Measuring animal welfare in a global context
FAO

5 regional offices, 10 sub-regional - 5 liaison offices

136 country offices

4000 staff - 192 Members
FAO’s audience

- Governmental institutions (Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock)
- Private sector representatives
- Professional associations
- Civil society organizations
- Academia and research centres
- Regional economic development and intergovernmental organizations
Petition to U.N., Codex Alimentarius Commission and FAO to stop the use of ractopamine hydrochloride in livestock.
Need for an intergovernmental body, independent from risk managers, to address at international level animal welfare risk assessment and provide opinions to national and intergovernmental organizations.
Scientific Assessment of Animal Welfare
Capacity building to implement good animal welfare practices

FAO Expert Meeting
FAO Headquarters (Rome)  30 September – 3 October 2008
As a general approach, improving the welfare of animals should begin with an assessment of the risks and opportunities in the entire system or production chain. Assessment should include science-based assessment of the needs and welfare of the animals and risk assessment to identify causes of sub-optimal welfare.
“Animal-based” measures

- Assessed at the level of the animals
- Include the presence of injuries, the incidence of disease, scoring of body condition and the performance of certain behaviour
- Can be used within a wide range of production methods
- Provide only a “snap-shot’ in time, as later groups of animals might react differently to the same conditions
“Resource-based” measures

- Assess housing, diet and other resources that are provided for the animals
- Relatively easy to measure, but do not guarantee a good state of welfare at any given time
- May be most applicable in relatively uniform production systems where predictable links between resources and animal welfare can be established by research
- May not be good predictors of animal welfare when applied to very different production systems
“Management-based” measures

- Focus on human care as an important factor in animal welfare
- May include the handling skills of the staff, feeding practices, hygiene strategies, and record keeping
- Are relatively indirect as indicators of actual animal welfare
Scientific Assessment of Animal Welfare

- At global level its complexity increases because of the wide range of production systems to be considered
- Need for a system-oriented approach that uses a wide range of information and captures the complexity of interactions
- Should rely in a comprehensive, well updated, information system and database of measures to be combined
Scientific Assessment of Animal Welfare

- Needs to identify causes of sub-optimal welfare and the opportunities for successful intervention in the entire system or production chain
- Should be science-based but it should also be done with the full participation of the target audience
FAO gives priority to an approach to animal welfare that lead to benefits for both producers and their animals.
Animal welfare should not be treated as a stand-alone issue but as one among many socially important goals including food safety and security, human and animal health, economic and environmental sustainability, protection of biodiversity, occupational health and safety, gender equity and social justice.
Global Multi-stakeholder Platform for Animal Welfare

FAO as an honest broker, will provide a platform for multi-stakeholder collaboration to develop jointly a global road-map for animal welfare. The new initiative "Global Multi-stakeholder Platform for Animal Welfare" will take into account similar existing initiative and scale them up at global level. The platform will identify priorities, needs and activities, measures and indicators, benchmarking and assessing mechanisms.
More information

- farm-animal-welfare@fao.org
- www.fao.org/Ag/AGAInfo/resources/en/pubs_awelf.html
- Gateway to Farm Animal Welfare: www.fao.org/ag/animalwelfare.html
thank you