



# Newsletter 5 – January 2017

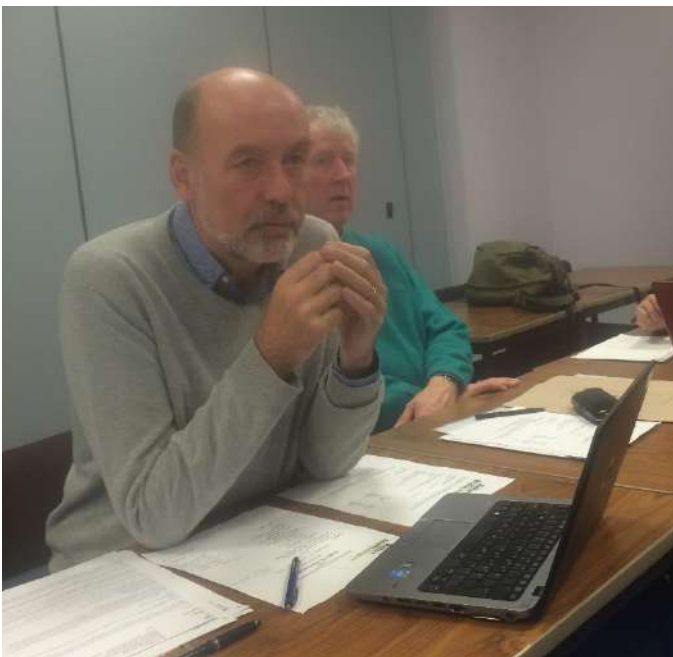
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## From the WQN Coordinator...

Dear Partners,

Days are getting rapidly longer, especially here up north. This General Assembly and the seminar day of 2016 were hosted and organized in Helsinki by Anna Valros and her group. The seminar day was also attended by PhD students who attended a course "Animal welfare - from fork to farm" during the preceding week. I think this was an excellent combination because the involvement and interest of PhD students is very relevant to further develop the science and spread the knowledge related to the Welfare Quality® approach.



That is also an important reason why several members of the WQNetwork continued to work together to develop the Marie Skłodowska-Curie European Training Network proposal 'AnimSharedValues'.

The idea is that a team of WQNetwork partners and associated partners will train a new generation of scientists to perform high quality research in transdisciplinary environments designed to identify and implement animal friendly innovations in Europe's food supply chain. We hope the proposal will be successful this time.

We also had a fruitful General Assembly in Helsinki including discussions on the integration of measures. The work on the improvement of the protocols is ongoing and some are very close to being published in an upgraded version. The exams are also on their way and will be used to deliver the first qualified Welfare Quality assessors. Hans Spooler left the Management Team (thanks for your contributions during many years Hans!) and after the GA Isabelle Veissier was elected as new member of the MT (welcome back Isabelle!).

Although some partners decided to leave the Network, there is a continued interest in our work both from industry and from new partners. I am looking forward to an inspiring 2017 and I hope to meet many of you at various meetings!

- Harry Blokhuis

Coordinator WQN

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

## Development of a certification schema on animal welfare based on Welfare Quality protocols

In 2014, the Animal Welfare Subprogram of IRTA and AENOR (The Spanish Association for Standardisation and Certification) developed a certification scheme of animal welfare based on the Welfare Quality® protocols. AENOR is legally responsible for developing and disseminating technical standards in Spain and it is among the 10 most important certification organisations in the world. The certificate was developed under the name “AENOR Certificate on Animal Welfare on farm. Assessment shared with IRTA and based on Welfare Quality®”, and a label: “Animal Welfare. AENOR Conform”.

The technicians of IRTA, previously trained on the protocols, are the responsible of visiting the farms or slaughterhouses and perform the audits by using the Welfare Quality protocols. Once performed the audit, a report on the results is sent to the certification company who is the responsible of giving or not the certificate to the end user.

At the moment, different slaughterhouses, pig production companies and beef and dairy cattle companies have been certified. However, only one of them, a dairy cattle company named ATO, has included the certificate in the label.

ATO has a total of 7 farms and produces 118 millions of litres of milk per year.



Figure 1. The text read: ATO farms are the only farms with the AENOR conform (Cattle) animal welfare certificate based on the European Standard Welfare Quality.

