

# Poultry and Pig Low-input and Organic production systems' Welfare



## Perceptions and expectations of practitioners and citizens towards welfare in poultry low input outdoor and organic production systems

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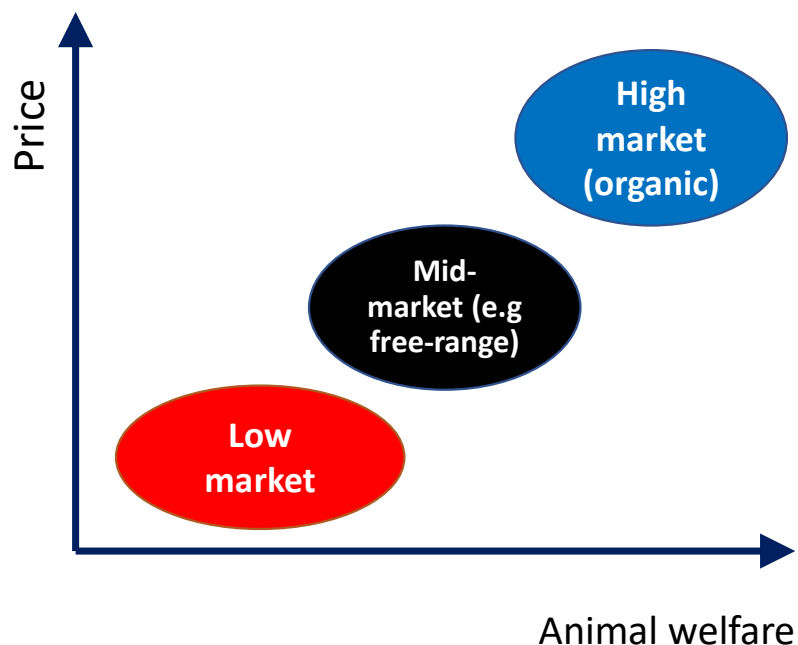
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# Background and the aim of the study



- Organic production is known better than alternative ways (e.g. non-organic outdoor) of producing
  - Organic and free range are considered as higher animal welfare
  - Diversity of practices throughout Europe
- Still more to improve from the animal welfare point of view
- To examine, understand and identify the perceptions of practitioners and citizens towards poultry (and pig) welfare in *low input outdoor* and *organic production*

# Method

## 15 on-line focus groups in 2020

- France, Belgium, Finland, United Kingdom, Italy and Romania
- From local language to English

## Participants:

- Low input outdoor and organic farmers
- Processors, retailers, policy actors
- Consumers

Separate groups for egg and poultry production (except with consumers)

## Questions discussed:

- Topics based on the literature and interviews

## Farmers and supply chain

- Views on animal welfare; development, challenges, ways of improving animal welfare
- Impact of other actors

## Consumers:

- Concerns and benefits, familiarity of productions, expectations, marketing as "low input", views on profitability
- *One welfare* concept

# Results: Egg production

*"Difficulty in finding stability in organic feed" (Industry)*

*"Animals can live according to their natural behavior and not in factory facilities" (Consumer)*

*"Will sexing a chick at 10 days in-ovo be acceptable? "The problem of animal welfare is no longer with the animal, but society. We have to face reality. We have lost the logic of animal death" (Industry)*

*"Organic control inspections are based only on bureaucratic aspects" (Consumer)*

## Industry

- Major issue: Well-balanced diet, controlling disease levels
- Challenge: Full use of outdoor area
- Ethical problem: Killing the male chicks
  - Taking to meat production not an viable option due to slower growth rate and feed conversion rate
- Too many policy initiatives and regulations to complicate investing decisions

## Consumers:

- Freshness, price, quality important
- Able to identify different systems
  - No clear understanding of the systems
- Preferred freerange and organic
- Very little knowledge of the welfare / farm assurance labelling

# Results: Poultry meat

*“...appropriate feeding is the most important factor” (Industry)*

*“Traditional and organic, it ensures the ability of birds to walk outside and feed, allowing them to express natural behavior” (Consumer)*

*“A big hall full of chickens” (Consumer)*

- Main issues: Costs and investments
  - Land use, provision of shelters

## **Industry:**

- Key: Management of range areas (weather, enrichments, predation..)
- Welfare issues: Cannibalism, feather pecking
  - Additions of amino acids

## **Consumers:**

- Price and quality important
- Knowledge generally low

*One welfare concept not well known, but instrumental to overall success*

# Conclusions

- High level of support for animal welfare
  - Lack of consensus for best practise
- Variety of practices between countries
- Organic is seen as high welfare by some parties and supported for that – is it so?
- Consumers' knowledge rather low, more information needed
- Labelling important in communicating information
  - Quantity and range of information confusing
- *Low-input* challenging to understand, would require a lot of promotion and education
- *One welfare* supported
  - Understanding of concept poor and would require a huge investment for marketing needs
  - Lack of consensus for practices



Thank you!  
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