



Newsletter 4 – June 2015

Content

From the WQN coordinator...	1
2014 Annual meeting of Welfare Quality Network	2
Welfare Quality Network Meeting and General Assembly 2015	4
Upgrading the Welfare Quality® protocols	5
Do you have any ideas for improving the Welfare Quality® protocols?	5
Upcoming events	6
Call for papers	7
Colophon	8

From the WQN Coordinator...

Dear Partners,

I realized the other day that the partnership of researchers in Welfare Quality® has now been active for over 12 years. I have never been part of any focused collaborative effort that lasted this long! And, although the current Network does not have a large financial capacity there is still substantial activity and progress.

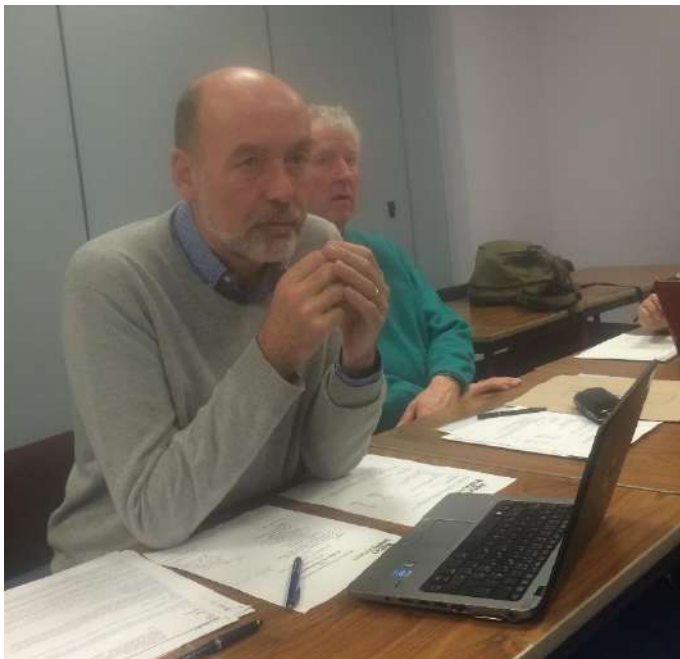
Our yearly meeting shows time and again that there is a lot of interest in the Welfare Quality® approach, not just from the WQNetwork partners but also from outside. Various research projects use the WQ assessments and much work is also focused on improving and simplifying



the system as well as trying to automatize specific measures. Furthermore, several companies now use (aspects of) the Welfare Quality® system.

Twelve years of working together has also provided the WQNetwork partners with a firm basis to effectively take new initiatives together which have led to further collaborative efforts like the production of the Welfare Quality® book (<http://www.wageningenacademic.com/welfarequality-e>) and the EUWelNet project (www.euwelnet.eu).

The existing Welfare Quality® assessment protocols and evaluation models need to be regularly updated and refined on the basis of new scientific findings, societal developments, and practical experiences gained during implementation. For example, some new measures may prove easier to collect, or they may be more precise or more reliable than some contained in the current Welfare



Quality® protocols. Currently we are in the process of updating the existing protocols to include improvements and new knowledge.

The General Assembly also decided to accept new partners in the Network. The procedure and requirements for the acceptance of new partners in the Welfare Quality Network can be found at our website (<http://www.welfarequalitynetwork.net>).

This Newsletter clearly shows that the WQNetwork is very active and that it remains committed to improving the Welfare Quality® approach and the welfare of animals.

- Harry Blokhuis

Coordinator WQN

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences



2014 Annual meeting of the Welfare Quality Network

Clinical Vet Science, University of Bristol on 16-17 December 2014

The 2014 AGM of the Welfare Quality Network was held at Clinical Vet Science, University of Bristol on 16-17 December 2014. A welcome to the meeting was given to the 20 delegates by Bryan Jones, and a short introduction to 'Bristol Vet School' was given by Andy Butterworth. The first day of the meeting comprised a full programme of short talks, a tour around the vet school, a tour of the vet



school farm, and a trip to City of Bath in the evening.

The second day comprised the formal AGM meeting with election of officers and agenda items including WQN accounts and planned spending. The attendance at the event was good, with a wide spread of representation from institutes across Europe, and the discussions around the presented papers were friendly and informative. It is clear that the use of measures derived from WQ, or allied with the WQ approach are currently still a very active part of European animal welfare science research.