Since 2014, the company has been certified for three consecutive years. Each year all the farms of the group (6 in 2014 and 2015 and 7 in 2016) were assessed. The first year 5 farms were assessed as enhanced and 1 acceptable and the following two years all the farms were considered enhanced. When the final values are considered, an improve on the mean final score of 11.7% has been observed from 2014 to 2016, showing that the report sent to the company can be useful for improving the situation for the animals.

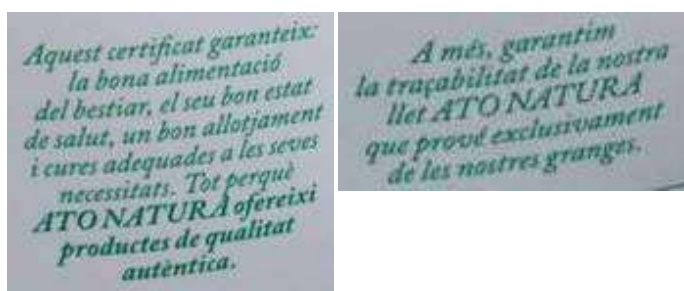


Figure 2. The text read: The certificate ensures a good feeding, good health, good housing and caring in relation to their needs. Everything to offer authentically products of quality by ATO Natura. In addition, we ensure the traceability of our milk ATO Natura that is supplied only by our farms.

After the audit, the company will receive a report for each one of the farms that contains the score for each one the parameters of the protocol and some detail on the thresholds or even a comparison with the normal values in other commercial farms. With a simple codification of colours, we show if each parameter is considered excellent (blue), enhanced (green), acceptable (orange) or insufficient (red).

At the end of the report, a summary by criteria, principles and final score is shown by using the same colour codification based on the score established in the [Welfare Quality](#) and figure 3.

### CRITERIA

Absence of prolonged hunger	100.0	
Absence of prolonged thirst	100.0	
Comfort around resting	87.0	
Ease of movement	100.0	
Absence of Injuries	54.4	
Absence of disease	54.6	
Absence of pain	100.0	
Social behaviour	58.0	
Other behaviours	100.0	
Human animal-relationship	0.0	
Emotional State	76.1	

### PRINCIPLES

Good Feeding	100	
Good Housing	90.9	
Good Health	53.8	
Appropriate behaviour	34.1	

### FINAL SCORE FOR THE FARM



Figure 3. Summary of scores by criteria, principles and final score for the farm received with the report carried out in each farm.

- Antoni Dalmau  
IRTA



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WQNetwork members at General Assembly and seminar in Barcelona, December 2015



## FAWEC - Initiatives with stakeholders

The [FAWEC](#) was created at the end of 2012 by the Department of Animal and Food Science of the School of Veterinary Science at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB).



The FAWEC members are [Dr Xavier Manteca](#), [Dr Eva Mainau](#) and [Dr Déborah Temple](#).

The main objective of FAWEC is to produce educational resources on farm animal welfare and to run theoretical and practical training courses on dairy cattle and pig welfare. The main ways to achieve this objective are:

1. To distribute a set of documents on animal welfare, which are free available on-line, covering general concepts as well as more specific issues on swine and cattle welfare. "Fact sheets", which are documents mainly theoretical, are specially addressed to vets and other animal science discipline and scientist. "Practical notes", which are documents mainly practical, are specially addressed to farmers and practicing vets. Finally, "Updates" give the latest information about animal welfare issues.

2. To organize workshops on farm animal welfare for veterinarians and other professionals with experience in animal science. Two mainly programs are offered: pig welfare and dairy cattle welfare. The workshops include lecture, group discussions and farm visits. The workshops are run in Spanish, English or French. Around 90% of participants were practitioner vets. The remaining 10% were agronomist, scientist, technician or product managers with experience in animal science.

The main objectives of the workshops are as follows:

- a. To understand the concept of animal welfare as applied to farm animals. The relationship between animal welfare and animal health, as well as the production and economic implications of animal welfare, are discussed in detail.
- b. To learn the content of the EU directives on farm animal welfare, and discuss the expected changes in the EU legislation on animal welfare in the near future.
- c. To become familiar with the main welfare problems on pig and dairy farms
- d. To understand the basis of on-farm animal welfare assessment

3. To run webinars (on-line seminars) that cover specific issues on swine and cattle welfare. The FAWEC organizes two webinars per year that are also available on-line for free after their emission.

