

# Consumers' Views about Farm Animal Welfare

## Part I: National Reports based on Focus Group Research

edited by  
Adrian Evans  
Mara Miele





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WELFARE QUALITY REPORTS NO. 4

Welfare Quality Reports  
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# PREFACE

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Animal welfare is of considerable importance to European consumers. Nowadays food quality is not only determined by the overall nature and safety of the end product but also by the perceived welfare status of the animals from which the food is produced. The fact that improving the animal's welfare can positively affect product quality, pathology and disease resistance also has a direct bearing on food quality and safety.

The Welfare Quality project is about integration of animal welfare in the food quality chain: from public concern to improved welfare and transparent quality. The project aims to accommodate societal concerns and market demands, to develop reliable on-farm monitoring systems, product information systems, and practical species-specific strategies to improve animal welfare. Throughout this Integrated Project, effort is focused on three main species and their products: cattle (beef and dairy), pigs, and poultry (broiler chickens and laying hens).

The research programme is designed to develop European standards for on-farm welfare assessment and product information systems as well as practical strategies for improving animal welfare. The standards for on-farm welfare assessment and information systems will be based upon consumer demands, the marketing requirements of retailers and stringent scientific validation. The key is to link informed animal product consumption to animal husbandry practices on the farm. The project therefore adopts a 'fork to farm' rather than the traditional 'farm to fork' approach. Welfare Quality will make significant contributions to the societal sustainability of European agriculture.

In this report, we present the results of a series of focus group discussions with consumers in seven EU countries (Hungary, Italy, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and France). Seven focus group interviews with 8/10 participants each were carried out with ordinary consumers in all seven study countries in order to explore underlying consumer awareness, concerns and beliefs associated with animal welfare and information on food labels. The groups have been selected on the basis of the participants' life cycle or consumers' lifestyles: Urban mothers, Rural women, Empty nesters (Living with partner, no children at home), Young singles, Seniors, and Politically active/vegetarians. In each country a seventh group was selected according to country specific criteria, e.g. Gourmets in Italy, Religious minorities in France, Hunters in Norway, etc.

Part two of this Report will present the results of a comparative analysis and a thorough description of the focus group protocol and methodology adopted. This will be published separately.

*Adrian Evans*  
*Mara Miele*  
Cardiff, April 2007



# HUNGARY

by

Bridin McIntyre and Cathal Cowan

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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- Price, quality and provenance are the key influences in determining participants' choice of animal based products. Participants across all social classes appear to be price sensitive and value for money was a critical factor when making purchasing decisions. Loyalty to Hungarian produced products, particularly meat products, was strong among consumers. Health concerns was a major driver for those consumers who have made dietary changes in the last five years.
- Participants' perceptions of farming practices appear to be strongly influenced by their experience with farms. Positive animal welfare perceptions were related to consumers' direct experiences with farming. Participants' generally associated large-scale/industrial farming with poor animal welfare practices whereas small-scale farming was considered to have good welfare practices.
- The term "animal welfare" is not used in Hungary. However, consumers had a good understanding of the concept. Participants were in general agreement on the core issues surrounding animal welfare. They wanted animals to be housed in hygienic conditions, have a nutritious diet, have sufficient space, live in conditions that avoids suffering and if transported, it be done in a humane way. Consumers welcome changes that will improve animal welfare standards.
- There was poor awareness and low consumption of animal friendly products. The most commonly purchased products were organic and free-range eggs, organic chicken and organic yoghurt. Price was a significant barrier to the purchase of welfare friendly products. Other barriers included poor availability and current satisfaction with existing products. Participants generally purchased non-packaged meat in preference to the welfare friendly packaged meat.
- Participants generally found the labelling signifying the various certification schemes confusing. Consumer understanding of organic certification was particularly poor. This poor understanding of the various certification processes

has led to cynicism among some consumers. The “Excellent Hungarian Product” label, which promotes the purchase of Hungarian produced products on the domestic market, appeared to be one of the few certification labels that was both understood and trusted by consumers. Strong promotional support together with a simple message may have contributed to consumers understanding of this label.

- Most participants linked good animal welfare practices with quality food. Good animal welfare practices were considered good for consumers whereas poor welfare practices were seen as a potential hazard to the human food chain.
- Consumers in general did not actively seek out information on animal welfare issues. In general consumers received information on animal welfare by chance through the media. The print and broadcast media plays a significant role in alerting consumers to scandals in animal welfare while encouraging support for those trying to improve standards. Participants highlighted the need for balanced welfare information.
- Participants generally displayed high levels of distrust in many areas of Hungarian society. Consumers differed in their opinions on who should have responsibility for animal welfare. However, participants had greater levels of trust in state-supported organisations rather than market-based stakeholders. Many distrusted the large multiple retailers to inform consumers of animal welfare issues however, the small market vendor was considered trustworthy. In general participants held experts, irrespective of their discipline, in high regard. Experts attached to independent agencies were particularly trusted. Politicians were generally held in low esteem.
- In general participants had little confidence in their individual ability to effect change in animal welfare standards. They thought a publicly funded, independent national agency with complete responsibility for all matters concerning animal welfare would be best placed to bring improvements in animal welfare. While consumers in general wish to see improvements in welfare standards, concerns over price, in the short-term at least, could restrict demand for welfare friendly products.
- There were mixed views on the role the EU in animal welfare policy. While some participants considered the EU to have a poor understanding of Hungarian farming to take responsibility for animal welfare others considered the EU a credible source of information.
- Participants were closely aligned to the ten welfare concerns formulated by the project scientists. However, participants wished to have greater detail on specific issues such as animal feed, space and level of veterinary care. Consumers highlighted the need to retain a sense of proportion when developing animal welfare standards and that any proposed standards should be both effective and cost-effective. Consumers expressed a concern that improved welfare standards could result in price increases.

- A graded standard was the preferred option for most participants and several consumers suggested using a star system similar to that used in the hotel industry. A single trademark or logo was considered preferable and any proposed standard should be internationally recognised.
- Participants thought it imperative that the introduction of welfare standards would be introduced alongside a monitoring and enforcement programme.

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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Hungary even before democratic elections were introduced had a fairly 'liberal' economy. The level of GNP generated by the state sector has now fallen to less than 20 per cent. There has been considerable growth in the economy and incomes in recent years. Growth in income was 8.9 per cent in 2002. This fast pace of growth appeared to slow down more recently and was only 2.9 per cent in 2003 (Euromonitor, 2004). The main factor underpinning this growth is the expected continuing development of the economy as a whole and to the positive effects of the country's accession to the EU. This will create higher salaries, improved living standards and higher disposable incomes for much of the population. The Hungarian Central Statistics Office (KSH) retail sales figures show a 6.8 per cent year-on-year rise for 2004.

Since 1989, the state owned food-processing industry has been transformed. Privatisation is virtually complete. Of the assets privatised in the food sector foreigners including multinationals bought more than 50 per cent. Financially strong Hungarian and multinational companies such as Nestlé, Unilever and Bernard Matthews have introduced modern, new, state-of-the-art processes. Many of the smaller traditional companies struggle with out-of-date technology, often below EU standards of hygiene and safety.

New or internationally known products and brand supported by Western-style advertising campaigns have been introduced, often by foreign companies. Daily shopping habits are gradually changing as supermarket chains build new units (Tesco, Cora, Auchan, Metro, Spar, Lidl, Tengelmann etc.), leading to fewer and larger shops.

Key drivers for change include entry to the EU in 2004 with the collapse of the controlled eastern markets forcing companies to look West for new markets, the demand for foreign branded goods, increasing inward tourism and international investment from large retailers.

Farm animal welfare is not a major issue in Hungary (Pencz Levente, Fauna Society/CIWF, personal communication, 2005). There is a greater consumer concern about domestic pets and Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) is trying to draw attention to farm welfare. For the consumers who are more concerned about animal

welfare there are not many shops where animal friendly products are available. At farm level and through the chain responsibility for animal welfare is through local regions and is mainly based on EU regulations.

The overall demand for meat in Hungary fell during the nineties but the underlying developments varied according to the type of meat. Per capita beef and pork consumption declined sharply while that of poultry increased and exceeds that of the EU-15. Beef consumption is quite low while pig meat consumption has decreased from a high level in earlier years to the level of the EU-15. Milk consumption in Hungary also fell during the nineties (IAMO, 2004).

In the future total meat consumption is expected to increase. Meat products containing primarily beef will increase in consumption. All types of pig meat especially high quality cuts are expected to increase in demand whereas poultry demand is expected to stabilise. Moderate growth in consumption of fresh milk is expected (IAMO, 2004).

#### 1.1.1 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

An overview of the methodology follows this short introduction. The structure of the report then follows the four main themes of this research. Theme one will present insights into the food consumption cultures and habits of Hungarian consumers and in particular the consumption of meat and dairy products. Theme two will examine consumers' knowledge of animal welfare and welfare food products and how consumers evaluate the provision of information about these products. Theme three will concentrate on who consumers believe should be responsible for animal welfare and the reasons why they forward these suggestions. The various ways in which participants choose to mobilise their animal welfare concerns will also be explored. The fourth theme will examine participants' reactions to the ten concerns document produced by the scientists in subproject two in the light of their own spontaneous definitions of animal welfare. This section will also address participants' impressions of the likely effectiveness of a standard based on scientists' list of concerns. The last section summarises the conclusions of the key findings of the preceding sections and provides recommendations aimed at project members and stakeholders with an interest in the report.

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## 1.2 METHODOLOGY

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This section will review the use of qualitative research methods in general and focus groups in particular. The selection of the groups will be outlined and the rationale

behind the selection of the different groups. An overview of how NVIVO was used in the analysis will be described.

### 1.2.1 THE USE OF FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups is a qualitative research method commonly used in market research. The key feature of focus groups is that it uses the interaction of the group to produce data and insights that may not be possible without interaction. These focus groups were carried out to explore consumers underlying awareness, concerns and beliefs about animal welfare. This research method was chosen because limited availability of data. Krueger (1979) states that focus groups can give insights into the participants' experience, perspectives, underlying conceptions, opinions and choices.

### 1.2.2 SELECTION OF GROUPS

Seven focus groups were carried out in Hungary. The composition of the six groups was developed and agreed by all partners and a common selection criterion was used across all partner countries. The composition of the seventh group was left to the discretion of individual partners and was decided at local level. This was felt necessary as the focus groups could identify a segment not included in the original recruitment plan. TNS (Hungary) was commissioned to recruit, moderate and prepare the transcripts of the focus groups. Five focus groups were held in Budapest (Urban) and two held in Kazincbarcika (mid-sized town in Eastern Hungary). Following a review of the six focus groups it was decided to target innovative health conscious middle class females for the seventh group. The rationale for this decision was based on the view that the earlier groups did not provide the necessary insights into those consumers who were most likely to consume these products. There were eight participants in each focus group and discussions lasted two hours.

### 1.2.3 ANALYSIS OF THE FOCUS GROUPS

Each focus group was audiotaped and transcribed and then translated into English. To aid analysis of the focus groups, NVivo software packaged was used. Each transcript was imported into NVivo and all text was coded which allowed the linking and synthesising of ideas and themes emanating from the data. To facilitate the location of themes in the data a number of nodes were created.

TABLE 1.1 presents a general description of the seven groups

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<i>Group 1: Urban mothers (Budapest)</i>	
Gender	Female
Age	Under 50
Children	With children (50% with at least one child under 5, 50% with at least one teenage child)
Rural/Urban	Urban dwellers
Social Class	Middle to high income
Other Criteria	Responsible for at least 50% of the household shopping
<i>Group 2: Rural women (Kazincbarcika)</i>	
Gender	Female
Age	Under 50
Children	With children (50% with at least one child under 5, 50% with at least one teenage child)
Rural/Urban	Must live in or have grown up in a 'rural' area
Occupation	Must Not be farmers or farmers' partners
Social Class	Low to middle income
Other Criteria	Responsible for at least 50% of the household shopping
<i>Group 3: Empty nesters (Budapest)</i>	
Gender	Mixed gender (50% male, 50% female)
Age	50% over 40
Children	Childless, or no children living at home at present (empty nesters)
Relationship/Marital Status	Married or living with a partner
Rural/Urban	Urban
Social Class	Lower to middle income
Other Criteria	All participants must do at least 50% of food shopping
<i>Group 4: Seniors (Kazincbarcika)</i>	
Gender	Mixed gender (50% male, 50% female)
Age	55-70
Children	No children living at home
Relationship/Marital Status	No restrictions
Rural/Urban	Rural
Social Class	Low to middle income group
Other Criteria	All participants must do at least 50% of food shopping
<i>Group 5: Young singles (Budapest)</i>	
Gender	Mixed gender (50% male, 50% female)
Age	Under 35
Children	No children
Relationship/Marital Status	Single
Rural/Urban	Urban dwellers
Social Class	Middle to high income group
Other Criteria	All participants must do at least 50% of food shopping
<i>Group 6: Politically active/vegetarians (Budapest)</i>	
Gender	Mixed gender
Age	No restrictions
Children	No restrictions
Relationship/Marital Status	No restrictions
Rural/Urban	No restrictions
Other Criteria	50% should classify themselves as vegetarians (vegans should not be included); 50% should be 'politically active' consumers, who are non-vegetarian
<i>Group 7: Health conscious innovators (Budapest)</i>	
Gender	Female
Age	Under 45
Children	No restrictions
Relationship/Marital Status	No restrictions
Rural/Urban	Urban
Other Criteria	Recruitment questionnaire will identify innovative purchasing habits and interest in personal health

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### 1.3 CULINARY PRACTISES, EATING, PREPARING AND BUYING ANIMAL FOOD PRODUCTS

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All types of retail outlets from local markets and butchers to supermarkets are used. Outlets vary across the participants of focus groups. In some cases including urban mothers, those married or living with partner but with no children, young singles and rural seniors, local markets, supermarkets and small stores are used. In other cases, such as health conscious consumers buying at the market appears to dominate. A mix of small shops and butchers predominated for rural women, while small shops and supermarkets are more important for politically active/vegetarian consumers. Buying or getting animal foods from family or friends in the countryside is also common practice across many of the groups. Health conscious consumers buy some products in bio stores. One such participant stated clearly that she bought animal friendly products.

‘[A]t the market’ (Urban mother). (Location stated by several participants, talking about meat purchases.)

‘I buy nearly everything at the market... or in bigger supermarkets’ (Urban mother).

‘I go to small private stores’ (Empty nester).

‘I usually buy it in the country, because my parents are from the country and that’s where we buy our meat’ (Empty nester).

‘I buy in all kinds of places’ (Empty nester).

‘At the market, Tesco, Cora’ (Young single).

‘When I buy meat, I go to supermarkets and bigger stores’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘I also go to bigger supermarkets; I don’t really go to the market.... Well, it’s just that the market is not nearby. So I buy my meat when I do my general shopping in the supermarkets. I don’t really buy meat anywhere else’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘There are two supermarkets here with the butcher next to them. And sometimes I just get into the car and look for some promotions at Tesco’s in Miskolc. I don’t know if there is one’ (Senior).

‘At the butcher’s mostly’ (Rural woman).

‘I go to the market, I know a butcher there, I have known him for a long time, so I like going there’ (Health conscious innovator).

'I often do' (Health conscious innovator). (In response to question whether they buy meat in a bio shop.)

### 1.3.1 FACTORS INFLUENCING FOOD CHOICE

A number of factors are important in regard to food choice. Many participants mentioned the freshness of the produce across the groups and there was considerable concern about the way produce were frozen and stored and they questioned the whole process. While many felt retail outlets and markets were well maintained and clean, many others were of a contrary opinion and raised question about cleanliness and the safety of food. Bad smells were frequently mentioned as negative factors on food choice.

'I go to the market because I an always be sure that its fresh. I don't buy big quantities because I live alone, but I always have guests. So if I freeze that one kilo of chicken drumsticks myself, then I know that it was fresh. But if I buy deep frozen products, which I like otherwise, then I cannot know how long they had been keeping it in the freezer. Or if it is a little store that I drop into, there either, I cannot know how long the product had been kept in the freezer!' (Empty nester).

'When I buy meat, I go to supermarkets and bigger stores, so I can be sure that it doesn't stink and that it's clean, hopefully. I had a really bad experience once at the market; I couldn't eat meat for six months afterwards' (Politically active/vegetarian).

Some are satisfied while others are not so happy with the range and choices of animal products available. Knowing your butcher was mentioned and most appear to shop at the same store. The convenience of the store location was also important in deciding where to buy. Choice of store is also influenced by range available, quality of produce and price. Promotion and presentations can influence purchase place and products chosen.

'Wherever we go, everywhere, the range of choices available is much wider than twenty years ago. So there is a huge range, a huge offer. So you can say you want chicken breast filet, you can ask for it with or without the bone, you can ask for anything! So the choice is huge' (Empty nester).

'[S]atisfied with the choice of products available? Absolutely not.... The choice is quite poor. In Coop for instance they don't always have sheep or beef. I often have only five minutes to pop in, and if they don't have what I want, then I try Plus, but that's all. I don't have time to go elsewhere for meat. Then very often it doesn't look as good as it should. And if, in addition, it's deep frozen, then I have to wait before preparing it. Last time I bought frozen chicken legs for instance' (Rural woman).



‘The situation is terrible.... Compared to the EU countries I think it’s terrible.... There isn’t such a wide range of cold cuts for instance. In fact in all the other countries the choice is much bigger for all the products. Our prices are twice as high though’ (Health conscious innovator). (In response to question whether satisfied with the choices available.)

‘I go to the store round the corner. That’s the simplest. Sometimes, about once a month, I go to Tesco’s and if I see something that looks good and is cheap, I often buy it, but otherwise it’s mostly Match, but only because it’s round the corner. If it were a Plus, I’d do my shopping there all the same, because it’s close’ (Young single)

‘Of course!’ (Empty nester). (In response to question whether they bought a product only because the label on it seemed so attractive and credible.)

‘That’s the only way to make people buy a new product. You examine it and see that it looks good.... Marketing really has an effect on people’ (Empty nester).

‘Sometimes I go to a store where I know that the meat is fresh because the animal was killed that morning. Promotions also count, if I see seasoned chicken breast for instance, I buy it because you can prepare it in no time when you get home in the evening’ (Young single).

If produce was Hungarian in origin this was a positive influence on the purchase decision and there was a lack of trust in some non-Hungarian products, related to safety scares, particularly the recent scare on paprika.

[Talking about Hungarian products] After all, we are Hungarians, aren’t we?... Well, one is inclined to say that it is more important for the product to be fresh! Because, sometimes, as I take a look at it, in the very beginning, when these tightly foiled, all kinds of meats came in, and we were amazed at how nice it looked, then, when I opened it, I found this nappy thing underneath. And I was thinking what on earth is this? Of course, we dissected it at home, with the microscope and all that, but in fact, it’s nothing special. It’s a kind of conserving cushion, which of course makes the meat stay consumable for two weeks, if kept in the fridge. If I hadn’t opened that little foil. Interesting, isn’t it?’ (Urban mother).

‘With Polish and Russian products, yes.... There are always scandals around there’ (Empty nester) (In response to question whether they didn’t buy a product only because they didn’t trust the producer.)

‘The same; it happened to me with foreign products – I don’t trust Poland either, for instance’ (Empty nester).

‘I don’t know, Hungarian producers have really fallen into discredit with this paprika scandal. It turned out that they didn’t monitor these products at all? Now

how am I to believe that they do control a product after this? I trusted Hungarian paprika fully, that's what I bought all the time' (Young single).

'I prefer to buy paprika from someone I know, so that I can be sure it's really homemade paprika' (Young single).

'Same for me too, if there are two similar products and one is foreign, the other is Hungarian, then I always pick the Hungarian one' (Health conscious innovator).

'Yes.... To support our own economy... a country's economy gets stronger if it is able to produce and it can only produce if there is a demand on the market.... At the same time I feel that this whole thing is quite controversial. Many people I know say the same thing, that they only buy Hungarian products, even if it's more expensive, than, say Spanish oranges or foreign vegetables. At the same time, they drive Western cars and go to Vienna to buy a mirror and clothes, their kids can only play with toys of good brand that come from the States. So I think that this preference for Hungarian products should not only be valid for food, but for everything else. Everyone means this for foodstuff though' (Health conscious innovator). (In response to question whether it is important for the product to be Hungarian? This opinion is shared by several participants.)

For some trust is an issue. While labels and use by dates are considered important as an influence on purchase many questioned the authenticity of labels and had doubts as to whether they were an accurate reflection of the produce they described. E additives were also a concern for some.

'I wouldn't trust the homemade stuff they sell there [the market]. It's true that I haven't been there for a long time, but most of these aren't checked for quality. Because in a store they check the products from time to time I suppose. Out at the market, even if that sausage seemed real good and smiled at me, I just couldn't eat it. Maybe it's just me, I don't know.... If there's money, there's everything' (Senior).

'Yes, because I know he brings the meat from trustable places where you can be sure they hadn't fed the animals on all kinds of artificial feeds before killing them' (Health conscious innovator). (In response to being prompted why she buys meat at the same butcher's.)

'You should be able to trace back where the product is from' (Health conscious innovator).

Animal welfare aspects were generally not a food choice criteria except for the politically active/vegetarian group whose concern as to how animals are treated in food production has lead them to becoming vegetarian and non purchasers of animal based foods.

'For me the main concern was what I've just told you; what animals are fed with. And I think that this is the primary concern' (Politically active/vegetarian). (In

response to question whether the fact that being vegetarian has anything to do with how animals are treated.)

‘I hesitated earlier too, before these scandals broke out in the EU that is. I was also concerned about my own health, not just about how animals are treated. So these two things were my main concern when I made my decision’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘No.... Whenever I did, I ended up not buying it after all.... Or if you see a pig’s head when standing in the queue at the butcher’s. It has happened to me already. I started looking at it and felt more and more sorry for the pig until I ended up leaving the shop altogether.... If I start watching the fish at the fishmonger’s, I also feel sorry for them’ (Rural woman). (In response to question whether they ever bought such products, did you do it for animal welfare reasons?)

‘I guess that it’s healthier, that the animal hadn’t been fed on all kinds of horrible things, or at least I hope so’ (Health conscious innovator). (In response to question whether they buy meat in a bio shop.)

Price was raised in many groups as a concern, particularly by seniors (rural), but was also mentioned by urban mothers and young singles. The rural seniors most frequently said they watched out for promotions. Many consumers talked about freshness of the product including urban mothers, politically active consumers and couples without children. Quality in general was a factor for both rural groups. Convenience was important for young singles. Rural women also mentioned presence of children in a household as an influence.

‘So we check several to see which is the cheapest’ (Senior).

‘We follow the promotions and read their advertising leaflets’ (Senior).

‘I’d say that if you find a butcher’s where the quality is fine and the service is also proper, than I like to go return. But there are places I’ve been to twice only – for the first time and for the last – because I didn’t like the smell of the place in the first place, it made me sick at once.... I like these nicely pre-packed products, because it makes me really nervous if I see someone finger everything before finally choosing, say, the bread or the meat he wants. So I don’t like it when someone touches the meat’ (Senior).

Urban mothers, health conscious consumers and politically active/vegetarian consumers said additives were a factor influencing food choice. These three groups and the married or living with partner but no children group were also most likely to consider trust as an issue and related to this had varying views on whether Hungarian product was safer or should be bought instead of product from other countries.

‘The processing. How is the food produced, fresh food that is? And in what form it has been processed, how many chemicals have been added, these E substances, or how it is stored and so on. Say, for me it is also important for it to be a

Hungarian product! For me, it is also important to support the national market, on the one hand. Because I have a quite anti-globalist approach economically, on the other hand, it is then probably controlled and suffers no quality damage during transport and so on. Because obviously, if it has to be transported from further away, then it has to be enhanced with more chemicals in order that it stands the journey' (Urban mother).

'And we still don't know for sure what is harmful and what isn't. They keep talking about how these E additives can be harmful, but still, everyone eats them. And even if I'm curious about the ingredients and check what's written on the wrapping while I chew, I don't really understand what those substances actually are' (Politically active/vegetarian).

### 1.3.2 CHANGING EATING HABITS

There are varied reasons for changing eating habits. Generally animal welfare was not mentioned, only once or twice. Changes were made also due to scandals but some mentioned there can problems with any food. Health reasons were mentioned particularly among young singles, rural seniors and health conscious urban mothers. There is an interest in eating products that are less fat and greasy, particularly pork. If there are children in the household that also influences changes.

'Yes. When there was that scandal around beef, when they said that there could be all sorts of diseases. Then we quit beef at once! We switched drastically to poultry at that time' (Empty nester).

'For many reasons. One was my health: I haven't eaten pork for ten years now. You can feel it in your body that pork has certain components that aren't good for your cardiovascular system. I felt it myself; I felt that it does no good at all, so I'm trying to quit greasy meat. I eat chicken breast, turkey breast and fish instead. I haven't had pork for ten years now, which is a good thing. I think the way they treat animals is very important. Sometimes you see blood in the chicken meat, which I suppose, is due to injuries from hitting, or at least that's what I heard. So if the meat is bruised, then no use arranging it in a fancy way on a tray' (Young single).

'Well, I think people are beginning to care more and more (about healthy nutrition), because ten years ago very few people bought turkey, it was a curiosity, whereas now it's widespread and the consumption of pork has dropped back. Ten years ago only old ladies went to pharmacies asking for half a litre of whatever potion' (Young single).

'When I was pregnant with my first child.... At first, there were only a few things I didn't eat, like; I still used to eat fish then. Later on, I stopped eating meat

entirely.... Well, I was just disgusted by it.... Yes, the taste and the rest' (Politically active/ vegetarian).

'Well, there were no such concrete events in my case. I just started to eat less and less meat gradually.... Well, I just didn't long for it; I didn't like meat dishes that lunch and there was always something else. So if I could choose, I chose the dish without meat.... Yes, it's mostly to do with taste' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'I quit greasy meat.... Because it made me fatter and fatter' (Senior).

'I also changed after my children were born; that's when I started to select the healthier foods. Unfortunately I hadn't paid attention to that before' (Rural woman).

'It depends on what we mean by healthy [eating]. Because some say we should eat beef and red meat because it's good for your health, then the next day you hear that it's not good.... Just getting back to the radish, I wanted to say that once I heard that these vegetables could contain a lot of nitrates.... So much for vegetables and fruits!' (Health conscious innovator).

'I usually aim at eating fruit. This black radish is good for instance. I try to collect information, but I don't really manage to keep these rules or suggestions consistently' (Health conscious innovator).

### 1.3.3 MEALS AND FOODS EATEN

Hungarians participating in the groups have varied diets with a wide variety of meals types mentioned as to what their meal had consisted of. Some groups such as rural seniors most frequently mentioned meat dishes, in other groups such as health conscious early adopters meat was less frequently mentioned. Most appear to regard breakfast as crucial meal to have whereas lunch was often skipped as many felt under considerable time pressures related to work. Main meals appear to be frequently eaten at home rather than in restaurant or at the workplace often included meat as part of the meal.

'Some dietetic trotters stew for lunch. They cook really well in the office; we can even say that it is to some extent healthy, too. Sometimes they cook tripe, trotters and pork à la baker's wife [Hungarian meat dish], so all kinds of things. Then you get a little tempted and say, all right, I will have a whole portion of the meat, but only pickles for garnish, or, if possible, some vegetables! We are carnivores, aren't we? I haven't yet managed to switch to any kinds of seeds. But I don't think I really want to either! So that's why' (Urban mother).

'I had a quite strange lunch. I don't insist on having cooked food at all costs. In fact I ate the chicken stock I brought from mum and some bacon. It's good! This is why I say it was a little strange. That's what I felt like eating. When it comes to

eating, I always pay attention to what my body longs for, and it has already happened that it just had to be cooked food! It's because I work in my own apartment, so I can allow myself to eat whatever I want!' (Urban mother).

'Cabbage with tomato, grilled steak' (Empty nester).

'A soup and French-fries' (Empty nester).

'Pork for me, stuffed with liver' (Empty nester).

'I wanted to say the same, I haven't had lunch yet today, but yesterday I had two slices of meat fried in breadcrumbs [a common Hungarian way of preparing meat], which I ate without a problem, so that was good' (Young single).

'Not me [eat meat], I had vegetable soup. And I didn't have time for the main course' (Young single).

'Cauliflower soup, paprika chicken made from country chicken' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'Letscho [Hungarian dish with sweet peppers and tomatoes]' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'I cooked pork yesterday, with braised cabbage' (Senior).

'Meat with meat, that's what we have usually' (Senior).

'Pasta with paprika potatoes' (Rural woman).

'I had my regular workplace-lunch, which was soup and then layered potatoes with sausages for main course.... My work doesn't really allow me to eat regularly in the first place' (Rural woman).

'Pasta with cottage cheese' (Health conscious innovator).

'I had a salad' (Health conscious innovator).

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#### 1.4 CONSUMERS' KNOWLEDGE OF ANIMAL WELFARE AND WELFARE-FRIENDLY FOOD PRODUCTS AND THEIR EVALUATION OF THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON THESE SUBJECTS

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This section will address what consumers know about animal welfare in general and welfare-friendly food products in particular and how they evaluate the current provision

of information on these subjects. Consumers' knowledge of farming practices will be highlighted as will their understanding of animal welfare. Where consumers get their information from and how they rate this information will be explored and whether there is any information that consumers would like to know but find difficult to access.

#### 1.4.1 CONSUMERS' KNOWLEDGE OF FARMING PRACTICES

Consumers' perceptions of farming practices would appear to be strongly influenced by their experience with farms and farmers. Those consumers, who had positive perceptions relating to farming practices, appeared to have direct experiences with farming. This was generally through visiting their extended families living in rural Hungary. Many of these consumers were either first or second-generation urban dwellers who still have either parents or grandparents living on farms. These positive perceptions include; well-cared-for animals are fed healthy foodstuffs and produce high quality food.

Consumers made distinctions between mass production/industrial farming and the 'natural farming' methods they saw when they visited family. Some of these memories related to childhood visits to farms and perhaps have become romanticised along with other childhood memories. Industrial scale farming practices are associated with particular feeding regimes and its negative effect on the quality of the meat, particularly taste.

'My grand parents lived in the country and there I saw how they treat animals. Not just them but also their neighbours. There is an enormous difference compared to these bigger industrial farms. I once visited an egg farm, where the hens were in microscopic cubes, there was just enough room for the egg to drop out and that's all. They didn't even have feathers or anything – it was horrible! And it smelt bad!' (Empty nester).

'I saw quite a lot of farming when I was a child, I remember the hens and all those little animals around the house.... I always remember what those animals looked like and what they ate.... In those times you couldn't even imagine a courtyard in the country without lots of chickens, hens, geese and turkey' (Empty nester).

'In a household animals are fed very differently from the way they are fed in the farmers' co-operative. And you can tell from their meat, because homebred chicken or pig is very different. I know well because I grew up in such a household. You can surely tell.... My parents also keep chickens and they feed them only with wheat and corn, they never give them chicken feed, which puffs them up actually. Home-raised chicken meat has a much more succulent taste' (Rural woman).

Many consumers were acutely aware of the economic difficulties that many farmers faced, particularly in achieving adequate prices for produce and problems of over-

supply caused by imports. It would appear that consumers were sympathetic of their situation.

‘Poor farmers, if they don’t produce, they don’t get support. I am from Szabolcs and I know what it means to plough and produce. And no one cares about them’ (Senior).

‘Sometimes the cauliflowers are so cheap that I guess it’s practically not worth it for them to grow any’ (Empty nester).

‘They import [cauliflowers] for less than it would cost to grow them in Hungary’ (Empty nester).

Negative perceptions of farming practices not only included feeding regimes but also the fattening of geese for foie gras, rearing of pigs and high-density farming. Consumers held farmers responsible for these practices which are considered unacceptable. These perceptions were not based on first hand experiences but from other information sources.

‘It’s the stuffing of geese, I’m disgusted about, it’s just terrible, I read that those poor animals simply commit suicide and break their heads against the cage because their stomach bursts. It’s horrible’ (Health conscious innovator).

‘On pig farms they cut off the pigs’ tails and pull out their canine teeth because the young pigs are bored and start harming each other. They prefer to mutilate the animals rather than throw in a few rubber toys for them’ (Health conscious innovator).

#### 1.4.2 CONSUMERS’ UNDERSTANDING OF ANIMAL WELFARE

While the term ‘animal welfare’ is not in common usage in Hungary, consumers did have an understanding of its meaning. One participant expressed his dissatisfaction with the term and suggested that another term be used.

‘I would add that the term animal welfare is a silly slogan; I think it should be changed to something else’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

Table 1.2 presents the concepts consumers associated with the term animal welfare. Across all groups, consumers understood the term to mean how animals ‘were kept’. Many of the phrases listed below show that consumers are quite specific in their understanding of animal welfare, they do not want animals to suffer, they want them reared in clean housing with reasonable space. They are concerned about how animals are transported and with their feeding regimes. Animal welfare is associated with positive health and wellbeing. Good animal welfare practices are considered to be achievable and should be accepted practice.



TABLE 1.2 Consumers understanding of animal welfare

How animals are kept	What they are fed with
The circumstances of their farming	Whether the animals get enough food
Kept in normal conditions	How they slaughter cattle
Their rights	Not to hurt the animal
How hygienic is the place	No Mutilating animals
They are kept in a clean place	How many animals they keep in one stall
Transportation	How big their living space is

*Note:* verbatims from focus groups

### 1.4.3 INFORMATION SOURCES

When asked how informed they are on animal welfare issues, consumers differed in their responses. Some consumers considered themselves well informed while others perceived themselves to be poorly informed. Urban dwellers, particularly those with little contact with the countryside, considered themselves to be less well informed on animal welfare issues than those consumers who live in rural areas. However, some consumers admitted that it is a subject they do not think about until the issue is highlighted in the media. It was generally agreed that animal welfare was not a topic regularly featured in the media. For some consumers, knowing about animal welfare issues was not desirable as it is thought that such information could negatively influence their views on food.

‘It would be good to know more, but... then we would be scared about what we eat.... People would be disgusted. They wouldn’t buy so many products in such quantities’ (Young single).

‘In the city, we are not informed at all’ (Health conscious innovator).

‘Maybe those who have relatives in the country who keep animals are better informed’ (Politically active/vegetarians).

‘[T]he information we get through TV or from anywhere is minimal’ (Health conscious innovator).

Television, radio, newspapers and friends are the main sources of information on animal welfare for consumers. NGOs particularly, animal rights activists were also a source of information. In general, consumers felt the media concentrated on animal abuse reports and ‘scandals’, however, a few consumers stated that they has seen positive animal welfare reports related in the media. However, these reports appeared infrequently. Radio and TV documentaries were also considered informative and it would appear that consumers consider these programs editorially reliable. Along with terrestrial television channels many consumers also view satellite channels such as Discovery, Spectrum and BBC World, allowing consumers to observe western animal welfare issues. It would appear that consumers do not actively seek out animal welfare information and it is by chance that they see or read about these issues in the media.

'I have noticed that the information we get is often related to scandal or sensation that they show on Fokusz (Hungarian TV programme), but it can be something we learn from the news. It all depends on how they present things' (Young single).

'They don't really show good examples on TV or in the papers. Even though I'm sure there are model farms' (Empty nester).

'I don't always deliberately look for what I read, it might have caught my attention. I think people often read articles this way. Just like in papers' (Young single).

While some consumers stated that information on animal welfare is available on the internet, none of the focus group participants deliberately accessed the internet for animal welfare information but have read about this issue if they came about it by chance. However, several consumers stated that if they wished to access information on animal welfare, they would use the internet. Friends and colleagues were also a source of information with animal welfare discussed at work or in conversation with friends. While animal welfare activists were regarded with some suspicion and were considered prone to exaggeration, they were considered to be important players in informing consumers on animal rights abuses. Consumers were somewhat aware of animal rights organisations and were confused with the names of specific organisations names and just gave generic names to such groups, for example NGOs and Greenpeace. These organisations were seen as important in initiating public debate on animal welfare.

'Although Greenpeace activists sometimes exaggerate, they are right. If they weren't so active people wouldn't even know they exist. Even so, many people don't know about them' (Young single).

'There are these NGO initiatives to draw public attention about keeping sheep for example. There was a protest in front of the parliament about how inhumanely they were kept. The activist dressed up as sheep to try and shake up public opinion' (Urban mother).

Some consumers stated that they have observed animal welfare conditions directly, either through farm visits, observing the transportation of animals.

'Well, there is always what we see with our own eyes' (Senior).

'Or you can see it from your car on the road' (Young single).

#### 1.4.4 EVALUATION OF CURRENT PROVISION OF INFORMATION

There was a general opinion among consumers that the information that is received on animal welfare issues is minimal. While consumers agreed that that they receive

minimal information on animal welfare, some consumers stated that they would like to be better informed, however it is not clear that all consumers wished to receive more information on animal welfare. One consumer thought it would be beneficial if this information was available on the product label. Interestingly, some participants from the politically active focus group did not place animal welfare rights high on their political agenda, for some, other social issues were considered more important.

‘What disturbs me the most is the lack of information. You just don’t have access to it. Even if you are interested, there is no information available. This just doesn’t work in Hungary’ (Health conscious innovator).

‘[W]hat they broadcast and what I know from these [TV, radio] is not very much.... I think we should be more informed. We should be aware of these things’ (Urban mother).

‘I don’t think it concerns us that much actually. Maybe professionals would read about it [animal welfare] and would watch these programmes’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘I am interested myself, but I guess that 70 per cent of the population in Hungary doesn’t care’ (Health conscious innovator).

There appears to be a consensus among the groups that there is a need for animal welfare information that is not driven by scandals in the media.

‘[M]ost of the information we get is related to scandals for one reason or another. I’ve never seen a documentary in which they show a cow’s life from birth to the slaughterhouse’ (Young single).

‘It would be good if they enticed farmers to keep their animals in more human conditions and to pay more attention to these issues. They could for instance indicate this on the products’ (Young single).

#### 1.4.5 CONSUMERS’ KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE/FAMILIARITY WITH WELFARE-FRIENDLY FOOD PRODUCTS

A number of products were introduced to the groups by way as stimulus to the discussion, these products were purchased in a number of shops in Budapest. These shops including SPAR, Cora and Tesco. The products were divided into three categories; (1) Explicit welfare content (2) Implicit animal welfare products (3) Quality Labels with ambiguous or non existent welfare component, see appendix 4 for full list of products.

There was a mixed reaction to the sample products that were introduced to the focus groups. No one group had complete knowledge of the products shown or similar

welfare products. Despite shopping in Tesco, Cora and SPAR, some consumers stated that they did not see these products on the shelves of these stores. While some consumers stated that they had seen these products they had not sampled them. Others had eaten these products but there was no clear indication that they regularly consume welfare friendly products. Bio eggs, free-range chicken and bio yoghurts were the most familiar products. There was a general consensus that these products were not generally available in the shops and to purchase these products would entail effort.

The Seniors group was less positively disposed to packaged foods in general and was less likely to purchase the sample products and comparable products

'How much time did it take you to check all the supermarkets [for welfare products]? Because I guess you really had to search!' (Empty nester).

There were also differing levels of familiarity with organic products used in the discussion, with no one group being distinctively different from the other. Again several consumers were familiar with the labels but few had purchased these items. However, there was a general consensus that organic products were not widely available. Some consumers were of the opinion that products produced on small farms maybe similar in quality to organic products.

'I rarely see such labels' (Empty nester).

'I have already see it [bio milk], but I have never drank any' (Empty nester).

'I have seen it [bio eggs] in several stores, but I didn't buy it because it is very expensive and I know a producer at the market who is guaranteed to have normal hens and keeps them normally' (Politically active/vegetarians).

While not all consumers were familiar with the free range chicken and turkey products used in the discussion, several consumers stated that they did purchase free-range poultry from local markets. Free-range poultry were considered to be superior to non-free-range poultry. For some, convenience was also an important consideration in purchasing packaged poultry.

'I have already eaten both free-range chicken and factory produced chicken. One is so tender that it simply falls apart in your mouth and has no taste. The other you really have to chew! So the difference is that the freely raised chicken has more muscles, so that it has to be cooked longer! It doesn't cook to pieces that fast. The other just has no taste. So there is a big difference between the two' (Empty nester).

'I buy some [free-range chicken] regularly because I think it is healthy and also because I have a small family, the small quantity of fresh meat in a pack is just enough. If I bought more then I would have to store it somehow and then it would loose its freshness' (Urban mother).

The importance of brands in determining food choice criteria is seen from this consumer's comment below. Also it is interesting to note how this consumer perceives organic production to differ from traditional production – if it is produced organically it cannot be produced using traditional methods. Again this consumer also highlights how consumers food choice criteria differs when either choosing processed or fresh meat. Provenance is particularly important when shopping for fresh meat and the brand replaces provenance when selecting processed meat.

'I wouldn't think it's bio. Because Pick [well-known domestic brand] means tradition. And although I am concerned about the origin when I buy fresh meat at the market, when I buy salami, I don't check it all, I don't examine the label to see the details, because unfortunately the brand for me is a guarantee, so I just take Pick salami off the shelf, the airtight pack. So I can be quite ignorant in the case of such products' (Young single).

#### 1.4.6 KNOWLEDGE OF CERTIFICATION

'Excellent Hungarian Product' was by far the most familiar quality label known to consumers. Provenance was an important criterion in determining food choice of many of the focus groups. While most participants has little knowledge of the detail in the certification process, most consumers trusted foods originating from Hungary and it was seen as a guarantee of quality. However, for some consumers their commitment to Hungarian to food products is rooted in their sense of nationalism and the belief that the Hungarian economy should be protected from imports.

'I would only trust this Excellent Food label, I hope that no one can put it on their product just like that because it is a trade mark. It's true that this label in itself doesn't mean that it is poison-free but maybe the two are credible' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'[Excellent Hungarian Food is] a guarantee of quality' (Young single).

'It is important to protect the Hungarian economy instead of favouring foreign products' (Young single).

While Gyulai Quality (quality pork logo) was familiar to some consumers, their understanding of what the logo represented did not necessarily reflect the actual quality criteria used in its production. Consumers' perceptions of the certification process included a breeding and rearing process that was highly regulated and monitored by vets.

'That it [Gyulai Pork] has been inspected by a vet' (Urban mother).

'That it [Gyulai Pork] has no foot-and-mouth disease. They probably take the pigs from breeders who keep the animals as it is laid down in the regulations' (Urban mother).

There was a surprising level of confusion as to the meaning of bio/organic labels. Young Singles and Seniors were particularly confused on what the term organic meant, as seen from the verbatims below:

'I don't know maybe that it [bio milk] possibly is not made from milk power' (Young single).

'Maybe it is made from soya' (Young single).

'No preservatives and no additives' (Young single).

'The cows are fed on absolutely chemical free feed' (Young single).

'[T]he chicks aren't fed on artificial chick feed' (Senior).

'[I]t wasn't made from milk powder' (Senior).

Some consumers were cynical of organic production and saw it as a purely marketing tool. Quality systems such as HACCP had little meaning for some consumers and its inclusion on a label was counter-productive as seen in the verbatim below. There is little doubt that consumers place considerable trust in the Excellent Hungarian label.

'Here too they write HACCP system. Now what on earth is that?... Why do they put it on the label then? It doesn't say anything to me. It's brought out on yellow paper and there are those big red tickings on it but this doesn't say anything to us does it?' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'It's a good campaign trick. They talked precisely about this only yesterday on TV. They write Bio on everything to make people buy the products. This is the idea' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'I would only trust this Excellent Food label, I hope that no one can put it on their product just like that because it is a trade mark. It's true that this label in itself doesn't mean that it is poison-free but maybe the two are credible' (Politically active/vegetarian).

#### 1.4.7 EVALUATION OF INFORMATION ABOUT ANIMAL WELFARE PRODUCTS

Despite finding labels confusing, several participants would prefer more information on their labels. This information would include details about farming practices and in particular details on product provenance. Consumers also requested that labelling claims be supported by a monitoring programme that would verify claims. However, some members of the focus groups cautioned that not all consumers were concerned about labelling details.

‘You need three PhD degrees to decipher what they say’ (Politically active/vegetarians).

‘You can’t be sure that it [quality label] is true... anyone can print such a label’ (Health conscious innovator).

‘I think there should be a trademark, which would also mean some kind of monitoring. It should be well advertised, on the TV for instance, people should see that it is issued by a trustworthy company like the one for Excellent Hungary products.... They could develop an image or logo to make it credible and then when I go shopping I can check the logo’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘There should be a symbol system that allows me to identify what exactly I am buying’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘About practices, how things are done’ (Urban mother).

‘The origin of the end product’ (Urban mother).

‘I think there are many people who don’t care’ (Urban mother).

#### 1.4.8 INCENTIVES THAT ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS

Welfare friendly products were considered to have a number of quality attributes, these mainly included taste and safety attributes. The taste of welfare friendly foods was considered superior to mainstream food products. It was also thought that a number of food safety benefits were derived from the feed regime of the animals produced under good welfare conditions. As a result of this, many consumers considered welfare friendly foods promoted good health in humans and for one consumer this meant she would live longer.

‘When we get chicken from the country, from Grandma or elderly people, they always say that you can taste the difference and they’re right, you can feel the difference, they have a very different flavour’ (Young single).

‘Because it is free of chemicals. Because the air is just as polluted. It makes no difference where we are! But at least it is chemical-free. Because there it is said that for a certain number of years even plants can’t be grown, so at least we don’t get to eat that’ (Urban mother).

‘I’d like to live longer’ (Health conscious innovator).

## 1.4.9 BARRIERS THAT DISCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS

Some consumers are resistant to pre-packaged fresh meat products and prefer to buy fresh meat non-packaged. Much of the welfare friendly products available in Hungary is packaged and as a result is not considered by many consumers when making purchasing decisions. Several consumers perceived themselves to be already purchasing welfare friendly foods as they perceive products bought from vendors at local markets to be produced under welfare friendly conditions. These products are thought to have all the attributes of welfare friendly products without the price premium. These products were also thought to have a price advantage over products available in retail shops.

'I don't buy pre-packed stuff. I either go to my meat vendor or we get some fresh meat from our relatives when they kill a pig. I know what it is' (Urban mother).

'But if you buy directly from the farmer, it's generally cheaper' (Young singles).

Not surprisingly, price was considered a significant barrier to purchasing welfare friendly products across all focus groups. Participants considered this to be a barrier not just for themselves but for most consumers. However, participants stated that they would choose welfare friendly products over mainstream products if prices were comparable. There was a belief that welfare friendly products could only be produced using small-scale production methods. Some consumers are resigned to animal welfare products always being more expensive than mainstream products.

'This is 20kgs and it costs 2600 Ft the kilo. So even if it scrapes away in the yard and was raised in good conditions! For me this is too expensive!' (Urban mother).

'If bio cost as much as non bio, then probably the vast majority of people would choose bio as often as they choose non bio now. Non-bio otherwise can be several hundred forints cheaper' (Young singles).

'I think people are very far from buying these things because they are very expensive' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'They [small-scale farmers] can care more about that one animal, feed it better, they can ensure all the circumstances much better, they can even play. So I'm sure I'd buy this one if the price is the same' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'They [animal welfare products] will never be of the same price' (Young singles).

Availability of welfare friendly products was also considered to be a barrier for those who were positively disposed to these products. While some consumers knew where these products were available, seeking out these products entailed some effort.

'I know for instance that they bring fresh lamb, sheep and chicken from around Érd, which is quite far however, so sometimes I buy meat in the nearby supermarket out of laziness' (Young singles).



#### 1.4.10 ETHICAL DILEMMAS

Consumers were asked how they resolved any ethical dilemmas they might have when shopping for animal products. For some this issue was resolved by avoiding thinking or looking at anything that might make them aware of animal ethics. Clearly, this is an issue that for some is difficult to think about and for some consumers it is best resolved by avoiding preparing raw meat and disassociating the animal from the food. Some consumers fear that they would be unable to eat meat if they gave the meat production process any consideration.

‘I try not to think of that! Because then we wouldn’t eat it!’ (Urban mother).

‘If I don’t see it, then I buy it’ (Urban mother).

‘This is interesting, for I hate preparing meat! Now, it’s better, I am not a vegetarian any more, which is a step forward, but even now, if I had to kill an animal... or even process it! At home, it is my husband who cuts up the meat into cubes or slices. It’s always him who prepares the meat. I told him that I can’t take it, I prefer not to eat any! So he prefers to do it, and then we cook it or something’ (Urban mother).

‘Well, if we always stop to think about what each product may contain, then we might end up not buying anything at all. You can’t help wondering sometimes, but I try not to think about it. We knew someone who used to go and help my mother kill the pigs. He was quite a professional in this field, but I deliberately asked him not to tell us anything. He worked in the meat industry actually and he also admitted that he preferred not to tell me what quality-ham was made of for instance, because then we’d never eat it again’ (Rural woman).

#### 1.4.11 HOW CONSUMERS EVALUATED THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION ABOUT WELFARE-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

Focus groups participants were asked to give their opinions of the labels of the welfare products used in the discussion. Generally consumers welcomed the labelling information on the products but felt the labels fell short of explaining how either the welfare or quality issues were monitored. Some labelling was considered to be misleading as it was thought there were few regulatory controls on food labelling.

Several participants were of the opinion that most people didn’t read labels. Many participants considered the existing variation in labelling confusing and called for standardisation in labelling for welfare standards and for transparency from the monitoring agency. Consumers wanted to know not only, who is the monitoring body, but also what is monitored. This was considered necessary to raise confidence in animal

welfare standards. They felt that an advertising campaign was necessary to raise awareness among consumers.

‘But it would be good to know what this means! Because it is so easy to write this on the product! But what exactly do they control?’ (Urban mother).

‘But they just say that it has been checked or comes from a controlled breed- but what do they check exactly? Why haven’t they written that on the product? Those two extra lines would have been worth the trouble!’ (Urban mother).

‘80 per cent of the people don’t care at all about what is written on the product!’ (Urban mother).

Participants highlighted the importance of having labels in legible font sizes, as small fonts were sometimes indicative of misleading labelling. One urban mother was quite prescriptive about what she wanted included on a label. She first wanted ‘the same thing should be indicated on each and every product’, then how the animal ‘was treated’, ‘what it contains, what is excluded’, ‘how it was inspected’, and ‘conditions the animal was kept’. She thought this should be as important as the labelling of weight on a product.

‘And what really disturbs me in many cases is that the more important parts are always written in tiny letters.... Tiny fonts so you have no chance of reading them even! And that’s where the trap is. Oh, how come I didn’t see it! That’s what you say to yourself at home’ (Urban mother).

‘I’d just like to add, that I would introduce a law about this, some kind of regulation.... Anyhow, a law that the same thing should be indicated on each and every product! How it had been treated, what it contains and the rest of the things that are the most important for us. What it contains, what is excluded, what is not. Just like on that one, that it is anti-bacteria-free. If there is something additional, that should be indicated too! So there should be a standard to indicate how it was inspected, how the animal was kept, in what conditions. I mean among what conditions the animal was raised. And then I could decide whether I buy the farmyard pork, from a pig that was bred on a small farm, or not! So I would make this an obligation! Just like for the weight and everything’ (Urban mother).

‘Then these plants, where tens of thousands of animals are kept, chicken and all – why isn’t there a law for them? About how much space there should be for one chick! But then I am not sure whether this would be good either! My main problem is that they should mention precisely what they had checked!’ (Urban mother).

‘I think that there should be trademark, which would also mean some kind of monitoring. It should be well advertised, in the TV for instance, people should see that it is issued by a trustworthy company like the one for excellent Hungarian products. It could be broadcast in the News, in Magellán [a Hungarian TV programme] or on the RTL channel. I can imagine this issue in one of those

programs where TV people really go out to visit and check the farm, to see where they get the forage from, etc. So they should invent an image to make promotions or whatever to make it credible and then eventually, when I do my shopping, I might really check these signs' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'There should be a standard label for instance, the same for all the products, just like for the Hungarian products. It would help a lot if we didn't have to decipher what they say each time, but if we could know everything about the product at a glance from the emblem. All right, there's also the provenance of the product, but that's another thing' (Health conscious innovator).

While most consumers considered the labels shown as somewhat credible, they thought it important that labelling claims should be supported by a guarantee. It was thought that some products made exaggerated claims that could not be substantiated. Claims of cows grazing on herb meadow were considered unbelievable. Some labels were considered to 'advertising tricks' (Young single). Interestingly, some consumers called for more information on the Hungarian organic certification body Biokultura, so that the organisation could become more meaningful to consumers. Not surprisingly, labels from well-known and trusted brands such as Pick, were considered credible and useful, particularly by the Rural Women focus group. Highlighting the name of the farmer on the label was considered useful and it was thought that such a mention 'brought the product closer to us' (Urban female).

'Well, I'd question that- it says the cows grazed on an herb meadow. I can't imagine that!' (Empty nester).

'Unbelievable. Well, I'm a Dutchman! So someone is always standing next to the cow to make sure she only eats the herbs?' (Young single).

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## 1.5 ROLES OF RESPONSIBILITY, AGENCY AND TRUST IN RELATION TO ANIMAL WELFARE

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This section will firstly address who consumers believe should be responsible for animal welfare in their country and it will further explore the reasons put forward for their suggestions.

### 1.5.1 WHO SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANIMAL WELFARE?

There was a general consensus among the focus groups on the composition of the organisation that should have responsibility for animal welfare. While not all groups

nominated an existing agency or organisation that they would like to take responsibility for animal welfare, they did however describe the attributes they felt necessary for such an agency. All of the focus groups except for the 'Politically active/vegetarians' group were in agreement that some form of government body or professional group should be responsible for animal welfare. This group would be made up of professionals with experience in agriculture and more than likely be attached to either the Department of Agriculture or Finance; (the Department of Finance was considered the more powerful as it controlled the country's finances). There were mixed views on the role of the EU in monitoring animal welfare. Some considered the EU to be remote and were of the opinion that the EU lacked familiarity with conditions in Hungary.

'Urban mothers' suggested two organisations, Bio Kontroll KHT and ANTSZ. (The latter organisation is the certification agency for organic production and the former is the Hungarian State Federation of Medical Officers). Couples without children were generally trusting of government departments and seemed content to allow the Ministry for the Economy to have overall responsibility for animal welfare while directing the Ministry of Agriculture with day-to-day responsibility.

'Young singles' were content to allow a government department to have responsibility for animal welfare with one important proviso that this department has complete responsibility for animal welfare. The politically active vegetarian group suggested a combination of a non-governmental group working with a group of professionals such as medical officers or veterinarians.

'Seniors' considered monitoring of animal welfare to be very important and considered this a public health issue. It is not surprising that this group nominated the government medical officers to manage animal welfare issues. The Rural Women focus group spontaneously highlighted the importance of monitoring animal welfare conditions. This group also emphasised the importance having one group or agency responsibility for animal welfare. One woman nominated the national medical officers however; another rejected this. A consumer rights group was also suggested but all in all there was no clear consensus from this group.

There was no clear consensus among the 'Innovative/health conscious' group on who should have responsibility for animal welfare. The innovative health conscious females were generally distrustful of any agency that would have responsibility for animal welfare and could not come to agreement on who should have this responsibility. It was thought that any agency could be open to outside influence and could not be fully independent. However, consumers did reach a consensus on those whom they did not wish to be responsible for animal welfare. They did not favour government ministers, 'Definitely not one of the ministers' or any political organisation, 'It should by no means be a political organisation, but should be made up of professionals', the EU was considered too distant, 'The EU is very far away'. An independent group with both professional and consumer representatives was considered a compromise. This group would have to be answerable to the public in general and would also have to demonstrate its independence.

Veterinarians, in general, were held in high esteem by most focus groups and considered well equipped to manage animal welfare conditions. It was thought that it was important that responsibility for animal welfare should fall under one agency rather than a number of government departments. This was considered important particularly if there was a problem and interested parties could 'complain' to one agency. The 'Rural women' focus group was particularly adamant that one agency should have responsibility for monitoring animal welfare and it should not be left to individual groups. The 'Rural women' voiced their unease with the perceived current situation where a number of agencies shared responsibility for animal welfare. This would suggest that these consumers do not wish to deal with an agency burdened with bureaucracy.

'Someone who works in agriculture or the Ministry of Agriculture. A professional! Someone who has already seen a live horse or pig. So not just in the form of sliced meat. Now this would certainly be an advantage!' (Urban mother).

'The Ministry of Economy, because they do the counting. The direct responsibility should be with the Ministry of Agriculture' (Empty nester).

'But it would be good if it weren't everyone's dog, but would belong under one single institution and then people could complain there if something isn't right' (Young single).

'Everybody does monitoring and invents all kinds of scales. There should be a standard. A common system of values. Whatever is general for the whole EU should be introduced here as well. We should eat the same things as they do. The same good things' (Rural woman).

'OK, but when it comes to monitoring, I think that the same organisation should do it for everywhere. I wouldn't trust all these individual inspecting organisations' (Rural woman).

Interestingly, the Rural Seniors focus group was of the opinion that there was already an agency whose role it was to monitor animal welfare. They were not familiar with this organisation but appeared to be satisfied with their work.

'There is some kind of monitoring organisation that checks certain things, I don't know exactly what. But the important thing is that these products are controlled by this organisation' (Senior man, aged 55).

One participant from the 'Innovative health conscious' group thought that whatever group was responsible for animal welfare they should have a public face in the form of a spokesperson that could communicate with the public.

'The organisation itself should really have a representative who would keep contact with people. But this representative would definitely have to be a professional, not just someone trained to do this and that. He or she would have to

able to answer the more complicated questions as well' (Health conscious innovator).

Interestingly, the 'Politically active/vegetarians' group argued that that the body with responsibility for animal welfare should not have any links or associations with government or any political group. They insisted that animal welfare shouldn't be a political question and 'There shouldn't be any politics involved in animal farming'. They believed that a non-governmental group should oversee the management of animal welfare issues. The ideal organisation would be a non-government group, which would include members of a professional organisation. Again veterinarians were the preferred professional group.

'I would imagine the association of a non-governmental and a professional organisation. Civilians and professionals. Because non governmental organisations need professionals too, because their basic tasks aren't professional. I'm not saying that the NGOs don't know anything about the issue, but they need to work together with professionals all the same. Or NGOs could associate with an official organisation like the association of medical officers or vets' (Politically active/vegetarian).

#### 1.5.2 CONSUMER/CITIZEN AGENCY

The focus groups were asked if they had any way in which they could mobilise their animal welfare concerns and how they could influence the animal welfare debate. One urban mother thought she could influence the debate by boycotting products that were not animal welfare friendly.

'Of course! Every day. When we do our shopping. We don't buy the product about which there is no information- everyone votes with his or her money actually!' (Urban mother).

However, another woman suggested that this type of boycott was only available to the more affluent consumer who had a choice when shopping. It was thought that wealthier consumers could choose to buy more expensive welfare friendly products whereas less affluent consumers had little choice as they could not afford the price premium these products commanded.

'The market can be influenced to some extent; if something doesn't seem all right, then I don't buy it! Only if someone doesn't have enough money, then it is no question that they can't pay three times more for that farmyard chicken. It could be influenced, but really, this is a question of money!' (Urban mother)

Participants from the 'Living with partner, no children' group disagreed with each other on their ability to influence animal welfare policy. Some said that they could not exert any influence while others felt they could raise awareness 'by talking about it and

spreading the news' through discussions with friends and colleagues. While this group did not raise the possibility of using product boycott in influencing animal welfare policy, some have used this tactic with 'suspicious' products or those products with which they have negative associations.

'Young singles' considered themselves powerless in influencing animal welfare conditions. This group thought that if 'a worker had an average wage of 200 000Ft in Hungary. Then we could put some pressure on them'. They believed that only the affluent consumer was in a position to make a choice between welfare friendly and mainstream products. The disparity between the price of organic and conventional foods prohibited consumers from using their spending power to exert influence over animal welfare policy. It was thought that 'if bio cost as much as non bio, then probably the vast majority of people would choose bio as often as they choose non bio now' and they were of the opinion that these products 'will never be of the same price'. One consumer thought 'one person can't do much' while another was of the opinion that because of the financial investment necessary to improve animal welfare conditions that 'only the government, the ministries and the economical organisations could change things radically'.

Not surprisingly, 'Politically active/vegetarians' consumers were generally in agreement that they could effect change in animal welfare policy if they so wished. However, this group thought that this could only be successful if involved in a mass campaign rather than an individual effort, 'one person or ten persons can't do anything, but a crowd can'. Using both boycotts and mass demonstration to lobby government thinking were considered useful in effecting policy changes, 'one way is through making choices when shopping, the other is through mass campaigns to influence delegates, decision-makers and ministries. So basically there are two channels. One channel is the choice we make when shopping, the other is mass demonstration'.

The 'Rural seniors' group was notable in their attitudes to mobilising their animal welfare concerns. They very much wanted to use the existing official channels that were available to them and believed that individual effort could only be effective if the individual 'made a report towards the authorities' if they observed mistreatment of an animal on a farm. The individual consumer was considered to be ineffective in introducing change and it was the responsibility of 'official channels' to monitor production and 'wind up' farmers who did not 'not fulfil the criteria they had agreed on the contract'.

'Rural women' were generally pessimistic about their ability to effect change. However, they did think that the media was an effective agent for change, 'media is a great power, so we can always bring about something if we turn to the media'. Individual effort of 'just one person avoiding certain meats would never have an effect; they would go on farming the animals the same way'. However, group action where 'many people boycotted products that were produced among bad circumstances', was considered to be effective and that could lead to something.

The 'Innovative health conscious' females were particularly confident of their ability to influence change. This change could be brought about by 'our choices when we buy the

products,' if necessary 'we could always go and demonstrate'. This group see themselves as agents of change compared to 'average people' who 'aren't too clever and furthermore, they don't have the money'. While others 'are not to blame,' there is a belief that other consumers do not 'care too much about what they buy'. It would appear that this group already perceives themselves to be innovators compared to others who are 'too lazy to search a little, it's much more comfortable to go to Tesco's or Cora and buy the rubbish that hangs on the wall, which they prefer instead of going to the market and having a look there'.

### 1.5.3 TRUST

'Urban mothers' appeared to generally trust the labels on the products they were shown, but they did feel that some labels were not clear on 'what they check exactly' and thought that this information could be indicated on 'two extra lines'. While these consumers would like further explanation of the claims made on various labels, consumers continue to trust food products however, there are indications these consumers are questioning label claims.

Those couples who do not have children living at home were suspicious of claims that they considered 'exaggerated'. The 'Excellent Hungarian Product' rating commanded complete trust from this group with one consumer stating that 'I'd believe that without question'.

The 'Young singles' group appeared to be sceptical of labels and for a few consumers some claims were considered 'advertising tricks' and was part of an 'EU trend we have to follow now that we are members'. One consumer stated that 'I can very well read what is written on it but I couldn't detect it if what they write isn't true' suggesting a degree of doubt in the labels.

The 'Politically active/vegetarians' group were dubious of the labels used in the discussion. It was interesting to note that one consumer trusted the labelling on milk but not on meat products, 'I don't trust the meats, I would only trust the milk.' It would appear that the more specific the labelling claim the more credible it was to consumers, 'the red one about antibiotics-free feed... this is quite important and also credible.' The Hungarian Excellent Food label commanded respect from most participants, as it appeared that most consumers believed that 'They monitor Hungarian products only, so they check the nationality of the owner or those who do the processing'. Many participants admitted that they were poorly informed about the Biokultura Association (the organic certification agency) and for them the agency lacked credibility. Similarly, consumers did not understand HACCP: 'They write HACCP system. Now what on earth is that?... Why do they put it on the label? It doesn't say anything to me.' One consumer was particularly disillusioned with the regulatory agencies ability to police labelling claims and stated that 'the powers have lost control' and felt that there was 'no use writing anything on labels.'



The ‘Seniors’ group felt that the label that ‘lists most details’ was the most credible label. This group also thought that milk labels were most trustworthy. One consumer stated that ‘we have been deceived so many times by labels’ and as a result is not prepared to take time in a shop to read labels. Labels from a ‘well known brand’, particularly domestic brands such as Pick was considered trustworthy.

The ‘Rural women’ group also placed considerable trust in the well-know domestic brand, Pick. The Hungarian Excellent Product label was also respected and for one consumer in the group was ‘for me it’s a guarantee for good quality’. A quality label which is not supported by rigorous monitoring was considered meaningless and for one consumer ‘an emblem in itself is not credible enough, we need a guarantee that the product has been truly been inspected by a professional team which is responsible for issuing labels only for quality products.’

A number of the ‘Innovative/health conscious’ urban females approved of listing producer details on labels and for one consumer ‘the fact that they name the farmer counts for a lot, they bring the product closer to us.’ It would appear that the less familiar consumers are with a label the less likely they are to trust the label, leaving consumers questioning the authenticity of the product ‘you can’t be sure that it’s true’.

#### 1.5.4 WHO DO PARTICIPANTS TRUST TO PROVIDE ANIMAL WELFARE INFORMATION?

‘Urban mothers’ were somewhat distrustful of the ‘big supermarkets’, and several women stated that ‘I don’t trust them’. Most mothers trusted vendors from the local market. Hungary’s entry into the EU was considered detrimental to regulatory enforcement, ‘we used to have really strict regulations, but now we have opened towards Europe, so many things are coming in. We’d think that the EU will protect us, but this is not true!’ However, not everyone agreed with that sentiment with one mother stating if a ‘general EU standard [was introduced] then I think that would be really good’.

The consumer protection agency was considered trustworthy as ‘it is the one who does the monitoring who has the greatest knowledge and they would be most trustable’. ANTSZ (Hungarian State Federation of Medical Officers) was considered by several consumers to be an organisation that would give unbiased information. Participants were suspicious of political organisations because it was thought ‘they manipulate’.

The ‘Living with a partner, no children’ group were prepared to trust the Ministry of Agriculture and an independent non-governmental organisation. An organisation that provides credible information ‘should be independent’ according to this group and if the EU provided information it was thought ‘that would definitely be better’.

