

Earlier this year the EconWelfare project reached its half way point. This means that most of the data collection has been completed, and that we are now focusing on ideas for policy makers and estimating their consequences. This Newsletter will give you a flavour of what are current thoughts are.

WP 2

At the end of March a European seminar was held to discuss the attitudes and expectations of consumers and citizens towards the standards and initiatives collected in WP1. They discussed the main results of a survey carried out within WP2 about the opinions of consumers organisations, retailers and NGOs. The survey confirmed that several research projects and the Eurobarometer results indicate consumers are interested in increased animal welfare levels, in particular in the intensive production systems for pigs and poultry. However, consumers' organisations do not position animal welfare issues high on their agenda. In almost all analysed countries these organisations are not very well informed about the real production conditions on the livestock farms. In general they ask for more information on packaging so consumers are informed about how livestock products are generated. The compliance with animal welfare regulations is just one of the issues.

Completely different is the opinion of the animal protection organisations. Although these organisations do not represent the view of the majority of EU citizens, they can be very effective in alerting the general public to welfare concerns, and influencing legislation in this field.

Retailers operate on the edge between consumers and citizens on one side, and producers on the other. They develop a new category of initiatives to support animal welfare: standards of production. Some multiple retailers have launched animal welfare standards either in collaboration with animal protection NGOs, some do it autonomously. The retailers in general state that animal welfare standards can create an interesting market niche, but they also stress that animal welfare alone is difficult to market separately from other quality characteristics, such as compliance with environmental standards or biodiversity.

The overview confirms that animal welfare organizations take the lead in the societal debate on animal welfare. The collaboration between NGOs and multiple retailers often created the conditions to launch these standards on the market.

The participants of the European seminar were representatives of multiple retailers chains and NGOs such as animal welfare leagues and charities. The seminar took place in Brussels, and was organised in collaboration with the Animal Welfare Unit of DG SANCO. The discussions highlighted the differences and agreements between NGO's and retail representatives. These will be presented in Deliverable D2.2 of the EconWelfare project. Both groups agreed that to raise animal welfare levels in Europe, it is essential that a higher level of compliance with existing animal welfare legislation should be achieved. However, retailers back the view that new legislation is not needed, unlike the NGO's.

The next activity in WP2 concerns the opinion of key actors in the supply chain: farmers, transporters, abattoirs. Across Europe four National Workshops were held in Poland, Italy, the Netherlands and Macedonia and one other workshops will be held in England very soon. Farmers' organisations, transport companies, slaughterhouses and meat processing industries were invited to participate. The discussions focussed on the importance and feasibility of the most important aspects of the Animal Welfare standards which go beyond the minimum EU requirements. The final report (D2.6, due this autumn) including the results of the five workshops, is expected to show different opinions of the actors of the animal supply chains across five different European countries.

Kees de Roest and Paolo Ferrari
CRPA - Italy

On May 19th Martien Bokma and I presented our mid term report to the Commission in Brussels. We discussed the main results of the first two WP's, the progress of our deliverables and also the recently started collaboration with another EU funded project: the European Animal Welfare Platform. You will find more information on these topics elsewhere in this Newsletter.

We also talked about the forthcoming 61st meeting of the European Association for Animal Production in Crete, Greece, from 23-27th of August. In collaboration with EAAP's Commission on Animal Management and Health we have put together a session on Monday morning 23 August called "Societal demands and policy instruments in relation to animal welfare and food production".

The meeting will start with a plenary contribution by prof Peter Sandøe (DK) on the relationship between societal demands and welfare regulation. After that, three EconWelfare colleagues will present results and conclusions of their WP's: Otto Schmid, Kees de Roest and Linda Keeling. This will be followed by a coffee break. The second half of the meeting will start with a presentation by Gé Backus (on Dutch animal welfare issues), followed by two papers on the difficult policy area of stunning and killing animals: Luc Mirabito (on French slaughtering houses) and Haluk Anil (on religious slaughter). It promises to be interesting sessions in which you can hear about recent findings, and challenge the scientists with your ideas on animal welfare policy making.

I've been asked to chair this session, and look forward to seeing you there!

Hans Spoolder
EconWelfare coordinator





EAAP 2010

61st Annual Meeting of the European Association
for Animal Production

AUGUST 23rd-27th, 2010 - HERAKLION, CRETE ISLAND, GREECE



Registration for the conference is possible via <http://www.eaap2010.org/>

WP 3 – Development of policy instruments and your chance to comment

The first deliverable from this work package was completed at the start of the summer. The work was led by Victor Immink and Paul Ingenbleek from LEI Wageningen UR, part of the Social Sciences Group of Wageningen University and Research Centre, The Netherlands.

The report includes a decision framework to determine animal welfare policies, intended to help policy makers select a set of instruments best suited to a particular country. The word 'policy' is used in the broadest sense to include not only regulative policies but also market-based policies and those aimed directly at the farm. It includes instruments being implemented by governments, those developed by private enterprises, academic bodies and other non-governmental organisation. The report shows that there is considerable scope for new policy instruments, for improving existing ones and for novel combinations of instruments. But it also shows that not one solution will suit all countries, as what is most appropriate depends on many factors.

