

Report No. 1: Swedish Pig, Cattle, and Poultry Farmers' Views on Animal Welfare

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Introduction to Parts I-III

This report investigates the attitudes and practices of producers concerning animal welfare and assesses the acceptability and practical achievability of new welfare strategies. Due to fundamental differences between types of producers, the report is split into three parts: pig, cattle, and poultry farmers. Additionally, there is a concluding chapter which considers the three producer types jointly.

Each producer chapter describes farmers' perception of animal welfare; its importance and components. Next, the chapter explores farmers' views of animal welfare legislation including specific regulations. Then, quality assurance schemes are investigated to discover farmers' motivation for participation, barriers to participation, and impacts of their participation. After that, it examines farmers' perception of off-farm -transportation and slaughterhouse- animal welfare. Lastly, farmers' expectations of society and the market are studied.

Farmers' definitions of animal welfare

There were three broad definitions of animal welfare expressed by farmers. The 'basic' definition emphasizes the "provision of basic biological needs such as enough and good quality food, enough water, good climactic conditions" (Welfare Quality Reports No. 2, 100). In this case good animal welfare is measured by good animal health and by high zoo-technical performance.

The second definition focuses on the idea of freedom and comfort for the animal through the animals' opportunity for expressing natural behavior.

The third, and by far the most rarely encountered definition, emphasized the concept of the farmer as caring for the animals. This definition was found almost exclusively among dairy farmers.

Sources

This report summarizes findings as published in Welfare Quality Reports. Except where otherwise noted the information on pig farmers comes from Report 2 Part III, on cattle farmers from Report 7 Part III, and on poultry farmers from Report 8 Part II (Kjærnes et al, 2007; Kjærnes et al, 2008; Kjærnes et al, 2009). Research began with the pig and cattle farmer cases in 2005 and poultry farmers the following year. The case studies were published in the reports in 2007 through 2009.

Each of these producer case studies included 60 semi-structured questionnaire interviews with Swedish farmers. Samples were not meant to be representative; instead an effort was made to include various types of farmers in order to explore the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and behaviors among farmers concerning animal welfare. As such, each producer sample included farmers from different types of schemes and farmers for different products within the species, for example both laying hen and broiler poultry farmers were interviewed.

No scheme non-participant farmers were interviewed in Sweden for any species. This is due to the fact that scheme participation in Sweden is often a prerequisite for market access and as a result participation rates are very high, thus it was not possible to find non-participating farmers. In some cases, it was not even possible to find basic quality assurance scheme

participants for interviews. There are no animal welfare specific schemes in Sweden, thus there are no interviews reflecting this perspective. Furthermore, there is no veal production present in Sweden so no such farmers could be interviewed.

Table 1: Swedish pig farmer research sample

	Basic quality assurance scheme	Top quality assurance scheme	Organic scheme	Total
Sweden	2	48	10	60

Source: Kjærnes et al, 2007

Table 2: Swedish cattle farmer sample

	Total	Breakdown by type of production		
		Dairy farmers	Beef farmers	Combined dairy & beef farmers
Basic quality assurance scheme	5	-	5	-
Top quality assurance scheme	35	13	13	9
Organic scheme	20	1	15	4
Total	60	14	33	13

Source: Kjærnes et al, 2008

Table 3: Swedish poultry farmer sample by scheme participation

Basic quality assurance scheme	Top quality assurance scheme	Organic scheme	Total
-	45	15	60

Source: Kjærnes et al, 2009

Table 4: Swedish poultry farmer sample by production type

Laying hen farmers	Broiler farmers	Breeding	Total
30	30	-	60

Source: Kjærnes et al, 2009

PART I - Swedish Pig Farmers

1 Perception of animal welfare

All farmers agree that animal welfare is important and most believe that animal welfare is good at their farm. Swedish pig farmers tend to believe it is important due to its influence on zoo-technical performance and therefore the economic performance of the farm, more than ethical or moral reasons.

Farmers distinguish between their treatment of animals, which is considered essential for good animal welfare, and their emotional attachment to the animals, which is not considered essential for either a good relationship with the animals or good animal welfare. Good contact with the animals was stressed by the farmers as being part of good treatment and important for animal welfare. Farmers distinguish between pets and production animals, but even within production animals there are differences. Farmers tend to get more attached to reproduction animals than to fattening animals, and to animals with longer life spans on the farm.

2 Perception of animal welfare legislation

Farmers tend to be in favor of animal welfare legislation generally, but criticize specific regulations and measures. Swedish farmers stress the need for better internationally harmonized animal welfare standards. Many Swedish pig farmers support the idea of ‘meeting in the middle,’ in other words reduce Swedish standards while EU regulations are strengthened.

Legislation in Sweden requires lying areas for pig pens with solid floors and only some slatted floor is allowed next to that. Straw bedding systems are already legally required in Sweden and almost all Swedish farmers are positive about using straw bedding systems. This enthusiasm appears to increase with farmers who participate in animal welfare schemes. Swedish farmers oppose totally to slatted floors because they believe this makes the use of straw bedding impossible and causes drafts in the stables (Kjærnes et al, 2007, p. 106).

Farmers are split on the issue of providing outdoor housing. In general farmers in basic and top quality assurance schemes oppose it, whereas organic scheme farmers already provide outdoor areas and are content with it. Another way of seeing this split is between farmers who conceptualize animal welfare primarily through animal health or zoo-technical performance who reject outdoor housing on the basis of poorer hygienic conditions, increased risks of contamination, and decreased control of climatic conditions versus farmers emphasizing the expression of natural behavior as relevant for animal welfare who see outdoor housing as providing better freedom of movement and more natural living conditions.

Swedish farmers favor a ban on castration when there is a solution for boar taint, or else they fear consumers will stop buying pig meat. There is currently a ban on castration without anesthetic in effect in Sweden. Swedish farmers generally do not oppose this ban because boar taint is not a high risk factor in Swedish pig meat; whereas they might oppose a ban in a country like Italy where uses of pig meat have higher risks of boar taint.

