EURCAW-Poultry-SFA Newsletter, we answer Questions to EURCAW (Q2E), and provide guide to good practice in free-range rabbit farming, along with plenty of other items.

Link to download the Newsletter (pdf in English)

16/12/2024 : EURCAW-Aqua website

Document type: EURCAW-Aqua website

Author: EURCAW-Aqua

Preview: The European Reference Centre for animal welfare for Aquatic animals now has a website. EURCAW *Aqua* has been created in 17th of January 2024 in accordance with Regulation

(EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council (notified under document C(2024) 209), a European Union reference centre for the welfare of aquatic animals. The European Union Reference Centre for the Welfare of Aquatic Animals (hereafter the EURCAW-Aqua) will mainly focus on the welfare of fish, cephalopods and decapods. Priority will be given to farmed aquatic species of economic significance for European aquaculture. The EURCAW-Aqua is structured and operated to address the main challenges in assessing the welfare of aquatic organisms, namely the large number of farmed species, the diversity of farming systems and the uniqueness of different aquatic environments, all of which can influence the welfare needs of the animals. The EURCAW-Aqua will conduct and facilitate the research in the underdeveloped area of aquatic animals' welfare, and will engage in public outreach and awareness campaigns through public lectures and exhibitions.

13/12/2024 : Newsletter - EURCAW-Pigs - Edition 12

Document type: Newsletter 12 from the European Reference Centre for Pig Welfare (EURCAW-Pigs)

Author: EURCAW-Pigs

Preview:
- Roadshow meetings continued in Romania, Spain and Poland
- Fourth annual EURCAW-Pigs MS officials meeting
- Increased litter size in pig breeding challenges pig and sow welfare
- Two new podcasts Pig Welfare in Action
- EURCAW-Aqua website now available
- …

18/11/2024 : Projet Entr'ACTES : Acteurs face aux enjeux sociétaux

Document type: project website for Entr'ACTES from Idele

Author: Entr'ACTES

Preview: The Entr'ACTES project aims to assess the impacts of current differences over livestock farming on farmers' practices and how they interact with the rest of society. Its aim is to investigate how the debate is perceived by those working in the livestock industry, and to identify the range of changes they have made to practices and the initiatives they are putting in place to restablish links with the public. It will provide:
- training tools and methods for trainers and teachers of current and future livestock farmers and farm advisors, to help them better understand change in livestock farming.
- knowledge and tools for other professionals working in the sector, to help them support farmers in transforming practices and systems to better respond to societal challenges and the changes that result from these. Farmers will thus be able to carry out their profession with pride.

Objectives
- Suppport livestock practitioners in achieving the transition towards greater attention to societal issues in their practices.
- Encourage the development of farming activities with a shared meaning for those in the livestock sector and the rest of society.
- Help reestablish links between livestock farming and the rest of society.

Operational actions

1- Take stock of what it means to be a livestock farmer in France today.
2- Assess how livestock farmers and future farmers are responding to the challenges facing society.
3- Explore the shared actions being carried out by the sector to meet society's expectations.
4- Create tools to support and train livestock farmers, future farmers and advisors.

Invertebrates

28/11/2024 : Opinion: Insect welfare matters and the UK can lead the world on welfare standards

Document type: opinion article published in **Food Manufacture**

Author: Jonathan Birch

Preview: Insect farming is an emerging global industry with big ambitions. Our unsustainable food system needs an overhaul: we currently feed the vast majority of the world's soya to farmed animals, producing protein highly inefficiently and at devastating environmental cost. The solution, according to insect farmers, is to feed larger animals on ground-up insects, while feeding the insects on human food waste, replacing an environmentally destructive process with a form of recycling. UK start-ups such as Entocycle, The Bug Factory, Cricket Factory, Instar Farming and Better Origin are at the leading edge of developing the technology to achieve this vision, vying with major European players such as Protix and Ynsect. In all other kinds of animal farming, it's accepted that welfare matters. It matters to the animals themselves, it matters to consumers (who want high-welfare products) and it matters to the bottom line of producers, who lose financially from having stressed-out, unhealthy animals and high rates of mortality. That doesn't guarantee that welfare is always good or even adequate — far from it — but at least there are minimum standards, providing a floor we can try to lift upwards over time.

Insects go unprotected

Insect farming, by contrast, has no industry-wide welfare standards at all. Every company processes insects in its own way, leading to great variation. (…)

Do insects feel pain?

Very little scientific work has been done on the welfare of the larvae or the adults. Basic questions (e.g. what temperature, humidity or stocking density parameters minimise stress for these animals? How can we protect them from infectious disease? What slaughter method is quickest and most humane?) still lack clear answers. More research is needed - that's why I was glad to be a founding member of the Insect Welfare Research Society, a group of researchers working together to close these evidence gaps. (…)

What are the main issues a code of practice should address? Sadly, adult black soldier flies (which are needed only for reproducing and do this only once) are usually starved to death. There seems to be a widespread belief in the industry that they don't need to feed - but they have functional mouths and digestive systems and in the wild have been seen to feed on nectar. It troubles me that the industry, despite talking the talk on welfare, has been reluctant to take the simple step of providing adult flies with sugar solution. With the larvae, the lack of any standards on slaughter is an obvious problem. When researchers need to kill an insect in a lab, the preferred method is usually immersion in liquid nitrogen, which is very rapid for a single tiny animal. In industry, a variety of much slower methods are used, including microwaving the larvae en masse for up to 15 minutes, roasting them in hot sand for up to 30 minutes or baking them in an oven on a low heat for as long as 24 hours. We would not accept these methods for larger animals, and there's no good reason to accept them

for insects either. Grinding in an industrial grinder will kill most larvae quickly, but some may get stuck in the machine, potentially suffering for some time. Freezing is a popular method, but standard freezers are much slower than liquid nitrogen. Animal welfare is sometimes presented as an airbrake on innovation. To me, this is entirely the wrong way to think about it. Good welfare is win-win-win: the animals benefit from living better lives, consumers benefit from reassurance that their values are taken seriously, and producers benefit from having healthier, less stressed animals. And the goal of high welfare creates opportunities to innovate. UK startups already position themselves as technological innovators - if they can genuinely position themselves as welfare innovators too, the sustainability case for investing in their business will be stronger.

