



Barriers and levers to enhance laying hen welfare in low-input and organic farming – a supply chain survey

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Improving welfare in organic and low input systems

- High consumer expectations from organic and low input products
- Variation across Europe: learning from other countries
- Need to address specific challenges: improving welfare, reducing mortality, risks of free range access, risks of intact beaks, alternatives culling day-old male chicks

Evaluation of measures that can improve animal welfare with attention to the environment, economics and human well-being (farmers, consumers, citizens)

PPILOW partners and collaborators



PPILOW

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

2019-2024



Coordination:



23 PPILOW Partners in 9 countries

9 National Practitioner Groups (NPG)

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- Research institute
- Technical Institute
- Citizen/Practitioner Association
- SME
- University/Higher education



Introduction: supply chain survey

- Low-input outdoor and organic poultry production systems have the potential to enhance chicken welfare compared to conventional systems
- Many practices in laying hen farming have the goal to improve animal welfare
- How supply chain actors (e.g. farmers, veterinarians and farm advisors) perceive these practices has not yet been studied
- Their perspective is necessary for feasibility assessment and future decision-making

Methods: supply chain survey

- A survey was conducted to compare views of supply chain actors in nine different European countries on management practices (Spring 2021)
 - Belgium
 - Denmark
 - Finland
 - France
 - Germany
 - Italy
 - Netherlands
 - Romania
 - United Kingdom
- Developed in English, translated to local languages
- Ethical approval of the Ethics Committee for Human Sciences (University of Turku, Finland) was obtained. The data collection was carried out in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the EU, including informed consent of the respondents.

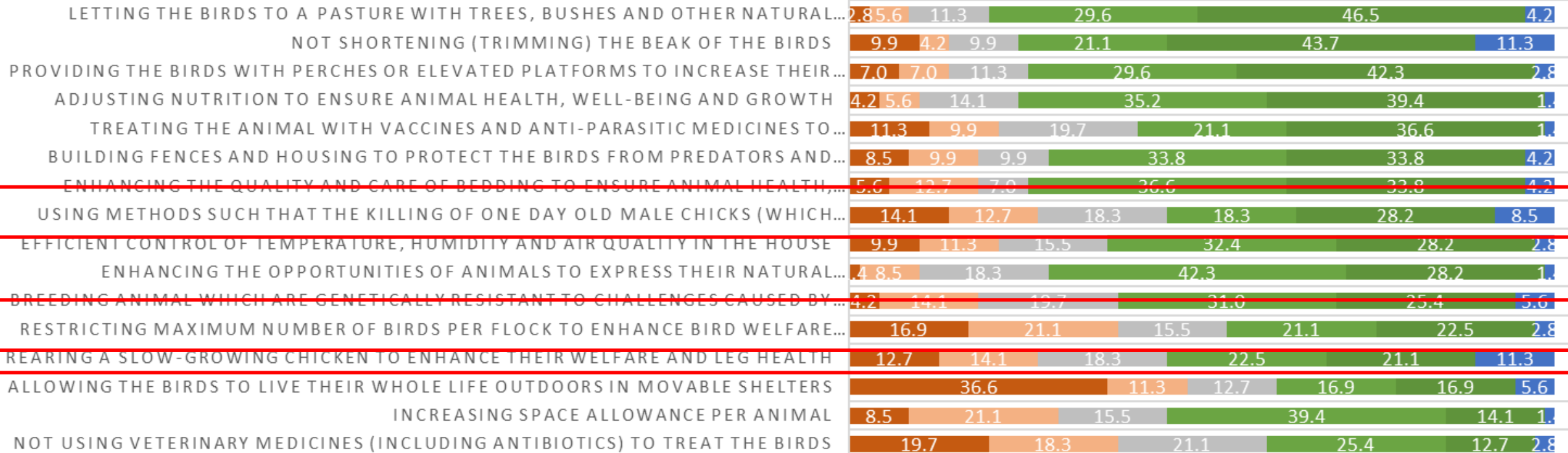
Results: response rate

- A survey was conducted to compare views of supply chain actors in nine different European countries on management practices (descriptive analysis)
 - Belgium (7)
 - Denmark (3)
 - Finland (25)
 - France (8)
 - Germany (6)
 - Italy (22)
 - Netherlands (15)
 - Romania (22)
 - United Kingdom(14)
- The highest response came from Finland (20.5%), Romania (18.0%) and Italy (18.0%)
- The most common occupation of respondents was livestock farmer (39.3%), veterinarian (13.9%) or advisor/consultant (12.3%), though occupation varied highly between countries

Results: welfare improving practices

HOW APPLICABLE ARE THE FOLLOWING PRACTICES ON YOUR FARM/THE FARM YOU WORK WITH?