Farmers - regardless of scheme or country - doubt that installing a brush in stables adds much to animal welfare since pigs can scratch using the walls of the stable. Furthermore, they stress the importance of keeping pigs free of scale to prevent itching. However, there is little opposition to it as it requires little investment.

In line with current legislation, Swedish farmers are against the use of hormones, except as treatment for diseases.

Swedish farmers support the ban on tail docking as tail biting in itself is seen as an indicator of a bad production system. Furthermore, most Swedish farmers agree with the Swedish ban on tooth clipping.

GMO feed is a divisive issue among Swedish farmers with some believing GMO feed is not a problem, others are skeptical, and organic farmers are against it.

In addition, group housing for non-suckling sows is already mandatory in Sweden as is a minimum weaning age of 28 days. Tethering sows is already banned.

3 Participation in animal welfare schemes

Quality assurance schemes are quality assurance programs which farmers join voluntarily or by mandate. These schemes vary in focus as well, for example a scheme may be focused on organic production, food safety, animal welfare, etc.¹ It was difficult to find farmers that do not participate in a quality assurance scheme or who only participate in a basic quality assurance scheme.² Additionally, there is no specific animal welfare scheme for the Swedish pig sector. Thus, top quality assurance farmers make up a large segment of the Swedish sample.

Motivation

Basic quality assurance has practically become a precondition for access to the market, a situation in which non-participation is hardly an option. Top quality assurance farmers are most often motivated by the opportunity for high quality production, leading to better prices and therefore better economic results, and better labor conditions. Meanwhile organic farmers cite ethical concerns and animal welfare improvements as their reason for entering the scheme. Additionally, they cite economic motives, better market access, escape from scale enlargement pressure, and more stable relations with retailers.

Table 5: Overview of the main motivations for entering various animal welfare schemes

Basic quality assurance	Market access
Top quality assurance	Quality production, better prices, better labor conditions
Organic agriculture	Ethical concerns , animal welfare, market access, stable relations with retailers

Oftentimes Swedish pig farmers participate in many schemes simultaneously. This is largely due to the fact that participation in one scheme is a prerequisite for entering another scheme. Moreover Sweden has a quota for organic pig meat, thus organic producers participate in multiple schemes so that when the quota for organic pig meat is reached they are still able to sell their pig meat for a premium price.

¹ For a more in-depth description of these schemes see Bruckmeier & Prutzer (2007).

² In Sweden, pig farmers have five important basic quality assurance schemes available to them: MHS, BAS, KLS, SLP, and Ugglarp . Additionally, it has five important top quality assurance schemes: SvDhv, BIS, BIS+, SwedehamPlus, SLP +.

Barriers

The most important reason farmers do not participate in a particular scheme is that they are not convinced it will improve their economic results, but rather that such a scheme would increase their economic risks by hindering their chances in the market and possibility to sell meat – assuming that it would make their meat products more expensive. In addition, many farmers doubt the cost effectiveness of such schemes, the willingness of consumers to pay, the increase in workload especially administrative, fear of losing independence, lack of knowledge about scheme, and technical implementation problems.

Impact of participation

There is overlap between motivation to enter a scheme and positive impact of a scheme. This is due in part to the fact that the farmers have already experienced how the scheme affects the farm before being interviewed on why they joined the scheme. Negative impact of scheme involvement includes restriction by scheme specifications, limiting sales to particular slaughterhouses, and increase in administrative workload. Farmers perceive their participation as voluntary in that they decided to enter the scheme and they acknowledge that they knew what was required when they entered.

Basic quality assurance programs are not perceived to increase the administrative workload of Swedish farmers. From a Swedish perspective, administration is simply seen as necessary for participation in schemes. Basic quality assurance schemes in practical terms have become mandatory to allow market access. For top quality schemes improved market access is the main benefit. The organic scheme increased market access specifically to the specific niche market where customers are willing to pay more.

Farmers already think that participation in some type of quality scheme is a necessity and they expect participation to become increasingly obligatory in the near future. In this case, non-participation will only be an option for very small farms working at a local niche market level. Farmers also expect that the number and type of quality assurance programs will increase.

Generally, farmers do not have a problem with the control regime, particularly those who participate in voluntary quality assurance schemes. Negative attitudes to the control regime are mostly directed at perceived inefficiency. Often, farmers are visited by inspectors from the official control as well as inspectors from the scheme; many farmers think that it would be more effective to have a single auditing agency able to perform both controls. Inspections require a lot of paperwork for farmers and farmers are sometimes disappointed by the inspector's lack of pig farming knowledge leading the focus away from practical aspects of farm management and occasionally fussing about minor issues.

Swedish farmers have a high opinion of the veterinarians' role in animal welfare; appreciating their advice as a source of animal welfare information and best management practices for animal welfare. However, some organic farmers perceive veterinarians as too focused on animal health and medication, too timid to speak out about animal welfare for fear of insulting clients.

4 Off-farm animal welfare

Transport

According to farmers transport conditions have greatly improved in recent years and further improvement is not really needed. Climate control, ventilation, water access, partitioned travel compartments, good loading facilities, not too long distance, the right amount of space, and most importantly a skilled driver and staff to handle the animals are necessary for good animal welfare conditions during transport. Most farmers do not believe animal welfare during transport is their responsibility, but rather the responsibility of the transport company specifically the driver. They do believe, however, that it is their responsibility to hire a trustworthy transport company. Loading the animals is considered a shared responsibility.

Slaughterhouse

Farmers found it difficult to assess the state of animal welfare in slaughterhouses because most of them have never been in a slaughterhouse. Some expect the animals are treated roughly, others think the animals are treated well as stress would negatively affect the quality of the meat. Good slaughterhouse animal welfare means allowing the animals to recover from transport, but preferably not keeping them overnight at the slaughterhouse. Additionally pigs should be kept in the same group from farm to slaughter line to reduce stress. Once again, the importance of good animal handling skills for transport as well as slaughterhouse staff is emphasized.

