

Farmers' perspectives on welfare monitoring Bettina Bock, Wageningen University







The Farmer juries

- 10-12 pig farmers (varying subsectors, age/gender, farm-size, production method)
- In the Netherlands, Norway and Italy
- for 2 full days in October 2008
- To discuss with input of animal and social scientists
- About animal welfare, the working of the WQ monitoring tool and its implementation



Results

- 1. Areas of agreement
- 2. Areas of concern and resistance
- 3. Discussion process
- 4. Lessons learnt





1. Agreement

- Definition of animal welfare as reflected in principles and criteria
- Prioritizing health and bodily fitness
- But recognizing the relevance of behaviour and feelings
- In favour of objective, animal-based monitoring
- Addressing citizen concern
- But avoiding sentimentality.



2. Concern and resistance

1. Objectivity of measurements & scores:

risk of subjectivity for criteria 9 -12 context-dependency of results interrelation of criteria and scores

2. Accountability for results

dependency on supply chain partners & markets limits within intensive systems and business economy unpredictability of animal-based measurements

3. Politics of animal welfare

Assessment as first step towards more regulation Using assessment for blaming and shaming farmers



Discussion process

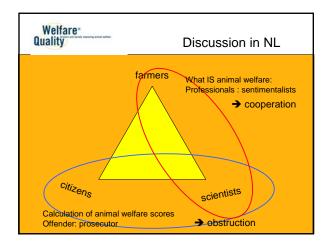
Difference between countries

in discussion process

- calm in Norway, more agitated in Italy and especially the Netherlands -

reflects the different societal context and but also forecasts

potential barriers in the implementation process





Lessons learnt (1)



- 1. Need to address farmers concerns:
 - More information about measurements and
 - More information about costs and benefits of monitoring and welfare improvement
- 2. Need to recognize the politics of animal welfare
 - Monitoring animal welfare is not just a matter of information - when animal welfare enters the political battlefield.

Welfare Quality

Lessons learnt (2)

Farmers care about animal welfare; it is part of their professional ethics and pride.

They are ready to improve and monitor animal welfare but need to stay in business.

They want to be treated as a partner in animal welfare, not an offender.

Welfare Quality	
Thank you very much for your attention	
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