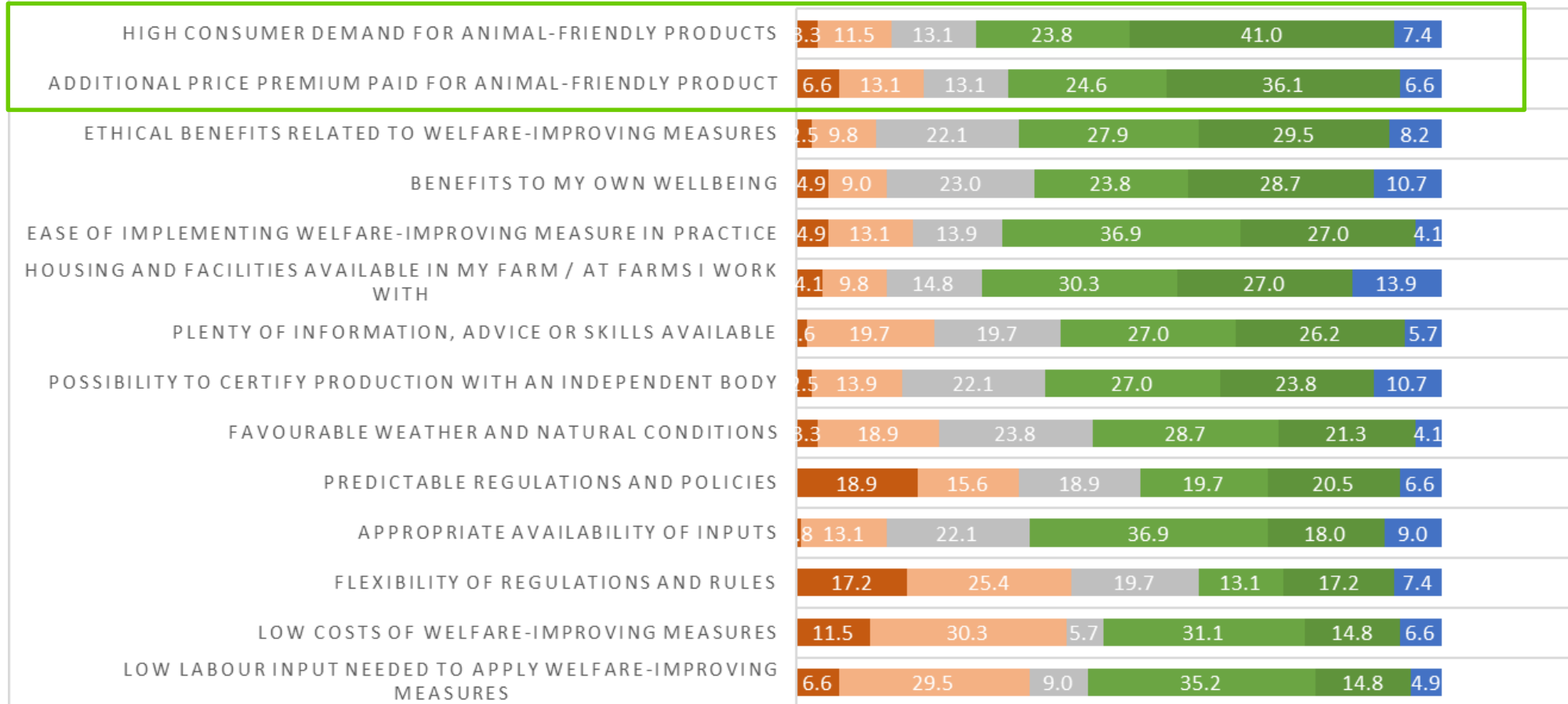
■ Very inapplicable
 ■ Somewhat inapplicable
 ■ Neither applicable nor inapplicable
 ■ Somewhat applicable
 ■ Very applicable
 ■ I don't know



Results: opportunities to improve welfare

ARE THE FOLLOWING FACTORS AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE LAYING HEN WELFARE?