5 Expectations of market and society in terms of animal welfare

Farmers' view of consumers

Farmers have a rather low opinion of consumers' animal welfare concerns. They think consumers are primarily interested in low prices and hesitant to pay extra for animal friendly products. They believe that consumers are largely ignorant of the level of animal welfare in pig farming and that many are misinformed through bad publicity. Organic farmers tend to disagree; they believe consumers are genuinely concerned about animal welfare.

For consumers to better support animal welfare, farmers want consumers to take action on moral concerns through consumption. In other words, consumers should be better informed and prepared to pay more for animal friendly products. Swedish farmers also point out that supporting animal welfare could mean buying local products rather than cheap meat imports. Swedish pig farmers believe that they have a positive image among consumers.

Farmers' view of government

Most farmers want the government to arrange that all European farmers comply with equal standards, thus preventing the importation of cheap meat of lower animal welfare standards. It is seen as the government's responsibility to inform consumers about animal welfare and animal friendly products. To support animal friendly production the government could provide economic incentives such as tax relief to farmers.

Farmers' view of welfare campaigners

Animal welfare campaigners have a very negative image with farmers because they are perceived as having little knowledge of farming, promoting non-realistic demands, and

excessively manipulating information about farm practices they disagree with. Instead, farmers would like to see animal welfare campaigners participate in open discussions with the farming sector in order to cooperate in finding solutions to animal welfare concerns.

Animal welfare campaigners are appreciated by a small group of farmers, most of whom are involved in organic schemes, because they are perceived as fulfilling the function of animal welfare guardians and supporting a general movement in farming towards animal friendly production methods.

Farmers' view of retailers

Farmers are generally skeptical of retailers' concern for animal welfare. According to farmers, the main motivation for retailers is maximizing profits. Thus, although retailers like to advertise animal welfare they do not want to pay more to support such systems. Hence retail efforts to support animal welfare are seen primarily as window dressing.

Swedish farmers complain about a double standard in which Swedish pig meat is forced to maintain high standards while retailers import cheap products with low animal welfare standards from abroad.

Thanks to their market power, farmers believe retailers could play a significant role in encouraging animal friendly production. However, retailers would have to be willing to pay a better price for it and promote the products more effectively.

The majority of Swedish farmers see potential in an animal welfare label if it entailed major promotional efforts and if the price were not too high. They foresee a small niche market for animal friendly products. Other farmers do not think this is feasible due to high production costs.

PART II - Swedish Cattle Farmers

1 Perception of animal welfare

Farmers were asked to score the following five aspects of farming: animal health, animal welfare, economic and financial result of the farm, environment, and food safety. This was considered by farmers to be a very difficult task because the elements are all important and interrelated. The average score for each aspect gave the following result for Swedish farmers: animal health (most important), food safety, animal welfare, economic results, and environment (least important).

The relationship between farmer and animals differs greatly between dairy and beef farmers. It is very important for dairy farmers to have a good relationship with the animal because they are in very close contact during milking. When cattle farmers had a special relationship with an individual animal, it was usually because the animal had a story or especially good characteristics. The relationship with animals for dairy farmers is emotional, including feelings of joy, love, responsibility, and appreciation. However, the animals are never considered to be pets and are considered a means to gain income. Some Swedish farmers felt that their relationship with the animals had become more detached compared to the past when they had fewer animals.

Beef farmers have less daily contact or intensive contact with the animals. Bull farmers speak about their relationship with their animals in terms of mutual respect. Swedish farmers also talk about the beauty of the animals.

When asked to define animal welfare, Swedish farmers' responses can be grouped into three different definitions. The basic definition was the most common; it defined animal welfare simply as animals feeling well and biological needs being met. The second definition focuses on the opportunity of the animal to express natural behaviors. The third definition focused on care-taking, in which case the farmer-animal relationship is essential.

The natural behaviors definition was most frequently found among organic production farmers, while farmers from the basic and top quality assurance schemes most often used either the third or the first definition. Beef farmers or combined beef-dairy farmers usually referred to either the third or the second definition, while specialized dairy farmers tended to use the first type.

Animal welfare is an important aspect of good farming, although not necessarily the top priority of the farmer. Animal welfare greatly impacts animal health and performance, thus it is closely linked with the farm's financial results. It is also seen as the responsibility of the farmer to take good care of the animals. Additionally, good animal welfare influences the image of the cattle sector and strengthens consumer trust.

Farmers assess animal welfare by examining behavior, appearance, zoo-technical performance, and health. When asked to rank the most important aspects of animal welfare for their cattle, absence of hunger was ranked first.

Table 6: Ranking of aspects of animal welfare in Sweden

1	No hunger
2	Absence of stress
3	Absence of disease
4	Absence of pain
5	Social behavior & Human-animal interaction
7	Physical comfort
8	Natural behavior
9	Absence of injuries
10	Something else

Source: Kjærnes et al, 2008

Farmers identified four possible areas for improvement: better stable ventilation, more space for the cows, change to the stable system, and softer walking or lying surfaces. Most farmers did not plan on introducing these improvements due to a wide variety of constraints.

Most farmers believe that their level of animal welfare knowledge is good or at least sufficient. Information comes from experience, colleagues, veterinarians, professional magazines, and external advisors. Swedish farmers see the veterinarian as the most important advisor for both animal health and animal welfare.

2 Animal welfare legislation

Current Swedish animal welfare legislation

Sweden has many provisions for cattle welfare above and beyond the EU directive 98/58/EC. All cattle must have the possibility of outdoor exercise and requirements exist for floor type, bedding material and delivery equipment among stable, box and free-range systems.

Dehorning cannot be performed without anesthesia, newborn calves and cow cannot be immediately separated, and there are additional provisions for tethered cows. While veal production is not explicitly forbidden, its production is prevented by strict feeding and space limitations; it is generally considered to be an animal-unfriendly production type.