The ‘Young singles’ thought that ‘no such organisation’ existed which could provide trusted information. They wanted ‘an organisation which is independent, isn’t connected with anyone and namely doesn’t belong to anyone’s authority.’ While the EU

was considered 'credible', it was thought the EU would not be relevant to all groups in society and particularly it 'wouldn't mean a thing to the elderly'.

The 'Politically active/vegetarians' group were unable to nominate any existing organisation which they could trust. One consumer did not 'have much faith' in the EU while another thought if the EU had an involvement in animal welfare it would 'just make things worse'.

The 'Rural seniors' group placed high levels of trust with the EU as they considered them to be 'very trustworthy' and 'we believe them'. Their credibility was based on their trans-national experience 'because they deal with several countries and not just what's within our borders'.

The 'Rural women' group had difficulty in suggesting an organisation that they could trust, they thought, 'this is a problem. It is very difficult to tell'. Several of the groups considered the EU trustworthy but others were hostile to the EU because they did not accept that EU membership would be beneficial to Hungary.

The 'Innovative health conscious' consumers stated that they would not 'trust those no name companies that I have never heard of before'. The EU was thought not yet to have 'the reputation that would be necessary for us Hungarians to trust them'. One consumer was adamant in her distrust of government 'definitely not one of the ministers' while another stated that, as animal welfare had 'nothing to do with politics, so it is totally unnecessary to involve them'. The Hungarian Academy of Sciences was thought to be a possible trustworthy organisation but it's independence was in some doubt as 'each university and scientific association is financed by someone... so you can't really find an independent organisation'.

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## 1.6 CONSUMERS' EVALUATIONS OF A PROPOSED SCIENTIFICALLY BASED STANDARD FOR FARM ANIMAL WELFARE

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### 1.6.1 INTRODUCTION

This section will present and discuss the lists of animal welfare concerns that participants generated during the individual and group exercises. Participants' reactions to the ten concerns document produced by scientists of subproject 2 will also be examined. Participants' impressions of the likely effectiveness of an animal welfare standard based on the scientists' list of concerns.

### 1.6.2 SPONTANEOUS ANIMAL WELFARE CONCERNS

During the course of the focus group, participants were asked to consider what animal welfare meant to them in the context of food production and to write down the issues that they thought to be important when assessing the welfare of animals. Participants were then asked to share their insights with the group.

The Table 1.3 lists all the animal welfare concerns generated by the focus groups. The list comprises of all the concerns mentioned by the groups, in some cases some issues may overlap in interpretation for example ‘veterinary care’ and ‘animal health’. However, the list only serves to highlight the concerns raised by the focus groups.

As can be seen from Table 1.3, all seven groups were in agreement on a number of issues.

Participants typically listed a core number of concerns: to avoid inflicting suffering on animals and where it cannot be avoided, to minimise it, to ensure animals have sufficient space to express their natural behaviour, that animals have clean living conditions and that they not only have a sufficient food supply but that it be nutritious.

Participants concern for the food animals were given was motivated mainly by self-interest and the impact suspect animal feed would have on the food chain and ultimately on himself or herself. The type of food animals ate was considered ‘very important’ and several participants recommended that animals should receive ‘appropriate food’, ‘natural food’, ‘controlled feed’, ‘bio nutrients’, ‘healthy forage’, ‘poison and chemical-free feeding’. It was thought that animals should not only eat a particular diet but also get the ‘proper quantity’. One consumer recommended controls over animal feed:

‘I would emphasise control! Because anything can happen if the food is not inspected’ (Urban mother).

‘First of all I wrote- animals are ruled by men, aren’t they? Therefore men should care more about animals! Just like with their own children. Paying attention to how it grows, to its healthy nutrition and not in the least to how it is kept. It should be done in the same way! Because we breed animals for ourselves. Although we don’t eat our children- just the animals, but this is why it’s important: because we eat them!’ (Urban mother).

It was generally thought that animals should be kept in hygienic conditions and again some consumers acknowledged that this was mainly motivated by concern for personal well being rather than concern for the animal. There was a perception that bacteria from animals could pass into the human food chain.

TABLE 1.3 Consumers' spontaneous list of issues important when assessing the welfare of animals

	Focus Groups						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Avoid suffering	v	v	v	v	v	v	v
Humane slaughter	v	v	v	v	v	v	v
Healthy nutrition	v	v	v	v	v	v	v
Sufficient food	v	v	v	v	v	v	v
Cleanliness	v	v	v	v	v	v	v
Space	v	v	v	v	v	v	v
Owner responsibility	v	v	v	v	v	v	v
Transportation	v	v	v	v	v		v
Veterinary care	v	v	v	v	v		v
Professional handling	v	v	v	v	v		v
Keeping of animals	v	v	v	v			v
Psychological health		v		v	v		v
Monitoring animal welfare	v			v		v	v
Temperature			v	v	v	v	
Housing		v	v		v	v	
Water			v		v		v
Animal health	v	v	v				
Reproduction	v	v					v
Treatment of animal whilst being kept	v					v	v
Properly groomed		v			v		
Freedom to roam	v			v	v		
Respect			v		v	v	
No genetically modified foods	v		v				
Normal development			v				v
Light			v		v		
Stress-free environment			v				
Manual milking of animals			v				
Licence to farm animals		v					

Notes: 1=Urban mothers, 2=Empty-nesters, 3=Young singles, 4=Politically active/vegetarians, 5=Seniors, 6=Rural women, 7=Health conscious innovators.

'I put down: keeping the animals clean. Maybe it's not important for the animal itself, but I guess quite a few bacteria can get through to our food as well' (Urban mother).

Several consumers used the term 'professional keeping' of animals and when probed to the specific meaning of this term, one consumer defined it as follows:

'This is a term that covers everything – if there is expertise, then there they can make no mistakes! They keep them clean, take care of them, transport them properly and control the processes. So all comes true' (Empty nester).

It would appear that these consumers not only want to highlight areas of concern but also wish to delegate responsibility to farmers, transport and abattoir staff and hold them accountable for animal welfare.

Several participants were quite prescriptive in the care of animals, and wished to regulate the frequency of not only their feeding but also how often their housing is cleaned. This advice would appear to be based on their rural experiences.

‘The most important is to groom them properly, to clean their housing several times a day, to feed them at least twice a day and to give them water at least three times, because they need to drink at noon too. I know because I grew up in a village’ (Senior).

Female consumers were more likely to make reference to human-animal relationships and thought that it was important that farmers ‘should be proud to raise animals’ and that all consumers should extend ‘respect to animals’ and that ‘only people who love animals should farm them’

‘The only thing that hasn’t been mentioned from among what I’ve written is respect towards the animal, respecting them for serving us, they are bred just for us to eat them and we should be thankful for this’ (Young single).

‘I also wrote that a lot depends on what the farmer is like. Because if he doesn’t treat them in a human way and doesn’t love them, then that’s harmful. Whether it’s livestock or a dog, they have to be loved by their master’ (Senior).

Despite the changes in the regulatory environment surrounding the transportation of animals, this still remains an area of considerable concern for consumers. Some consumers questioned the necessity of transporting animals over long distances while others attributed their poor conditions during transit to the greed of multinational companies. The transportation of live animals generated a particularly lively debate among the health conscious female group. This group seemed to be well informed of the poor conditions that some animals’ experience in transit, which may be accounted for by some of the group’s exposure to the activities of animal welfare organisations. It should be noted that the demographics of this group are typical of the consumers targeted by these organisations.

‘I think that it’s totally unnecessary to transport live animals. For a long time I didn’t understand why they do it, why it matters that much where it is that they slaughter them. Then I learnt that it’s just a question of money. Because it costs much more to transport meat in a refrigerator wagon than to transport them alive, without giving them anything to eat or to drink- even if half of them die, it costs less to transport live animals. It costs more. Work force costs less in the East, so they take them to be slaughtered to the East, then they bring back the finished product. I never understood why this is worth it. I guess it’s worthwhile on the big scale. It’s not the small private producers who do this, but the big multinational companies’ (Health conscious innovator).

'They really transport them among inhuman circumstances. I heard that there were some kind of troughs on the sides of the truck, but the poor sheep that were in the middle didn't have access to them, so more than 50 per cent of the herd died. And then one wonders whether at the slaughterhouse they really only processed the animals which were safe and sound and not the rest' (Senior).

Not all the participants of the focus groups were exercised by animal welfare issues, one politically active member, who is also a vegetarian, expressed the view that there were other social issues that should be prioritised before animal welfare is addressed.

'I was just saying, that we can very well talk about such things, but there is not much point in it, not while the peoples' situation is such in this country. It's ridiculous to say what kind of cake we would like when people are starving. It's just like talking of building a world city, as Demszky does [the mayor of Budapest], when there are so many homeless people in Budapest, in the parks and the forests. So these are the basic problems. So it's ridiculous to talk about such things when the whole society is having problems' (Politically active/vegetarian).

### 1.6.3 CONSUMER REACTIONS TO 10 AREAS OF WELFARE PRINCIPLES PREPARED BY THE SCIENTISTS

Consumers were generally supportive of the ten principles prepared by the scientists and were prepared to engage in the discussion of each item on the list. However, they took issue with some principles and thought that they were not prescriptive enough and questioned how some of the principles could be implemented. Some consumers believed that if some of the fundamental principles such as the right to a nutritious diet and access to outdoors were implemented that many of the other principles would automatically follow. Some consumers acknowledged that that they did not 'think of things like positive emotions' while others doubted that principles would be adopted by all the relevant stakeholders as the standards would be too difficult to monitor.

'We didn't think of things like positive emotions! I think that if the basic things are given, then the animals feel good!' (Urban mother).

'And their forms of behaviour. Because I'd say that means playing, flying, running around. How would that be possible in an industry?' (Urban mother).

'But this is as unbelievable as an Andersen fairy tale' (Urban mother).

'We can very well talk about all this, nothing will be solved anyway' (Young single).

Each of the ten areas of concern will be discussed below.

*Hunger, thirst or malnutrition*

While several consumers welcomed the reference to hunger, thirst or malnutrition, a number of consumers were dissatisfied with the depth of the principle and wanted assurance that animal feed would be safe for human consumption, include ‘natural nutrients’ and not include genetically modified material.

‘It’s good! My only problem is that, just like us, animals are made from what they eat. Now, it says sufficient nutrition; ‘sufficient’ and ‘key nutrients’ is not enough for me! And it’s my viewpoint, not necessarily the animal’s interest! Because this can mean giving food that had been treated with antibiotics or fish powder. So it’s all right for the animal, but not for us! Or perhaps all those drugs and chemicals aren’t good for the animal either after all’ (Urban mother).

‘It shouldn’t be genetically manipulated’ (Young single).

‘But here again, if there are really many chicks in one place, they can’t take care of each one by one! So they can’t really notice how many times that little spotted chick had eaten for instance! Or how many times the other pinched or kicked her. So I think that if there are too many chickens in one place, then it is impossible to monitor! The injuries won’t be discovered, only towards the end maybe, when the poor thing is dropping already’ (Urban mother).

*Physical comfort and security*

Participants stated that the scientists’ list did not detail the minimum amount of space that animals should be allocated. It was felt that having correctly designed housing was irrelevant if there was over-crowding in the housing. Likewise, animal transport trucks should also have a maximum capacity loading. They felt that the principle should also determine the maximum distance that animals should travel. Scientists were considered to have the expertise to determine all these details. The transportation of animals was the most discussed element in this principle.

‘That, say, they check whether the housing is properly conceived! They don’t limit how many animals should be kept on what surface. It can happen that the housing fits all the regulations perfectly; only it’s not 20 but 120 chicks that they keep in it! No use having proper housing, without edges and with proper ventilation if there are too many animals that tread each other to death’ (Empty nester).

‘Again, this might sound strange, but they should define how many square metres they should ensure for the cow. Scientists, who are familiar with the issue, should know. Or those who do farming for a living should calculate how many square metres a cow needs to rest properly, to turn around and so on’ (Senior).

'They should set a law stating how many cows can be transported on a truck of a certain size. And they couldn't transport more, otherwise the police could fine the driver' (Young single).

'I've seen that sometimes their feet get stuck because they aren't tied down properly and then when the truck stops suddenly or turns they break their legs because they are all standing and not seated with a safety belt. There could be a law saying that they shouldn't be transported further than a certain distance, I wouldn't transport an animal for several hundreds of kms, it's unhealthy and does no good for the animal at all' (Empty nester).

### *Health and injuries*

Participants were generally satisfied with this principle. However, some questioned how this could be monitored in industrial scale farming. Some consumers thought that provision for regular veterinary care along with vaccinations for animals should be included in this principle. It was also thought that this principle would be difficult to implement, as this principle was not practised for humans.

'But here again, if there are really many chicks in one place, they can't take care of each one by one! So they can't really notice how many times that little spotted chick had eaten for instance! Or how many times the other pinched or kicked her. So I think that if there are too many chickens in one place, then it is impossible to monitor! The injuries won't be discovered, only towards the end maybe, when the poor thing is dropping already' (Urban mother).

'Yes, it would be good if they had regular veterinary check-ups. It would be better both for the animals and us. They should recognise in time if the animal is sick in order to avoid the spreading of the disease, like this chicken flu for instance. They should stop the epidemics in time and not keep us all scared' (Young single).

'But this is not even working for humans, so how could we do it with animals?' (Young single).

'I was just thinking that all this just cannot be fulfilled among industrial circumstances and in mass production. I mean in the village everyone had two, three or four cows, and we took good care of them, but you can't do this on those huge farms' (Senior).

'And they should vaccinate cows once every year against tuberculosis. The vets should go and examine them more frequently though, four or at least two times a year. This should be a regulation. And it's very important. Yes, the vets could be obliged to go regularly and not just when they are called' (Senior).



*Health and disease*

Consumers were generally satisfied with this principle and raised similar concerns as in the previous principle. It was thought that this principle would be difficult to implement in industrial scale farming. Some participants thought that this principle could be possible if a licensing system for farmers was introduced or if a similar suggestion whereby ‘professional handling’ was ensured. Interestingly, this suggestion was made by all of the focus groups except for the rural women group. Compulsory medical checks-ups were also thought necessary for the full implementation of this principle. This was further emphasised by some consumers, as they feared that some animal diseases could be passed to humans.

‘People should only keep animals if they can provide proper conditions! So it shouldn’t be possible to say, that ok, I will keep animals from now on, and then, later I call the vet, when I already have a hundred chicks in a small place. I should be obliged to get a license, where they state that in such big a place I can only keep 38 chicks! But not 39!’ (Urban mother).

‘They should employ skilled workers on the farms’ (Health conscious innovator).

‘To increase monitoring! I would make it compulsory! I would order regular compulsory medical check-ups, because diseases can be concealed or smoothed over’ (Empty nester).

‘Say, if there’s a farm with several thousands of chickens, how are they to examine their hearts one by one?’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘Some diseases can spread from humans to animals. Therefore some tests should be made compulsory for prevention. So that they don’t act only when there’s trouble. Those who deal with animal farming should agree to keeping continuous contact with the vet too, shouldn’t they?’ (Rural woman).

*Pain*

All of the focus groups supported this principle and wish that animals experience no pain if possible. However, there was an acceptance that some pain was inevitable and where it cannot be avoided it should be minimised. It was felt that the principle could be strengthened by regulating for the use of professionals in the slaughter process and on the type of equipment used. Castration specifically was raised as an issue in the ‘Young singles’ and ‘Health conscious innovative’ group. Participants who raised this issue knew about this practice from experiences while visiting farms. This was a practice they thought should be prohibited while others thought this was an inevitable feature of farming. The ‘Seniors’ and the ‘Rural women’ group not surprisingly adopted a pragmatic approach to pain and saw it as part of the farming process. Some participants thought that in general Hungarian slaughter practices were acceptable and of a higher standard to other countries.

'They should hire the right professionals, so that if the treatment is necessary, the animal recovers as fast as possible after the medical treatment. And at slaughter they should use a technology that really works smoothly and kills the animal in a few seconds' (Young single).

'I am against castration' (Young single).

'We could say that they shouldn't suffer excessive pain. Because if they just have to be castrated, there's nothing to be done, is there?' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'It would be important, but again, there are some things you just can't avoid doing if you breed animals, whether there are regulations or not' (Senior).

'Here in Hungary they usually shoot pigs, so they die much faster' (Senior).

'And don't suffer so much' (Senior).

'They should be killed as fast as possible so they don't suffer. There are surely good methods for doing this. That animal has to be killed in a way that surely doesn't cause suffering. Although it makes me sick, I sometimes watched as my father got hold of the chicken and then cut its head off in an instant with the axe. We feel sorry for the animal, but there are people who even enjoy that there's pig's blood all over the place' (Rural woman).

During the course of the focus group discussions, participants expressed their concerns for animal welfare in the context of self-interest and concern for their family health. However, while discussing 'pain' participants highlighted the wish that animals should not suffer and this concern appears to be motivated by their genuine compassion for the animal. It would appear that participants have a genuine concern for animal welfare that is not necessarily based on self-interest.

#### *Normal/natural social behaviours*

While most participants were in general agreement with the sentiment expressed in this principle, a number of participants were confused with the detail of 'preventing sexual behaviour' and separating females from their off-spring. This appeared to some participants contrary to good animal husbandry and the practicalities of producing eggs and milk. Again, some participants thought that if other principles in the list of concerns were addressed, such as sufficient space for animals, this concern would not be an issue. One participant wondered how this principle could be reconciled with industrial scale farming. The 'Innovative health conscious' group was particularly sympathetic to preventing the separation of female animals' keep their offspring in the early stages of their development.

'If they have enough space, they can do all this, because the animal has the instinct in it' (Urban mother).

‘Now this really made me smile to myself! Because my grandparents also used to live in the country and they kept the male pigs separately. Same for the stallions. This was customary, since otherwise there would always be great orgies there. I think it’s stupid! They are separated anyway!’ (Empty nester).

‘Yes, but in the hatcheries the eggs just have to be separated, there’s nothing to be done about that. Hens don’t have the right to keep their eggs’ (Young single).

‘I don’t see how this could be assured in mass production farming’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘Yes, they shouldn’t let them become inbred and degenerate’ (Rural woman).

‘I don’t understand. They should separate the male piglet from it’s mother to avoid them having children?’ (Rural woman).

Extract from discussion from the ‘Innovative health conscious’ group:

‘Sows always have to be separated when they wean. Cows too. Unfortunately they separate the calves too early afterwards.’

‘But why don’t they allow the babies to suckle longer?’

‘Because it’s not profitable. After about a week they continue to milk the cows and the farmers feed the calves from the bottle.’

‘They shouldn’t for example separate those poor little babies from their mothers!’

#### *Normal/natural other behaviours*

This principle provoked little debate among the groups; perhaps it was because as one woman stated:

‘We can’t say much about these points though, because we don’t know much about how the animals live, since we don’t keep animals ourselves’ (Rural woman).

One urban mother expressed the view that this principle ‘is even beyond our dreams’. A politically active participant was quite vocal on this principle and argued that the elements of an animal welfare policy should be reasonable and take into account the practicalities of farming. He stressed the importance of keeping the focus on food production and ensuring that whatever welfare regulations are introduced that they be workable and achievable for farmers.

‘My problem with this is that it’s beginning to sound like a blond-woman joke, or I don’t know what adjective I could use. Again, if these animals are bred in a farming co-operative, then how on earth will they make them fly? So there must be a sensible limit. All right, let’s have volunteers who would run for chickens’ rights, but we must draw a line somewhere. We shouldn’t make the mistake of taking farmers for fools. So if the delegates of this foundation or institution go to

see a farmer, then the farmer's hair shouldn't stand on end, he shouldn't be thinking that the Lord's sheep are at his door. Instead, this whole thing should have sense, so that the farmers would be willing to consider it. If they figure out reasonable goals, like, say, some things should be monitored' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'If I have a cat, then I make sure that she can play, but breeding animals in stables is a completely different thing. So zoos can be about making sure that the animals feel good, because that's what they're there for; for me to show the animals to the kid. But when it comes to raising ten thousand chickens in a farm, the most important is providing me with food' (Politically active/vegetarian).

### *Human-animal relationship*

Participants acknowledged that animals bred for food production and their keepers can form a relationship and for many, this was important. Many stressed the importance of professionalism in farming and for those handling animals. Some participants believe that some farmers farm irresponsibly by employing unskilled labour that had little concern for animals. A few thought that those who abuse animals should be penalised and the penalties should be included in this list. However, one participant did highlight the mechanisation of animal production where there is little human-animal interaction. This limited interaction can cause considerable stress to animals whose only contact with humans is when transported. One 'Young singles' thought the adoption of this principle 'is utopia' and would probably not be implemented.

'I think that it's easier to transport them and handle them every day if they are used to man. Because if they just get their feed through a hole, then when they sense that someone enters, because, say, they must be transported, then of course they'll get wild if they'd never seen a man before' (Empty nester).

'I think that expertise is very important!' (Empty nester).

'There should be something about this here! Such laws exist for dogs. Because there was that guy who tied a dog to his car and dragged it. Torturing an animal is a penal act! It's difficult to say where the limit is for horses, goats or any husbandry. It's difficult to define what is to be penalised or for what farmers could be accountable! There should be something! Or the head of the village or the neighbours could keep an eye on this. I would punish the torturing of animals!' (Empty nester).

'I'm just saying that we're in year 2005, that's all. It's not humans who are feeding the chicks, a machine takes the food there for them and feeds it at precise intervals' (Young single).

'It's all true. Because often the farmers are willing to hire anyone to shepherd the animals. They don't care who it is; they just hire the cheapest work force to whom the animals mean nothing at all. They just try to keep them quiet and give them

their water and food, but wouldn't go closer. They just don't care about the animals. And this is not good at all' (Senior).

'The farmers should hire people who have some kind of education in farming and know how to treat animals. Without electric pods that is' (Senior).

#### *Negative emotions (apart from pain)*

While this principle did not provoke a lot of discussion most participants thought this issue was important. There was a perception that if the other principles on the list were adhered to then negative emotions may not be an issue. It was thought that this principle was related to principle seven and it was suggested that perhaps both points could be merged. One rural woman thought that this concern may be over exaggerated and perhaps too much emphasis was being placed on animal emotions.

'I think that this point is the consequence of all that we have been talking about so far! If the rest of the principles are kept, then there are no negative feelings either' (Empty nester).

'Yes, if those criteria are fulfilled, then so is this one automatically' (Rural woman).

'I think that this is somewhat related to point seven. The two could make one point actually, because they are quite similar' (Health conscious innovator).

'But all these are abstract things. In the beginning we discussed whether humans and animals were on the same level. Well, what we're talking about now is a bit exaggerated I think. Depression for instance is something for psychologists!' (Rural woman).

#### *Positive emotions*

There was general agreement that this principle was important but again there was some scepticism among participants with one urban mother describing it as 'sweet dreams', another thought 'it sounds beautiful'. There was little hope among some of the Young Singles that this principle would be adopted. However, some of those who were more enthusiastic about this principle made a connection between animal well being and product quality. This perception was particularly strong among the innovative health conscious females. Again some participants made the point that the principles were inter-connected and the effectiveness of the code of standards was dependent on each element of the principles being adopted.

'This is important! Especially that they should have a daily routine. Because it's routine that makes them calm and balanced, which generates positive emotions. Because they know at about what time their caretaker comes to bring them their feed! If he doesn't come, then they become restless' (Empty nester).

'I think it's important. If the animal is stressed, its meat won't be good either. So whatever is good for the animal is good for us. If he feels good, then it's better to eat its meat too' (Young single).

'I agree that these things should be realised, I just don't see any chance or possibility for it... If I take a human, then we know that stress causes gastric stricture, ulcer and can also result in cardiovascular problems. I guess it's the same with livestock' (Young single).

'Maybe this is silly, but I can imagine that an animal which is kept well would have healthier and better off-spring' (Senior).

'I guess that if the previous conditions are fulfilled then there can't be any problems, can there?' (Rural woman).

'I eat chicken that lived happy more heartily!' (Health conscious innovator).

'It surely has better meat' (Health conscious innovator).

'These last three points are related, because for instance if you don't massage the cow's udder before putting her on the milking machine, then the animal is stressed' (Health conscious innovator).

#### 1.6.4 MONITORING OF WELFARE SYSTEM

It is important to note that in the course of the discussions participants made reference to the importance of monitoring and enforcement of standards that may be introduced. References to monitoring were noted during the various discussion topics.

'I think they should be monitored and controlled to see if they respect the regulations' (Senior).

#### 1.6.5 HOW CONSUMERS WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE INFORMATION ON ANIMAL WELFARE SCHEME

Participants were asked for suggestions on how they would like to receive information about the welfare standards produced by the scientists. There was a surprisingly high level of engagement among participants on the subject. Some participants gave quite detailed instructions on how such a scheme could be administered. Most suggested a rating system, which would outline the level of compliance with the ten standards. Others suggested that one logo should be used to indicate complete compliance with the scheme.

The internationally recognised star rating system, used by the hotel industry, was a popular choice for several participants, this was closely followed by a colour coding system. The level of respect that many consumers have for the 'Excellent Hungarian Product' campaign led many participants to suggest that this approach be used as a model for developing a welfare standard programme. Consumers requested that one standard welfare system be introduced to avoid confusion. They thought it important that one recognised system be introduced that all consumers could trust and that 'everyone should know what it means' (Young single).

Discussion from 'Rural womens' group:

'They should score the products between one and ten.'

'There should be a scale.'

'Just like with hotels, there should be first, second and third class.'

'There could be a system with stars.'

'What I thought was that they could display the list with large, well-readable letters and then on the product itself, I would just indicate categories. For instance, if the product meets three criteria, then it's category D, if it can fulfil more, then it's C and so on' (Senior).

'With a plain circle. So here they have ten points- I'd cut the circle in half and put, for instance, seven out of ten. This would be quite clear I think!' (Empty nester).

'Just like it is for the milk. I go into the store and I see Polli milk, CBA milk, 2,8 per cent fat, or 3.6 or 1.5 per cent. Same for the chicken, I'd know if it was from the Pilis [hilly region in Hungary], one star, and that's all. And I would know what the number of the stars means. Eventually we would learn and get used to the rating! And they wouldn't have to indicate what one star actually means. Sooner or later everyone would learn!' (Urban mother).

'There is this Excellent Hungarian Product sign, that was pretty well conceived at that time, wasn't it? Well, it could be something like that, say, four degrees, printed in four colours. So if it's a certain colour, then I know that all ten are fulfilled' (Urban mother).

'A logo, but not any kind of logo; it should include all ten points. I could imagine the picture of an appropriate farm. And everyone should know what it means' (Young single).

'I was thinking that there could be a logo like the one he has described, and there could be numbers around it. And the number they mark would indicate the number of points fulfilled. They could also list what each point means' (Young single).

'I think that those who don't respect all ten simply shouldn't produce at all. There's no need for any logo' (Young single).

'Or there could be a system of points to indicate how many of the ten are fulfilled. So if a product fulfils seven criteria, there could be seven points on the packing' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'There could be a smiling cow. I'd invent a trademark, which I suppose already exists, at least the one you just showed us. So this would be a trademark everyone knows and trusts. And if everyone knows what it's all about, then it would be enough to put just the trademark on the product, because I'd know what it stands for. And they could write next to it that it was produced in controlled circumstances and fed with controlled feed' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'I don't think it's necessary to have four, five sorts of trademarks: one would be enough, we would all know what it means and they would be the ones to deal with the issue officially. So we wouldn't need an encyclopaedia for each half a kilo of chicken meat, but there would be that stamp. Obviously, it would also be this company's task to inform everyone about what their trademark actually stands for. They should also make sure that producers aren't just swallowing money, but are really doing something. If such a trademark existed, I surely wouldn't buy unknown Polish, Czech or Ukrainian chicken. I'd see this sign and know at once that it is a Hungarian product' (Politically active/vegetarian).

To raise awareness for welfare standard participants suggested promotional campaigns using the print media, television and internet with the use of a web-site. In-store promotions at point-of-sale was also recommended (they could display it on a huge board above the chicken refrigerator, (Politically active/vegetarian). The use of celebrities to endorse the standard was suggested. Educating students while still at school was recommended. Most participants were media literate and some displayed an impressive awareness of how promotions and awareness campaigns are developed. It was generally agreed that it was necessary to engage in an education and awareness programme to promote the products so that as one urban mother recommends 'Explain what it means exactly'.

Some groups did raise the issue of products that did not meet the ten principles. Some wondered how the market would treat non-compliant products. One consumer thought that only products that achieved the standard should be put on the market.

'Now we all know about these things, because we have just read it. But most people aren't aware. Newspapers should publish this in the public issues column! In *Budapesti Piac* [a Hungarian advertising magazine], for instance. Everyone gets it in his or her mailbox for free. Whenever a new law is established or anything informative happens, then they explain it- like it was for the pension reform. These points should be distributed everywhere, so people would get to know what that star means when they see it on the product. Because if they don't know what it's all about, then they won't be motivated to buy it' (Urban mother).

'There should be a minimal number of points to be respected, under which the producer wouldn't be allowed to enter the market' (Health conscious innovator).



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## 1.7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 1.7.1 CONCLUSIONS

Price, quality and provenance are key influences for participants of the focus groups in determining their choice of animal based products. Participants across all the groups were particularly price sensitive and value for money was an important factor in making purchase decisions. Consumers used a range of retail outlets when purchasing animal based products. However, with the increasing presence of the leading European multiples in Hungary this could see consumers shifting their shopping patterns to include these outlets in their search for better value products. It can be expected that the multiples will make every effort to meet consumers growing demand for value and provenance.

The changing eating trends of Western Europe are gaining popularity among Hungarian consumers. Included in these dietary changes are switching from animal to vegetable fats for cooking and the growing perception that organic food is more beneficial than conventional foods.

While the term animal welfare is not in common usage in Hungary, participants did have a good understanding of the concept. Participants generally acknowledge that there is a need for changes in the practices surrounding animal welfare. The welfare standards employed in large- scale industrial farming are considered to be below what should be the acceptable norm. However, several participants were at a loss to understand how this situation could be rectified, as they believed that industrial scale farming was at variance with acceptable animal welfare practices.

Despite the low consumption of welfare-friendly-labelled products and the general poor awareness of the availability of these products, consumers had strong positive perceptions of these products. The products were associated with quality attributes such as superior taste and safety. However, higher welfare standards were also strongly associated with high prices and for most participants this was considered to be a significant barrier to purchase. While it would appear that consumers' concern for animal welfare is motivated by the impact that poor welfare standards could have on the human food chain, consumers expressed genuine concern for animal well-being and wished that animals be treated humanely and not experience suffering.

The print and broadcast media plays a significant role in alerting consumers to the areas of welfare concerns and encouraging support for those trying to improve matters. However, the focus groups participants recognise the dangers of receiving unbalanced information and expressed the desire to receive welfare information from 'independent' sources. Despite being meat eaters, some consumers have difficulty in reconciling the animal production process with their enjoyment of meat and fear that further information could effect their consumption. Some consumers responded to this dilemma

by avoiding information on animal welfare. This response highlights the need for sensitivity when informing consumers about welfare issues as it may have the adverse effect of changing non-rejectors of meat to rejectors.

Participants had little confidence in their individual ability to effect change in the culture surrounding animal welfare. This lack of confidence combined with high levels of distrust in politicians may have influenced participants' proposal that an agency be formed to take responsibility for animal welfare. They wished for one national agency to have complete control over all matters concerning animal welfare. This agency would be publicly funded by central government and would be staffed by animal welfare experts. Some focus groups expressed the wish that NGO's could be represented in such an agency. This agency would have a role in developing standards, ensuring compliance with these standards and educating all stakeholders from farmer to consumer on animal welfare issues. The EU was considered by many consumers' as a remote organisation with little understanding of Hungarian society to be tasked with the responsibility for animal welfare. However, an EU standard for animal welfare was considered desirable with responsibility for implementing this standard to be carried out by a national agency. Irrespective of what form this proposed organisation will take, it would appear that promoting trust between stakeholders would be a necessary part of its function.

It is encouraging to note that both scientists and consumers are closely aligned on what issues are of most concern in animal welfare. However, consumers wished for more detail on the ten broad areas of concern. They required explicit information on a number of standards including the type of food to be fed to animals, actual measurements of animal housing and maximum capacity loading on transport vehicles. This need for detail might be yet another example of the lack of trust Hungarians have in government and in authority in general. Participants acknowledged the changes taking place in agriculture and the move to increased mechanisation in farming and the possible de-skilling of those working in animal production and processing. This recognition has led several participants to seek the inclusion of compulsory training and the introduction of a licensing system for those involved in handling animals in the list of standards developed by the scientists. Participants were keen that if welfare standards are introduced that a sense of proportion is retained and that standards are both effective and cost-effective. While consumers want 'something done about animal welfare' they acknowledge that science and the experts involved in this project rather than individual consumers have the greater role in deciding the future improvements in animal welfare.

Numerous questions were raised about monitoring and enforcing the proposed standards. It would appear that consumers would not be satisfied with just the introduction of a set of standards. Participants require that standards have legal backing and that those responsible for animals receive the training deemed necessary to ensure best practice.

Participants in general nominated a graded standard for assessing animal welfare. Familiarity with graded standards strongly influenced this choice. The willingness with which consumers engaged in the discussion of a labelling system suggests that consumers are very comfortable in dealing with animal welfare in its abstract form. Participants were generally confused with various quality symbols and certification

codes displayed on food products and requested that one welfare logo or trademark be used on all products. There was willingness among consumers to learn about the proposed graded system. Participants displayed considerable understanding of the animal welfare debate and for some, the only barrier to translating attitudes into purchase behaviour was that of income. This augurs well for welfare friendly products, as participants perceive such products as superior products. Demand for superior products can be expected to increase as average incomes increase in the new EU states, whereas expenditure (as a proportion of income) on inferior products will decline as income rises.

### 1.7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Consumers have identified a number of core concerns relating to animal welfare and are supportive of the many standards developed by the scientists. They wish this research to continue so effective solutions are found to improve welfare in the future.
2. Price is a significant barrier to the purchase of welfare products, it is important therefore that economic cost of welfare improvements are considered alongside the development of standards. Every effort should be made to ensure that the pricing of welfare friendly products is such that it allows consumers make a choice between welfare friendly products and conventional products.
3. Welfare standards should include specific details or specifications that consumers require. This includes detailing space requirements, what constitutes appropriate housing, diet, and access to fresh water.
4. Compulsory training and licensing system for those responsible for animals to be introduced to complement the introduction of the standards.
5. To ensure trust consumers need to be reassured that effective controls for the enforcement of the standards will be introduced. These controls should form an integral part of the standards. Standards that have legal backing would be desirable.
6. Consumers requested a graded standard that is relatively simple to understand. However, consumers did indicate that they were prepared to invest some time in learning about whatever standards are developed. One standard should be used across all products. A standard that has European acceptance would be desirable.
7. One trademark or logo was preferred rather than a range of symbols.
8. One national agency to be formed to have complete control over all matters concerning animal welfare. This agency would have a role in developing standards, ensuring compliance with these standards and educating all stakeholders from farmer to consumer on animal welfare issues. They would also have a role in promoting welfare standards.
9. A significant awareness and education campaign should accompany the introduction of any proposed welfare standards for consumers. This campaign should be sensitive to the needs of those consumers who wish to disassociate meat from the animal.



# 2

## ITALY

by

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report describes a series of focus groups conducted with consumers on issues concerning animal welfare. The research has been conducted by the Italian team working on sub-project 1, workpackage 1.1, which focuses on consumers' attitudes towards animal welfare. What follows is a description of the main findings from the analysis of the focus group.

#### *Food consumption, shopping habits and food characteristics*

This section reports some recent relevant changes that have occurred in food consumption habits in Italy, main participants' food procurement channels (Super and hyper-markets of Large Organised Distribution and specialised shops), participants' motivations for choosing these structures and the characteristics and information that influence participants' choice of food products.

It also checks information that was currently available to consumers and that they considered to be satisfactory (about product characteristics, labels, general information, the supply system), as well as information that consumers would like to find.

#### *Consumers' knowledge of animal welfare and welfare friendly food products*

*Animal welfare meanings/understanding* During last years consumers have become more careful about food safety and all related issues, including, among others, farm animal welfare.

This attention has enhanced consumers' awareness about these issues. Hence, expressions such as 'open-air raised animals' or 'free range' are often synonyms with products based on farming practices that respect animals' needs – therefore, a better quality product (tasty, healthy and safe).

For foods of animal origin, as immediate approach to the concept of animal welfare, quality and health (concerns) represent therefore the requisites that consumers associate with this concept. Most participants identify the concept of animal welfare with the following aspects:

- respect for the animal's natural cycle, which implies the possibility of moving freely and outdoor and a healthy and non-forced diet;
- respect for the animal: no mistreatments, tortures (mutilations) and suffering during the rearing, transport and slaughtering stages.

Obviously for vegetarians (but not only) this concept is primarily related to the non-utilization of animal food products. A minority of consumers believe that animal welfare does not exist for farm animals, it is a concept that is true only for game or wild animals. All these concepts are presented in a clearer and deeper way later when listed in details in the 'individual lists of the animal welfare' and in the 'general list' of the groups.

*How consumers evaluate the current provision of information on farming practices and animal welfare* Consumers believe that information on this issue is poor and difficult to find. The information that is available, both on product labels and from other sources, is deemed to be unclear and overly generic.

Some consumers would like to find this information, but they do not know where to find it. Most consumers have acquired information either through magazines and newspapers or documentaries and television programs, and they have been struck and/or mainly affected by the breeding systems (e.g. battery egg production). Some consumers would like to find information on the products relating to the type of production systems used (e.g. information relating to how the animals were raised, if they were free, what they ate, how they were slaughtered). Most consumers think there is not currently a real debate on AW, however they would be interested in the development of a public debate on this issue.

*Barriers, ethical dilemmas and political consumption* The difficult national economic situation and a general increase in the cost of living is certainly a problem that strongly affects food shopping. This difficult situation obviously strongly affects the possibility of purchasing higher quality products, such as welfare-friendly products. In fact, although several participants would be willing to buy those products, they consider the price a main barrier.

The focus groups did not identify opinions that emphasized specific ethical or moral dilemmas and problems; few people reflect on, or are significantly influenced by, the concept of animal welfare during their shopping or during the consumption of the product.

The main role consumers think they can play to promote animal welfare in the farms is that of choosing food produced with techniques that comply with certain productive

standards as opposed to others. Many, however, think that this role is not going to be very influential and several participants feel powerless as individual consumers.

*Consumers' evaluations of a proposed scientifically based standard for farm animal welfare*

*Spontaneous general lists of animal welfare concerns* The analysis of the indications provided in the list (see annex) emphasize one 'general concept' or 'parameter' that best expresses and guarantees animal welfare in the farms: a respect for their life cycle. This aspect has been explicitly indicated by all participants to the six focus groups (the only group in which the term does not explicitly appears is the group of seniors).

Participants identify the animal's life cycle as a cycle of biological, physiological and ethological stages during which the animal is capable of performing all of his functions and of satisfying all of his needs.

The closer these stages are to what the natural lifestyle would have been if the animal was free (not reared), the more they reach a balance that provides to the animal the highest level of welfare.

To make farms follow and comply with these stages is a vision that all the groups share.

The transport and killing (slaughtering) methods used are two other parameters present in the general lists of almost all groups and, according to the participants, contribute to characterize the welfare of the farm animal. These stages are considered as the moments in which the animal is subject to the highest levels of stress and suffering.

*Assessing animal welfare: reaction to 10 animal welfare categories (expert's list)* The general evaluation of the 10 categories on behalf of the participants has been overall very positive. No particular observation or criticism emerged.

The list of the ten categories is considered much more complete and in-depth compared to the lists identified by the individual consumers, and it is also considered trustworthy as it has been prepared by experts.

Almost all participants evaluated very positively the EU's adoption of a classification system to define an animal welfare standard for farm animals based on the following categories.

*Assessing animal welfare: information system* The greater part of the participants agree on the necessity of a double level of information.

- An 'immediate' level, to be obtained by means of logos (e.g. smiling little pig, little rabbit or stars) on the products expressing the content of AW. Few consumers would prefer only one logo (e.g. the NO CAGE logo).

- Another more detailed level, to be obtained by means of information campaign, newspapers and TV and also of posters exposed in the shops, explaining the meaning of the logos and the importance of associated issues.

### *Responsibility and trust*

The answers participants provided to questions about who ought to be responsible of animal welfare in our country at times identify actors responsible for specific actions and fields and at times identify actors in a more general and wider context.

Actors that should take responsibilities have been identified for two stages in particular: the correct application of parameters to improve animal welfare in the farms, hence controls' management, and the dissemination of information.

The motivations on which these indications are based concern primarily the trust participants have in those actors. Responsibilities and trust in certain actors in the context of animal welfare are then strictly interrelated and often, but not always generate similar evaluations.

Regarding the control system for ensuring that AW standards are adhered to, consumers trust those experts that already operate in the breeding system, such as veterinarians or technicians belonging to public structures, such as Regions and the ASL (Local Health Agency) or Municipalities/Provinces Technical Offices. Little trust is placed in private Control and Certification Bodies, (as has already been revealed in the case of the organic control system).

Participants believe that information on AW issues should be promoted by reliable public bodies through targeted and widespread campaigns. Consumers identify national institutions - particularly the Ministry of Health - and local institutions - Regions- as the most adequate for this task.

As to the information and the control system, some participants propose joint action by public and private actors, whilst others prefer to add independent structures (not institutional/governmental, e.g. consumers associations) in order to increase citizens' trust.



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## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

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### 2.1.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

In the last years, one of the most significant changes occurred in our consumption society has been consumers' special attention to the quality of animal food products. This is no longer exclusively related to the nature of the product or to food safety issues. Consumers have begun to request additional features that cannot be perceived during the purchasing but that must be communicated. Animal welfare is certainly one of these features.

An increased awareness of the links existing between diet and health and the new nutritional information about the preparation of the meals are seen as a first step towards healthier food choices that can promote a genuine and balanced diet and, consequently, a global improvement of human health (Harrington, 1991).

Specifically, a fear about diseases that could be transmitted from food to humans has highlighted the fact that different production methods can affect also food safety.

These issues have emerged especially in the last ten years, in part as a result of food scandals that have developed all over Europe, such as the BSE or dioxin-contaminated chickens.

These events have emphasized, on the one hand, the fragility of the food chains and, on the other hand, they have demonstrated how careful consumers are when it comes to food safety and all issues related to it – such as, among others, the welfare of farm animals.

### 2.1.2 THE STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Section 2.2 illustrates the methodology utilized for the research, the criteria adopted to recruit the participants for the focus groups, the main characteristics of each group and the analysis of the data. Section 2.3 describes the food habits of participants and the main changes occurs in the food routine. Section 2.4 evaluates consumers' knowledge of welfare friendly products and their responses concerning the existing information about animal welfare. Section 2.5 presents the role of responsibility, agency and trust in relation to animal welfare (the subjects who consumers have identified as occupying responsibility positions, who they trust with regard to the management of animal welfare). Section 2.6 presents a definition of animal welfare and participants' reactions to the 10 categories that identify animal welfare in the farms, as well as their reactions

to the possibility of using such categories as standards to be utilized in the farms. Finally, the section discusses how such standards should be communicated.

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## 2.2 METHODOLOGY

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This section describes and assesses the focus groups' methodology. After an initial and preliminary analysis of the 'pilot' focus groups, it illustrates the procedures adopted to organize and conduct the seven focus groups with consumers. It also presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants and the analytical technique utilized to examine the transcriptions of the recording occurred during the meetings.

### 2.2.1 THE USE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

In marketing, political science and other social sciences, focus groups' discussion is one of the most commonly used research methods to obtain information on topics that have not been not well (or yet) investigated. It is generally used for identifying similarities and/or differences in opinions among consumers, to understand the language used to define specific products and services and to generate a range of hypotheses on the subject matter. Usually the focus group discussion is used during the first stage of an investigation and it is then complemented by other types of methods, such as surveys or interviews, that allow to better grasp the relevance of the issues listed or elicited in the group discussion and the quantitative aspects of the research. Group discussions can also be used as interpretative tools at the last stage of a research for understanding and interpreting quantitative data already collected.

Focus groups discussions have been used in the present project, at this stage, because they tap into human tendencies, and on the assumption that attitudes and perceptions relating to the concept of animal welfare are developed in part by interaction with other people. Moreover, by creating a non-judgemental and permissive environment, we attempted to promote self- disclosure among participants so as to unravel the meanings of animal welfare for the different groups of consumers and to reach a better understanding of the range of issues comprised in the concept of animal welfare.

In this respect, the main purpose of the group discussion was to provide a richness of data about consumers' opinions, perceptions and attitudes towards the products labelled as 'animal friendly', which were contrasted with standard animal-based products.

### 2.2.2 CRITERIA TO SELECT THE DIFFERENT FOCUS GROUPS

#### *The pilot focus group*

During the ‘Welfare Quality’ meeting held in Florence (September 2004), it was decided that each research team would have conducted a ‘pilot focus group’ with consumers to test the efficacy of the ‘discussion guide’ and to evaluate participants’ reactions to the issues identified and to the timeline needed to conduct the focus group.

The pilot focus group was organized by the Italian research team in Pisa and was conducted in the meeting room of the Agronomy Department of the University of Pisa.

The recruitment involved seven people who differed from one another in socio-demographic terms (gender, age comprised between 25 and 60, meat consumers as well as vegetarians, standard-high levels of education).

Unfortunately three people cancelled the appointment at the last minute and the focus group was conducted with 4 people.

Nevertheless, the focus groups has provided positive answers with regard to the objectives identified and it has provided useful information and hints for the final structuring of the discussion guide and for the general structure of the following focus groups.

#### *Composition and typology of the consumers’ groups and places where the focus groups have been conducted*

On the basis of the information emerged from the pilot focus group and of a series of indications provided to all research teams involved in this stage of the project, seven focus groups were organized and conducted in Italy, between February and the end of March 2005. These involved different typologies of consumers.

The tables describe the six groups defined on the basis of terminologies and participants’ selection criteria that were common to all countries, plus another group (group 7) that has been identified in each country on the basis of specific selection criteria and the places in which the focus groups were conducted.

With regard to the places, consumers have been selected in two major urban centres of northern Italy: Milan and Bologna. The focus group characterized by the typology ‘Rural Women’ has been conducted in Pisa.

Such cities have been chosen for various reasons, but especially because they provided an opportunity to maximize the odds of finding groups of people interested in issues related to food and animal welfare, as identified by the ‘discussion guide’, and capable to express their various opinions on those issues.

TABLE 2.1 Focus group participants' selection criteria

<i>Groups</i>	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6
	Urban mothers	Rural women	Empty nesters	Seniors	Young singles	Politically active/ vegetarians
<i>City – locality</i>	Milano	Pisa	Milano	Bologna	Milan	Bologna
<i>Gender</i>	Female	Female	Mixed gender	Mixed gender	Mixed gender	Mixed gender
<i>Age</i>	Under 50	Under 50	50% over 40	55-70	Under 35	No restrictions
<i>Children</i>	With children (50% with at least one child under 5, 50% with at least one teenage child)	No restrictions	Childless, or no children living at home at present (empty nesters)	No restrictions	No restrictions	No restrictions
<i>Relationship/marital status</i>	No restrictions	No restrictions	Married or living with a partner	No restrictions	Single	No restrictions
<i>Rural/urban</i>	Urban dwellers	Must live in or have grown up in a 'rural' area (or in countries where this is not possible a less urbanised area).	Urban	No restrictions	Urban dwellers	No restrictions
<i>Other criteria</i>	No restrictions	They must not be farmers or farmers' partners	All participants must do at least 50% of food shopping	All participants must do at least 50% of food shopping	No restrictions	– 50% of the participants should classify themselves as vegetarians (vegans should not be included) – 50% of the participants should be 'politically active' consumers (see recruitment questionnaire), who are non-vegetarian
<i>Family income</i>	Medium/high	No restrictions	Medium/high	Medium/low	No restrictions	No restrictions
<i>Education</i>	Medium/high	Medium/high	Medium/high	No restrictions	Medium/high	Medium/high

In fact, compared to other rural or southern Italian areas, these two large Northern Italian urban centres include a higher number of consumers sensitive to problems of health and food safety and ready to pay a premium price for high quality, healthy and socially ethical food products. Participants have been recruited by two specialized agencies (one located in Milan and the other in Bologna) on the basis of the indications we have provided.

The selection and recruitment of the ‘rural women’ group have been done directly by the University of Pisa’s researchers, in cooperation with a local agency specialized in rural activities. Through this agency, a regional association of ‘rural women’ has been contacted and, on the basis of the pre-existing selection criteria, a few of its members have been invited to participate in the focus group.

#### *Further criteria utilized to select the participants*

In addition to the selection criteria adopted by all partners, two further socio-economic criteria have been identified in Italy. These concern the family income (annual net family income) and the level of education, which have been divided into three sub-levels.

TABLE 2.2 Further criteria adopted in participants’ recruitment

	Low	Medium	High
Family income (yearly net income)	11,000–35,000 Euros	35,000–60,000 Euros	> 60,000 Euros
Education	Compulsory Education or Certificate of Professional Qualification (3 years later compulsory education) or Certificate of Professional Qualification by professional training with requisite of CE	High School Leaving Qualification, Professional Qualification (5 years) or Certificate of Professional Qualification by professional training with requisite of HSLQ.	University Degree (3 years) or Specialistic University Degree (5 years) PhD, Master etc.

#### *The criteria adopted to select the ‘national’ group ‘Gourmet’*

We called this group ‘Gourmet’ to refer to people with specific attitudes, knowledge and culture about food and diet – a sort of passion for food traditions both from a production standpoint and in terms of related social issues. Hence, the recruitment here has focused on people active or particularly interested in those issues – such as members of wine and food Associations, chefs, restaurant owners, specialized journalists, etc.

TABLE 2.3 Criteria for selection national group 7 'Gourmet'

	Group 7
Group	'Gourmet'
City	Bologna
Gender	Mixed
Age	30-70
Children	No restriction
Marital status	No restriction
Rural/Urban	No restriction
Other criteria	People involved in cultural-enogastronomic associations, journalists of this sector, people engaged in restoration, etc.
Family income	No restriction
Education level	Medium-high

For this group, subjects have been selected and recruited in Bologna, a city that, due to its strong food culture and tradition, has general characteristics that make it easier to identify that kind of target. However, the specificity of this group has forced us to widen the selection criteria; therefore, it was decided to insert no restrictions, other than those concerning the 'medium-high' level of education required and an age of more than 30 years old.

TABLE 2.4 The sample of consumers

Number of groups	7
5 with 8 people	
2 with 6 people	
Total people involved	52
Female	31
Male	21
<i>Average age</i>	
18-40 years old (n)	23
41-60 years old (n)	20
> 60 years old (n)	9
<i>Marital status</i>	
Married/living with a partner	33
Separated/divorced	2
Singles	17
<i>Children</i>	
Yes (participants with 1 or more children)	30
No (participants without children)	22
<i>Family Income</i>	
Low(n)	24
Medium (n)	27
High (n)	1
<i>Education level</i>	
Low	13
Medium	25
High	14

### The final consumers' sample

The Table 2.4 includes some general information about the characteristics of the selection criteria: 52 people in total were involved in the seven focus groups, mainly women (considering that only women were expected to participate in 2 of the focus groups). Most members of the sample were younger than 40 and, in general, had a medium-low level of income and a medium level of education. All participants have received a small non-financial incentive from the recruiting agencies.

### Composition of the groups

Tables 2.5a–g present, for each group, the criteria to select the participants and the socio-demographic characteristics of each of them.

TABLE 2.5a Group 1: urban mothers (Milan)

N.	Gender		Age	Marital Status	Children	Rural/ Urb.	Family Income			Education			Occupation
	Female						No restric.	*With children	Urban dwellers	Medium - high			
	M	F	Under 50							L	M	H	L
1		v	42	Married	3	u		v			v		Housewife
2		v	35	Married	2	u		v			v		Part-time employee
3		v	29	Married	2	u	v				v		Housewife
4		v	50	Married	1	u		v			v		
5		v	27	Married	1	u	v				v		Employee
6		v	50	Married	2	u		v			v		Employee
7		v	42	Married	1	u			v			v	Employee
8		v	49	Married	3	u		v			v		Retired teacher

Notes: \*With children (50% with at least one child under 5, 50% with at least one teenage child); other criteria: no restriction.

TABLE 2.5b Group 2: rural women (Pisa)

N.	Gender		Age	Marital Status	Children	Rural/ Urb.	Family Income			Education			Occupation
	Female						N.R.	N.R.	*Must live...	N.R.			
	M	F	Under 50							L	M	H	L
1		v	37	Single	No	R						v	Free-lancer
2		v	24	Single	No	R					v		University student
3		v	34	Single	No	R					v		Free-lancer
4		v	42	Married	Yes	R						v	Employee
5		v	42	Married	2	R					v		Free-lancer
6		v	37	Married	2	R						v	Free-lancer

Notes: \* Must live in or have grown up in a 'rural' area (or in countries where this is not possible a less urbanised area); other criteria: they must not be farmers or farmers' partners.

TABLE 2.5c Group 3: empty nesters (Milan)

N.	Gender		Age	Marital Status	Children	Rural/ Urb.	Family Income			Education			Occupation
	Mixed						* Married or ...	**Without children or ...	Medium-high			Medium-high	
	M	F							L	M	H	L	M
1		v	35	Married	no	U		v			v		Employee
2	v		65	Married	3	U		v			v		Retired
3		v	41	Married	no	U		v					
4		v	43	Div/sep.	1	U		v			v		
5	v		53	Div/sep.	1	U		v			v		
6	v		66	Married	1	U		v			v		Retired
7	v		60	Married	1	U		v			v		
8		v	29	Married	no	U		v				v	Employee

Notes: \*married or living with a partner; \*\*without children or with children no more at home; other criteria: all participants must at least 50% of food shopping.

TABLE 2.5d Group 4: seniors (Bologna)

N.	Gender		Age	Marital Status	Children	Rural/ Urb.	Family Income			Education			Occupation
	Mixed						N.R.	N.R.	N.R.	Low-Medium			
	M	F								L	M	H	L
1	v		64	Married	1	U		v			v		Retired
2	v		65	Married	1	U		v			v		Retired
3	v		66	Married	1	U		v			v		Retired
4		v		Single	no	U		v			v		Interpreter
5	v		60	Married	1	U		v			v		Retired
6		v		Married	1	U		v			v		Retired
7		v	56	Married	1	U		v			v		
8		v		Married	1	U		v			v		Housewife

Note: other criteria: all participants must at least 50% of food shopping.

TABLE 2.5e Group 5: young singles (Milan)

N.	Gender		Age	Marital Status	Children	Rural/ Urb.	Family Income			Education			Occupation
	Mixed						Single*	N.R.	Urban dwellers	N.R.			
	M	F								L	M	H	L
1	v		26	Single	no	U		v			v		Employee
2	v		32	Single	no	U		v			v		Traveller agent
3		v	32	Single	no			v				v	Computer technician
4		v	34	Single	no								Employee
5	v		30	Single	no	U		v				v	Unemployed teacher
6		v	30	Single	no	U			v		v		Employee
7		v	32	Single	no	U			v			v	
8	v		32	Single	no	U		v				v	Employee

Note: \*who lives alone.



TABLE 2.5f Group 6: politically active/vegetarian consumers (Bologna)

N.	Gender		Age	Marital Status	Children	Rural/ Urb.	Family Income			Education			Occupation
	Mixed						N.R.	N.R.	N.R.	N.R.	Medium - high		
	M	F	L	M	H	L					M	H	
1	v		67	Married	2	Pol. active		v		v			Retired
2	v		30	Single	no	Vegetarian		v		v			Student / worker
3	v		34	Single	no	Pol. active	v			v			Employee
4	v			Single	no	Vegetarian	v			v			Student / worker
5		v	31	Single	no	Vegetarian	v			v			Nursery school caretaker
6		v	35	Married	no	Pol. active	v			v			Free lancer
7		v	57	Married	2	Pol. active	v			v			Employee
8		v	64	Married	1	Vegetarian		v		v			

*Note:* other criteria: 50% of the participants should classify themselves as vegetarians (vegans should not be included); 50% of the participants should be 'politically active' consumers (non-vegetarian).

TABLE 2.5g Group 7: gourmet (Bologna)

N.	Gender		Age	Marital Status	Children	Rur/ Urb.	Family Income			Education			Occupation
	Mixed						N.R.	N.R.	N.R.	N.R.	Medium - high		
	M	F	L	M	H	L					M	H	
1	v			Married	1			v		v			Food and wine tourist agency manager; Food and wine journalist
2		v	61	Married	1			v		v			Food and wine journalist
3	v		39	Married	1		v		v				Cook, owner of a traditional gastronomy shop in Bologna/ Cook, wine and food tradition from Bologna owner
4	v			Married	no			v		v			Administrative employee; sector Slow Food in Bologna
5	v		63	Married	1			v		v			Food and wine journalist
6	v		42	Single	no		v			v			Head Chef

### 2.2.3 DATA ANALYSIS

#### *Initial considerations about the focus groups*

Overall, the focus groups were successful in terms of participation (six-eight participants were requested; five groups included eight people, and only two groups included just six people) and level of interest they raised; almost all people interviewed were very active and involved in the discussion on the issues raised. As it emerged from the final questionnaire (debriefing questionnaire, see annex 1), many are satisfied about their participation; a few of them, specifically five or six, did not demonstrate interest or desire to get involved in the debate, mainly because they are shy, and not because of a lack of interest in the issues discussed.

Contrary to our expectations, the contribution to the discussion provided vegetarians and politically active consumers was not significantly different from that provided by the other groups; only one person has become vegetarian due to an ethical and informed choice; two of the other three are vegetarian due to their families' habits and the other two because they do not like meat. The politically active consumers focus primarily on general issues, such as the boycotting of Nestlé products, issues concerning powder

milk in Africa, labourers' rights in the South of the world, the criticism to GM crops – all issues that are not connected to animal welfare.

The focus groups lasted on average about two hours and 15 minutes. An effort was made to conduct them within this time span, as participants are usually more reactive and available at the beginning of the interview. However, the two hours available were not sufficient to better develop the issues included in the discussion guide for some of the groups.

The focus groups have been conducted by two facilitators (members of the Italian research team involved in the project) on the basis of the indications provided by the discussion guide (see Appendix). During the focus groups, then, in addition to gathering the participants' opinions on the specific issues (creation of individual and general lists on animal welfare, gathering of evaluations of the ten proposed categories which will be discussed in the following sections etc.), participants have been informed about the general characteristics and goals of the Welfare Quality project.

At the end of each focus group participants have been kindly requested to fill out a general questionnaire. The results of these questionnaires will be discussed in Part II of this report.

The focus groups have been video-taped and audio-taped. They have been transcribed in Italian and, subsequently, have been translated into English (for the comparative report).

#### *The use of NVIVO*

The discussions that took place during the focus groups have been analyzed through a qualitative analytical tool, the software NVIVO. The text has been codified through the creation of roughly 200 nodes that have been adopted as unit of analysis.

The socio-demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, children, residence, employment, education and income) have been incorporated as attributes of the nodes concerning the focus groups' participants.

The analysis has been conducted so as to highlight both the most representative opinions of the sample examined and those impressions, thoughts, ideas and concepts that are not part of a 'broader' vision but are still important to examine and describe different aspects of the same issue.

#### 2.2.4 METHODOLOGY

This part reviews the development of qualitative research methodology and focus groups in particular. It addresses the theoretical framework and the criteria for evaluating qualitative research.

### *Qualitative research*

Qualitative methods, including focus groups, are motivated by research questions aimed at exploring human experience and, therefore, require verbal or textual interaction and interpretation. Here, hypotheses emerge from the data. Sampling, in contrast to statistical sampling, is purposive or theoretical, aimed at maximising or minimising differences. In qualitative research, the researcher herself/himself is the instrument for data collection. The data is analysed for theoretical transferability, not generalisation, and the analytical approach is generally inductive, rather than deductive. Data are selected to fit the research questions, however, the theoretical assumptions which guide the formulation of the research questions are continually assessed through the dynamic relation between the researcher and the data. The methodological qualitative paradigm is influenced by the theoretical social constructionist paradigm.

Social constructionism is rooted in the sociology of knowledge (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). A dominant view is that as the social world is socially constructed it, therefore, can not be directly accessed, it is always shaped by social and cultural forces, which exist above and beyond the individual. This extreme constructionist approach is the diametric opposition to the realist approach, which states that there is one true, accessible world. The pragmatic view between these two extremes is described by Brown (1977:93) as:

‘The dichotomy between the view of perception as the passive observation of objects, which are whatever they appear to be, and perception as the creation of perceptual objects out of nothing is by no means exhaustive. A third possibility is that we shape our percepts out of an already structured but still malleable material. This perceptual material, whatever it may be, will serve to limit the class of possible constructs without dictating a unique perspective.’

The object of study here is consumer concerns and quests for information about farm animal welfare. Given that it is explicitly stated that consumer concerns and their quests for information are the focus of the research, then it is highly appropriate that this investigation begins with qualitative methods, which allow the participants to speak for themselves, to identify, define and prioritise their concerns, and relate them to the monitoring scheme developed by the animal scientists in this project, within a broadly pre-defined conceptual framework previously identified through the literature review and the formulation of research questions.

Social life is shaped by social processes which are ultimately socio-cultural products (Gergen, 1985). Consequently, cultural structures will determine beliefs and behaviour whilst the rules, or conventions, are continually being negotiated and renegotiated by the participants. Focus groups allow the researcher to explore these processes of negotiation at work. Indeed, qualitative research is a generative process, which grows through the analysis of representations of reality – here focus group discussion transcripts. The ways in which reality are perceived, interpreted and represented by consumers are to be explored. Concepts emerge from the critical exposure of contradictions and fragmentations found in the structure of belief systems and behaviours based on, or in opposition to, those expressed beliefs, or concerns. The

analysis of discursive texts will aim to reveal the dimensions of the participants' constructions of reality, and to determine why and how some constructions are privileged to the detriment of others.

### *Grounded theory*

This research enters the tradition of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) both in the research process and the analysis of textual data. Grounded theory involves the systematic open-ended classification of data, which, in turn, gives rise to concepts, which propel the analysis.

'[I]nductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory should stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge. (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:23, quoted in Pandit, 1996).

'What is relevant' to the study of consumer concerns about animal welfare and the type of information that they would like to receive, will be explored in this initial stage of the project.

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## 2.3 CULINARY PRACTICES: EATING, PREPARING AND BUYING ANIMAL FOOD PRODUCTS

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### 2.3.1 FOOD HABITS

One of the main changes occurred in Italian food habits during these last years concerns the de-structuring of meals, the decrease in the amount of time devoted to the consumption of meals and the simplification of the service.

Traditionally lunch was the main meal in Italy and used to be consumed at home. The restructuring of the work and school schedules (which often allow 30 minutes or so for the lunch break) has contributed to increase the number of meals consumed outside home. Thus, dinner often becomes the main time for family members to get together and consume a more substantial meal.

This data is confirmed by the ISMEA report 2004: in the last 10 years the number of meals consumed out has increased by 31 per cent and in the second semester of the year 2004, 75 per cent of Italians has eaten out at least once.<sup>1</sup>

A first aspect emerging from the focus groups concerns a significant variety and diversity of the participants' food habits -- not just between groups but also within groups -- in relation to their age, occupation and marital status.

### *Where and what*

The vast majority of the participants have a more or less substantial breakfast (depending on their age and lifestyle) at home. The foods eaten at breakfast include mainly coffee, milk, biscuits or croissants, but also cereals, honey, fruit and yoghurt – a product that has been consumed more and more in the last years, especially by women.

All participants have at least one meal (lunch or dinner) at home every day. A full meal, which includes a first and a second course, with a side dish and fruit, is no longer a daily habit. Many prefer a de-structured meal, which means a first course at lunch and meat with vegetables in the evening, or vice versa.

Among regular meat consumers, the consumption attitudes and preferences vary significantly. In fact, many do not clearly choose between 'red' meat (beef, pork, horse or game) and 'white' meat (poultry, rabbit) and eat both with a frequency that varies from every day to once a week (even though the majority states they consume meat usually 2/3 times a week).

Those who prefer red meat state that it is tastier and, at times, appreciate it for its content in proteins (especially those who practice much sport); those who choose white meat appreciate it for its lower fat content and easy preparation.

Usually the main first course, pasta, is accompanied by the consumption of cheeses and cured meats; meat is accompanied by raw or cooked vegetables. Fruit, vegetables and yoghurt often substitute a full lunch.

Roughly one fifth of the participants usually have one meal out of the house, mainly using corporate canteens, self-service outlets, and other casual eateries. The groups that have explicitly stated they eat out of home at least once include: Empty nesters (4 people), Gourmet, Urban mothers, Young single (each group 2 people).

The frenetic lifestyle of the members of this category often affects their food habits:

‘[N]oon for me does not mean to eat, it means to fill my stomach up, given the kind of work I do I am never in the same situation, I eat what I find, a sandwich or pasta or a slice of pizza’.

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<sup>1</sup> ISMEA report on food consumption in Italy; the report examines the trend consumption for five years, from 2000 to 2004

Several people have stated that they are more and more often giving up on the mid-day meal for reasons linked to their work or study schedule. Among these are especially young people, who often devote their lunch break to some sport (gym, swimming pool, etc.).

### 2.3.2 SHOPPING HABITS AND FOOD CHARACTERISTICS

#### *Shopping habits*

The analysis of data on this aspect emphasizes different habits and general attitudes that characterize consumers.

The purchasing channels utilized by consumers to buy food and the other products we focused on can be subdivided into:

- supermarkets and hypermarkets owned by large retailers;<sup>2</sup>
- specialized stores: butcher shops, dairy product stores and organic stores;
- local markets;
- directly from the producers.

In general, as a result of the proliferation of supermarkets and hypermarkets owned by large retailers which has occurred over the past two decades, especially in the big cities, the number of small food shops, which used to be the main points of sale for consumers, has progressively decreased.