In the first morning session, presentations were given on the following cattle topics;

- **Short-term consistency of animal-based measures and aggregated scores of animal welfare in dairy cattle farms** – G. Koch, M.K. Kirchner, A. Wassermann, C. Winckler
- **Animal health and welfare planning affects udder health and cleanliness but not leg health in Austrian dairy herds** – L. Tremetsberger, C. Leeb, C. Winckler
- **Welfare state of dairy cows in three European low-input and organic systems and influencing factors** – M.K.

Kirchner, C. Ferris, L. Abecia, D.R. Yanez-Ruiz, S. Pop, I. Voicu, C. Dragomir, C. Winckler

- **Consistency over time of single measures and aggregated scores of the Welfare Quality® protocol for fattening cattle** – M.K. Kirchner, H. Schulze Westerath - Niklaus, E. Tessitore, G. Cozzi, U. Knierim, C. Winckler
- **Development of a certification schema on animal welfare based on Welfare Quality protocols in dairy cattle** – A. Dalmau, J. Pallisera, A. Velarde

Good discussion on the use of assessment measures over longer time periods (variation) and on the very interesting commercial application of the WQ protocols in Spain.



After coffee, the group toured the clinical and research areas of the vet school site, seeing some of the surgical facilities, the CT and MRI scanners, the equine block (including equine operating theatre), the equine treadmill, and some of the clinics. The group also visited the dairy farm (200 cows in milk), a farm which is commercially run, but which provides a teaching and research resource for the vet school.

After the tour, and a buffet lunch, the talks continued on the subject of poultry;

- **Does diversity of free-range systems mean diversity of welfare levels in laying hens?** – F. Serrurier, C. Cayez, J.

Lensink, H. Leruste, J. Heerkens, F. Tuytens, V. Guesdon

- **Economic optimization of animal welfare in the Dutch broiler sector using the Welfare Quality® assessment protocol for poultry** – S.D. Brooshooft, I.C. de Jong, E. Gocsik, H W Saatkamp
- **Comparing the outcomes of the Broiler Directive and Welfare Quality measures** – A. Butterworth, S.N. Brown, G. Richards
- **Improvement in feather loss of laying hens is associated with a large scale welfare initiative** – S. Mullan, D. Main, M. Fernyhough, S. Butcher, J. Jamieson, C. Atkinson
- **The Welfare Quality® broiler monitor as a tool for the farmer to improve broiler welfare** – I.C. de Jong, H. Gunnink, V.A. Hindle



And these talks were followed by interesting discussion on poultry assessment issues, including discussion on application of the aggregation model, and of practical issues regarding application of the protocols in poultry in commercial environments. After coffee, the talks continued with a 'pig' talk - **Welfare quality assessment on pig farms – experiences from Finland** – A. Valros, C. Munsterhjelm, M. Heinonen, and then with talks, and discussion, on more general aspects of the use of WQ protocols;

- **Danish animal welfare assessment protocols for dairy cows and calves, sows and finisher herds** – B. Forkman, J.T. Sørensen, T. Rousing, A.M. Michelsen, M.K. Kirchner, S. N. Andreasen, P.P. Nielsen
- **Iceberg indicators of animal welfare** – H. Spoolder, I.C. de Jong, T. van Niekerk, K. van Reenen, H. Vermeer
- **The impact of Welfare Quality® and related projects** – I. Veissier, H.J. Blokhuis, H. Spoolder, L. Mounier, A. Boissy, X. Boivin, M.C. Meunier-Salaun

It had been quite a long programme of talks, but the discussions were friendly and interesting. The group then moved to the evening programme with a tour of the city of Bath (very cold!), and a meal at ‘Jamie Olivers Restaurant’ in Bath. At 09.00 on the next day (Wednesday 17th) the General Assembly of the Welfare Quality Network took place, and the proceedings of the formal AGM are recorded in the minutes.

- *Andy Butterworth*
University of Bristol



Welfare Quality Network Meeting and General Assembly 2015

The Welfare Quality Network Meeting and General Assembly will take place in Barcelona this year on 1st and 2nd December. Our partners of Institut de Recerca i Tecnologia Agroalimentàries (IRTA), Antoni Dalmau and Antonio Velarde, and Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Xavier Manteca, will host the meeting.

We will follow the same successful format as last year with a whole day meeting consisting of presentations of ongoing work related to the Welfare Quality approach. Apart from the Network partners themselves we also welcome others who collaborate with our partners or are simply interested in our work. I hope that many people will be able to attend this meeting and that many of them will present their research.