The majority of farmers in Sweden were satisfied with the level of legislation for animal welfare. Furthermore, most of them were convinced that animal welfare legislation in Sweden is stricter than EU or other EU countries' legislation. In fact the majority of cattle farmers in Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom were all convinced that animal welfare legislation in their own country was the strictest in the whole of the EU.

View of specific regulations

Many Swedish farmers consider loose-housing systems better for animal welfare than tie-up systems.

Outdoor access for cattle during a specified period is already mandatory in Sweden. Cow brush installation is generally seen as improving animal welfare, although not as essential for welfare and it can only be used in loose-housing systems. Hoof care is important and farmers support the idea of regular attention to hoof care, but they opposed mandatory regular hoof trimming because they felt the need depends largely on the animal and its housing conditions so the farmer should decide when the animal needs hoof trimming. Swedish farmers were very positive about the benefits of a tethering ban for animal welfare reasons. Mandatory grazing was also seen as beneficial.

3 Participation in animal welfare schemes

Motivation

Almost all farmers were at least in part motivated by market-related issues. For example, participating in a scheme increased access to a market or improved their standing in the market. Though scheme participation is not legally mandatory, at least basic quality assurance schemes are practically speaking necessary for market access. Farmers in basic or top quality assurance schemes often cited society-related motivations for participation. Top quality assurance farmers in Sweden found extra benefits very important, such as an agricultural advisory system or Swedish milk salmonella scheme insurance. Most organic farmers referred primarily to ethical motivations, though these concerns are not necessarily animal welfare specific but rather for environmental and food safety issues.

Swedish welfare schemes

Table 7: Overview of Swedish cattle schemes

	Basic quality	Top quality	Animal welfare	Organic
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	assurance schemes	assurance schemes	specific assurance schemes	schemes
Dairy	MHS 1 cooperative dairy factory	Swedish Milk Healthy Cow SvDhv Nöthälsan Several cooperative dairies	None	KRAV
Beef	MHS Naturbeteskött Swedish meats KLS Several cooperative slaughterhouses	SvDhv Nöthälsan 2 private slaughterhouses	None	KRAV

Source: Kjærnes et al, 2008

Sweden has many basic and top quality assurance programs; many of these schemes operate on a regional level or are specific to a particular slaughterhouse or dairy corporation.

Barriers to participation

While scheme participation is not legally mandatory in Sweden, farmers consider it a practical necessity since most buyers demand product certification. Though, there are still a few opportunities for small farmers to sell to buyers without certification. There are few Swedish beef producers so slaughterhouses dependent on cattle deliveries are careful to not impose too many regulations.

Impact of scheme participation

Generally quality assurance schemes were perceived by farmers as offering increased transparency and benefiting the image of cattle farming. Additionally, schemes are a tool to help farmers reflect on their own practices and stay alert, thus acting as a safeguard for high quality production. Furthermore, quality assurance schemes are recognized as the key to market access.

Most farmers did not see scheme participation as limiting their freedom to manage their farms. Many Swedish farmers went on to contend that the scheme improved their farm management by providing them with information. Most Swedish farmers did not consider scheme specifications too restrictive, but rather they considered the regulations realistic, necessary, and relevant to warrant good production.

The disadvantage of such schemes is that some scheme specifications can be time and labor intensive without directly benefiting the farmers. The need for quality assurance schemes to justify farming practices is seen by farmers as a sad proof of society's distrust.

The majority of Swedish farmers agreed that participating in a scheme increased paperwork. Two-thirds of Swedish farmers believed that scheme participation improve their market position.

Transfer costs include the cost to make required investments and audits in order to be allowed to join a scheme. Generally, farmers did not feel that schemes had high transfer costs. However, Swedish organic scheme participants were an exception, in that they considered membership and auditing costs to be too high.

Throughout Europe, most schemes and in most countries certify and control farmers through independent certification bodies, usually once or twice a year. Farmers consider unannounced inspections, analysis of case samples from farm in a laboratory, and detection of farmers not in compliance with good agricultural practices to be key characteristics of good inspections. However, in MHS farmers audit themselves.

The weaknesses of control regimes are seen as inefficiency, paperwork focus, distrust of farmers, lack of specific knowledge, and overly strict enforcement which prevents on farm-specific solutions.

Table 8: Swedish farmers' motivations to enter a quality assurance scheme

	Basic quality assurance scheme	Top quality assurance scheme	Organic
Motivation	- Buyer requirement, a financial reduction in not participating (M)	- Price premium (M) - Advisory system (M) - Insurance (M) - Buyer requirement (M) - Increase knowledge and control over production (M) - Belief in cooperative ideology (E)	- Price premium (M) - Buyer requirement (M) - Ideology concerning animal welfare and environment (E) - To keep consumers' trust (M)

Source: Kjærnes et al, 2008, p. 285

4 Off-farm animal welfare

Transport

Farmers identified the key components of animal welfare in transport to be time and length of journey, stocking density in the truck, adequate water, feed, and rest, good ventilation and hygiene, good loading conditions, and well-qualified staff. The disappearance of local slaughterhouses is considered detrimental to animal welfare as it increases transport distances. Farmers were in favor of more slaughterhouses and Swedish farmers suggested the use of mobile slaughterhouses.

Dairy farmers are less knowledgeable of transportation than beef farmers to whom transport is extremely important as stress would deteriorate meat quality and reduce prices. Thus, beef farmers are very careful in selecting transport companies or they transport the animals

themselves. Generally, farmers were satisfied with transport practices, though some felt they lacked knowledge on the issue.

Slaughterhouse

The majority of cattle farmers are not familiar with conditions inside a slaughterhouse, though they assumed animal welfare conditions to be good and complying with legislation. Stress deteriorates meat quality so it is in the best interest of the slaughterhouse to treat animals well. Some farmers were critical because they believed that slaughterhouse staff was too rough with the animals.

The most important aspect of slaughterhouse animal welfare, according to farmers, is waiting area and waiting time. Animals need enough time to rest and recover from transport, but not too long. Animals should be kept in the same groups as they arrived to the slaughterhouse in. The waiting areas itself should be clean with a safe path to the slaughter line. Animals should be handled with care and respect with the final stunning and killing as humane, swift, and painless as possible.