The decision framework arose from a SWOT analysis of instruments and brainstorming meetings and has as its starting point whether the country has perceived higher animal welfare than the average for the EU, a similar level, or lower levels of animal welfare. For a country with high animal welfare levels but small markets, potential policy options may include increasing their markets by supplying high quality market segments of other countries with lower levels of animal welfare. In short the objectives focus on increasing profitability for farmers and increasing added value to create new types of demand. For countries with low levels of animal welfare, increasing awareness becomes important. This may be achieved for example by the EU raising the animal welfare component in region-of-origin standards. Alternatively NGO's and high welfare innovative companies could be supported, as they ultimately pressure conventional market parties to adopt some of the higher welfare requirements.

A decision at one point in the framework e.g. a market based approach to increase animal welfare, may sometimes increase the need for policy in other areas e.g. solutions for the perceived confusion in labels. Thus several routes may lead to similar policy options and there will be cascade effects, requiring combinations of policy instruments. The decision framework presents these options in a structured way and so contributes towards answering the ultimate question of which developments most benefit animal welfare in which situation. The decision framework highlights many potential policy instruments, and combinations of instruments, so the next task is to refine this long list to a short list. This work has already started and the method is a Policy Delphi exercise. It is being distributed among different categories of stakeholders in each of the 9 partner countries. In addition to asking about the appropriateness of different policy instruments, questions are asked about methods to document their effectiveness at the animal, chain and societal levels. If you have been contacted by the representative in your country, we encourage you to send in your reply. If you are in one of the participating countries and would like to comment, please contact your EconWelfare partner.

Linda Keeling
SLU- Sweden

WP 4

The work package is designed to evaluate benefits, costs and trade impacts of upgraded animal welfare standards and initiatives at the farm and food chain levels.

At the current stage of progress in WP4 the general methodology of cost and benefit analysis on farm was designed. Basing on the initiatives and standards collected within the WP1 upgraded animal welfare standards were defined for all the species concerned. The standards, containing sets of calculable norms were differentiated as "moderate" and "maximum" level. Moderate is understood as a solution applicable for all commercial farms, whilst variant maximum is more restrictive in terms of animal husbandry conditions. Subsequently, based on the experts' judgment, all the necessary technological parameters on potential additional inputs as well as gains from upgrading AW standards were estimated to feed the cost/effect model. The model was tested for the Polish farming sector. After required improvements the model will be distributed among all partners in the project in order to run similar calculations in other countries represented in the project.

The next step will be to do an impact assessment of these standards on chain level, which will include likely benefits of selling higher quality products. We hope that for the chain considerations a close link with the EAWP project will be established.

Edward Majewski
SGGW - Poland

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The European Animal Welfare Platform

The activities of the European Animal Welfare Platform (EAWP) started on 1 May 2008. The EAWP brings together representatives of major stakeholders and groups with clear interests in animal production; these range from producers and retailers to scientists and NGOs. They are all committed to safeguarding and progressing farm animal welfare. We also invest substantial effort in consulting a much larger group of stakeholders in order to bring broader input (and often specialist expertise) to our work, thereby ensuring the relevance of our findings to a wide audience. In brief, the EAWP aims to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experience and expertise between partners. It also disseminates information to a much broader stakeholder base through a dedicated website (www.animalwelfareplatform.eu) and other avenues. Our first tasks included establishing an efficient and effective management structure and an operational framework of product cluster groups that focus on welfare issues in specific types of farm animals (pigs, poultry (meat and eggs), cattle (beef and dairy) and salmonids). The supply chains have since been mapped out in detail in each of the cluster groups and comprehensive lists of perceived welfare issues/problems have been compiled. The EAWP has carried out an extensive round of consultations (via questionnaires) with stakeholder groups in order to prioritize these welfare issues; we are currently analysing and summarising the responses so that they can be presented in a fully transparent fashion. A similar exercise will be undertaken to identify current 'good practice' for dealing with each of the welfare problems as well as any knowledge gaps.

In addition to the extensive knowledge and expertise available within the EAWP we will also draw on external scientific expertise to construct 'road maps' for the different product chains that define the welfare issue, indicate ways to recognize/measure the problem, summarize possible practices to overcome them, and formulate possible short-term and long-term goals. In collaboration with the EconWelfare project we aim to generate valuable information regarding the costs and benefits of implementing the various improvement strategies (good practice) identified. This information will make significant contributions to the 'road maps'.

Harry Blokhuis
Coordinator EAWP

Acronym project

- EconWelfare
www.econwelfare.eu

Project full title

- Good animal welfare in a socio-economic context: Project to promote insight on the impact for the animal, the production chain and European society of upgrading animal welfare standards.

Funding

- FP7 programme of the European Commission

Project number

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- 1.3 million euro

Duration

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