■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Slightly disagree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
 ■ Slightly agree
 ■ Strongly agree
 ■ Don't know



Results: barriers to improve welfare

ARE THE FOLLOWING FACTORS A BARRIER FOR IMPROVING LAYING HEN WELFARE?

■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Slightly disagree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
 ■ Slightly agree
 ■ Strongly agree
 ■ Don't know

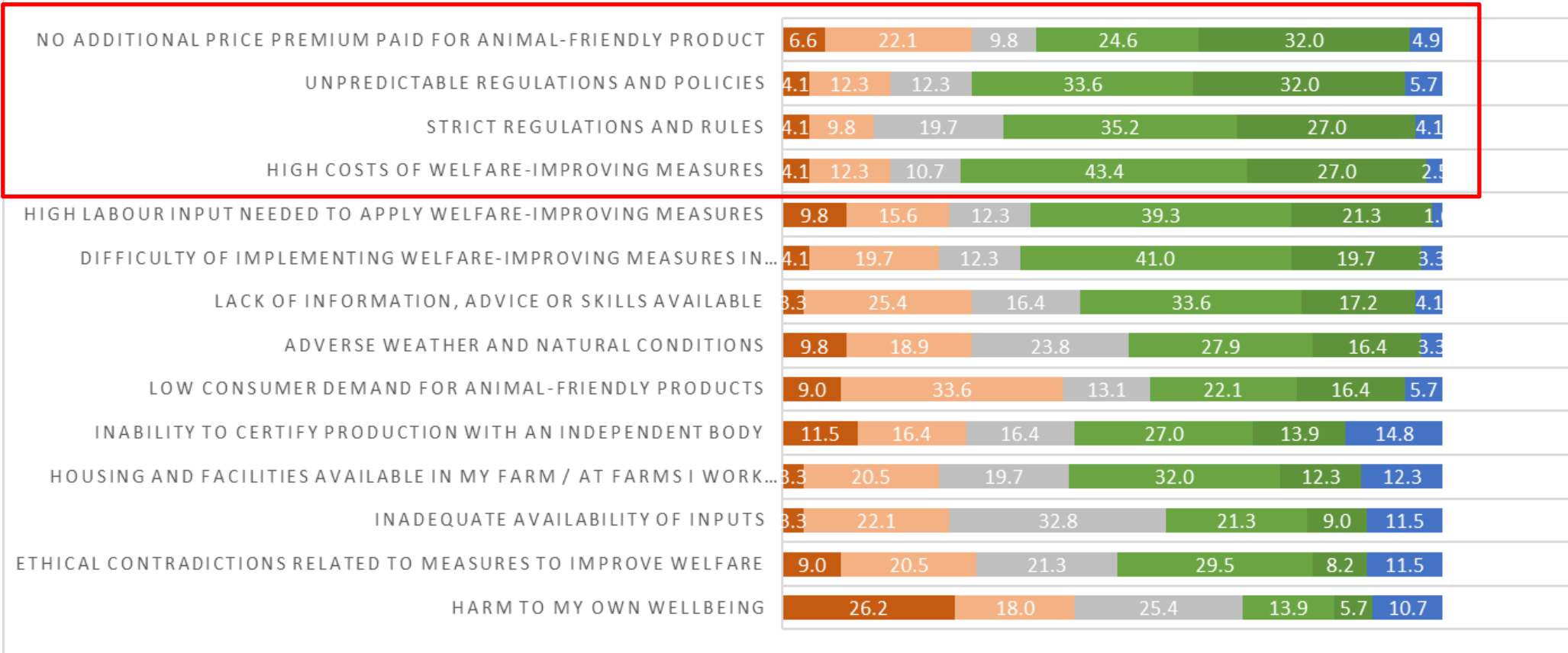


Figure 2. Barriers for improving laying hen welfare

Discussion and conclusion

- Most practices mentioned in the survey were perceived **applicable** on-farm
 - Except for: allowing the birds to live their whole life outdoors in movable shelters, not using antibiotics, restricting the maximum number of birds per flock, and the use of methods to avoid the killing of one day old male chicks
- **Opportunities** to improve laying hen welfare are the high consumer demand for animal-friendly products and an additional price premium paid for these products (and premium is needed)
- **Barriers** are strict and unpredictable regulations and policies, and high costs of welfare-improving measures
- Final phase : testing innovations on-farm through practitioner groups

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<https://youtu.be/nejpvjRW4pw>



Thank you for your attention!

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