The 6th General Assembly (GA) of the WQNetwork is organized in conjunction with and on the day after the presentation sessions. At this GA meeting we deal with administrative, organizational and financial issues of the Network and where different working groups report and discuss their activities. Attendance is restricted to Network partners.

Welcome to Barcelona!

- *Harry Blokhuis*

Coordinator WQN
Swedish University of
Agricultural Sciences



Upgrading the Welfare Quality® protocols

Copenhagen, April 2015

The animal welfare assessment protocols developed in the Welfare Quality® project were first released in 2008. Since then new scientific findings related to various welfare measures have been reported, so it was decided that the original protocols needed to be updated. Therefore, in April 2012 a group of researchers within the Welfare Quality Network met in Amsterdam to discuss the problems encountered when using the protocols and potential solutions and improvements. Six working groups (broilers, laying hens, beef, dairy cows, calves and pigs) were established.



During the 2012 meeting the identified problems were subdivided into those that could be dealt with immediately, such as spelling mistakes and other errors, and problems that would need further discussion and scientific examination within the Welfare Quality Network. The obvious errors, spelling mistakes etc. were corrected and the revised protocols were published on the Welfare Quality Network home page in August 2012. Based on the work initiated in April 2012, researchers from all over Europe have since been working on upgrading and improving the protocols. Their efforts culminated in a meeting in Copenhagen in April 2015. At this meeting one representative from each animal group

presented the problems and possible solutions. Potential ways of homogenising the protocols across species were also discussed. Consequently, we decided to delete and/or replace some measures if there were any doubts about their validity or if it was felt that they did not give a reliable or fair assessment of the welfare criteria.

The outcomes of this meeting include six upgraded protocols (one for each animal group) that are currently undergoing final refinements before they are sent out to all members of the Welfare Quality Network for comment. We aim to publish the new, upgraded protocols on the network's homepage before the end of 2015.

Many thanks to all members of working groups for their sterling efforts.

- *Per Peetz Nielsen*

University of Copenhagen



Do you have any ideas for improving the Welfare Quality® protocols?

The Welfare Quality® Assessment Protocols were designed in such a way that they could be modified and upgraded in response to developments in technical and scientific knowledge (see other item in this Newsletter).

Everybody (inside and outside the Network) is welcome to suggest improvements to the assessment protocols by proposing changes in measures or completely new measures for the various Welfare Quality® criteria that could improve the quality or practicability of the assessment.

Each proposal will be reviewed by the Welfare Quality Network Working Group for upgrading protocols. Please feel free to submit any constructive proposal by email or by posting them on the website using the pre-designed template (<http://www.welfarequalitynetwork.net/network/45848/7/0/40>).

- *Harry Blokhuis*

Coordinator WQN

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Upcoming events



UFAW International Animal Welfare Science Symposium on “Animal Populations – World Resources and Animal Welfare”

14-15 July 2015, Zagreb, Croatia

Humans and their kept animals (farm and companion) comprise the larger part of the world's vertebrate biomass. The world's resources are limited, and as humans use more of these, fewer resources are available for wild and other animals. Whether like it or not, we humans now control or greatly influence the population sizes of many, and perhaps all, other vertebrate species, and decisions that we make to keep more of some species e.g., domestic, and farm animals have implications on the numbers and welfare of animals of other species that the world can support.

How do we apportion resources between kept and wild animals? How do we balance the welfare interests of one species against that of another? Modern veterinary

science enables us to keep a high proportion of animals alive to old age (when we wish it), but these occupy niches that would otherwise have been filled by young replacements: but is fewer long-lived animals better than more short-lived ones? Little effort seems to have been made to address how such balances should be struck. It appears that it is time to try to decide how many of which animals we want and how to achieve that most humanely.

This meeting will consider issues surrounding the rationales and methodologies of humane control of animal populations (kept and free-living) in pursuit of preserving biodiversity and minimising welfare risks to animals.

For more information and the programme, visit <http://www.ufaw.org.uk/zagreb2015.php>



Humane Slaughter Association

HSA International Symposium 2015: Recent Advances II: “Food animal welfare during transport, marketing and slaughter”

16-17 July 2015, Zagreb, Croatia

Around the world, over 100 billion animals are transported, marketed and slaughtered annually in order to provide food. Growing meat consumption and an increasingly globalised food supply chain add to the need to develop improvements in animal welfare during transport, marketing and slaughter. These challenges, combined with increased consumer concern, are stimulating new developments and the adoption of higher welfare standards in many parts of the world.