20/11/2024 : *Apis mellifera* welfare: definition and future directions

Document type: scientific synthesis published in **Frontiers in Animal Science**

Authors: Formato Giovanni, Giannottu Elena, Roncoroni Cristina, Lorenzi Valentina, Brajon Giovanni

Preview: *Apis mellifera*, commonly known as the Western honeybee, plays a crucial role in providing ecosystem services, such as pollination, which are essential for biodiversity and environmental quality. Honey bees are the most economically valuable pollinator worldwide and impact a wide number of commercial crops and wild plants, some of which are threatened by extinction. Hive products are valuable not only for their economic benefits but also for their positive impact on human and animal health. Thanks to its pollination services, *Apis mellifera* is regarded as a flagship species among pollinators and serves as a biomarker for environmental quality. (…)

The Five Freedoms, initially conceived to protect intensively farmed mammals and birds, have evolved in response to changing public opinion and values regarding animals. In recent years, animal welfare science has expanded its focus from avoiding negative impacts to also include providing positive welfare states. Modern practices now emphasize good farming and product standards, based on the more comprehensive model (Five Domains Model). This approach aims for a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, rather than merely the absence of disease or infirmity, considering as significant the welfare of all the stakeholders involved (human, animals and the environment). The model not only addresses the basic needs of the animals, but also emphasizes that animal welfare is a continuum from negative to positive emotional states. It strives to enhance animal welfare by placing greater emphasis on the mental experiences of the animals. (…) Despite their remarkable abilities, honey bees have been given limited consideration in terms of welfare due to uncertainty about their capacity to experience mental states. However, based on numerous scientific reports, we believe that honey bees are capable of feelings and emotions, and they align perfectly with the Five Domains model, just like any other animal.

The New York Declaration recently acknowledged the realistic possibility of consciousness in invertebrates, including *Apis mellifera*, emphasizing the importance of considering their welfare based on scientific evidence. However, animal welfare is applicable once its meaning is clearly defined and practical actions are implemented to measure and to improve specific indicators. For *Apis mellifera*, the concept of welfare needs to be further defined, drawing from models that address contemporary threats and promote preventive approaches.

22/10/2024 : Putative Nociceptive Responses in a Decapod Crustacean: The Shore Crab (*Carcinus maenas*)

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

Authors: Kasiouras, E.; Hubbard, P.C.; Gräns, A.; Sneddon, L.U.

Preview: Nociceptors are receptors that detect injurious stimuli and are necessary to convey such information from the periphery to the central nervous system. While nociception has been extensively studied in various taxa, there is relatively little electrophysiological evidence for the existence of nociceptors in decapod crustaceans. This study investigated putative nociceptive responses in the shore crabs, specifically their response to mechanical and noxious chemical stimuli. Extracellular multi-unit electrophysiological recordings were conducted from the anterior ganglion and the circumesophageal connective ganglia to assess nociceptive responses. Soft tissues at the joints of the chelae, antennae, and walking legs were stimulated using acetic acid (noxious stimulus) and von Frey hairs (mechanical stimulus), while nearby ganglion activity was recorded. The results indicate the existence of nociceptors in the tested areas, with mechanical stimuli eliciting shorter, more intense neural activity compared with acetic acid. Although acetic acid triggered responses in all areas, the antennae and antennules did not respond to mechanical stimuli. Though we acknowledge the challenges of conducting in vivo electrophysiological recordings, future research should focus on further characterizing nociceptor activity because the results suggest the presence of nociceptors.

01/05/2024 : Farmed yellow mealworm (*Tenebrio molitor; Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae*) welfare: species-specific recommendations for a global industry

Document type: scientific synthesis published in Journal of Insects as Food and Feed

Authors: Barrett, M., Godfrey, R.K., Schnell, A., & Fischer, B.

Preview: Yellow mealworms (*Tenebrio molitor; Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae*) are currently the most farmed holometabolous insect species in the insects as food and feed industry, with over 300 billion individual mealworms reared annually. Yellow mealworm larvae are being developed for potential uses as human protein, pet, livestock and fish feed, reclamation of mycotoxin-contaminated grains, and more. Insect welfare is of great interest to consumers, producers, and academics; yet no studies have considered the species-specific welfare concerns of farmed yellow mealworms under current industry conditions. Following a model for considering farmed insect welfare, we review yellow mealworm biology and its relationships to welfare in commercial rearing facilities, including: interspecific interactions (predators, parasites, and pathogens), abiotic conditions (temperature, hydration, atmospheric gasses, lighting), nutrition (including pollutants, plastics, and hormones), intraspecific concerns (genetics, morphological defects, cannibalism, density, mating and oviposition needs, and handling-associated stress), and slaughter and depopulation methods (including anesthesia and stunning). From this review, we identify practical recommendations for improving current welfare concerns in the industry and mitigating future concerns that may appear as the industry continues to grow. Finally, we discuss future research directions that are necessary to better understand the welfare of this species.