5 Expectations of market and society regarding animal welfare

Public image of cattle sector

Half of Swedish cattle farmers believe that the cattle sector has a good public image. About a quarter of farmers believed the public is indifferent towards the cattle sector and that the public have very little knowledge of the sector. The remaining farmers either believed the image was bad or they were unsure of the public's perspective. There was general concern about bad publicity and how it affects the public opinion.

Farmers' view of consumers

Farmers believed that consumers are generally favorable towards animal welfare, but their consumption behavior is characterized by cheap prices or meat quality. Furthermore, it was thought that consumers did not have enough knowledge about the sector to make specific animal welfare demands. They did recognize however that there are small groups of consumers who make further animal welfare demands; however, these demands are often unrealistic.

Farmers considered consumer buying power to be a potentially powerful tool to influence animal welfare, but consumers would need to be willing to demand animal-friendly products and to pay higher prices for it. Swedish farmers believed that consumers could support animal welfare by buying domestic rather than imported products.

Farmers' view of government

Generally farmers thought that the government could promote animal friendly production by informing and educating consumers, funding animal welfare research, and ensuring compliance with animal welfare standards, including preventing cheap imports which failed to meet this standard. Additionally, a couple of Swedish farmers believed that subsidies would help in the development of animal friendly production, though others clearly did not want to depend on subsidies.

Farmers' view of animal welfare campaigners

Farmers' views of animal welfare campaigners vary significantly depending on the action taken by the campaigners. Those that enter into discussion with the sector and try to implement changes through democratic process are appreciated by farmers for setting the agenda for change in the sector and fulfilling the role of watch dog. However, activist activities like releasing mink or television campaigns portraying extreme conditions were seen as spreading false information and using illegal methods. Beef and dairy farmers are rarely the object of attack in such campaigns.

Farmers' view of retailers

Half of Swedish farmers were skeptical about the role that could be played by retailers in promoting animal friendly production because they mistrusted the retailers' real interest in animal welfare. Retailers could promote animal friendly production by paying fair prices for animal friendly products, informing and educating consumers, stop importing cheap products produced according to lower animal welfare standards, and stop using meat as a discount product.

Farmers' view of animal welfare label

Most Swedish farmers did not believe in a potential market for animal friendly labeled products. This is because animal friendly does not ensure better quality, animal welfare is not a consumer priority compared to price, animal welfare is believed to already be good enough, consumers already buy organic, dairy factories will not want their own brands competing, and labels are already too numerous and complex for consumers. Farmers who believed in the possibility of a market for animal friendly labeled products pointed out that animal friendly production is distinct from industrial production methods, it could only succeed with good publicity campaigns, and still animal friendly products would only sell to a small niche market.

PART III - Swedish Poultry Farmers

1 Perception of animal welfare

Definition of animal welfare

Farmers gave a variety of answers for what animal welfare is. Many of them combined multiple aspects listed below to describe animal welfare. The general answer was that good animal welfare meant that the animals were doing well or were fine or at least as fine as possible.

'Being fine' meant good living conditions for animals including enough good food and water, good ventilation and temperature, good quality litter, good micro-climate, a dry environment, light, and enough space. Some farmers considered having good routines, inspecting animals, and nursing them as the most important precondition for ensuring animal welfare. Some farmers defined animal welfare by the animals' ability to produce because good animal welfare is a precondition for high production levels or because high production is a good indicator of animal welfare. Other farmers defined animal welfare by the opportunity of the animal to express natural behaviors, while others disagreed saying that being free from pain

and suffering of feather pecking and stronger stable mates was more important. Often farmers pointed out that animal welfare was restricted by economic or production conditions. In Sweden, it was mostly free-range or organic scheme farmers who emphasized the benefits of outdoor access or opportunity to express natural behavior.

Most important aspects of farming

Freedom from prolonged hunger, thirst or malnutrition was put first by most farmers and is seen as a basic condition for rearing animals. Poultry farmers in general saw the opportunity for natural social behavior as more important than the opportunity to play or explore as seen in the table below.

Table 9: Rating most important components of animal welfare

1	No hunger
2	Absence of disease
3	Social behavior
4	Human-animal interaction
5	Physical comfort
6	Absence of pain and Absence of stress
8	Natural behavior
9	Absence of injuries
10	Something else

Swedish poultry farmers rated top three aspects of animal welfare from the following list: freedom from hunger, physical comfort, and security, absence of injuries, absence of disease, absence of pain, natural behavior, social behavior, human-animal interaction and absence of stress. Source: Kjærnes et al, 2009

According to farmers, animal welfare is an important precondition to achieving good production and therefore financial results. Swedish poultry farmers also found good animal welfare important for the image of the sector and to maintaining trust of customers or the license to produce. Additionally, farmers felt a responsibility for their animals and good animal welfare resulted in higher job satisfaction.

Good poultry farmer

According to Swedish poultry farmers, a good poultry farmer needs to be observant and capable of detecting the condition of animals quickly upon entering the stable; this requires good eyesight, hearing, olfactory and tactile senses and skills. Swedish laying hen farmers added that good farmers must have a great interest in animals, take good care of animals, and oversee all on farm processes and processes affecting their production. Swedish broiler farmers highlighted the importance of taking good care of animals and having control of production processes. They too mentioned interest in animals as a characteristic of good poultry farmers.

Farming priorities

Farmers were asked to rank animal health, animal welfare, economic and financial result on the farm, environment, and food safety on a scale from very important to very unimportant. It

is important to note that Avian Influenza broke into several EU countries during the course of the interviews and its impact on the results is impossible to measure. In Sweden, food safety ranked highest followed by animal welfare, animal health and economic result, and environment respectively.

Relationship with animals

Poultry farmers across the board had similar ways of relating to their animals. Some farmers found it difficult to describe their relationship with their animals, instead they would compare their relationship with poultry to their relationship with others animals. Their relationships with livestock animals and pets were much more personal than their relationship with poultry.

