

The PIGLOW app for welfare assessments by free-range and organic farmers: effects on pig welfare and opinions of farmers



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The PIGLOW app

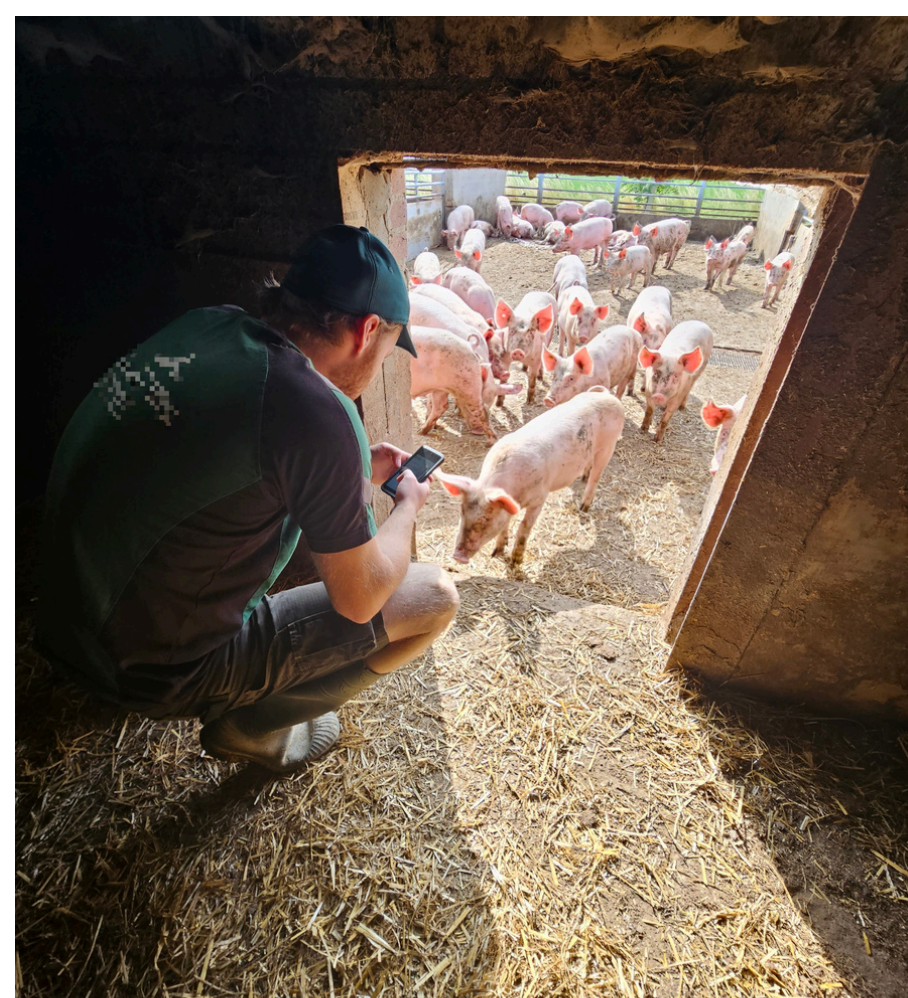
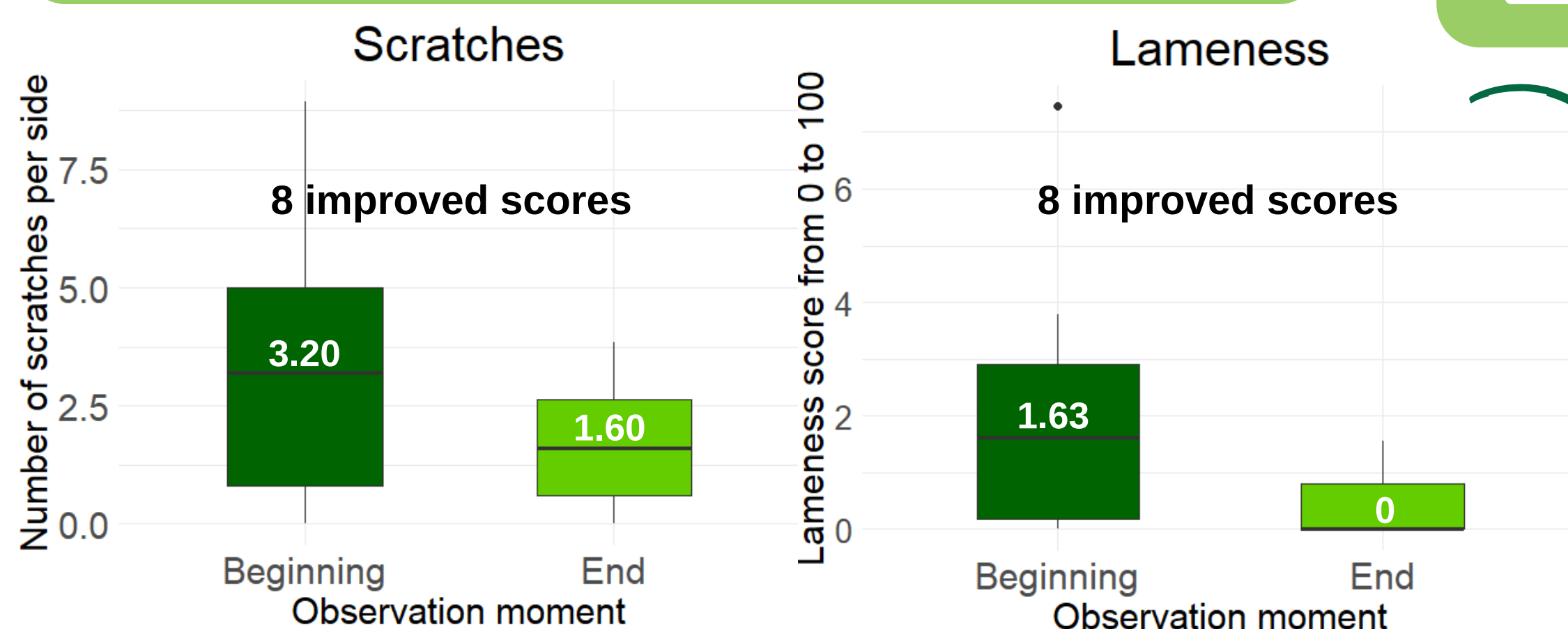
This app was designed within the PPILOW project to let free-range and organic farmers assess the welfare of their pigs. The results of the assessments contain automated feedback per welfare indicator in the form of risk factors for related welfare problems. Benchmarking information is also available.