Housing and enrichment

20/01/2025 : Lighting quality evaluation on growth performance and feather pecking behavior of broilers

Document type: article published dans Poultry Science

Authors: Chenghao Pan, Rong Xiang, Jinming Pan

Preview: Light is an important factor affecting the feather pecking behavior in poultry. To evaluate the quality of lighting in production of a local broiler breed, this study was designed to investigate the effects of light color on the growth performance (body weight, feed conversion ratio and upper beak length), welfare parameters (walking step, plumage damage and hormone level) relating to feather pecking and their correlations. One hundred and twenty 49-day-old Youhuang broilers were randomly distributed into 3 lighting treatment groups (warm white, cold white and red) and reared for 4 weeks. The results showed that the lighting had no significant effect on the growth performance ($P \geq 0.05$). The daily walking steps of birds in cold white group were greater than birds in warm white and red group at 8 ($P \leq 0.05$) rather than 9 to 11 ($P \geq 0.05$) weeks of age. Compared with birds in red group, the birds in cold white group had lower plumage scores ($P \leq 0.05$) and the birds in warm white group had similar plumage scores ($P \geq 0.05$). Lower scores meant severer plumage damage. Moreover, the plumage scores of backs and wings were both lower than those on tails ($P \leq 0.05$). The serotonin levels in blood of birds in warm white group were greater than those in cold white group ($P \leq 0.05$) but lower than those in red group ($P \leq 0.05$). However, during the entire study, there were no correlations among body weight gain ratios, upper beak length gain ratios, average daily walking steps, total plumage scores of different body parts, and serotonin levels of 24 selected birds in three light treatment groups ($P \geq 0.05$). Considering the friendliness of white light to human eye, warm white light should be recommended to reduce pecking behavior in production.

28/12/2024 : Impact of musical rhythm on blood, physiological and welfare parameters in stabled horses

Document type: scientific article published in Scientific Reports

Authors: Fernanda Yumi Ueno de Oliveira, Agnês Markiy Odakura, Maria Fernanda de Castro Burbarelli, Caio César dos Ouros, Ibiara Correia de Lima Almeida Paz, Jaqueline Murbach Braz, Rodrigo Garófallo Garcia & Fabiana Ribeiro Caldara

Preview: The aim of this study was to evaluate the effects of two styles of classical music, based on different tempos (BPM), on the physiological and blood parameters of horses during social isolation and restriction of movements. First experiment was carried out using nine horses of no defined breed, distributed in Control, Slow-tempo music and Moderate-tempo music. For social isolation and restriction of movement, the animals were housed daily in individual stalls for two hours and exposed to the stimuli for 60 min, and eye temperature, heart rate, and respiratory rate were assessed. The second experiment was carried out using ten horses of no defined breed, distributed in a randomized design in treatments: Slow-tempo Music and Moderate-tempo Music. Blood samples were taken at the start and end of the experimental period to assess hematological and biochemical parameters and serum serotonin levels. Horses exposed to moderate-tempo music showed an increase in serum calcium levels, mean corpuscular hemoglobin (MCH), and total hemoglobin concentration, as well as a reduction in lymphocytes. Both types of music led to a significant increase in serotonin levels after one week of stimulation. Both musical rhythms are appropriate for promoting the well-being and health of stabled horses.

12/12/2024 : Retours d'expérience sur la verraterie liberté

Document type: article published in 3trois3.com

Author: Chambre d'Agriculture Bretagne

Preview: To identify the keys to success for the use of free group housing for sows from weaning to the end of the insemination period, the Chambre d'Agriculture de Bretagne has carried out a survey of farmers who follow this practice. The survey identified three strategies adopted by farmers from the week following weaning:
- LIBIA: Sows are kept in standard insemination sow stalls from weaning until the last insemination. They are then released and grouped within 6 days of the last insemination (15 of 38 farms)
- LIBSEVIA: Sows are free-housed and grouped from weaning, are confined for the duration of the insemination period before being released again. Farmers explained that they take advantage of the stress generated during grouping to bring the sows into heat and facilitate heat detection (mounting others). The sows are confined for around a week during the insemination period, then released immediately or within 6 days at most after the last insemination. (11 of 38 farms)
- LIBSEV: Sows are grouped immediately after weaning and confined for a maximum of half a day to carry out the AI. Sows are grouped throughout the insemination and gestation periods (12 of 38 farms)

Precautions to take when grouping (...)
Advantages and points to watch (...)
Seven advice sheets for breeders wishing to implement this practice on their farms are now available.

29/10/2024 : Welfare and performance benefits of shade provision during summer for feedlot cattle in a temperate climatic zone

Document type: scientific article published in **Journal of Animal Science**

Authors: David W Miller, Anne L Barnes, Teresa Collins, Liselotte Pannier, Joshua Aleri, Shane K Maloney, Fiona Anderson

Preview: There is increasing interest from cattle lot-feeders in the use of shade to mitigate the effects of a potential heat-stress event, though it is unclear whether the reported benefits of shade in previous studies conducted in more high-risk heat-stress zones are pertinent in cooler temperate zones. The objectives of this study were to measure the welfare and performance benefits of shade provision for lot-fed cattle at a commercial feedlot located in a mild heat-stress risk zone in Western Australia. Six blocks of black Angus (*Bos taurus*) steers were inducted into the feedlot over 6 time windows across a southern hemisphere summer, with 80 cattle per block housed in a partially shaded pen (providing 3.125 m2 of shade per animal) and 80 in an unshaded pen. Parameters assessed in 960 cattle over the first 70 d in the feedlot included weight gain, feed intake, and physiological and behavioral indices of overall health and welfare. Over the months of October to May in which the experiment was conducted, shaded cattle demonstrated a modest 0.13 kg overall increase in average daily gain across the 70-d feedlot period ($P = 0.13$). There was no difference in dry matter intake between any block or treatment. The physiological and behavioral markers of health and welfare revealed that, even during to the hottest times of the experiment, the cattle were quite able to thermoregulate, via increased panting and seeking shade (if available), to maintain physiological homeostasis. In addition, we measured the effect of heat stress and shade provision on the affective state of the cattle. Qualitative behavioral assessment was used to indicate that the cattle in the “no stress” temperature humidity index (THI) category and the shaded cattle in the “moderate stress” THI category displayed the most positive demeanor ($P \leq 0.05$), being described as more “*settled and sociable*”, while the unshaded cattle in the “moderate stress” THI category and

all cattle in the “severe stress” THI category were described as more “*agitated/anxious*” ($P \leq 0.05$). Overall, the findings from the present study suggest that there are definite welfare and modest performance benefits associated with providing cattle with shade in summer in a feedlot situated in a temperate climatic zone.