The HSA is holding a second International Symposium, in Zagreb, Croatia, to present and discuss recent scientific and technological advances in this field, and the application and uptake of advances around the world. The event will also be an opportunity to help identify future priorities and to provide a forum for sharing information and experiences.

For more information and the programme, visit <http://www.hsa.org.uk/news-events/hsa-international-symposium->



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Lauréate de l'Institut de France

Symposium on “Animal Welfare: from Science to Law”

10-11 December 2015, UNESCO headquarters, Paris, France

This international event will deal with a wide range of research topics and issues related to the science of animal welfare and its assessment, the state of its recognition and integration into international law, as well as related ethical and legal considerations. The aim of the Symposium is to bring together researchers from various disciplines – such as law, philosophy, biology, sociology – who all share the goal of promoting animal welfare in the various human activities that utilize and exploit animals, in order to propose concrete actions towards improving animal welfare.

It follows on the previous symposium “*Animal Suffering: from Science to Law*” in 2012. More information will soon be disclosed on www.fondation-droit-animal.org Email: dir@fondation-droit-animal.org

Call for papers

British Animal Studies Network meeting “Cold Blood(ed)”

9-10 October 2015, Cardiff University, Cardiff



Hosted by the Animal Geographies Research Cluster, School of Planning and Geography, Cardiff University

The event focuses on the topic of 'cold blood(ed),' suggestive both of particular lifeforms and lifeworlds, as well as a metaphor for the absence of 'passion' or emotion in human-animal relations. Thus, this event invites thinking on non-mammalian animals such as reptiles, amphibians, fish and molluscs but also a theorizing of action from and toward animals.



We would particularly welcome papers that address themes and questions including:

- What difference does blood make? How might a focus on blood encourage more-than-bodily conceptualisations of animals? How might a focus on blood encourage a focus on the internal workings of animals?
- How does a distinction between warm and cold blood affect human understandings of animal sentience? How does this affect the ethical judgements that are taken around animals?
- In what ways is/might blood and its circulation (be) used to hide or reveal nonhuman difference?
- Why have animal studies scholars generally paid less attention to cold blooded animals than warm blooded animals? Do cold blooded animals raise intrinsically different research questions?
- How does animal killing take place 'in cold blood'? How does coldness manifest itself in the process of killing?

How does coldness relate to theoretical concerns around the notion of abjection?

- What practices are viewed as killing in cold blood? How is killing in cold blood resisted? What range of reactions to killing animals in cold blood might be identified?

We welcome papers that deal with such issues in contemporary and historical settings, and would especially like to see papers that address these issues from contexts outside the UK, including the Global South. Papers are welcomed from across the scope of animal studies, including disciplines such as (but not limited to) geography, anthropology, sociology, literature studies, art history, science and technology studies, ethology, psychology, behavioural sciences and ecology.

If you are interested in giving a paper, please submit an abstract of no more than 200 words with a brief biography

(also of no more than 200 words). These should be included within your email - i.e. NOT as attachments. Please send them to Mara Miele at Mielem@cardiff.ac.uk. The deadline for abstracts is 30 June 2015. Presentations will be 20 minutes long, and we hope to include work by individuals at different career stages. Sadly we have no money to support travel, accommodation or attendance costs.

For more information, visit:

<http://sites.cardiff.ac.uk/animal-geographies/basn-2015-call-for-papers/>

Colophon

WQNews is the electronic newsletter of the Welfare Quality Network project.

This is a European network of researchers focusing on the updating, implementation and communication about the Welfare Quality® project's results. Twenty-six institutes and universities, representing thirteen European countries and four Latin American countries, participate in this network. Welfare Quality Network has been endorsed by the European Commission (DG Sanco), and has received financial support from the Swedish Government and the Dutch Government.

Project Coordinator

Prof. Harry J. Blokhuis

Department of Animal Environment and Health
Section Ethology and Animal Welfare, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
Box 7068
75007 Uppsala
Sweden
Tel.: +46 (0) 18 671 627
Mob.: +46 (0) 702 464 255
Fax: +46 (0) 18 673 588
Email: Harry.Blokhuis@slu.se

Project Communication

Dr. Mara Miele

Cardiff University
United Kingdom
Email: MieleM@cardiff.ac.uk

<http://www.welfarequalitynetwork.net>