Results - Effect on animal welfare

Two statistics were compared per welfare indicator (13) for the scores given in the detailed welfare assessment (n=11):

- Medians at the beginning and end of the study
- Number of farms with improved and worsened scores at the end of the study

Results supported an improvement during the study for “Scratches” (number of scratches per side of the body) and “Lameness” (score between 0 and 100, with 0 being the best) each.



Longitudinal study

A longitudinal study with 11 pig farmers in The Netherlands and Belgium was set up. The goal was to answer the following research questions:

- Do frequent animal welfare self-assessments with the PIGLOW app lead to improved animal welfare on the farm?
- What do farmers think of the PIGLOW app?

The study consisted of the following elements:



Farmers used the PIGLOW app for finisher pigs at least 3 times a year during a two-year period



A researcher visited each farm at the beginning and end of the study to perform a detailed welfare assessment and determine the animal welfare status on the farm



Farmers filled out a survey about animal welfare and their (expected) opinion of the PIGLOW app at the beginning and end of the study

Results - Farmers' opinions

Results of the survey at the end of the study showed that on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (absolutely):

- Farmers noticed a medium-sized effect ($\bar{x} = 4.00$) of the use of the PIGLOW app on how they viewed the importance of animal welfare aspects that are included in the PIGLOW app
- Farmers noticed a medium-sized positive effect ($\bar{x} = 3.82$) of the use of the PIGLOW app on their pigs' welfare

Farmers gave the PIGLOW app a mean rating of 8.09 out of 10. However, answers to open questions revealed that many farmers thought the PIGLOW app had the most potential to help new farmers with less knowledge of animal welfare.

Conclusion

The use of the PIGLOW app might have positively influenced “Scratches” and “Lameness”, but no clear overall effect on animal welfare was seen. Farmers in the study indicated that they saw a medium-sized effect of the use of the PIGLOW app on how they viewed the importance of certain welfare aspects and on the welfare of their own pigs. Farmers rated the PIGLOW app quite highly, but thought it might be especially beneficial to new farmers or others with less knowledge.