One Welfare

10/12/2024 : The carbon cost of impaired welfare on sheep farms

Document type: scientific article published in Animal

Authors: L. Lanzoni, M.C. Reeves, K. Waxenberg, R. Ramsey, A.S. Atzori, J. Bell, R.M. Rees, G. Vignola, C.M. Dwyer

Preview: In the face of global climate threats, farm and land-management decisions must balance climate concerns with profitability, animal welfare, and ecosystem health. However, few comprehensive studies have quantified the relationship between animal welfare and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and no study focuses specifically on sheep farms. The present study aims to quantify effects of impaired welfare on GHG emissions for common welfare challenges faced in UK lowland (L) and hill (H) sheep farming systems. Two case study research farms in Scotland, representative of high welfare conditions, were used as baselines for semi-intensive L and extensive H systems. In this study, “high welfare conditions” are defined as situations where animals have access to adequate feeding, suitable housing, good health, and opportunities to express natural behaviours. From each high-welfare baseline, scenarios representing common levels of impaired welfare conditions were modelled, using parameters retrieved from the published literature. The selected poor-welfare scenarios included lameness, gastrointestinal nematodes (GIN), blowfly strike, liver fluke, inadequate shelter provision, inadequate feeding during lamb growth and late gestation, and high lamb mortality rate. GHG emissions were estimated “from-cradle-to-farm-gate” using Agrecalc ©, a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) tool for the agricultural sector. Total GHG emissions and emission intensities (EI) in kg of CO2 equivalent (CO^2eq) per kg live weight (LW) were compared across the baseline and the scenarios. Gross farm emissions and product-level EIs demonstrated divergent patterns in response to impaired welfare. Most impaired welfare scenarios led to a slight decrease in total farm emissions (0.03-3%), with a few exceptions. On the other hand, EI increased across all impaired welfare scenarios relative to the baseline, because meat production decreased by 1.3-16.6% across all impaired welfare scenarios, reducing resource use efficiency. Lameness was identified as particularly impactful, resulting in 18% and 10% increases in EI on H and L farms, respectively. This was primarily due to the high lamb mortality associated with lameness in published studies. Inadequate shelter provision was associated with an 8-15% increase in EI. Scenarios related to ineffective parasite control contributed to an EI increase ranging from 1 to 13%, while inadequate feeding management caused a 3-4% increase in EI. This study highlights the potential for reducing emission intensity through system-specific interventions, emphasizing the importance of integrating animal welfare into GHG mitigation strategies.

03/12/2024 : Améliorer conjointement la santé et le bien-être des animaux dans la transition des systèmes d'élevage vers la durabilité

Document type: scientific synthesis published in INRAE Productions Animales

Authors: Christian Ducrot, Maria Belén Barrio, Alain Boissy, François Charrier, Sergine Even, Pierre Mormède, Sandrine Petit, Marie-Hélène Pinard-Van Der Laan, François Schelcher, François Casabianca, Alain Ducos, Gilles Foucras, Raphaël Guatteo, Jean-Louis Peyraud, Muriel Vayssier-Taussat, Patrick Veysset, Nicolas C. Friggens, Xavier Fernandez

Preview: Farming conditions are increasingly questioned by society, particularly in terms of their impact on the environment, as well as on animal health and welfare. When the combined improvement of health and welfare is placed at the heart of the transformation of farming systems, this significantly changes the way that we view transition and the research questions that are asked at different scales, as developed in this article.

This article was adapted from an invited review article published in the journal Animal (Ducrot et al., 2024).

20/09/2024 : The Interface of Caretaker and Animal Well-being As a Critical Component of Sustainability

Document type: scientific synthesis published in Meat and Muscle Biology

Authors: Edwards-Callaway, L. N. & Sullivan, P. A.

Preview: The food animal industry has collaborated across supply chain sectors to develop and implement initiatives that promote the sustainable production of food and fiber. While sustainability programs aim to address all three pillars of sustainability equitably (e.g., environmental, social, and economic pillars), there is often a disproportionate focus on environmental and economic initiatives despite the recognized importance of the social aspects of a system, which includes human and animal health and well-being. Assessing human and animal well-being is complex, and while these evaluations are often perceived as subjective, many objective measures are available. For example, in food animals, there are many physiological measures (e.g., heart rate, stress hormones) and behavioral indicators (e.g., escape attempts, engagement in exploratory behavior, body posture) that can be used to assess welfare. Moreover, there is an inherent connection between livestock and the people who care for them, making it essential to explore the reciprocal benefits and challenges of human–animal interactions in livestock production systems. By promoting the health and well-being of both people and animals through positive human–animal experiences, the food animal industry can work to foster more sustainable food production systems.

Regulation

13/01/2025 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-002112/24 : Serious concerns regarding animal cruelty during animal transport in Austria

Document type: Response from the European Commission to question E-002112/24

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

Question: Two shocking incidents of animal cruelty have recently been observed during the transport of animals in Austria. During the export of pregnant animals from Austria, footage on the Bulgarian-Turkish border shows a calf being cut out of a pregnant, dead cow, following which the calf is thrown on to the blood-drenched ground, while shaking violently[1]. Other footage shows

animals unable to stand upright due to illness or exhaustion being brutally dragged from a vehicle by their front legs.[2] An overloaded truck carrying 142 calves was also stopped in Austria. A veterinarian on site confirmed that this transport from the Netherlands should never have taken place because the transport documents were not in order, the duration of the transport and the planned rest breaks were not respected and the water system for the animals was inadequate[3].
1. Can the Commission outline its views on the mistreatment of calves during these transports?
2. What action and sanctions has the Commission already taken against the relevant authorities in the Member States concerned for a flagrant infringement of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005?
3. Does the Commission consider serious cruelty to animals to be reason enough to suspend the transport of live animals from Austria?
[1] https://vgt.at/presse/news/2024/news20240905mn.php
[2] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jcl0XeoepN4
[3] https://www.krone.at/3518368