Farmers did not relate to individual chickens, but rather to flocks as a whole. According to farmers there are simply too many animals and too short time spent on farm, especially for broilers, for farmers to relate to them individually. Even though there were no personal relationships with individual animals, the farmers nevertheless felt responsible for them and believed it was very important to take good care of the animals.

Broiler farmers described their relationship with animal as professional more often than laying hen farmers. Some broiler farmers enjoyed the rearing period, but found their work unpleasant when broilers reached a certain size and age. There were also farmers who described their animals in terms of production factors rather than animals. There was a minority group of farmers who saw themselves as specifically drawn to poultry, preferring working with birds than with other livestock. They described their relationship with the animals as close and personal.

2 Perception of animal welfare legislation

Knowledge of animal welfare legislation

There was no difference between Swedish laying hen and broiler farmers in terms of how well they felt they knew current animal welfare legislation, most of them rated their knowledge from 'not in detail' to 'rather well'. Farmers working in alternative production systems felt less certain about their knowledge level. Many farmers confused animal welfare legislation with quality scheme assurances and assumed that by following quality scheme specifications they were in compliance with animal welfare legislation. Farmers were more knowledgeable of national animal welfare regulations than EU regulations. Numerous sources were used for getting information about welfare legislation including: government, controlling agencies, farmers' organizations, professional magazines, media, internet and colleagues.

In Sweden, the majority of farmers were satisfied with current national legislation. Battery cages were prohibited since 1988, although exemptions were made for certain producers until April 2003. The opening of the Swedish market with focus on low prices and three dominant retailers controlling the market were seen as problems. Although producers did favor Swedish legislation, many also stressed the higher production costs and thus the difficulty to compete in the market. Farmers wanted politicians to avoid making sudden and short term decisions in animal welfare.

On the EU level, Swedish poultry farmers agreed that there should be uniform legislation. However, they disagreed as to whether this meant lowering Swedish standards or raising EU standards. Those in favor of lowering Swedish standards believed that the EU legislation would catch up to Swedish legislation in a reasonable amount of time, while in the meantime Swedish farmers would face fierce competition. Some of them already found themselves in a difficult economic situation as a result of such competition. Monitoring and control of animal welfare at an international level was suggested by some farmers because it was believed that some countries did not take agreements seriously enough.

Attitudes toward specific measures

Ban on battery cages

As a whole Swedish laying hen farmers considered free-range systems better for animal welfare regardless of their own production system; although some Swedish farmers pointed out disadvantages of such a system.

Reducing stocking density

There was a proposal from the European Commission for new animal welfare legislation limiting stocking density of broilers to 38 kg/m² during the research period. Broiler farmers were asked about this measure and laying hen farmers were asked about a reduction of stocking density as a fictive measure to investigate readiness to accept such a regulation.

However, Swedish legislation already limits stocking density for broilers to 20 kg/m², though producer participants achieving top scores in Svensk Fågel can extend this limit to 36 kg/m². Thus, the proposed EU regulation is still less strict than the pre-existing Swedish law. As such, farmers opposed further reductions to stocking density of broilers. Some farmers focused on the importance of equal requirements across the EU and many farmers argued that reducing stocking density would only be possible if consumers paid for the extra cost. Organic producers already have lower stocking densities with a maximum of 20 kg/m². These farmers highlighted the importance of sufficient surface to reduce bacteria.

Among laying hen farmers, reduction of stocking density was not considered necessary. They believed that current norms already offered good animal welfare and functioned well. However, some organic farmers did think reducing stocking density would be a good idea for conventional systems. Farmers believed that reducing stocking density would increase production costs and that consumers would be unwilling to pay higher prices to compensate for this. Additionally, some farmers feared lower stocking density would increase fighting and pecking and would require additional heating. Organic farmers pointed out that surface area alone is not enough, but that hens need the opportunity to move to perches, to withdraw and hide. Swedish farmers also pointed out that stocking density in Sweden is already lower than elsewhere in Europe.

Providing outdoor access

Swedish organic laying hen farmers presented both positive and negative impacts of outdoor runs. Generally, farmers who already use outdoor runs were positive about their impact on animal welfare assuming climate was accounted for, although some also mentioned

disadvantages. They thought outdoor runs give the hens more freedom, provide fresh air and sunshine, better allow natural behavior, and makes for happier hens, but at the same time is more work for farmers and means a greater risk for transmittable diseases.

The majority of Swedish farmers with indoor production did not want to use outdoor runs. Transmission of disease and increase in workload were seen as major risks with outdoor runs. In addition, some farmers had too many chickens or not enough land to support an outside system. However, some Swedish farmers believed that outdoor runs are better for animal welfare and would be willing to use them if the extra work and costs associated with it were paid for.

Broiler farmers from outside of Sweden who work in outdoor production already are positive toward outdoor runs and their effect on animal welfare; whereas indoor farmers were skeptical of outdoor systems. They argued that a broiler's lifespan is so short that by the time they could go outdoors it's almost time to send them to the slaughterhouse. Additionally, they worried about the health impacts in terms of disease control.

It would be extremely difficult for broiler farmers in Sweden to switch to outdoor production. Most Swedish slaughterhouses require participation in the Svensk Fågel scheme, which in turn requires participation in the Voluntary Salmonella Scheme. The salmonella scheme excludes outdoor producers. Thus, a Swedish broiler farmer would have to find a new buyer in order to be able to switch to outdoor production. Some Swedish broiler farmers saw outdoor broiler production as a potential alternative production way, if the extra time and work could be compensated.

Ban on beak trimming

De-beaking is already banned in Sweden. Most Swedish farmers believed that beak trimming is unnecessary in a good production system. They believed that the practice of beak-trimming is unethical and that problems like pecking can be solved in other ways, such as through breeding, light schemes, good feed, and giving the hen something to do.