This has significantly affected the shopping habits of many consumers. As it emerges from the focus groups, for the most part consumers prefer super- and hypermarkets for their shopping, usually those owned by large retailers.

Specifically, Empty nesters and Politically active/vegetarian consumers are the groups that mostly use those stores, especially the Coop's hyper- and supermarkets, as they also appreciate the ethical-social role played by the Cooperative.

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<sup>2</sup> In addition to Carrefour, a large retailer present in various European countries, the most representative large retailers in Italy are Esselunga and Coop. Originated in Milan in 1957, Esselunga is territorially located mostly in northern Italy, with more than 120 stores (including both supermarkets and Superstores) in Lombardy, Tuscany, Emilia-Romagna, Piedmont and Veneto. Coop, a consumers' cooperative with more than a century and half of history, has developed to the point of becoming the first retailer in Italy. It is especially present in Central Italy but also in the North and, more recently, in the South as well. Gruppo PAM operates in the retailing sector under the brand Supermercati Pam and Superal. It has 108 stores across Lombardy, Liguria, Veneto, Trentino Alto-Adige, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Lazio, Abruzzo, Umbria. Conad is a cooperative organization of independent entrepreneurs in Italy. Its structure articulates along three levels, which include mostly supermarkets and small stores. Along with these retailers, there are more localized ones, which are for this reason often better known and more utilized.

‘I buy the COOP [a supermarket chain] products, because COOP comply with an eco-sustainable production protocol’.

Among all the groups, and particularly in Milan, the Urban mothers are more inclined to go to the Esselunga stores.

As it appears with particular regard to meat, eggs and milk, the motivations behind such choices are related to ease in terms of access and movement, to the opportunity of finding a good quality-price relationship, to the wide range of products available and to the guarantee in terms of compliance with hygienic and health conditions. In this case, the food shopping takes place usually a few times every week, with couples and elderly people devoting to it more time than young people do.

Various consumers who used to rely upon small shops have been forced to turn to the supermarkets once those closed due to their inability to sustain the competition. After this change, they declare they have appreciated the quality of the products they have found in the new stores.

‘I have been married for a long time and where I live there used to be a butcher shop, a cured meat shop, a milk store etc. and on Saturdays we used to go shopping together or I used to go on my own with the list prepared by my wife, and we would buy meat from the butcher, cheese from the specialized store etc. and I was convinced that those products were tasty; as time went by those stores were closed. Since we lived near Esselunga and Sma initially we thought: the stores have closed, what are we going to eat, but I changed my mind, as far as hygiene is concerned I trust the supermarkets better than the stores, they are more controlled, when you package something you have to wear gloves, a hat, whereas in the past the store manager used to cut cured meat without wearing gloves, then he would touch money, he was smoking.... And I also had to change my mind with regard to taste, you can find meat of all different prices at the supermarket and if you spend more because you want to eat well taste is there, the meat is good, it depends on how much you spend’.

Those who still rely upon small retailers (shops or local markets) or on the producer directly do so because they have a relationship of trust with the retailer and/or the producer, because they can find special and quality products and because of the freshness of the products available.

This typology of consumers is more frequent among the seniors, who, however, normally rely also upon big retailers.

The other shopping sources cited are not very significant.

Another interesting aspect identified by some participants, especially those who moved to Milan from central and southern Italy, concern the changes occurred in their shopping habits after they moved – both in terms of retailers utilized and products they purchase.

'I had to change my shopping habits when I moved to Milan because in Rome I was used to the neighbourhood's butcher, something that I have not found here, at least in the area where I live; as I was adapting myself, finding new outlets, I noticed an extreme difference in prices between big retailers and the few specialized stores and also a big difference in taste between the supermarket's packaged meat and the meat I find at the butchery' (Empty nester).

'After moving I had to change my habits; in the past my parents used to buy meat in a small town in the Bari province from a butcher and then froze it; after coming here, since I don't know people at all, I go to the supermarket and I am quite comfortable with that because I like reading the labels, expiration date, ingredients' (Empty nester).

'In 2001 I moved to Milan from Ancona (middle Italy), where I used to have my trusted butcher, dairy producer and fish vendor, they were all fixed steps when I got home from work. Here I had to adapt myself and the only habit I managed to keep is a trusted dairy shop next to home, whilst there is not a single butcher in the area and the most convenient place is the GS supermarket, but the quality of the meat there is hallucinating' (Young single).

*Meat purchasing* Most participants who provided information on the purchasing of meat utilize large retailing stores.

The reasons behind this include:

- easy access (presence of parking space and freedom of movement);
- higher trust in the hygienic and health controls compared to butcher shops;
- wide range of products offered;
- opportunity to choose autonomously and independently;
- better relationship quality/price;
- an effective service provided by the meat cutting service (only for some supermarkets);
- satisfactory meat quality.

Even though there is a significant gap between large retailers and small stores with regard to general food shopping, in the case of meat, as the indications provided by the participants illustrate, shopping in butcher shops (specialized stores) is still quite common and relevant. Many participants tend to use both kinds of stores to purchase different products.

The reasons for shopping at the butcher shops include:

- a relationship of trust with the seller;
- wider availability of high quality meat cuts;
- better meat quality.



In Milan consumers use butcher shops that are located mainly in the city centre; almost half of the group Young single and one third of the groups Married or living with partner but without children at home and Urban mothers rely upon those stores.

On the basis of the indications gathered, in Bologna the group of seniors buys meat both in the supermarkets and in the shops. A good portion often goes to the local butcher shop in the market; about ten participants have stated that they go to butcher shops located outside of the city or go directly to producers they know. This habit is more frequent amongst the Gourmet (both as a choice and due to a type of work that brings them into direct contact with farms) but also amongst the Young single, two of whom stated that they rely upon small producers they know to purchase poultry or to a cooperative for pork.

In Pisa, most female consumers (rurwo) prefer to do their meat purchasing in the supermarkets of the main cities located near where they live (Pisa, Lucca, Livorno), whereas two of them go, respectively, to the butcher shop of her town to guarantee its survival and directly to a local producer, where she purchases half-carcass to freeze and consume during the following months.

*Eggs* In this case, participants also state that they mostly use large retailers, where they find more compliance with hygienic and health parameters, compared to what they find with producers or other types of stores. In this case, the consumer often looks for eggs coming from 'free range' or 'outdoor' chicken farms.

Urban mothers is by far the group that mostly prefer large retailers. However, many consumers prefer to go directly to the producer, often friends or acquaintances, who have small chicken farms, as they find their eggs more genuine, flavourful and fresh than those sold by large retailers.

*Milk and dairy products* Consumers mainly choose supermarkets to buy this kind of products. In this case too the Urban mothers stated they go to supermarkets and choose high quality milk and branded products, which they trust in terms of hygienic and health security. In general, all mothers prefer products that provide this kind of guarantee.

A few connoisseurs look for special dairy products (typical and certified ones) in specialized stores, where, however, the products are sold at much higher prices than those available in the supermarkets.

It is interesting to notice that several people of Southern origins, especially in Milan, appreciate the taste of their areas' artisanal products, especially dairy products (mozzarella, ricotta and cheeses in general). Since they cannot find products with the same characteristics in the large retailing stores, they often give up on this purchase.

### *Food characteristics and information*

There are several different characteristics/properties that influence participants when they choose a product:

*Provenance* The indication of the origins of the product is the most significant aspect, especially for meat; in this context, national (Italian) provenance is for many a crucial factor (as many Seniors have stated).

‘I look at the provenance, I am a bit opposed to non-Italian things’ (Senior).

‘When I go to the supermarket to buy meat I look a lot at the label, especially if it is of Italian origins’ (Senior).

‘I am fixated, I only want Italian products, we are in Europe but I want Italian products, so that’s the first thing I look at when I buy’ (Senior).

‘[T]he meat should be of national origins’ (Senior).

The preferences in choosing a product go up in case this is of regional origins or is certified (PDO, PGI, etc.).

‘Provenance is one of the basic elements in my food choice.... I like to buy Italian products. I like the ‘Agriquality, White Butterfly’ brand [Tuscany region], that give me enough guarantee that products are local ones.... I prefer local products’ (Rural woman).

*Type of chicken farm for purchasing eggs* Free-range eggs are preferred.

*Packaging and expiration dates* They represent two important pieces of information that the consumer looks for in the label to assess another important factor: the freshness of the product.

*Organic certification* The information requested by those who intend to buy this kind of products (well informed consumers) concern the certification body. They trust more those that they know or the Demeter brand. The European logo is considered in itself a carrier of important information.

### *Quality of the product, in its wider meaning*

*Brand* In this case the brand is an important point of reference, especially for milk, yoghurt and eggs

‘I am always interested in the expiration date and the brand, not just because it is advertised but because others might have tried it and after hearing that it is good I try it... I prefer to buy products of a brand that I just know, that I have tried and that I trust’ (Rural woman).

*Ingredients* Consumers carefully read the ingredients of a product, checking whether this includes (and in what percentage) chemicals, animal fat and GMOs.

*Relationship quality/price* Price.

‘There are utopia and down-to-earth characteristics. Absolute genuineness is difficult to find, so I look for a good share quality/price’ (Gourmet).

*Traceability* Consumers expect a complete set of information on the food chain; in the case of meat, they do care about where the animal was born, where it was raised and where it was slaughtered.

*Genuineness* With regard to the intrinsic characteristics of the product, the visual impact (aspect) has been identified, especially when purchasing meat (in particular, the amount of fat is assessed).

‘The first exam is visual, and it is already useful to discriminate’ (Seniors).

‘I must like even the aspect of the meat, especially red meat, if it is too fat or it is not the right cut I change, I don’t want it’ (Empty nester).

The taste, the flavour and, in the case of meat, its tenderness and the type of cut are the other characteristics requested.

At this stage of the research, among the characteristics-information that participants state they look for during their shopping there are also some references to the animal welfare content (that will be analyzed in-depth in the following sections). These are especially important for the eggs and the farms where these come from (free range and outdoor) but also for beef and poultry. In fact, even before starting the section of the focus groups specifically centred upon animal welfare, many participants expressed impressions and perceptions concerning the welfare of farm animals.

‘I always check the origin of the animal and where it was slaughtered; I prefer slaughter outside Italy, because if I think of this animal being transported alive... so if the animal was slaughtered in a well developed country like Holland – of course if it comes from the Eastern countries it’s another matter – it’s okay for me so it has not suffered. In my opinion, when the animal suffers toxins go around the meat and it’s unhealthy. I do the same with eggs, I don’t buy eggs from chicken bred in a cage’ (Urban mother)

'As to eggs, after having seen a TV program, I buy eggs from free-range hens' (Urban mother).

'[A]s for eggs, I am fixated with free range stuff, so I prefer that kind, also for chicken.... In terms of information, they put perhaps provenance, I find something more at the butcher, he explains things to me, I can almost imagine the farm; at the supermarket they don't tell you more than packaged on, expires on; I think that how the animals are reared and what they eat is crucial, it makes a lot of difference and I would like to know these things and maybe I would stop buying meat' (Empty nester).

### *Different issues on food information*

The evaluation of the general information that consumers search for on the products researched (beef, pork, poultry, eggs, milk and milk products) has two contradictory aspects. On the one hand, for some participants the evaluation is overall positive and satisfactory with regard to the following aspects.

- On beef, milk and eggs: The information required for these products are considered overall satisfactory; in particular, many consumers think that the information concerning meat traceability are currently adequate. For some, this provides more guarantee for the products labelled by large retailers, whereas for others who go to butcher shops the lack of a label with complete information is compensated by the trust relationship with the butcher.
- The information on the labels of fresh milk and eggs available in the large retailing shops is considered overall satisfactory.
- Some retailers in particular (Coop and Esselunga) are appreciated for the kind of information provided on their products' labels.

At the same time, however, many consumers do not evaluate positively and are not satisfied with the current information about products:

'Information is one of the worst plague and everybody complains about that. For example, I'm a large consumer of olive oil and you don't find place of production, of bottling nor the year. Information you find on the meat is evanescent, easily to counterfeit along the route, often can be also misinterpreted. I try to find out place of origin and place of breeding that may be different from the one of slaughtering. Usually you find packaging and expiring dates. Then if you have points of reference you really trust, you are sure, but often not all consumers are able to have them' (Gourmet).

The main limits and gaps identified include:

- many labels are still incomplete or include too much information, without emphasizing the important issues;
- there is little information on animals' diet (the indication about provenance is not sufficient);

- the information about the production of pork and poultry meat is almost completely insufficient (traceability, diet).

Consumers have also identified the actions needed to improve the general information system:

- the information should be written in a simple and legible way;
- it would be necessary to have a uniform information system on the labels of different supermarkets;
- the products sold in the butcher shops should include more information;
- the presence of GMOs should always be specified;
- the farm where the eggs come from should always be specified;
- it would be necessary to increase and always specify information on processed products (ex.: hamburgers or breaded products).

There is also a certain amount of self-criticism among consumers themselves for their lack of knowledge or interest in reading the labels.

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## 2.4 CONSUMERS' KNOWLEDGE OF ANIMAL WELFARE AND WELFARE FRIENDLY FOOD PRODUCTS AND THEIR EVALUATION OF THE CURRENT PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON THESE ISSUES

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### 2.4.1 CONSUMERS' KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION ABOUT FARMING PRACTICES AND ANIMAL WELFARE

#### *What consumers know about farming practices*

Recent food scandals (BSE, salmonella, Sars-avian flu) have had a significant impact on the public and have created a widespread preoccupation, but also a growing interest, regarding farming systems and animal food products.

This situation has led an increasing number of consumers to pay special attention to the provenance of agri-food products, in particular meat. It is widely believed that products coming from animals that have been not just raised (and slaughtered) in Italy, but that were also born in Italy, provide more guarantee in terms of security and health, compared to products coming from countries that have experienced epidemics and that are characterized by control systems which are considered inadequate.

It must be emphasized, however, that most consumers still have little knowledge of the practices currently utilized in modern farms. This situation is often related to the lack of adequate and specific information, which creates much confusion and uncertainty.

Even though in the last years there has been an increase in the number of TV shows devoted to agriculture and zootechnic practices that represent the main source of information for most consumers, in general those who have been in contact with animal farms (because they have lived in rural areas or have studies related subjects) are more knowledgeable about zootechnic farms.

Several TV shows have also contributed to popularize the most negative aspects related to intensive animal farms (exploitation, coercion, etc.). This has generated a general criticism towards those systems and a deep lack of trust towards those who manage them and their products.

On the other hand, some conventional brands (such as Aia and Amadori) or organic brands (Almaverde) have tried to spread, through strong promotional initiatives (mostly TV advertisements), a positive image of their farms, emphasizing their respect for nature, for the animals and for the environment, in order to reassure consumers about the quality of their products.

These factors have emphasized, on the one hand, the fragility of the food chains; on the other hand, they have shown how careful consumers have become about food safety and all related issues, including, among others, farm animal welfare.

This attention has enhanced consumers' awareness about these issues. Hence, expressions such as 'open-door raised animals) or 'free range' are often synonyms with products based on farming practices that respect animals' needs – therefore, a quality product (tasty, healthy and safe).

'I watch often Mela Verde (a TV program) and lately they interviewed Amadori, a producer of chickens; during the program they explained that in Italy chickens are not bred in battery, apart from hens for egg productions' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'Well, if Mr. Amadori says it, surely you can be a little doubtful' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'I take it for what it is, but anyway if it's true this means higher welfare for the chickens. Of course battery breeding generates stress to the animal, because they don't have living space, they cannot move, they are given low cost feeding with fish flour. Depending on which eggs you buy in the supermarkets, you can recognize what the hen was fed on; if it was fish flour you feel the taste of the fish like I happened to feel' (Politically active/vegetarian).

### *Understanding the term animal welfare*

Quality and health represent therefore the requisites that consumers associate with the concept of farm animal welfare.

‘[W]e nourish from animals and a whole series of food problems arose from the so-called profit. We make animals feed on whatever comes into our mind, all that is against nature, and this thing has backfired on us’ (Gourmet).

‘[T]here are structures in which cows and pigs are kept very well. The farmers let them free, they are aware that animals must suffer as less stress as possible. It’s also very important the way of dying, otherwise muscles stiffen and later the meat is a disaster’ (Gourmet).

‘In the farms the treatment is important, how the animal is reared, that the cows are outdoor without being forced, they live well, I think the meat tastes better; and if they live well the slaughtering is less dramatic; if they are mistreated, also during transportation, if they are crowded up and they arrive stressed out the animals suffer and you have to be careful about the meat, I have seen it on TV, the animal produces substances that are harmful or even poisonous for humans, because it dies badly; if the animal has a pleasant trip, can rest and is then slaughtered properly those toxic substances are not released and the meat is better; this is true for chickens, pigs, for all the animals’ (Empty nester).

To analyze consumers’ immediate approach to the concept of animal welfare, during this stage of the focus groups participants have been asked: ‘what is for you animal welfare in the case of farm animals?’.

A few participants expressed a clear idea and also managed to provide appropriate definitions coherent with the questions. The majority, however, initially resorted to more general and less structured concepts.

As the discussion continued, on the basis of the considerations made by people who were better informed or more sensitive to these issues, those concepts were expressed more clearly and in-depth, and participants’ involvement increased.

In general most participants identify the concept of animal welfare with the following aspects:

- respect for the animal’s natural cycle, which implies the possibility of moving freely and outdoor and a healthy and non-forced diet;
- respect for the animal (no mistreatment, tortures and suffering) during the rearing, transport and slaughtering stages.

With regard to to respect for the animal’s natural cycle, a rural woman had the following to say:

‘To be well an animal must be raised outdoor, its growth cycle must be respected, its growth must not be stimulated, it must be fed with food of vegetable origins, the food for the animals must not contain animal or vegetable fat and it must not be coming from chemically treated or GM-crops’ (Rural woman).

Some consumers believe that such aspects can become reality in small farms located in the mountains, where animals can directly eat the grass available. There is a widespread perception that the current intensive productive systems, regulated by the market's rules and conceived to satisfy the needs of an increasingly consumerist society, are not able to comply with the parameters that guarantee animal welfare –as conceived by the consumers.

With regard to respect for the animal during the rearing, transport and slaughtering stages, a gourmet commented the following:

'It means how animals live and then how they die. How they live: we know that living stuffed together one next to the other or in a cage is not the best, yet this exists. How they die: if they die badly, is not best and I know from a friend of mine working in the field that for example chickens are disembowelled still alive. So I think these are the hugest problem at the moment, even though most people don't worry about them. There is this idea of predominance of men on animals and its many facets, even religious ones. This should make us think. I believe animals are still treated in an indecent manner. Let's think only to vivisection. It's crystal-clear, wide-spread and public opinion is very scarcely attentive. It's enough to look at the way in which pets are treated by their owners, so animal welfare means trying to eliminate suffering in the most possible way' (Gourmet).

These aspects have been considered very significant and various participants referred to situations that affected them emotionally, both directly and through TV programmes:

'It's important the way in which they [animals] are killed. For example with horses they first break them their legs so as to avoid them kicking before being killed, and they do this shooting a nail in the head... and also transportation.... I don't know if you have seen on the highway how they carry the pigs on the lorries. Obviously these are animals that must be killed, yet it is desirable some quality of life, quality of death and quality of transportation between the two stages' (Young single).

The concept of animal welfare, so far, finds consumers in agreement on the issues identified. Obviously for vegetarians (but not only) this concept is primarily related to the non-utilization of animal food products.

'According to me there would be animal welfare if we were all vegetarians' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'To make them live well we should avoid eating them' (Senior).

'Over these last years on TV there are such documentaries about rearing system that I'm thinking of becoming vegetarian.... Maybe I got awareness since I'm aging, but I say, well... for example, to reach my mother's home I pass in front of a farm and I see those animals tied with a rope, wind, sun or rain, always tied there. My god, I feel distressed and recently I start thinking to become vegetarian' (Urban mother).



Some also believe that animal welfare does not exist, except for game or wild animals. One consumer expressed a peculiar and different opinion on this:

‘To me animals are the machines and fodder is the fuel. I’ve seen a breeding consisting of 100 cows, always tied up, even when they delivered. Then animals have always suffered in their life in the countryside, only wild animals can live a life worth its name. Animal welfare doesn’t exist, it exists only for the wild animals. Animals are the slaves of men!’ (Gourmet).

### *Animal welfare information*

The information on this issue is considered by most consumers scarce and difficult to find. The little that exists is generic and not clear, both with regard to the labels and for other sources of information.

In general, however, participants state that they do not look directly for information, since until the time of the focus group they did not specifically address the problem and/or they would not know where to find such information. Several of them would be willing to learn about it, if there sources of information available. Not many have looked for this type of information.

‘Frankly initially I looked for information, after finding it I got angry, I realised many things and I stopped looking for it; there are horrifying situation’ (Rural woman).

A female consumer states in a self-critical way that she does not want to find information and learn more about these issues:

‘For me it [animal welfare] would imply becoming a vegetarian. I don’t eat horse meat because it would be like eating my dog; I stopped eating goose pate’ because I saw how they make it; when pigs are slaughtered their cries bother me; I eat very little meat, consciously, but to know, to be informed would hypocritically make me too conscious of how these animals are killed and it would certainly stop me. Let’s say that I eat without thinking. So I don’t face a problem with information; I do it to understand if the eggs come from free-range chickens or if the chicken is organic, but I don’t go beyond that’ (Rural woman).

### *Where do they get information*

The main sources utilized by the participants to gather information on animal welfare are TV documentaries and programmes. Among such programmes, they have been especially struck by those showing specific rearing systems as in the case of industrial egg production (egg hens) and the forced diet imposed on geese for the production of foie gras.

A few participants, but not very many, receive information through newsletters or searches for it on Internet either because of their personal beliefs or because they are members of environmentalist, organic, animal rights organizations.

‘There is information on this topic, I found it through alternative channels, through associations such as Lipu and WWF, that have campaigned on this, and also in the organic world, there is a lot on this topic in the newsletters, so you can be informed if you want’ (Rural woman).

*What information would they like?*

Among the information on animal welfare that they would like to receive, participants consider paramount information concerning the farm (where and how animals live, how and with what are they fed), the transport and the slaughtering.

‘To me it would not be so important to know how bad they have been treated, but instead how well; I mean information should focus on the animal that has lived in welfare conditions... that was real welfare and not ‘badfare’’ (Young single).

#### 2.4.2 KNOWLEDGE OF AND EXPERIENCE/FAMILIARITY WITH WELFARE-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

*Availability of welfare friendly products in Italy and consumers' knowledge assessed through a sample of products shown to the participants*

This section deals with participants' knowledge and perception of welfare-friendly products. The analysis is based primarily on consumers' reaction to a number of food products,<sup>3</sup> labels and leaflets (listed in the next table) that were shown to them during the focus groups.

Considering that in Italy there are nor products that make an explicit reference to a productive system based on criteria that comply with animal welfare, as it is the case for example with the English freedom-foods, the selection of our sample included the products that mostly comply with those criteria, either in terms of productive system (organic, free-range) or because part of specific brands (in this respect it is worth emphasizing that brands such as Coop, Naturama, Laiq comply with specific parameters on animal welfare in some cases, but this is not specified in the labels)

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<sup>3</sup> The products have been purchased in different stores (super-hyper markets) owned by large retailers in the cities in which the focus groups were held and on the basis of a list identified in the report WP 1.2 for Italy.

TABLE 2.6 The sample of food products

Products	Description	Brand
<i>Eggs</i>	1. Free Range ('on round' rearing)	Ovomaremma
	2. Free Range ('open space' rearing)	Ovomaremma
	3. Free range Extra-fresh ('on round' rearing)	Coop
	4. Free Range Organic	Podere Centrale
<i>Milk and yoghurt</i>	5. Organic Yogurth	Podere Centrale
	6. Organic Yogurt 'Prima Natura'	Granarolo
	7. Organic Milk	Maremma
	8. Organic Milk	Podere Centrale
<i>Chicken</i>	9. Organic Sliced Breast	Coop
	10. Sliced Breast	Coop
	11. Free-range chicken	Del Campo
	12. Processed chicken, bite-sized chunks (Cricche di Pollo a bocconcini)	Del Campo with LAIQ label **
	13. Processed chicken, breast bite-sized chunks (Bocconcini di petto di pollo), MAGIC ZOO	Fileni
<i>Beef</i>	14. Organic Minced and Cutlets (macinato e fettine)	Almaverde
	15. Baby beef	Naturama-Esselunga
	16. Hamburger	Montana
<i>Labels</i>	17. Chicken breast	Amadori
	18. Organic chicken breast	Almaverde
<i>Leaflets</i>	19. Informative on Eggs	Ovopel
	20. Informative on Organic products (brand umbrella)	Esselunga
	21. Informative on chicken	Del Campo

*Notes:* \* these products have been purchased in different supermarket of national Large Distribution system, diffused in all the cities in which F.G. have been conducted; \*\* by environmental association 'Legambiente' project.

The products were made available to the participants, who read the labels and the information written on them, made comments and exchanged products to compare them.

The first issue that emerges is that several of these products are well-known and consumers habitually purchase them.

In particular, the best known products in terms of typology and brand are the Esselunga-Naturama branded, especially for several women who participated in the group Urban mother, but also Coop's meat and products in general (mostly known by Politically active and vegetarian consumers and Rural woman).

The organic lines of the retailers shown (Coop, Esselunga-for which we showed a leaflet) and Almaverde-bio were also known.

'I know this product (baby beef Esselunga Naturama) and there is everything written on: prepared on, where it was born, where it was slaughtered, where it was cut plus a code of traceability' (Gourmet).

'I know Esselunga Naturama and some Esselunga organic products' (Urban mother).

It must be noted that there is a dual attitude towards organic products: some people know them and purchase them because they consider them better than the conventional products and/or they trust the organic brand. Others know them but do not trust them or do not believe in this kind of products:

'Usually when I buy meat I choose this brand [Almaverde Bio].... I trust this brand' (Rural woman).

'Among these products I know some organic ones, but I don't buy many organic things because I don't believe so much in organics' (Empty nester).

Amadori is another fairly known brand that, however, many consumers state they do not trust much or have doubts about.

'I know the chicken 10+ [Amadori] but more because of the publicity, because I don't like this brand, I don't trust it' (Empty nester).

Magic Zoo Fileni, pieces of breaded chicken shaped like small animals, is also a known products about which some participants have doubts, especially with regard to the kind of preparation made up to attract young consumers.

'This kind of things [MAGIC ZOO Fileni] I didn't buy them not even when my children were little and asked for them because they have the shape of small animals, but I really don't trust them' (Rural woman).

Some other participants belonging to rural woman group assert together as well:

'[T]his one [Fileni-Magic Zoo], I would never buy it' (Rural woman).

#### 2.4.3 INTERACTIONS WITH AND PERCEPTIONS OF WELFARE FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

The relationships consumers have with the products analyzed is based primarily on experience gained by purchasing them and on the knowledge of specific brands. There is still an issue with the consumers' welfare prevailing over the welfare of the animal. Basically very few participants immediately associate a product with the conditions in which the animal was raised, transported or slaughtered. This relationship, as outlined above, is more effective in the case of free-range eggs. Organic products can also in a

way express this link for the consumers, even though in this case only habitual consumers can identify the connections - and only for a few aspects:

‘To me ‘organic’ is more linked to the animal feeding than to the issue of large open space’ (Young single).

However, organic products are also considered by some as products chosen in pursuit of individual, rather than animal, welfare:

‘According to me you get closer to the organic products above all out of a sort of egoism, because you think the meat is better. Very few get closer because they know or think that whit this kind of breeding the animal reach higher levels of animal welfare’ (Young single).

It is difficult to establish whether the visual perception of the product can at times stimulate concepts or opinions that go beyond the processing, packaging and purchasing of the product to connect it, albeit indirectly, with animal welfare. For one of the participants:

‘[T]he [darker] red colour of organic is a clue of the ‘naturalness’ of the product’ (Young single).

The trust in a specific brand can also convince the consumer that there is a link among the product, the farming system and the welfare of the animal:

‘I know Esselunga Naturama and some organic products of the Esselunga; the name Naturama makes me think that this products meets my requirements of a natural product or at least it gives me this idea’ (Urban mother).

At times this trust can be even more significant compared to a product that does not include specific and explicit references to animal welfare:

‘Anyway, as to buy products with information on animal welfare, I buy Esselunga even though with few information, because I trust it and I expect that it conforms to this issues’ (Urban mother).

### *Barriers*

The difficult national economic situation and a general increase in the cost of living is certainly a problem that strongly affects food shopping. Ismea 2004 report on food consumption in Italy emphasizes how, in the last 4 years, Italian families have purchased less food; between 2000 and 2004 there has been a 10 per cent decrease every year, especially with regard to bird meats, butter and fresh vegetables. This situation also emerged during the focus groups.

‘I shop at the Coop because I find what I need, yet I have meals at home no more than 5 or 6 times a month. This is due both to my job and to my being single. So I

do a little shopping when I'm hungry, for immediate consumption. The first data coming to my mind is that before when I shopped at the Coop I could buy a nice Florentine steak priced 12,000 liras and I earned 5 millions, so I didn't pay attention. Now the same steak costs 12 euros and you earn 3 millions (in liras), so I buy one more sausage instead of the usual steak' (Gourmet).

This difficult situation obviously strongly affects the possibility of purchasing higher quality products, such as welfare-friendly products. In fact, although several participants would be willing to buy those products, they consider the price a main barrier.

'Due above all to my job, I face conditions that give me to think. And so I rather privilege quality. I tried to process quality chickens, so I looked for a specific kind, not exactly a farmyard one because this doesn't exist anymore, at least not in the large distribution system. And I even think that a real farmyard chicken would not be appreciated because our mentality has changed. Thus, I tried an organically bred chicken, that obviously was more expensive, and I noticed that people consider the price much more than quality. This is the major problem we have to face every day. Everybody likes eating well, yet the problem is totally relative. Of course a good cook is able to do well even with certain products, and I firmly believe in this. I think, however, that if you look for a quality product and consequently you spend a little more, today nobody appreciates that anymore. The problem unfortunately now is how to reach the end of the month, we see that around the end of the month there are incredible decrease in shopping, and I'm speaking even of milk and bread; we sell less milk and bread and this is a recent problem owing purely to money. As to quality not being too much appreciated I see also an opposite trend' (Gourmet).

'In my case [the factors would hinder the purchasing of products with high animal welfare content] the price, because we would all want good things, quality things produced a certain way, but at the end what makes a difference is the price. I would spend a bit more for organic fruit juice, but if it costs twice as much as the other I can't do it, wealthy people can, but we must talk about the purchases of the majority of people and their finances at the end of the month. I don't know how much a litre of this milk (organic) costs, but if I find a branded milk that costs 70 cents I buy it, maybe a mother who is making sacrifices for her child can buy this one' (Senior).

The current cost of organic products, for example, is considered too high, and for some consumers it does not reflect the quality of the product in terms of taste.

'He was saying that the product must be healthy and I agree. Yet I'm so used to tasty meat that I cannot renounce to this characteristic. Speaking of organic products, I bought some organic fruit that, however, had no taste... then I said who cares if it's organic, because I eat for nourishment but also to receive sensorial sensations, some flavour, so if it's only healthy but tasteless then well' (Young single).

However, some participants state that it is inevitable to pay a surplus for those products, compared to the ‘conventional’ ones, maybe by reducing the amount purchased.

‘To spend more and eat less, maybe using cheese because if the animal is well treated also the cheese is good’ (Urban mother).

Among the other barriers identified, there are:

- the range of products offered;
- the availability of products (if/where it is available);
- the combination of high price and scarce quality.

### *Ethical dilemmas and political consumption*

The focus groups did not identify opinions that emphasized specific ethical or moral dilemmas and problems; few people reflect on, or are significantly influenced by, the concept of animal welfare during their shopping (as we will discuss later) or during the consumption of the product.

‘[T]here are some products, such as for example the buffalo mozzarella from Campania, that raise some questions to me, in the sense that I wonder what happens to the calves that cannot be fed with the milk used to make the mozzarella... so I choose not to buy buffalo mozzarella; I don’t want to become a fundamentalist though, so at times I think about myself, at times about the well being of the animal’ (Rural women).

‘[W]hat hassles me more when eating a steak is to think of the suffering of this animal, also as long as you cook it’ (Urban mother).

One female participant (Rural woman) acknowledged the importance of the issue but also emphasized the importance of not demonizing all breeders and farmers. She hopes that it will be possible to reach an optimum level of animal welfare in the farms but through a clear and responsible management of the entire process on behalf of everybody. This could in fact have significant repercussions on the entire farming and zootechnic sector, as it has recently happened in our country with the milk quota problem.

The main role consumers think they can play to promote animal welfare in the farms is that of choosing food produced with techniques that comply with certain productive standards as opposed to others.

‘Surely we consumers can do a lot not buying a certain product. If a product is not bought, automatically is no longer produced. I buy certain eggs and boycott the others; disadvantage is they cost more than those produced in battery’ (Urban mother).

'Yes, it affects me when I shop and it can also be influential through the use of the 'fidelity card', through which retailers obtain information on your age, your purchasing choices and they obtain statistics based on this information' (Rural woman).

Many, however, think that this role is not going to be very influential and several participants feel powerless as individual consumers:

'[T]he role [of consumer] is linked to the fact of not buying certain products, the world will not change, but it is the only thing we can do' (Empty nester).

'I feel powerless, because what can I do' (Senior).

'I don't think that not buying products can we really play some role, since we are only the last ring of the chain' (Politically active/vegetarian).

It is interesting to notice that for some participants the non-purchasing and the boycotting of certain products mean very different things. For those who feel to be 'active' consumers, this behaviour is considered as the tool available to truly 'change' the productive system; for those who feel powerless, such action, which is still considered as one of the few tools available, is not believe to be very effective.

In all cases, a barrier to 'informed consumption' identified is the lack/scarcity of information, which prevents those who are potentially interested from playing an active role.

'Consumers can do something, they have the last word; the problem is they are not informed' (Gourmet).

#### 2.4.4 CONSUMERS' EVALUATION OF THE CURRENT INFORMATION ABOUT WELFARE-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS AND THEIR PREFERENCES ON THE FORM AND CONTENT OF THE INFORMATION THEY WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE

##### *General evaluation of the information and useful types of information presented on labels*

At first glance participants state that the information and references to animal welfare on the products are patchy, not very clear, not very specific and not always easy to identify.

'I don't have adequate information to understand how an animal was bred' (Young single).

However, a deeper analysis of the products (better reading of the information included in the labels or in the package, comparisons between different brands and types of



products, exchange of opinions within the group) leads to very interesting considerations about their animal welfare content.

Some participants do not believe the information on the labels, since it is impossible to verify its reliability.

‘In general on the products you find the information given by the producer [ironic tone denoting scarce trust]’ (Gourmet).

‘Also the feeding animals have received is very important. For example, on this product [organic eggs ‘Podere Centrale’] it says it consisted only of maize, sunflower and wheat, thus it makes me think of a really valid product, always hoping that it tells the truth!’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

The lack of parameters or standards through which it becomes somewhat possible to quantify the level of animal welfare in a certain product leads the consumer to evaluate the product on the basis of the effectiveness of the information provided in evoking the life of the animal.

In this sense, the term ‘reared outdoor’ has the first positive impact on the consumer, as it leads to think about freedom of movement and space and, consequently, about a high level of animal welfare in the farm.

Several participants believe, however, that a reference to this rearing practice alone does not immediately imply animal welfare, but it needs further information.

In this sense, a specific indication about the number of metres available to the animal is considered a very important factor, even though some participants emphasize their incapacity to really assess animal welfare standards.

‘Here [organic eggs ‘Podere Centrale’] as to animal welfare it says that cages are daily cleaned and conform to certain standards of meters; it says that out of 200 mq there are at most 500 heads; these look like standards to me, quite good ones, surely reflecting some respect for animals’ health. Probably they associate that if the animals feel better, we feel better too, maybe also because we have a clean conscience’ (Gourmet).

‘Personally I don’t know standards to make animals feel good, I have no parameters’ (Gourmet).

According to the participants, eggs’ packages contain the best and more specific information and communicate to the consumer that the product originated from animals that were raised on the basis of criteria that were respectful of their welfare.

The typologies of eggs presented (see Table 2.6) during the focus groups were all evaluated positively (Ovomaremma free-range eggs a bit less) for the following aspects.

*Extrafresh free-range eggs (Coop)* They contain a good number of clear and legible information that specify the provenance, the type of hens utilized and the farming practice that explicitly refers to compliance with animal welfare. There are some negative comments about the lack of reference to the diet and to the fact that 'allevate a terra' used alone does not necessarily mean outdoor.

'[T]he label on these eggs [3 extra-fresh eggs 'Coop'] says where they come from and how they are raised etc., but it does not say anything about what they eat, why? They say something about the absence of animal fat in the flour, but nothing more specific' (Rural woman).

'[T]he Coop's eggs also provide good information; in general to say that they have been raised on the ground is not sufficient, because they can be on the ground but indoor' (Empty nester).

*Extra-fresh free-range eggs/outdoor farm (Ovomaremma)* The information provided is evaluated positively. Even in this case, there is a specific reference to compliance with animal welfare. It is especially appreciated a symbol, a hen in a cage crossed, which indicates that the animal is not raised in a cage (the same symbol is utilized for the Ovomaremma eggs da 'allevamento a terra' ).

*Organic extra-fresh eggs (Podere Centrale)* The indication on the daily cleaning and on the respect for the space standards for the hens is evaluated positively.

The evaluation is overall positive also with regard to the information present on milk packages. Specifically, the organic milk Maremma is appreciated because it is stated on it that 'cows are not anyhow stimulated and are reared with respect for their welfare in our organic farms'. In this case there is also trust in the product related to consumers' knowledge of the production area.

Reference to animal welfare is almost completely missing on meat packages, including both beef and chicken. There is an appreciation for the general indications (packaging, provenance, etc.) provided by brands such as Esselunga's Naturama and the Coop's products.

Paradoxically the only product that is evaluated positively by several participants in terms of information on animal welfare is Fileni, small pieces of chicken that initially were not very popular for their aspect. Among the valid information provided in this product is especially appreciated by some consumers the utilization of the day/night rotation in the rearing system.

'[T]his one that is not organic [Fileni] offers many many information. Also to alternate day/night is important, they don't stress in advance those poor hens' (Urban mother).

It is acknowledged that organic products contain in general the most exhaustive information system.

‘Descriptions you find on the organic products should be written also on the others’ (Urban mother).

‘[H]ere on the organic products you read they (animals) were bred in vast open space, fed on... etc... this information are OK’ (Gourmet).

For example, the information contained in the Almaverde product have received a very positive general evaluation both for their content and for the farming practices utilized. However, the fact that the information on the farming practices is reported inside the package and is written using a very small font - hence, it cannot be immediately identified—is criticized.

Moreover, some people are sceptical about the equation between this production method and animal welfare.

‘[P]erhaps this organic chicken (Almaverde) gives information, but it conveys the idea of a family’s happiness, more than the animal’s happiness’ (Rural women).

‘On these products they mainly speak of organic method, but they almost never report the issue of animal welfare, and I don’t think there is always a correspondence between the two issues’ (Young single).

The organic brand is, for those consumers who know and appreciate this system, synonymous with compliance with certain parameters that can guarantee an adequate level of animal welfare.

‘I use organic products [specifically the Demeter brand] which relates itself to an anthroposophist culture and it guarantees me that the product is not hyper-stimulated, that it is part of a natural cycle’ (Rural women).

‘Then also the label is very important, I trust the fact of finding the label ‘organic product’ and also the ‘PDO’ one. For example I’ve read the information on those eggs [organic eggs ‘Podere Centrale’] and I find it exhaustive. I trust the products of the Podere Centrale’ (Young single).

Other participants believe that such parameters are respected also by other products – retailers’ brands (Naturama, Coop) and other Laiq-Legambiente brands. This opinion is mostly based on a relationship of trust towards those subjects; in fact, the main criticism of these brands concerns the total or partial lack of information and reference to the animal welfare parameters that have been adopted.

Factors that influence food consumption and purchasing; types and level of information required; recommendations regarding product labeling

In general participants state that when they purchase a product they do not directly think about its animal welfare content or that they do so very superficially.

This attitude relates to the fact that up until the time of the focus group most people did not have a consciousness in this regard, either because they were not aware of the problem or because they had never specifically thought of it. Even those who had already reflected on animal welfare issues usually do not take them into consideration during the shopping.

‘I don’t think about animal welfare when I do food shopping, I do shopping in a hurry. I think about it in other moments; for example, discussing it with friends’ (Gourmet).

‘As far as my work is concerned, I’m not able to follow the issue of animal welfare; even though it would be correct to promote it, when I buy I don’t think about it’ (Gourmet).

It must however be emphasized that some participants stated that, thanks to the stimulating discussion occurred during the focus groups, they will pay more attention to animal welfare issues during their shopping.

Honestly animal welfare influences my purchase not much, after today I will certainly be more careful, but so far, I must say, I was just aiming at the highest possible quality, I never thought much about animal welfare’ (Senior).

The only group that showed a certain level of awareness during the shopping is that of the urban mothers. Most women from this group state that they think about animal welfare when they shop for food, but mostly for reasons related to taste and health (including their children’s health). This is also the case for one young single.

‘When I go shopping to the Scelta I trust them, because if I ask to have some meat for my child they propose some products and they say this come from this producer in this area. They give me quality products, including a certain way of treating the animal, because if you treat it well the meat will be better’ (Urban mother).

‘Sure, if an animal is well bred, the taste of its meat will be superior’ (Urban mother).

Usually all urban mothers agree that they think about animal welfare during their shopping for one reason: if the animal was treated well, the product is better.

‘Starting from my personal experience, I sometimes buy also Irish meat because I imagine the animals being bred in wide meadows, and with the German meat it’s the same. Then you can think of animal welfare, yet still – I repeat – from an individual point of view, because you are thinking of the final taste of the meat’ (Young single).

The highest level of awareness about animal welfare in the farms was reached with a participant from the group of vegetarians, who decided to quit eating meat after learning about certain farming practices and the life conditions of the animals.

‘Before I used to eat meat, then I started to think exactly to the problem of all those animals, which are similar to productive machines. And thus I stopped eating meat’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

This awareness is reached, although to a lesser extent, by some consumers when they purchase eggs, which, as we have noted above, represent the type of product that create more easily a relationship between the consumer and animal welfare (given its informational content and a better knowledge people have of chicken farms as opposed to other types of animal farms). Such awareness is a selective criterion at the moment of choosing the product.

‘I think about it [animal welfare] when I purchase eggs because I happened to see how they raise chickens, so it’s natural for me to think about it, but to tell you the truth I don’t think about it when I buy other products’ (Rural woman).

This aspect is absent in the case of other products, especially meat. A direct or trust relationship with a butcher can in a few cases satisfy consumers’ interest in the criteria according to which the animal was raised. However, this is never available on the packages sold by large retailers, even though, as previously stated, some participants argue that, although they do not think about it directly, they hope that the controls done by large retailers or the type of production methods utilized by certain brands also include inputs related to animal welfare.

‘When I buy Coop meat I have confidence that there are anyways controls on how the animal was bred, what he was fed on, and thus I believe I’m buying some meat which is good also from the point of view of animal welfare; above all in comparison with some years ago, after the mad cow issue’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘I have never thought about it as a target, in the sense I buy this product because of its animal welfare content, but I do indirectly... for example, I was motivated to buy Maremma milk the first time because I associated the Maremma with a genuine product, it’s an area that gives me the idea of ‘free’, so indirectly it gave me an idea of animal welfare; certainly I didn’t buy it because the cows were treated in a certain way, but certainly I received that message’ (Senior).

‘I don’t think about it [animal welfare] when I do food shopping, mainly because of lack of information and sensibilisation. Today we all think to the ecological issues, etc.. but out of individualism. The only thing I do is not buying unknown labels, because I think those animals are not bred respecting their welfare. Even though, I repeat, the concept of their welfare is always finally oriented to the consequences it can have on the final quality of the product and thus on me. Some kind of individualism and/or egoism is always prevailing in such an attitude. I trust the large labels and labels of the Large Distribution, also thanks to the

advertising you start to know them, and if you find that the meat is also tasty and you think the animal was bred in a certain way and has lived well' (Young single).

The last statement indicates and identifies another important element previously emphasized: the lack of adequate information and awareness is considered one of the obstacles to the choice of products during the shopping.

Adequate information would instead be capable of determining the purchasing of welfare friendly products compared to other products.

'I don't know if the animal had a difficult trip or was killed badly, so even though animal welfare could affect my choices I don't have information to do it' (Empty nester).

Consumers then would like to receive more information concerning the level of welfare of the animals from which the products derive and ask that such information are provided in a clear and direct way. In particular, they request more specifications on how the animals were raised and fed and how they were slaughtered.

'[T]he information that I would like to have are: how animals were bred, if they are free, what they eat, how they have been killed' (Gourmet).

'In addition to the lack of information about transport in the supermarkets there is also a problem with feeding, it would be important to know how the animal was fed' (Empty nester).

'I care also about which way these animals are killed' (Urban mother).

'To me, slaughtering is most important' (Urban mother).

'In my opinion the first thing is the feeding' (Urban mother).

Since many believe that the time available for shopping is not much, the information on the products should be provided so as to have an immediate impact. The best tool in this respect is the utilization of symbols or brands:

'[O]ne cannot spend hours shopping and reading about the content of the products, we would need something with an immediate impact, for example an animal that laughs, I would know that the producing farm complies with certain criteria in terms of animal welfare, provided, of course, that there were serious controls here' (Rural woman).

'But why they do not establish some symbols? For example on these eggs [Ovomaremma] there is this symbol with a barred hen, which means the animal comes not from battery. I can see well and I'm able to read all the history of the product, yet a symbol is faster and universally comprehensible. Without reading, just logos, different small symbols, with different colours. You know that product possess the characteristics you are looking for, you recognize that product as

having what you are seeking, for example that the animal is free, hasn't eat disgusting things, etc... of course all this should be monitored' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'[Y]es, if there was a logo that tells me that the animal has been reared a certain way I would not even read the information labels anymore' (Empty nester).

'It should use some marks to make you understand that animals were bred in a certain way' (Politically active/vegetarian).

Several consumers ask for an individual brand that identifies all welfare friendly products:

'I would eliminate also the underlabels used by the Coop and other chains. We would need a European mark, so that through such mark I have to know no matter where and how that the animal was bred in a certain way' (Young single).

'According to me [to specify a welfare friendly product] wethere must be a unique symbol and not many different ones' (Politically active/vegetarian).

The information provided through communication forms that have an immediate impact should be accompanied by more in-depth information provided both in the stores, through posters or leaflets, and through awareness campaigns. Such action, as a female participant stated, should however be based on uniform communication criteria, rather than be relegated to a few big producers.

'[T]here should be something like a leaflet that specifies things to me, that provides me with information; I am also talking for the general consumer who is always in a rush, it is true that he should pay attention to these things because food is important; the basis for me is that I trust the supermarkets' products because they are controlled; considering that the information is available and there have been problems [mad cow disease] the consumer will become more and more careful, so I welcome these things' (Empty nester).

'I would like some background information, more consistency in communication, which cannot be limited only to the Amadori ads there should be certain logos accompanied by adequate information' (Rural women, aged 37).

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## 2.5 RESPONSIBILITY, AGENCY AND TRUST IN RELATION TO ANIMAL WELFARE

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### 2.5.1 RESPONSIBILITY

*Which consumers believe should be responsible for animal welfare and why*

In the various aspects that characterize animal welfare, from the management of the production process through the management of control to the dissemination of knowledge and information, there are different actors involved, and each has a specific role. In this sense, the responsibilities of such actors have different characteristics and weight.

The answers participants provided to questions about who ought to be responsible of animal welfare in our country at times identify actors responsible for specific actions and fields and at times identify actors in a more general and wider context.

Actors that should take responsibilities have been identified for two stages in particular: the correct application of parameters to improve animal welfare in the farms, hence controls' management, and the dissemination of information.

The motivations on which these indications are based concern primarily the trust participants have in those actors and will be analyzed in the following section. Responsibilities and trust in certain actors in the context of animal welfare are then strictly interrelated and often, but not always generate similar evaluations.

With regard to the management of the application of parameters that comply with animal welfare the participants identify the following subjects:

- institutional-public subject: it is indicated by the vast majority and it is subdivided into different levels and specific roles;
  - the regional level – the region: it is the most widely preferred. It should function through regional commissions capable to verify that the parameters are correctly applied;
  - the state level – the state, through the Ministry of Health, or through a joint action of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agricultural Policies;
  - the local level – local health authorities (ASL) and municipal offices (hygiene);
- public subject: a subject that coordinates institutions and consumers' associations has been identified;
- specialized personnel: the identified subjects responsible at this stage are veterinarians, although in conjunction with the ASL.



No private subjects have been identified among those who should assume a responsibility role (with the only exception of one participant who referred to a Certifying Body). With regard to the information on animal welfare that should be disseminated, participants also identify a public and authoritative subject, operating through specific and widespread campaigns.

Compared to the controls' stage, for this aspect participants allocate responsibilities in a more articulated way through the identification of multiple subjects; they still prefer public bodies and institutions, primarily the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health, followed by the Regions, but they also refer to a single and super-partes Certifying Body and to the Consumers' Associations.

A few indications also emerge concerning non-governmental organizations, experienced and animal-loving personnel, producers, retailers (supermarkets), Universities.

The term responsibility acquires an especially important meaning when issues concerning citizens' health were raised. Some participants identify the Ministry of Health as the subject in charge of health protection and promotion, due to its authority and competence. In this sense, they identify a role of general responsibility that the Ministry should assume with regard to farm animals' welfare, since this is strictly related with the citizens' health and welfare.

## 2.5.2 TRUST

### *Participants' trust and distrust in different actors, systems and information sources in relations to animal welfare*

Trusting the controls' system is often a very arbitrary choice for consumers and it requires the highest guarantee in terms of truth and transparency.

For the most part, consumers trust those subjects that, as we have seen, can assume a role of responsibility through their authority, hence the Institutions, but the level of this kind of trust also varies on the basis of the political-territorial context in which the institution is active.

Therefore, many consider the regions more trustworthy in terms of monitoring the compliance with animal welfare standards, as they often evaluate positively similar activities or initiatives that have been or are implemented:

‘I trust the region of Tuscany, because their current agricultural policy is working well’ (Rural woman).

Or they consider other decentralized public institutions, ASL or municipal/provincial technical services, which are already working in the farms with specialized personnel such as vets or technicians.

Some, instead, still trust the State, hence central institutions, such as the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture (several participants in the Rural Women group, by contrast, mistrust those institutions).

A significant role in terms of trust is assigned to Consumers' associations (Gourmet) in relation to issues of clarity and transparency in the management of the system:

'[Y]ou trust more a consumers' association or an umbrella of different coordinated bodies, they give you more guarantees about telling the truth' (Gourmet).

It is believed that a private subject is not always capable to guarantee the requested truth and transparency, as this would be involved in the economic interests of the entire process.

Therefore, many participants show little trust in private control and certification Bodies, which, as in the case of Organic products, are often mistrusted.

'I don't believe in organic products, I don't believe in companies certifying organic products. In Italy there are almost 20 certifying bodies, there is not a rule able to really guarantee' (Gourmet).

'Personally I have no negative remarks on the organic products, yet I had way to understand how the controls do function. So when I'm in front of an organic product I don't doubt it was produced according to that method, yet I have no guarantee, because I know that often the controls are scheduled in advance, are based more on administrative than technical aspects and only in a few cases they take samples from the ground. I don't blame the product, but if these are the controls I cannot see the difference with a normal one' (Young single).

Even though many consider the control system a weakness in the organic sector, this attitude does not imply a total lack of trust in the system. In fact, the existence of a certification system and of regulations and laws and a direct knowledge of farms and producers that many habitual consumers have lead many to consider the organic sector trustworthy.

'Let's say that organic provides more guarantee, they aren't very big retailers/chains, the farms are often very small and hence I trust them more' (Empty nester).

'I prefer organic because even if you can never be entirely sure about the certification process, nevertheless that certification provides a guarantee to me' (Rural woman).

Participants believe that the Institutions are the most trustworthy source of official information on animal welfare.

They would give much credit to information disseminated by the Ministries of Health and Agriculture, by the Regions and, in some case, by European institutions (ex. EU Agricultural Sector).

With regard to the source of information, participants also trust logos, symbols, specific brands (ex. Quality Products, organic products, Consumers' associations, umbrella brands of some large retailers), even though those do not always refer to animal welfare. In this case, the level of trust increases when the subjects that propose those brands are considered capable of providing guarantees in terms of safety, truth and transparency.

'[T]he information provided is absolutely not sufficient, especially they don't guarantee that the products I buy for my children are growth-promoters and antibiotics free; for this reason I use organic products, specifically the Demeter brand which relates itself to an anthroposophist culture and it guarantees me that the product is not hyper-stimulated, that it is part of a natural cycle and that it goes hand in hand with children's psychological development' (Rural woman).

'I buy the Coop brand because it is a guarantee for me, I trust it' (Empty nester).

'Then also the label is very important, I trust the fact of finding the label 'organic product' and also the 'PDO'' (Young single).

'[W]hat would ensure me here is the presence of an association of consumers that you can trust which provides indications about purchases, like the magazine 'Altro Consumo', an independent association, does. This is the reason why I liked the brand on the Coop's eggs [reporting 'approved by Consumers' association']' (Empty nester).

Advertising (especially on TV) can often spread messages that, over time, can contribute to enhance consumers' familiarity with certain products or brands, thereby increasing also their level of trust.

'I trust the large labels and labels of the Large Distribution, also thanks to the advertising you start to know them' (Young single).

Our participants do not always consider the relationship between advertising and big brands as synonymous with trust in the information provided:

'I don't trust national brands such as AIA etc. Because they don't give me enough guarantee that the animal has been raised treated well, that it was not raised in a cage but at least on the ground, without utilizing substances that favour its growth.... I don't believe in the Plasmon's [baby food brand] oasis either, that's another deceiving ad, I think that children are not protected and I think that these are the least adequate products for children, as they use all the leftovers to make them' (Rural woman).

Another aspect of the relationship between trust and information on animal welfare concerns the relationship between consumer and seller (butcher, milk seller, etc.).

In this case as well most opinions expressed by the participants show two different kinds of attitude: on the one hand, there are those who trust their seller and state that, by purchasing directly and through a good relationship built over time, they obtain all the information on the animal's lifestyle; on the other hand, other participants show scarce or less trust in small sellers, as they believe that, being less controlled than large retailers, they do not always comply with the laws and do not show or provide adequate information on the production systems of the products they sell.

There are finally those who have a general lack of trust and cannot identify subjects to receive information from :

‘But we are all poorly informed... there has been a case of mercury poisoning in a nearby area, organic producers continued to grow vegetables and sell them, but no one informed us about this, you don't know who to trust anymore’ (Senior).

Finally, no indications have been provided by participants concerning their trust in Producers' Associations, the Food Standard Agency or NGOs.

Only one participant referred to the responsibility that Parma's European Food Agency should assume in providing information.

### 2.5.3 AGENCY

#### *Citizen/consumer's agency in the context of animal welfare*

Before the focus group started, most participants were not very involved in animal welfare issues.

Only a few had awareness in this respect, based on more or less deep knowledge coming from different sources and motivations or justified by ethical, health or work reasons.

‘A friend of mine brought me to the pig breeding. In that time there was a discussion about mass breeding, there were also TV programs like Quark focused on what the animal were fed on and health of the consumers, so it was not so much about direct animal welfare. From then I started to wonder about the issue and I started to do some research on my own. And I stopped consuming these kinds of meat’ (Young single).

The perception of some aspects related to these issues was mostly based on the realisation that, following the food scandals, especially mad cow, and the information provided on this, there has been a decrease in the consumption of some types of meat and an increase in the number of vegetarians and of people who have turned to natural food products as an alternative to the conventional ones.

At this stage some participants think that a certain kind of debate on welfare, led by Animal rights associations, had already spread and had involved several people.

The fact that a good proportion of the participants is available to acquire more information on animal welfare issues, as discussed in the previous section, outlines a certain level of interest in the subject, confirmed by positive opinions about a potential further development of the public debate and by the availability of participants to participate in it.

More information and more involvement through debates and confrontations would be adequate instruments identified by participants to involve more people and citizens. By stimulating consumers' and society's awareness, this could help identifying some initial solutions to animal welfare problems in the farms.

'Yes, it would be a movement in the public opinion... if we spoke more, to have more natural conditions, maybe not so adhering to nature, but improving all the same the conditions of these animals. Many friends of mine use to eat only fish and they are shocked, they have been impressed from TV programs showing how fish breeding is carried out, with all the fish stacked. In the future maybe we'll reach a different culture in breeding animals' (Gourmet).

Several participants (especially in the rural women group) emphasize, however, how mistakes in the way in which the problem of mad cow was addressed and communicated contributed to the spread in the past of confusion and alarm in the public opinion. This led to a drastic decrease in consumption, with disastrous repercussions on the zootechnic sector and on producers. In this respect, some criticized the actions of the Associations (animal rights and environmentalist) involved.

Therefore, they believe that the spread of information and the general debate should be conducted and managed unpretentiously, without sensationalism, to avoid repercussions that would be counterproductive also in terms of animal welfare.

However, it has been emphasized also how the environmentalist Associations have recently adopted a different attitude in approaching those issues

'The environmentalist associations are now changing the way of providing information, they are beginning to understand that it is not necessary to alarm people, but it is necessary to provide good information to create a consciousness' (Rural woman).

Spreading correct information and widening the confrontation through debates on these issues would be important, as previously identified, to create a public movement on animal welfare.

How can, according to the participants, consumers and the public opinion in general directly and concretely contribute to improve animal welfare in the farms? Some think that the individual consumer cannot anyhow have an impact; at the same time, many

emphasize how the consumer can play an important role through his/her shopping choices. The association of many consumers is considered an even more useful tool.

‘[Everyone shops with his own head, but if we would all start making certain choices, our union would become a strength’ (Senior).

As emerged from paragraph 4.3 about ‘political consumption’, the participants who think they can have an influence through their choices state that they turn to products produced through techniques that comply with certain productive standards and boycott those products that do not present the same characteristics.

Moreover, for some participants it would be necessary to re-modulate meat consumption, bringing it to a lower level than the one that currently leads industrialized societies to justify the presence of intensive farms (which are geared towards productions that are too high compared to our needs).

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## 2.6 CONSUMERS’ EVALUATIONS OF PROPOSED SCIENTIFICALLY-BASED STANDARD FOR FARM ANIMAL WELFARE

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### 2.6.1 HUMAN TO ANIMAL RELATIONSHIPS

#### *Animal rights and difference*

Questions such as ‘do animal have rights, and which ones?’, ‘can these rights be compared to human rights?’, ‘who should protect and guarantee these rights?’ have created an articulated debate characterized by different opinions and contrasting positions.

The analysis of the answers provided allows us to state that participants in general think that animals have their own rights, but that these are not comparable to human rights (only one participant explicitly stated that humans and animals should have the same rights). In this context there is often a different attitude in case one thinks about pets, which are often considered as family members, as opposed to farm animals:

‘I think there is a perhaps unwanted hierarchy between pets and farm animals, I don’t think people would show the same sensitivity, who would make a phone call if you see a pet dog locked in a car under the sun and who would make a phone call if they see a van on the motorway with 50 animals crowded up; instinctively there is a hierarchy, the welfare problem is more widespread for animals that are close to humans’ (Empty nester).

In any case, the majority thinks that farm animals have their own rights which must be respected and protected.

Even when considering the destiny of these animals in relation to food consumption, it is emphasized that the main right of a farm animal is that of having a dignified life as close as possible to what his natural life would be like, a life without suffering and maiming and during which the animal is respected in every sense.

‘We [human and animals] are different and we have different rights. We should make it clear, so that also the animals could have rights close to those of men. To abuse animals in such ways is a sign of uncivilized, and the way we treat them makes clear also the degree of civilisation with which we are living’ (Young single).

‘I believe that animals must have rights just because they are animals, at least to not being abused. Then maybe I start from a unconscious catholic principle, but I don’t do to somebody else what I don’t want being done to me. According to me, animals must live decently their animal life, then it’s obvious that their function is to serve human beings, they have to nourish them. Maybe this is not their primary function, yet this is their destiny. I cannot see however why they must not be treated well’ (Gourmet).

For some, the reason why animals are reared does not allow them to acquire rights:

‘In my opinion they don’t have right to life, because if they are bred to be finally killed, they are not guaranteed any life right; it’s nonsense, because you can’t give them rights during their life if later you kill them... if their scope is that of being compelled to die’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

The vision of those who believe that farm animals have no rights is a small minority, but it can be very extreme and completely opposite to the vision of the majority.

‘I think animals are created to serve men, they don’t have any rights and have not had any from the beginning of the world, they are always slaves. Animals must serve men, their only right is the wilderness, which is not enough since human kind is increasing more and more and thus this is not possible’ (Gourmet).

For the participants, animals cannot obviously claim their rights and humans must then guarantee them.

Although the majority agrees that animals have their own rights in the context of a vision that seems to focus on the animal, as previously emphasized many participants are in reality essentially anthropocentric. As it emerged during the discussion, they relate animal rights (or lack of) to human needs, in terms of higher quality, health or lower production costs.

'[I]f I want to eat good meat I have to turn to those who can guarantee that the animals have lived a life as close as possible to their natural rhythm of life' (Rural woman).

'The better status of the animal rights correspond also to better quality, since a free pig rooting around gives a better meat, and the same it's true with cattle' (Gourmet).

'After all these are rights that the animal acquires according to men's requirements, which means it must feed well so that the meat will be a genuine product, it must not assimilate certain substances that could be later noxious still to men's health' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'[I]n my opinion, when the animal suffers toxins go around the meat and it's unhealthy. I do the same with eggs, I don't buy eggs from chicken bred in a cage. I pay attention to this kind of issues, respect for the animals and also our health comes from our respect for them: that's why I pay attention' (Urban mother).

A comparison of the opinions on the issues so far identified, along with aspects related to the concept of animal welfare that have been discussed in Section 2.4, contributed to introduce the topic of the characterization of 'farm animal welfare' which will be discussed in the following sections.

## 2.6.2 GENERAL LISTS OF ANIMAL WELFARE CONCERNS

One of the specific objectives of the research concerns the identification of parameters, terms or aspects that, according to consumers, can describe in the most appropriate way the concept of 'animal welfare' with regard to farm animals. At this specific stage of the focus group the facilitator initially asked each consumer to identify such parameters and to write them down (through a scheme or a short concept) on a piece of paper, as a sort of 'personal list'.

At the end of this stage, through an overall vision and a general comparison of the aspects emerged from the individual list, a general list for each group has been compiled. It has also been asked to prioritize the aspects identified.

In general the parameters identified are mostly the same for all groups, even though not in all of the groups the discussion resulted in opinions shared by all participants (ex. Groups 1 and 2) or in the identification of priorities concerning the parameters that characterize animal welfare (Groups 1, 3, 4, 6), as these have all been considered important and strictly interrelated.



TABLE 2.7 Spontaneous general lists of animal welfare concerns

Group 1 Urban mothers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respect of natural cycles This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No to constraints.</li> <li>• No to ill-treating;</li> <li>• Available open space;</li> <li>• Natural life, feeding and reproduction ('natural' means as close as possible to what would happen in nature).</li> <li>• Respect of hygiene and safety</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Painless transportation and slaughtering All points are equally important</li> </ol>
Group 2 Rural women	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respect of the biological/ethological cycle This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open space breeding, with adequate available space.</li> <li>• Natural feeding.</li> <li>• Total absence of ill-treating.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. As painless as possible slaughtering. The whole breeding chain internal to the farm or to local centres.</li> </ol>
Group 3 Empty nesters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most natural/adequate/forceless feeding</li> <li>• Respect of natural biological cycles;</li> <li>• Freedom of moving/available space;</li> <li>• Adequate environment/hygienical sanitary conditions/accurate veterinarian treatments;</li> <li>• Adequate slaughtering (non traumatic, no agony) and transportation (adequate time, non forced), as least traumatic as possible;</li> <li>• Life cycle of animals monitored by skilled staff;</li> <li>• Respect in general.</li> </ul> <p>If it is necessary to select the most important indication, this concerns feeding, yet all issues on the list should be considered at the same level because they are all equally important.</p>
Group 4 Seniors	<p>This is the resulting list, all issues are considered equally important, no priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural feeding and no use of medicines to increase weight</li> <li>• Open and vast space</li> <li>• No ill-treating</li> <li>• Sanitation of the breeding farm</li> <li>• Veterinarian controls</li> <li>• Painless and non traumatic slaughtering, respectful of the animal</li> </ul>
Group 5 Young singles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respect of bio-physical cycles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural life conditions (open air, light)</li> <li>• Space (larger availability of movement and open space also among animals)</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Feeding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• natural</li> <li>• directly supplied by the farmer</li> <li>• healthy</li> <li>• non forced</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Group 6 Politically active/ vegetarian consumers	<p>Transportation and slaughtering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect of the biological/ethological cycle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• available space/grazing land/possibility of moving</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Well treated animal + aware breeder responsible of animal welfare + veterinarian controls</li> <li>• Hygiene and cleanliness (of animal and breeding environment)</li> <li>• Natural feeding</li> <li>• Painless and least traumatic slaughtering</li> <li>• No mass transportation (space) as least traumatic as possible</li> </ul> <p>The participants consider all the above points as interconnected</p>
Group 7 Gourmet	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Decent natural biological cycle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• available space</li> <li>• adequate feeding (forceless, no harmful feed)</li> <li>• adequate hygienical-sanitary standards</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Adequate transportation</li> <li>3. Painless killing</li> </ol>

The analysis of the indications provided in the list emphasize one 'general concept' or 'parameter' that best expresses and guarantees animal welfare in the farms: a respect for their life cycle.

This aspect has been explicitly indicated by all participants to the six focus groups (the only group in which the term does not explicitly appears is the group of seniors).