FAWEC compiles information attending to different congress or livestock fairs, by e-mail received through FAWEC webpage or discussing with veterinarians and producers in different workshops or courses that FAWEC members attended. The remaining 30% of the topics included in the fact sheets and practical notes are proposed by FAWEC sponsors. Once a year, different topics are discussed in a meeting of the FAWEC coordination committee (composed by FAWEC team and one member of each sponsor).

Fact sheets and practical notes are mainly distributed digitally. In some cases, FAWEC distribute printed fact sheets in some congresses or livestock fairs. FAWEC webpage is visited around the world (except some countries in Africa) and receives an excellent feedback from Latin America, Spain and Poland (see figure 3).

From all the people visiting the webpage, a 20% downloaded the fact sheets and 15% the webinar content (the two most visited sections). Specific questions related to the fact sheets or practical notes arrive via e-mail.




Figure 3 Map of the frequency of downloaded content from the web by countries.

Additionally, FAWEC has organized specific webinars, which content is also free available on-line after their emission, such as:

 ["The future of EU legislation on farm animal welfare "](#)

 ["Pain and discomfort caused by parturition in cows and sows"](#)

 ["Tail biting and the use of enrichment material: a challenge for the pig sector."](#)

Topics included in the webinars are proposed by FAWEC and announced in the webpage and via e-mail.

Webinars receive a positive response and a considerable amount of questions by e-mail. FAWEC explores the possibilities to organize interactive webinars.

- Dr. Antoni Dalmau  
IRTA



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## H2020 and Animal Welfare

[The Horizon2020](#) funding scheme of the European Commission is nearly half way. The first two years have seen a large number of calls for proposals on many different topics. 'Animal Welfare' was not among them.

Progress in science costs money, and many scientists are dependent on funds from outside their institutes or universities to carry out their work. The European Commission realises that and is running extensive Framework Programmes achieve EU policies through scientific research.

The current programme is called Horizon2020 and started at the end of 2015. The area of research within this programme which includes animal welfare issues is called 'Societal Challenges 2'. As many of you will know, the calls for 2016-2017 were published in a large document which can be found at



[http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2016\\_2017/main/h2020-wp1617-food\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2016_2017/main/h2020-wp1617-food_en.pdf)

The calls for the second part of this programme (2018-2020) still have to be written.

At the moment the Commission has distributed a draft of the likely topic areas which is out for consultation to many stakeholders. "Plant and Animal Health and Welfare" is mentioned among a great number of other topics, in a group of ideas called "Healthy ecosystems, food systems, lifestyles". This means that this important topic is not forgotten, but it also means that there will not be a huge focus on it. That is a pity, especially since the European Commission's own Eurobarometer once again indicated the great societal concerns about the status of wellbeing of our livestock and companion animals.

### What can you do to increase the attention for animal welfare in the H2020 funding programme?

First of all, the European Animal Task Force (<http://www.animaltaskforce.eu/>) is lobbying for a good research programme on livestock related topics. ATF is currently writing a 'white paper' indicating the most relevant topics the Commission should consider. Animal Welfare is among them, of course: 'animal welfare supporting animal health' and 'animal welfare & precision management' are two important topics which are addressed, in addition to several topics where animal welfare is related to other issues.

Secondly, the programme committee members from all member states will be asked to comment on the Commission's current views. They will have an important say in what the detailed calls will look like.

So it is a good idea to contact your national representative. If you do not know who they are, then ATF may be able to help, or the national contact person in your country (who you can find at the [Participant portal](#) - select your country and then 'food security').

The topic areas ('strategic priorities') are now more or less decided. Drafts of the detailed calls will come out in June of next year. The final programme and first calls will be published at the end of 2017.

### Let's do an effort to get some animal welfare calls in there again!

- Dr.ir. HAM (Hans) Spooler  
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## NOVA PhD Course *Animal Welfare- from Fork to Farm* Helsinki, November 21st -24th 2016

Over four days in November 2016, PhD students and acclaimed researchers gathered in Helsinki to partake in the course organised by [Professor Anna Valros](#) and NOVA university network. The course considered different methods of animal welfare assessment on a farm, but also how animal welfare is, or should be, reflecting consumer perceptions. Furthermore, the course discussed how animal welfare can be used in voluntary animal welfare schemes and branding, and how animal welfare is related to animal health and food safety.

Each day was dedicated to different topics, with presentations from experts, followed by participant presentations and group discussions.

The first day focused on the topic of animal welfare branding, in particular assessment and assurance schemes & consumer acceptability. Professor [Cassandra Thucker](#) and [Professor Mara Miele](#) led this session.

