Participative monitoring of the welfare of veal calves

Vincent Pompe,
Marko Ruis.
Animal Welfare Group,
VHL University of Applied Sciences

EAAP 2015
Welfare Quality Veal Calves

Clinical Health
- Good feeding
- Good housing
- Good health

Behaviour
- Expressing social behaviour
- Expressing other behaviour
- Appropriate behaviour

Pathology
- Hunger
- Thirst
- Thermal comfort
- Comfort around resting
- Ease of movement
- No painful management procedures
- No disease
- No injuries
- Positive emotional state
- Good human-animal relationship

Animal based Welfare Monitoring
Veal calves

Health + Behaviour
On the farm

Pathology
Slaughterhouse
Tested on 65 farms for improvement
Still in progress
• Survey amongst veal calves farmers shows
  – the implementation of Welfare Quality counters mixed opinions
The survey (21 in-depth interviews) indicates:

- **Sector**
  - There is overall positive expectations of the welfare monitor for the veal sector: **transparency**

- **Farm**
  - There are reservations about the success at farm level. Business revenues are not in view: **financially and practically**

- **Audit & Science**
  - Farmers’ doubt about some audit criteria, specially regarding the behaviour. In some aspects science appears to be too remote, hard to follow: **reliability and validity**
Key is $E = Q \times A$

- **Effect = Quality (science) * Acceptance (farmers)**
- $E = Q \times A$ means
  - understanding the roles of the farmer: entrepreneur, livestock keeper and stockman
  - understanding the dialectic of science – practice: methodological thoroughness vs practical relevance
Science: Reliability and validity

Practice: usability

Better understanding of the roles of the farmer

Based on:
N. Aarts,
C. Van Woerkum,
2010
Dialectic of science - practice

Flow of implementation

Based on: Andriessen (2014)
Dialectic of science - practice

Science aims at knowledge
Empirical Cycle

Practice aims at change
PDCA

- Acceptance
- Practical Relevance
- Usability
  - Innovation
  - Valorisation
  - Responsibility
- Evidence-based practice
- Practice-based evidence
- Reliability
  - Validity
  - Transparency
  - Clarity
- Methodological Thoroughness
- Quality
Dialectic of science - practice

The flow of Welfare Quality is problematic

**EBP**
Clinical proof
Efficacy

**PBE**
Success
Effectiveness
Conclusion Dialectic

- Welfare science: too focused on methodology, not always seeing the relevance
- Welfare farming: too focused on relevance, underestimating the generic power of science

- It is a common in most animal sectors (if not all)
Smarter transfer science ↔ practice

• Search for Room for Manoeuvre
  – Challenge the common pattern
  – Co-create the new

• Participatory monitoring is a way to close the gap
  – Methodology – Relevance
  – Quality – Acceptance
Participatory Model

• Basics
  – Farmers’ participation in defining welfare aspect
  – Coexistence of the farmer’s observation with that of the welfare assessor (science).

• Benefits
  – Farmers will get more involved in science: learning in methodology
  – Science will be encouraged to enrich, refine or reduce welfare indicators: learning in relevance.
Participatory Assessment

- **Quality Input**: Animal Facility
- **Quality Throughput**: Feed Climate Management
- **Quality Output**: Product Welfare

---

- Advisor → Farmer
- Farmer → Report
- Farmer → Assessor
- Interactive
- Interpretative
- Objective + Subjective

Animal Welfare Group
Participative monitoring

• WQ assessment protocol stays formal and objective
• Farmer’s observation and opinion will be taken into report
• Science can see when observations and interpretations are challenged and take actions
  – Explaining further the meaning of the protocol
  – Modifying the protocol
New Move in WQ implementation

- Effect = Quality * Acceptance
  - more interactive / less sequential
- Science is part of the PDCA
  - Farmers’ ownership of welfare monitoring
  - Science’s continuation in data valorisation and new data gathering
- Special manager/director to guard the flow
Next step for science

• More awareness and discussion about smarter interaction science-practice
• Creating ‘labs’ to experiment
  – Young farmers and young scientist
  – No fixed protocols on animal based welfare
Participative monitoring of the welfare

Vincent Pompe
MSc, MPhil, PhD
VanHall-Larenstein
Animal Welfare Group
Leeuwarden (NL)