Participants identify the animal's life cycle as a cycle of biological, physiological and ethological stages during which the animal is capable of performing all of his functions and of satisfying all of his needs. The closer these stages are to what the natural lifestyle would have been if the animal was free (not reared), the more they reach a balance that provides to the animal the highest level of welfare.

To make farms follow and comply with these stages is a vision that all the groups share.

Three groups (rural women, young single and gourmet) especially consider the respect for the animal's life cycle as a priority among all the parameters.

Among these, in the context of the animal's life cycle two parameters are especially significant in two groups (rural women and gourmet):

- space, often related to the terms wide and open, which implies freedom of movement;
- diet, which must be as natural as possible and should not be forced.

In the young single group diet is considered the second priority.

Even when they are not explicitly listed in the context of the general life cycle or are not prioritized, the terms space (wide, open)/freedom of movement and diet are used by all other groups.

The transport and killing (slaughtering) methods used are two other parameters present in the general lists of almost all groups and, according to the participants, contribute to characterize the welfare of the farm animal.

These stages are considered as the moments in which the animal is subject to the highest levels of stress and suffering.

Usually, in the groups that have made lists of priorities these parameters are the last in the list, since they refer to the final stage of the animal's life cycle and are shorter.

Rural women prioritize more the slaughtering stage, compared to the transportation stage (which, although not indicated in the list, is considered by several participants as an important stage). This could be improved by promoting integrated or local farming cycles, which would eliminate the need to carry the animals to distant slaughtering houses.

An adequate transportation method is more important for the gourmet.

For the young singles, slaughtering and transport are equally important.

In general participants believe that the transportation should be performed using adequate means, where there are satisfactory internal climatic conditions (heat/cold) for the animals and with enough internal space available.

The slaughtering should be as little traumatic as possible, avoiding suffering and agony to the animals.

Only the group of seniors did not make any reference to the transportation stage.

Four groups referred to the need of avoiding mistreatments to the animal: urban mothers and rural women, for whom this is crucial in the context of respecting the life cycle, seniors and polit-veget.

Finally, farm's hygiene (animal and environment) is another parameter on which the participants of five groups (urban mothers, napster, seniors, pol.active-veget, gourmet) agree.

Also in the two other groups (rural women and young single), as we will see, this parameter has been identified in the individual lists. Indicated by one or two people in the context of the group's discussion, it has not found a general agreement about its use among the parameters to adopt in the general list.

In this respect, we report below the observations of a few individual participants that were not directly incorporated but have somehow been shared by the group or have completely convinced the participants about their validity in the context of an evaluation of animal welfare.

Further considerations emerged from the individual lists and from the discussion about the general lists

#### *Urban mothers*

In this group 'natural reproduction' is considered as an adequate parameter to assess the animal welfare in the farm in the context of respecting the natural cycle of the animal.

Two participants do not agree, as they think that giving up on artificial reproduction is not as important as other parameters.

#### *Rural women*

In addition to the elements identified in the general lists, about which the majority of participants agree, there are other elements considered important by some participants:

- the need for personnel specialized on the nature of the animal through which it would be possible to improve the relationship humans-animals;
- in this sense, it would be good to name every animal in the farm – at least in those that are small enough;
- information to re-modulate consumption.

It would be necessary to directly inform consumers about the need to consume fewer proteins of animal origins so as to reverse the consumerist trend existing in industrialized societies and decrease the too high number of intensive and/or industrial farms on which those trends are based. This could lead to reduce the size of many farms and to improve the general conditions of animal welfare.

Development of local/regional farms and promotion of autochthonous breeds. This would privilege breeds that better adapt to the territory they originated from and would re-localize consumption, which in turn would eliminate long-distance transportation for the animals.

#### *Young singles*

Other aspects considered important:

- to promote extensive systems;
- to control reproduction;
- to eliminate torture.

#### *Gourmet*

One participant, as outlined in Section 3, reiterates his opinion that the concept of animal welfare cannot be associated to farm animals; the only animals for which it is possible to talk about welfare are wild animals that follow an entirely natural biological cycle.

### 2.6.3 ASSESSING ANIMAL WELFARE: REACTION AND OVERALL IMPRESSION TO THE 10 ANIMAL WELFARE CATEGORIES

The stage that followed consumers' identification of the parameters that identify the concept of 'animal welfare', which has been analyzed in the last section, is another important stage in the assessment of 'animal welfare'. In this stage, participants were introduced to ten key 'categories-problematic areas' to be utilized as a starting point to assess the welfare of cattle, pigs and chickens in the farms, during the transportation and during the slaughtering. These areas, identified by researchers (biologists and ethologists) involved in the Welfare Quality project encompass aspects that should be

taken into consideration to identify and measure a series of standardized parameters to assess animal welfare in the farms.

The facilitator then presented the ten categories to the participants and asked them to do an overall assessment, indicating changes or necessary additions.

Not all participants expressed themselves on this issue individually, and not all of them answered the questions asked, despite the facilitator's efforts, but they often agreed with the opinions of those who talked regarding the validity of the categories.

### *Participant's reactions and overall impressions*

The general evaluation of the 10 categories on behalf of the participants has been overall very positive. No particular observation or criticism emerged.

The list of the ten categories is considered much more complete and in-depth compared to the lists identified by the individual consumers, and it is also considered trustworthy as it has been prepared by experts:

'Categories of the project are better than ours, in the sense that there is more' (Urban mother).

'I dare say that the list is complete' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'I think they have already considered what we wrote, even in a much deeper way' (Rural woman).

'The ten categories selected by the project represent what we have said, but they are explained in a more scientific way' (Empty nester).

'In my opinion, everything has been considered!' (Senior).

After the categories were read, some participants were very shocked by the description of cruel actions that are performed on the animals and of the suffering that they always go through (and that participants did not know about):

'Not knowing that, I would never be able to think of such strong evil in human beings' (Urban mother).

Others were positively impressed by some of the issues raised by the categories:

'It's very nice this respect for psychology of the animal, and these categories make me feel secure, because they have been drawn by experts' (Young single).

'I like in particular the sentence 'abnormal social behaviours'; I know it's not possible, yet not to separate the mother from the cub would be important' (Politically active/vegetarian).

Some participants consider a specific issue especially important or emphasized some stages identified within the categories:

'I would put first the point nr. 8<sup>4</sup> of this list of categories' (Senior).

'I would say that space issues are fundamental, and this means a kind of respect for the environment and biological cycle' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'I believe that transportation should be protected even more' (Rural woman).

*Participants' impressions of the likely effectiveness of standards based on the scientists' list of concerns*

Almost all participants evaluated very positively the EU's adoption of a classification system to define an animal welfare standard for farm animals based on the following categories:

'It would be optimum' (Politically active/vegetarian).

In the context of a unanimous agreement about the validity of the categories, which, according to the participants, express everything that should be taken into consideration in the farms to reach a good level of animal welfare, a few identified the breeders as those that should be responsible for the adoption of those categories. Even though it is explained that a producer's adherence to a system based on those categories would be voluntary, a few think that such system should be mandatory. For some participants, the existence of a connection between the overall system and the information to the consumer is crucial.

'[I]t should be like this for all the animals; it should become an obligation for producers' (Urban mother).

'These categories and these standards should be used by producers and should also concern information to be given to consumers. If I knew that animal was bred according to these ten characteristics, I'm willing to buy it' (Urban mother).

'Farmers must comply, but if the producer does one thing and the consumer does not know it, it is useless' (Rural woman).

Among the various positive opinions, a few participants made observations about the fact, for instance, that adhering to a system based even just on a few categories would increase the costs for the producers. Moreover, such categories must be related to the size of the farms, considering that in the smaller or more extensive farms animal

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<sup>4</sup> Human-animal relationship: poor interactions with people can be reflected in increased avoidance distances and fearful or aggressive animal behaviours. This can occur due to inappropriate handling techniques (e.g. slapping, kicking and the use of electric prods), or when farmers, animal transporters or slaughterhouse staff are either insufficiently skilled or possess unsympathetic or non-compassionate attitudes towards animals.

suffering should not be a problem, compared to what happen in large farms or in those that keep many animals on a small surface.

‘The categories and the adoption to this system would be very good, but if breeding farms are able to respect the rules, in the end they would respect them. I want to say that maybe these issues have been lost because they included too high costs; if I don’t have a clean environment, it is because I have to employ two more workers, if I don’t have the right fodder, it’s because I have to pay a double cost for it. These are costs I cannot cut... maybe with incentives... yet I can hardly achieve even a few of the categories we’ve seen before’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘[T]o me, all we are saying here leaves out a fundamental parameter, that is dimension of the breeding farm; I can’t think of negative conditions in a stall of 20 heads, or in a chicken farming consisting of 10 hens; much depends on dimensions of breeding’ (Young single).

Finally, for some consumers (most of the gourmet, some emptynest and one urban mother), as previously stated (Luana), the EU’s adoption of animal welfare standards could influence consumers’ purchasing of animal food products:

‘[I]f you can find indications on the products, they surely would’ (Empty nester).

‘[Y]es, in particular if there was a guarantee label, maybe issued by independent associations’ (Empty nester).

To be able to make such choice, consumers should be informed about the use of these standards.

The communication system identified articulates on two different but strictly related levels:

1. a more immediate one, based on the utilization of a logo/symbol on the product (baby pigs, baby rabbits that laugh, little stars);
2. a more specific one that provides explanations on the meaning of the logo/symbol.

With regard to the logo/symbol, most participants agree that the product should contain one or more symbols that allow to establish a direct connection between the level of animal welfare achieved and the parameters utilized in the farm.

There are different opinions about the number of logos/symbols to put on the product: for example, rural women think that there should not be more than 3-4, while one participant among the gourmet thinks that an evaluation scale from 1 to 10 would be more effective. Few stated that they would prefer one single logo/symbol.

The presence on the products of different numbers of symbols would help consumers to make an informed choice:

'Yet the final price may depend also from multiple classifications (more logos), and you could decide to buy the highest one in terms of welfare contents even though it will be the most expensive. Or you may choose to spend less and guarantee all the same a certain level of welfare, which, even though inferior, would result acceptable in comparison with those which do not comply at all with the standards' (Politically active/vegetarian).

Also with regard to more detailed information, the opinions expressed identify different potential solutions. According to such solutions, the informative content should be:

- located directly on the back of the product;
- exposed in the points of sale through posters and leaflets;
- disseminated through a wider media campaign (TV-press-radio, ex. progressive advertisements adopted by the Ministries) that targets both individual consumers in general and specific bodies, such as producers' and consumers' associations and the schools;
- disseminated through the utilization of leaflets mailed directly at home, following the example of similar initiatives (ex. campaign about the use of medications organized by the Ministry of Health).

A correct informative campaign on welfare-friendly products, whose content derives from farming practices that follow the standards identified by the researchers, would not only help consumers making their choices. It would also reward the work of farmers who comply with those parameters.

'[A]n informational campaign similar to the one recently organized by the Health Ministry, a strong and targeted campaign, because this would also help to give producers who adhere to a potential protocol on animal welfare more visibility and acknowledgment, and this in turn would increase the number of farms...; I think there would also be an economic advantage, because the productive cycles internal to our territory would be rewarded' (Rural woman).

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## 2.7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 2.7.1 GENERAL CONSIDERATION

According to the participants, the FGs have been an useful tool to acquire a greater awareness and knowledge on the issues related to animal welfare.

These focus group discussions have shown that consumers are more familiar with concepts of animal welfare and less concerned about food safety than 5 years ago (previous study by Miele and Parisi).



Till now in Italy there has been little discussion about avian flu, but there are signs of decrease in consumption of chicken. If the debate around the possible pandemic will develop as it is emerging in the UK, probably food safety will become again a major worry.

The prevailing definition of animal welfare is anthropocentric, aw is seen as an indicator of 'more important' characteristics such as healthiness, quality and taste.

The group of young singles seems to emerge as the less involved in the animal welfare considerations.

The group of the vegetarians and the politically active consumers did not show significant differences in attitudes and definitions of aw from the other groups, their contribution to the discussion is not set from the input given by the other groups.

Widely shared trust in large Italian retailers especially for perceived high standards of hygienic parameters, safety, quality across all groups.

Consumers reacted very positively to the 10 areas of animal welfare concerns proposed by the animal scientists; most participants showed trust towards animal scientists while addressing animal welfare issues, at the same time the vast majority rejected the GMO and showed a much more sceptical attitude towards science applied in that field.

However the majority of focus group participants failed to see the difference in their conceptualization of animal welfare (more holistic and inspired by wild animals, where natural condition of life, outdoors rearing, natural light and natural foods are of paramount importance) and the more pragmatic concept of adaptation to farm condition used by the animal scientists.

Wider information is considered instrumental in creating the condition for further consumers. involvement and commitment to increase the welfare of farm animals but also for affecting purchasing behaviour (e.g. choosing welfare friendly options).

Socio demographic variables such as income, education, age and sex do not seem significant in affecting the attitude towards animal welfare.



# 3

## UNITED KINGDOM

by

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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- Most consumers stated that they were concerned about animal welfare.
- Although most people were concerned how animals are treated, for many, there was an inbuilt disassociation between meat and animals, and a definite resistance to having to think about how the animals are reared.
- People, especially children (according to the adults in the focus groups) felt more sentimentality towards farm animals now than previous generations, because of the increased distance between urban and rural life.
- The different groups focussed on different attributes when shopping for meat, but the general concern was mainly with nutritional issues (fat content, salt content, protein content) and other health and safety issues (particularly BSE), followed by appearance.
- The biggest barrier to non-purchase of welfare-friendly products was price, although trust, and lack of time to look at labels were also high on the list. Other barriers were lack of information, and also the disassociation of production from animal welfare, where consumers were not thinking about the fact that meat comes from farm animals and the resulting welfare issues of animals when purchasing meat.
- The only welfare-friendly products commonly purchased were free-range eggs. The reasons for this were that they are clearly labelled, everyone had a good idea of the welfare issues regarding cage eggs, and they were not very much more expensive.
- There often appeared to be a link between the ethical and health reasons for buying welfare-friendly products, because the assumption was that if an animal had been treated better, it would be healthier to eat.

- The only product commonly avoided for welfare reasons was veal, although a few people also avoided non-organic or non-free-range chicken.
- Information on the impact of farming systems on animal welfare was gained from the media (television documentaries, radio programmes, and newspaper articles) and this did seem to have an effect on the consumers purchasing habits.
- There was very little knowledge of welfare labelling apart from that for eggs. Only one participant had heard of the RSPCA Freedom Foods and one of the Red Tractor logo.
- Most people are interested to know more about the animal welfare issues but are not prepared to actively search for information.
- Generally it was thought that a single EU welfare standard would be a good idea, and that its attainment should be recognisable by a single standard logo on products.
- There was a call for simplification of labelling and provision of clear information so that the labels could be easily understood.
- Some thought that all products should be produced to such a standard and that there should be no market for sub-standard goods. It was suggested that this should be put into place by the government.
- There were varying levels of trust for different actors, although supermarkets were universally distrusted. Several groups came up with the idea that any standard should be under the administration of a group representing all the separate actors throughout the food chain, so that no one group would dominate.
- It was generally thought that the Government should take responsibility for the issue of animal welfare, and that it should not be left to the consumer. There was a consensus that, as people find it hard to choose welfare-friendly goods when they are on a budget, they would in fact rather not have the choice and thus be forced to 'do the right thing'.

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## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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### 3.1.1 SOCIO-CULTURAL-ECONOMIC CONTEXTS OF ANIMAL WELFARE

Animal welfare is an issue of increasing importance in the UK for consumers, producers and Government. There have been increasing institutional activities concerned with

farm animal welfare, in relation to Government (e.g. the new Animal Welfare Bill, published October 2005 which plans to raise standards of animal welfare, strengthening penalties for offenders and enabling preventative action to be taken before suffering occurs), animal welfare lobby organisations, farm assurance bodies and food retailers. Despite this, and despite a high proportion of consumers that state that they are concerned about the animal welfare implications of the food that they purchase, 'animal welfare-friendly' food products represent a relatively very small proportion of total food products purchased.

This may be due to the limited supply of such goods to the market and the lack of widely recognised farm animal welfare schemes. In 2001, the Farm Animal Welfare Council set out a core framework encompassing an animal's basic needs, 'the Five Freedoms'. These have been incorporated into the RSPCA Freedom Foods scheme and other farm assurance schemes including the British Farm Standard Mark (the red tractor logo), but do not appear to be well-known or understood. The limited supply of such goods is illustrated by the following statistic relating to the RSPCA's 'Freedom Food' scheme which probably supplies only around 2 per cent of the livestock products marketed in the UK. Other products which consumers perceive to have positive animal welfare attributes include free-range eggs and meats, and organic livestock production. Free range eggs constitute about 15 per cent of egg consumption (Bennett and Yee, 2004) and barn/perchery eggs account for a further 5 per cent. Organic purchasing has increased substantially, but a core of 8 per cent of consumers purchase 60 per cent of all the organic produce. From this research, it would seem that the greatest hindrance is cost.

Overall meat consumption has reduced in the UK between 1980 and 2004, with the exception of poultry meat, where the consumption has doubled. Much of this has been exaggerated by food safety issues; beef and veal consumption fell to an all time low in 1996 at the time of the BSE crisis; mutton and lamb consumption dropped during the foot and mouth crisis in 2001; and the focus groups reveal that these issues of food safety are still very much on their mind, affecting trust in government and other food-related institutions. Food Assurance schemes were introduced to reassure consumers but it appears that there is little awareness of these schemes.

Yogurts are the fastest growing of the animal-based food products. Five per cent of the yogurt market is organic, where Yeo Valley is the dominant brand. The consumption of other milk and milk products is decreasing slightly.

### 3.1.2 PREVIOUS WORK

There is quite a body of literature relating to animal welfare issues in the UK that is reported in the literature review done for this study (Bennett and Yee, 2004). A number of consumer surveys have been undertaken (for examples see Bennett, 1997; Balnford and Fulponi, 1999; Bennett and Blaney 2002) that report a high level of concern about the way farm animals may be treated, not only because of the welfare of the animals

themselves, but also the impact that this would then have on food quality and safety. These concerns are mainly related to modern methods of intensive agriculture, where animals have limited space, are subjected to the routine use of antibiotics and other drugs, and are transported over long distances for sale or slaughter. There has also been a long running debate over the relationships between man and animals and the obligations of man towards animals (Bennett, et al., 2002; Caruthers, 1992; Dawkins 1980, 1990; Rollin 1992; Singer, 2000). The economic theory used to study animal welfare has been the utilitarian argument, that reducing animal welfare reduces the utility of some consumers and therefore society as a whole. Bennett et al. (2002) undertook a study asking citizens about their willingness to pay to support animal welfare legislation as a way of measuring the value people place on legislation. The study showed a positive link between moral intensity and people's willingness to pay to address the issue in question.

### 3.1.3 OVERVIEW OF STRUCTURE OF REPORT

The methods used in the research are reported in the next (second) section, followed by a section reviewing people's general eating and shopping habits and how this reflects their ethical stance towards animals. The fourth section concentrates on consumers' knowledge of animal welfare in general and specific animal welfare products and what they think of the provision of information on these subjects. The roles of responsibility for animal welfare, consumers own involvement in the animal welfare debate and trust in different agencies is examined in the fifth section. The sixth section relates to consumers' evaluations of the proposed scientifically-based standard for farm animal welfare, examining the consumers own spontaneous concerns for animal welfare with the proposed ten welfare concerns put forward by the EU scientists, and how this standard could be put into practice. The last section summarises the conclusions of the above.

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## 3.2 METHODOLOGY

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### 3.2.1 RESEARCH METHOD

Focus groups were used to collect the qualitative information needed for this research. They provide a very flexible method to collect consumers' in-depth thoughts and opinions. A loosely structured discussion guide was followed, ensuring coverage of the main topics but allowing for plenty of freedom of expression and debate within each group. This discussion guide was based on four main themes: Eating and shopping practices; Information and involvement; Assessing animal welfare principles; and Trust

and Responsibility. The data collected were then analysed to aid understanding of consumer behaviour in relation to animal welfare issues.

### 3.2.2 SELECTION OF FOCUS GROUPS

For the UK study, seven focus groups were undertaken. These were recruited for and hosted by a firm called Sensory Dimensions, but led by the UK project team. The recruitment followed the guidelines laid down by the project management recruitment guide, where the seven groups were chosen to reflect the different socio-demographic characteristics and 'lifestyles' discussed in the Florence meeting. These groups were:

- urban mothers;
- politically active/vegetarians;
- seniors;
- young singles – southern region;
- young singles – northern region;
- married or living with partner, without children at home;
- rural women.

The focus groups were all undertaken in March 2005; the first four in Reading (Urban, South), the next two in Leeds (Urban, North), and the final one in Earlsfield (Rural, Midlands). A screening questionnaire was used in the recruitment of the participants, to make sure they all met the relevant criteria (for example, that they all carried out at least 50 per cent of the household's shopping, as well as fitting with the relevant age, gender, life stage and urban/rural criteria). The participants were all unknown to each other. Because of the UK Data Protection Act, it was not possible to tie up an individual attributes with their focus group contributions, but a table giving the attributes of the participants in each group is given in the Appendix. Further details of their thoughts after the focus groups are also given in the Appendix.

### 3.2.3 OBSERVATIONS ON THE FOCUS GROUPS

In general, the focus groups went well. However, some groups were less balanced than others. For example, the Politically Active/Vegetarian group discussion was very much dominated by the two male vegetarian members, and it proved difficult to draw the other members in. Similarly, with the Rural Women group, a couple of members of the group did not really engage with the group or contribute to the discussion. On the other hand, all the other groups were very much more dynamic, especially the senior group, where all the members contributed substantially and in a balanced way.

#### 3.2.4 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

All the focus groups were audio-taped, video-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were then entered into a software package called NVivo, designed especially for the analysis of qualitative research. NVivo aids the qualitative analysis of textual data by providing a logical, structured means to order, sort, and categorise the transcribed text from the focus groups. Thus, this package allows the transcripts to be organised into topics by coding relevant sections of the text. These are then categorised under separate 'nodes' which may be free (i.e free standing) or tree nodes which can be used to catalogue categories and subcategories for easy access.

For this project, data was initially coded through the following eleven recommended nodes, although these were later subdivided.

- Practices.
- Knowledge and information (general).
- Knowledge and information (products).
- Preferences, dilemmas and barriers.
- Responsibility.
- Agency/involvement.
- Trust.
- Human-animal relationships.
- Spontaneous welfare concerns.
- Reactions on the 10 animal welfare concerns.
- Welfare quality information systems.

#### 3.2.5 THEORETICAL APPROACH

The first stages of analysis took the form of a systematic process of data coding and indexing. This was then followed by the procedures used in Grounded Theory. This involves the researcher building up theories from the concepts emerging from the data. The purpose of this is to generate or discover a theory or abstract analytical schema of a phenomenon that relates to a particular situation grounded in the experience and perceptions of the participants (Komives, 2005). In this study, we are trying to draw out theories of consumers attitudes to animal welfare based on the experience and perceptions of our focus groups participants on animal welfare issues.



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### 3.3 CULINARY PRACTICES: EATING, PREPARING AND BUYING ANIMAL FOOD PRODUCTS

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#### 3.3.1 FOOD CONSUMPTION CULTURES, AND HABITS

In recent years, there has been a huge revival in interest in food and cooking in the UK, with an explosion of cooking programmes on television and television chef celebrities. This has widened the array of foods that appear in the supermarkets, with rediscoveries of old varieties of fruit and vegetables, and appearance of previously thought exotic fruit and vegetables becoming the norm. It is in this sector (fruit and vegetables) and also convenience foods that the largest increase in food expenditure has been seen (Roe and Murdoch, 2005). The total expenditure on animal-based products has however decreased in current prices over the last ten years, which may have negative implications for aspirations to increase animal welfare standards and meat quality (Roe and Murdoch, 2005). However, certain higher-value, higher-welfare products have done better within the broad categories of animal-based products and the range of products has increased. One example of this is the increased availability of products labelled with breed. Many supermarkets now stock eggs labelled with their hen breed. Outbreaks of disease (foot and mouth, and BSE) have also encouraged the more discerning customers to search out meat from particular breeds of cattle and pigs. Despite this, there still appears to be a great separation between the eating and cooking of food and knowledge of where the food is coming from.

All the participants in the focus groups consumed meat at least once a week, with the exception of the two vegetarians. There were substantial differences between and within the groups as to eating habits, ranging from those who barely ever cooked and ate mainly from takeaway or readymade meals, to those who always cooked fresh ingredients from scratch. Very few admitted to buying ready meals but take-away meals were very popular especially at the weekend, especially amongst the Young Singles and the Living with partner, no child groups. A fairly typical pattern of eating follows;

‘I tend to also have a takeaway on a Friday, Sunday meal on a Sunday, and the rest of the week I cook whatever I’ve bought during the week’ (Empty nester).

The idea of a Sunday roast was popular particularly amongst the Midlands Rural women group:

‘I think we only have meat about four times a week, but we have a traditional roast on a Sunday, I try and get them (the family) together all around the table and perhaps one proper cooked meat in the week, but other than that, they’re quite happy with pizza, something on toast and that sort of light meal’ (Rural woman).

There were a few differences between the groups, for example the Politically active/vegetarian group were definitely more environmentally aware with concerns over

the local production of food and food miles, whereas those with children were more concerned with a lack of time and money, and the Senior group appeared to be the most health conscious.

Mothers generally ate with children, and there were several references to children not eating proper meat (or not meat that looked like meat), with a recognition that this is likely to be related to the distance now between food that we eat and the reality of food and farming, and also an increasing sentimentality towards animals.

'Children don't eat meat nowadays, do they?' (Empty nester).

'Because they're making them (the meat) into funny faces and different shapes' (Living with partner no child).

A certain sentimentality has crept into attitudes, particularly among the very young, and the responses below were very typical for focus group participants with children.

'My daughter, she won't eat beef, because she knows they're cows and that's why I haven't told her about bacon yet and she said, well, why don't they just wait for them to die' (Young singles, north).

'[M]y daughter to this day does not eat lamb.... [S]he used to when she was younger, but [when she realised she had been] eating their legs, she will never eat lamb again' (Empty nester).

'I take my children into a butchers and they think it's absolutely disgusting. I used to love going to the butchers with my grandma' (Empty nester).

In fact, many consumers are far removed from farming and manage to disassociate the meat with the animals in general, as is apparent from the following comments:

'I think when you're in the supermarket, you disassociate yourself when you see meat' (Empty nester).

'Yes, you don't look at it as a little pig or lamb, do you?' (Empty nester).

The feeling was not that animals should have similar rights to humans, but that all deserve certain minimum standards and need to be respected, that it was wrong to kill for the sake of it, but if one kills to eat, then that is acceptable.

'I think it's respect basically, respect on their lives, so you can eat them, but you respect them until you kill them, or you can hunt them, and then you kill it and eat it and this is respect. If you eat it afterwards, its respect for it, because you make a meal out of it' (Young single, south).

'[I]f you're eating an animal, I think the least you can do is treat it with respect and give it a quality of life it deserves' (Empty nester).

There are other references to the more general decreasing meat consumption. Some people were still having meat the same number of times a week, but reducing portion size and increasing vegetables consumption. BSE has affected the consumption of beef, particularly amongst mothers and young singles.

‘I did go off beef a little when it were that mad cow thing’ (Young single, north).

‘[O]ur children are in their early twenties, so I was very aware of the whole BSE thing and I started at that point only buying Aberdeen Angus meat, because I knew that (it) was supposed to be more free of the BSE sort of stuff and... I would buy meat from the cut meat counter at the supermarket, rather than buying it prepackaged’ (Senior)

What people are looking for when they buy meat, eggs and dairy products varies a lot between groups. Seniors group seemed to be the most informed and aware of food health properties, and were making food choices on the basis of fat and cholesterol content, rather than just price. The Rural Womens group also mentioned fat content, but they were more concerned with appearance of the food. Nutritional values and cost were high on the agenda of the Urban mothers focus group, but appearance (lean, looks nice) was considered the most important for several of the group.

‘But I don’t start thinking about how it’s produced, well not the first thing. First I’m deciding whether I’m even interested in buying it, you know, if it looks pretty grim, it doesn’t matter to me as a consumer how it’s produced, because I’m not even going to pick it up, you know, so when you’ve seen that it looks okay, then you might start considering whether it satisfies the other criteria, but if you’re not even going to pick it up’ (Urban mother).

‘I think they should have nutritional (qualities), I mean I consider meat products ought to be a good source of protein. So, I’m expecting if I buy a meat product for it to be meat and not necessarily to have been pumped up with water. I mean I avoid quite a lot of frozen stuff because everyone says it’s quite easy to pump up with water’ (Urban mother).

‘I wouldn’t pick it up if I didn’t like the look of it’ (Urban mother).

Several people mentioned avoiding lamb because it is seen as very fatty. None of the reasons for decreasing meat consumption relate to animal welfare.

The only welfare issue that does seem to have motivated purchasing habits is that of battery-caged hens. Most people would only buy free-range eggs, because they had heard of the poor welfare conditions of battery hens. This is probably as a result of a salmonella scare in the mid-1980s, a very well publicised campaign by the RSPCA in 2003, and numerous television documentaries about poultry farming. There was also mention of avoiding very large birds when buying chicken meat as they are seen as unnatural, and also welfare-unfriendly.

‘Similarly for chicken, I would have gone for either organic or corn fed or free range and avoided the supermarket’s very large chickens, which seem to be pumped up with goodness only knows what’ (Senior).

The majority of the focus group participants shop in supermarkets for convenience, although a few went to specific butchers. There was definitely an idea that butchers have better meat, use less packaging, and can provide you with what you want. Several people mentioned the use of butchers for special occasions, as they were seen as providing a superior product.

‘I’ll go to the supermarkets, but then if I want some really nice meat, I’ll go to the local butcher, who... is really good if you want to have a treat’ (Young single, north).

‘[I]f I was cooking a big meal for people, you might then think, well, maybe I’ll go and get a decent cut of meat from a butcher, but day to day, it’s just not practical, I can’t spend that much money every meal time’ (Young single, south).

On the other hand, one member of the Living with partner, no child group also thought butchers provided better value, as well as better meat:

‘You get more for your money, sometimes they throw a load in, if you’re having a barbecue or something... and you usually get better meat as well’ (Empty nester).

Many worried about what is put into food. For example, several people mentioned water and other added ingredients in bacon when bought packaged in supermarket, and bacon purchased from butchers was definitely seen as being better quality. Not all liked the ideas of butchers and some felt that the butchers had less information on the products and therefore could be trusted less.

‘We did have a butcher [but] I wouldn’t have gone for the stuff on a lot of these trays, covered, like peppered steaks and so on. Now, that was a so called proper butcher, but there was not labelling on that at all, so you didn’t know where anything came from and I didn’t go near the place’ (Senior).

A few people distinguished between supermarkets on quality of meat (particularly regarding less water on cooking). Local markets were popular with some groups. In the north, Leeds market was popular, and seen as a cheap place to shop with fresh produce. In the south, Reading farmers market was popular among some in the Young singles, and Politically active/vegetarian groups. The Politically active/vegetarian group members were also concerned about local shopping, and air miles (the only group to bring up this topic) and also wanted to support the ‘little guy’ rather than the supermarkets, but the dilemma between doing this and cost arose at this point:

‘I prefer to shop locally, because you’ve got to think about the air miles of some of these products that come from all over the world. So I go to the farmer’s market, which is once every two weeks here in Reading, or I tend to shop at the

market in Reading and there's like a local organic Co-op that's in Reading' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'I prefer to support the little guy in a way, but most of the time, the supermarket is for convenience and it does work out a lot cheaper' (Politically active/vegetarian).

On the subject of choice in supermarkets, comments generally related to there being too much for some things, but at the same time, it was difficult to find some products, for example vegetarian food:

'[B]ut at the same time, the huge Asda in Reading, for example, I do find surprisingly limited at times for things like vegetarian food.... I do buy frozen pizzas for convenience and they have a whole aisle dedicated, but only two types of frozen pizza for vegetarians in the whole shop' (Politically active/vegetarian).

A general worry about processed meat products, particularly chicken nuggets, surfaced on several occasions. A typical comment from a woman in the urban mothers group follows:

'Exactly, I would never buy chicken nuggets or anything like that, I just wouldn't' (Urban mother).

At the same time, some of those with children seem to think they were essential, the sort of things that other people's children would just expect. There was also a general understanding that for those with children, often time and effort is such a premium,

'[I]f you have children, you have a lot less time on your hands, and that's why people tend to pick up, because if you're tired and have just come in from work, and you have to go shopping and the kids are screaming, its just a lot easier to chuck a box in the trolley and put it in the microwave for ten minutes, you know, people are sacrificing health threes days for ten minutes extra. It's a lot of time' (Young single, south).

A couple of people went to a huge amount of trouble to buy meat and cheese. A man bought some of his meat in France, one woman bought most of hers in Devon. Others bought cheese from a delicatessen because they claimed it tasted better:

'[A]nd half the time, I buy it (meat) in France, because I think it is better produced and better presented' (Senior).

'[M]eat I buy from the supermarket, but cheese I buy from the delicatessen in town. I like it because you can taste it' (Young single, south).

### 3.3.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONSUMPTION AND ANIMAL WELFARE ISSUES

Very few of the above statements have any bearing upon animal welfare issues. Animal welfare is not an issue that seems to crop up spontaneously except with regard to poultry and this is largely because of the amount of publicity that there has been about poultry farming in the UK, whereas in general the public seem far less informed about, or aware of, welfare concerns for other types of farming. Any comparison between butchers and supermarkets was related to value, better quality product, being able to ask for specific cuts etc, and reduction in packaging, rather than any reference to how the animals were treated while they were alive.

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## 3.4 CONSUMERS' KNOWLEDGE OF ANIMAL WELFARE AND WELFARE-FRIENDLY FOOD PRODUCTS AND THEIR EVALUATION OF THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON THESE SUBJECTS

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### 3.4.1 ANIMAL WELFARE AND FARMING PRACTICES

Most of the focus group members had very little knowledge of farming practices and animal welfare issues, apart from those relating to poultry and veal, with the exception of some of the Politically active/vegetarian group who had obviously considered questions of animal welfare before. All the groups had a basic idea of what they thought welfare should involve, and three of the groups (Seniors, Urban mothers, Politically active/vegetarian), brought up the idea of a holistic approach, considering the whole animal's life from birth until, and including, slaughter.

The following quote is from one of Politically-active/vegetarian group with regard to her view of animal welfare.

'It's the conditions the animals are kept in, the freedom they have to roam, the quality of life they are given, things like battery farming to reduce energy consumption at the expense of the animals, just things like that. The term welfare speaks for itself, really, just the quality of life that the animals receive more than anything' (Politically active/vegetarian).

The next two quotes illustrate the concern that society should not just consider how the animals live, but also how they die.

'Yes, right from the start to when they're slaughtered' (Urban mother).

'The overall production, the way its kept and the way its fed and the way its slaughtered, the whole lot' (Senior).

‘[B]ut when you talk about the overall business of animal welfare, you could have an animal which is free range, so that aspect is fine, but how is it killed, is it killed humanely. So for me, it has to be the whole thing right across the board, right from the start to when the animal is knocked on the head and becomes part of the food chain for us’ (Senior).

There are frequent references to poultry farming being the worst kind of farming, which seems to relate to a significant coverage of the subject in recent years on the television, radio and newspapers. Some examples of consumers’ reactions to this area as follows:

‘The chickens are really bad’ (Empty nester).

‘I saw chickens and they were standing on each other, it was horrible, they didn’t have feathers on and they were squawking and its was horrible, absolutely horrible’ (Empty nester).

‘[S]ome of the pictures I’ve seen of animals suffering, like chickens being injected with hormones so they so big that their legs break beneath them’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

Only one member of focus groups referred to other farm animals being kept in bad conditions:

‘It’s like that with pigs and cows, they’re all packed in a shed’ (Empty nester).

On the other hand, there was a lot of concern with how animals are transported and also how they are slaughtered rather than how they are kept during their lifetime. This probably relates directly to the information on the television and radio on these issues. Transporting is a particularly big issue that most people had heard about. Indeed, there was much controversy in the UK few years ago with animal welfare protests at Dover and other ports over live sheep being transported to France.

‘Because they’ve to keep the meat fresher, so that’s why they transport them, they pile them all in a truck and they get so distressed, I should think, because they want the meat fresh, they will not transport the dead animal’ (Empty nester).

‘[S]omething on the news a couple of years ago that they transported some sheep and they didn’t even have a drink for about twelve hours and its not good, is it?’ (Empty nester).

‘[J]ust horror stories you hear about animals dying in transit’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘No, they were in terrible conditions, weren’t they, they were dying as they were being transported’ (Senior).

Veal was also mentioned in four of the focus groups (Living with partner, no child, Seniors, Urban mothers, and Young singles, north) as a food that they would not touch

because of the way it was produced. Evidence for this again came from television documentaries.

‘You know there was a documentary on last night about the veal being processed and the calves, they’d got a chain on them and they couldn’t even move. They keep them in the dark for two or three months they do, for the colour of the meat and exports to France and something, that was disgusting, because I never hear of people eating veal’ (Young single, north).

### 3.4.2 ANIMAL WELFARE-FRIENDLY FOOD PRODUCTS

The full list of products used in the focus groups is given in Appendix Three, and consisted of a broad range of products including sausages, chicken nuggets, yogurts, eggs, bacon, and pork chops. Some of these were organic, some free range, or otherwise claiming some welfare-friendly production. The range of products included the usual availability of ‘welfare-friendly’ products found in most UK supermarkets, (Roe and Murdoch, 2005) namely, free range chicken, free range eggs and outdoor reared bacon, as well as more specialised foods. The labels varied greatly as to the detail they gave the consumer about the product, with for example the Free range and the Duchy dry-cured bacon giving a lot of information on the package as to how the animals had been kept, and, on the other hand, the Yeo Valley Yogurt and other organic products which rely on the organic standard to relay their welfare message. Other products were not necessarily animal welfare friendly, but described as ‘finest’ emphasising quality. In general, there seems to be a blurring of the labels of quality, organic, free-range, with very few products using all three labels to describe any products. Indeed, the market audit undertaken by Roe and Murdoch (2005) revealed a complex, disaggregated market, where a number of products make welfare claims but carry no recognised production standard.

The Focus groups revealed that most people had bought free-range eggs (although not necessarily the brand shown as an example) and the Yeo Valley yogurt (organic) but not very many of the other products. The Rural Midlands women recognised, and had bought more of them, than the other groups. They had purchased the chipalatos, the chicken nuggets, the yogurts, the Sainsburys Taste the Difference.) but they had not bought them for animal welfare reasons. Most of the concerns were to do with what might have been added and how good/bad it would be for human health (for example injecting with water, hormones etc). Bacon was a product that was discussed at length for the potential additives that it might contain.

One of the young singles from the Reading area (south group) had bought the yogurt, not for welfare reasons but because it had been produced locally. Many people were buying free-range eggs:

‘[We] recently found a source of free range eggs, where you can actually go and see the chickens running around in the areas and virtually see the eggs being



picked out, so we've actually started eating more eggs now, because we quite like them, but there's not a lot of logic in that' (Senior).

But not all were necessarily doing so for animal welfare reasons. There were other concerns that the way they were produced might have health repercussions for those that ate them.

'[T]hat was one of the reasons I was very careful with chickens, because of the growth hormone stuff that I'd heard of when I was at college, that was put into them and I just thought I wanted to be careful for my children' (Senior).

The organic label was a label that was instantly recognised by most of the focus group members, and was also a label equated with good animal welfare practice.

'Yes, I like the Soil Association stamp, things like that which are for me just a signal that they're ok to buy. Even though that's meat, but you get that on lots of products and it's a sign you can trust' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'I think organic products and higher end stuff, they're treated better. It kind of makes me wonder why, you know, what do they do to the cheap stuff that they don't want to tell you about that they 're quite happy to promote with the other stuff' (Empty nester).

'Well, if something's organic, you'd assume that the animal's well looked after' (Urban mother).

'Yes, [we] buy organic chickens, because... battery hens, they're kept in terrible conditions' (Urban mother).

'[W]e know what we're going to go for, I mean if we're going to go for the organic, we know they should be reared in a nice way or a proper way' (Politically active/vegetarian).

The next quote from a lady in the Rural Midlands group was in reply to the question, 'which labels do you think provides the best information about animal welfare?', and thus reiterates this point.

'I think once you've seen the organic name, it speaks volumes to me, too expensive, but still speaks volumes' (Rural woman).

However, there is also a lot of uncertainty about what organic actually means. Some participants took a cynical view that it is just a way for farmers and retailers to get more money, others just found the term confusing.

'I find organic a really confusing term as well, I don't know what people mean by organic. Some people claim to grown vegetables organically, but sometimes it can just mean that they don't put all of the pesticides on that most people do, and all

that kind of things, so I find it really confusing, so as a result most of the time, I don't bother buying it' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'[I] come from Germany, and in Germany its very clear if its organic, and it's also considering animal welfare, and I can be sure of that, and the vegetables will be organic and I assume it's the same in the UK... but actually I don't really know how are the laws over here' (Politically active/vegetarian).

Other people chose organic for nutritional reasons:

'Chickens I do try and buy either corn fed or organic chicken, because you never know how much water is in pre-packaged chicken' (Rural woman).

'[S]imilarly with chicken... I would have gone for either organic or corn fed or free range and avoided the supermarkets' very large chickens, which seem to be pumped up with goodness only knows' (Senior).

There appeared to be very little awareness of any specific animal welfare labels, and where people were concerned, they tended to buy free range or organic, and assume that these labels indicated a certain amount of welfare-friendliness towards the animal. An example of such a comment, this one from the seniors group, is given below.

'Because as far as I am aware, a standard method of welfare labelling doesn't exist, so apart from if I'm buying eggs, I'll go for free range or organic, because that's actually something that's on the box' (Senior).

One lady from the rural Midlands groups had heard of freedom foods, and another lady in this group mentioned the red tractor logo, but their knowledge of what these labels meant was very hazy. None of the other focus group participants had heard of these labels. Many of the focus group participants said that if they were aware of welfare-friendly products and had the choice, that they would choose welfare friendly, but then, of course, the cost issue comes in.

Because there has been a lot of publicity about battery farmed chickens (including a poster publicity drive in 2003 by the RSPCA), their welfare was very fresh in most of the participants minds. They recognised that this was the case, and that most of them knew very little about other types of meat production. The three following quotes are typical and highlight this point.

'[A]nd that's probably because more people do buy free range eggs, because that's one of the areas that have been highlighted to the public, that's probably why they're doing it' (Urban mother).

'[Y]ou understand the eggs, you know whether they're farming or whether they're battery ones, but I think with the meat, you don't. It might say it's organically fed, but you haven't really got a clue where it comes from and what you're eating' (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘You’re always prompted to buy free range [eggs], because it’s better for you and better for the animals... but meat wise, they tend to not sort of advertise’ (Young singles, north).

Every focus group mentioned that people get most of their information on animal welfare from the TV and radio, and the enterprises that people knew most about were the ones that had been discussed a lot through the media.

‘I think I’d probably pick up the information from magazines, from newspaper articles, radio and television programmes, because I’m interested in food and therefore you key into these things, even if you just listen to it in the background’ (Senior).

‘It all depends on what press coverage there’s been recently as well. If there’s been like a TV programme on how hens are kept, than people will take a lot more notice the couple of weeks after buying chickens’ (Urban mother).

‘Because they have these undercover tv programmes, where they go in with the cameras in their bag and they film the chickens doing this and the pigs in all the swill and everything’ (Urban mother).

‘Well, since that awful thing [television documentary] about the chickens, when you see chickens packaged in the supermarket on the joints, its marked, its an acid burn, because they can’t stand up, and I don’t think I’ve bought a chicken since... I can’t afford organic chicken, so I’ve not bought a chicken since then’ (Urban mother).

‘If you ask people, there’s probably more people that are buying free-range eggs as opposed to battery eggs now, and there’s probably more people who buy dolphin friendly tuna. So it was advertised or highlighted a bit more’ (Urban mother).

Only two people mentioned finding information on the internet. One was from the urban mothers group, the other from the politically active/vegetarian group. The latter made the point that because he is particularly interested in what he eats, he goes to a lot of effort to find information about the food he eats, but recognises that not everyone would be quite so proactive.

‘I’d say, because I am vegetarian, I tend to be quite proactive in searching for information, so mainly my sources of information for things would be things on the internet. But on the other hand, I don’t know how you’d give the information to people who were not necessarily looking for it’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

Time involved in pursuing information is obviously an issue for many people – although they may be interested, welfare is not an issue at the top of their agenda and thus not one that they will actively invest time in. Lack of opportunity also arose, especially amongst mothers with small children, who were in agreement that they would

like to know more about the food they eat and offer their children, but never seemed to have the time or energy.

'My children are very small, and if the radio happens to be on and it happens not to be drowned out by the sound of small children, and its an article in which I happen to be interested in happens to be on, and the same with television, but its opportunity with having small children around. It ought to be an issue to which I pay more attention, but the opportunity is not always necessarily there' (Urban mother).

Many people felt that they were not well informed on animal welfare issues and there was a general agreement that there is not enough information readily available and in a form that everyone could understand. Typical comments are as follows;

'[S]ome of the information, I agree with you, is very, very poor there, you look at it and it just says nothing, the next says it's quality standard, whatever that means, and then a bit later on you get ones that list all the things they do and don't do and that includes to a certain extent, but there's not much information available for you to make the decision (Senior).

'I don't think I would actually know how a herd to cattle or beef were actually produced nowadays. I don't think the information is out.... I think if we actually knew some of the stuff, I don't think we would eat the meat' (Senior).

'I would like the information to be clearer, like more information. It would be good if every product had information and told you exactly how they'd been kept. Its not enough, they don't really give enough, I think they should give you a proper description' (Young single, south).

'[W]hen it comes to animal welfare, I'm very, very conscious and I would prefer not to buy something... not well treated... but the trouble is you never know, and that's what upsets me most, because I think there's not enough information and for those, even for free range, for instance, I'm not convinced, even when I buy it, what does it mean, free range, it means that the chicken, instead of eating meat and being stapled to the floor, I don't know, can go round in a circle, I don't know, what does it mean, because I think there are many windows in these things (Young single, south).

Some took a slightly cynical view towards the programmes. The senior focus group in particular discussed the veracity of the documentaries, and how unbalanced and one sided they may be.

'I would say that I'm informed as whatever the particular article or programme was trying to tell me, but whether that was across the board, I wouldn't know, because it's very easy for people to say particular words and press particular buttons, so they know what they're meaning but its not what I'm hearing' (Senior).

'[A] lot of programmes, both on television and on radio about animal welfare in different guises, and... the way they're produced, there will be a slant, the producer and presenter is trying to get their message across and the message may not be the correct one' (Senior).

For specific information, some people did say that they did look at labels, especially those in the Living with partner, no child and Senior groups. The country of origin was felt by many to be one of the most important things to look out for, and it was mentioned by several people that they preferred to buy things produced in the UK. Others mentioned that they look at labels more now than in the past.

'I think we're becoming much more aware of what we're looking at now, I tend to look at the packet, where probably two or three years ago, I wouldn't even have dreamed of looking at the packet' (Politically active/vegetarian).

Some looked at labels for very specific information, the Senior group, as has been mentioned, were very conscious of health issues and a fairly typical comment is given below.

'I'm afraid, but we tend to look at the label, at least I do fairly neurotically, to see what the fat content is and how much salt there is in it' (Senior).

How effective the labels are often comes down to lack of time and education to take in what the labels are trying to say. There seems to be a need to simplify the message, and also to educate.

'I mean when we are shopping we look for a certain level of things, but we really haven't got time, I mean most of us have not had the education to understand to the next level to what is happening to our food and particularly our meat and our animals. There would need to be much more education generally into what it is, I mean we look at it, it sort of says something like 30 per cent fat free, well 30 per cent of what fat free, we bandy around these percentages and these words, but do we actually understand what they mean?' (Seniors).

One of the urban mothers commented that because there is such limited space on the packaging, it would be better to put the more detailed information out at the front of the supermarkets, for example the information on E numbers. Others agreed with this and suggested that there should be a list of all the abbreviations so everyone knows what they mean.

And then there is the question as to whether people do really want to know? Some said that they would rather not know, as they had a feeling that some of the welfare was probably not very good, so therefore would rather not hear about it. The Urban mothers definitely agreed about this and it was also brought up and discussed in both Young singles groups. Examples of comments are given below.

'I think it's twofold you know, I kind of think, it's an awful confession, but to me, ignorance is bliss' (Urban mother).

'But at the end of the day it's easy enough to stick your head in the sand and say, oh, they don't publicise it enough, but at the end of the day everyone knows what they actually do with the animals and how they treat chickens, they know the whole lot and yet they still buy the meat and nine times out of ten people would still rather pay less and pretend its not happening, rather than try and pay, two, three times the amount and make sure they've got free-range meat, because at the end of the day, people are worried about their money. As long as they can sort of ignore it and pick up the cheapest thing in the supermarket' (Young single, south).

'You switch off, you don't really want to know' (Urban mother).

'[W]e don't see slaughter houses, we don't know what goes on, we just see the meat on the shelves, we have an image of a cow in a field and we go to the supermarket to buy our meat and we think it's been a nice process up to that, but up to that, most of the time it hasn't' (Young single, north).

'I think most of us, we don't want to know that its not kept very nicely or the conditions or pictures of it' (Urban mother).

'But there is all that information, and yet people on one hand know these things are not great and still on the other hand they buy them, and it's partly because they're cheap and peer pressure from kids and advertising on the telly' (Urban mother).

### 3.4.3 KEY BARRIERS TO THE PURCHASE OF WELFARE-FRIENDLY GOODS

Cost is the issue that comes up in all groups, and for most of the participants as the greatest barrier to purchasing more animal welfare friendly products. It is not the only issue, but was by far the most important one. It seemed to be particularly important to the young singles groups, but was discussed in all groups. A selection of quotes illustrating this point and the context in which this issue arises are given below:

'If it was cheaper, I'd buy it' (Young single, north).

'There will always be a market for... the battery hens and everything else, because of the price. If you're on the breadline, I suppose if you have no choice of feeding your children battery eggs' (Urban mother).

'I'd like to think that it had been killed humanely or looked after, but it's price. If you're having to feed a family within a budget and you've got x amount of pounds and your kids are nagging you for this' (Empty nester).

'Yes, I'd have to say price [in response to q about anything preventing buying animal welfare friendly products], because that's the one thing you can't really

help, with all the best will in the world, if you can't afford any price, then you can't' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'[P]eople can choose to have it, but it is just a cost issue, and the fact that there's still so few [welfare friendly] products and people don't know enough about it' (Young single, north).

'Exactly, I mean if it was possible for me to afford meat that had been humanely killed and all the rest of it, alongside meat which hadn't of course you're going to go for the stuff which is pro animal welfare, but I can't afford it, I wouldn't be able to afford meat full stop, pretty much' (Young single, south).

A number of people pay the extra for free range eggs because they feel that the price is not that much extra, but balk at the idea of paying a lot extra for meat. The price differential between free-range eggs and cage eggs has narrowed in recent years, with free-range eggs becoming cheaper and cage eggs more expensive. This has not happened to the price differential between welfare friendly and non-welfare friendly meat products.

'Like I say, I try to be quite good when I buy free-range eggs and things like that, but when you're buying meat, it does bump up the price quite a lot, the organic and if it was cheaper, I think a lots more people would buy it and be a lot more conscious about what they were buying' (Young single, north).

'I'm all for animal rights and all the rest of it, but I cannot afford to be paying two, three times more for me, I just can't, I wouldn't be able to afford to buy meat. I mean I'll buy free-range eggs and if I had the money then it'd be great if I could afford to buy meat where I know the animals weren't packed into little pens and they were killed humanely and all the rest of it. But its just not practical, its not like I'm sticking my head in the sand... it may seem that way (Young single, south).

Where there is an equation between animal welfare and organic food, there is also a concern over price.

'Well, you see a lot of people will go for the cheaper stuff, because if you're on like a lower income or whatever, you can't afford to go organic, it would be very very difficult. So you just for the cheaper stuff and go, oh right, yeah it's buy one and get one free' (Empty nester).

'I also think its just cost, I mean I imagine us here perhaps can afford a certain percentage of income to spend it on food and we're all sort of within an age range so we know what organic was, that's what we were brought up on, but it worries me at the other scale of people who haven't got it, that don't perceive that a large percentage of their income should be spent on food' (Rural woman).

One of the members of the Urban mothers' focus group said that the cost of welfare-friendly meat has led them to eat less of it, rather than buy meat which she feels is less nutritious. This strategy of changing consumption habits because of the price barrier

'But cost is still an issue and we actually started eating a lot less meat, simply because we thought, you know... on a budget, you can either give rubbish that's half water, half salt, whatever, or eat something a bit more vegetarian. That's been the choice that we've made recently' (Urban mother).

She was the only one to mention this sort of strategy for overcoming the price barriers, of actually changing consumption patterns. She was, however, not alone in this thinking, as others also felt that 'welfare-friendly' was also better for you. An example of this thinking is given below.

'If I had the money, I'd get the best of everything, it's better for you' (Empty nester).

Another barrier to the purchasing of animal welfare friendly foods is time. This is a real issue for those with small children, and in the urban mothers group, this came up time and time again, although it was not an uncommon issue in the other groups too. Thus, these consumers are normally trying to get their shopping done very quickly, and they don't have time to read labels, or to find perhaps the more animal welfare products.

'I never have the chance to go for a leisurely shop, because I'm rushing here, there and everywhere and then I think I'll drop the kids off there and I'll just whip in and get that, you don't have time to dance around with your trolley' (Urban mother).

'I just don't think the guide was big enough. You know, if you've got a couple of kids tagging along with you, then the last thing you want to do is pick up and look for specific markings' (Urban mother).

'I find it hard to find, I don't think it's very clear at all. Usually I'm in a rush to go shopping anyway and so you just grab what you want and it's far too time consuming to read about every product' (Young single, south).

There was a general feeling that animal welfare friendly food was better for you, more nutritious and therefore was a good thing from that point of view, and most people thought that if they had sufficient time and money, then they would purchase more animal-welfare friendly goods.



#### 3.4.4 CONSUMERS' EVALUATION OF THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION RE: ANIMAL WELFARE

Most consumers were really very unaware of specific animal-welfare labelling, with only one participant having heard of Freedom Foods, and no recognition of the little Red Tractor logo. Most felt also that the provision of information at the supermarket level was sparse, although the feelings about food labels was mixed, with some consumers feeling that there was too much information on the labels, and others thinking there was too little. Two contrary views follow, where the first woman would like more information on the labels, and the second feels that it needs to be provided elsewhere in the shop.

'I think they ought to have more evidence really, the whole process, how they're treated and after that, how they're slaughtered and that, because from what you've seen on television, a picture of a happy pig. I mean there always seems to be something else, if it's not mad cows, its something else' (Rural woman).

'[W]ith the limited space on packaging, it would be nice to perhaps have that information available at the front of the supermarket, if you want to got into all the ins and outs of your E's and things' (Urban mother).

There were a number of items that participants mentioned that they would like to see on food labels (how the animals are treated, how they are fed) but the one point that was brought up by many people was that of country of origin. This following quote from a man in the senior group is typical.

'I would look at the label, depending on where I'd bought it, but I'd look to see what country it came from for a start. I mean it's two things about it it, isn't it, whether ou want to eat food from another country or whether you want to support Britain' (Senior).

The urban mothers group suggested an 'animal welfare friendly area' in supermarkets so you know that if you bought stuff from that area, you could be confident you were buying food that had been produced in a welfare-friendly manner:

'[I]t would be interesting, wouldn't it, because basically if the supermarkets were to have an animal friendly section, that's basically saying... that the rest is not!' (Urban mother).

They pursued this idea further to propose that then supermarkets could advertise on the basis of the percentage of welfare friendly produce they stocked, and that this would have an effect on which shops people would choose to use.

As mentioned in a previous section, most information on animal welfare was gleaned from television documentaries or listened to radio programmes detailing animal welfare issues. These seem to have been taken seriously, although some were more cynical about the balance in these programmes.

### 3.5 THE ROLES OF RESPONSIBILITY, AGENCY AND TRUST IN RELATION TO ANIMAL WELFARE

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#### 3.5.1 RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

The overwhelming feeling from the focus groups was that the Government were the only group that could be responsible for ensuring that animal welfare is looked after. A typical quote comes here from one man in the Senior group:

'I think it does need to come at Government level' (Senior).

One man from the young singles in the south group assumed that the government was already taking control:

'Well for me I've always had this naïve trust of the government that they're going to be looking at it [animal welfare]' (Young single, south).

However, there was severe doubt as to whether the government would take on this role (through lack of concern and lack of funds):

'I'm sure the majority of all people would want to do the right thing if it were made easier for them and the Government just turn away because they are not interested' (Young single, south).

'I don't think the government are going to support that or subsidise it' (Senior).

'I think it's a nice idea to expect the government to steer that, but I don't think it would happen, I think at the end of the day price would be the determining factor' (Senior).

One member of the seniors group further clarified this point, stressing that they felt that the animal welfare issue needs to become politically important before the government will act.

'[U]ntil you get into people's minds that animal welfare is important, I don't think the government are going to do anything, I don't think they'll do anything at all' (Senior).

Retailers were not trusted and it was also felt that consumers on lower incomes if given the choice between price and animal welfare, would feel compelled to go for the lower price. What was quite interesting was the idea that people would want to do the right thing, but they needed it to be made easier for them! Several people suggested that a certain level of animal welfare should be compulsory and it should not be left up to

consumers to be able to choose, as it would always be wrong to produce food from animals when they had not been properly looked after.

The following quote from woman in the young single south focus group sums this up:

‘The government, I think they’ve got a lot to answer for, I mean they’ve got so much money, I mean I know they’re always spending it on the wrong things, they’ve never got money for the right things, but they have got the money and if they said to the supermarkets, this is the way it is. The supermarkets will never do anything unless it’s told it has to do something, at the end of the day it’s just there to make money and if they had to do stuff, if they subsidised stuff like that, of course the public want to buy it, but you don’t want to pay ten times the prices and I’m sure the majority of people would want to do the right thing if it was made easier for them, and the Government just turn away because they are not interested, because its not nothing to do with money and the supermarkets are doing so unless they are told otherwise’ (Young single, south).

The idea that all food should, for moral reasons, be produced in an animal welfare friendly way was discussed in at least four groups (urban mothers, young singles north, Young singles, south and politically active/vegetarians).

‘[A]t the end of the day, this is about the animals, it’s irrelevant whether the consumer wants to buy something cheaper’ (Young single, south).

‘Its like your children, you expect your children to be brought up in a minimum standard, no matter now wealthy or poor you are, they all should be treated with respect... the animals... some are going to get better things and better this and the other, but you know, they should all be treated with the minimum standard’ (Empty nester).

The following quote is from a young single who thought that welfare-friendly goods might also become cheaper if all goods were produced in this way:

‘If it were all welfare, if it had to be welfare friendly, they wouldn’t have the price they have either... they wouldn’t be competing for price, because they’d all have to do the same thing, so they’d all have to drop their prices, so people would buy it’ (Young single, north).

The equation of organic with good animal welfare practice has been mentioned previously, but crops up again with reference to putting animal welfare standards in place. It is also interesting because it would appear that consumers believe that good animal welfare and organic practices will also make the food taste nicer, and that that is a good (main?) reason for improving animal welfare in the food production process:

‘I think everything should just be organic, have organic on the labels and then say it’s treated with good care and say where it came from, so that should be the new big thing, organic should just be the standard, because everything tastes nicer’ (Young single, south).

Recognising the main barrier to non purchase of animal welfare friendly items as cost, one from the Politically active/vegetarian group suggested:

‘[A]nother idea, maybe put an extra tax on products which are not according to animal welfare, so make those animal welfare products more attractive’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

A similar idea was proposed by one from the ‘Empty nester’ group:

‘[A]nd I suppose really the Government should subsidise that (animal welfare measures) and put these things into place’ (Empty nester).

The importance of having the government taking responsibility was also brought up when considering the need to police new standards.

‘They [the government] make the laws and they should look after the laws, I think, I don’t think there is another way to control’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

Members of the Rural Midlands Womens group voiced the acceptance that some of the responsibility falls upon consumers (i.e themselves). This was not discussed in any of the other groups. A couple of examples are given here.

‘We need education, don’t we really’ (Rural woman).

‘I used to just put the chicken nuggets in the freezer, but I watched this programme and I really should have known better’ (Rural woman).

There was some discussion about the percentage of income that people now spend on food, and how this has radically decreased over the past hundred years, and how the expectation of cheap food has driven the producers of animal products to less animal friendly systems. This again brings the consumers into the blame game for their current expectations, but at the same time, ultimate responsibility for this was laid at the door of Government policies.

Farmers were generally seen as victims of circumstance and government policies, and therefore not directly responsible for the ways that animals are now currently farmed. One reference below mentions how economic pressure on farmers can force bad welfare.

‘All the animals should be treated the same and should be all eaten the same... but some people can’t afford to do it, if they want to stay in business, and it’s pressure and it’s not right, just to make a living and keep your head above water’ (Empty nester).

Another sympathetic reference to small farmers comes from a young single man, whose grandfather farms near Worcester:

'I think local farming's good, because the farmers care for the animals and it's their livelihood, so they don't maltreat the animals, whereas, like you say, supermarket owned dairy farms or pig farms or chicken farms, it's all cost effective, they want the most amount of meat for the food they give then and stuff like that, whereas a normal farmer, they're not making much money, so its all they've got as it were... but stuff like battery farms and that, it's terrible' (Young single, south).

Supermarkets were in general blamed for encouraging bad animal welfare, as their greatest concern is seen to make money from selling vast quantities of cheap food, rather than having concern over how that food was produced. Because of the lack of trust in the motives of supermarkets, no one thought that the supermarkets should have responsibility for animal welfare.

'These terrible huge supermarket chains that you have, I think they have a lot to answer for and you don't have them in any other countries, apart from America where they've come from, and they try and push all of it upon you and buy as much as you can, cheap and cheerful, buy two get one free...' (Young single, south).

### 3.5.2 CONSUMERS INVOLVEMENT IN THE WELFARE DEBATE

Generally, there was very little involvement in the welfare debate by those attending our focus groups. No one had attended protests or demonstrations or had been very actively involved in animal welfare concerns. The most effective way of mobilising their own welfare concerns was felt to be through shopping habits.

'Only though your shopping habits and that's going to be affected by the way you perceive the product through its label' (Senior).

'I think in terms of buying, you hope your product choice makes a big difference in the big scheme of things. It's like boycotting, you hope that works sort of thing, so in that respect I'd say, yeah, the consumer can do that, but aside from that it all goes a bit extreme' (Politically active/vegetarian).

A few did put this into practice by avoiding certain foods for reasons of animal welfare. The foods boycotted on welfare grounds were veal (avoided by members of the Empty nesters, Seniors, and Young singles north focus groups), non dolphin-friendly tuna (avoided by Living with partner no children group members), Dutch bacon (avoided by Senior members), and chicken (avoided by members of the Urban mothers group). Veal was boycotted because its methods of production were reasonably well known. There has also been a campaign over non-dolphin friendly tuna fishing methods in the last few years in the UK so that was well known among the members of the focus groups. The Dutch bacon was avoided because it was felt that the Dutch did not have as high welfare standards for pig production as here in the UK. Chicken was avoided because of the

well-publicised battery-rearing methods, and also other matters that concerned consumers, in particular that the chickens were grown unnaturally large so they couldn't walk.

Other foods were avoided for other reasons. For example, perceived nutritional grounds over 'value' meat ( particularly cheap sausages and beef burgers from budget supermarkets and chicken nuggets – Living with partner no child, Urban mothers), and 'child-welfare' grounds for Nestle products (avoided by Politically active and Senior groups).

A build up of pressure from consumers as a result of education was another point that was brought up in the Seniors group:

'I think you can get political pressure from outside, because Mcdonalds has recently started to introduce salads and reduce the fat content, and I can imagine if people said that 30 per cent of the food that Tesco's is selling is zero-starred and 10 per cent if five star, they're bad but Sainsburys is very good, it would push them towards trying change their product mix, because they look good' (Senior).

The issue of trust in supermarkets came up again here, and the fact that consumers preferred to shop in little shops, rather than supermarkets was mentioned a few times. However, it is difficult to know whether the concern is really for the animal welfare, or concern over the nutritional content and safety of the food as a result of the way the animal was produced.

'That's why people are going back to the little shops, because you are too bombarded, its very stressful going to the supermarkets. If you go in a little shop, you can have a nice friendly chat, nice and calm, you can ask the butcher where it's come from and also of theirs is award winning meat, they know exactly where it came from' (Empty nester).

### 3.5.3 TRUST IN LABELS AND AGENCIES

#### *Trust in labels*

There was a real dearth of any animal welfare labelling knowledge, apart from the 'free range' label associated with eggs and chicken. This is a label that most of the focus group participants took seriously and trusted although not all of them.

Most of the information here about trust in labels and agencies relates to the organic label. For some, the organic label was trusted completely, and for many they also believed that this meant that the animal welfare was much better. However, there were still some who were more cynical, as these quotes below show:

'I don't believe that because its been left for two years it can be organic, I am still not convinced' (Empty nester).

'I don't think anything can be that organic, that pure of pesticides' (Empty nester).

'[A]lso with organic, its going to cost more to feed an animal with all these additives and that, so really organic should be cheaper, because that's how it was done years ago' (Senior).

One of the comments that does relate directly to animal welfare labelling brings up a suspicion about whether any standards relating to the animal welfare label would actually be enforceable and therefore should there be a label, it would be difficult to have complete confidence in it.

'Trust, I imagine it would be very difficult to put in place people round [the clock] to monitor or inspect and do more inspections and all the rest of it, so I don't know that I would personally trust implicitly on the label if it said, if you looked at the animal welfare standards, I don't know that I would trust that completely until its been in the system a long time, because I don't know' (Young single, south).