On the second day, [Harry Blokhuis](#), [Inger Lise Andersen](#), and [Björn Forkman](#) gave presented their views and research with regards to practical implications of animal welfare assessments.

The penultimate day addressed health and food safety in relation to animal welfare. [Päivi Rajala-Schultz](#), [Mari Heinonen](#), [Annamari Heikinheimo](#) shared their findings before they opened the floor to dicussions.



WELFARE QUALITY NETWORK SEMINAR 2016

On the fourth day of the course, participants took part in a seminar- its aim was to present and discuss research and development projects related to animal welfare assessment on-farm, with a special focus on topics related to the Welfare quality® protocol.

The seminar attracted researchers from the US, the Netherlands, Finland, Demark and Sweden. Majority of presentations shared findings from case studies in which WQ protocols were implemented, either at slaughterhouses or on farms.

Altogether, students embraced 12 hours of seminars, 18 hours of lectures, 20-40 hours of independent work, and 6 hours group discussions/workshops! Tour the force indeed! Photos from this excellent Helsinki meeting are on the next page.

The organizers thank WelfareQuality Network and NOVA for support.

- Dr Anna Valros  
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WQN members at PhD event in Helsinki



## Upcoming events



### UFAW International Symposium 2017: Measuring animal welfare and applying scientific advances – Why is it still so difficult

Tuesday, June 27, 2017, to Thursday, June 29, 2017

There seems to be a growing consensus that what matters to those animals that are presumed to experience feelings, and therefore what should matter most to those concerned about animal welfare, is how those animals feel. However, this raises difficult questions, some of which are fundamental to the development of animal welfare science as a rigorous scientific discipline and the assessment of animal welfare.

With the aim of developing new ideas and of promoting higher quality and better-focused animal welfare science, this three day symposium will consider whether and how animal welfare scientists can make progress in these and other areas, for example:

Will we ever be able to demonstrate sentience?  
Are the techniques that we have to study emotional state (affect) adequate?  
How important is positive welfare?  
How robust is the data collected on animal welfare?

The symposia will feature the following keynote talks: Professor Georgia Mason (University of Guelph, Canada), Professor Mike Mendl (University of Bristol, UK) and Professor Jaak Panksepp (Washington State University, USA).

Royal Holloway  
Surrey  
University of London  
United Kingdom  
<http://www.ufaw.org.uk/ufaw-events/ufaw-events>



### 7th International Conference on the Assessment of Animal Welfare at Farm and Group Level

5-8 September 2017, Wageningen, the Netherlands

Any topic related to the assessment of animal welfare at group level is welcome to WAFL2017, like:

Welfare as part of sustainability assessments  
What can we learn from measures that didn't work?  
Precision Farming techniques for welfare measurements.

[Registration opens on 30 Jan 2017](#)  
[Deadline abstracts submission: 17 Feb. 2](#)

## Call for papers

### 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting of British Animal Studies Network

#### “Hearing”

**19 and 20 May 2017 at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow**

As well as being a celebration of the 10th anniversary of the first ever British Animal Studies Network meeting, this is our final engagement with the senses in Glasgow: following ‘Looking’, ‘Feeling’, ‘Tasting’ and ‘Smelling’, ‘Hearing’ will turn attention to noise, listening, ears, music, and other wonders. If you are interested in giving a paper addressing the topic from whatever disciplinary perspective please submit your title, with an abstract of no more than 200 words and 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 [erica.fudge@strath.ac.uk](mailto:erica.fudge@strath.ac.uk). The deadline for abstracts is Friday 20 January 2017. 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.

Topics covered at this meeting might include (but are not limited to)

- The representation and comprehension of animals’ auditory capacity
- Animal noises as music and song:
- The use and/or imitation of animal sound in human art and culture
- Listening to animals; recording animals; tracking animals
- Comprehending animal vocalisations



We would 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 animal studies, including disciplines such as (but not limited to) geography, anthropology, sociology, literary studies, art history, history, science and technology studies, ethology, psychology, behavioural sciences and ecology.

Confirmed plenary speakers are Karen Lury (University of Glasgow), John Webster (emeritus, University of Bristol) and Cary Wolfe (Rice University).

<http://www.britishanimalstudiesnetwork.org.uk/FutureMeetings/Heari>

## 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.

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<http://www.welfarequalitynetwork.net>