Answer: 1. & 2. Member States are responsible to enforce EU rules on the protection of animals during transport, as set out in Regulation (EC) No 1/2005[1]. At the same time, the Commission closely follows the relevant cases, including the specific instance referred to by the Honourable Member whereby the Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare immediately reached out to Türkiye to offer his assistance to find a solution. The Commissioner is committed to be in close contact with the relevant authorities and to be part of the solution also in the future.
3. Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 does not foresee provisions for banning the export of animals at EU level. However, based on the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice, Member States' competent authorities shall refuse to approve journeys for export if the operator is unable to demonstrate that EU rules on protection of animals during transport can be complied with until the place of destination. On 7 December 2023, the Commission adopted a proposal for a new Regulation on the protection of animals during transport which includes stricter conditions and rules on export of animals to third countries. This proposal is now on the table of the co-legislators for further discussions and amendments.
[1] Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations and amending Directives 64/432/EEC and 93/119/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1255/97; OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p. 1-44

19/12/2024 : Newsletter Décembre 2024 - The European Institute for Animal Law & Policy

Document type: December 2024 Newsletter published by the European Institute for Animal Law & Policy

Author: Animal Law Europe

Preview: Greetings to our readers and supporters in Europe and around the world. As the year draws to a close, we're sharing our final update before 2025. December has brought significant developments, including the European Parliament's approval of the new College of Commissioners, who have now officially taken office. Looking ahead, there is much to anticipate. The new Commission is set to release its Work Program in February, and we will provide in-depth analysis of all the key updates around animal welfare. Additionally, exciting developments are on the horizon at the Institute, with new publications and continued organizational growth in the works. (…)

17/12/2024 : Assemblée nationale : réponse écrite à la question n°788 : Interpellation sur les soirées illégales de l'Aquarium de Paris

Document type: Answer to question n°788 published in the Journal officiel de la République française on the website of the **Assemblée nationale**

Authors: question: Mrs Danielle Simonnet Paris (15th district) - Écologiste et Social. Answer: Ministry of Ecological Transition, Energy, Climate and Risk Prevention.

Question: Mme Danielle Simonnet alerts Mme la ministre de la transition écologique, de l'énergie, du climat et de la prévention des risques, to the illegal party events currently being held at the Paris Aquarium. Indeed, Law 2021-1539 of November 30, 2021 to combat animal abuse amends the Environment Code, which in Article L. 413-13-I states: "It is forbidden to present domestic or non-domestic animals in discotheques or nightclubs. For the application of the present law, a discotheque or nightclub is considered to be any enclosed place, or one to which access is restricted, whose primary purpose is to receive the public, even for private events, with a view to a gathering intended mainly for the broadcasting of music and dancing". Despite this law, the Aquarium de Paris continues to organize lucrative discotheques with animals on a regular basis. Fish are sentient beings, not decorative objects. She therefore asks what measures the Minister intends to take to enforce the law and prohibit these illegal parties at the Paris Aquarium.

Answer: As part of the implementation of French Law 2021-1539 of November 30, 2021 to combat animal abuse and strengthen the bond between animals and humans, it is forbidden to display domestic or non-domestic animals in discotheques and nightclubs. Article L. 413-13-1 takes aquatic animal species into consideration. The Direction Départementale de la Protection des Populations de Paris has been informed of the report concerning the organization of party events by the Aquarium de Paris, and is in charge of examining the case and the action to be taken.

03/12/2024 : Olivér Várhelyi - European Commission

Document type: article published by the **European Commission**

Author: European Commission

Preview: As Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare, Olivér Várhelyi's task is to complete the European Health Union. He will do this by diversifying supply chains, improving access to the most advanced treatments, boosting the competitiveness, resilience and security of health systems and working on strategic inventories. He is also tasked with building on the One Health approach, which recognises the connection between people, animals, plants and their shared environment. He is responsible for:

- proposing a Critical Medicines Act to address the severe shortages of medicines and medical devices and to reduce dependencies
- leading the efforts to conclude work on the reform of EU pharmaceutical legislation
- leading the work on a new European Biotech Act to boost innovation in health technology assessment, clinical trials and more
- ensuring the availability and competitiveness of medical devices
- stepping up the Commission's work on preventive health, including by ensuring the implementation of the European Beating Cancer Plan and by evaluating and revising tobacco legislation
- continuing the work to combat anti-microbial resistance (AMR) and working with Member States to reach the 2030 targets

- preparing a European action plan on the cybersecurity of hospitals and healthcare providers
- completing the European Health Data Space and making proposals to scale up genome sequencing capacities
- leading an EU-wide inquiry on the broader impacts of social media on wellbeing
- **modernising the rules on animal welfare, including on the import of exotic animals** *(extract from the mission letter: "Building upon the existing animal welfare legislation, you will modernise the rules on animal welfare, including on the import of exotic animals, standards while addressing sustainability, ethical, scientific and economic considerations, and citizens expectations.")*
- proposing actions to prevent and reduce food waste
- enforcing food safety standards, including through increased controls on imported products

Read more about the EU's public health and animal welfare policies.
Link to President von der Leyen's mission letter to Olivér Várhelyi

27/11/2024 : Maltraitance animale : les vétérinaires vont collaborer avec la justice comme les médecins légistes

Document type: article published in La Dépêche

Author: Sébastien Girardel

Preview: Since September 2022, the Toulouse Public Prosecutor's Office has been pursuing a rigorous policy for the prosecution of animal abuse, through the creation of a dedicated environmental and animal abuse unit (PEMA). Responsible for coordinating legal action, the unit brings forward swift prosecutions and effective counter-measures such as the seizure and confiscation of abused animals, while the most serious offenders are banned from keeping animals. The purpose of the new protocol, signed in 2024, is to formalize the collaboration between the PEMA, the Toulouse National Veterinary School (ENVT) and the Regional Council of the Order of Veterinarians (CROV). Its aims are twofold: to ensure improved handling of veterinary evidence in the courts, and to provide appropriate training for professionals.