Use of slow growing broilers

The issue of slow growing broilers was seen by Swedish broiler farmers in economic terms. They would be willing to work with slower growing animals if they were paid for the additional costs. Some farmers even added that it would be better to work with these breed since they have higher disease resistance and there would be less pressure on the animals. However, farmers did not believe consumers would be willing to pay extra for poultry meat and some pointed out that poultry meat was treated like a discount product where consumers are used to low prices.

3 Participation in schemes

Types of schemes

Sweden has several basic quality, top quality, and organic schemes for poultry meat and eggs. The MHS scheme is self-controlled and does not exceed the demands of Swedish animal welfare legislation. Eighty percent of hen farmers, including both conventional and organic farmers, participate in Svenska Äggs omsorgsprogram (SFS: Swedish Egg Care Scheme).

Ninety-eight percent of Swedish poultry meat production is produced within the Svensk Fågels omsorgsprogram (Swedish Poultry Care Scheme), although organic broilers are excluded from entering. This is not a classic quality assurance scheme in that it is obligatory involving samples controlled by the Swedish Administrative Boards, who then deliver the data to the Board of Agriculture. KRAV and Demeter are available organic schemes.

Scheme motivation

Oftentimes, scheme participation is simply seen as a prerequisite for entering the market and selling products. Schemes are also perceived by Swedish poultry farmers as a useful tool for providing quality guarantees and thus maintaining trust from consumers and society in general. There was a subgroup of Swedish laying hen farmers with battery cages who stated they entered Svenska Äggs omsorgsprogram in order to get dispensation from changing to enriched cage or free-range systems.

Organic farmers referred to their sympathies with the organic philosophy as a motivation for entering the scheme. Also, they believed in a market opportunity for organic products and often received better prices for their products.

Barriers for scheme participation

There were a variety of reasons for poultry farmers to choose not to enter a scheme. For instance, if farmers thought stricter specifications within the scheme would be difficult to comply with or if they did not believe in the economic feasibility of the scheme are both commonly reported barriers. However, Swedish farmers agreed that for large-scale, commercial farming it would be impossible to enter local markets without quality assurance program participation.

Swedish poultry farmers were dubious of labeled production because retailers sell products under their own brand names, thus the consumers are not informed about the origin of the products or of the welfare quality assurance participation.

Impacts of scheme-participation on farm-management

Swedish farmers see quality assurance schemes as management tools to keep farmers alert and up to date on good farming practices. The main disadvantage of quality assurance participation was the increase in administrative workload and increased costs of production. Although many farmers experienced no increase in administrative workload, two thirds of organic Swedish farmers did complain about the amount of paperwork required generally.

Most farmers did not feel restricted by quality assurance schemes, nor did they feel the scheme restricted their management as they thought they would follow the same routines even if they did not participate in quality schemes. However, this does not apply to half of organic farmers and most of Swedish broiler farmers. They said that scheme specifications did influence their management on the farm and found their freedom as producers limited as a result.

Scheme participation according to Swedish poultry farmers did not influence production costs, or when it did it was only a slight increase. However, half of Swedish organic farmers did see a cost increase; some of them considered the price premium as compensation.

Among conventional Swedish farmers, a little less than half did not experience any or only minor transfer costs, while other farmers experienced costs from having to adjust their farm to comply with specifications of a scheme. Within organic poultry a slight majority experienced no transfer costs, while the rest faced costs to adjust their farm.

The majority of Swedish broiler farmer participants in Svensk Fågel labeling did believe the label improved their market position. However, Swedish laying hen farmers found that their market position was unaffected by quality assurance schemes. According to them, this is a result of large Swedish retailers using their own label, which makes the producer's product anonymous and thus impossible for Swedish consumers to decide on particular products. Organic farmers found that quality assurance schemes gave them the ability to sell their products as organic and receive a premium price for their products.

The Swedish MHS scheme works mostly through self-control systems in which farmers audit themselves. Farmers were generally content with the control system and believed it was a useful tool in providing guarantees to buyers and consumers, upholding a level of quality, preventing company blindness, and keeping farmers alert. Few farmers identified faults with control systems. Those that did criticized controlling agency inefficiency, paperwork rather than animal welfare focus of inspectors, control without physically entering stables to prevent spreading disease, and standard tariffs rather than payment for time spent on farm.

Across all studied countries, including Sweden, farmers welcomed the idea of improving quality assurance schemes by making control regimes more efficient. Farmers were divided on toughness of control regime with some wanting more or stricter controls or unannounced inspections and others wanting less or more flexible controls. Swedish farmers suggested that schemes should cooperate and coordinate control. In this way contradictory specifications would be solved and dual registrations, transaction costs, and number and time for inspectors could be reduced.

4 Off-farm animal welfare

Animal welfare during transport

Swedish farmers disagreed about the level of animal welfare expected during transport. Some believed welfare was well ensured, others thought it differed based on the transport company, some didn't know, and many thought that transport could be improved. Good ventilation, short transports, and low stocking density were seen as the most important factors in maintaining animal welfare during transport.

Animal welfare at the slaughterhouse

Broiler farmers were slightly more familiar with slaughterhouse conditions than laying hen farmers, most of who had never been to a slaughterhouse. Swedish laying hen farmers assumed animals in slaughterhouses were slaughtered humanely and swiftly. These farmers mentioned slaughterhouse modernization, many regulations, and veterinary controls. Swedish broiler farmers were satisfied with a new stunning method of gassing the broilers. Meat from laying hens is of little economic value and due to high transport costs in Sweden gassing hens

on the farm and destroying the carcasses has become increasingly common. Also, farmers said it saved the hens from the stress of transport and the meat is used as fuel.

5 Expectations of market & society

Public image

The public image of the poultry sector was not discussed with Swedish poultry farmers.

Farmers' perception of consumers

The majority of farmers believed that consumers were interested in animal welfare, preferred less intensive production, and generally preferred the cheapest products. However, some farmers did not agree that consumers were actually concerned about animal welfare at all. In general, farmers expected that information could increase interest among consumers. For example, allowing customers to visit farms, although this also caused farmers to worry about increased disease transmission risks.

