

Workshop 5: Market Driven Animal Welfare. The Role for Retailers and Consumers

The purpose of the workshop was to discuss how far and in what way the market will be able to drive animal welfare – and to discuss what we can expect from retailers and consumers. The workshop included five short presentations from three researchers, a representative from retailers and a representative from the EU commission. In the workshop the main challenges and possible solutions were discussed.

During the workshop the following challenges for market driven animal welfare were identified:

- There is an increase in cost for the farmer when increasing animal welfare standards. Animal welfare demands change quickly; however, farmers need a long time horizon for new investments.
- Animal welfare is not per se associated with a high quality product – so there is a need to bundle animal welfare with food quality.
- Consumers by tradition buy animal products, and particularly meat, unlabeled and purely based on price.
- Consumers cannot grasp too many labels and at the same time retailers proliferate private labels.
- There are different prioritizes in different countries when animal welfare becomes specific.
- The market may - slowly - improve voluntary schemes introducing low – middle – high levels of animal welfare, but this gives rise to the risk for cannibalism, i.e. people stop buying high levels when middle levels are available.
- Actors within the Danish pork sector and export markets are waiting on other actors to take the initiative and drive improvements of animal welfare standards forward.

During the workshop the following solutions were identified:

- Diversification of products – more levels of animal welfare, not only basic and premium animal welfare. A good example is the Dutch “Better Leven three star system”.
- There need to be a simple message which gives the consumers a good feeling.
- There is a need for a label which guarantees compliance with minimal legislation.

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- There need to be underlying requirements which guarantee against serious welfare problems.
- Animal welfare standards at different levels could be defined and be adapted by different private labels.
- EU welfare labelling system for animal products can support transparency for consumers.