Enhanced technical and judicial collaboration

The CROV has undertaken to provide a list of trained veterinarians operating throughout France to intervene at the request of public prosecutors or investigators. These veterinarians will work in coordination with the PEMA's advisory magistrates to guarantee the provision of rapid and reliable expertise. In addition, the ENVT will provide its expertise for complex autopsies and cases involving wild or farmed animals. This scheme also benefits from recent legislative advances in France, such as the partial lifting of professional secrecy for veterinarians, introduced by the Law of November 30, 2021. This framework enables professionals to report cases of animal abuse observed in the course of their duties.

Measures with teeth to prevent recidivism

In addition to the suppression of immediate abuses, this protocol seeks to protect against recidivism by adopting an approach that combines education with dissuasion. Targeted training courses will be offered to veterinarians to help them better detect and characterize offences. Last, the emphasis is on legal measures suited to minor offences, including alternatives to prosecution. With this strengthened collaboration, Toulouse is positioning itself as an example of good practice in the fight against animal abuse, combining scientific expertise with a robust judicial response.

26/11/2024 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-001907/2024 : Greece is failing to meet its animal welfare obligations

Document type: Response from the European Commission to question E-001907/2024

Authors: question: Matthias Ecke (S&D). Answer: Mrs Kyriakides on behalf of the European Commission

Question: Greece is failing to meet its obligations under Regulation (EU) No 576/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 June 2013 on the non-commercial movement of pet animals. The animal welfare association Tierschutzinitiative ohne Grenzen e.V. imports cats and dogs from Greece to Germany; it has always had a licence to do so. That licence has now been withdrawn by a court because the association did not use the TRACES system when importing pet animals into Germany. According to that association and other animal welfare organisations (such as Tierschutzverein Südkreta e.V.[1] and Tiere in Not Griechenland e.V.[2]), Greece systematically refuses to provide the necessary data on the use of TRACES.
Consequently, the animal welfare association is being prevented from fulfilling its purpose.
1. Is the Commission aware of any other complaints from animal welfare organisations in the EU that Greece is failing to meet the obligations stemming from European animal welfare regulations, in particular with regard to the non-commercial movement of pet animals?
2. How does the Commission view Greece's inadequate implementation of animal welfare obligations, in particular with regard to the transport of animals involving the TRACES system?
3. How does the Commission intend to ensure that Greece provides information in future, in particular since systematic refusal to provide animal transport data is a breach of EU law?
[1] https://tsv-suedkreta.de/aktueller-hinweis/
[2] https://www.tiere-in-not-griechenland.de/

Answer : Movements of animals referred to by the Honourable Member cannot be considered as non-commercial movements of pet animals as their main aim is to transfer the ownership of the concerned animals through an animal welfare association to a new pet owner. They therefore fall under Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/688[1], which provides that dogs and cats must come from establishments that have been registered by the national competent authorities. Without such approval, dogs and cats cannot be moved to other Member States.
As for Regulation (EC) No 1/2005[2], there is no requirement to record journey logs for journeys between Member States in TRACES. The Commission adopted in 2023 a proposal for a new Regulation on the protection of animals during transport[3]. This proposal includes provisions on the recording of journey logs in TRACES for the transport of dogs and cats as an economic activity.
[1] Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/688 of 17 December 2019 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council, as regards animal health requirements for movements within the Union of terrestrial animals and hatching eggs, OJ L 174, 3.6.2020, p. 140.
[2] Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations and amending Directives 64/432/EEC and 93/119/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1255/97, OJ L 0035.1.2005, p. 1.
[3] Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of

animals during transport and related operations, amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1255/97 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005, COM/2023/770 final.

19/11/2024 : Bien-être animal : la présidence hongroise du Conseil propose un contrôle de la température durant le transport

Document type: article published in Euractiv

Author: Sofia Sanchez Manzanaro

Preview: The Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) is proposing the introduction of temperature monitoring systems as part of new rules on animal welfare during transport. The Presidency's draft proposal, made public following a transparency request from Euractiv, relates to Chapter V of the regulation on requirements during transport and on arrival at the place of destination. It was presented to EU Member States on October 21 and discussed at a meeting on October 28. Article 24 now proposes that outside temperatures should be monitored, a requirement not included in the the Commission's initial proposal of December 2023. Sensors should be mounted in the part of the truck most exposed to extreme temperatures, and the driver should receive an alert when a certain threshold is reached. "Means of transport [...] must be equipped with a warning system to alert the driver when the temperature reaches 0°C or +35°C," the Presidency plans. An EU diplomat familiar with the negotiations reported that the draft text was generally well received by Member States on October 28. Another diplomat told Euractiv that the proposal was a step in the right direction. Under the Commission's proposal, the transport of animals would be authorized at night only if the expected daytime temperature was above 30°C. Olga Kikou, from the European Institute for Animal Law and Policy, noted that, despite the statement that the driver will be "alerted", there is no indication of the action to be taken when the maximum temperature is reached. She expressed concern that "lack of clarity will lead to problems when transporting animals, which is quite worrying". While the Hungarian Presidency is focusing primarily on finalizing Chapter V, negotiations have also begun on chapters that are closely related, such as Chapter II on organizer and transporter authorizations, an EU diplomat confirmed to Euractiv.

19/11/2024 : Assemblée nationale : réponse écrite à la question n°1076 : Gestion des animaux errants en France métropolitaine et en outre-mer

Document type: Answer to question n°1076 published in the Official Journal of the French Republic

Authors: Mrs Corinne Vignon (Ensemble pour la République - Haute-Garonne (3rd constituency)).
Answer: Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry

Question: Mrs Corinne Vignon alerts the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry to the issue of the management of stray animals in mainland and overseas France. Article 11 of Law no. 2021-1539 of November 30, 2021 provided for the publication, within six months of the law's promulgation, of a report designed to draw up a quantified situation report, assess the cost of capturing and sterilizing stray cats and formulate sustainable, operational recommendations to address this issue. The Fondation 30 Millions d'Amis, which runs the largest stray cat identification and sterilization program in France (with a budget of 2.2 million euros in 2023), has alerted the Deputy to the fact that, almost 3 years after the law was enacted, this report has still not been

published or submitted to Parliament. It also appears that the trial provided for in Article 12 of the same law has not been implemented. The National Plan to improve the welfare of companion animals announced in May 2024 by Minister Marc Fesneau recognizes that excessive numbers of stray animals give rise to several issues, including health and safety risks, loss of biodiversity and public nuisance, and that sterilization is a proven solution. A start has been made on addressing this issue with the allocation of a budget of 3 million euros earmarked for the sterilization of stray animals, as part of the Finance Act for 2024. She would like to know what concrete actions will finally result from the provisions of the Law of November 30, 2021, and to what extent the national government intends to provide long-term support to local authorities to implement ethical and sustainable policies for sterilizing stray cats.

