

Workshop 6 - Animal Welfare Education and Training –How, for whom and to what effect?

The purpose of the workshop was to explore and discuss how education and training may drive animal welfare improvements - How should animal welfare training and education be conducted, who are the target groups and what effect may we expect?

Research into methodologies and approaches to teaching animal welfare is a relatively new field. The speakers in this workshop all brought new and valuable knowledge with them as well as highlighting the challenges and some possible ways forward for teaching animal welfare to different target groups.

Some of the main challenges and focus points identified at the workshop included:

- At Agricultural colleges there are more and more students with non-agricultural backgrounds and more female students - both in Europe and in the US Students are often very young and possibly not motivated for academic learning
- Agricultural and veterinary students need to be prepared and trained to handle societal expectations – including moral and ethical issues as well as technical and practical knowledge
- Scientific knowledge does not reach farmers and consumers. Producers may be disconnected from what consumers want and consumers may feel disconnected from farming production and scientific results
- School children are future consumers and animal owners but lack knowledge about ethology, needs and living conditions for animals

Suggested solutions and ways forward for teaching animal welfare included:

- Ensure better link between school periods and apprenticeship periods for agricultural students
- Prepare veterinary and agricultural students for making decisions on basis of production and welfare parameters – including more reflective learning
- Teaching material should be suitable for target groups - adjust pedagogical styles to target groups – e.g. on-farm visits, case studies, open education approach, practical placements on farms
- Use of digital technology to enhance training and education programmes – e.g. web-based teaching, AV teaching material (videos, photos)
- Use a variety of teaching materials and methods – use digital material and hands-on training in combination
- Teach school children about animal production and animal welfare as they may be key to achieving informed consumers – provide easy to use teaching materials for class room teaching – e.g. magazines, website, practical workshops