### *Trust in agencies*

This seemed to vary considerably amongst the different focus groups. The Living with partner, no child group trusted the farmers, but not the Government.

'I don't think it should be the government, because you can't believe them anyway' (Empty nester).

'Someone that knows about farming, the government don't know' (Empty nester).

The Rural Midlands women trusted the Food Standards Agency. The Seniors trusted the European Commission more than the UK Government, and scientific bodies and also some sources of the media. The Urban mothers were the most suspicious and didn't seem to trust anybody. They suggested:

'If there was a regulatory body made up of animal welfare, perhaps somebody from the government, somebody from here, somebody from the food standards, trading standards, a member, a representative from each one of them, so that basically they all keep an eye on one another' (Urban mother).

This idea was re-iterated by the Empty nesters group, where one member said:

'They need to check up different areas that different agencies are interacting and they're very much interlinked and working together, you're more likely to have a better system at the end of the day, you're more likely to have people who are really taking into account the necessary provisions for the animals and at the same

time, what the customer wants to see when they go shopping, how they want to purchase the food and what information they want to know, it's really important. So really it involved all these agencies working together with one objective in mind' (Empty nester).

The politically active/vegetarian group trusted the European Government and the Food Standards Agency too, but not the RSPCA. The young singles north group trusted DEFRA, but agreed that in order to oversee a new animal welfare system, one would need a group of individuals from different agencies, that covered the whole food production system. A typical comment follows:

'You need a group that deals with everything, the farming process right through to when it hits the supermarket, you need one group that does all of that... because at the moment you've probably got somebody who monitors it at the farming level and then you've got different sort of monitoring in different supermarkets' (Young single, north).

The young singles south group seemed generally to be trusting of most agencies except pressure groups like the RSPCA, because:

'[T]hey've always got their own agenda' (Young single, south).

Supermarkets suffer from a huge lack of trust:

'The thing that worries me, I don't know if it's the same for other food labelling, if you start bringing something emblazoned across it from some animal welfare things, can't supermarkets get round things with clever wording. I know this is part of the animal welfare debate to say then things are labelled low calorie, and actually its just three calories lower or low fat 80 per cent fat free which means its 20 per cent fat. If they emblazoning it all over the place, will they perhaps not find ways round it, do you know what I mean, they'll find ways around on better welfare animals, you know, that's better than the battery hens, but it still ones kept in whatever environment' (Urban mother).

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### 3.6 CONSUMERS' EVALUATIONS OF PROPOSED SCIENTIFICALLY BASED STANDARD FOR FARM ANIMAL WELFARE

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#### 3.6.1 OWN SPONTANEOUS LISTS OF ANIMAL WELFARE CONCERN

Each individual participant in the focus group created a list of their own personal unprompted concerns about animal welfare. The Figure 1.1 shows the concerns that came up most frequently, in terms of the percentage of participants who mentioned



them. This is not to say that those that came up most frequently are the ones that the participants felt were most important, although it does apply in some cases. Certainly, nearly all of the participants (87 per cent) included physical comfort, sufficient space and access to a natural environment as one of their concerns, and this is also the concern that most participants felt was the most important, followed by nutrition, which was also the next most popular concern with 68 per cent of the participants including it in the list. Many of the participants felt it was very important that the animals were kept in as close to the natural environment of the animal as possible, and this including feeding animals as close as possible to their natural diet. A few quotes are given below:

‘[N]atural sunlight, fresh air and good veterinary care’ (Rural woman).

‘Respect, space to roam, good feeding’ (Empty nester).

‘It’s got to be an environment, I hate to use this word, but that’s got some biodiversity which is more like a natural [environment]’ (Senior).

‘Natural, a more natural environment suited to each animal’ (Rural woman).

‘Low stress environment that’s appropriate to the animal’ (Urban mother).

‘While it was alive, I’d like it live how it was supposed to live’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘Keeping animals according to their natural habits’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

The next most popular concern was humane slaughter. This was a deep felt concern by many of the participants, who had obviously been upset by documentaries and articles in newspapers and magazines on this subject. Other things that came up were the use of routine medicines, artificial hormones, respect and transportation. The inclusion of transportation and slaughter are quite interesting, as they are in some ways another step away from the concerns of the scientists.

### 3.6.2 REACTIONS TO TEN WELFARE CONCERNS OF THE SCIENTISTS

Nearly all groups thought the concerns were very comprehensive and didn’t exclude anything, except breeding (genetic modification for better meat attributes which were then bad for the animals) and slaughter. These attributes are obviously not part of the day-to-day animal welfare concerns but it was interesting how often they cropped up, particularly concern over humane slaughter.

The urban mothers group thought the ten welfare concerns was just a condensed list of what they had themselves produced.

‘In short, everybody agrees that everything you’ve listed here is just a condensed version on the board’ (Urban mother).

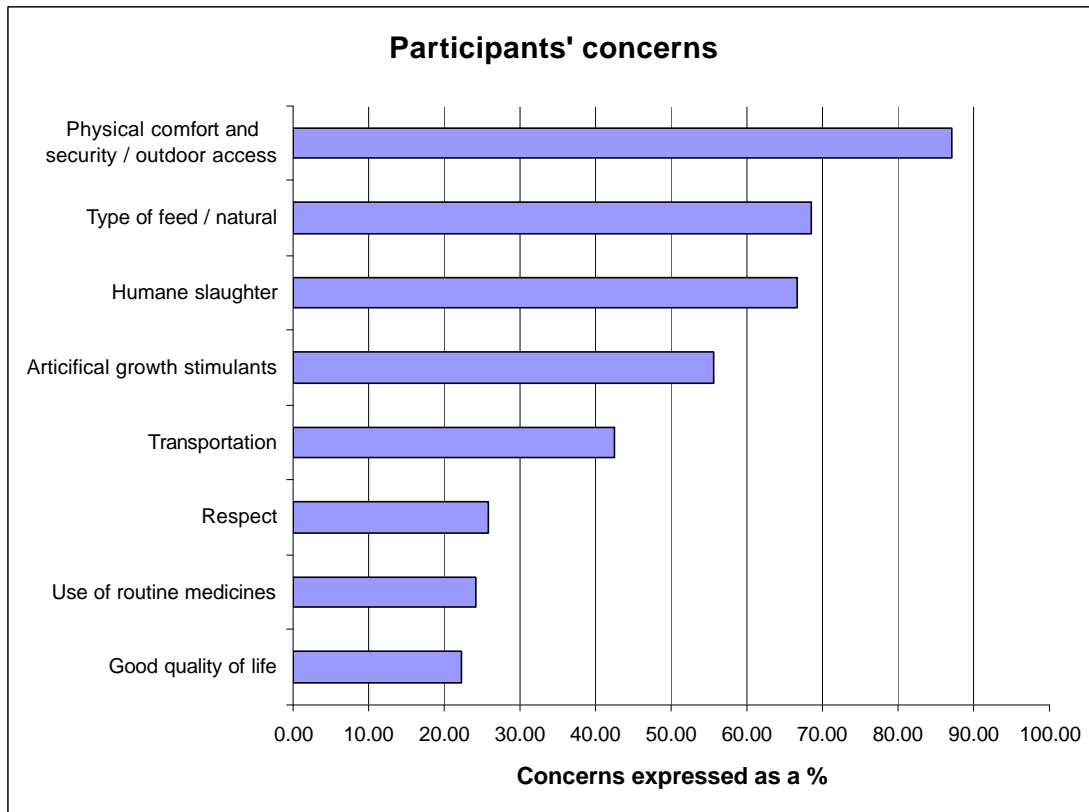


FIGURE 1.1 Participants' own personal unprompted concerns about animal welfare

All groups were of the opinion that if these measures were brought in, they would make a difference to the standards of animal welfare in the various farming systems.

In the 'Empty nesters' group there was general agreement that all these points were of equal importance. The urban mothers thought too, that they were difficult to separate out as they all complement one another and therefore could not rank them.

Among the other groups, either number 1 (hunger, thirst or malnutrition) and number 2 (physical comfort and security) or number 1 on its own were thought the most important. Apart from this, the only opinion expressed about ranking (most thought that all were important) was about number 8, the human-animal relationship, which was felt to be the least important. This was brought up in three of the groups, in the seniors, the urban mothers, and the young singles north) but each time it was discussed, the group member who had brought it up changed their mind. The young singles north group participant thought it important not to get too close to the animals,

'I think human animal relationship, I do believe they should be treated fair, but slaughter house staff, you wouldn't be able to do your job, would you , if you fell in love with them' (Young single, north).

The urban mother group participant who had brought up the human-animal relationship was unsure of the relevance of the relationship:

‘On number eight, the human animal relationship, with animals that are being farmed for our consumption, do they necessarily have a great deal of interaction with people?’ (Urban mother).

There was confusion in the urban mothers group also over whom the improved welfare is supposed to benefit, whether the concern is to produce better meat for us, or just about the welfare of the animals. They did, however decide that it would make the consumers feel better about meat consumption:

‘Like you say, you wouldn’t feel so bad if you felt they’d had a half decent life’ (Urban mother).

### 3.6.3 CONSUMERS’ IMPRESSIONS OF LIKELY EFFECTIVENESS OF STANDARDS

All the focus groups were of the opinion that if these measures were brought in they would make a difference, although the politically active/vegetarian group were a bit more cynical, but one member of the group did think such a measure would bring reassurance:

‘It would reassure me quite a lot’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

The young singles north group thought would help choose between products. This feeling is conveyed in the following statement:

‘Yes, I think if there was a clear indication on the things that you were buying that the meat you were buying had been, whilst it was alive, had been treated with some care’ (Young single, north).

There was similar feeling in the Living with partner, no child group too, illustrated by the next quote.

‘Not all the agencies will conform though, will they, and that’s going to be the problem, so unless they bring in legislation, because if it’s not something that’s actually practiced at the moment, it’s not going to change, so it’s only those people who feel that there’s an interest there and they could fulfil that niche of the market, it’s if it becomes more and more popular, then the Government might think about making it mandatory, but they need to bring in legislation to actually do that’ (Empty nester).

Most of the groups came to the conclusion that a single standard as opposed to a range (like a star system) would be better and less confusing. There was also a time element to this, as revealed in the following quotes by some of the rural women group.

‘Some sort of logo that you’d recognise, because you haven’t got time to read all through everything’ (Rural woman).

'I think a clear stamp that we all know and recognise' (Urban mother).

'Its like if you were shopping and you saw organic, you'd head straight for that, if that's what you buy, so it needs to be something that's quite prominent and catchy so you don't have to search for it' (Rural woman).

'At the end of the day, when you're doing your shopping, you don't want to have to be reading loads of information, you want to know something that you recognise' (Young single, north).

'And to get away from the busyness of a packet, I mean look how many logos you've got on that' (Politically active/vegetarian).

It was not only the time and package simplifying aspect of the single standard that appealed. Many of the participants also felt that it was important to have one standard that had to be reached, and any tiering or adding levels would confuse the issue, and make compliance less likely:

'The British standard for any meat or poultry or anything' (Young single, north).

'[T]hat's what you need and if they don't meet the standards, they either get closed down or fined or whatever' (Young single, north).

'You want one standard throughout the EU, and that's it basically, and if they don't comply, they get shut down or fined until they come up to the standards and that's it' (Young single, north).

'I think systems of stars and giving things five, four, three, two, one this is my personal opinion, I think that's a waste of time, I mean either things fit a standard or they don't and I think if there is a standard, we need to be informed of what that standard is, for chicken it's this, for pig it's this, for beef it's this, whatever, this is the standard. If these criteria are met, than it gets the mark and there aren't any nears or almos, because then things become wishy-washy. I mean personally I think there should be a standard and the information should be available to use as to what that standard represents and it's either yes, or no, not five stars because they've got this or not that or one star' (Urban mother).

The following quote from one of the urban mothers highlights the need for a very clear definition of the standard and the current feeling of uncertainty with the definitions of organic and free range from a lack of clarity of these labels.

'I think whoever's making the standard needs to draw a line, because they can be organic without being free range and equally they can be free range without being organic, but it's this thing about standards. Currently there's a standard for battery hens, but people who are considering animal welfare in greater depth still don't feel that's appropriate. So some body, and I don't mean an individual, I mean a body of people somewhere will decide and that should include people who are informed, experts or whatever, and I'm not an expert, should decide what the

standard is, and if the organic eggs reach that standard, then you can label them with that standard, but they don't, they could be labelled with organic but not with the standard, and if the free range eggs meet the standard, then they could be labelled with the standard even though they're not labelled organic, because they are not organic. Do you see what I mean? But draw a line' (Urban mother).

On the other hand, the Politically active/vegetarian group thought that a system of stars would be better. This may relate to many in the group being prepared to look a bit harder at what they were buying, and having time to work out what the different stars represented. This was different to the other groups who thought that a system with stars would be difficult to understand, as it would be different standards for each production system, and also that even the lowest rating would have to fit to some acceptable minimum requirement of welfare:

'[Y]es, a clear standard, especially I like the idea of a rating system... five stars, that would be really good, because then you'd know first hand,.. because everyone would'nt be able to get five stars, so that would be fantastic' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'[A]nd also it would be across the countries so if you couldn't read the label, you'd have something that would be very helpful' (Politically active/vegetarian). [This was said with reference to the stars idea, but presumably would equally apply to a single standard.]

'Just a quick simple reference, and then you could read into it as much you want to' (Politically active/vegetarian). [This is referring to a previous idea put up that people do not have time when they are shopping to check too much into the ins and outs of what they are buying but they can check stars easily, then find the information about them later.]

'[A]nd what most people want when they go shopping is not to know the ins and outs of what they're buying and this type of thing, but to know that a product has four or five stars and then later, when they have more time, if they want to look at where did come from, if that information is available to you, then that is good' (Politically active/vegetarian).

Members of the Young singles (south) group pointed out that a star scale would have to cover the basic points even at the bottom of the scale. There was a recognition of a minimum acceptable level.

'[H]ave a scale, fine, but that bottom end of the scale has to still be good' (Young single, south).

The idea that the standard would be applied across the whole EU was taken as a positive step forward. This view, taken by one in the seniors group, of uneven standards in welfare across the EU was not uncommon.

'[O]ne of the programmes I was watching or listening to, in this country we have our own production standard, so take pork for example, those standards are quite high and these things are relative of course, but far higher than the standard say in Holland with their pork production, my view is that we have a standard that we should only accept the meat if its been produced to the same standard, whatever country its come from, but that doesn't happen' (Senior).

Some participants did make a strong point for welfare from the point of view of the animals:

'I think it should be made standard to everybody, because with organic food nobody's really been hurt... whereas this it is and it is going on and it does need to be stopped' (Young single, north).

'I think it all should come down to this, it should all be produced in this way, there shouldn't be an option' (Young single, south).

'They shouldn't be allowed to produce food inhumanely, it shouldn't be backed by the supermarkets, whatever the cost, it should just be a standard' (Young, single, south).

There was general agreement on the importance of a big campaign to alert and educate consumers in a new labelling system.

'There should be a bit campaign where they introduce it, so everybody should know about it, should know what it means, or maybe give a list like this?' (Politically active/vegetarian). [This was said in reference to the list of the Scientists 10 concerns.]

'[A]nd sort of promotions at the supermarkets to educate you, and say, look, this standard is coming onto our foods, this is what it means' (Urban mother).

'Yes, get it on the press, get it in the news, so we all think, oh that symbol means that' (Urban mother).

'[A]nd get it advertised on TV and that, so people are aware and they know what this sign means and what's gone into it to get this' (Young single, north).

One of the seniors group who also liked the idea of a star system, realised that it required an even greater effort to get the information across as to what each star actually meant.

'[The information must be] flooded on the media, you must be able to relate the number of stars to the level' (Senior).

One of the politically active/vegetarian group compared a possible star rating with the new wine labelling system that has been introduced.

'I'm sure getting people to understand it wouldn't be too hard, but getting them to be fully aware would be the difficult part. For example wine ratings, you know when you turn over the wines, its got a number on it you learn that instantly, what it means so actually understanding the symbol would be easy, but I think that you'd only need very short adverts to let people know it's coming in and to generate interest' (Politically active/vegetarian).

The idea of having a separate area in supermarkets related to animal welfare friendly produce cropped up again:

'[A]nd having it all in sections, this is organic, and this is not, and this is your welfare' (Young single, north).

Some thought the consumers would drive the producers and retailers, but others thought the government should legislate:

'I think it does need to come at Government level, probably if you were to really work out the pattern of buying so from the level say that we're at , the amount of money that we can afford for food, I would imagine that the bulk of purchase made in any supermarket is made by people who probably aren't in so well a position to pick and choose and too many people I think are going to go on the level of cost. If it was left to the consumer, I would suspect, I may be wrong, but I would suspect that more people buy on cost rather than what does the label tell me, is it organically produced, is it free range, the level of welfare behind the production of this, the animal provided this meat, I would suspect that more people buy on cost' (Senior).

'I think... one thing you could ask the government to do is to insist that whatever the standards are agreed are applied across the board and perhaps the support on that in much the same way as there are rules and regulations issued by Brussels at the moment that people are supposed to adhere to. I think you'd probably get them to agree to that, but the rest of it probably not' (Senior).

Others felt it was more important to change the minds of the public first. Only an outcry from the public would prompt action from the Government.

'I think you need to get into the hearts and minds of people... until you get into peoples minds that the animal welfare is important in that context, I don't think the Government will do anything, I don't think they'll do anything about it at all' (Senior).

The potential cost of putting such a standard into place and funding its monitoring worried some of the participants:

'But you've still got to fund the inspectors, haven't you' (Empty nester).

'It's going to be tens of millions of pounds anyway. It'll have to be on a monthly basis to make sure they stick to the standards' (Young single, north).

'Its going to cost... I don't think it'll happen, it would be nice, but I don't think.. every single product someone's going to check it' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'Maybe the government [should take responsibility] because its going to cost lots of money, They need to do what they need to be doing' (Rural woman).

There was also not complete trust that new welfare standards could be enforced.

'[B]ut you always get a bad penny in a bunch, don't you and someone who's going to get backhanders and turn a blind eye to that, you know, you can't guarantee that side of things' (Empty nester).

'It would probably be a positive step forward, I don't know how much impact it would have on an actual farming basis. I don't know how well it would filter down to the individuals, you know, chicken farmers' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'It wouldn't influence me on buying, but I agree with ou what you're saying that we need to be assured that these people are going in there and its not just once very six months or once every twelve months and all these little outlets are getting away with certain things, you need reassurance that these people are there doing these guidelines' (Young single, north).

'I think more regular checks... I think if you're really on top of it and make them realise that they're not going to get away with things, because they're going to be there whenever they want, to have the freedom to just go whenever they want and do these checks on the spur of the moment' (Young single, north).

'I mean I don't know how this could be monitored, because we can't suddenly pass from suppliers that are now, to suppliers that are very small and local where these things are monitored, am I clear or not?' (Young single, south).

'[L]ike when we were saying before, if you see organic or free range on the label you don't necessarily trust that it's going to be like the idea' (Young single, south).

'Exactly and if you know that these are the guidelines, it can't well, I don't know, but I imagine it would be very difficult to put in place people to go round or monitor or inspect and do more inspections and all the rest of it, so I don't know that I would personally trust implicitly on the label if it said, if you looked at animal welfare standards, I don't know that I would trust that completely until it's been in the system a long time, because I don't know' (Young single, south).

Many people mentioned the importance of involving a large group of people in order to make it work:

'They need to check up different areas that different agencies are interaction and they're very much interlinked and working together, you're more likely to have a



better system at the end of the day, you're more likely to have people who are really taking into account the necessary provision for the animals, and at the same time, what the customer wants to see when they go shopping, how they want to purchase food and what information they want to know, it's really important. So really it involved all these agencies working together with one objective in mind' (Empty nester).

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### 3.7 CONCLUSIONS

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In summary, there appears to be very little knowledge of farming systems or current animal welfare labelling among the focus group participants (which perhaps is not surprising since the vast majority of products are not welfare labelled). There also appears to be confusion about current labelling particularly with reference to organic and its welfare standards. Many people are equating organic with high animal welfare standards, which is not necessarily the case.

Free-range eggs were the only commonly purchased welfare-friendly product, although a few of the focus group participants also chose organic or corn-fed chicken for welfare reasons, thus re-iterating the confusion mentioned above.

Not all the participants really wanted to know how the meat was produced. Although most participants expressed concern about animal welfare, it appears that they manage to disassociate meat from animal production. This was especially true among the Urban mothers group, where lack of time and money were always important considerations when shopping (many felt they didn't have the time, energy or money to worry about meat production).

Information was usually obtained from the media; only the very proactive turn to the internet. Cost is a big barrier and the main reason why people would not buy welfare friendly products (although there are other barriers such as lack of time, lack of information, and lack of trust in labelling)

For this reason, it was suggested the responsibility for animal welfare should be with the Government and that all products should be produced to a certain level of animal welfare, to stop giving the choice of cheaper (but less welfare friendly) products. This desire for any responsibility to be taken away from the consumers was really quite interesting. Many really felt they would be unable to make the 'right choice' if faced with cheaper alternatives. It was also suggested by several focus groups that the regulatory body should be made up from representatives of agencies all through the food chain, to provide a balanced and trustworthy body.

Much of the concern with animal welfare seemed to be bound up with concerns over health and safety of food, and it is difficult to separate these issues. Although there was

a general concern about the way animals were kept, reasons for improving the situation always included clauses to do with resulting better, tastier and healthier food.

*Recommendations*

- Responsibility for animal welfare should lie with the government, and all products should be produced to a certain (higher than current) level of animal welfare.
- Any regulatory body should be made up from representatives of agencies throughout the food chain.
- Failing a complete compulsory overall rise in animal welfare, the other option that is recommended is a single standard, represented by an obvious easy-to-spot logo that would indicate that the product has been produced to the required standard

# THE NETHERLANDS

by

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report analyses consumer concerns about animal welfare, identifies the types of information that consumers would like to receive about animal welfare, and develops ideas about effective communication and information strategies with respect to animal welfare on the basis of six focus group discussions in The Netherlands.

### *Culinary practices*

- Most participants to the focus group discussions do all or most of their shopping in the supermarket, since this is most convenient;
- The butcher is much less frequented and mainly for reasons of quality and – to a lesser degree – animal welfare;
- Butchers are more trusted than supermarkets to give reliable information;
- The organic shop is hardly frequented, except among political consumers and vegetarians;
- The top 5 considerations when buying animal products are: 1) price; 2) free range/outdoor access; 3) expiry date; 4) appearance; and 5) organic;
- Most participants do not buy animal-friendly products on a regular basis;
- Many participants do buy free range/outdoor access eggs;
- Few participants buy organic meat on a (fairly) regular basis;
- Some participants eat less meat for animal welfare considerations or avoid meat from certain animals.

### *Consumers' knowledge of animal welfare and animal-friendly products*

- The participants to the focus group discussions did not know much about farming practices and animal welfare;
- Knowledge is fragmentary, tainted by negative emotions and ambivalent;

- Main information sources about farming practices and animal welfare are: 1) the Internet; 2) newspapers; 3) television; 4) packages and labels; and 5) magazines of retailers, animal protection organisations, political parties and consumer organisations;
- Most participants questioned the trustworthiness of all these information sources;
- Some participants would like to receive more and better information;
- Other participants evaded to be better informed;
- Most participants hardly search for information about animal welfare;
- The availability of animal-friendly products is not considered to be particularly good;
- The participants were often confused about the divergent certification schemes for (animal-friendly) food products;
- The participants had by-and-large positive associations with the term 'organic';
- The participants showed high levels of distrust in animal welfare labels;
- High prices are the main barrier for buying animal-friendly food products;
- Distrust in the claims of animal welfare labels is another major barrier to buy animal-friendly products.

#### *Principles of animal welfare and their evaluation*

- Two animal welfare concerns were listed by a majority in each and every focus group, i.e. farmed animals should have enough space and they should have good food;
- The idea that farm animals should be slaughtered in a humane way was mentioned by a majority in two focus groups and by a minority in three other focus groups;
- Outdoor access as welfare concern is mentioned by a minority across all focus groups but the discussions showed that a vast majority has outdoor access in mind when raising the concern that farm animals should have enough space;
- The idea that farmed animals should not be given additives was mentioned by a minority in all but one focus group;
- Political consumers and vegetarians mentioned long transports of living animals much more than any of the other participants to the focus group discussions;
- The animal scientific welfare principles did not cause much discussion;
- It was hard for the participants to say what principle is the most important and what principle is the least important;
- The most important principles are: 1) No hunger, thirst or malnutrition; 5) No pain; 8) Good human-animal relationship; 2) Physical comfort and security; and 3) Good treatment of injuries;
- The least important principles are: 6) Normal/natural social behaviour; and 10) positive emotions;
- The participants were confused about the intended purpose of the list of animal scientific welfare principles;
- The vast majority of participants was supportive to the idea that the list is mandatory and serves as the basis of governmental rules and regulations;
- Some participants thought that the list of animal scientific welfare principles will not make much of a difference;

- Other participants argued that people should have the freedom to choose for themselves whether or not they buy animal-friendly products;
- The participants were positive about the idea of a new EU hallmark on animal welfare;
- Many participants liked the idea that the hallmark will be used in a European context and that an EU hallmark on animal welfare might replace other hallmarks;
- Some participants thought that providing good information about a new animal welfare hallmark would help people in making choices;
- The participants mentioned that they want a uniform hallmark with uniform standards;
- Most participants did not voice strong opinions on the idea of a star system but it needs to be a simple system.

#### *Responsibility, agency and trust*

- A majority of participants claimed that their consumptive practices make a difference;
- Most participants claimed that they had a responsibility as consumers;
- Boycotts and buycotts are quite generally used as a means to exert consumer influence
- The participants switched between the idea that consumers have their own responsibility for animal welfare and the idea that the government has responsibility;
- Most participants thought that animal welfare is a shared responsibility and that the government has the final responsibility;
- The participants highly distrusted hallmarks, their promises, marketing strategies and information campaigns;
- The participants did not seem to distrust the government on the issue of animal welfare;
- The participants responded positively to the idea of the European Union being responsible for (monitoring) animal welfare and providing information about animal-friendly products.

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## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

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The main objectives of this report are to analyse consumer concerns about farm animal welfare, to identify the types of information that consumers would like to receive about animal welfare, and to develop thoughts about effective communication and information strategies with respect to animal welfare. Focus group discussions have been organised to meet these objectives. They focused on consumers' concerns about animal welfare and on their views about information-provision strategies. The purpose of these focus group discussions has thus been to 'improve the understanding of underlying consumer

concerns and beliefs associated with animal welfare and its communication through various forms of information, including labelling' (Welfare Quality, Implementation Plan).

Six focus group discussions have been executed in The Netherlands in February/March 2005. This report will analyse the results of these group discussions. This introductory section will frame the Dutch context of animal welfare discussions as a background for understanding the results of the focus group discussions (Section 4.2). This description of the political, institutional, economic and socio-cultural context of the report is based on a review of the literature. The section will also provide an overview of the structure and contents of the report (Section 4.3).

#### 4.1.1 FRAMING THE DUTCH CONTEXT OF ANIMAL WELFARE DISCUSSIONS

##### *Political and institutional context*

The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality is responsible for the animal welfare policies of the Dutch government. In general, Dutch politics tends to be characterised by an orientation towards consensus building. Institutions and organisations with an interest in animal welfare issues are regularly invited to contribute to departmental discussions or to comment on draft policy documents or regulations. The aim of this high level of public involvement in policy-making processes is to achieve a balanced representation of a variety of interests and opinions.

The last couple of years The Netherlands have had a right-wing coalition of Christian-democrats (CDA), liberals (VVD) and social liberals (D66). This coalition strives after a reduction of state intervention and an increase of responsibilities for private parties. This position is also reflected in the government's stance towards animal welfare issues in the agricultural sector. The idea is that the government should mostly adopt a stimulating and facilitating role, whereas the agricultural sector itself has the primary responsibility to realise improvements in terms of animal welfare. The credo is self-regulation instead of governmental rules and regulations. The government even reversed some animal welfare legislation, since this legislation was thought to be too much ahead of European rules and regulations. Consequently, Dutch farmers were thought to have a competitive disadvantage on international markets.

The most important law with respect to farm animal welfare is the Gezondheidswet en Welzijns Wet voor Dieren (Animal Health and Welfare Law). This law was ratified after long and intensive socio-political discussions in 1982. It is noteworthy that this law recognises the so-called intrinsic value of animals. This implies, according to Minister of Agriculture in office in 1985, that animals have value independent of their (instrumental) value for human purposes. Animal welfare is thus a goal in itself. This recognition that animals have their own interests means that, when it comes to decision-making, these interests should always count as a distinct consideration (Handelingen Tweede Kamer (1984–1985)).

In 2003 a single-issue political party entered the Dutch political landscape to campaign the issue of animal welfare (Partij voor de Dieren). Animal welfare in intensive livestock production systems played a central role in their election campaign. The party did not win enough votes to gain a seat in Dutch Parliament but the numbers were quite close. Apart from this single-issue party other, more established and mostly left wing, political parties also paid attention to animal welfare in their election campaign. Shared issues of attention were and are the idea that intensive livestock production systems should be stopped or converted into more sustainable agricultural systems, support for the further development of organic agriculture, a proposal to ban long transports of living animals, and a wish to reconsider non-vaccination policies in times of crises like the foot-and-mouth epidemic.

#### *Economic and social-cultural context*

The Netherlands has 16.3 million inhabitants that for 60 per cent reside in urbanised areas. The Dutch population includes 3.1 million immigrants, among which 1.7 million non-western immigrants. Immigrants from Turkey, the former Dutch colony Surinam and Morocco form the largest cohorts among these non-western immigrants. They tend to have quite distinct consumption patterns, since they spend a much larger portion of their income on food (40 per cent compared to 20 per cent for non-immigrants) and they also eat more meat. Whereas the overall Dutch consumption of meat is about 45 kilogram/person/year, the figures for immigrants from Turkey, Morocco, Surinam and The Netherlands Antilles are 80, 76, 60 and 65 kilogram/person/year respectively (Landbouw Economisch Instituut. 2003).

No exact figures are available that disclose the number of vegetarians in The Netherlands (see, for example, <<http://www.vegatopia.nl>>). Estimations range from 150,000 (1 per cent of the population) to 800,000 (5 per cent of the population). Market shares of organic products are small but some increase in sales figures may be witnessed (see Platform Biologica, 2001, 2002, 2003). Research seems to indicate that the reasons for buying organic animal products are increasingly based on welfare considerations. In 2002 10 per cent of respondents said that 'more animal-friendly' was a reason to buy organic animal products, whereas this figure rose to 19.8 per cent in 2002 and 30.5 per cent in 2003 (see Viester, 2003).

The export of agricultural products is important for The Netherlands. With the United States and France, The Netherlands is among the most important exporters of agricultural products in the world. The country exports 70 per cent of its meat and animal derived products (Ministerie van Landbouw, Natuur en Voedselkwaliteit, 2004:18).

Recently, quite some studies have been done to investigate consumer perceptions and consumer knowledge of farm animal welfare in the Netherlands (Beekman et al., 2002; Beekman et al., 2003; Beekman, 2004; Ter Berg et al., 2003; Frewer et al., 2005; Te Velde, 2001; Verhue and Verzijden, 2003). The results of these studies indicate that Dutch consumers do not have many specific concerns regarding animal welfare. They seem to think in broad terms about animal welfare. Moreover, they do not strictly

distinguish between animal welfare, food safety and environmental aspects of livestock production, and have little knowledge of actual animal husbandry practices. Consumer perceptions of intensive livestock production are quite negative indeed. According to the different studies, animal welfare standards are adequately met according to consumers when animals have 1) enough space; 2) good food; 3) outdoor access; and 4) the possibility to express natural behaviour. The studies also indicate that Dutch consumers consider animal welfare to be moderately important.

#### *The media debate and the role of NGOs*

The issue of animal welfare is regularly discussed in the national media debate, predominantly in the national daily newspapers. Representatives of organisations voice their ideas on a variety of issues in these newspapers and the same holds true for animal scientists and other specialists as well as an occasional politician. Members of the general public sometimes send concerned letters to the newspapers. Particularly in times of some agricultural or food crisis a plethora of position statements tends to be published in newspapers. Otherwise, intensive livestock production systems are discussed in more general terms and arguments are put forward that these systems should be transformed into more sustainable forms of agriculture. People also respond to specific events, like proposals from the government or political parties.

Emotions drifted during the foot-and-mouth epidemic a few years ago, when 265,000 cows were slaughtered including 200,000 animals that were not infected by the disease. The so-called price war at Dutch supermarkets has also been a topic of heated debate. Many critics claimed that the welfare of animals and farmers was sacrificed in the attempts to offer food products at low prices. The introduction of the 'Party for the Animals' as newcomer in the Dutch political landscape received quite some media attention and its leader, Marianne Thieme, gave many interviews in newspapers and on television talking about farm animal welfare issues. When the long animal transports (in terms of both space and time) were on the agenda of the European Parliament, this topic got quite some media coverage. Occasionally, more specific welfare issues like problems with broilers or pigs also received attention in the media. Nevertheless, the media do not routinely cover all the issues that animal welfare organisations and political parties try to place on the socio-political agenda. It also seems that long cattle transports did not get quite as much media attention as, e.g., in the United Kingdom.

The largest Dutch animal welfare organisations are *Nederlandse vereniging tot bescherming van dieren* ('Dutch organisation for the protection of animals'), *Varkens in nood* ('Pigs in distress'), *Wakker dier* ('Animal awakenings'), *Compassion in world farming Netherlands*, and *Milieu-offensief Wageningen* (Environmental offensive Wageningen).

The Dutch organisation for the protection of animals is one of the oldest animal protection organisations. It is also the largest. It focuses on the treatment of pets but also on the welfare of farmed animals. *Pigs in distress*, *Animal awakenings* and *CIWF Netherlands* are active organisations, influencing the public debate and retailers on issues of animal welfare. They focus on the welfare of farmed animals, while *Pigs in*



distress mainly focuses on the welfare of pigs. Environmental offensive Wageningen differs from the other organisations in that it tries to stop intensive livestock production by legal means, i.e. by taking farmers and local governments to court. It does not organise campaigns to influence the general public or Dutch politics. Their work is thus complementary to the other organisations.

#### *Developments in retail and labelling*

Most food labels address environmental or social considerations. Not so much labels exist that exclusively focus on animal welfare considerations and these are mostly found on eggs and some meat products. The use of food safety labelling is more widespread with quite a variety of labels. Eggs in particular tend to be labelled with a whole range of quality and welfare claims (see Binnenkamp's Welfare Quality working paper about the retail structure in the Netherlands).

The most important (explicit but mostly implicit) animal welfare labels are Eko (organic production and used on a great range of agricultural products), Demeter (bio-dynamic production and used on a great range of agricultural products), Scharrel (free-range with norms differing across categories of animals), Gras (free-range with outdoor access and mainly used for eggs) and CPE (requirements for eggs based on EU regulations).

Products with animal welfare labels are sold in organic shops (Eko and Demeter) and in most regular supermarkets, although the availability is a problem in many supermarkets. Top-segment supermarket Albert Heijn has a greater range of animal-friendly products than other supermarkets and also has its own product line of organic products with the Eko label.

#### 4.1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Section 4.2 will elaborate on the methodology used in the empirical study that informs this report. Section 4.3 will explore the theme of culinary practices. It pays in particular attention to buying, preparing and eating of animal food products. It also covers the (ethical) values and assumptions that (implicitly) influence the consumption of animal food products. Section 4.4 will address the theme of consumers' knowledge of animal welfare in general and animal-friendly products in particular. It will also evaluate divergent information-provision strategies.

The focus group discussions paid a lot of attention to animal welfare concerns and principles. The participants were asked to compose their own individual list of what they think are important animal welfare principles and they had to discuss these lists among each other. The participants also responded to and gave their overall impression of a list of ten animal welfare principles as formulated by animal scientists. Section 4.5 will present the results of this part of the focus group discussions, and also present how

the participants thought that a (European) standard based on such principles could be effective in improving farm animal welfare.

Consumer concerns about of animal welfare are closely related to questions about agency, responsibility and trust: Who or what organisation or institution is and should be responsible for animal welfare according to consumers? What is consumers' own responsibility for animal welfare? Do consumers think that they have the power to change things or to influence public debate? These questions will be answered in Section 4.6. This section also describes consumers' trust and distrust in different actors and information sources in relation to animal welfare, and pays special attention to trust and distrust in animal welfare labels. This will generate insights that are relevant in view of the aim to design a European animal welfare label. Section 4.7 will draw conclusions and recommendations.

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## 4.2 METHODOLOGY

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### 4.2.1 INTRODUCTION

Since this report presents results from focus group discussions about consumer perceptions of animal welfare, this methodological section will start by paying attention to focus group discussions as a particular method of qualitative social scientific research (Section 4.2.2). Next, the composition of the focus groups will be described (Section 4.2.3), some remarks will be made about the execution of the discussions (Section 4.2.4), and some thoughts will be spent on Nvivo as the specific software program that has been used to facilitate a structured analysis of the focus group discussions (Section 4.2.5). The section will conclude with a short introduction to the theoretical approach that has been used to analyse the results of the focus group discussions (Section 4.2.6).

### 4.2.2 METHODOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION OF USING FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The general objective of this report is to investigate consumers' views of farm animal welfare and to consider how animal welfare should be assessed and communicated. More specifically, the report aims to 'improve the understanding of underlying consumer concerns and beliefs associated with animal welfare and its communication through various forms of information, including labelling' (see implementation plan, p.5). The execution of focus group discussions has been instrumental to the

achievement of this objective, and this report predominantly presents results from these focus group discussions.<sup>5</sup>

Focus group discussions are a specific method of qualitative social scientific research and its merits should be clearly distinguished from those of quantitative social scientific research methods like surveys. In general, the use of qualitative methods is characterised not so much by an aim to provide a (statistical) analysis of causal relations ('erklären') but rather by an aim to provide a more in-depth understanding ('verstehen') of people's (inter) subjective interpretations of a specific topic. Qualitative studies like this one thus do not aim at generalised statements about large segments of populations, and mainly pose open-ended questions to facilitate the verbalisation of people's (deeper) reflections. Furthermore, qualitative research tends to include much longer interactions with respondents than quantitative methods like surveys. Consequently, the gathered information is relatively unstructured and cannot easily be reduced to a simple table or figure. Qualitative research does not aim to present representative data but rather to deepen the understanding of specific (groups of) people (see Greenbaum, 1988:6–7).

Focus group discussions are a frequently used method of qualitative social scientific research. They operate through a – loosely – structured discussion about a topic that is of specific relevance to the participants. The participants in a focus group have some common characteristics that are relevant for the topic being discussed. The fact that the participants have some characteristics in common stimulates spontaneous interaction between the participants but avoids too heated unfruitful debates. Focus group discussions are often used in combination with other quantitative or qualitative methods (see Krueger, 1988:7).

The rationale of focus group discussions is that the dynamics of the group process generates more useful information than would be obtained in interviews with individual respondents. The idea is that people will listen to opinions of others while forming their own positions. This dynamic exchange of opinions facilitates people influencing each other with their remarks, and individual opinions may thus shift during the course of the discussion. Focus group discussions thus approximate the real life social interactions that normally structure processes of opinion-formation. Moreover, most people feel more comfortable to talk about a subject when they are involved in a discussion as part of a larger group of people with whom they share certain things. The interaction among the members of a focus group will thus result in the participants being more talkative and responsive to stimuli by the others in the group. Group dynamics may also provide insight into how peer pressure plays a role in the adoption or rejection of concepts, products or ideas that are developed (for more about characteristics of focus group discussions, see Greenbaum, 1988:18–19; Krueger, 1988:23).

It should be obvious that the main objective of this report is well served by these characteristics and purposes of focus group discussions. Focus group discussions are a good means to gather information on the understanding of consumer concerns and beliefs associated with animal welfare. Other research methods like surveys among or

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<sup>5</sup> Section 4.1 also includes results from a review of the literature on animal welfare discussions in the Netherlands.

interviews with individual respondents, are likely to be too structured and formal and do not entail enough opportunities for social interaction and gaining a deeper understanding of people's interpretations of the subject matter. The results from the focus group discussions will serve as input for a follow-up quantitative survey among a representative sample of the population.

#### 4.2.3 COMPOSITION OF THE FOCUS GROUPS

Six focus group discussions were executed in The Netherlands in February/March 2005. Recruitment for these focus groups followed the common criteria as established for all case study countries. First, every focus group had to consist of 6-8 participants and the participants were to be aged between 18 and 70. Second, two filter questions have been used in the recruitment of participants: Filter 1 ensured that all participants were meat eaters who eat meat at least once a week (except for the participants in the sixth focus group of politically active and/or vegetarian consumers), whereas filter 2 ensured that participants had at least a bare minimum level of interest in either farming animals for food (e.g. in different systems of production) or in animal welfare issues.

The composition of the six focus groups has been similar across the seven case study countries. Table 4.1 reiterates the criteria for each focus group and highlights where the Dutch focus groups deviated from the common criteria (for an overview of all relevant characteristics of the participants, see Appendix). It also provides a justification of these deviations. If a cell in this table is empty, this will mean that nothing special is to be reported.

#### 4.2.4 EXECUTION OF THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The organisation and facilitation of the focus group discussions has been sub-contracted to Veldkamp Marketing Research. This agency has also been in charge of the recruitment of the participants. Two people from this agency each moderated three focus group discussions.<sup>6</sup>

The focus group discussions developed well in a pleasant and co-operative atmosphere. The discussions never went out of hand. Most participants spontaneously contributed to the discussions, whereas only a few of them needed some more explicit stimuli to voice their opinions. For some of this latter – small – category their initial silence was a sign of relative disinterest in the subject, whereas for others it was mostly an expression of their less outspoken characters. Every focus group had some participants that were more dominantly present than others. This mostly expressed a (more) strong interest in and/or

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<sup>6</sup> At this stage we would like to thank Judith ter Berg and Martin de Bruin from Veldkamp Marketing Research for the most pleasant and fruitful collaboration in the execution of the six focus group discussions.

knowledge of the subject of animal welfare but it never posed a problem for the quality of the discussions.

TABLE 4.1 Composition of the focus groups

Number	Details	Date/time	Common characteristic	Recruitment criteria	Deviation	Justification
1		February 24, 2005, 17.00 – 19.00	Urban mothers	All-female Age under 50 50% with at least 1 child under 5 50% with at least 1 teenage child Urban residents	3 of 7 had at least 1 child under 5	Tightness of recruitment period
2		February 24, 2005, 19.30 – 21.30	Married or living together without children	Mixed gender 50% age over 40 Childless or no children at home Married or living together Urban residents Do at least 50% shopping		
3		February 28, 2005, 14.30 – 16.30	Seniors	Mixed gender Age 55 – 70 Do at least 50% shopping		
4		February 28, 2005, 17.00 – 19.00	Rural women	All-female Age under 50 Rural residents Not (partners of) farmers		
5		March 3, 2005, 17.00 – 19.00	Young singles	Mixed gender Age under 35 Living on their own Urban residents		
6		March 3, 2005, 19.30 – 21.30	Political and vegetarian consumers	Mixed gender 50% vegetarians 50% non-vegetarian political consumers		

Two cases require special notification though. First, in the focus group of people that were married or lived together without children (Group 2, henceforth called ‘empty nesters’) one rather dominant participant (316) had quite deviant opinions on animal

welfare. Later it appeared that her husband is the director of a meat-processing company and that some of her relatives are farmers. She seemed to feel a strong urge to position and defend herself against the – supposed – opinions of the rest of the group as well as against those of the animal scientists in Welfare Quality. Quite frankly, she probably should not have passed the filters of the recruitment criteria but on the other hand people with such a background will also be present in real-life social groups and discussions.

Second, in group 6 with the politically active and vegetarian consumers a noteworthy gap was present between some politically more strongly motivated consumers and vegetarians and other politically less strongly motivated consumers and vegetarians. Some participants seemed to miss the opportunity to voice their strong opinions and knowledge. They sometimes seemed to be a bit bored or even annoyed with the less motivated participants. The expectation was that the group of politically active and vegetarian consumers would be greatly interested to participate in and contribute to the discussion. However, the experience was more mixed. Actually, the recruitment criteria might have been a bit too lax in this case.

#### 4.2.5 COMPUTER-AIDED ANALYSIS OF THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

All seven case study countries used the same software package – QSR Nvivo – for the analysis of the focus group discussions. Nvivo is designed for qualitative research and it can easily be combined with different theoretical approaches and methodologies. The software helps a researcher to deal with rich data records, such as data from focus group discussions. Using Nvivo gave national research teams the possibility to adopt a common basic structure for analysing the data. The contents of the analysis, on the other hand, remained in the hands of the individual research teams. So, the actual analysis was not influenced or done by the software. Nvivo merely provided a tool to structure the analysis of qualitative data.

The research teams have agreed upon a basic common list of themes, which are present in the data and that should be coded for analysis. All research teams used this common basic structure but the individual teams were free to complement this basic coding structure with other more specific topics of interest. Eleven themes have been identified to form the basic common coding for a structured analysis. Table 4.2 reiterates these themes.

These basic themes reflect the structure of the common discussion guide that has been used for the focus group discussions (for the interview guide, see Appendix).

TABLE 4.2 Basic themes for the analysis of the focus group discussions

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1	Practices – Eating practices
2	Knowledge and information (general) – Consumers’ knowledge about farming practices and animal welfare generally and evaluation of the provision of information on animal welfare
3	Knowledge and information (products) – Consumers’ knowledge of and familiarity with welfare friendly food products and evaluation of the provision of information on food products
4	Preferences, dilemmas and barriers – Properties that participants think that animal derived products should have, discussion about perceived conflicts between these properties and any mentioning of barriers that prevent participants from buying welfare friendly food products
5	Responsibility – Who the participants think should be or is responsible for animal welfare issues
6	Agency/Involvement – The extent to which participants are interested or involved in wider debates about animal welfare
7	Trust – The level of trust that participants have in different organisations, labels or (sources of) information
8	Human-animal relations – The participants’ broader ethical stance towards animals
9	Spontaneous welfare concerns – The participants had to draw a list of animal welfare concerns and discuss their individual lists
10	Reactions to the 10 animal welfare principles – The participants’ responses to the list of welfare principles as developed by animal scientists
11	Welfare Quality information system – The evaluation by participants of the likely success of a practical labelling standard based on the list of Welfare Quality principles as developed by animal scientists

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#### 4.2.6 THEORETICAL APPROACH

The analysis of the focus group discussions basically adopts an actor-oriented approach to social scientific research (Long & Long, 1992), which treats the positions as voiced during these discussions as (discursive) behaviour by in principle knowledgeable and capable actors in a social group. This approach implies that the analysis 1) stays as close as possible to the richness of the empirical material; 2) restrains itself in imposing theoretical constructs or academic jargon upon this material; 3) focuses on discursive behaviour of the participants as constituted by social processes inside and outside the focus group; and 4) pays attention to structural determinants only in the second instance. This approach acknowledges that people’s (discursive) behavioural practices are always constituted at the interface of actors’ attitudes and the more structural properties of societies but opts to approach these practices from the actor and not so much from the structure side of the duality of structure (Giddens, 1984).

Occasionally, the analysis will highlight issues that bear particular relevance to the objective of raising people’s (ethical) room for manoeuvre in both public deliberations and consumptive practices. This specific emphasis is informed by a pragmatic

combination of discourse ethics and liberal political philosophy (Keulartz et al., 2002). These more philosophical approaches share a preoccupation with people's autonomy in the public domain and on the market, and are thus very much engaged with the question of how to enable informed choice for animal-friendly food products. Even at those occasions the analysis will try to remain as close to the empirical material as possible.

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### 4.3 CULINARY PRACTICES: EATING, PREPARING AND BUYING ANIMAL FOOD PRODUCTS

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#### 4.3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section will focus on culinary practices as discussed in the focus group discussions. It will subsequently pay attention to shopping practices (Section 4.3.2), consumers' main considerations in these practices (Section 4.3.3) and more specifically to their animal welfare considerations (Section 4.3.4). The section will conclude with some reflections on ambivalence in the implicit animal ethical stances of the participants in the focus group discussions (Section 4.3.5).

#### 4.3.2 SHOPPING PRACTICES

Most participants to the focus group discussions do all or most of their shopping in the supermarket. Convenience is the dominant reason for this practice – supermarkets tend to be nearby and offer an assortment that allows one-stop shopping. Some participants have reasons to frequent a specific supermarket. These reasons include the quality of animal products, variety and availability of particular, e.g. quite a few participants deliberately opt for the top-segment supermarket Albert Heijn (owned by Ahold) since it offers the most extensive range of organic products. The participants regularly buying organic products all shopped at Albert Heijn. Middle-segment and discount supermarkets tend to be distrusted when it comes to guaranteeing or providing information about animal welfare.

The butcher is not frequented that much, although each and every focus group included one or two participants regularly or predominantly buying meat at the butcher. Some participants also bought eggs at the butcher. The reasons to shop at the butcher include product quality, a good balance between quality and price, the availability of organic meat, and personal routines, relations and trust. Some participants also shop for animal products on the market and then look for specific products like free-range eggs or special cheese. Only a few participants have a milkman stopping in the street or regularly go to an organic shop. Finally, two participants buy some of their animal



products directly on the farm, whereas one participant gets her meat from her husband, who owns a meat processing company.

The focus group with seniors frequents the butcher much more often than the other focus group. The same holds true for the focus group of political consumers and vegetarians but they also more frequently go to the organic shop. The main reason for seniors to go the butcher is product quality, whereas the political consumers and vegetarians motivate this practice with animal welfare considerations. Both groups indicate that they trust butchers and and/or organic shops to take care of these issues. Some participants thought that butchers give more and better information about animal welfare and this is also a reason to frequent the butcher.

Urban residents tend to trust top-segment supermarket Albert Heijn. One participant even said that he trusted the organic label because it is sold in Albert Heijn and he trusts that supermarket. Actually, quite a few participants seemed to think the organic label is a label of Albert Heijn. The reason for this confusion is probably that other supermarkets do not have many, easily recognizable, organic products on their shelves.

One participant among the urban mothers said that she could not believe that a certain package of free-range eggs really contained free-range eggs, since those packages are sold in a discount supermarket. This sentiment was reflected by others arguing that cheap products cannot be trusted.

#### 4.3.3 CONSUMPTIVE CONSIDERATIONS

When asked explicitly what the participants to the focus group discussions looked for when buying animal products, the following top 6 of considerations was listed: 1) price; 2) free-range/outdoor access; 3) expiry date; 4) appearance; 5) organic; and 6) fat percentage. It is noteworthy that health and quality considerations were hardly mentioned explicitly and only implicitly through references to fat percentage and appearance respectively. This seems to stand in sharp contrast with previous studies in the Netherlands but it might also be an artefact of the framing of this question in the focus group discussions. The question has been posed after focusing on animal products and this might have led the participants to forget about considerations with respect to food on a more general level. It should be clear that although price is people's first consideration in their consumptive practices, this does not mean that price overrides all other considerations. People will always balance different considerations and this might lead to accepting higher prices for, e.g., healthier foods.

Most participants felt that the choice in animal products in the supermarket is – more than – enough; some of them missed certain things. It will, for instance, not be possible to choose a small number of pieces of meat, if the supermarket only sells large portions of pre-packaged meat. It is actually quite hard these days to find a package with only one or two pieces of meat. The young singles in particular voiced this problem but they were not the only ones. Rural women tended to package size to product quality, since

they shared experiences that large meat packages tend to include pieces of meat with a below-average quality.

Quite a few respondents have reasons not to eat meat from certain animals. One finds calves, lamb, horse, game, pig and chicken among these avoided animals and for quite divergent reasons. Some participants simply do not fancy the taste of meat from certain animals, whereas others thought that certain animals should be classified in a different category (e.g. horses are for sport and not for consumption) or considered certain animals to be too young and sweet to eat (e.g. veal, lamb). One participant said:

'I don't buy horse meat but I do buy cow's meat, that's all. Rabbits neither. I don't do that; they walk in my garden, not on the stove' (Urban mother).

And another:

'My daughter does horseback riding, so we don't eat horse meat, and I don't like the idea of eating lamb' (Rural woman).

Animal welfare considerations were also mentioned. Veal is not only avoided because calves are too young to be eaten but also or mainly because the living conditions of calves are too poor. Similar considerations hold true with respect to avoiding consumption of pork and chicken. It seems that once people feel a temptation to caress certain animals they do not wish to eat meat from these animals. This relation is probably positively correlated to the urbanisation level of a certain society.

Women more often than men do not want to eat horse meat or meat from young animals. This finding should however be classified by the remark that the focus groups consisted of far more female than male participants. Relatively more men than women considered animal welfare to be an important product characteristic and most male respondents bought organic meat on a fairly regular basis. The male participants also seemed to show a greater interest in receiving information about animal welfare, more willingness to discuss the subject, think about it in daily life and pay attention to it when shopping or eating. This counter-intuitive result might be an artefact of the recruitment criterion for most of the focus groups that the participants had to do at least 50 per cent of the shopping. This criterion inevitably leads to a non-representative sample among the male population that quite likely over-represents the more conscious male consumers.

#### 4.3.4 ANIMAL WELFARE CONSIDERATIONS

Most participants to the focus group discussions did not buy animal-friendly products on a regular basis. Sales of free-range/outdoor access eggs are the exception to this general picture, since many participants consciously and explicitly buy these eggs. This finding that so many participants repeatedly emphasised that they buy free-range eggs is not all surprising in the Dutch context. Market shares of free-range eggs have been high

in The Netherlands for many years and it is no longer possible to buy battery eggs in Dutch supermarkets since 2004. Before 2004 the price of free-range eggs was not much higher than of battery eggs. This relatively small price difference was – together with information campaigns that presented free-range eggs as the animal-friendly alternative to battery eggs – probably the main reason for the early success of free-range eggs.

The success of free-range eggs is however a disputed story in The Netherlands. The word ‘free-range’ (‘scharrel’ in Dutch) suggests that the chicken has been allowed outdoor access, and this suggestion used to be supported by romantic images on packages until legislation banned those misleading pictures. Many people thus (like to) think free-range hens live on small farms, in small groups and with ample opportunities for outdoor access. These romantic images reflect people’s nostalgic memories of how farm life used to be in the old days and were routinely reinforced by corporate marketing strategies. The reality of free-chicken farming stands in sharp contrast to these suggestions, since thousands of free-range hens tend to share the same large barn without outdoor access. NGOs and producers of outdoor access pay attention to mismatch between image and reality.

It is thus not surprising that quite some participants were very negative about the level of animal welfare that is guaranteed by free-range eggs. The idea that the welfare of free-range hens is not high is quite widespread. Some participants were aware that free-range eggs are not the most animal-friendly eggs, whereas others argued that free-range label is not much more than a shallow marketing trick. The participants showed different strategies to cope with this discomforting knowledge about the welfare of chicken. Some changed their shopping practices and started to buy outdoor access or organic eggs. Others entirely lost all faith completely and started to think that it does not matter whatever eggs you buy. Still others acknowledged that free-eggs are not as animal-friendly as suggested but nevertheless the best possible buy. Two participants – one young single and one political consumer or vegetarian – participate in the ‘Adopt a chicken’ initiative. This is an organic initiative that enables people to adopt an organic chicken for 35 Euro/year. In return, you receive six organic eggs/week and to make a virtual tour on the farms with the help of web cams.

All focus groups included at least one or two participants buying organic meat on a (fairly) regular basis. Since organic production is not only about animal welfare, it is not immediately clear whether these participants buy organic meat for animal welfare considerations but it is quite likely though. In general, the participants to the focus group discussions seemed to equate organic with animal-friendly, and the organic label seems to serve as the point of reference when discussing animal welfare (labels). The main barrier to organic meat consumption seems to be high prices, and quite some participants said that they purchased large(r) quantities of organic meat when it is on sale. Organic dairy and eggs are not purchased regularly among the participants to the focus groups with the exception of the political consumers and particularly the vegetarians.

Some participants indicated that they eat less meat for animal welfare considerations or avoid meat from certain animals. Let’s hear some of their voices:

'I do think about [animal welfare]. That is the reason that I do not eat a lot of meat. But I am not a vegetarian either. But I do buy outdoor access eggs' (Young single).

'I have never been a big meat eater, but since the swine fever I consciously started to eat less and less. That is the right thing to do. It really gets to me, all those animals. I think twice before I eat meat' (Rural woman).

Other participants indicated that they once in a while temporarily change their consumption practices for animal welfare considerations. Then they eat organic meat or avoid eating meat from certain animals, because they saw something worrisome on television or because of a crisis like BSE. After a while these participants return to their old routines.

#### 4.3.5 IMPLICIT ANIMAL ETHICS AND AMBIVALENCE

Food consumption, preparation and shopping practices may reflect and embody taken for granted normative assumptions about, e.g., human-animal relations. Descriptions that consumers give of such practices may furthermore point to instances of ambivalence with respect towards using and killing animals for meat products.

##### *Jewish-Christian morality*

It is surprising that none of the participants to the focus group discussions voiced doubts about whether humans are (morally) allowed to use and kill animals. This result is probably a consequence of the impact of Jewish-Christian morality on Dutch gastro-cultural traditions, even if the Netherlands is one of the most secularised European countries. This morality – with strong similarities to classical Greek philosophy – strongly impacts on the way that Europeans perceive of human-animal relations. Both Greek philosophy and Christian morality adopt a stringent hierarchy in the natural world. Animals serve the interests of the higher positioned humans in this hierarchy. The Bible combines the idea that animals are instrumental to humans with the idea of stewardship that awards humans with the obligation or responsibility to take good care of animals.

The influence of Jewish-Christian morality is recognisable in quotes of the participants to the focus group discussions:

'An animal is meant to be eaten. It is made for it. But it should not have to suffer and to be overfed before being eaten' (Senior).

'They are there for us.... In a good way. Treat them with respect. They need to have a normal life until they... Well, we aren't there for them, that's the truth. But with a good life' (Rural woman)

‘As a human you have the obligation to treat animals with respect’ (Senior).

*Ambivalence* Some participants to the focus group discussions showed ambivalent behaviour. An actor is considered to be ambivalent when he/she has at least two contradictory values or shows contradictory behaviour. Since having contradictory values or showing contradictory behaviour is generally regarded as an uncomfortable state-of-mind, the problem might be solved by giving the one value priority over the other or by identifying a unifying higher order value.

Ambivalence with respects to animals is mostly related to animal suffering and slaughtering. Many people would rather not be reminded of death and suffering as inextricably connected with practices of eating meat or other animal products. Nevertheless, most people are somehow aware of these discomfoting aspects of meat consumption. Some people can easily ignore this uneasiness, whereas others struggle with moral remorse. Quite some people (unconsciously) distance themselves from the killing and suffering of animals as a device to cope with their discomfoting feelings of moral remorse. Different distancing devices might be identified (Serpell, 1986): 1) detachment; 2) concealment; 3) misrepresentation; and 4) shifting the blame.<sup>7</sup> All these distancing devices could be witnessed in the focus group discussions.

*Detachment* Some participants to the focus group discussions try hard not to be confronted with the sight of dead animals, for example:

‘[While cooking] I smell iron and raw cow. I don’t like that, it smells. Then I know I am frying a dead animal’ (Rural woman).

Some participants therefore prefer to use ready-to-eat meat. If meat is chopped or sliced, they will not be reminded of the animal and they will not need to cut the animal themselves.

‘I don’t want to recognise the animal, I am happy when meat is just a slice and that’s it’ (Rural woman).

Or consider the following quote:

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<sup>7</sup> These distancing devices are not only present on an individual level but also on a societal level. Taking the death and suffering of animals out of sight has also literally distanced them from humans. Slaughterhouses have gradually moved out of the inner cities to the outskirts of cities. Intensive livestock production places the living conditions of animals out of sight as intensive livestock production is often veiled by concrete buildings that do not resemble tacit ideas about how a farm looks. Europeans and North Americans, furthermore, seem to take more offense than others at the sight of suffering or killing of animals. Livestock markets are all but closed in these parts of the world and people no longer raise and kill animals themselves. This is quite different in other parts of the world, where people seem to be more used to handling, possible suffering and killing of animals. Although people in Europe and North America generally take more offense at killing and suffering of animals, this should not be confused with the idea that these parts of the welfare also have more animal-friendly production practices. It may very well be that the level of animal welfare in industrialized countries is lower than in countries with more traditional farming practices.

'I once heard an intelligent boy say, it was an 8-year-old boy. He told that they used to slaughter animals for meat but now you just go to the Albert Heijn. Nice story, isn't it? But when you see all that meat in the Albert Heijn, you do not think about the fact that it comes from an animal' (Politically active/vegetarian).

Others would rather not go to a butcher, if it shows complete carcasses or meat and bones that remind them too much of animals. In general, Dutch butchers veil the 'animality' of the meat and as tourists in other countries the Dutch are regularly somewhat shocked at the sight of butchers with complete carcasses and animal parts like heads, legs or intestines. One participant referred to this when she said:

'I fancy a good barbecue. So I get my husband to get it. I don't like it when I am abroad, I vomit in the supermarket' (Rural woman).

*Concealment* Some participants do not want to be confronted with information about animal welfare in an attempt to distance themselves from the practices of livestock production. This holds true for both general media information and more specific information on packages. Therefore, negative labelling (for example, a warning that this chicken did not have outdoor access) would not be appreciated, since it reminds them that they 'do wrong'. Quite some participants claimed that they do not want to know everything about animal welfare. One respondent, for example, said:

'I don't want to know that we torture those animals to get me my piece of meat' (Rural woman).

*Misrepresentation* The distancing device of misrepresentation did not show up much during the focus group discussions but one participant (with a butcher as husband and with some other relatives as farmer) definitely misrepresented when suggesting that the Dutch media try to produce false images of living conditions in animal husbandry and henceforth suggesting that these conditions are not that bad:

'The farmers are producing good meat. Everybody is critical about the farmers but the animals are fine and so it is. The meat is good so the animal is fine. And the image on television is just that you see a small pen and then everybody thinks it is sad for the animals. But that is also a distorted image by the media, they know in Hilversum [Holland's own Hollywood], exactly how to make it look as if it is very small' (Empty nester).

Some of the rural women also seemed to misrepresent things. Whereas in the beginning of their discussion many claimed that things are not good with respect to the level of animal welfare and that farmed animals could and should have better lives, their opinions shifted dramatically after reading the ten animal welfare principles as formulated by animal scientists. Then suddenly, they claimed that Holland does not need those principles, since things were not that bad. The Netherlands has good legislation and the principles are thus already taken care off. They also ridiculed the principles, suggesting, for example:

‘When I read this I think that those animals will have better lives than humans’ (Rural woman).

‘This makes me laugh’ (Rural woman).

All other focus groups included some people that were a bit shocked by the principles, since they didn’t think that things were that bad. The strong reactions among the rural women however seem to indicate that actively tried to distance themselves from discomforting information about the level of animal welfare.

*Shifting the blame* Participants to the focus group discussions tried to shift the blame when they said that they were not responsible for animal suffering. This response is related to their views on consumer agency. Although many participants in all focus groups claimed that they as consumers have at least some responsibility and impact, others claimed that they were not in a position to change a thing:

‘I don’t think that I am in the position to change a thing. The government needs to deal with this. It might be stupid but it will not help if just I do not eat meatballs for a day’ (Rural woman).

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#### 4.4 CONSUMER’S KNOWLEDGE OF ANIMAL WELFARE AND WELFARE-FRIENDLY FOOD PRODUCTS AND THEIR EVALUATION OF THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON THESE SUBJECTS

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##### 4.4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section will focus on what the participants to the focus group discussions know about animal welfare in general and animal-friendly food products in particular. It will also see how these participants evaluate the current provision of information on animal-friendly production and products. First, the next section will focus on what the participants know about farming practices and animal welfare (Section 4.4.2). Then, attention will shift to their knowledge, experience and familiarity with animal-friendly food products (Section 4.4.3) and their interactions with and perceptions of these products (Section 4.4.4). The section will conclude by examining how the participants to the focus group discussions evaluate the provision of information about animal-friendly food products (Section 4.4.5).

## 4.4.2 KNOWLEDGE OF FARMING PRACTICES

The participants to the focus group discussions did not know that much about farming practices and animal welfare. In general, their knowledge is fragmentary, tainted by negative emotions and ambivalent, i.e. the participants constantly switch between the idea that farm animals have horrible lives and the idea that these lives are not as bad as suggested by the media. Many participants in particular believe that calves, chickens and pigs live unhappy lives. Quite some participants are aware of their limited level of knowledge and adopt a self-critical stance:

'Well I think that we do not know a lot of things, and we're not looking for more since that would be too confronting' (Rural woman)

'Well, I assume they tell you how it is. I really don't want to think about it, you don't hear that much. I am not going to look on a meat package where it's from' (Urban mother).

Main information sources about farming practices and animal welfare are: 1) the Internet; 2) the website of the Dutch nutrition centre (<http://www.voedingscentrum.nl>); 3) newspapers; 4) television; 5) packages and labels; 6) magazines of retailers, animal protection organisations, political parties and consumer organisation. Most participants question the trustworthiness of all these information sources. One specific nuisance is that the media are accused of only showing bad news, excesses. Therefore some participants feel that farm animal welfare seems to be worse than it actually is:

'If the information were correct, it would be enough but well' (Urban mother).

Others accuse marketing strategies of giving people a hard time to find accurate information about farming practices.

Some participants would like to receive more and better information. They in particular would like to receive more honest information that enables them to make choices:

'Well enlightenment is all right' (Urban mother).

'I prefer that over being misguided' (Urban mother).

However, not all participants fancy more information or even deliberately evade to be better informed:

'I don't want to know. In the back of your mind you know. I don't need to read it and I don't want to think about it. I don't want all of that' (Urban mother).

'I do not want to know we torture those animals to get me my piece of meat' (Rural woman).

'You just do not want to know everything' (Empty nester).