Answer: Under current legislation, stray animals are impounded under the authority of the local 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 wild 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 municipal councils and animal protection associations, in varying proportions. Law no. 2021-1539 of November 30, 2021, to combat animal abuse and strengthenthe bond between animals and humans, required the Government to draw up two reports on the subject of stray cats. The first, presenting a quantified assessment 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 stakeholders, 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 makes provision for a trial enabling local councils, who have powers to manage stray cats, to enter an agreement with the national authorities 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 town and rural authorities. The second report will focus on the results of this trial. 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 groups and public establishments for inter-communal cooperation (EPCI) that manage stray cats as a non-statutary activity. Pursuant to the Finance Act for 2024, the Ministry is making available a €3m fund 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 individual characteristics of these territories, domestic dogs may also be eligible. This funding is allocated as part of the pilot provided for in the above law of November 30, 2021, which allows for the establishment of agreements between national government and Mayors or Heads of territorial authorities and voluntary EPCIs, with the purpose of improving the management and care of stray or stray cat populations and setting out the skills and resources provided by each signatory with this objective in mind. To apply for a grant, local authorities had to respond to the call

for projects on the web page entitled "Support for stray cat management projects", which was open for applications 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.

19/11/2024 : Assemblée nationale : réponse écrite à la question n°495 : Maltraitance animale dans les Drom-Com

Document type: Answer to question n°495 published in the Official Journal of the French Republic

Authors: question: Mme Maud Petit (Les Démocrates - Val-de-Marne (4th district)). Answer: Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry.

Question: Mrs Maud Petit draws the attention of the Prime Minister's Minister for Overseas France to animal abuse in the DROM-COMs. Overseas territories may be a paradise for many tourists, but they are often a living hell for animals. After being contacted by an association, and having witnessed the issue first-hand when she lived there as a child, the Deputy feels that animal welfare is, even today, seriously threatened in the French overseas territories. Abandonment, abuse, violence, torture - it's not good being a cat or dog in some of these departments and communities. Many animals, some starving or sick, roam the streets and countryside of these territories. And when they are captured by the pound, they are, according to the association Les Amis de Sam, euthanized in 95% of cases, sometimes under unacceptable conditions. Euthanasia is not a solution, as it in no way solves the problems of abandonment and proliferation, unlike sterilization. She therefore asks the Minister what measures he plans to take to remedy this situation. She asks him about the possibility of launching a wide-reaching sterilization campaign in these territories, which would prove far less cruel. She also alerts him to the need to set up local shelters to care for these stray, abandoned and abused animals. Finally, she asks him to what extent it would be possible to set up a financial fund to help the associations who are doing remarkable work on the ground, but are often overcome by the scale of their task.

Answer: The government has been committed to animal welfare for several years, in response to a strong and legitimate societal expectation, and condemns all acts of mistreatment of animals, whether in breeding, slaughter establishments or domestic animals. To this end, since 2020 and thanks to the France Relance plan, more than 36 million euros have been granted to animal protection associations and veterinary medicine. Similarly, since the adoption of the law to combat animal mistreatment on November 30, 2021, four implementing decrees and six ministerial orders have been published, to enable the reinforcement of training for personnel in contact with pets, information for new buyers, control of animal identification on online offers, as well as the strengthening of penalties against acts of mistreatment. To extend the positive momentum initiated by the Government, a plan dedicated to the well-being of companion animals was announced on May 22, 2024. Its national monitoring committee, chaired by the Minister for Agriculture, brings together four ministries, industry professionals and civil society players, to ensure that its actions are properly coordinated. For the French government, the aim is to fully support and promote current and future initiatives in three areas: preventing and combating pet abandonment, improving the management of canine and feline straying, and preventing and combating pet abuse. To achieve this, it is structured around concrete measures contributing to five key areas: understanding the situation and identifying levers for action; informing, questioning and training; facilitating synergies between players involved in animal protection; making regulations more protective; and renewing

funding mechanisms. The first axis of this plan is to better characterize and objectify situations of abandonment, straying and mistreatment, and to draw up reliable and accurate statistics.
In this respect, the mobilization of the expertise of the observatory for the protection of domestic carnivores and the centralization of data relating to the above-mentioned situations on a single platform will enable public authorities to make informed decisions. In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture will make it easier for professionals and private individuals to take on board the new regulatory obligations, notably through a responsible acquisition program, as well as by renewing communication campaigns on the fight against abandonment and mistreatment, on sterilization and identification of animals, and on access to care for the underprivileged. In addition, the Ministry will endeavor to integrate these concerns into animal-related vocational training courses. If these measures are to be implemented effectively, synergies between the various players involved in animal protection must be facilitated, notably through the establishment of interministerial governance specifying the role of each. Within this framework, the Ministry of Agriculture steers public policies relating to the protection of domestic animals, the Ministries of Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion ensure those relating to wild animals, the Ministries of the Interior and Overseas Territories ensure the repression of animal mistreatment and trafficking, and support the other ministries in the application of legal procedures, under the supervision of the Ministry of Justice. In this context, an interministerial training course on the fight against animal abuse has been developed for all agents concerned, including law enforcement officers, and will go online in autumn 2024. In addition, the "Ma sécurité" platform, run by the Ministry of the Interior, will be consolidated, to become the preferred centralized tool for reports of mistreatment sent to government departments. Similarly, discussions will be held with animal protection associations to identify ways of professionalizing local associations in terms of training in best practices and regulatory provisions. Lastly, the Ministry of Agriculture will step up its efforts to raise mayors' awareness of the need to prevent stray animals and to manage pounds. The aim will also be to make current regulations more protective, on the one hand by assessing the application of the Animal Abuse Act of 2021, and on the other by updating the April 3, 2014 decree framing pet-related activities. In addition, a change in European legislation is underway, under the impetus of the French government, with the European Commission's December 7, 2023 proposal on the welfare and traceability of dogs and cats placed on the European market. The government intends to go even further, and is bringing forward strong measures at European level, such as a ban on the use of electric collars, tail docking and the prolonged use of muzzles in places where animals are kept. Last but not least, the State will be on hand to renew the funding mechanisms implemented under previous Finance Acts, notably for the sterilization of stray animals and aid to local authorities for this purpose, through the creation of a "France protection animale" fund, designed to collect any donations from companies. The government is determined to step up its efforts to protect animals, and will remain attentive to reports of stray, abandoned or mistreated animals. The latter may be prosecuted, both in mainland France and in the overseas territories.