Swedish broiler farmers had greater trust in consumers' animal welfare interest than egg producers. The Swedish broiler scheme has worked well and has been well received by consumers.

Farmers' perception of government

Farmers wanted government to be more actively involved in informing consumers about poultry production. Swedish farmers wanted the government institutions to buy exclusively Swedish produced or at least products produced according to Swedish legislative standards. Furthermore, they wanted the government to inform consumers about the high quality of Swedish production, thus making it easier to sell products in local markets and leaving the farmers in 'peace and quiet' without too much interference. Swedish farmers would also like to see more stable regulatory conditions with less unexpected and less frequent changes to regulations.

Farmers' perception of animal welfare campaigners

Most farmers recognize and respect the watch dog role of animal welfare campaigners; however, farmers thought these campaigns could never justify methods including violence, freeing of animals, or destroying property.

Farmers' perception of retailers

The majority of farmers were suspicious of retailers' genuine interest in animal welfare; it was generally believed that retailers were foremost interested in earning money. Thus, retailers would offer animal welfare friendly products if customers asked for it, but not out of concern for animal welfare. It was thought that if retailers really cared about animal welfare they would do more in terms to information and promotion for the products. Many farmers complained about retailers importing too many cheap products from places with less regulations and thus lower production costs.

Swedish farmers are dissatisfied with the role played by retailers in the marketplace. Concentration and scale enlargement have meant the retailers have gained too much control. Retailers have a double standard with animal welfare since they argue in public for and

demand good animal welfare standards for producers in Sweden, while at the same time importing cheap, possibly poor animal welfare products. Thus, in practice the retailers were more interested in cheap products and income than in animal welfare in the eyes of farmers.

Farmers' perception of animal-friendly labeling

Conventional Swedish broiler producers were very positive about animal welfare labels. They had recent experience with a label working well and with wide consumer acceptance. Egg producers were far more skeptical of labels. In general, organic farmers were convinced that an animal welfare label would work well for selling animal friendly products to consumers.

Highlights of Parts I-III

Highlights of Swedish pig farmer results

- Farmers tend to support current animal welfare legislation, but criticize specific regulations and measures.
- GMO feed is a divisive issue among Swedish farmers with some believing GMO feed is not a problem, others are skeptical, and organic farmers are against it.
- Basic quality assurance programs do not increase administrative workload for farmers.
- Generally farmers do not have a problem with the control regime.
- Farmers appreciate veterinarians as a source of animal welfare information and best practices for animal welfare.
- Transport conditions have greatly improved in recent years and further improvement is not needed according to farmers.
- Farmers think consumers could support animal welfare by buying local products.

Highlights of Swedish cattle farmer results

- Relationship between farmer and animals differs greatly between dairy and beef farmers.
- Sweden has many provisions for cattle welfare above and beyond the EU directive 98/58/EC.
- Quality assurance schemes were generally perceived by farmers as offering increased transparency and benefiting the image of cattle farming.
- Most farmers did not see scheme participation as limiting their freedom to manage their farms.
- Some scheme specifications can be time and labor intensive without directly benefiting the farmers and participating in schemes increased paperwork.
- Half of farmers believe that cattle sector has a good public image.
- Farmers considered buying power to be a potentially powerful tool to influence animal welfare.
- Many farmers thought the government could promote animal friendly production by informing consumers, funding animal welfare research, and ensuring compliance with animal welfare standards.

Highlights of Swedish poultry farmer results

- Poultry farmers across the board related to their animals in similar ways; they had difficulty describing their relationship with the animals, compared the relationship to that of other animals, and did not relate to individual chickens but rather to flocks as a whole.
- The majority of farmers were satisfied with current animal welfare legislation and believed that current norms already offer good animal welfare and functioned well.
- Quality assurance schemes are seen as management tools to keep farmers up to date on good farming practices.
- Generally farmers did not experience an increase in administrative workload resulting from scheme participation.
- Farmers disagreed about the level of animal welfare expected during transport with some believing it was ensured, others thought is depended on the transport company, some did not know, and many thought transport could be improved.
- Wanted government to be more actively involved in informing consumers about poultry production.
- Dissatisfied with the role played by retailers in the marketplace.

Comparison of producer groups

- A basic animal welfare definition involving animals feeling well and their biological needs being met was the most commonly held perspective, though all producer groups also had a group defining animal welfare with freedom of animals to express natural behaviors, which was most common among organic farmers but not exclusive to them. Sometimes, especially among cattle farmers, animal welfare was defined through care-taking.
- The farmer's relationship to the animals differed between species as well as by function of the animal.
- There were no animal welfare specific schemes for pig, cattle or poultry producers.
- Scheme participation for all producers was seen as practically a necessity for market access; many farmers participate in multiple schemes simultaneously.
- Most pig, cattle, and laying hen farmers have not been to a slaughterhouse and are not familiar with conditions inside of them; broilers are only slightly more familiar with slaughterhouses than laying hen farmers.
- All producers stressed the importance of well-qualified transportation and slaughterhouse staff for supporting animal welfare.
- All producer groups complained about the double standard of requiring high animal welfare standards for Swedish meats while at the same time allowing the import of cheap, possibly poor animal welfare quality products.
- All producer groups expressed skepticism toward retailers' role in promoting animal welfare because they doubted retailers' motivations and generally believed retailers were foremost interested in money.
- Producer groups differed in their views of consumers perceiving them in a range of uninformed to superficially interested to a small group believing consumers are genuinely interested in animal welfare; however, farmers generally believed consumers buy based on low prices.

- Some producers, particularly among cattle and poultry farmers, appreciated the watchdog role of animal welfare campaigners, but all producer groups criticized activists who use violence or manipulate information.
- Farmers want all European farmers to comply with equal standards; however, there is disagreement among farmers as to whether or not this should involve lowering Swedish animal welfare standards.
- Producer groups disagree about the potential of animal welfare labels; conventional broiler farmers were the most positive, while cattle farmers are quite negative.

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