Most participants furthermore claim that they hardly search for information about animal welfare. They are also not interested in articles in newspapers or documentaries on television. This probably also explain why many participants are not aware of any public debate about animal welfare or of more specific welfare issues among farm animals. Some participants show somewhat higher levels of awareness and knowledge, e.g. by making references to beak cutting of chickens or castrating young male pigs. The focus group discussions revealed that those participants take animal welfare quite seriously indeed in their daily lives.

First-hand experiences with farming practices heavily influence the participants' perceptions of farm animal welfare. Many participants recalled confrontations with transports of living animals. Apparently, they only have direct contact with animals' living conditions when they are on the road and pass a truck stuffed with. The images of the transports of living animals are very negative:

'A truck full of those animals, I just think that one third of them are dead before they reach their destination. That is just not good. My image of those transports and mass things is just bad' (Empty nester).

Some participants claimed to have changed their consumption patterns after they saw for themselves how animals – particular calves and chickens – live their lives:

'I once visited a veal farm, that is dreadful. So I never buy veal anymore' (Rural woman).

Others tell quite emotional stories about how shocked they were after seeing how things are in animal husbandry:

'Let's give an example. My husband has a metal detector and he received a call from a farmer with free-range chickens. That farmer lost his ring while feeding the chicken.... Well he received some chickens for thanks but I threw them away.<sup>8</sup> It was just how my husband spoke about that place. He had to walk through the chickens and the farmer just kicked their asses. Well, I felt so sorry, that idea is so bad.... But this was a free-range farm and still it was this bad' (Rural woman).

The – rural – seniors and women have had a lot more direct contact with animal husbandry than the other focus groups but their knowledge was equally fragmented, although the seniors claimed that they had enough information and knowledge on farm animal welfare. They were thus the only exception to the general feeling that information is not good enough or incomplete. All seniors also claimed that animal welfare was important for them.

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<sup>8</sup> This is also an example of ambivalence, since this participant obviously does not like to be reminded of animal suffering of the animals. Her strategy to cope with this ambivalence is however to throw the chickens away rather than to change her consumption pattern.

#### 4.4.3 KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE AND FAMILIARITY WITH ANIMAL-FRIENDLY FOOD PRODUCTS

The availability of animal-friendly products for Dutch consumers is not particularly high (see Table 4.3 for an overview of the main Dutch labels with animal welfare requirements). This particularly holds true for the major supermarkets. Some participants to the focus group discussions complained about this lack of supply. The familiarity of free-range eggs and organic food products is however quite high among the participants to the focus group discussions. The vast majority of them claimed to buy free-range eggs on a fairly regular basis, which is not surprising since Dutch supermarkets no longer sell battery eggs. Many participants also occasionally buy organic food products and some even quite regularly. Some participants qualified this with the remark that they only buy organic products when they are on sale, since otherwise organic foods are too expensive.

TABLE 4.3 Main Dutch labels with animal welfare requirements

	Requirements	Products	Main outlets
Scharrel (free-range)	Free-range without outdoor access	Eggs and meat products	Butchers and supermarkets
Gras (outdoor access)	Free-range with outdoor access	Eggs	Supermarkets
EKO (organic)	Organic with outdoor access and environment-friendly production methods	Foods	Organic shops and supermarkets
Demeter (bio-dynamic)	Organic with outdoor access, environment-friendly production methods and based on an anthroposophical philosophy	Foods	Organic shops

The participants to the focus group discussions are often confused about the divergent certification schemes for (animal-friendly) food products, e.g. they think that EKO and organic ('biologisch' in Dutch) refer to different standards whereas the EKO label qualifies a product as organic. They are also not aware that the EKO label is certified and monitored by an independent organisation (Skal) and some participants even think that the EKO label is a private label of the Dutch supermarket Albert Heijn. Hence, knowledge of the requirements for the EKO label is rather low.

The participants had by-and-large positive associations with the term 'organic'. Most of them almost equated organic with animal-friendly and consistently used the term 'organic' when talking about animal-friendly products. It seems to be the same thing for them. Organic foods are thus the point of reference when the participants talked about animal welfare labels and animal-friendly products. This for instance implied that when asked about the kind of label that should signal the Welfare Quality principles, they opted for a 100 per cent organic label. Furthermore, organic products and the EKO label are most trusted to assure animal welfare standards, despite limited knowledge of the

requirements for these products. Biodynamic products – labelled as Demeter – are also highly trusted by the few participants that knew this label. Only participants frequenting organic shops recognised the Demeter label and regarded it as the most organic and trustworthy label.

Dutch supermarkets used to sell quite some animal-friendly but not organic products, e.g. free-range meat, but these products have gradually been removed from the shelves and replaced by organic products. It therefore seems that the market for animal-friendly products might not be big enough to have various animal-friendly labels. Free-range eggs are the main exception to this picture and still have a large share of the market. The other exception is the range of animal-friendly products in top-segment supermarket Albert Heijn and at some butchers. Familiarity with the animal-friendly products in Albert Heijn is moderately high. Quite some participants knew the label ‘Greenfield’ (free-range beef) but ‘Loué’ (free-range chicken) or ‘Peter’s farm’ (free-range veal) left most of them clueless.

Knowledge of animal-friendly eggs is also limited. Many participants thought that free-range hens have outdoor access, whereas others were aware that this is not the case but thought almost equated free-range and battery hens. None of the participants knew the organisations responsible for monitoring free-range eggs. Some participants became recently aware that free-range eggs are not from hens with outdoor access. This may have to do with the fact that outdoor access (‘gras’) and organic eggs are more widely available in supermarkets nowadays. Since many participants still believe that free-range eggs are the most animal-friendly eggs, their distrust levels steeply raise after being informed about the free-range requirements that do not include outdoor access.

All seniors claimed to pay attention to whether labels on animal products have anything to say about on animal welfare, although they showed not much knowledge about the divergent labels. Most participants to the other focus group discussions only paid attention to the labels of animal-friendly products. The participants generally showed high levels of distrust in animal welfare labels. Many of them thought that producers and retailers are allowed to put whatever claim on a package. Others were mostly sceptical about monitoring animal welfare claims: Who monitors? How can they be certain that a farm adheres to the requirements? Isn’t it practically impossible to visit each and every farm and to have a look at each and every animal? One participant voiced such questions as:

‘Can I ask something? Those organic products that are lying in a shelf, that is very nice and you pay more for it, but is it true? Who controls?’ (Empty nester).

And others said:

‘I also have that sometimes, they can just tell whatever they want, they couldn’t care less’ (Empty nester).

‘You are never certain, unless you go to a free-range butcher’ (Urban mother).

‘But even then you are not certain’ (Urban mother).

'I enjoy reading the Albert Heijn Allerhande [magazine], but it annoys me that I see an picture of a smiling farmer but I am not sure if I can trust it.... I am annoyed about not knowing. It has to do with the fact that I also read other stuff. For example, those animals are killed in an awful way' (Politically active/vegetarian).

Distrust spreads easily – When the participants (for whatever reason) come to distrust a certain label, they tend to also distrust other labels. Let's consider the following example: some participants thought that the EKO label had something to do with the partisan 'Effe checken' ('Let's check') campaign about food safety as financed by mainstream meat producers. This campaign urged the Dutch public to check whether a certain label (IKB) is on the package of meat products, since that would ensure good meat quality. At the time of the execution of the focus group discussions the 'Let's Check' campaign was dominantly present in the media, since it deliberately misinforms consumers by suggesting that the IKB-label not only guarantees food safety – this is true – but also other attributes of food quality like animal welfare – this is not true. Somehow some participants associated the 'Let's check' campaign with the EKO label and therefore started to distrust organic as well. The logo of the 'Let's check' campaign is at least partially responsible for this confusion, since it looks almost the same as the free-range logo.

This spreading of distrust holds true more often. When free-range eggs are not what people thought they were, then outdoor access eggs might also be a marketing trick. If the 'Let's check' campaign is not truthful, why should one trust campaigns about organic products then? One senior was particularly suspicious towards all kinds of labels, and this suspicion clearly resulted from bad media stories about some of these labels:

'A while ago there was a show on television and that was about the distribution of meat. But even the highest manager did not know where the meat was from. For example, the green meat. I don't believe a thing. There are also some TV-shows that go further into that. I just do not have faith in it. They asked people who worked at Albert Heijn where the meat was from and nobody knew. They had more of that nonsense. Someone from the marketing department even told that long names of products were not put on the package materials. Just write down Ireland and that is it. It is a disgrace' (Senior).

For some participants such stories were a reason to start buying organic meat or shopping at an organic shop but for others they were a reason to stop trusting altogether.

Distrust is thus an effect of marketing campaigns with deliberately ambiguous images and messages. The 'Let's Check' campaign, for example, leaves space for people to think that the campaign is about guaranteeing animal welfare, more healthy production or about tracing product origins, whereas this is not the case. When people discover that some (implicit) promises are false and that these promises are mainly a marketing thing, the chances are that they will become quite sceptical indeed. Since not everyone is able to tell the difference between a partisan marketing campaign and an independently monitored label like EKO, it does not come as a surprise that people start to distrust

independent labels as well. This implies that the authenticity and trustworthiness of one label is not good enough; other labels also need to be reliable. The prospects for an animal welfare label monitored by the European Commission thus probably also depend on more stringent governmental rules and regulations on corporate marketing.

However, to end this section on a more positive note, things are not all bad, since many participants were able to tell the difference between the EKO and Demeter labels on the one hand and the 'Let's check' or other marketing campaigns on the other hand. Furthermore, the organic labels were shown to be the most trusted labels, even if some participants also leaned towards distrust of organic products. Finally, occasionally it also looked as if displaying distrust was an excuse for not spending more money on animal-friendly products. The argument then runs something like this: Why should I spend a lot of money when I am not 100 per cent certain that the claims of some label are true.

'I doubt the truthfulness of information. I do buy, but I am not going to pay a lot more' (Empty nester).

#### 4.4.4 INTERACTIONS WITH AND PERCEPTIONS OF ANIMAL-FRIENDLY FOOD PRODUCTS

##### *Negative characteristics*

It comes as no big surprise that the participants to the focus group discussions often mentioned prices as the main barrier to buy animal-friendly products. Whereas for some participants the sentence 'organic meat is too expensive' seemed a mantra to ease oneself of any personal responsibility for animal welfare, for others the choice between expensive animal-friendly meat and cheap animal-unfriendly seemed to present a real and tragic dilemma:

'Well, it's simply not always possible [to handle high prices] so you do less and that's no fun. You also look for specific meat and eat more vegetarian' (Urban mother).

Several participants resolved the dilemma by buying more organic meat when it is on sale, for example:

'I do buy more organic meat at the supermarket when it's on 25 per cent sale. I get more then and put it in the freezer. I am not going to pay 20 euro for a chicken if I can get one for 10 euro elsewhere' (Urban mother).

And another solution is to 'simply buy less meat, or sometimes meat and sometimes a replacement. And change to fish' (Urban mothers). Distrust in the claims of animal welfare labels is also a major barrier to buy animal-friendly products. One participant worried about microbiological dangers in organic meat, whereas another questioned the

sustainability of organic meat. Finally, lack of time or the pursuit of convenience is also a barrier to animal-friendly food consumption patterns.

### *Positive characteristics*

Animal-friendly products have positive connotations. Many participants believed that free-range meat tastes better:

‘[That free-range] filet americain is almost yellow. It looks as if it’s very old but it tastes better. My neighbour forced me to taste it and now I am really won over’ (Urban mother).

Organic meat is also considered to be healthier, since their feed has been of better quality:

‘Well, I think of animal friendly meat then. I think that those animals have been treated well, that’s organic, and that they get good feed, without pesticides and all those things’ (Rural woman).

The idea is that organic animals get appropriate and healthy feed and that this is also healthier for humans – you eat what they eat. The participants did not clearly distinguish between what is healthier and what is more animal-friendly. Thus stress and hormones were also considered to be bad, not only for the animals themselves but also for the health of humans:

‘Well if an animal eats unhealthy then I also eat that and also if they are stressed and have a frightful death then I also get that inside. Those are all hormones and I don’t know what such an animal produces at such a moment’ (Empty nester).

‘A human does not like to do things he does not like, so I can imagine that pigs like their freedom and space as well. [Transport of live animals] is just crazy. Those animals are almost dead when they get to their final destination. That cannot be right. That sort of meat cannot be 100 per cent pure. The meat contains too much adrenaline’ (Senior).

More participants thought that stress and a frightful death resulted in unhealthy meat, because of the adrenaline in the meat.

The idea of having ethical dilemmas in choosing between different good-making properties of animal products is probably much too academic for most people, since most participants lumped together animal-friendly, environment-friendly, healthy and tasty. This is also a major risk for organic and other labels, since the health claims of these labels are not supported by scientific evidence and this might quite easily result in distrust of the other, more substantiated claims as well.

#### 4.4.5 INFORMATION ABOUT ANIMAL-FRIENDLY FOOD PRODUCTS AND THE EVALUATION OF THIS INFORMATION

Some participants in each and every focus group looked for information about animal welfare on products and then mainly looked for organic or free-range products. Most animal-friendly products do say much about their specific animal welfare criteria and quite some participants would appreciate such more specific information. They claimed that they have the right to know what goes on in animal husbandry practices or wanted to have more information to be able to make informed choices. Such claims are clear echoes of the dominant liberal political philosophy in The Netherlands that makes much of consumers' freedom of choice on the market.

Many participants would like to have more information about what organic means, what animal-friendly stands for or what the animal welfare criteria are. They consider it to be of the utmost importance that such information is true, even when that would imply negative labelling, e.g. this meat is from a chicken without outdoor access.

'Sometimes you see commercials that say that the free-range hen has had some more space than a battery cage. Then you know... the hen has been in a battery but his conditions of life have been a bit better. That is a bit fairer. They do not lie about the hen's circumstances of living. They do admit that the hen has been living in a battery. That is honest' (Senior).

Many participants would like to see such information on packages, preferably in the form of a clear and visible label. Although some participants would like to have (extensive) information on organic products, others argued that labels need to be simple and compact.

Some participants suggested to provide leaflets in the supermarket or to start media campaigns. Quite some participants complained that supermarket personnel do not know a thing about the meat they sell and where it comes from. This is an implicit recommendation for more skilled personnel as an information source. Other participants were not that interested in more information about animal-friendly products, either because they did not really care or because they found it disturbing to be confronted with such information on packages. Some participants considered it to be too much of a hassle to look for the animal welfare characteristics of each and every product:

'I have the opinion that when you have to find out about every product how it was killed and how it was treated... then I have to check for every purchase whether that animal has had a good life. That is just not handy, that will take me an hour' (Empty nester).

It seems that information about animal welfare on packages will only influence people's consumption, if they are already interested. It is only then that they will buy organic or other animal-friendly products. A reciprocal relation exists between having a general interest in animal welfare and being interested in general information about farming practices and levels of animal welfare. A link thus exists between receiving and looking

for general information about animal welfare and looking for animal welfare characteristics of products.

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## 4.5 CONSUMER'S EVALUATION OF A PROPOSED SCIENTIFICALLY BASED STANDARD FOR FARM ANIMAL WELFARE

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### 4.5.1 INTRODUCTION

This section will focus on principles of animal welfare. First, the participants' spontaneous animal welfare concerns will be discussed (Section 4.5.2). Then, attention will be paid to their responses to the proposed scientifically based standard for farm animal welfare (Section 4.5.3). Finally, the participants' impressions of the likely effectiveness of a standard based on the animal scientists' list of animal welfare principles will be discussed (Section 4.5.4).

### 4.5.2 SPONTANEOUS ANIMAL WELFARE CONCERNS

During the focus group discussions the participants were asked to individually write down a list of animal welfare concerns. After this exercise the focus groups were to place their concerns on a joint list. Table 4.4 shows for each focus group the animal welfare principles that a majority of the group (more than 50 per cent) wrote down on their individual lists as well as the principles that were listed by a minority (less than 50 per cent).

A majority in each and every focus group listed two animal welfare concerns, i.e. farmed animals should have enough space and they should have good food. The idea that farm animals ought to be slaughtered in a humane way was mentioned by a majority in two focus groups (seniors and rural women), and by a minority in three other focus groups. The urban mothers were the only focus group not to mention this particular concern. A minority in all focus groups mentioned the concern that farm animals should have outdoor access. It should however be noted that the discussions about the individual lists of concerns consistently showed that a vast majority has outdoor access in mind when raising the concern that farm animals should have enough space. The idea that farmed animals should not be given additives was mentioned by a minority in all focus groups except the empty nesters. In most occasions additives were specified as hormones. The focus group with political consumers and vegetarians mentioned the concern about long transports of living animal much more than any of the other focus groups. Long transports were a majority concern among these political consumers and vegetarians, whereas it was hardly voiced in the other focus groups.



TABLE 4.4 Animal welfare principles as listed by participants to the focus groups

	Majority (listed by more than 50% of the participants)	Minority (listed by less than 50% of the participants)
Urban mothers (1)	Enough space Good food Enough light Good care	No additives/hormones Outdoor access Keep mothers and children together No mutilations Good hygiene No pain and stress Normal lifespan
Married/living together without children (Empty nesters) (2)	Good food Enough space	No pain and stress Good care Outdoor access Humane slaughtering Good hygiene
Seniors (3)	Enough space Good food Humane slaughtering	Outdoor access Fresh air Good hygiene No long transports Good care Enough light
Rural women (4)	Enough space Humane slaughtering Good food	No additives/hormones Outdoor access No long transports Good care Fresh air Distraction No pain and stress Normal lifespan
Young singles (5)	Enough space Good food	No additives/hormones No mutilations Humane slaughtering Good care Good hygiene No additives/hormones No mutilations Fresh air Enough light Outdoor access Normal lifespan
Political consumers and vegetarians (6)	Enough space Good food No long transports	No pain and stress No additives/hormones Outdoor access No mutilations Human slaughtering Good hygiene Good care Enough light

The similarities between the focus groups are remarkable – only slight differences exist between the divergent groups. The listed concerns are, furthermore, most often formulated in quite general terms. This is not particularly surprising, since most participants to the focus group discussions did not have much specific knowledge of farming practices and the associated animal welfare problems. This may also be the

reason that the participants did not distinguish between welfare concerns for different animal species. Another reason for not talking about animal welfare on species-specific might be found in the situation that people are more likely to make distinctions animal species when thinking about what kind of animals are fit to rise on farms and/or to eat for dinner. When the participants to the focus group discussion made such distinctions between animal species, it was in the context of that sort of reasoning that was not at stake at this stage in the discussions. The participants did not much discuss the individually listed animal welfare concerns. They did not seem to feel the need to provide reasons for their concerns or to justify them. It seems as if they thought each other's concerns were self-explanatory and readily agreed with the principles of others, even if not listed by themselves.

#### 4.5.3 ANIMAL WELFARE PRINCIPLES

##### *General impression of the principles*

In most focus groups the animal scientific welfare principles did not cause much discussion let alone heated debates. Most participants were worried or even shocked by the list, since they read the principles as an indication that animal welfare in current husbandry practices is worse than they thought:

'It is even worse than I thought' (Urban mother).

'It is almost scaring' (Urban mother).

'It is depressing, reading this. It makes me feel shamed. It says that you are responsible for living animals as a human' (Politically active/vegetarian)

'This is what it is all about. Nobody wants to see this. When you see this you feel guilty and much must have been done to hide this from people's eyes' (Politically active/vegetarian).

It is noteworthy that in the focus group with political consumers and vegetarians this was a more dominant response than in any of the other focus group. They said things like:

'They are like humans' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'I am moved by this' (Politically active/vegetarian).

The principles that were mentioned by a majority of the participants in one of the focus groups correspond with four of the animal welfare principles as listed by animal scientists, whereas minority concerns also referred to four other animal scientific welfare principles (see Table 4.5).

TABLE 4.5 Comparison animal welfare principles as listed by animal scientists and participants to focus groups

Animal scientists	Majority participants	Minority participants
1. No hunger, thirst and malnutrition	Good food	No additives/hormones
2. Physical comfort and security	Enough space/light No long transports	Outdoor access Fresh air
3. Good treatment of injuries		
4. Good treatment of diseases		Good hygiene
5. No pain	Humane slaughtering	No mutilations No pain and stress
6. Normal/natural social behaviour		Keep mothers and children together
7. Normal/natural individual behaviour		Normal lifespan
8. Good human-animal relationship	Good care	
9. No negative emotions		
10. Positive emotions		Distraction

However, quite some participants felt that the list of principles responded to an overly negative picture of animal welfare in current livestock production practices. Some participants even saw the list as a quite accurate description of the actual living conditions of all or most farmed animals of today. They felt that the list gives the false impression that animal welfare is worse than it actually is:

‘This picture says that all animals are in a bad condition, but that is not true I think’ (Empty nester).

One participant explicitly asked whether the list of principles presented a description of reality:

‘I am kind of curious what part of all the animals on all the farms must endure this?’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

The focus group with rural women was the exception to overall calm and moderate response to the list of animal scientific welfare principles, since the majority in this group quite strongly and emotionally responded to the list of principles. On the one hand, they thought that the list presented a false picture, since they believed that these principles were already adhered to in the Netherlands and that these principles were more relevant for other – less civilized – European countries. On the other hand, and inconsistently, they felt that the principles were unrealistic and a bit too much:

‘My guinea pigs live like this’ (Rural woman).

‘Yes, and elderly people don’t’ (Rural woman).

'Well in five years we will not have any farmers left in Holland.... Well, it is quite all right in Holland I guess, but this is about Europe, but I think that apart from exceptions it is quite all right in Holland. We just want so much meat. It will be the same' (Rural woman).

One participant in the focus group of empty nesters considered the list of animal scientific welfare principles to be the bare minimum. According to him the principles were not too much – like the rural women argued – but rather too little:

'This is only the bare minimum' (Empty nester).

Some participants felt the need to emphasise that farmers are not the only ones responsible for the suggested low level of animal welfare in current husbandry practices:

'Doesn't a farmer love their cows?' (Empty nester)

'The farmers are not malevolent, I think, they are farmers because they love animals, they do not want to chase a cow with an electric stick. The farmers are forced by mass-production and that is because we want to get our cheap meat' (Young single).

Quite some participants in the focus group of young singles questioned whether it would be possible to achieve the conditions as described by the list of principles and voiced worries like: Who is going to monitor this and is it actually possible to monitor this?

Some more individual responses to the list animal scientific welfare principles were:

'It misses direct action' (Young single).

'These principles say more than just food and space. That is good. More is going on. It is important to think about it' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'Some of these things are so common sense, treat them well so they do not get sick, but it is hard when there are so many of them' (Senior)

'I find 10 a bit strange, they suddenly speak in positive terms. The rest is negative. It is a bit of a strange introduction. But that's more a matter of language' (Urban mother).

#### *Most and least important principles*

The participants to the focus group discussions found it hard to say which one of the animal scientific welfare principles they considered to be most important or least important:

‘I find all of them important, if you do not have anything to drink or to eat then you are nowhere, it is a choice between all equally things. That is just very hard’ (Empty nester).

However, when the participants were forced to pick one or two principles as most important, they were able to provide reasons why they considered some principle as the most important principle. Sometimes these reasons were self-explanatory:

‘Everything that is negative is not good, also for animals. Everything that has to do with suffering is not good, and you must prevent it’ (Empty nester).

‘Pain is just not good’ (Empty nester).

Others motivated their choice by claiming that their favourite principle is the most basic principle. And it is most basic either because that principle is the most important principle according to them<sup>9</sup> or because this principle more or less serves as a necessary precondition for the other principles – it needs to be secured first:

‘Principle 1 is the most elementary principle; if this one is not fulfilled then nothing will work out’ (Senior).

‘When a farmer starts to kick or hit an animal he is not taking good care of its animals, he will not take care of the other principles then’ (Young single).

Most participants mentioned one of the following principles as the most important principle:

- 1) no hunger, thirst or malnutrition;
- 5) no pain;
- 8) good human-animal relationship;
- 2) physical comfort and security;
- 3) good treatment of injuries.

In general, and implicitly, most participants to the focus group discussions seemed to adopt the same hierarchy as the dominant – consequentialist and deontologist – moral philosophies by arguing that it more important do avoid doing harm (to animals) than to do good.

Most participants found it even more difficult to decide on what is the least important principle and many felt unable to pick one principle:

‘It is hard to say what is important and what is not important, everything is important, everything needs to be good’ (Young single).

Actually, not all participants managed to mention a least important principle but principle 6 (normal/natural social behaviour) and principle 10 (positive emotions) were

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<sup>9</sup> This is of course circular reasoning of course, which again shows that the participants found it hard to choose a principle. By the way, they also explicitly expressed that this question gave them a hard time.

mentioned most often. Quite some participants seem to consider those principles a bit too much. It might also be possible that the relevance of those principles were most difficult to understand.

Since the participants found it hard to decide on what is the least important principle, it does not come as a big surprise that not one single participant thought that one or more of the animal scientific welfare principles were superfluous – they are all important. It is noteworthy that, although quite some participants mentioned outdoor access as an animal welfare concern in their individual lists or in the follow-up discussions about providing enough space, no participant noticed that outdoor access is not explicitly included in the list of animal scientific welfare principles. It may be that this is so because the participants think that outdoor access is implied by principle 2 (physical comfort and security), whereas this is not automatically the case.

The participants to the focus group discussions missed the following things on the list of animal scientific welfare principles.

1. A reference to the idea that farm animals should not be given additives/hormones – presumably to be included in principle 1 (No hunger, thirst or malnutrition).
2. A reference to the idea that too much food might also be bad, e.g. no force-feeding of geese should for the production of foie gras – presumably to be included in principle 1 (No hunger, thirst or malnutrition).
3. A reference to the idea that small-scale production is better – presumably to be included in principle 2 (Physical comfort and security).
4. A reference to the idea that the food must be appropriate for the animal, e.g. cows should have a vegetarian diet – presumably to be included in principle 1 (No hunger, thirst or malnutrition).
5. A reference to the idea that vaccination might be wise to prevent diseases – presumably to be included in principle 4 (Good treatment of diseases).
6. A reference to the idea that genetic modification of animals is bad – it is presumably not possible to include this concern in one of the ten principles and thus warrants the formulation of an additional principles.
7. A reference to the idea that needs might differ between individual animals – presumably to be included in principle 7 (Normal/natural individual behaviour).

#### 4.5.4 A WELFARE QUALITY BASED STANDARD?

The participants to the focus group discussions were highly confused about the intended purpose of the list of animal scientific welfare principles. They saw at least the following three possibilities to use these principles in a regulatory context.

1. Adherence to the ten principles is mandatory and enforced by governmental rules and regulations. Then, no need exists to introduce a new hallmark, since all animal products will have to be produced in accordance with the principles. Consumers will not have a choice whether or not they purchase these products.

The ten principles will serve as a basis for a minimum level of animal welfare as secured by law.

2. Adherence to the ten principles is voluntary and all animal products will get a hallmark indicating whether or not – or to what degree – it has been produced in accordance with the ten principles. Animal products that do not represent any of the ten principles will also be – negatively – labelled. This hallmark could be given the shape of either a graded (e.g. with stars) or a pass/fail system. Consumers will have a choice between animal products with different welfare standards.
3. Adherence to the ten principles is voluntary but only animal products that are produced in accordance with them will receive a hallmark. Consumers will again have a choice between animal products with different welfare standards.

The first possibility is the most far-reaching and the last possibility is probably most easy to accomplish. The vast majority of the participants was however most supportive of the first possibility and the idea that the list serves as the basis of governmental rules and regulations. Quite some participants actually assumed that this was the idea of the list, asked whether they were right, and were quite disappointed to discover this might not necessarily be the prospect for the list. They then emphasized that they still believed that governmental rules and regulations were the way to go with the list:

‘I thought it would be for all animals, I do not like the idea of another hallmark’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘The government should also maintain this, that’s important’ (Empty nesters).

‘I would like to see this solved. I don’t want to make mistakes so let them arrange it, then it might be a bit more expensive and then I don’t need to choose anymore and I will eat a little less meat’ (Rural woman).

The following conversation between three rural women is also quite illustrative:

‘Well suppose that everybody follows the same guidelines, then everybody can buy the same in the supermarket and you don’t need a distinctive expensive organic product anymore. You do not have to choose anymore, and then everything is fine’ (Rural woman).

‘You should be able to trust that’ (Rural woman).

‘You should not have to put that on a label, it simply should be like that’ (Rural woman).

One final quote on this issue:

‘But what I read here is that after those five years a quality hallmark comes out. Or is it just a fun thing. And they do make it mandatory, including sanctions? Otherwise it is useless... So, you will still have a free choice, if that is true than

we will have another hallmark again. I do not see why that is not useless' (Young single).

Some participants thought that the list of animal scientific welfare principles would not make much of a difference, since they doubted whether it would ever be put into practice. These doubts were either informed by the assumption that European parliaments will never pass a law to guarantee these principles or by the assumption that it will be impossible to monitor these principles. Others explicitly disagreed with the dominant idea that governmental rules and regulations are the best possibility to stimulate adherence to the animal scientific welfare principles, because they argued that people should have the freedom to choose for themselves whether or not they buy animal-friendly products:

'Well everybody needs to change if it is a governmental regulation. Well, people who don't have problems with animal welfare should be able to continue their current shopping behaviour' (Urban mother).

Another participant is not positive about the idea of more governmental rules and regulations because she assumes:

'[T]hat all farmers already know these rules.... I don't believe that my supermarket sells meat from maltreated animals. These things don't happen in Holland. In a European context we're ahead of others' (Rural woman).

*What if the EU develops a hallmark on the basis of the list of animal welfare principles?*

In general, the participants to the focus group discussions were moderately positive about the idea of a new EU hallmark on animal welfare, although most of them were even more positive about a new EU law to guarantee a higher minimum level of animal welfare. Many participants in particular liked the idea that the hallmark will be used in a European context. They argued that it is hard to accomplish a good level of animal welfare on a national scale, since that would negatively impact on export possibilities. Therefore, introduction of a hallmark on a European scale would make things much easier. The participants also welcomed the idea that an EU hallmark on animal welfare might replace other hallmarks, because they are quite confused and frustrated about the current plethora of animal welfare labels.

Some participants thought that providing good information about a new animal welfare hallmark would help people in making choices. They also thought that it is important to be clear about the claims of the label:

'If there are clear-cut standards it would become clearer why you ask more money for some products. It would be more attractive for a farmer to produce at a smaller scale' (Young single).

'Yes, a product with a regular label doesn't do me much. I need more information. I will trust it more if I knew more about it' (Young single).



‘For me it will [make a difference]. My feeling of responsibility or my feeling of shame. I can do something with that’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

Other participants cast doubts:

‘If you are talking only about a nice hallmark, without saying anything about the regulation, then it is useless. You have to say something about living up to the rules otherwise it is useless’ (Young single).

And do not forget about the importance of prices – if the animal products that are produced in accordance with the ten principles are much more expensive, it will not be expected that others or – on a more self-reflexive note – they themselves choose to buy such products.

Some participants claimed that the hallmark should also be used on products that are not produced in accordance with the ten principles:

‘If they put on a package ‘this is meat from an abused animal’, then it will [improve the level of welfare]’.

Others notoriously disagreed with this idea of negative labelling:

‘[Y]ou have to keep it positive. You have to write down which requirements it does fulfil’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘People want to be rewarded and people do not want to be or feel bad’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

*What kind of standard do Dutch consumers want?*

The participants to the focus group discussions quite often spontaneously mentioned they wanted a uniform hallmark with uniform standards and to be used in all supermarkets on a preferably larger than national scale. These uniform standards need to be clearly communicated to clarify the meaning of the hallmark:

‘It should be a general system which everyone uses. Not just one shop. It must be introduced and regulated by the government. You should try to prevent that shops create their own system’ (Young single).

When thinking about the format of the hallmark, participants’ equation of animal-friendly and organic returned to the scene. They then argued that the label to guarantee adherence to the ten principles should say that product is ‘100 per cent organic’. Others thought of using red and green colours on a package to indicate bad and good animal welfare respectively. Please notice that these requests for very simple labelling formats are at odds with the other professed wish to be better informed about the claims of the hallmark. In general, the participants did not spontaneously raise many ideas about specific standards, hallmarks or communication strategies.

When specifically prompted whether they thought that a star system was a good idea, most participants did not voice strong opinions and did not seem to have a strong position on this particular idea. Anyway, it needs to be a simple system, not too many stars and not too many categories, otherwise it will be too complex to understand and people will not even bother to try. One participant strongly opposed the idea of a star system for the following reasons:

‘Well, how will that work? Say, if, what is a lot organic, that’s odd. I have two stars what does that mean to me?... Well, stars really aren’t a good idea; actually it’s a ridiculous idea. You have to work on those ten principles and then introduce a logo from the government. There are no degrees in organic’ (Urban mother).

The idea is that animal welfare is similar to pregnancy – it is either animal-friendly or not and not a bit.

### *Information about animal products that represent the Welfare Quality principles*

Many participants to the focus group discussions said that they would like to receive information about animal products that are produced in accordance with the ten animal scientific welfare principles by means of a hallmark. This hallmark needs to be clearly visible and simple. The hallmark is best introduced and communicated through television campaigns and/or leaflets. These leaflets might be delivered at home or be available in supermarket, e.g. on the meat shelves. The participants suggested that the hallmark should be clearly visible on the meat shelves and that it should be introduced in a television campaign or on billboards. Many participants also claimed that they do not pay a lot of attention to television programs or newspaper articles about animal welfare, because they are not that interested in the issues. This provides some perspective to the chance at success of the aforementioned suggestions for communicating a new animal welfare hallmark.

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## 4.6 THE ROLES OF RESPONSIBILITY, AGENCY AND TRUST IN RELATION TO ANIMAL WELFARE

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### 4.6.1 INTRODUCTION

This section will focus on the roles of responsibility, consumer agency and trust in relation to animal welfare. First, attention will be paid to the level of personal engagement with the subject of animal welfare as showed by the participants during the focus discussions and to the amount of responsibility and influence they think to have as consumers (Section 4.6.2). Next, responsibility will be the subject of Section 4.6.3. Section 4.6.4 will discuss the issue of trust. Since the subjects of responsibility and trust

have been touched upon in earlier sections, summaries will be given instead of repeating earlier descriptions of discussions to avoid too much redundancy.

#### 4.6.2 CONSUMER AGENCY AND INVOLVEMENT

The majority of the participants to the focus group discussions is not overly concerned about animal welfare in their daily lives. They do not often think or talk about the subject and they do not actively seek information about animal welfare. Most participants do not feel to have much influence on the animal welfare debate through memberships of political parties or NGOs. This even holds true when they are members of such organisations. The participants thus do not actively search for – or make use of – means to influence animal welfare debates. The majority of them also does not have a clue when they are prompted to think about possible means to impact on such discussions. The focus group with political consumers and vegetarians includes more participants that are more involved in animal welfare discussions than the other focus groups.

A majority of the participants to the focus group discussions claimed that their consumptive practices make a difference. Henceforth, most of them also claimed that they had a responsibility as consumers:

‘Not that I sit at home, on the couch and think about animal welfare. But you do have a responsibility. And you can make a choice. You grow in your consciousness but you have to take your responsibility’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

Although some of the participants explicitly stated to have changed their shopping routines because of a felt consumer responsibility, many participants confessed not (often) to make such changes. This however did not imply that they did not agree to the idea that changing consumptive practices would make a difference.

Boycotts and buycotts are quite generally used as a means to exert consumer influence, although sometimes the participants were not that consciously aware of boycotting food products. When specifically asked whether they boycotted or buycotted products (or specific producers or retailers), they sometimes were not able to mention anything. At earlier stage in the discussion, however, they might have been quite explicit about not buying, e.g. battery eggs or veal. Boycotting or buycotting has then become a routine of which the participants are no longer fully aware. Participants also indicated to change their shopping routines in times of some food crisis, i.e. the BSE and foot-and-mouth crises caused participants to buy less beef as a result of health rather than animal welfare reasons.

Frequently boycotted food products are battery eggs and meat from specific animals like chicken, pork, veal, foie gras and lamb. Frequently mentioned buycotts referred to organic and free-range meat, outdoor access and free-range eggs. Some participants also

said to buy more beef for animal welfare considerations, since they thought that cows are better treated and live longer than other animals. An empty nester with a preference for free-range meat said:

'I would like to accomplish something greater with it, but it is about the small things.... I think that when everybody here in the Netherlands only buys free-range chicken or free-range meat, then eventually you only have free-range farms' (Empty nester).

But the following rural woman would have disagreed initially:

'I think that I am not in the position to change a thing. The government needs to deal with this. I might be stupid but it will not help if just I do not eat meatballs for a day' (Rural woman).

However, she changed her mind at the end of the discussion and then argued that it would be a bit too easy to leave everything up to the government.

More participants switched between the idea that consumers have their own responsibility for animal welfare and the idea that the government has (final) responsibility. They simultaneously claimed that consumers could and should make a difference and that the government had the most crucial role. A participant buying outdoor access eggs was specifically asked what he was trying to achieve with his shopping behaviour and said:

'Well that the hens will get happy. The government should also just prescribe how chickens should live and then that should be regulated. The hens should all live like that; chickens should be able to walk about freely. That is the only thing that I can do' (Empty nester).

Some participants seemed to view consumer agency as a personal and moral choice, a choice related to a clear conscience and thus distinct from government responsibility. Consumer responsibility is about doing the right thing and making your own small steps at the time:

'Raising awareness is always a good thing. I think that is really good. You should not always be concerned with the result. Each small step helps. It is not possible to question the effectiveness. One has to be involved with the process' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'Buying organic is more something for yourself' (Urban mother).

Real changes, however, need governmental rules and regulations. Others opted for taking their own responsibility as consumers as a second-best option. If the government does not take its responsibilities for animal welfare, one should take responsibility as consumer.

All participants were quite aware of the so-called ‘prisoner’s dilemma’ in taking responsibility as consumers – boycotts or buycotts will only make a difference if many consumers do the same. Since the participants did not expect others to change their shopping routines on a daily basis, they questioned why they should be ‘moral saints’ and buy overly expensive animal-friendly products:

‘Some legal enforcement is necessary, otherwise nobody will make things more difficult for himself’ (Rural woman).

The following discussion between two young singles regularly buying organic products:

‘I think that the government should play a vital role. We are talking about it in this session. But if we are in the supermarket again, will we buy meat with a hallmark? Even if it is twice as expensive?’.

‘I will do so’.

‘I do not think so. The government has to help us a bit. The government has to help with a minimum set of rules. So that we can feel more secure about meat and that in the end the price will go down’.

#### 4.6.3 RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

Much has been written about the subject of responsibility already, i.e. in Sections 4.5 and 4.6.2. In summary and conclusion, a vast majority of the participants to the focus group discussion felt that the government has the first responsibility in realising a higher level of animal welfare, e.g. by enforcing the ten animal scientific welfare principles as presented in Section 4.5.4. However, not only the government has a responsibility. Most participants also indicated that they themselves or consumers in general have a responsibility, although they were quite uncertain whether this responsibility could make much of a difference. And retailers and farmers also have a responsibility for animal welfare. Improving animal welfare is thus a shared responsibility of many actors.

Notice that the participants to the focus group discussions distinguished between different types of responsibility. Furthermore, they were quite clear about the fact that different actors have responsibilities for different things:

- consumers have a moral responsibility;
- government have a legal responsibility;
- farmers and retailers have an actual or practical responsibility.

A farmer thus has a different type of responsibility than a consumer. The farmer needs to take practical care of the animal, since the farmer is actually present at the farm and this presence determines his/her type of responsibility lies. A consumer, on the other hand, has a moral responsibility for what he/she buys. This responsibility is again different from the responsibilities of a politician (policy-making) or a retailer (placing

specific products on the shelves and communicating about these products with customers). Since the participants argue that responsibility for animal welfare is a shared responsibility, they also distinguish between these different types of responsibility.

Most participants felt that one organisation should be responsible for monitoring animal welfare standards, although some participants argues that it is better to have more than one organisation as that would provide checks and balances:

'I do not like the idea of a monopoly' (Politically active/vegetarian).

Participants regularly mentioned that the monitoring organisation should be independent and trustworthy. They thought of some governmental body like a health or food inspection department, e.g. the Dutch Food Safety Authority (Voedsel- en Waren Autoriteit, VWA). Let's hear some participants:

'Well something that is public and it should be just like scientific research, you must be able to check it' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'It has to be an independent organization' (Young single).

Others disagreed:

'You want the ministerial department to do it, but I do not think that is a good idea. They will never bite themselves' (Seniors).

Other participants preferred monitoring to be a responsibility of the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals (Dierenbescherming) but this idea was always strong opposed by other participants that considered this NGO not to be independent enough as a representative of a particular interest.

#### 4.6.4 TRUST

Section 4.4 discussed the issue of trust into some detail already. This section clearly showed that the participants to the focus group discussions highly distrust hallmarks, their promises, marketing strategies and information campaigns. More generally, information about animal welfare tends to be distrusted. Some participants felt that the media present an overly negative picture of farming practices, whereas others claimed not to have enough information about farming practices that are deliberately hidden from the public gaze. These latter participants did not consider information to be too negative but rather is too limited or too positive, since the reality of livestock production practices is veiled.

Cheap foods are distrusted as notoriously animal-unfriendly, and the same holds true for discount retailers. Section 4.1 already revealed that most participants placed higher levels of trust in the much more expensive retailer Albert Heijn. The most urban focus

groups of young singles and political consumers/vegetarians in particular displayed high levels of trust in Albert Heijn to be providing honest information about animal-friendly products on its shelves.

The participants to the focus group discussions did not seem to distrust the government on the issue of animal welfare. No negative remarks were made about the Dutch government, apart from its bureaucracy. The (rural) participants did occasionally claim that governmental rules and regulations, e.g. about animal welfare, force farmers to leave the country:

‘I’ve got the idea that many farmers just go away. They just move to Canada. That is the pressure of the government. They just leave’ (Empty nester).

Concerns about bureaucracy were also voiced when discussing the implementation of the ten animal scientific welfare principles:

‘But that needs paperwork and rules. It does not make it easier and clearer’ (Senior).

Apart from these concerns about bureaucracy, most participants did feel that the government is the actor with most responsibility to take care of – monitoring – animal welfare.

It is therefore not surprising that many participants mention a governmental organisation when asked who they trust to give honest information about animal welfare and/or animal-friendly products. This organisation needs to be independent, trustworthy, non-partisan and without commercial/industrial relations. Participants mention the government in general, or specific departments like the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality or the Food Safety Authority. Some participants however worry that the government is not independent. This is shown by the following discussion among the young singles:

‘The government [should provide information]’.

‘For example, the Dutch Nutrition Centre’.

‘It has to be independent’.

‘The Food Safety Authority’.

‘No, it has to be independent’.

‘The body has to be trustworthy and non-commercial’.

‘And the organization who gives out the information should not be allowed to make any profits’.

The consumers’ organisation (Consumentenbond) is also mentioned quite often as a source of trustworthy information.

The participants to the focus group discussions respond positively – or at least not negatively – to the idea of the European Union being responsible for (monitoring) animal welfare and providing information about animal-friendly products. This

(implicit) trust in the European Union is relevant for the idea of developing a European animal welfare monitoring and labelling system.

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## 4.7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 4.7.1 INTRODUCTION

This final section will present conclusions and recommendations. Section 4.7.2 will highlight important themes and conclusions from the focus group discussions. Next, Section 4.7.3 will formulate recommendations on the basis of these focus group discussions. These recommendations will, on the one hand, be based on a summary analysis of the participants' reactions to the animal scientific list of welfare. On the other hand, a summary of recommendations about product labels will be given.

### 4.7.2 CONCLUSIONS

#### *Trust*

The participants to the Dutch focus group discussions displayed high levels of distrust in general. Labels are particularly distrusted but other information sources do not fare much better. Retailers and food corporations are distrusted as sources of information about animal welfare. It is noteworthy that regulatory institutions like the Dutch government and the European Commission are relatively well trusted. The participants spontaneously and recurrently raised the issue of trust during the focus group discussions. It is therefore clear that trust is very important for them. The levels of distrust were high across all focus groups and no difference showed between participants regularly buying organic products for animal welfare considerations and other participants.

Nevertheless, organic products are the exception to the high levels of distrust. Although the participants did not show much knowledge about the principles or the monitoring of organic production – and although organic products are also distrusted to some extent – most participants did have positive associations with the term 'organic'. Many participants even almost completely equated 'organic' and 'animal-friendly', whereas a vast majority considered organic animal products to be the most animal-friendly products on the market.



*Responsibility*

The participants to the Dutch focus group discussions saw the (national) government as the actor with primary responsibility for the issue of animal welfare. They claimed that although other actors also have their own responsibility, the government should have final responsibility. The idea is that the government is in the best position to take the effective measures to improve animal welfare.

*A negative information right*

The Dutch focus group discussions showed that distrust spreads easily. When a label or a retailer is distrusted for not giving reliable information, consumers are likely to be also more suspicious or distrusting towards other labels or retailers. This implies that a party with a hallmark with the best intentions to provide reliable information about the animal welfare claims of its products is also affected by the intentions of other food companies, retailers or certification schemes. Furthermore, some participants felt that retailers and food companies are currently allowed to make whatever claims they want to make. Although this is not entirely true, more stringent governmental rules and regulations about misinformation would not be such a bad idea in an attempt to improve the trustworthiness of labels, marketing campaigns and governmental institutions with a monitoring responsibility. A negative information right not to be misinformed may thus have a major impact on consumer trust in labels and information.

## 4.7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

*Responses to the animal scientific list of welfare concerns*

Section 5.5 showed that the 10 welfare principles of the animal scientists generally did not cause much discussion in the Dutch focus groups. The participants do not particularly agree or disagree with these principles. However, quite some participants were worried or even somewhat shocked by the list, since they read the principles as an indication that animal welfare in current husbandry practices is even worse than they thought. Others, also reading the welfare concerns as a reflection of the actual situation, felt that the list gives the false impression that animal welfare is worse than it actually is.

The participants to the focus group discussions felt that the principles are all important. Therefore, they had a hard time indicating what principle is the most important and what principle is least important. After prompting, the participants came up with the following hierarchy of most important principles:

- 1) no hunger, thirst or malnutrition;
- 5) no pain;
- 8) good human-animal relationship;

- 2) physical comfort and security;
- 3) good treatment of injuries.

Since the participants found it difficult to choose the most important principle, they also found it difficult to give reasons for their choices. They thought that these reasons are either self-explanatory or considered the chosen principle to be the most fundamental principle that needs realisation as a precondition for the realisation of the other principles.

The participants found even more difficult to indicate what principle is least important. After prompting, the majority mentioned one of the following two principles:

- 6) normal/natural social behaviour;
- 10) positive emotions.

The participants indicated that adherence to these principles might be a bit too much to ask for. The significance of these principles is probably most difficult to grasp for people with relatively limited knowledge of animal husbandry practices and animal welfare attributes.

The participants also had to draw their own list of animal welfare concerns. A majority in each and every focus group mentioned two principles, i.e. animals should have enough space and animals should have good food. A majority in two focus groups and a minority in three other groups mentioned that animals should be slaughtered in a humane way. Concerns about enough light for animals, good care and long transports were raised by a majority in one focus group and by a minority in most or all other groups. Outdoor access was mentioned by a minority across all focus groups. However, as became clear in the further discussion about the principles, most participants included outdoor access in their concern that animals should have enough space.

The self-listed concerns are mostly formulated in quite general terms. The participants did not think in the more specified terms or categories of the animal scientists and also did not raise specific concerns like castration of male pigs. This is not particularly surprising, since most participants to the focus group discussions do not have much specific knowledge of farming practices and the associated animal welfare issues.

The participants did not miss many things on the list of animal scientific welfare principles. Some felt a need to emphasise that animals should not be given additives or – more specifically – hormones. It is noteworthy that none of the participants missed a reference to outdoor access in the animal scientific list of welfare concerns. It might be that the idea that animals should have outdoor access was so self-evident for the participants that they simply assumed that it was (implicitly) included in the list of animal scientific welfare principles.

The responses to the animal scientific welfare principles suggest that these principles are not the most appropriate starting point for communication with consumers. The principles will primarily have to serve and the context of monitoring animal welfare. If the principles were to be communicated to the general public, it would be wise to

‘translate’ them into a more limited list of more readily comprehensible principles. The spontaneous animal welfare concerns of the participants could guide this translation process, since they clearly indicate that a reference should be made to housing and living conditions: How much space do the animals have? How many animals live together? Do the animals get outdoor access? Furthermore, a reference should be made to the food of the animals, whereas care by the farmer, transport and slaughter conditions are also important considerations. Finally, a reference is needed to who does the monitoring and how.<sup>10</sup>

### *Product labelling*

Many participants to the Dutch focus group discussions did not particularly like the idea of the 10 principles being the basis of a new animal welfare hallmark. The majority of them was more positive about the idea that the principles could serve as a basis for European rules and regulations, although many participants did not quite seem to be aware of the possible implications of such a proposal. A minority claimed that consumers should retain the freedom to choose for themselves and were therefore not in favour of more stringent governmental rules and regulations.

Although most participants would like to see the principles as a basis for governmental rules and regulations, a hallmark on the basis of the 10 principles could also count on some support. The participants in particular welcomed the idea that the hallmark might be introduced on a European level. Furthermore, many participants would like to see that the current plethora of different hallmarks be replaced by one uniform hallmark. This hallmark would thus need to guarantee uniform standards and these standards should be clearly communicated to the general public. Moreover, the hallmark needs to be simple, although this wish for simplicity might be at odds with the equally strong demand for more extensive clarification of the claims of the hallmark. Some participants mentioned that the hallmark should make a reference to whether – or to what degree – the labelled products are organic products. The participants thought that a star system would not be such a bad idea but most of them actually did not voice strong opinions on this matter. The star system would have to be simple though, i.e. not be too many stars.

### *Four types of hallmark*

What type of hallmark do the Dutch focus group discussions support? It is possible to use two dimensions to distinguish different types of hallmark: A) The hallmark could be another hallmark next to the already existing hallmarks or the hallmark could encompass and classify these existing hallmarks; B) The hallmark could be based on a

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<sup>10</sup> It seems that consumers’ animal welfare concerns are already quite well-captured by the five freedoms as formulated by the Brambell Committee in 1965: 1) Freedom from fear and stress; 2) Freedom from pain, injuries and diseases; 3) Freedom from lack of comfort; 4) Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition; and 5) Freedom to perform natural behaviour (Brambell Committee, 1965). If the fifth principle includes outdoor access, these five principles should be more than enough for quite sophisticated communication about animal welfare with the general public.

graded system or the hallmark could be based on a pass/fail system. Table 5.6 presents the resulting four types of hallmark.

TABLE 4.6 Hallmarks

Pass/fail umbrella hallmark	Graded umbrella hallmark
Pass/fail newly introduced hallmark	Graded newly introduced hallmark

Many participants claimed that they are confused about the current plethora of hallmarks. They also indicated to be in favour of a European label replacing or encompassing existing hallmarks. This implies that the prospects for a newly introduced hallmark do not seem to be too good. The pursuit of an umbrella hallmark seems to be a more fruitful endeavour, since such a hallmark would be in a position to reduce confusion among consumers. Furthermore, there is serious reason to question whether a graded system would be able to make things less complex and more uniform.

What about a newly introduced hallmark based on the 10 principles and accredited by the European Commission with different grades? Again, this does not seem to make life easier for consumers – they need to get accustomed to yet another hallmark and also with the meaning of the different ‘stars’. Henceforth, a pass/fail umbrella hallmark seems to have the best prospects on the basis of the Dutch focus group discussions. Existing hallmarks could then be evaluated to see whether their animal welfare criteria are in line with the principles of this European umbrella hallmark. Actually, this conclusion might be a bit too strict. An umbrella hallmark with only a few grades might also work, e.g.:

- = Conventional /free range without access;
- = Free range with outdoor access;
- = Organic.

Any European animal welfare hallmark, whatever type, should focus on its trustworthiness and transparency. The participants to the Dutch focus group discussions seemed to have a quite positive attitude towards to the European Union.<sup>11</sup> This is an important finding in view of the possibilities for a European animal welfare hallmark. The problem is that one will always be affected by the intentions of food companies, retailers and their hallmarks. Since consumers are not always able to distinguish between the trustworthiness of the claims of different labels and since distrust spreads easily, the trustworthiness of one hallmark is not good enough. If one hallmark is in crisis or considered to be a marketing scam, this may have huge impacts for other hallmarks.

<sup>11</sup> However, this stands in sharp contrast to the outcome of the Dutch referendum about the European constitution.

# 5

## SWEDEN

by

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The aim of this study is to get a better understanding of different attitudes towards animal welfare that can be found among Swedish consumers today. Our knowledge about Swedish consumers' animal welfare concerns is limited. There are very few studies focusing directly on animal welfare. Instead, most previous studies have been focused on organic food in general, where animal welfare concerns has been just one of several aspects considered. A more comprehensive understanding of Swedish consumers animal welfare concerns is, however, missing.

The study is qualitative and explorative in its character and it is based on seven focus group interviews with Swedish consumers. The aim with the interviews has been to identify the range of opinions and perspectives on animal welfare that are to be found in the Swedish society today.

The results show that the participants buy their meat products at the same places as they buy the rest of their food, at supermarkets. They were critical against newly established, (foreign) supermarket chains, but these chains were nevertheless used – because of their low prices. Price is, consequently, a very important factor for their choice of animal products. It is, however, not necessarily conclusive. Country of origin seems to be as, or sometimes even more, important, when it comes to meat consumption. Participant also considered if a product was organic (ecological), how it taste, and its durability when deciding what meat product they would buy.

Furthermore, the analysis has also showed that knowledge about animal welfare is low, even though many participants had a positive attitude towards animal welfare friendly products, and they did believe that information exists. They seem to miss information that is easy to access. Or, as some of them pointed out, they just don't want to know too much. Animal welfare was anyhow associated with positive values, like health, ecology and good taste.

Mass media was seen as their main information channel, but few trusted the information in the media. It was perceived as biased – too focused on problems and scandals. Trust in information from the government as well as from producers and retailers were also low. The perception was that this information is affected by political and economical self-interest. Scientific institutions, and in particular veterinarians, were on the other hand trusted, partly because of their independence. State agencies were also perceived as fairly independent (especially from economical pressures) which made them trustworthy. Information from the EU was instead partly distrusted, because of distance.

When considering who should have the responsibility for animal welfare was the main answer that it should be divided between the state, which should set up some kind of control agency, the farmers who should treat animals in the right way, and the consumers, who should buy the right products. Buying the right products – or boycotting the wrong ones (political consumerism) – was also one of four strategies for influencing animal welfare discussed by the participants. The others were to complain in the store, to contact the media, and to join a political organisation.

Finally, the comparison between of the participants' own lists of animal welfare concerns and the experts' list, showed that they corresponded fairly well. However, the participants stressed transports, the slaughter process and supervision to a larger extent. Furthermore, if the experts' list will be implemented did most participants want a label design as a single stamp. They did, however, point out a few problems with implementing such a standard. There is a risk that it will not be followed by everyone, that meat products become more expensive, and it will be hard to get a political agreement on the standard.

The analytical implications from these findings are discussed in the final part of the report. There it is pointed out that animal welfare can be understood in relation to the distinction natural/artificial, that information and knowledge about animal welfare is related to accessibility and motivation, that trust in different actors is related to independence and knowledge, and that issues of responsibility and control, as well as questions of agency, can be captured be an individual/collective-dimension, but also, when it comes to agency, engagement.

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## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

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The aim of this study is to get a better understanding of different attitudes towards animal welfare that can be found among Swedish consumers today. Our knowledge about Swedish consumers' animal welfare concerns is limited. There are very few studies focusing directly on animal welfare.<sup>12</sup> Instead, most previous studies have been

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<sup>12</sup> For a review of previous research on Swedish consumers' animal welfare concerns, see Pettersson and Bergman (2004).

focused on organic food in general, where animal welfare concerns has been just one of several aspects considered. A limited number of variables have also been analysed in a few quantitative studies on basically the same issue. A more comprehensive understanding of Swedish consumers' animal welfare concerns is, however, missing.

This study will focus directly on animal welfare. It will be qualitative and explorative in its character and it will be based on seven focus group interviews with Swedish consumers. The aim with the interviews has been to identify the range of opinions and perspectives on animal welfare that are to be found in the Swedish society today. The analysis presented here also aims to give input to a larger quantitative study, which will be carried out in the same project.

Before introducing the main part of the study, a brief overview of the specific Swedish context, related to animal welfare, will be given. This overview is based on findings in a literature review, conducted in an earlier stage of the project (see Pettersson and Bergman, 2004).

#### 5.1.1 THE SWEDISH CONTEXT

It is often pointed out that Swedes in general, place a great trust in government authorities and agencies. And, in addition, that the Swedish citizens expect authorities to take care of many of the problems discussed in the Swedish society. Even though there are important changes in the political culture today, which to some extent contradicts such a characteristic of the Swedish society, should this be kept in mind also when considering the Swedes consumption behaviour in general and consumption of animal welfare products in particular. When the average Swedish consumer buys a product in the supermarket does he or (most often) she expect it to be 'safe' or 'not harmful', otherwise the product wouldn't be allowed.

The law sets the minimum standards for animal welfare in the food production chain. A high trust concerning inspection and control of the production of meat products has been recorded. According to one study, are Swedish authorities trusted more than both European authorities and control measures set up by the private food industry (Edlund et al., 2003). However, there are voluntary assurance schemes as well as organic standards, which include animal welfare measures. The most important scheme, from a consumer perspective, is the KRAV label. KRAV is an incorporated association with about 30 members, representing farmers, processors, trade and also consumer, environmental and animal welfare interests. KRAV develops organic standards, inspects farmers following the standards and promotes the KRAV label. Animal welfare concerns are an important aspect of the standards related to the KRAV label. More general requirements for products labelled by KRAV concerns procedure for slaughtering, transports and fodder (see Johansson & Alm 2004 for further discussions). It can be noted that the KRAV-label is trusted by approximately 70 per cent of the Swedes (Edlund et al., 2003).

Sweden is often characterised as a consensus seeking society – the political culture promotes compromises through negotiations between organised interests, rather than a horse race between the politicians where the winner takes it all. In such a negotiation culture plays interest organisations an important political role and there are a large number of interest organisations and associations in most sectors of the society. This is also the case in the sector of animal welfare. First, there are a number of non-governmental organisations that focus on the animal welfare, animal rights and/or protection of the animals (e.g. 'Djurens rätt'). Second, there are a number of interest organisations with the objective to strengthen the consumers' power (e.g. 'Sveriges konsumentråd'). Finally, the farmers have their own organisations with the aim of protecting their interests. Most important of these is Swedish Farmers Association (Lantbrukarnas riksförbund, LRF), which has about 157,000 members. However, there are also a number of organisations and associations for different parts of the meat industry. Some also have their own animal welfare programmes (e.g. Swedish Poultry Meat Association and Swedish Meats) and all of them produce information materials.

All these organisations and associations do play a political role, which means that they at least indirectly are important for the consumers. They have the function as lobby organisations, they are many times asked by the government to state an opinion about new policies or new laws, and they are actively trying to influence how animal welfare issues are framed in the public debate.

Animal welfare is an issue in the public discourse in Sweden, however, how much attention it gets varies.<sup>13</sup> A general impression is that the attention has increased the last years and that the question of animal welfare and, in particular animal rights, has become an every day issue in many respects, which it is acceptable to bring up. Those aspects that seem to have been debated most include caged hens, the use of electric 'drivers', salmonella (which is directly related to the consumers), vegetarianism, transports, as well as furs. The initiative to bring the issue up often comes from NGO's but also from journalists. It has happened that the initiative has come from organic farmers too. Even on the formal political agenda – in the parliament, the government and in the political parties – have animal welfare concerns been discussed. The green party in Sweden in particular, but also a former member of the European parliament (Marit Paulsen) representing the liberal party, has been active in bringing the issue up in the political debate.

Meat consumption in Sweden has increased significantly during the last ten years. It is also worth noting that meat consumption in Sweden didn't decrease during the BSE-crises in the late 1990's, as it did elsewhere in Europe. An increased amount of imported meat, that most often is cheaper than Swedish meat, has been pointed out as an important explanation to the increased consumption. Nevertheless, products originating from Swedish farmers are trusted far more than products from other countries. (Szatek, 2003). There are no reliable figures on the consumption of animal welfare products.

As already pointed out, studies focusing directly on attitudes towards animal welfare concerns are missing. However, there are a number of studies about ecological food and

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<sup>13</sup> The following notes on the public discourse is based on information from interviews with Birgitta Karlsson, Djurens rätt, and Jenny Jewert, journalist at DN (Swedens most important news paper).



in the interviews conducted during this project it is indicated that the participants consider ecological products as also being animal friendly. First it can be noted that most Swedes have a positive attitude towards organic food, but that there is a gap between consumption behaviour and attitudes. There are more people having a positive attitude towards organic food than actually buying such products (Szatek, 2001; Magnusson et al., 2001). If we look at consumption of ecological food in general, results from several studies shows that it is risky to point out any specific demographic factor, like age, income, and gender, to define the typical Swedish eco-consumer (Alarik, 2002). The only factor worth pointing out – even if it isn't supported in all studies - is that the typical eco-consumer seems to be a woman rather than a man (Ekelund, 2003). It has also been shown that women, as well as young and well-educated persons, have a more positive attitude towards organic food than men and older people in general (Magnusson et al., 2001).

However, a number of studies (for example, Alarik, 2002; Solér, 1999; Ekström and Shanahan, 1999; Andersson, 2003) stress other factors, like lifestyle or engagement and interest in questions concerning the environment and/or animals, to be more important for understanding the consumer's attitudes and behaviour related to organic food, including animal welfare concerns. Buying ecological meat, it seem, can also be a way of expressing one's identity. Results also indicate that the eco-consumers are rather few in numbers: a small part of the consumers seem to buy most of the organic food that is sold on the market. This strengthens the conclusion that buying organic is related to lifestyle. Research on political consumerism<sup>14</sup> has in a similar way showed that the typical political consumer is also more engaged in other political activities (Micheletti and Stolle, 2004).

This brief overview gives us a very preliminary understanding of Swedish consumers' relation to animal welfare. It shows, however that the issue is complex. On the one hand, are attitudes towards organic food not necessarily identical with attitudes towards animal welfare. This then, is one of the things that will be sorted out in this study. On the other hand, has previous research showed that we should consider how issues like animal welfare, is related to different contextual factors. This will also be taken up in the study, especially by discussing the issues of responsibility, trust and agency.

### 5.1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report goes on with a short section about the method, where we discuss the analytical approach, the use of focus groups, and how the groups were set up. The next section will present the results of the group interviews. In the first of these, Section 5.3, will we focus on the participants' consumption behaviours in general and their consumption of meat products in particular. The fourth section focuses on the participants' general knowledge about animal welfare and animal welfare-friendly

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<sup>14</sup> Political consumerism refers to the phenomenon where individuals use their purchasing powers to influence retailers and/or producers to take ethical or political concerns. For an introduction to the concept, see Micheletti (2003).

products, as well as how they evaluate the information that is available. The fifth section explores the participants' views on who should be responsible for animal welfare and whom they will trust. The relation between producers, retailers, the state, and the consumer is discussed. In the sixth section will the consumers evaluation of a proposed scientifically standard for animal welfare be presented. In the final section of the study, will the key findings be summarised and a few recommendations for future studies will be considered.

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## 5.2 METHOD AND ANALYTICAL APPROACH

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The aim of the study is to explore an issue area where our knowledge today is limited. The analytical approach in the study will, consequently, be explorative, inductive and open to any possible perspective. The aim is to get hold of as many perspectives and aspects of animal welfare existing among Swedish consumers, as possible. We want to know how animal welfare is conceptualised by the participants, what it means, as well as what values, institutions and actors that are, and should be, important for animal welfare, according to Swedish consumers. For this, we believe it is important to examine the issue without to many predefined analytical categories. We will instead, in line with the methodological approach 'grounded theory' (Strauss, 1987), use the results from seven focus group interviews to generate analytical categories, distinctions and dimensions that seem to be important for the Swedish consumers understanding of animal welfare. These analytical dimensions will be discussed in the conclusions. However, the analysis will to some extent be structured by the themes defined in the interview guide. The guide contained four general themes: consumption habits, information and involvement (including political consumption, ethical dilemmas and barriers as well as human-animal relationships), assessing animal welfare, and trust and responsibility. The themes were decided on collectively in the project, and the aim was to facilitate comparisons between groups and countries. This report presents, accordingly, the results from the Swedish study only. Before we move on to the presentation of the results, a few more words of the use of focus groups may be important here.

### 5.2.1 THE USE OF FOCUS GROUPS

Morgan defines focus groups as 'a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher' (Morgan, 1996: 130). Focus groups are particularly useful in explorative studies. The interaction in the groups encourage the participants to explain themselves and the group discussions makes it easier for the participants to formulate their own ideas, since they have other participant's ideas to

respond to. All this makes focus groups fruitful for sorting out different perceptions and ideas about a specific topic, defined by the researcher (Morgan, 1996; Wibeck, 1998).

However, focus groups can also, at the same time, be used to illuminate the limits of a discourse. In a group setting where the participants don't know each other in advance will participants most likely bring up perceptions that are at least to some extent widely accepted in the society – or even 'correct'. The views that are expressed are generated in a situation that is similar to a normal conversation, taking place in other spheres in the civil society – where most of our opinions usually are formed. This means that focus groups might help us to understand the norms and values in the animal welfare discourse at large.

The results from the focus groups may also, throughout the more deep-loading understanding of what is being said, be helpful when analysing the results from the survey that will also be carried out in the project.

### 5.2.2 SELECTION OF GROUPS

The focus groups that were used in the study were composed of six to eight people. A general idea was to have groups that were internally homogeneous, but with variation between the groups. The participants selected for the different groups represented different parts and spheres in the society. The seven groups finally used in the study can briefly be summarised like this (for more information about each individual participant,<sup>15</sup> see Appendix).