13/11/2024 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-001843/2024 : Banning chick culling in the EU

Document type: Response from the European Commission to question E-001843/2024

Authors: question: Pascal Arimont (PPE). Answer: Mrs Kyriakides on behalf of the European Commission

Question: Each year, 330 million day-old male chicks are killed in the EU directly after hatching because they can neither lay eggs nor provide enough meat. This widespread practice not only

causes considerable suffering, but also contravenes Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which recognises animals as sentient beings. Some Member States, such as France and Germany, have prohibited this practice. In-ovo sexing technologies are available on the market to determine the sex of the embryo at limited cost. They work before day 13 of incubation, in line with the latest scientific evidence on pain perception, which shows that embryonic pain sensitivity starts from day 13 of incubation.
1- Will the new Commission's proposals for new regulations on the welfare of farmed animals include a ban on chick culling, with the implementation of in-ovo sexing before day 13 of incubation, in the egg sector, thus harmonising EU legislation and avoiding a distortion of competition?
2- If so, when does the Commission plan to publish the draft of this new legislation?

Answer: The killing of male chicks in the laying hens' production sector has been discussed twice at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, in July 2021[1] and October 2022[2]. On these occasions, the Commission expressed its intention to investigate this issue and assess various options. Between 2019 and 2024, the Commission sought scientific opinions from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on the welfare at the time of killing for different species[3]. In its opinion related to killing poultry for purposes other than slaughter adopted in September 2019, amongst others, EFSA recommended encouraging the development and use of technology to prevent killing surplus/unproductive animals such as male day-old chicks from layers' genotypes[4]. The Commission is currently considering EFSA's recommendations while assessing the potential economic, social, and environmental impacts. This analysis is a key component of the Commission's work to modernise the existing legislation on animal welfare.
[1] https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/agrifish/2021/07/19/
[2] https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/agrifish/2022/10/17/
[3] https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/topics/topic/animal-welfare-slaughter#:~:text=EFSA%20publishes%20four%20scientific%20opinions%20on%20the%20welfare,of%20consciousness%20or%20sensibility%20in%20animals%20at%20slaughter
[4] https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.2903/j.efsa.2019.5850

Transport, Slaughter, Pick-up

12/12/2024 : Effects of space allowance on behaviour during lairage, stress physiology, skin lesion scores, and meat quality of market pigs transported in an actively ventilated vehicle in the winter

Document type: scientific article published in Canadian Journal of Animal Science

Authors: Vanessa Pasquale, Luigi Faucitano, Nicolas Devillers, Sabine Conte, Renée Bergeron

Preview: A total of 1488 pigs were transported to slaughter using a mechanically ventilated vehicle in the winter in Canada. On each of six journeys, a sub-sample of 78 pigs were randomly assigned to two space allowances (0.46 or 0.53 m^2/pig), distributed across six compartments, in two positions (near-front and near-rear) and three deck levels (top, middle, and bottom). Compartment ambient conditions (e.g., T°C and RH %) were monitored during transport, and pig behaviour was recorded during lairage. Blood lactate, hematocrit, creatine kinase (CK) concentrations, and meat quality in the *longissimus* (LM), *semimembranosus* (SM), and *adductor* (AD) muscles were assessed on a

total of 108 pigs. Pigs transported at 0.53 m^2/pig had greater blood hematocrit levels (P = 0.05), but lower blood CK concentrations at slaughter (P = 0.01). The top deck was colder during all transport events ($P \leq 0.001$), and pigs transported in this location stood less in lairage compared to those transported on the bottom deck (P = 0.05). Pigs from the top deck showed lower lightness (L*) values in the LM and SM muscles (P = 0.02 and 0.04, respectively). Overall, animal location had a greater impact than space allowance on animal welfare and meat quality of pigs.

26/11/2024 : Impact of slaughter method on stress in organic common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*)

Document type: scientific article published in Journal of Animal and Feed Sciences

Authors: Łosiewicz B, Szudrowicz H.

Preview: Aquaculture is transforming due to global food demand. Organic carp is a popular fish farmed in ponds, mostly by small and medium enterprises. This is associated with environmental and quality benefits, but also high costs and low production density. Despite being a large sector of food industry, the ethics of aquaculture slaughter methods are perceived as inferior. Implementing the least stressful killing method would ensure better welfare of fish. This study aimed to determine the most optimal strategy among commonly used and approved fish sacrificing techniques. To assess the level of stress experienced by fish, the following biochemical blood parameters were analysed: cortisol, glucose, lactic acid and cholesterol levels, as well as the activity of alkaline phosphatase, amylase, aspartate aminotransferase and alanine aminotransferase. In conclusion, slaughter methods used in the experiment involved three main stress factors: handling time, fish body damage and stunning method. After analysis, we would recommend percussion followed by brain destruction as the least stressful method.