TABLE 5.1 Description of the seven focus groups selected for the study

Group No.	Abbreviation	Description of the group	Date for the interview	The interviews location	Numbers of Participants
1	Urbmo	Urban mothers	050216	Gothenburg	8
2	Rurwo	Rural women	050303	Rättvik	7
3	Emptynest	Married/partners without children	050217	Gothenburg	8
4	Seniors	Seniors 55 – 65 years old	050222	Stockholm	6
5	Yosing	Young singles 18 – 35 years old	050308	Stockholm	7
6	Paveg	Politically active and vegetarians	050310	Stockholm	6
7	CSSW1	Politically active as well as fathers	050428	Stockholm	6

The ambition was to spread the groups over the country, at least to a certain extent, with the result that four group interviews were held in Stockholm (Sweden's largest city),

<sup>15</sup> Each participant is assigned with a number which while be used each time the participant are quoted in the report.

two groups in Gothenburg, the next largest city in Sweden, and one in Rättvik, a rural district in the northern part of Sweden, with only about 11 000 inhabitants – and only 5.8 inhabitants per square kilometre. For recruiting participants to Groups 1, 2, and 3, a recruitment agency was used. For Groups 4, 5, 6 and 7 was recruiting done by the research team, where different social networks were used (friends' friends and colleagues, students etc.). The aim was to get groups with participants that did not know each other in advance, and this goal were achieved even though a few of the participants probably had met before (e.g. some of the students in Group 5 and 6).

A few shortcomings that relates to the recruitment process have been identified. First there was only one political active meat eater in Group 6. The rest were all vegetarians. Second, there were quite few men in the mixed groups (37 per cent, and only 24 per cent taking all the first six groups into account). The seventh group was composed of men only to balance this. Third, most of the participants were quite well educated (60 per cent had been/were studying at university level). Finally, immigrants/Swedes with at least one parent born in another country seem to be underrepresented.

The interviews were held by the same moderator (with an assistant) and took about two hours, including a short break. A semi-structured interview guide was used (see Appendix). During the interview, two different sort of stimulus material was presented to the participants. The first included different product packaging, leaflets, and posters for animal products (see Appendix). This material was shown to the participants during the interview, followed by questions about their perceptions. The second stimulus material used was a proposal of a scientifically based standard for animal welfare, developed by partners in the Welfare Quality project (see Appendix). This proposal was handed out to the participants, but also read out loud. The participants were then asked to evaluate the proposal (see Section 5.6 for further details).

### 5.2.3 THE CODING

The interviews was transcribed and a software called NVivo was used for the initial analysis of the material. The use of NVivo made it easier for us to get an overview over all the interviews, and facilitated comparisons between the groups. When coding the material, we started with a quite long list of possible nodes to use, partly generated from our general impression from conducting the interviews, partly from the themes and questions in the interview guide. Most nodes (including a few new nodes that emerged during the coding) were later restructured into subcategories placed under a limited number of 'tree nodes'. However, a few 'free nodes' were also used. Furthermore, all participants were coded with different attributes, as age, sex, income and place (rural/urban).

The coding helped us to search for specific themes and sub themes discussed in the groups. These codes have, accordingly, been the starting point for the analysis presented in the following sections of the report.

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## 5.3 CONSUMPTION PRACTICES

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This section will focus on where the participants buy their food, how they feel about cooking and under which circumstances they eat different meals. The aim here is to get a general understanding of common norms and practices in the Swedish society, when it comes to consumption of animal food products.

### 5.3.1 PREPARING AND EATING

Most of the participants eat breakfast, lunch and dinner. There seems to be a widely held perception that breakfast is an important meal, even though many of the participants said that they don't always eat in the morning. The main reason for not eating breakfast was lack of time. Many of the participants say they eat lunch outside home, either at a restaurant or at work, bringing their own lunchbox. Except from eating lunch in restaurants, the regular practice is to eat at home and also to cook the food by your self. There were two dominating views on how they felt about cooking. Many participants said they enjoy cooking:

'It's like I said, the kitchen is my workshop. Cooking is my hobby' (Politically active father).

This view was most strongly expressed in the group with people living together without children, and in the senior group, but it was also found in other groups. The second dominating view was that participants saw cooking as something you have to do as part of everyday life:

*'Is it fun and important to prepare food for yourself?'* (moderator).

'Yes' (several).

'No, I don't really think so. I think it's unavoidable' (Urban mother).

'It's not fun everyday' (Urban mother).

'Fun and fun.... But how much fun that is I don't know.... Eating makes you feel happy (Politically active father).

This opinion was found especially in the group with urban mothers and in the group with young singles. It is clear that feelings about cooking is related to how much time you have to spare but also to the participant's age and matrimonial status:

'No, it's not so fun to cook for yourself. Then I think it's rather boring, it's mostly just to get something in your stomach' (Young single).

Generally, participants with children and the participants living alone did not enjoy cooking very much.

### 5.3.2 BUYING ANIMAL FOOD PRODUCTS

Common for all participants is that they did their main grocery shopping in supermarkets. They buy meat, eggs and dairy products in the same supermarket as they buy the rest of the food. The participants stated two main reasons for choosing the supermarkets they do. The first and most common reason was that the store is situated in a convenient place. The second argument was that the store has good or low prices. Another general pattern that can be seen is that participants do their grocery shopping in one store and buy fresh commodities or smaller items at another store, nearby their home:

'I also shop like you, stock up at Willys and then I complement at Konsum. A small store that is nearby. Willys because it's good and cheap, I think. And then Konsum because there're so many people or such long lines. But I always feel guilty when I shop at Konsum because it's more expensive' (Senior).

The of rural women group diverges from this pattern, which can be explained by the fact that the three supermarkets that can be found in Rättvik (the place where they live) are situated right next to each other. In this group, price stood out as the conclusive factor for choosing supermarket.

However, other groups did also mention other reasons for choosing a specific supermarket. A few of the political active indicated that they preferred Konsum (Swedish Coop):

'I mostly shop at Konsum. I know that it is expensive and very uneconomical but somehow I still believe in the cooperative, you know. And what is it called, I think that they are rather nice to their staff and have a rather fair staff policy. Or I do not know, but I usually go there to shop because it feels somewhat like a good alternative. Yes, it feels as if they are more serious than Liddell for example. Or Netto or something' (Politically active/vegetarian).

In group Politically active fathers, which included political active, were the reasons for choosing Konsum ecological concerns:

'Where I shop at ICA, I think is sucks. There are too few ecological products'.

'I agree'.

'Before I lived close to a Konsum shop and that was a lot better. Even if it was kind of bad it was a lot better'.

'I really support the previous speaker. ICA Nära is terrible when it comes to for instance lamb mince meat, such a simple thing does not exist'.

Five chains of supermarkets stand out as the most frequently used. These are Konsum (Coop), Vivo (Vi), Hemköp, Ica (Ica Kvantum) and Willys. Netto and Lidel were mentioned, but it seems that they were used only by few participants or under particular circumstances. In contrast to the four chains of supermarkets mentioned first above, have Willys, Netto and Lidel been established in Sweden quite recently. This might explain the scepticism towards Netto and Lidel that could be found among the participants:

‘We usually do bulk shopping at ICA Kvantum and what is that other terrible place called?’ (Politically active father).

‘Netto? Willys?’ (Politically active father).

‘No, not quite that terrible. Let’s see, let’s see. It’s at out there at Kungens Kurva’ (Politically active father).

This paragraph should be seen as an exception rather than reflecting the general opinion about Willys. Willys reputation was not as bad, and the participants shopping there seem to be more than pleased. However, the paragraph reflects a widely spread scepticism towards these ‘new’ chains of supermarkets. Participants shopping at Netto and Lidels were not pleased with the stores and they were critical to theme. It seems it is not really appropriate to shop there, so you must have an excuse for doing this:

‘I am one of those terrible ones that shop Netto. And that is only because they are cheap. Or... the thing is.. I live here at Lappis, and there is a very expensive Ica there so it is a bit like ok, then I will go to Netto and buy staples in bulk’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘I can shop at Netto sometimes. Because it can be fun. Most of it is crap and it is a boring shop but if you like Danish products then you can really find some gold nuggets. Like if you want to make Danish smörebröd and so on, and then you can find some good stuff there’ (Politically active father).

‘I usually buy fish and things at ‘Lidl’. Because there they have these shady twenty kilo packs with German weird nazi sticks, sort of. And then they’re the ones. It’s cheap there anyway’ (Young single).

A few of the participants used market-halls, but not frequently. It was rather the case that they shopped there at special occasions:

‘And then sometime it happens that you go into the markets and look and find something yummy’ (Empty nester).

Only one person bought meat at a butcher. However, skilled butchers in the supermarkets seem to be appreciated:

‘[Y]ou see the butcher standing there, and I think he seems good because he cuts nice pieces too’ (Empty nester).

To buy animal products straight from the farmers was desirable, but only the participants who had easy access to a farm did this. Eggs were the only product that was possible to get from farms without middlemen's hands. Many of the participants talked about the superior taste of eggs bought directly from farms, but only a few of the participants had the opportunity to buy such eggs without too much effort. These persons lived close to a farm or in the countryside, as the participants in the rural women group:

'If you can, if you get that offer. If there's someone who has eggs to sell, if you're in a course or something and then some lady has them with her: 'Now I have eggs with me today, does anyone want some?' Yes, everyone says, and fight over the eggs. Like hens [mimics hens, and laughs]. Because it's much better. Much better if you boil an egg. Then you really feel the taste. It's different' (Rural woman).

The same thing goes for meat from hunted animals. This meat was appreciated, as many believed it had better taste and that it was more natural as well as healthier. However, only a few of the participants were actually able to get hold of it:

'But actually, if you have eaten wild game shot in Sweden.... No, but if you have ever eaten it you think, well, is this is how it's supposed to taste! So you feel... ah, it's not just that it tastes... because they have eaten what they have eaten and walked where they have walked and you can tell by the meat. It feels like' (Politically active father).

When shopping animal products the participants looked mainly for two things, price and country of origin. Country of origin was mentioned in six out of the seven groups as a very important factor when choosing animal products. It is clear that the participants were actively looking for Swedish products at least when it comes to meat:

'Milk, I don't look at it so much, then I buy light or no fat. But eggs, if there are ecological, then I'll have that, otherwise I'll take any. And meat, I only buy Swedish. Because I think it's a little gross with foreign meat because I don't know how long it's been lying around' (Empty nester).

'You just have to go after the Swedish flag' (Rural woman).

However, it is important to stress that the perception that Swedish products are better than foreign was complex. There was also an impression among the participants that this perception, actually is rather 'ridiculous', even though they still preferred to purchase Swedish meat:

'We've seen how it is there in Brazil and they have it fantastically. Open pastures, really nice, and they are out year-round. But we will only eat Swedish. It's so silly, as my previous boss said' (Rural woman).

'Yes, pay 300 crowns for this steak which is raised here in Sweden, as opposed to half price for Brazilian and that's better meat and the animals have it much better. OK, it's imported, that you're not supporting Swedish companies, but we're a bit



stupid about that sometimes.... That's typically Swedish, we get ourselves really worked up. Because we think we're so good here in Sweden (Rural woman).

In the senior group the issue of country of origin turned into a major strife, where particularly one of the participants strongly opposed that Swedish animal welfare would be better than elsewhere:

'It's of course the same in Sweden in that case. I would like to point that out. That it's not better in Sweden than anywhere else. That's what I think your opinions indicate, that everything is so good in Sweden because we have bans here and so on. And we don't use things like that here, but out in Europe where it's so ugly and bad, there they do. I don't think it's like that and I don't think it's right to say so' (Senior).

This infected discussion in 'Swedish' products, might indicate that country of origin is also related to notions of identity.

All the groups agreed that price is an important factor. However, price was not necessarily a conclusive aspect, which was clear when price was considered in relation to other aspect, like, country of origin:

'I don't look at the price when I buy meat. I definitely don't buy Brazilian or Irish or anything' (Rural woman).

*'What do you look for when shopping milk, egg and meat?'* (moderator).

'Land of origin' (Urban mother).

'I'd rather not worry about the price if there is a cheaper price for something that I don't like' (Urban mother).

'It depends on how big a price difference. If it's a big difference, I don't worry about the land of origin. But if not, I take the one I would rather have, I think' (Urban mother).

Other aspects that participants considered when buying animal products were ecological production and date of expiring. Ecological production was brought up in almost all the groups and it was often mentioned in relation to eggs. Ecological could, however, also mean animal welfare:

'And eggs, if they're ecological or not. I always check that because I feel so bad thinking about those small cages' (Young single).

Regarding meat, a few participants mention that it was important what the meat look like:

'Well, the last six months I've reacted to it. You sit there and chew and chew. And then, meat is supposed to be fatty to be good and tender. You rarely find a fatty piece of meat. And if you do, you dive right into it even though you haven't planned it for dinner and put it in the freezer. You seize the moment because you find a good piece' (Empty nester).

### 5.3.3 SUMMARY

One important conclusion can be drawn from the findings presented in this section. It is clear that most of the participants felt that products produced in (according to their opinion) a more traditional way are more desirable than other products. In some cases, this was explicitly outspoken, but the perception becomes clear also through the fact that participants prefer local or at least Swedish products and meat from haunted animals. The scepticism towards newly established chains of retailers could also be seen as a part of this. Traditionally produced food and traditional ways to shop seems to represent a better way of life, even though it is clear that only few of the participants had the possibility to enjoy these traditional ways of purchasing in their everyday life.

Furthermore, country of origin was stressed as an important aspect, especially when buying meat. There were a number of motives among the participants for why they preferred meat from Sweden, but the strong belief in Swedish products also indicates that this preference could be related to identity aspects.

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## 5.4 KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION

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In this section are we going to explore the participants' knowledge about animal welfare further. We will explore from where the participants receive their information about animal welfare and how the information is evaluated. We will also examine whether or not the participants want more information and if they would like to have the information framed in another way.

### 5.4.1 KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF ANIMAL WELFARE

In general, knowledge about animal welfare seems to be low among the participants. Nobody could, for sure, say what the conditions for animals in fact are like, but the general perception among the participants was that the conditions are bad. This view was also clear when the participants were asked to define animal welfare in relation to the food industry. Many of the participants said that animal welfare in this sense does not exist:

'I do not think that it is a word that gives one good vibes. There is something like an 'in language' about it somehow in my opinion. What does one mean by animal welfare, everybody knows that that does not exist' (Politically active/vegetarian).

This quote comes from one of the vegetarians, which can be expected to have a more critical opinion in these matters. However, this view was expressed in many other groups as well. Animal welfare in relation to the food industry was in almost all the groups associated with negative incidents. In almost every group did the participants mention long and uncomfortable transports when asked about animal welfare in the food industry:

‘I think a lot about these transports. Pictures from these horrible transports’ (Urban mother).

Another circumstance often brought up was that the participants felt that farms had been turned into factories and that animals are exploited without considerations:

‘But I think it’s become more of some sort of conveyor belt industry, that you have two to three hundred cows in a really long building, and you take them out to some sort of mud, and then they come in and get dried hay or something. I think you have become too commercial with animals’ (Empty nester).

‘But like. I don’t think so. I think that in some way... I have been really thinking about it a great deal and that many of the problems that arise, that is everything from mad cow disease to infections and such. It’s because one pushes this production too hard. I feel its absurd sort of’ (Politically active father).

An interesting observation here is that the negative perceptions described above were almost exclusively based on second hand information. The participants that had experiences from farms through visits or acquaintances did in general have a more positive view about how animals are treated on farms. However, this view is contrasted with information they receive from other sources and the overall outcome is that good farms are exceptions rather than the norm:

‘My grandparents had a farm and it was really, really charming there. There were calves standing feeding from the cows. But I don’t know if it’s any, it was a milk farm’ (Young single).

‘I come from the countryside, so there are a lot of farms where I come from’ (Young single).

‘But positively... I don’t think I’ve ever gotten a bad impression when being out there’ (Young single).

‘But you’ve heard about it, you know’ (Young single).

This leads us to the next section, information channels. Obviously the participants had some ideas about animal welfare and next task then is to sort out where they get their information from about the issue.

## 5.4.2 INFORMATION CHANNELS AND EVALUATION OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION

The definitely most important channel for information about animal welfare issues is newspapers and television. Some participants also mentioned that they get information from producers, people in their surroundings and the Internet, but these sources were not the main ones. In all the groups, except for the vegetarians, was the media seen as the major information channel. Other ways to get hold of information were just used as complements. This was explicitly outspoken when the participants were asked where they got their information from. However, that participants get many images from the media was also clear implicitly, when they spoke about different phenomenon – many of the participants referred to things they had seen on television or read in the newspaper. The general opinion in the groups that referred to the media as their main information source were however, that the information received through the media is biased, focused on shortcomings and scandals, and that most issues live a short life in the media. Debates and/or issues of immediate interest are only getting brief attention and they are never followed up:

‘Although it does go up and down. Sometimes it’s more. Sometimes there is a lot of media coverage. And then, now I think it’s been quiet for a while. For a while, though, there was a lot on chicken’ (Urban mother).

‘It has phases, very much. Whatever is interesting’ (Urban mother).

‘There’s a scandal somewhere, and then it goes on for a week in the news’ (Urban mother).

‘And then it’s quiet for a while’ (Urban mother).

‘Ah, I think it’s quite bad actually. It pops up, when there is a scandal. Then it quietens down directly. There is no continuous follow up, but a big hue and cry and then it quickly dies down’ (Politically active father).

Group 6 (Politically active/vegetarians) had a somewhat different relation to information than the rest of the groups. In this group almost all the participant actively searched for information, and while doing this, they used other sources than the regular mass media. Books and Internet were mentioned, but also the opportunity to receive information from friends (networks) that are well informed about the subject:

‘Well yes, it is in books. Yes, since I do not, because I have chosen not to eat meat I have...Well one becomes interested so to say. So this is what happens, how are these animals taken care of? Because I eat eggs and drink milk. Then somehow one wants to know where it comes from and how they are taken care of. And you can do research, there is the internet and that is a superb place to look for information. – There are books as well. And then, if one has friends that are vegan, they are more than happy if they can give one information, you know’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

This attitude towards information was also found among two of the political active participants in Group 7 (Politically active fathers). These participants, as well as the vegetarians, felt they were relatively well informed about animal welfare issues. This strongly supports the conclusion that information about animal welfare is available, if

you have a particular interest and knowledge in the issue. However, you have to actively search for the information yourself. Many other participants brought this up – that information probably exists, but that it is hard for the normal consumer to get access to it:

‘There’s probably more information, but you don’t know where to find it’ (Urban mother).

‘It’s perhaps not so clear. You have to get involved then’ (Urban mother).

‘I think that the information is actually quite good, but you don’t take the time and read it. There is actually quite a bit though, I think’ (Rural woman).

Even though many of the participants stated that the information most likely exist, did they also say that they lack information. This may be understood as an aspect of what is sometimes called ‘information overload’. In a society where there is too much information available, will many people to a larger extent expect information that is easy ‘read’ and access. If the information is hard to find or if it demands too much attention, it will get the same effect as if there is a lack of information. A paradox here is that some of the participants, who stated that they lacked information about animal welfare, also said they did not want to know too much about the issue. One possible explanation can be that these persons get their information from the media (which many say they do) and that this information, as mentioned earlier, focuses on problems with farmed animals (like transport scandals). The result is a kind of internal conflict. You do not want to stop eating meat. More and more (negative) information will lead to a situation where you anyway will be unable to eat meat. So, you don’t want the information:

‘I thought to say I want to know as little as possible’ (Empty nester).

‘Yes, I thought that, for you know, I’ve seen programs that have made me cry over how they treat animals. Horrible. And that’s what I’m saying, if I’m going to continue to eat meat I don’t want to see how they’re treated’ (Empty nester).

Opinions like this do not exclude that there is an interest for animal welfare information – it was actually a demand for it. However, it indicates that information has to be more balanced (where positive and negative images are presented) to have a good chance to actually get through:

‘Yes, but if someone started a farm where the animals are treated really well, then you want information about that. Perhaps pictures on how large the cows stalls are compared to others’ (Young single).

‘But you can’t sometimes wish that you wanted the information before you read that it’s negative. Because it’s then you get the kind of thinking that you had, that yuck, now I don’t want to buy these eggs. You should have information beforehand so you have the choice’ (Urban mother).

Some participants asked for more information from producers and retailers. It was also pointed out that persons working in the supermarkets should be more into giving

information about animal welfare and that retailers should try to reinforce their own ecological brands in different ways. Some groups asked for a label, or something similar, which would help the consumer to trace the meat back to one particular farm. This demand, that a product could be traced back to its place of origin, was brought up in relation to many subjects, however most often in relation to discussion on country of origin.

In general, it was stressed that information about animal welfare should be clear, visible and on the top of the packages. Leaflets were, by some participants, seen as superfluous since it would take too much time to read them, while others saw them as a good supplement to the information on the packaging. The type of information many participants asked for should focus on facts, and other institutions than the mass media should distribute it. The idea that there should be some kind of animal welfare label came up spontaneously in three of the groups. A label could, accordingly, be one possible method to actually get the information out to the consumers.

Another opinion, shared by a few of the participants, was that they did not want too much information because they lacked an interest in animal welfare. If they had been interested, they argued, would they have made sure to find out what they wanted:

‘But it also feels this way, about what you said that there are many that do not want information. As a vegetarian I can also feel that. Like, OK now that I have decided, can’t I just ignore the fate of these poor creatures for a while. And sort of have to deal with my own problems. Sort of’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘Well I understand, it is rather low on the list of priorities. First I have my exams, then I have to clean my flat, children are dying in Africa. There has been a tsunami- emergency. George Bush is the president of the United States and so on, bla, bla, bla. Chickens have place number 145 on my list of, what I can get involved in and pay attention to’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

#### 5.4.3 PERCEPTIONS ON ANIMAL WELFARE-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

There are relatively few brands in Sweden that explicitly markets their products as animal welfare-friendly. The ecological label ‘KRAV’ is the most widely known among the participants and will be reviewed in the next section. ‘Ugglarp’, ‘Bosarp’, ‘Naturkött’ and ‘Änglamark’ are some other brands that explicitly include animal welfare. The first two brands were not very well known among the participants. The only participant familiar with ‘Bosarp’, which is a small chicken farm in Skåne (a south region of Sweden), was one of the politically active participants, which had a special interest in animal welfare issues. He did for instance know in what stores this brand could be found. ‘Naturkött’ was a bit more well known and some of the participants had bought this product, or at least they talked about Naturkött in a way that it was clear that they had seen it (before it was displayed in the focus group interview). ‘Änglamark’ was better known. Änglamark is the retailer Konsum’s own ecological brand and it includes several products that are not animal products. This might explain part of the

participants' familiarity with the brand. The fact that the trademark is ecological might also affect the participants' knowledge about the brand. An important conclusion from the focus groups interviews is, in fact, that ecological products are seen as animal welfare-friendly. The participants see 'ecological' as a concept, which includes environmental concerns, animal welfare matters and (human) health aspects.

'But as soon as you buy these eggs or products it's combined, it feels like a better product and like better animal welfare, morally and everything else. You buy it for several reasons. Then if I am in the store, at the direct moment of purchase I may not think that this cow was well treated, I maybe have not done that. But it is part of a bigger picture' (Politically active father).

Eggs, is a central product in all the groups. There was, without exceptions, a discussion about eggs and the conditions for hens in all groups. However, we could also see that there was confusion about what kind of eggs that is the best to buy if you are concerned about the welfare of the hens. Some participants advocate free-range eggs, while others believed that free-range eggs also had to be ecological, or that they had to wear the KRAV-label, to be good.

*'If you have bought any of these products, did animal welfare make a difference as to why you did so?'* (moderator)

'No' (Senior).

'It was probably the price' (Senior).

'Yes, eggs since I have so many different eggs to choose from I look for those which are free-roaming' (Senior).

'Free-roaming don't feel so well' (Senior).

'Free-roaming then?'

What do they do then? They stand and kick the ground' (Senior).

However, even though a multitude of various kinds of eggs tend to make the consumers confused, was it also clear that the information about the conditions of the hens on the packaging was appreciated. It made it easier for the consumers to choose.

'Yes, for example the hens. There you feel like you have a rather good idea of which conditions they live in, and if they are free-range hens then you know that at least they're not fenced into these minimal cages' (Young single).

'But then there are these free-range hens indoors. And then you also know that they cannot be so well off' (Young single).

'That there's 'only' 12 per square meter' (Young single).

'But then there's something called 'sprätthöns' [free-range] also. Which is a little better?'

'But that's at least a good product, that it really says something. That is it's one the few products where it's written and you know exactly where it comes from. But then what knowledge you have about the conditions in the next you don't have at all times but there it says anyway' (Young single).

The majority of the participants took the welfare of the hens in consideration when choosing eggs. It is obvious that these participants bought a more expensive product and

that a strong reason for doing this was that they cared about the hens. They seem to have a very clear image of how bad the condition for hens can be:

Yes, about the eggs. Then I understand that they probably are healthier, but I buy them anyway because I feel sorry for the animals. Because there's probably a rather large difference in price' (Urban mother).

This quote emphasises two important findings from the discussions on specific animal welfare products. The first is that animal welfare products are seen as a healthier alternative. Animals that has been treated in a decent way, been given good food, and that has not been exposed to stress, will give us healthier products, which are good for the humans. Animal welfare is accordingly related to human welfare:

'They are sort of both. It is both my welfare about myself and welfare for the chickens or hens. It's double. It becomes both for the health reasons and for the animals. It's connected somehow' (Urban mother).

'But you have to think about yourself as a person. If you're a mother and you're going to breast-feed your child, then you make sure to put good things in yourself and that the child gets good things. If you, like a cow, take in good things you produce good milk. So it goes together. If you think about it more personally, connecting it to yourself, it's easier to see' (Empty nester).

However, one of the participants in the group of young singles meant that health aspects can also be a reason for not buying animal welfare-friendly products. She was thinking of health in relation to sustenance:

'[A]nd then there are some products, now I don't know, I have not checked 'Änglamark', but if you want to choose a healthy alternative perhaps it's not always possible. Perhaps not all places have blue ecological milk, but only green, and I only drink blue and yellow. And then that's also a situation you have to deal with. So it's both price and the contents that perhaps are prioritised over where it comes from' (Young single).

The second finding of interest for this section is how price can, but do not always have to be, a barrier for buying animal welfare-friendly products. Even though price is the main obstacle for buying animal-friendly food, it does not have to be a conclusive barrier. The participants seem to be divided into two groups; one that are prepared – or at least say that they are – to pay extra for animal friendly food and one group which thinks it is too expensive.

The decision to choose animal welfare-friendly products is not a definite decision. Several participants stated that they wanted to buy animal welfare friendly products and that they tried to do that as often as they could, but that other factors, like their personal economy sometimes was more important:

'The economy, yes. One notices that it correlates with that in the beginning of the month one can buy more ecological products and then towards the end it becomes



more and more strained, and then suddenly it is not so important [laugh]' (Politically active father).

'But I also feel like you don't have to see it as now I will only, now I will change over to only buying KRAV-marked. You can decide that I will buy it when I can afford it, and then I cannot care about it when I don't feel like it, or when I feel that I can't afford it. You don't have to make it into a must' (Young single).

#### 5.4.4 SUMMARY

The participants are in general positive to the idea of animal welfare-friendly products. However, only a few of them seem to have any deeper knowledge about the products that exist in the Swedish market today. Animal welfare-friendly products are nevertheless related to other values, as good quality and health. The main barrier for buying the products is the price, but easy accessible information about what products that actually are animal welfare friendly seems to be lacking. There is, at least to some extent, a demand for this kind of information. However, here it is also important to consider effects from the interview situation. A demand for more and better information on animal welfare can have been more strongly expressed because the participants believed that they were expected to ask for this. In a real situation, when they are shopping animal food products, may this need for more information be less urgent.

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## 5.5 RESPONSIBILITY, AGENCY AND TRUST

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In this section we are about to explore the roles of responsibility, agency and trust in relation to animal welfare. Our main focus is on who the participants believe should be responsibly for animal welfare and how they perceive their own role in improving animal welfare. The nature of the participants' trust and distrust of different actors and information will also be explored.

### 5.5.1 WHO SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANIMAL WELFARE?

A general view among the participants was that the responsibility for animal welfare should be shared between the farmers and the state. In many groups the spontaneous answer were that the farmers/producers should be responsible, but after discussion it turned out that they also wanted – or assumed that this would include – a control agency of some kind.

'I think there has to be some kind of control authority that makes an impartial overview and checks all breeders. You can't trust that all people think positively about animals. Even if you would hope so' (Rural woman).

'It's like you say, who should? It's primarily the farmer then or those who take care of the animals. But perhaps he in his turn should have someone who.... And then that there's someone who goes out and checks on the farms that it's handled correctly. That the animals are well' (Empty nester).

This control agency should guarantee that farmers follow existing rules. However, opinions about whom should be responsible for setting these rules up varied. The most common view was that the state could be seen as main responsible actor, through passing laws about animal welfare, but in three groups was the European Union mentioned when responsibility was considered. In the Senior group everybody did agree that the EU should have a particular organ responsible for monitoring the conditions for animals in the Union. This organ would also work out laws on this issue.

*'I will get to the last area now. Who do you think should have responsibility for keeping the treatment of animals within the food industry at a high, or at least at a certain, level? Who should have responsibility?'* (moderator)

'The EU veterinarian' (Senior).

'An organization that is mainly comprised of veterinarians' (Senior).

'But then every single country should be represented by a veterinarian' (Senior).

'Absolutely' (Senior).

The other two groups that discussed EU and responsibility expressed different opinions. In group 7 (Politically active fathers) there was a major disagreement about the matter. Three of the participants advocated that animal welfare is exactly one of these issues that should be dealt with and regulated by the EU:

'No I agree, this is definitely an issue for the EU. To make this type of decision and I hope that they do' (Politically active father).

'Yes, EU and the government, parliament. But then you have the farmer, off course they have the primary responsibility to treat the animals right. But there has to be pressure from above' (Politically active father).

However, another of the participants in the same group opposed this view strongly. He meant that animal welfare is neither an issue for the EU, nor for the state. Instead he pointed at the KRAV label as an example of how a standard and label can be created by the market, which he also thought was the best way to bring about improvements in animal welfare:

'But you should rather make a connection. Actually this KRAV-investment, it's the market that has created it. And it's the consumers and someone who will realise that it a good idea. And it is really. And it is really, now it is, there are several situations when it does work, but it's really the best way. So the state can do more important things to show farmers that have the wrong distance in the

pens or something like that a point. Then it works out the best' (Politically active father).

The same participant also advocated political consumption as an alternative for consumers interested in improving animal welfare. He did not however, and this is important to note, make consumers responsible for animal welfare. Political consumption was not seen as a duty, rather as a possibility to influence, for those interested in the issues. In the next section we will examine the role of the consumer further.

### *Consumer responsibility*

There was a wide range of perceptions about the consumer's role for animal welfare. Even though the major part of the participants believed that the state or the EU should have the final responsibility, almost all of the participants agreed to that consumers have at least some responsibility. This opinion was most strongly expressed in the group with political active vegetarians. In the other groups came consumer responsibility up first when asked about the consumers' role for animal welfare.

'In the end it's the consumer. We can't just open our mouths and swallow. We have to check ourselves' (Senior).

In the group with vegetarians was the same thing taken up spontaneously. However, after some discussions was it clear that authorities also should be involved.

*'I am going to present you my last question. Whom do think should be responsible for that handling animals within the food industry maintains a high standard or a certain level?' (moderator).*

'Everybody' (Politically active/vegetarian).

*'Everybody?'* (Moderator).

'Well, you know with all consumers, sort of. It is everybody's' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'Yes in actual practise' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'I wish that everybody had a responsibility but that there was a type of national institution that checked regularly, you know' (Politically active/vegetarian).

It was also pointed out, in the senior group, that consumers should not be supplied with 'bad' products:

'But bad products, we shouldn't be provided with all this bad food. And bad things either. There should be some sort of barrier' (Senior).

The same participant meant that retailers ought to guarantee the quality of the products:

'The grocers should make that choice in that case. And have a, order what's good. I think they would benefit from that' (Senior).

This idea, that consumers should be able to trust that the food in the stores has been produced in a 'good' way, was found among other participants as well. In these cases did the participants think that the state, through laws and regulations, should guarantee good products. The consumers' role were here reduced to decide if they were pleased with the regular standard (guaranteed by the state) or if they wanted to pay extra for even higher animal welfare standards:

'As consumers we can probably do a lot, but on the basis that there still has to be a control system which we have to build. So that before we get it as consumers, it has passed through certain quality controls. Then we as consumers can choose, but then we don't have to choose by basic issues, it should be obvious. That it should be this level, this is the minimum level. If you then want to do something above that level we can choose that as consumers. And pay for it' (Empty nester).

This view generates different implications for political consumption. The first implication is that consumers do not have to use their wallets to make sure that the animals in the food industry are treated in a decent way. This is legislation taken care of, which leaves the state with the final responsibility. However, the participants still think that there should be a possibility for the consumers to choose a better alternative, which leaves us in a situation where the consumers still can influence through their willingness to pay more for a certain product and hence improve the welfare of animals even more. A plausible conclusion is that you as a consumer will be responsible to act, or purchase, only when it is an issue area that is important for you. It is up to the individual to make the decision to be responsible or not. This view comes very close to the perspective held by the man in group Politically active fathers, quoted above, which stressed that the best way to improve animal welfare is to leave it all to the market forces. However, there is an important difference here. In the latter case are the market forces not reliable enough. The state has to take the final responsibility (for a minimum level) and lead the way to improvements in animal welfare. This might actually reflect a lack of confidence in the individual.

*'Do you think the consumers should contribute through buying the right products or do you think that the government and state should go in and regulate, or should the producers and chain stores be responsible'* (moderator).

'I absolutely think that the responsibility should be with the consumer. But I don't think it will' (Young single).

'It's a responsibility for all of us, really' (Young single).

[Several agree]

'A combination' (Young single).

'Exactly. It's kind of connected, it feels like' (Young single).

'The consumers have sort of already had their possibility to take the responsibility there, and they didn't' (Young single).

This quote shows that consumer responsibility, even though many of the participants are attracted to the idea and that they think political consumption do matter, is not seen as a realistic alternative, if not backed up by some other institutions. The confidence in other

individuals' willingness to act in a way that promotes the common good seems to be fairly low and may occasionally cessation individualized collective actions.<sup>16</sup>

Interesting to notice, is that only one participant said that she, as a private person, felt responsible for the conditions of animals:

'I think you can do things, but the obstacle is the price. And perhaps more vital information that you think is missing. I also feel a responsibility. I can feel a responsibility deep in my heart for these animals. And the animal transportation, and all that' (Rural woman).

In other conversation was the responsibility always 'everybody's' or some institutions'. Nobody, except for this woman, explicitly said that the responsibility for animal welfare is his or hers. This can indicate that the participants try to distance themselves from a responsibility they in fact believe that they have, as private persons, but are not prepared to take. One man said, for instance, that he did not feel responsible, but nevertheless he could get a bad conciseness when not buying ecological food:

'I usually always think that I'm going to buy ecological, but then I don't. For economical reasons. So I probably could do more, but no' (Young single).

'*But do you feel you have a responsibility?*' (moderator).

'No, I probably don't. But I can feel guilty for not buying' (Young single).

A lack of confidence in others as well as in their own willingness to act will accordingly make state authorities and regulations desirable.

### 5.5.2 AGENCY AND INFLUENCE

A central question is weather or not the participants experience that they as consumers or citizens have agency – the power and possibility to influence animal welfare. Only one group (the Seniors), out of seven, believed they were powerless. In this group it was pointed out that to influence you had to put in a lot of work and it, particularly if you live in an urban area, was unrealistic:

'*Concerning this... yes, do you think you're powerless or will there be options if you manage to get involved?*' (moderator)

'I think you're pretty powerless. If you don't, like you said, put a lot of time into it. You have to eat' (Senior).

'It's a full time job, in that case' (Senior).

'But it could also depend a little on where you live. If you live in the city or out in the countryside. Perhaps you can influence there, keep your own chickens and things like that' (Seniors).

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<sup>16</sup> Michelletti introduce the concept of individualized collective action as a 'form of citizen engagement that combines self-interest and the general good' (Michelletti, 2003:25).

The other groups believed they had the power to influence. But their capacity was limited by lack of time and willingness to put enough effort in:

'Yes, there is an alternative, if you really want to get involved, and that is to buy this. If you say it costs twice as much, or whatever. I mean, if you want to be involved, you can' (Urban mother).

'Then you prioritise that part' (Urban mother).

'Yes' (Urban mother).

'You can sacrifice half your spare time influencing your friends, also, if you feel like it. But you kind of don't have the time. At least that's how I feel (Urban mother).

This opinion was expressed in almost all the groups and should not be neglected. The feeling that influence is time consuming can be seen as a barrier, which makes people unwilling to even try to influence. Another aspect, stressed in a few groups, was that it is important to be many people striving for the same goal. On your own, you are powerless, but when working together it will be possible to make a difference:

*'Is one powerless in influencing this type of issue?'* (moderator)

'No, I do not think so' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'No!' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'No, it is just that I am one person among many. So that alone one is powerless.... [F]ive vegetarians here, who are most probably vegetarians for five different reasons' (Politically active/vegetarian).

Four different strategies to influence were taken up in the discussions. The first strategy, to make conscious choices when shopping, has to some extent already been examined above. However, there are more to say here. To buy the 'right' products, seem to be the most easily accessed strategy to influence animal welfare, according to the discussions in the groups. This should however, not be interpreted as something the participants always do (see Section 5.3 for a discussion on the participants' actual consumption behaviour). Many participants said they would, and that they believe other persons would as well, buy more animal welfare friendly products if prices were lower or more in line with the prices of similar (less animal welfare friendly) products. Nevertheless, a form of political consumption, as a strategy, was discussed in all groups:

'Yes, there is an alternative, if you really want to get involved, and that is to buy this [refers to animal friendly products]. If you say it costs twice as much, or whatever. I mean, if you want to be involved, you can' (Urban mother).

'Yes, I believe in consumer power, sort of. Through choosing good products and telling others that you do, in the long run I believe that will make you able to influence. Although, I still believe that's too expensive for most people. I think if you have three children and a job where you don't make so much money, it's probably easy to disregard the suffering of the animals and buy food for the kids instead' (Young single).

From the interviews it is clear that it seems to be easier to not buy (boycott) a particular product than to buy a specific one:

‘A little bit with what you choose to buy. To then have a preconceived notion about or like for myself, ecological eggs are better, I believe, then I buy those. That I influence, I think, that more of that good will be produced. And perhaps I don’t buy, for example, Irish meat, which I’ve come to believe. Why, I don’t know, but...’ (Urban mother).

‘Or you stop buying products you don’t believe in. Like those which you, like Danish chicken, or whatever it is’ (Rural woman).

One of the reasons why the participants thought it is easier to boycott than to purchase a particular product could be the price. In many cases you can find an alternative to the boycotted product, at a decent price. But if you are going to actively choose a specific (animal welfare friendly) product, then there are often few alternatives and these may be fairly expensive. Another reason, which might explain why boycotting is a more popular strategy, may be lack of reliable information about the alternatives. It is easier to know what is bad, than it is to know what is good.

A somewhat paradoxical finding is that the senior group, which stated that they felt powerless, expressed a very positive attitude towards political consumption. They all agreed on that boycotts are the best way to influence the debate of animal welfare:

*‘What would you think the most efficient way would be to influence and participate in this debate, if you would want to? It’s not a given that you do, but if you...’* (moderator).

‘You refuse to buy certain things when you find out that it hasn’t been fair’ (Senior).

‘Boycott’ (Senior).

‘Exactly, a boycott’ (Senior).

Boycott was mentioned as the only strategy to get influence in this group, since it did not take too much effort:

‘Yes, for example. So I mean, I think that if you go for it, or if you feel that you should do something, it’s probably a lifetime of work that demands 100 per cent commitment. Unless you simply boycott certain products’ (Senior).

This indicates that political consumption could, at least for some people, function as a strategy to support something one believes in, without putting too much time and effort in – and perhaps without bothering so much about the effect. A similar interpretation is that it is a way for people with enough money to ‘buy’ themselves a better conscious. Comments in the young singles group could be an indication of this:

‘[B]ut you can decide that I will buy it when I can afford it, and then I cannot care about it when I don’t feel like it, or when I feel that I can’t afford it. You don’t

have to make it into a must. But make it into a bonus. You get a good conscience afterwards' (Young single).

The only group including critical voices against political consumption was Politically active/vegetarians. The critic was directed towards ethical products, as Fair Trade, but may be valid for animal welfare products as well:

'I am actually very doubtful about political consumption' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'Yes, yes me too. It is not that it is a way to change society. It is just something you can do when you are shopping anyway. There are other, more basic things that have to be changed' (Politically active/vegetarian).

This group did not just include vegetarians, but most of them were also political active persons, which most likely had spent some time reflecting over contemporary society problems. The fact that they use the term 'political consumption' themselves indicates that they are familiar to those kinds of debates. However, the critical standpoint did not hinder the same participants to purchase products in accordance with their convictions. It simply meant that they did not believe that political consumption is enough to change shortcomings in the society. It is interesting to contrast the senior group with the two participants quoted above. The senior group, which was not engaged in improving animal welfare and which did not feel responsible for it either, saw political consumption as a way to do at least something. The two political active participants on the other hand, saw political consumption as something you do by automatic, while the most important struggle for animal welfare takes place in others arenas.

The second influence strategy that we found in the interviews, to make complaints to the store, can be related to the first one. This strategy was highlighted by a few of the participants, who also had a good experience from doing this:

'Talk with them in the stores. Because that can maybe count as a voice, only say 'hm, hm.' And then the product can be taken away' (Rural woman).

'It's more sensible for the store also that they will take away a product than like if only I stopped buying it' (Rural woman).

'Yes, exactly. You do a little more only if by talking with someone else' (Rural woman).

'One can ask in the shops, the retailer as well if they can order that which is not available' (Politically active father).

One of the participants talked about how he was active in the store council for one retailer (Konsum). And one of their main questions was to convince Konsum to stop selling eggs from caged hens, which was finally what happened:

'Well there are many ways, and I mean that we are talking about political activity, it can be small like a shop advisory board in Konsum there we worked and pursued this issue about caged hens. Submitted motions at different levels, whatever the different bodies are called' (Politically active father).



The third strategy brought up by the participants was to try to get some room in the media. This strategy came up in almost all the groups, but only a few participants had actually contacted the media. However, it is obvious that several participants believed that the best, and perhaps even the only, way to get their message out, is through the media. Two options were mentioned. The first was to make journalists aware of things that should be changed, the second and most commonly expressed, was to write letters to the press.

‘For us as individuals I think letters to editors, because it’s difficult to influence people if you don’t know, or have contacts within’ (Empty nester).

‘You get to write in newspapers and hope that someone answers. That big hierarchy in order to get through. But you may hope that a lot of people maybe wake up and read it, I think’ (Empty nester).

The significant role that the media is given is related to the previous statements about the importance of being many people working together for the same goal. Media is in this context supposed to function as a communicative sphere, where public opinion in favour of animal welfare can be developed:

‘So this so to say, letters to the editor presenting political arguments, the writing aspect in addition to the active choice in the shop’ (Politically active father).

‘One can ask in the shops, the retailer as well if they can order that which is not available’ (Politically active father).

‘Yes, however there has to be a certain number that ask for it and it is about creating an opinion so that one has a large enough number of buyers. Because they will not stock it just for one customer. But if that customer spreads his idea in the building or neighbouring buildings then it works eventually’ (Politically active father).

A final strategy for influence, taken up for discussion among the participants, was to join some kind of organisation or a political party:

‘We are not actually powerless. We only think we’re powerless. I think that many should at any opportunity, wherever you feel most inclined, stand up and say what you think. We see how it is in politics, that’s where we decide everything. There aren’t many people there either. Especially us younger people who only sit and complain, no but.... ‘There’s nothing to do’. You should get into what you can influence’ (Rural woman).

Involvement and engagement in some kind of organisation was mentioned in four of the groups, but only in one group (Politically active/vegetarians) was this strategy discussed further. The efficiency of joining a political party was one of the things discussed in the group – and working in parties was an effective way influence, according to some of them, but slow and ineffective, according to others. Either way, the participants believed that it is possible to make a change by putting pressure on those in power:

‘Yes, well it is all about influencing the decision-makers. Then one may have different viewpoints, depending on whether one is a member of a political youth movement or a non- political organisation. But it is about influencing those who have power in this issue’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

### 5.5.3 TRUST IN DIFFERENT ACTORS

In this section we are about to explore the nature and the implications of the participants trust in different actors. The focus will be on which actors the participants would trust to provide honest and unbiased information about the conditions for animals and we will explore why certain actors are trusted or not.

#### *Trust in information from the EU, state authorities and scientific institutes*

Trust in EU as a provider of honest and unbiased information varies a lot among the participants in the seven groups. About half of the participants explicitly said they did not trust the EU, when considering information on animal welfare. This often reflected a more general distrust in the EU – which is common among many Swedes. Two main reasons for not trusting EU were stated. The first was based on the impression that the EU is too large, too bureaucratic, too costly and governed by national interests:

*‘Now we’re talking about information, but you mean that national interests can influence that information?’ (moderator)*

‘Yes, that’s exactly what I think. National interest is money with lobbying and all that, so I think it’s better to keep it at a local level, because it’s easier to control it’ (Young single).

‘Yes, you know EU how could they have a grasp of everything? It feels sort of... (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘That is true ofcourse. A Swedish authority is in Sweden and can check Sweden. The EU is in Brussels and it is sort of not easy for them to check on dairy farmers in Småland. That is if there are any there, I do not know’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

The second quote lead us to the second reason for not trusting the EU as a provider of information. Some participants meant that EU authorities are situated too far away from the regions they are supposed to have knowledge about. This makes their information less trustworthy:

‘I have a hard time saying, to answer that question. I think it’s hard to trust authorities. Especially when they are so far away, none of them are really out on the field. They sit in Brussels and don’t really know so much. There are a lot of politicians who come there and say what it’s like in their respective countries’ (Rural woman).

‘They sit in Brussels at a table’ (Rural woman).

‘But then they delegate in that case. If it were to be some control function’ (Rural woman).

‘But I’m hesitant to that, overall. But you can hope’ (Rural woman).

There were also participants that expressed trust in information provided by the EU. Most of them did not see any reasons why they should not trust the EU. Information from EU was accordingly not worse than information from any other authority. Some of the participants, it seems, were also quite well informed or had experiences from working close to an EU institution:

‘No, actually I would think that I would rely on information that comes from groups I believe in and sympathise with today’ (Politically active father).

‘Which groups are you thinking of?’ (moderator).

‘Yes, for example, if it comes from the Brussels, the information via... the red-green group down there that has a lot of competence around them’ (Politically active father).

Another participant said she would trust information from the EU if it were distributed through the municipalities:

‘Okay it can be run from the EU, but it has to get out to the countries and to smaller parts. And then out to the municipalities then. So that you get... (Empty nester).

Proximity is a factor that seems to increase trust in the information. Municipalities have good knowledge of their regions and it is clear that many participants thought that the municipality’s information were reliable. One participant also emphasised that it is easier to hold someone accountable within the municipalities. However, the local connection and the fact that the municipalities are small units were also, by some of the participants, seen as a negative factor, which makes municipalities less trustworthy. It can be harder to prevent corruption in small units and the loyalty to the district may affect the information:

‘But the lower you go in authorities, then there are small groups and fewer people. It becomes easier and it gets so dependent on the individual person’s opinion, I think. Perhaps it’s better to listen to the EU then, where there’s so many people who sit together. I don’t know, it’s difficult, it’s really difficult’ (Rural woman).

‘But I believe that too actually. Because at a municipality level it could be hard for an individual environmental inspector to say that you’re not allowed to have this farm. And then feels pressure from... (Rural woman).

Larger municipalities were trusted more, since more people would be involved while the local connection were maintained.

Among all state authorities was the Government trusted the least. One group, however, regarded the government trustworthy, when it comes to providing reliable and unbiased information. In the other groups only a few participants expressed a similar confidence

in the government. The group with rural women meant that the Government is too far away, even if it is not as bad as the EU. Others meant that politician's primary interest is to stay in power. Even if there are individuals with great knowledge within the ministries, is it far from sure that those are the ones in charge.

The attitude towards special government agencies, like The Swedish Consumer Agency (Konsumentverket) and The National Food Administration (Livsmedelsverket), was however positive. Only a few participants expressed concerns about the agencies' trustworthiness. One of the comments made a reference to a recent scandal, where it was revealed that potato chips contained poisonous substance, an alarm that later turned out to be false:

'They said there was acryl amide in the chips and everyone stopped eating chips' (Rural woman).

'*But that's that they have power. Do they give honest and impartial information?*' (moderator).

'I'm hesitant to that also. Because I've heard that they went public with that report because they needed money. And they got it. At once they got a million and a half, I think' (Rural woman).

This participant points at the risk that agencies will manipulate information in ways that suite their own interests. Such a worry was not to be found among the other participants, who rather believed that these agencies were trustworthy since they are politically independent and free from economical interests:

'And then the National Board for Consumer Policies has less economic interests than the others. And the vets have interests but they are competent. But there shouldn't be any political interests either. That should be independent' Politically active father).

Political independence and absence of economical interests were also factors that made scientific institutes trustworthy among the participants. All participants declared high trust in scientific institutes as well as in people with specialised knowledge about animals like veterinarians. Veterinarians were seen as independent from political and economical interests, but it was also assumed that they cared a lot for animals. Almost without exceptions did all participants find the veterinarians the most trustworthy of all the actors discussed in the interviews. Veterinarians were mentioned spontaneously in six out of the seven groups as trustworthy and only three participants had some doubts about them. Two of these meant that even veterinarians might be corrupted. The last of them meant that it is important that veterinarians stand up for acceptable values in other areas of the society as well:

'In the same time someone who has a rather, someone who has lived or has their whole world built on that there should be voting rights for cows, will forget a lot of other aspects. So you need someone you can trust then as well' (Politically active father).

*Trust in information from producers, retailers, NGOs and the media*

Trust in information coming from retailers as well as producers were in general low. The main argument here was that both actors were profit orientated and the information they provide may therefore be biased. However, there were some exceptions. In the Politically active/vegetarians group did one of the participants appreciate that retailers promote their own ecological brands. To support this had he decided to trust their information:

‘But I have a feeling that at some of these supermarkets do put in quite an effort to have an ecological profile. For instance, Hemköp has had those free range hens, and Konsum also has that sort of profile. The result is that it feels more right to shop there. So, it’s not that I have looked the information up or questioned the information, it’s like it’s there and you have to rely on it’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

Another participant had an opinion that was rather different from the general view. He pointed out that retailers and producers have an economic interest in distributing animal welfare friendly food, which meant that they also have an interest in getting information about these products out. This information then has to be reliable and unbiased, because a company which is caught with false information will loose all its credibility:

‘So that if you have economic interest that it should have a logo as environmentally friendly, then it is a lot more honourable than everything else where there are interests that are political or special interests’ (Politically active father).

The attitude towards non-governmental organisations was similar in all groups. A general meaning was that the information they provide is biased, since they have their own interests in the issues. However, many of the participants were nevertheless positive towards NGO: s, as long as extreme groups were not counted. They believed that their involvement could improve the information from other actors, since many members of the NGO:s are deeply involved in animals rights and have a lot of knowledge:

‘I do not mean that we must get rid of pressure groups, but include them because they are interested and know the issue and they can maybe give the bureaucrats that we have been talking about some useful material to take a stand on and to look at more closely’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

The final actor the participants where asked about here was the media. Very few trusted the information they received from newspapers and the television. Many held the opinion that the media only look for scandals, which gave the media low credibility. One participant remarked that he did not trust the media in general, but he had a lot of confidence in scientific periodicals. Television programmes with a special focus on scrutinizing power holders etc., were also mentioned as provider of reliable information in several groups:

'They say all the time, 'Uppdrag Granskning [one of the most famous Swedish programmes in this genre] have discovered bla, bla, bla.' And then I definitely believe that' (Urban mother).

### *The KRAV label*

In this section, the KRAV-label, which has been introduced earlier in the report, will be discussed in relation to trust aspects. The trust in KRAV varied among the participants. A large number of participants said they trusted the KRAV-label and they assumed that products bearing the label were good products:

'But yes, I trust the KRAV logo. Because they wrote on their website that this is the way it is, we have this norm and we check that it is adhered to, Then I trust them. I do not trust the information on the food producer's website' (Politically active/vegetarian).

'But I think you anyway can, I feel that you can trust KRAV being KRAV. I think. Because I sort of read some brochure some time about KRAV that they also have a thousands inspections and there should be a lot this and that. So I believe in KRAV, that it is genuine so to speak' (Urban mother).

Another fraction among the participants did not trust the label:

'If I knew everything was in order, I would. But now I don't buy KRAV very often. But if I knew it was really as they say, I would have bought it more often. But now I feel I don't know, I'm not sure it's as good as they advertise' (Urban mother).

'I am completely honest here, I don't trust KRAV. I think that, well maybe there's more thought behind it, but' (Rural woman).

'I can say this, I never buy a KRAV-marked product. Partly because it's much, much more expensive than usual, and then you don't know' (Rural woman).

'It's like you say, you don't know if it's real' (Rural woman).

This sceptical view can be related to two factors. First, knowledge about what the KRAV-label actually stands for seem to be low. Few participants knew for instance that animal welfare requirements are included, but this was something that was assumed. Furthermore, some of the participants did not know that the label could be found on animal products. They thought it was only for vegetables. More concrete information about the label was also asked for:

'You now I think the bit about how they treat the animals. You know our animals grow up in family boxes with plenty of space, and plenty of hay to root in. That is more concrete, one could have a bit more of that on the milk packages what the KRAV logo implies when it comes to milk' (Politically active/vegetarian).

One participant with special interests in and knowledge about KRAV did on the other hand trust it as a reliable source of information.

A second factor related to the sceptical view is that KRAV labelled products sometimes are much more expensive. This could, following the perceptions held by a few of the participants, have the consequence that consumers believe they are fooled. The KRAV label is then, at least partly, seen as a fake, used to take out a higher price.

Interesting to notice is how the participants throughout the interviews used the KRAV label as a natural reference point. This could indicate that there is an interest in labels as an information source. Labels can be a concrete way to display information and they are easy for the consumers to recognize. Support for this conclusion is to be found in other parts of the analysis as well.

#### 5.5.4 SUMMARY

Let us sum up some reflections from the section. First, the general lack of confidence in their own as well as other people's willingness to pay for animal welfare friendly products that has been showed should not be interpreted too strictly. Many of the participants seem to be prepared to pay some extra for animal welfare and they are also out of the meaning that this is actually something you should do. However, there must be a good and trustworthy alternative available at a reasonable price, and where the information is good. Yet, this is a typical case where an interview effect might have had an impact. In the group interviews, will it be more convenient for the participants to say they would spend some extra money on animal welfare. If they actually would do so in a real situation might be questioned. This is something we should bear in mind when reflecting on this conclusion.

A general conclusion, when discussing trust, is that some kind of institution, which consists of different actors from various areas and levels of the society, will be the most trustworthy. The participants mentioned a number of different combinations, like a committee of vets from the countries in the EU, as well as groups of experts from the EU that work in team with local authorities. Another combination mentioned were state authorities (Livsmedelsverk) working together with vets. A variation of competence and perspectives were in the eyes of the participants, a guarantee for that the issues will be dealt with in an impartial and comprehensive way.

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## 5.6 ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS

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This section examine participants' reactions to ten animal welfare concerns generated by scientists working in the Welfare quality project in the light of their own spontaneous definitions of animal welfare and the spontaneous list of concerns that they were asked to generate during the interviews. It also addresses participants' impressions of the likely effectiveness of a standard based on the scientists' list of concerns.

### 5.6.1 PARTICIPANTS' ANIMAL WELFARE CONCERNS

We start with a discussion on the participants' own lists of animal welfare concerns, generated during the group exercises.

An overview of all the aspects that was taken up in the group interviews is given in Table 5.1. Here, we have separated between concerns focusing on (i) the animals, (ii) the farmer-animal relationship, and (iii) the farming process in general. As we can see from the overview, did all the groups bring up something under each of these main headings, but under each heading did different groups stress different aspects.

#### *Concerns focusing on the animals*

Regarding (i) concerns focusing more directly on the animals, did participants bring up aspects that are related to: (a) the animals' environment, (b) pain, stress and health of the animals, (c) fodder and water supply, and (d) what some of them called 'natural behaviour'.

When looking closer at the first of these aspects, (a) the environment of the animals, could we see that 'space' or 'plenty of space' was mentioned explicitly in five of the groups as important for animal welfare. This aspect was, however, not leading to any further discussions on how to measure good spacing etc., but the participants only pointed out that the animals must be able 'to move around' (Empty nester). Closely related to 'space' is 'free range', an aspect which was taken up in four of the groups. If free range was specified it most often meant 'outdoor'. Not all participants did, however, agree on free range. One of the urban mothers said that it was enough to make sure that animals wasn't 'packed as herrings' (Rural woman).

There were also other aspects, related to the environment of the animals. First, several participants pointed out that it should be 'clean', 'nice' and/or 'hygienic'. What standards they had in mind here were not obvious. As specified by one of them:



'[G]ood living conditions, I don't mean like at home, but that they should not stand in faeces' (Rural woman).

TABLE 5.2 Aspects taken up in the participants' own lists and the discussions following the list writing task

Concerns focusing on...	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6	Group 7
<i>... animals</i>							
a. Housing conditions/ physical environment (e.g. space, temperature, free range, clean)	X	X					
b. Health; no pain and no stress	X		X	X	X	X	X
c. Fodder and water supply	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
d. Natural Behavior (e.g. treated in a natural way, keeping females and offspring together)		X	X		X	X	X
<i>... farmer-animal relationship</i>							
e. Supervision, knowledge, control	X		X	X		X	X
f. Company, love, happiness		X	X		X		
g. Care in general	X	X		X		X	X
h. Other aspects on the farmer-animal relationship (respect, psycho-social situation)				X	X		
<i>... farming in general</i>							
i. Transport/ slaughter process	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
j. Production process at farms (e.g. small scale farming)	X		X	X			X

Second, there were concerns about the housing environment and/or the indoor climate in general, indicated by expressions like good 'ventilation', right 'temperature', and that it should not be to much 'noise' (Empty nester) or, that it should be 'varm and dry' as one of the young singles put it (Young single). The same participant also added 'normal days', meaning 'that animals are not kept in environments where it is light 24 hours a day'.

The second type of concerns focusing directly on the animals was related to (b) pain, stress and health, aspects listed by all the groups, except in the group with rural women.

However, one of the rural women nevertheless talked about getting 'away from the stress of these live transports of animals' (Rural woman) when discussing transports and slaughtering. Also in the groups where stress was listed, it was in some cases related to transports and the slaughter process (Urban mothers and Young singles). For other participants were stress related to food quality:

'Stressed animals make tough meat, any way' (Rural woman).

'[T]hey [the animals] are not stressed, because I think that would influence our food' (Senior).

Several participants emphasised that animal welfare should mean no pain, or at least, as one of the political active men put it, that 'suffering' was 'minimized' (Politically active father). This aspect seems to be related directly with concerns for the animals. One participant in the group Young Singles did also bring up that the animals must not be fed by force, which led to a short discussion among the participants in the group about ducks in France (Foie Gras) and meat of veal.

The next aspect, (c) Fodder and water supply, was also taken up by all the groups. On the one hand did some participants simply point out that animals should not be starving and/or be left out of water. A certain amount of food and water is needed (Young singles and Politically active/vegetarians). On the other hand did some participant say that the animals should be given fodder without additives: 'no antibiotics or anything' (Urban mother) and 'not received feed with strange additives' (Senior).

Bad fodder, it was also pointed out in the group of seniors, is a problem because the bad parts will be transferred to humans.

'The effect of the feed on us humans is often very harmful' (Senior).

In many cases, however, said the participants no more than, 'good food' (Rural women, Empty nesters and Politically active fathers), 'healthy food' (Young singles) or that the food 'shall be as natural as possible' (Urban mothers), without specifying what that would mean.

The last animal welfare concerns focusing directly on the animals were related to what we can call (d) natural behaviour. This was taken up in two ways. First, several participants talked about animal welfare in terms of 'a natural life' (Rural woman), a 'natural environment' (Young single, female), 'a natural way' to treat animals (Empty nester) or that the animals should 'live in accordance with their nature' (Politically active/vegetarian). This was also specified by some of the participants:

'I think that they should have as close to a natural life as possible, like they would have had if they hadn't been locked in or taken care of. For cows that's basically fresh water, grass, big areas, like I think they should have it if no one took care of them. For pigs it's mud holes and a bunch of good food which people have left behind' (Rural woman).

Others talked about an ‘active life’, (Rural woman) or that the animals should get some ‘exercise’ (Politically active father).

Second, a few participants brought up a specific aspect of natural behaviour, that mother and child should be kept together, as long as it is natural. As one of the women in the group Empty nesters put it:

‘I have written also that the needs for the different species are treated as naturally as possible. Appropriate food, water, and exposure to nature. Calves should be with their mother for the time that’s natural. And chickens with the hens’ (Empty nester).

However, in one group (Politically active fathers) was also the meaning of the concept ‘natural behaviour’ discussed. Natural behaviour was seen as a scale, were it is far from obvious were to draw the line between unnatural and natural behaviour.

### *Concerns focusing on the farmer-animal relationship*

The second group of animal welfare concerns listed by the participants focused on the farmer-animal relationship. This includes aspects related to: (e) supervision, knowledge and control, (f) company, love and happiness, (g) care in general, and (h) other aspects that can be related to the farmer-animal relation.

The first aspect, (e) supervision, knowledge and control, were taken up in all groups, except in the Rural women and Young singles groups. The main point here was to implement some kind of system that would guarantee a certain standard for the animals (i.e. regarding health and housing conditions). This aspect was on the one hand related to the issue of competent framers (knowledge), as in group Politically active fathers where some kind of ‘certificate’ was asked for. On the other hand was the same aspect related to supervision and control, especially by veterinarians. One of the women in the senior group did even want a veterinarian placed on each farm (Senior). Two groups did, however, just mention ‘god supervision’ (Urban mother) or ‘access to veterinarian knowledge’ (Empty nesters) without further discussions.

The second aspect, (f) company, love and happiness, was taken up by three groups. This aspect was discussed mostly in the rural women group where ‘company’ for instance taken up as an important aspect by several participants. One of them stressed how much animals like to be looked after, another pointed out that animals will be happy if they feel that they are needed and a third mentioned that they must not be seen as ‘milk machines’, but the farmer should sometimes also come by just to give them a pat. That animals need a pat, as well as ‘love’, was also mentioned by one of the young singles (Young single), and that animals need ‘human contact’ was also taken up in the group Empty nesters, but without further discussions.

The third aspect - (g) care in general – is more vague. However, most of the groups (Urban mothers, Rural women, Seniors and Politically active/vegetarians) included a general concern called ‘care’ on their lists (‘omsorg’, ‘omvårdnad’ in Swedish), without

discussing exactly what it meant. In group Politically active fathers a similar aspect was mentioned: 'the farmer's attitude'.

Finally, some of the groups did also bring up a few other aspects (h) that can be related to the farmer-animal relation. The senior group stated that 'farmers should not discriminate between different animals', one of the young singles mentioned 'respect' (Young single) and in group Politically active fathers it was pointed out that animal welfare is about the socio-psychological needs of the animals (Politically active father).

#### *Concerns focusing on the farming process in general*

The final group of animal welfare concerns listed by the participants had a wider scoop, where aspects of the framing process in general were taken up. Two sorts of aspects can be identified here: (i) aspects focusing on transportation and the slaughter process, and (j) aspects focusing on the production process at the farms.

Regarding (i) transportation and the slaughter process, was this aspect included in the lists of all the groups, and according to the discussions was the issue also of high importance. Concerns about transportation was discussed in terms of 'short transports' (or no transports at all), 'descent transports', 'human transports' and/or that transports should be carried out 'without stressing' the animals. One of the men in group Politically active fathers did for instance point out that it must not be: 'in the form of a 100 pigs cramped on a back of a truck' (Politically active father).

Concerns about the slaughter process (which was taken up by all the groups except Empty nesters and Politically active/vegetarians) did in a similar way focus on a 'fast', 'descent' and/or 'respectable' slaughter process, minimizing the 'stress' of the animals. These two issues, transportation and slaughter process, were also discussed together in three of the groups (groups Empty nesters, Seniors and Young singles), where the advantages of having slaughter on farms were pointed out. As one of the rural women put it:

'[B]ut that they should not have the stress of going to slaughter. If you say that they can die at the farm at least' (Rural woman).

And, as another of the participants in the same group pointed out, the animals will get away from the stress related to long transports (Rural woman).

Finally, aspects that can be related to (j) the production process in general, was actually only included in the lists of two of the groups (Empty nesters and Seniors), but it was nevertheless an important theme in the discussions in others groups as well (especially Urban mothers and Rural women). The main point with this aspect was that 'small scale farming' were regarded as a better production system for the animals, according to the participants. As one man in the group Empty nesters put it: 'the larger it is, the worse it will get' (Empty nester). Other participants stressed similar concerns. One talked about 'conveyor belt principle' where there is no room left for empathy (Empty nester) and another about 'gigantic animal factories' (Senior). One of the urban mothers was

concerned about animals ‘growing to fast’ today and one of the rural women meant that it is the ‘money that rules’. One of the fathers in group Politically active fathers, finally, meant that animal farming has become an ‘experimental workshop’ since the introduction of large scale farming (Politically active father). In all these cases it is clear that small scale farming, or as it was phrased in many of the discussions, ‘traditional farming’, is seen to be more animal welfare friendly.

### 5.6.2 EXPERTS’ LIST

All the groups were asked to give their opinion on a list of ten animal welfare concerns generated by scientists working in the Welfare Quality project (the experts’ list, see Appendix). It should be noted that this question was asked after they had been asked to produce and discuss their own spontaneous lists of concerns (see above).

The general impression of the experts’ list was that it was important and relevant. This was true for all the groups. The list did not generate many discussions in the groups and the comments were most often very general, like ‘complete and good’ (Politically active father), ‘feels very good an comprehensive’ (Politically active father), ‘good’ (Urban mother), ‘well formulated’ (Empty nester) and ‘well specified, one can understand exactly what they mean’ (Young single).

One group (Politically active/vegetarians) expressed their positive attitude towards the principles indirectly, by pointing out that ‘one could replace animals with humans in most places’ (Politically active/vegetarian). One of the young singles meant that the standard represented by the ten principles should be taken for granted and added that: ‘It is strange that it is not like this’ (Young single).

However, a few comments seem to indicate a less enthusiastic view. One of the urban mothers did for instance say that ‘It is probably enough’ (Urban mother) and another participant in the same group pointed out that it is ‘on the right track’ (Urban mother), indicating that the standards could be more ambitious. On the other hand, was the list seen as ‘wishful thinking’ by the senior group, which meant that the standards were ‘to ambitious’.

When asked to point out if there was any point in the list that was particularly important were a few points mentioned more than others. Point 8 (human–animal relationship) was mentioned in four groups (Urban mothers, Empty nesters, Seniors and Politically active fathers). This point was also discussed to some extent, especially in Politically active fathers. Here, we could see a disagreement on what is most important: basic needs, as food and water supply (point 1 in the experts’ list) or how the farmers treat animals – which in this case was seen as a precondition for the basic needs.

Points 1, 2 (physical comfort and security), 3 (health: injuries), and 10 (positive emotions) were all pointed out by participants in two groups. Points 5 (pain) as well as point 6 (normal/natural social behaviours), finally, were each mentioned in just one

group. Points 7 (normal/natural other behaviours) and 9 (negative emotions) were consequently not taken up in any group as particularly important. However, many groups stressed that all points in fact were equally important (e.g. Rural women). As already pointed out above, most participants seem to trust the experts. As one of the vegetarians put it 'it is good, they [the scientists] know what they talk about.' (Politically active/vegetarian).

The participants were also encouraged to discuss if there was anything in the experts' list that they missed. However, the only things mentioned were transports (in three of the groups), fodder without additives, GMO restrictions and small scale farming, aspects that we also recognize from the participants own lists (if we assume that GMO restrictions is included in 'natural behaviour').

A comparison between the participants' reactions to the experts' list and their own lists shows in fact a few important differences, considering the content. Most of the concerns focusing directly on animals, as well as those focusing on the farmer-animal relationship, in the participants' own lists, correspond fairly well with the ten principles in the experts' list (even though minor differences can be seen here, like the participants' aspect 'outdoor', which is missing in the experts' list). However, the aspects brought up under 'concerns focusing on the farming process in general (j)', that is transports, the slaughter process and small scale farming, are not stressed in the ten principles. Furthermore, in the participants' own lists above, was also an aspect called 'Supervision, knowledge, and control (e)', included, which is partly missing in the experts' list – the phrase 'insufficiently skilled' farmers, animal transports, and slaughterhouse staff (in point 8) does not fully cover this. The conclusions we can draw from this is that the participants put animal welfare issues in a wider context, by relating it to different phases of the production processes (transports, slaughter process), to economical constrains (small scale farming) as well as an political/institutional level (supervision, control).

There were also differences in how the lists were framed. First, it can be noted that the participants' lists focused on what is good welfare (positive aspects), instead on what should be avoided (negative aspects) as in the experts' list. This might indicate a different perception on the current standard. 'Positive' welfare standards are needed if the current standard is low, negative if an acceptable standard should be protected. Second, there were different ways to categorize the different aspects. Food and water was for instant separated in many lists, and health was not separated into different categories etc. It is, however, hard to say whether this points at a major difference in understanding animal welfare.

### 5.6.3 EFFECTIVENESS, DESIGN AND PROBLEMS

In all the groups there were discussions on the likely effectiveness of a standard based on the experts' list of concerns, as well as on how a labelling following these standards should be designed. A number of potential problems with implementing such a standard

(and labelling) was also taken up. The outcome of these discussions will be presented below.

First, effectiveness. The general opinion in all groups – except for the rural women group, which was more sceptical – was that a standard following the criteria in the experts' list would be effective, if implemented. Several participants stated that it would increase the welfare of the animals (i.e. Urban mothers, Seniors, Young singles) and/or that it would affect their consumption behaviour (i.e. Urban mothers, Seniors, Young singles and Politically active fathers). As one of the participants in group Politically active fathers put it:

‘Yes, you would dare to buy Belgian meat then’ (Politically active fathers).

The rural women group was critical to a standard that would be implemented ‘from above’ (that is the EU) and believed that it might actually get the opposite effect. Nevertheless, one of the participants in the group (Rural woman) said that it was more likely that she would choose a product if she knew that the expert list had been followed – and several others in the group agreed.

That some kind of animal welfare label might be needed or useful was taken up spontaneously in three of the groups (Urban mothers, Empty nesters and Seniors), where one of these (Empty nesters) also explicitly suggested an EU label. When asked about the design, most of the participants preferred a single stamp/label. A common argument was that it would make things less complicated for the consumer. Another opinion was that it is strange to grade such things as animal welfare (Empty nester). As one of vegetarians in group Politically active/vegetarians put it:

‘Yes, it feels sort of problematic with a five point scale. Torture animals a little, torture animals a lot, torture animals...’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

However, a graded scale was also discussed and suggested by some participants, as well as a negative label (for products missing any standard for animal welfare). One of the participants in group Politically active fathers did also point out that if a graded scale is implemented, it should not be stars, while this can be mixed up with ‘taste quality’ (Politically active father).

Considering potential problems with implementing the standards, three main problems were brought up. First, several groups pointed at the risk that the standard will not be followed, or that it will not be implemented in the same way everywhere. Consequently, most groups stressed the need for some kind of control agency that can be trusted. Another aspect of this problem is that the standard (as well as the label) should be ‘international’, so that it will be the same in all countries. However, even if there will be problems to get everyone to follow the standard it can make a difference and be out of importance according to one woman since it at least can be ‘a standard to struggle for’ (Urban mother).

A second problem brought up in many groups was that it might be too costly to implement the standard. It will lead to more expensive meat for the consumers and/or

that resources will be taken from other important areas in the society (in case the state will subsidise animal welfare friendly farming). A similar concern, taken up in two of the groups (Young singles and Politically active fathers), was that a European standard would make non-European meat more competitive which will have a negative effect on the European meat market. We will get more imported meat, that don't live up to the same standards (Politically active father), or new tariffs and trade barriers (Young singles).

Finally, in some groups it was also pointed out that it will be hard to get an agreement on such ambitious measures on a European level – a political problem so to say. In relation to this problem, there were also some discussions, especially Politically active fathers, about whether a standard for animal welfare is an issue that the EU should decide on or not. This discussion is hardly surprising. Whether one is for or against the EU, has become an important dimension in Swedish political culture.

#### 5.6.4 SUMMARY

If we summarize the main findings in this section can we first see that the participants' understanding of animal welfare correspond fairly well with the principles formulated by the scientists. However, a few important differences have been identified, which indicate that the participants seem to put animal welfare issues into a wider context, including several phases in the productions process as well as an economical, institutional and political environment. This broader perspective on the issue also became clear when the participants discussed problems with implementing the standard suggested by the experts.

Secondly, it is clear that the participants see supervision and control is an important aspect to be successful in implementing and/or upholding a certain animal welfare standard. Supervision, knowledge and control are on the one hand taken up in the lists of most of the groups. On the other hand is some kind of control agency seen as a guarantee for that the standard will be followed, if implemented. This should be seen in light of the Swedish society, where state agencies play an important role in many areas.

Finally, is the focus on small scale farming in the participants' own discussions worth a notice. The impression we get from the discussions here is that matters like small scale, tradition and natural are closely associated, and that it at the same time stands for what is good welfare.



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## 5.7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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The discussions in the sections above show some interesting findings about Swedish consumers' animal welfare concerns. We have found out that our participants buy their meat products at the same places as they buy the rest of their food, at supermarkets. They were critical against newly established, (foreign) supermarket chains, but these chains were nevertheless used – because of their low prices. Price is, consequently, a very important factor for their choice of animal products. It is, however, not necessarily conclusive. Country of origin seems to be as, or sometimes even more, important, when it comes to meat consumption. Participants also considered if it was organic (ecological), the taste, and its durability when deciding what meat product they would buy.

Furthermore, the analysis has also showed that knowledge about animal welfare is low, even though many participants had a positive attitude towards animal welfare friendly products, and they did believe that information exists. However, they seem to miss information that is easy to access. Or, as some of them pointed out, they just don't want to know too much. Animal welfare was anyhow associated with positive values, like health, ecology and good taste.

Mass media was seen as their main information channel, but few trusted the information in the media. It was perceived as biased – too focused on problems and scandals. Trust in information from the government as well as from producers and retailers were also low. The perception was that this information is affected by political and economical self-interest. Scientific institutions, and in particular veterinarians, were on the other hand trusted, partly because of their independence. State agencies were also perceived as fairly independent (especially from economical pressures) which made them trustworthy. Information from the EU was instead partly distrusted, because of distance.

When considering who should have the responsibility for animal welfare was the main answer that it should be divided between the state, which should set up some kind of control agency, the farmers who should treat animals in the right way, and the consumers, who should buy the right products. Buying the right products – or boycotting the wrong ones (political consumerism) – was also one of four strategies for influencing animal welfare discussed by the participants. The others were to complain in the store, to contact the media, and to join a political organisation.

Finally, the comparison between the participants' own lists of animal welfare concerns and the experts' list, showed that they corresponded fairly well. However, the participants stressed transports, the slaughter process and supervision to a larger extent. Furthermore, if the experts' list would be implemented did most participants want a label designed as a single stamp. They did, however, point out a few problems with implementing such a standard. There is a risk that it won't be followed by everyone, that meat products become more expensive and that it will be hard to get a political agreement on the standard.

Let us consider these findings from a more analytical point of view. What analytical distinctions, dimensions, and themes can be generated from the discussions above? How was animal welfare conceptualised? And what patterns can we identify, considering animal welfare in the light of a broader context?

First, the animal welfare concept. On one hand, does animal welfare mean something good. Animal welfare is synonymous with healthy, happy and pleased animals. Besides this was animal welfare related to a number of other 'positive' values. High animal welfare standards meant healthy and better tasting animal products, and this is good for humans. Animal welfare is accordingly associated with human welfare. Animal welfare is also in line with ecological concerns – what is good for nature. On the other hand was animal welfare defined in terms of 'natural behaviour', for instance free range (especially outdoor), pools of mud for pigs, or that female and offspring are kept together. In a similar way was fodder with additives as well as GMO, something that should be restricted. Furthermore, meat from hunted animals was perceived as more natural (and consequently better tasting) than meat from farmed animals.

From an analytical point of view can this be captured by the distinction natural/artificial. Good animal welfare is 'natural', bad animal welfare (which is a contradiction in terms according to the participants' meaning of the concept) is 'artificial'. This distinction was also clear when participants considered the production process. Traditional, small scale farming – as 'grandma's farm' – is more natural – and accordingly more animal welfare friendly – than modern, highly commercialized farms, where meat production becomes an industry, with 'fabrics', 'conveyor belt principle' and profit. Animals become 'products' instead of living creatures with feelings. Only one group did to some extent problematize what 'natural' means (group Politically active fathers), the rest seem to take it for granted – as being something good.

Second, animal welfare in light of a broader context. Here we should keep in mind that discussions in the groups were limited by the themes focused in the interview guide. Other aspects, not related to these themes, could of course have been brought up if other questions had been asked. However, we can at least identify a few patterns that emerged when animal welfare was related to knowledge, information, trust, responsibility, control and agency.

Let us start with knowledge and information. Two closely related things are important to mention here, which point at two analytical dimensions. When it comes to knowledge could we see that many participants, on one hand, did not know very much about animal welfare. Knowledge was low. On the other hand did at least some of them say that they did not want to know too much. This was of course closely related to their perceptions of the available information on animal welfare. Here, many said that they missed relevant information, or that information exists but it is hard to get hold on. In analytical terms can these concerns be interpreted as questions of accessibility and motivation. To know, you must have access to the right information. However, to know, you must also be motivated to access information that is available. Consequently, more information is not necessarily the only solution here.

If we turn to the issue of trust, another pattern can be identified. From the discussion above, it is clear that trust in information provided by different actors varied a lot. The main conclusion we drew from the discussions was that the more independent from political and economical pressures, the more trustworthy. This, then, gives us the analytical dimension independence. However, the actors trusted most was not just independent, but also competent (having good knowledge about the issue). So trust may also, it seems, be related to knowledge.

If we move on to responsibility and control, shows the results from the interviews that there is a tension between who should be and who has to be responsible for animal welfare. For instance, the consumers were ascribed a responsibility, and so were the farmers, but most participants doubted that they would be able to take this responsibility. Their own, individual interest would be stronger. Consequently, did they want the state (or the EU) to take the final responsibility for animal welfare. This tension can be interpreted in analytical terms by the distinction (or perhaps the dimension) individual/collective responsibility.

The last theme covered in the interview guide, agency, was related to responsibility and control above. As already pointed out above, did the participants bring up four different strategies to influence the level of animal welfare. These strategies range from individual (political consumerism, complaints at stores) to collective actions (joining a party) – while mobilising support by contacting a news paper may be placed somewhere in between these poles. An analytical dimension – individual versus collective action – can be formulated. This dimension is important in contemporary discussions on political participation (see Pettersson, 2004 for a short introduction). However, the discussions in Section 5.5 has also pointed out that young and/or political active participants seem to have a stronger belief in their capacity to influence, especially compared with the ‘seniors’, which indicate that the analytical category ‘engagement’ (similar to ‘motivation’ above) might be important to consider too. This does also support findings in previous studies on political consumption. Individuals that are political active in general will more likely be political consumers (see Micheletti & Stolle 2004).

So far has the themes in the interview guide been discussed. However, before closing this discussion on analytical implications from the study, two more findings will be pointed out. The first of these concerns an analytical category that we call distance. The results indicate that animal welfare and distance is closely related. Information from the EU is, for instance, not trusted because of distance, municipalities can be trusted because they know about the region. Furthermore, locally produced products are preferred, which also can be related to distance. Part of the discussions on country of origin may be understood in a similar way, and perhaps also the sceptical view on new (foreign) supermarket chains. Things close to where you live, which you are familiar with, is simply more reliable. This may also be an aspect of identity. Positive identification with a specific region may include positive identification with the products from the region. Considering that animal welfare is something positive, it is then, perhaps, more likely that one perceives local products as more animal welfare friendly.

The second point to make here is that we can see a gap between attitudes and practice – something that we also recognize from previous studies on organic food (i.e. Magnusson et al 2001). The participants have a positive attitude towards animal welfare, but they do not buy such products to any larger extent. Many participants were also critical against some of the newly established supermarket chains, but they did, nevertheless use them. And, finally, many pointed out that political consumption was a good idea, but they didn't believe it would work.

All the analytical dimensions and categories discussed above will be important to consider when analysing the results from the survey that is also conducted in the project. They can, furthermore, be fruitful for the comparative analysis, including the results from the focus groups carried out in other countries.

However, the study has also generated results that can be useful for other partners in the project. There are especially two recommendations from the participants that might be worth pointing out. The first generates from the discussion in Section 5.6, where the participants discussed the implementation of an animal welfare standard. Their main recommendation seem to be that there should be a label for animal welfare, that it should be designed as a single stamp, and that it has to be accompanied by a control agency of some kind, which is independent. The second recommendation is addressed to the experts, whom set up the list of ten animal welfare concerns. Here the recommendation from the participants would be that the list to a larger extent should stress aspects like transports, the slaughter process, and control. It could also be considered if the list should be framed as negative aspects. However, the general attitude towards the list was very positive and they seem to trust the experts in their work.

# 6

## NORWAY

by

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report describes and discusses the result of a qualitative study conducted in Norway on the issue of animal welfare. The study is part of a wider research project involving several European countries. Our study is primarily concerned with the welfare of animals used in food production. As it is through consumption practices that products of animal origin become ingredients of our everyday meals, we have used sociological theories related to consumption as a main approach for this study and have focus mainly on individuals as consumers. We understand food consumption as a set of institutionalised practices which are integrated in each other and generally centred around the household, as well as related to structures and norms in society at large.

This study investigates how people define the welfare of animals used in food production, which kinds of concerns they have, and how these concerns are reflected in eating practices. Moreover, it investigates how responsibilities for the welfare of animals used in food production are socially distributed and how individuals mobilise themselves as consumers on the issue of animal welfare. The data presented in this study refers to seven focus groups that have been conducted in Norway during the winter 2005. Of these, six are common to all the countries participating to the study, while one is defined as country specific. The six common focus groups have been: vegetarian and political consumers, young singles, cohabitants without children, urban mothers; over 50s, and rural women. A group of male hunters living in the countryside has been selected as the country specific focus group. Altogether, we interviewed 48 people, of those where 33 women and 15 were men.

The themes arising in the focus groups tended to be overlapping and interwoven. However, we have tried to structure the report in a way where we treat each main topic separately, mainly following the original structure of the interview guide.

Section 6.2 contains detailed information about the research design and the analysis of the data. The interview guide is characterised by the fact that we wanted to understand animal welfare in the context of consumption. For this reason our interview guide focus

mostly on consumption practices, on the connection between food and the animal this food comes from, on the role that people have as consumers. The interview guide we used is divided into four main themes: 1. Food consumption, preparation and shopping habits; 2. Information and involvement; political consumption, ethical dilemmas and barriers; human-animal relationships (During this theme participants have been also presented with some examples of the types of information about welfare friendly products that are already available to consumers); 3. Assessing animal welfare; ten welfare principles from the 'Welfare Quality' project; towards an information system; 4. Theme D: Trust and responsibility.

Section 6.3 describes informants shopping and eating practices in relation to meat and other food of animal origin. Apart from the vegetarians, most of the informants tended to eat meat rather regularly. Some reported however to eat less meat now than before, and there were also descriptions of changes in the types of meat most often used. Particularly in the seniors group, there were descriptions of changes from red meat to 'lighter' types of meat, often with reference to health reasons. The type of meat purchased depends on different factors, often related to age, family structure and personal economy. Among the young singles, price and convenience were central; for the mothers, time emerged as an important issue. In the two rural groups, human stewardship of nature was a central notion, and the women in particular expressed a concern with transforming natural resources into food, and making the most of the values represented in nature.

Generally, there were many similarities between the groups regarding where they got their meat and other products of animal origin. Convenience shopping at the nearest supermarket was described as the most common practice, across most groups. In many instances however, informants also referred to other kinds of food provisioning. To eat meat from hunted animals (particularly moose) is rather common in Norway and for the informants living in the countryside it represented the main form of provision.

A main aim of Section 6.3 is also to understand how informants frame the relationship between the food they buy and the animal this food comes from. Some participants described how their relation to the animal in general was very distant to the food products – even though they would like to have information about the food. Combined with – or parallel with the urge to not thinking about the animal that the meat originates from, appeared the need or wish to 'disguise' the origin of the food in the eating context. However, there were also some exceptions to the urge to keep the eating context a 'living animal free' zone. These were situations where the story of how the animal has lived its' life is perceived as a really nice one.

Section 6.4 aimed at describing the kind of information informants have about farming methods and welfare friendly products. It starts with a more general discussion about how informants evaluate the present situation in their country and become more specific afterwards. Particularly, this section contains the comments formulated by our informants on welfare friendly labelled products. Apart from a small group of informants, it generally emerges lack of information about the living conditions of farm animals. Most of the opinions tend to rely on the observation of the animals grazing out in the nature. The Norwegian landscape is an important frame in which discourses about

animal welfare are situated. Despite the lack of labelled products, Norwegian consumers seem actually not to lack opportunities to have experience with welfare friendly products. This is mostly due to the availability of meat or other products coming from animals that are perceived as having had a good life. Scepticism towards private schemes, higher costs and poor distribution emerged as the main barriers for the enhancement of labelled products in the conventional distribution system. The choice of products with private labels tends to be mostly related to preferences concerning taste and quality; alternative provisioning systems are instead chosen thinking more about animal welfare and sustainability.

Section 6.5 focuses mostly on the role that consumer can have in relation to animal welfare. Key issues such as responsibility, mobilisation and trust are discussed. The issue of responsibility related to animal welfare has been one of the most discussed in our focus groups. Two main positions emerged: One where consumers are considered as most responsible (i.e. Consumers that just want to buy 'cheap' food are seen as the main cause of the worsening of living conditions for farm animals). Another which tend to consider farmers as the main responsible party (The welfare of their animals must come first, no matter the pressure on prices). Besides these two, other actors were seen as responsible, such as retailers for access to products, public authorities as a third party and the media for providing information.

The focus groups indicate a plurality of ways in which informants mobilise themselves as consumers. These can vary from choosing 'small eggs' instead of extra-large ones to more comprehensive choices of life as stopping to eat food of animal origin. How individuals interpret their role as consumer is relevant for understanding mobilisation practices and patterns of trust.

Among the informants there is a widespread notion that things in Norway cannot really be so bad. This belief is mostly based on the trust they have on public authorities. On the other hand there is distrust towards producers and retailers. Labels are seen with scepticism and, if trusted, it is because public authorities would control the veracity of what is stated.

Finally, Section 6.6 goes deeply into the definitions of animal welfare as they emerged in the focus groups. During the interview informants were asked to 'make a list' of the most important dimensions related to animal welfare. In addition they were asked to comment a monitoring list provided by experts working for this project. The section is therefore based mainly on the data coming from the discussion of the two different lists, but it also refers to other relevant comments that emerged during the focus groups. Animal welfare concerns among focus group participants were – as discussed in earlier sections – not necessarily easy to become aware of. Animal welfare was not among the issues which normally were brought up spontaneously in the introductory rounds about the types of concerns they had in relation to their food, or what they normally looked for when they were shopping. Nevertheless, it is obvious that animal welfare did matter, and it was considered a basic requirement to food production. The view that animal welfare was not important was never claimed. There were some discussions about the relative importance of welfare measures between different types of animals (Do fish count? Do they have feelings?). But as a main finding, the welfare of animals was

considered important when the issue first had surfaced, and it was rather taken for granted as a common value that should not be violated for the sake of profit or efficiency. The concerns among participants covered the entire life-span of the animals, and all the different locations in the food system – from the farm to the slaughterhouse. Animal welfare was considered to be about ‘how they live’ and ‘how they die’ as well as everything in between. Many informants indicated the importance of animals being considered as living individuals until they die, and not as ‘food’ or ‘commodities’ from the moment they are born. Freedom and care are two main dimensions used in order to define the welfare of animals in food production. The more the animal was perceived as having had a decent life according to these two values, the more it was perceived as acceptable to eat it.

The last section contains some recommendations for the further development of the project.

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## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

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This report describes and discusses the result of a qualitative study conducted in Norway on the issue of animal welfare. The study is part of a wider research project involving several European countries . Our study is primarily concerned with the welfare of animals used in food production. As it is through consumption practices that products of animal origin become ingredients of our everyday meals, we have used sociological theories related to consumption as a main approach for this study and have focus mainly on individual as consumers. We understand food consumption as a set of institutionalised practices which are integrated in each other and generally centred around the household, as well as related to structures and norms in society at large.

The aim of the study is to investigate how people define the welfare of animals used in food production, which kind of concerns do they have, how these concerns are reflected in eating practices. We want, as well, to investigate how responsibilities for the welfare of animals used in food production are socially distributed and how individuals mobilise themselves as consumers on the issue of animal welfare.

Concerns about the welfare of animals is not a new phenomenon. The first association for the protection of animals, the ‘Society for the prevention of cruelty’, was established in London in 1824 (Guzman and Kjærnes, 1998). Not long after similar organisations were established also in other countries (Jesper and Nelkin, 1992). However, it was only one century and some decades later that the issue of animals’ rights became a political issue. A turning point in the mobilisation in behalf of animals has to be dated along the 1970s. As indicated by Jasper and Nelkin ‘since the last seventies, new animal ‘rights’ organisations, have rejuvenated the older and larger animal welfare movement, and together they are shaping public awareness of animals’ (Jesper and Nelkin 1992:3).



The fact that this renewed interest towards animals emerged in the seventies is by no means accidental. It is those years, in fact, that western societies have been crossed by mobilisations aimed to assert rights for oppressed parties of the population. Singer's book, *Animals liberation* is contemporary to other pillars of the civil rights movement. Tom Reagan, a front figure in the movement for animal rights, was himself an activist in the human rights and peace movement.

The fight for animal rights has been considered, by some scholars, as part of the 'silent revolution' described by Inglehart:<sup>17</sup> in affluent western societies people could afford to mobilise themselves for non-materialistic values such as civil rights, environment and peace. Using the Inglehart paradigm, we can therefore consider the rise of the animal welfare movement as the result of new sensibilities proper of post industrial societies: characterised by altruism and disentanglement from ones proper interests.

However, according to other scholars, the interest towards animals, in seeing them as subjects, may conversely be the product of a society where the relationship between human beings deteriorates. Loneliness and lack of communication made (some) animals the human best friend not only in a metaphoric sense. According to Franklin 'compassionate human-animal relations fill in the emotional spaces formerly met by the enduring human relationship' (Franklin, 1999). Following the Franklin hypothesis, we are moving towards a 'species multi-culturalism' characterized by sentimentalisation, reconciliation, and mutual discovery. Through the companion animal, that we feed, pat and talk to, the traditional relationship between humans and animals is called into question.

We may however observe that having a companion animal does not make people necessarily companions to all animals. We have plenty of examples of hunters who have an intense relationship with their dog but simply do not consider it problematic to hunt deer. We may be very fond of animals, but still eat a steak for dinner.

This introduces us to an essential theme of our investigation. The relationship we have with the animals that become food.

The problematic issue of eating animals have been the focus of an uncountable number of studies. Although human beings are theoretically omnivorous, only a limited range of the 'physiologically edible' products, in the end, are eaten (Douglas, 1966; Harris, 1985). Relevant differences among cultures in the definition of what can appropriately become food well indicate that eating is far from being just a biological need, as it is deeply related to moral concerns and social practices.

The history of our societies seems to be characterized by defining the distances between the human being and the rest of the living creatures (Franklin, 1999). The process of transforming them into food has been an important part of this process. The definition of which kinds of animals are acceptable to eat and which are not, how to transform them into food, how and when it is appropriate to eat them, is an important part of the

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<sup>17</sup> Although he, interestingly enough, never mentioned the animal right among his pots-materialistic values. More in general we find that the issue of animal rights has been neglected by important scholars of social movements (i.e. Tarrow).

process of defining the position of human beings in relation to other animals and our degree of civilisation (Leach, 1964; Elias, 1994).

These processes may be clearly understood as a form of institutionalisation. Referring to Berger and Luckman, Kjærnes defines institutionalisation as a development, whereby different sets of actors mutually recognise and typify habitual actions. Because of the mutuality, such habitual actions will appear in the form of institutional arrangement. Institutions develop historically, but appear to the individual as an objective reality, appropriated through processes of socialisation (Kjærnes, 2004).

Food consumption represent a particularly powerful form of institutionalisation: the provision of food, the time of and the spaces of consumption, concerns about appropriateness and care –just to mention some aspects- create a framework for understanding our consumption practices. Furthermore, institutionalisation implies a high degree of routinisation of these practices: they are not questioned everyday, but repeated steadily as part of our normal everyday life.

Following this approach, eating meat and other products of animal origin, is – for many – part of the taken for granted structure of the every day world where proteins are important, eating turkey at Christmas is a tradition, and buying an hamburger is a way to cope with the lack of time.

Institutionalisation, however, do not deny the possibility of transformation. Dissatisfaction with the traditional way of doing may emerge; alternative practices may win the favour of many. The impact of the animal right movement can be considered as an example of how institutionalised practices can be questioned and other forms of institutionalisation established.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the impact of this movement, we should not underestimate the effect of the food crises that have cross Europe since the 1990s. The BSE outbreak brought a deeper knowledge about what animals are feed and how they spend their lives. This crisis was interpreted as the sign that things have gone to far. What was happening to farm animals became object of discussion in the media, among politicians and between people. Citizens were forced to think about their role as consumers and to reconsider their routines. Health scares, aspirations to go back to more natural ways of production, demands of thinking about quality more than about quantity, became priorities in the consumers' agenda.

In conducting our focus groups interviews, we came across many of these aspects. But we also became aware that there are some particular aspects of the Norwegians' discourses on animal welfare that can be better understood having some knowledge of the Norwegian context. In the section that follows we will, therefore shortly describe some aspects, which are particularly important as background information for the data presented in this report.

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<sup>18</sup> For instance, the presence of a vegetarian menu in many restaurants can be considered as a form of institutionalisation.

Norway is one of the less populated European countries, with four and half millions inhabitants and a density of 15 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. Of the mainland area, the 72 per cent is mountainous, while 24 per cent is covered by forest. The Norwegian landscape, with its forests, small rivers and the red small farms colouring the landscape, but also with its long and cold winter and lack of cultivable land (only 4 per cent of the land is in fact cultivated) represents the frame in which discourses on food production and animal welfare are situated. This at least for two aspects: on the one hand, we have the difficulty of cultivation, which makes farming, in Norway, a scarce and highly protected activity; on the other hand there is instead, the plenty of natural resources to which all Norwegians can potentially have access.

In addition to this there is the specific Norwegian political tradition, characterised by a high level of state intervention and by a high level of satisfaction and trust among its citizens.

#### 6.1.1 MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NORWEGIAN FOOD SYSTEM

Norwegian agriculture is among the most protected in Europe. One reason for this is that maintaining and increasing national production have been main goals of a country which got its independence as late as 1905. Together with direct subsidies Norwegian farmers have been granted other forms of support, such as import protection. Products that could compete with Norwegian ones could be imported only at some conditions and had to face high customs fees.<sup>19</sup> The relevance of agricultural interests is likely to have played a major role in turning down Norwegian membership in the EU at the two national referendums (in 1972 and again in 1994).

The state regulation of the agricultural system rooted its legitimacy in the solidaristic aims of maintaining population in remote areas of the country and in the fact that it could provide Norwegians with healthy and safe food.

The establishment of cooperatives has been a central feature of the Norwegian agricultural sector. Production of meat, poultry, milk, and (to a minor extent) fruit and vegetables is organised in producer owned cooperatives (Almås, 2002). From the distribution side the Norwegian food market is dominated by big-volume sales of uniform products, where the few dominant actors do not emphasise diversity. The range of foods presented to Norwegian consumers is considerably smaller than in many other countries. Following the products backwards in the food chain, Stræte and Jacobsen (2002) point out some reasons why diversity is lacking. They describe the food system in Norway as being characterized by dominant actors at the levels of production, processing, distribution and trade. These actors have 'united' in cooperative and competitive strategies which mainly enhances the sales of standardised volume products – so-called bulk products, without special distinctive traits. In a study of meat products in the Norwegian food market, it is described how 'Quality and distinctness have been,

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<sup>19</sup> We may however be aware that these kinds of protections are steadily questioned in the frame of the WTO agreement.

if not sacrificed, then at least given a lower priority in the name of standardisation and low prices' (Jacobsen, 2001). The fact that people, in the role as consumers, also have been part of this 'bulk-regime' for several decades raises the question about how well trained or willing consumers are to distinguish between foods with different characteristics in the market.

It is claimed that food culture has not – until recent years, been recognized and used as an important part of the construction of the Norwegian identity, and that rather the concepts of nature and peasant community have been central in this respect (Amilien and Hegnes, 2002). It is further claimed that Norwegian consumers during the last decades have been 'educated' to ask for nationally produced bulk products (Amilien and Stø, 2000).

In Norway, the state has played a major role in organising and protecting consumer interests. The main consumer institutions have been created by the state and depend economically on it, but operate as politically independent organisations. Within the framework of this strong public involvement in the organisation of consumer interests, there has been less space for independent, self-financed consumer organisations.

This kind of system has won, during many years, a steady high trust from consumers. In Norway, there is in fact a particularly high level of consensus towards state intervention in agriculture and high trust in public food authorities, which are expected to be responsible for food and issues in the food production. Market actors, on the other hand, tend to be trusted to a lesser extent (Berg, 2000, 2004). The tendency among Norwegians to have divergent opinions about the role of public authorities and market actors has been confirmed by a survey that involves several European countries (Poppe and Kjærnes, 2003) and by a study of Norwegian consumers' attitudes toward safety conducted by Jacobsen (Jacobsen, 2003). It seems clear that public authorities occupy a central position regarding consumers' trust as well as their expectations of responsibility for food provisioning (Torjusen and Terragni, 2003).

#### 6.1.2 'NATURE' AND 'HUMAN STEWARDSHIP OF NATURE' – KEY ISSUES IN FOOD DISCOURSES AND PRACTICES IN NORWAY

The notion of 'Nature' is in many ways central to the conception of food in Norway – both in relation to (preferences for) domestic food production, and ideas about 'good eating'. 'Harvesting from nature' is a central value in cooking discourses and ideas of human stewardship of nature is a key notion in descriptions of proper outdoor life with picking of berries, mushrooms, fishing or hunting.

Many of the discourses on food in Norway tend to evolve around the Norwegian nature and landscapes. The expression 'ut på tur' – hiking in nature as part of normal, common family activities – is well established. Hiking typically takes place on weekends, maybe visiting one of the many publicly available cottages of the Norwegian Mountain Touring Association in the nearby area. It is reported that about one third of the Norwegian population have access to a cottage or holiday home (Døving, 2003). When

people do not own a cottage by their own, they can easily be guested in one of the more than 400 cabins the Norwegian Mountain Touring Association (DNT). Originally founded in 1868, it is an important institution in Norwegian outdoor life, with a growing number of members,<sup>20</sup> representing all parts of society both politically and socially.

‘Harvesting from nature’ by means of picking wild berries (blueberries, lingonberries, raspberries, cloudberries etc.) or mushrooms, or fishing and hunting, are activities which are important. This importance may refer to both cultural and social understandings of what it means to be a Norwegian, as well as to noticeable contributions of certain food in the diet (see estimates below). Unlike in most European countries, hunting and fishing is not activities reserved for the higher social classes, but rather part of quite ‘ordinary’ popular practices, together with picking of berries and mushrooms in the forest (Døving 2003). The popular appreciation of these activities and interest in the ingredients from ‘nature’ is among other things reflected in (and perhaps equally encouraged by) cookbooks, lifestyle magazines, television programmes etc.

It is hardly a coincidence that one of the most distinguished chefs in Norway, Arne Brimi, presents the philosophy behind his cuisine as ‘the cuisine of Nature’ (Naturens Kjøkken, <[http://www.brimi.no/naturens\\_kjoken/naturenskjoken.htm](http://www.brimi.no/naturens_kjoken/naturenskjoken.htm)>). ‘Harvesting from nature’ is central to his ideas. Brimi makes a distinction between the careful ‘use’ of nature on the one side, which implies a kind of stewardship where resources are sustained, and mere ‘consumption’ on the other side (in the sense that what is consumed may be exhausted, depleted). He emphasises that foods and dishes should be viewed holistically – with an understanding and appreciation of the wider context they come from and are part of. ‘The aim of each dish – no matter the name of the dish – is that the meal also is part of a totality. When we harvest from nature, it must be to use, not to deplete’ (Arne Brimi, <<http://www.brimi.no>>, our translation)

Hunting is quite common in Norway, and it is not rare at all to be provided with some meat from hunted animals directly from family and friends. Some idea about the extent of hunting may be read from the membership of The Norwegian Association of Hunters and Anglers (NJFF), a nationwide interest organisation: It has about 110 000 members spread over 19 regional associations with a total of 570 local hunting and fishing clubs. With a population of about 4 500 000 this means that roughly one in forty is a registered member of NJFF. According to other statistical sources (Statistics Norway, 2005, <[www.ssb.no/emner/10/04/10/jegerreg/tab-2005-04-08-03.html](http://www.ssb.no/emner/10/04/10/jegerreg/tab-2005-04-08-03.html)>) there were 194 170 hunters in Norway in 2004/2005. That counts for approximately 10 per cent of the male population over 16 years of age. As a comparison, there were 800 457 hunters in Italy in 2002. With a population of about 56 million, this represents about 1,4 per cent of the population (<<http://www.gondrano.it/deser/lab/caccia/numcacacc.htm>>). Even though Italy is regarded as a ‘hunting nation’, Norway has a even larger and increasing proportion of the population who actively takes part in hunting. When considering the network of family and acquaintances around every active hunter, this would indicate that knowing someone who hunts is not a rare thing in Norway. Nearly 100 per cent of boys and 80 per cent of girls between 11 and 16 years of age report that they have taken part in sports fishing. With increasing age, however, fewer women than men maintain

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<sup>20</sup> In 2004, DNT had 203,896 members, and the numbers for 2005 seem to be reaching 205,000 members (telephone conversation with staff at DNT, September 2005).

this practice: at age 67, 10 per cent of women are fishing compared to almost 60 per cent of the men. In hunting, there is an even stronger gender difference: Only 5 per cent of the active hunters are women (Døving 2003).

All meat from hunting must be reported to the authorities, and with some variation according to how it is calculated, it is estimated that about 5 per cent of the meat we eat and between 20–30 per cent of the fish we eat comes from hunting and leisure time fishing (Døving 2003:35). Approximately 40 000 moose are shot each year in Norway (Matportalen. Informasjon om mat fra offentlige myndigheter; newsletter 23/09/2005). As we will return to in later sections, the results from the focus groups indicate that meat from hunted animals such as moose, plays a significant role both symbolically (as an ideal) and in terms of practices. Not the least in terms of understanding the framing of the conceptions of animal welfare in Norway, it is important to include ideas and practices regarding wild animals.

### 6.1.3 SOME DATA FROM PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON NORWEGIAN CONSUMERS AND ANIMAL WELFARE<sup>21</sup>

The Norwegian public debate regarding animal welfare has been characterized by the presence of different discourses: the one concerned with animals 'natural' rights; the one related to stewardship of natural resources; the one focused on the need to protect and care for human food resources in terms of human health and food safety (Kjørstad, 2004).

Guzmán and Kjærnes conducted a qualitative research study of arguments underlying Norwegian consumer attitudes towards and consumption of meat in 1998 (SIFO 6-1998). Main focus was how these attitudes are expressed through preparation and consumption of meat, and what personal experiences are regarded as turning points. Guzmán and Kjærnes (SIFO 6-1998) describes two different approaches to the relation between humans and animals held by the informants. First the scientific approach – in which animals and humans are both organisms that work the same way, focus lies on the effects different types of food are claimed by experts to have on their body and health. Secondly the humanistic approach – in which animals are seen as beings with mental abilities and needs. This implies that animals are seen as 'almost-subjects' or as resembling humans. The biological and mental resemblance that is established between humans and animals, in turn have consequences for the informants attitudes towards meat. The informants assume that animals that eat i.e. hormones or pesticides will be affected, and if humans eat these animals it will also influence their bodies. For some, this health risk serves as a reason for reducing meat consumption or vegetarianism. The humanistic approach is central when informants criticise modern meat production. Their ethical concerns are related to animals being treated as objects and becoming de-animalised.

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<sup>21</sup> Most of the content of this paragraph is a synthesis of a literature review written by Ingrid Kjørstad (Kjørstad, Norwegian Literature Review. WP 1.1 Subtask 1.1.1.1, 2004).

Participants in a Food Policy Consumer Panels are concerned about animal welfare, but for different reasons (FR 1-2003). Results from the first debates reveal that some focus on the value of animals' life while others are more occupied with taste and meat quality, but both stakeholders might argue that meat from well treated animals taste better. Many agree that animal welfare is an important subject. At the same time many also agree that the concern of animal welfare should not be taken out of proportion, and that animal welfare not necessarily means equal treatment to humans. It's pointed out as an ethical dilemma that mattresses for cattle are mandatory, but not for humans (FR 1-2003).

Concerns about animal welfare have been also measured through quantitative surveys. A survey undertaken by a national market research institute (MMI) in the year 2002, indicates that around 70 per cent of the informants agree or partially agree that 'Norwegian farming is characterised by respect and animal welfare'. The same survey indicates however that 57 per cent believe that animal welfare should be considered to a greater extend, while 38 per cent is content with the today situation.

Another survey conducted by Berg (Berg, 2002), shows that 60 per cent of the population thinks that animals have a better life in Norway than in other European countries. However, Berg indicates that informants have different opinion about the welfare of specific animals. Moose and wild fish are considered has having a better life than pets, which are considered as having a better life that farming animals. Sheep are represented has having a life almost as good as moose while 70 per cent is of the opinion that chicken live under unacceptable conditions.

According to Berg's survey the proportion of vegetarians or partially vegetarian is about 4 per cent. A panel study conducted by Lavik and Kjørstad (2005), indicates that the number of vegetarians is not increasing in Norway. According to their data 4 per cent of the population never or almost never eat meat in 1997, 3 per cent in 2000 and 2 per cent in 2004. Conversely, the proportion of people eating meat every day is increasing. Few restaurants have specific vegetarian menu, and vegetarian processed food (i.e. soya burger, tofu) is difficult to find in conventional shops. Mobilisation for animal rights is neither particularly strong in Norway, although there are several active organisations. The most active are: NOAH (animal rights organisation); the Norwegian federation for animal protection and the Norwegian Animal welfare alliance. Environmental organisations are also active in the debate on animal welfare.

#### 6.1.4 OVERVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The themes arising in the focus groups tended to be overlapping and interwoven. However, we have tried to structure the report in a way where we treat each main topic separately, mainly following the original structure of the interview guide.

In the next section we will describe in detail the methodology used for conducting this study. Particularly we will argue the rationale behind the choice of the focus groups, how the interviews have been conducted and how the data have been analysed.

Section 6.3 takes as starting point the provisioning, preparation and consumption of meat and other animal products among our informants. A main aim of this section is to understand how informants frame the relationship between the food they buy and the animal this food comes from.

Section 6.4 is aimed at describing the kind of information informants have about farming methods and welfare friendly products. We start with a more general discussion about how informants evaluate the present situation in their country and become more specific afterwards. Particularly, in this section we will use the comments formulated by our informants when we showed them some welfare friendly labelled products.

Section 6.5 focuses mostly on the role that consumer can have in relation to animal welfare. We discuss key issues such as responsibility, mobilisation and trust. Tentatively we indicated how representation of the consumer role may have an impact on these dimensions.

Finally, in Section 6.6 we go deeply into the definitions of animal welfare as emerged in our focus groups. During the interview informants were asked to 'make a list' of the most important dimension related to animal welfare. In addition they were asked to comment a monitoring list provided by experts working for this project. The section is therefore based mainly on the data coming from the discussion of the different list, but it refers also largely to other relevant comments emerged all along the conduction of the focus groups.

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## 6.2 METHODOLOGY

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### 6.2.1 RESEARCH DESIGN AND ORGANISATION OF THE FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups belong to the rich and diversified arena of qualitative methods. They are mainly used with explorative aims, as they can help in understanding a problem and in the formulation of new hypothesis. Focus groups are often used in combination with other methods as surveys. This has also happened in our project. Many interesting aspect emerging from the focus groups have in fact contributed to the development of a questionnaire, which is presently going on in the seven countries participation to this study.

The most valuable aspect within focus groups it is that they tend to reproduce conventional conversational patterns. People may use their own word for expressing



their ideas and they interact with each other exchanging argumentations. The use of specific words or metaphors can open for many interesting considerations and guide the researcher further in the attempts the issue under investigation.

For the purpose of this study we have conducted seven focus groups. Being part of a larger comparative study, the choice of the informants for the focus groups has been the object of balancing different kind of considerations.

The main aim has been to make a choice of focus groups in order to get different insights on the phenomenon under investigation and to facilitate the comparisons between countries. In order to achieve this aim, we have selected our informants according to some common variables such as their gender, age, type of family, and residence. We have also tried to select our informants according to their concerns about animal welfare.

Altogether we carried one seven focus groups: six common to the countries participating to the study, and one defined as country specific. The six common focus groups have been: vegetarian and political consumers, young singles, cohabitants without children, urban mother; over 50s, and rural women. For the country specific focus group we decided to interview a group of hunters, living in the countryside.

In order to recruit informants we have used informal networks, controlling that- within each group- there would be some variation in social class and education.

Recruitment has been relatively easy and only in very few instances we had 'last minute drop outs'. All participants have been rewarded with a small amount of money.

Most of the focus groups had a length of approximately two hours. Four of them have been carried on in Oslo, at our research institute; one has been outside Oslo in the home of one participant; finally, two have been conducted in a specific area of the Norwegian countryside (Finnskogen)

Altogether we interviewed 48 people, of those 33 were women and 15 were men.

Table 6.1 reports the characteristics of the participants according to some of the variables used for their selection.

## 6.2.2 THE INTERVIEW GUIDE AND THE CONDUCTION OF THE FOCUS GROUPS

The interview guide takes is characterised by the fact that we wanted to understand animal welfare in the context of consumption. For this reason our interview guide focus mostly on consumption practices, on the connection between food and the animal this food comes from, on the role that people have as consumers.

TABLE 6.1 Characteristics of focus group participants

Focus	Gender	Age	Marital status	Exp.rural living	Education	Income	Politically active	How often meat
Paveg	F	50-59	Single	Urban	High	Medium	Yes	Veg
Paveg	F	40-49	Partner	Rural	High	Medium	Yes	Medmeat
Paveg	F	30-39	Partner	Rural	Low	Low	No	Lowmeat
Paveg	M	40-49	Partner	Rural	High	Low	Yes	Veg
Paveg	M	40-49	Single	Rural	Low	Low	Yes	Veg
Paveg	F	20-29	Partner	Rural	High	Medium	Yes	Veg
Paveg	F	40-49	Separated	Urban	Medium	Low	Yes	Veg
Paveg	M	50-59	Partner	Urban	High	Medium	Yes	Highmeat
Emptynest	F	20-29	Partner	Urban	High	Low	Yes	Highmeat
Emptynest	F	20-29	Partner	Rural	High	Low	Yes	Medmeat
Emptynest	F	30-39	Partner	Urban	High	Medium	Yes	Highmeat
Emptynest	M	20-29	Partner	Rural	High	Low	No	Medmeat
Emptynest	M	20-29	Partner	Urban	High	High	Yes	Medmeat
Emptynest	F	40-49	Partner	Rural	High	High	Yes	Medmeat
Emptynest	F	40-49	Partner	Rural	Medium	Medium	No	Medmeat
Emptynest	M	40-49	Partner	Rural	High	Low	Yes	Highmeat
Emptynest	M	20-29	Partner	Urban	Medium	High	No	Medmeat
Seniors	F	50-59	Partner	Rural	Medium	Medium	Yes	Medmeat
Seniors	F	50-59	Partner	Urban	Medium	Medium	Yes	Medmeat
Seniors	F	50-59	Partner	Urban	High	Medium	Yes	Medmeat
Seniors	F	60-69	Separated	Urban	High	Medium	No	Medmeat
Seniors	F	60-69	Partner	Urban	High	High	Yes	Medmeat
Seniors	F	60-69	Partner	Urban	High	Medium	No	Medmeat
Seniors	F	60-69	Partner	Rural	High	High	Yes	Medmeat
Yosing	F	30-39	Single	Urban	High	High	No	Medmeat
Yosing	M	20-29	Single	Urban	High	Low	Yes	Highmeat
Yosing	F	30-39	Single	Urban	High	High	No	Medmeat
Yosing	F	20-29	Single	Urban	Medium	Low	Yes	Lowmeat
Yosing	M	30-39	Single	Urban	Medium	Medium	No	Medmeat
Yosing	F	20-29	Single	Urban	High	Low	No	Medmeat
Yosing	F	30-39	Single	Rural	High	Low	Yes	Medmeat
Urbmo	F	40-49	Partner	Urban	High	High	Yes	Medmeat
Urbmo	F	40-49	Partner	Rural	High	Medium	No	Medmeat
Urbmo	F	30-39	Partner	Urban	High	High	No	Medmeat
Urbmo	F	30-39	Partner	Urban	Medium	Medium	No	Medmeat
Urbmo	F	30-39	Separated	Rural	High	High	No	Medmeat
Urbmo	F	30-39	Partner	Rural	High	Medium	Yes	Medmeat
Rurwo	F	50-59	Partner	Rural	Medium	Medium	No	Medmeat
Rurwo	F	60-69	Partner	Rural	Low	Medium	No	Medmeat
Rurwo	F	50-59	Partner	Rural	Low	Medium	No	Medmeat
Rurwo	F	50-59	Partner	Rural	High	Medium	Yes	Medmeat
Rurwo	F	50-59	Partner	Rural	High	Medium	Yes	Medmeat
Hunters	M	60-69	Partner	Rural	Medium	Medium	No	Medmeat
Hunters	M	60-69	Partner	Rural	Low	Medium	No	Medmeat
Hunters	M	50-59	Partner	Rural	Medium	Medium	Yes	Medmeat
Hunters	M	60-69	Partner	Rural	Low	Low	No	Medmeat
Hunters	M	60-69	Partner	Rural	Nr	Nr	No	Medmeat
Hunters	M	40-49	Partner	Rural	Medium	High	No	Medmeat

After some interesting discussions with our European colleagues we agree on the main themes that had be covered during the focus groups discussions, which are the following:

- Theme A: Food consumption, preparation and shopping habits;
- Theme B: Information and involvement; political consumption, ethical dilemmas and barriers; human-animal relationships;

- During this theme participants have been also presented with some examples of the types of information about welfare friendly products that are already available to consumers;
- Theme C: Assessing animal welfare; ten welfare principles from the ‘Welfare Quality’ project; towards an information system;
- Theme D: Trust and responsibility.

The Norwegian focus groups have been conducted by the two authors of this rapport. Usually one of us was, by turns, the main moderator while the other took notes or asked some specific questions. After having conducted two pre-tests and the first of our focus groups, we found it useful to select five key questions that could help guiding the discussion and moving on to the different themes that had to be covered during the interview. The five questions were the following:

1. Do you think about the animal your food comes from?
2. What do you mean by animal welfare?
3. Who is responsible for animal welfare?
4. What do you think that you, as consumer can do?
5. Who would you trust for giving you correct information?

We printed these questions and, when possible, we posted them successively on a blackboard.

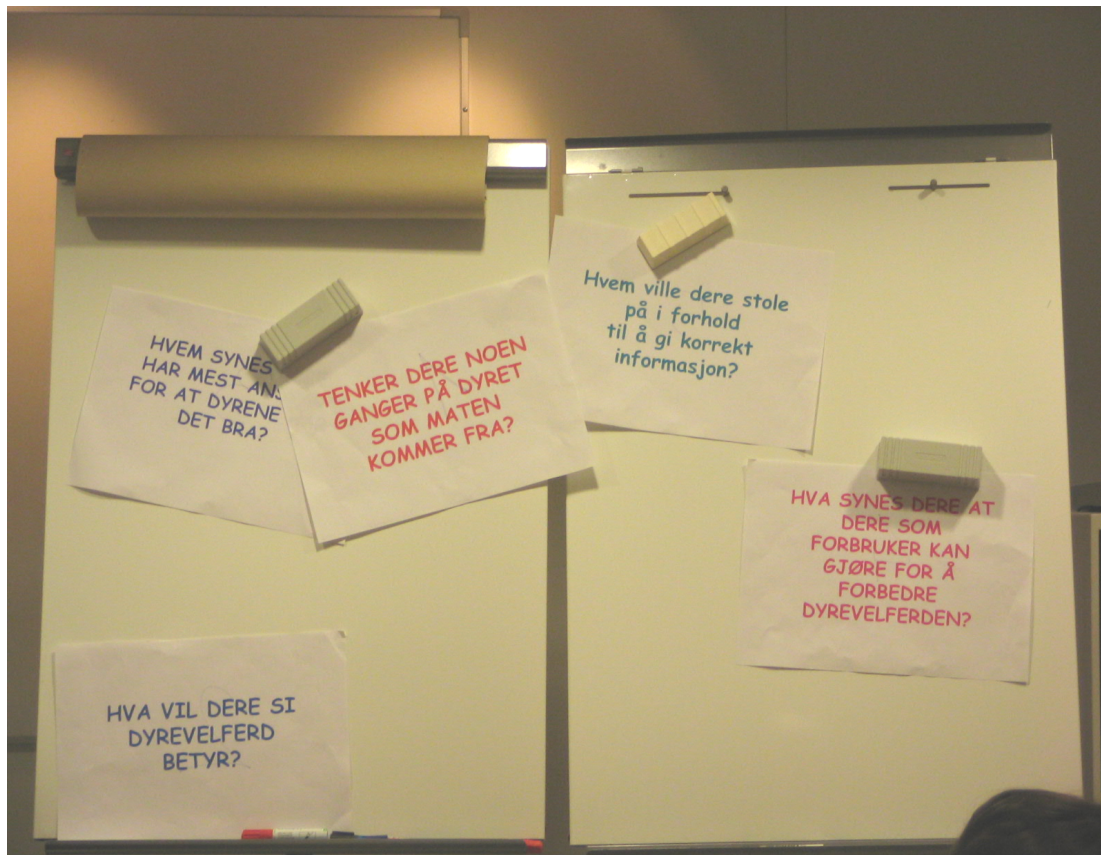


FIGURE 6.1 The focus group blackboard

During the focus groups informants were also asked to comment on the information on the label of some specific products (see Section 6.4) and to 'make a list' of the most relevant dimension for assessing animals welfare. The lists were presented and discussed with the others. In addition, the informants' list has been used as a starting point for evaluate the 'monitoring list' proposed by some experts working in the project.

The seven focus groups we have conducted for this study have been an exiting experience for us. We felt that people have been talking of things that were relevant for them. Many commented that for them was the first time that they so openly reflected and talk to others about these issues. We believe that all of us have come out enriched by this experience and with a wider understanding of the complex relationship between us, the animals and the food we eat.

### 6.2.3 THE ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The focus group discussion has been recorded and entirely transcribed. A first transcription has been done by a professional transcriber verbatim. In addition, both the authors have listened to the interviews for a second time and controlled the quality of the transcription. For the purpose of a further comparative analysis all the interviews have been transcribed into English. It is our opinion that this is a rather 'tricky' thing to do. No matter how professional the translator is (and in our case, given the lack of funding we had to rely mostly on students) it is very difficult to translate colloquial – and often dialectal- expressions. We have gone through them as well, and correct main misunderstandings, but still tend to rely on the Norwegian versions (or at least to double check when we use specific quotation).

For the analysis of our data we have been supported by the software NVivo. Our approach to the analysis of the data has been twofold. On one hand, giving also the task we had in the more general structure of the research project, we were asked to provide a descriptive analyst that could facilitate comparison between countries and give inputs to the survey. This has been a rather pragmatic task that gave us also the opportunity to plane the code structure well in advance. For instances: we made general categories such as eating practices, spontaneous welfare definition, reaction to the monitoring list, and so on. On the other hand, we tried to explore our data following the qualitative approach more strictly, trying to identify some new concept that could help us in developing new hypothesis and theories on the relationship between us and the food of animals origin we eat. A key expression we found and we analysed further is the one of 'clear conscience'; in other instances we analysed the context in which the word 'human' has been used.

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### 6.3 CULINARY PRACTICES: EATING, PREPARING AND BUYING ANIMAL FOOD PRODUCTS

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In this section we will present some background factors for understanding meat consumption in Norway. We will then describe the findings from the focus group regarding practices of eating meat and other animal products. Finally, key findings are summarised according to each separate focus group.

#### 6.3.1 BACKGROUND FOR MEAT CONSUMPTION IN NORWAY

##### *The structure of meals in Norway*

A study of how eating as an everyday activity is structured in the Nordic countries was conducted in 1997 (Kjærnes, 2001). This study indicates several similarities, but also some distinct features of each of the Nordic countries. The typical meal system in Norway was identified as follows: breakfast with sandwiches, lunch with sandwiches, a hot meal in the afternoon (4–5PM), and sandwiches later in the evening (Kjærnes, 2001).

One of the characteristic features which distinguish Norway from its Nordic neighbours is the cold lunch.<sup>22</sup> Whereas Finland and Sweden are ‘hot food’ cultures, in Norway and Denmark cold foods are eaten relatively often. In the latter two countries, rather few people had eaten hot food more than once a day (6 per cent in Norway and 12 per cent in Denmark). Apart from being cold, lunch in Norway is often brought to work and school from home in the form of a package of sandwiches. This lunch bag – or ‘matpakke’ – is central in the food culture and is understood to have strong symbolic meanings related to the narratives of the family and the nation (Døving, 2003). Cold cuts of meat and slices of cheese could typically be part of the spread on the sandwiches.

Dinner was eaten a couple of hours earlier in Norway and Finland compared to Denmark and Sweden (Kjærnes, 2001). This could mean that time for shopping and food preparation could be more under pressure. According to statistics reported in Døving (2003) about 80 per cent state that it is normally the woman in the household who cooks, while 6 per cent report that they share the work. Only 8 per cent report that the man in the household is the one who normally cooks. A large proportion of Norwegian women work outside of home, and time for shopping and cooking may be limited. However, there are strong indications that the meals at home, and in particular dinner, is highly prioritized in everyday life, and women who work outside of home put

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<sup>22</sup> Cold lunches were also quite common in Denmark.

great emphasises on maintaining sound food habits and the traditional family meals (Bugge, 2005).

Despite claims in the media about rapid changes in eating practices, and new dishes replacing the traditional ones, empirical data seem to contradict this. Both dinner as a family meal and the traditional dinner dishes seem to keep its central positions (Bugge and Døving, 2000; Bugge, 2005). Among the meat dishes which keep their popularity are sausages or hot dogs and meatballs served with boiled potatoes and gravy (Døving, 2003; Bugge and Døving, 2000).

It has been suggested that the social context of eating is radically changing. Modern eating is thought to take place increasingly in isolated circumstances and less often within the social context of the family. However, according to the Nordic study of eating patterns, most eating took place at home, in the kitchen or at a dining table (Kjærnes, 2001). At almost all times of the day, more people had eaten at home than in any other place. In Norway and Sweden, eating at 'other places' occurred to a greater extent among younger age groups. There were so significant differences between individuals living in different types of households. Contrary to expectations, the results indicated that individuals who live alone do not tend to eat at 'other places' to a greater extent than those whose households comprise of two or more persons (Kjærnes, 2001).

Later studies have confirmed the central position of the warm family dinner, prepared and eaten in the home (Bugge, 2005). Meat is the most central part of the Norwegian dinner meal and it is particularly important in the weekends (Bugge and Døving, 2000:117).

### *Consumption of meat*

Most people in Norway eat meat. In 1997 96 per cent responded that they ate meat at least once a week, and in 2004, 98 per cent said the same (Lavik and Kjørstad 2005). The proportion of vegetarians in the population has been stable over the last years, and counts for about 1–2 per cent (Lavik and Kjørstad, 2005). Some of the noticeable changes from 1997 to 2004 include an increase in the consumption of poultry. There has also been an increase in the private import of meat from shopping across the border to Sweden. Some of the factors which could explain these changes, could be increased confidence in meat and the meat sector, it could be a result of the popular nutritional debate (low carb – high protein), of improved economic status, or of increased assortment of different types of meat in the retail sector (Lavik and Kjørstad, 2005).

There has been an increase in the use of meat as main ingredient in the dinner meal among certain groups. Among women who live in couples, 57 per cent use meat for dinner three times a week or more in 2004 as compared to 48 per cent in 1997. Among those over 60, there has been an increase from 39 per cent in 1997 to 46 per cent in 2004 in the use of meat for dinner three times a week or more. Also regarding the way meat is used there has been some changes (Lavik and Kjørstad, 2005).

Regarding the feelings associated with meat consumption, peoples' hesitations or worries concerning their own meat consumption seem to have followed a stable pattern from 1995 to 2004. There were some increases in the health/safety related worries between 2000 and 2001, but these seem to have been of temporary nature. Consumer attitudes related to cultural and nutritional aspects of meat, as well as those related to ambivalence or resistance to meat as a product (emotional or political issues) have been quite stable. Regarding attitudes related to trust, worry and perception of influence in relation to the meat industry, there seem to have been an increase in trust over the last years. In response to the statement 'I have full confidence that Norwegian meat industry delivers meat from animals which have been treated well while they were alive' the percentage who agreed (completely or somewhat) fluctuated somewhat between 1997 to 2004: From 71 per cent in 1997, to 61 per cent in 2000, further down to 57 per cent in 2001, and back up to 74 per cent in 2004 (Lavik and Kjørstad, 2005).

According to the French anthropologist Vialles (1994), distance and unfamiliarity with farm animals and slaughtering can lead to a kind of alienation where one seek to distance oneself from the fact that the meat one eats originates from a living animal. The last SIFO-surveys on meat seem to indicate that most Norwegians relate to meat with quite a lot of ease. Only a few find it revolting to look at or prepare raw meat and few find it problematic to think about that the meat they eat was once a living animal. Regarding whether or not people have the right to take the lives of animals for meat of leather, more than 80 per cent supports this idea. This is a stable pattern. When it comes to meat consumption in perspective of environmental or sustainability concerns a little less than one in four supports the view that 'meat production is a waste of resources'. This is also a stable pattern. Despite the fact that few actually live as vegetarians, the surveys indicate that a larger number than these are sympathetic to the idea that some choose to be vegetarians, in particular in the younger age groups. The fact that about 20 per cent of the population – both in 1997 and 2004 – are likely to point out some positive sides to not eating meat could be interpreted as a kind of critical potential in the population, and as an expression of meat issues having been on the agenda during the latest years.

### 6.3.2 PRACTICES AMONG PARTICIPANTS IN THE FOCUS GROUPS

As a general overview, participants in all focus groups except the vegetarians in the vegetarian/politically active group ate meat on a regular basis, and reported to eat meat several times a week. The frequency of meat consumption among participants in the focus groups is given in the table below.

As a general impression from all the focus groups, a wide variety of meat was eaten. But there were also some distinct features among the groups. Some reported to eat less meat now than before, and there were also descriptions of changes in the types of meat most often used. Particularly in the seniors group, there were descriptions of changes from red meat to 'lighter' types of meat, often with reference to health reasons.

TABLE 6.2 Frequency of meat eating among participants in the focus groups

How often do you eat meat	Number of persons
Everyday	5
A few times a week	36
Once a week	2
Less than once a week	
Never (vegetarian)	5
Never (vegan)	
Total	48

'I suppose it is the same with us. That we eat less and less red meat. I should add that we can get hold of moose meat. Which is very red meat, but it is leaner and easier to digest than beef' (Senior).

'We have always had a varied diet, but I have noticed that little by little I have started eating more fish and lighter things, even though I have always preferred meat' (Senior).

Below is another example that health was crucial in explanations of own habits in the seniors group.

'We eat quite a lot of pork meat actually, because it's good, lean meat' (Senior).

Some special characteristics of the vegetarian and politically active group, was the emphasis on the importance of the consumer role and an explicit concern for animal right and sustainability issues. This was of course expressed in practice in terms of their vegetarianism, and among those who ate some meat, a balanced with regard to sustainability was emphasised. More products of vegetarian origin and less meat, as well as using organically and locally produced food were among the practices. Respect of the animal as animal was central and meat from hunted animals was regarded as better than meat from farmed animals. In this respect, there were similarities with the rural groups.

The need for de-animation in the context of eating appeared to be especially prominent in the group with cohabitants without children, but also in the young singles group. This had implications for the ways of shopping and the types of products that were preferred.

Among the young singles, price and convenience were central issues. These were also relevant issues in most other groups, but to a larger degree in this one.

Time as a dominant factor for shopping and food preparation were especially relevant issues in the urban mothers group.

In the two rural groups, human stewardship of nature was a central notion, and women in particular expressed a concern with transforming natural resources into food, and making the most of the values represented in nature.



Generally, there were many similarities between the groups regarding where they got their meat and other animal products from. Convenience shopping at the nearest supermarket was described as the most common practice, across most groups.

However, two groups clearly stood out from the others in terms of food provisioning, and that were out two rural groups: rural women and hunters. This is not a surprise, since they were largely recruited because of the closeness to nature and 'harvesting from nature'. However, it follows that the practices and concerns regarding food provisioning from these groups were distinct from the others. The availability of alternatives was not extensive – only one shop (a consumer coop without a fresh food counter) was in the vicinity, and the closest two shops apart from that were either some 25 kilometres away, across the border to Sweden, or some 30 kilometres away in the other direction.

Regarding 'eating out', participants in the young singles group raised this issue in particular, and expressed that they probably were the ones who did this most often. Many of them lived in central Oslo with lots of options for eating out in the neighbourhood.

Regarding supermarket shopping, it was expressed that it was easier to accept buying meat in those kinds of (non expert) shops as than fish. Buying meat in a specialty store, such as a butchers shop, or at least some place with a fresh food counter with expertise present, was pointed out as the most preferable practice. But few reported to do this on a regular basis. Differences were pointed out both between different types of occasions (everyday vs. week end or festive occasion, and different types of meat. Below is one example of such reflections from the seniors group:

'I think there is a big difference between meat and fish when it comes to that type of shopping. That was brought up on TV last week. So I think I am much more likely to buy meat in a supermarket than fish. Then I always go to the specialist shops, because I don't think Meny, or the other big supermarkets, are up to scratch when it comes to providing nice fish. But if it's something very special, then it's best to go to a butcher's shop of course. But chicken and mince are what I mainly buy meat wise. And then there are special occasions. The two already mentioned I think are OK, and pork shops, I buy vacuum packed. And I think that's OK to buy in a supermarket' (Senior).

### 6.3.3 ANIMAL WELFARE CONCERNS IN VARIOUS CONTEXTS

It was evident from the focus group discussions that the various context in which they related to and potentially to the issue of animal welfare were of great importance. Quite different stories were told from the different types of contexts. And even though animal welfare may not seem to be important when they were talking within the frame of certain contexts, it was clear that it could still be a concern in other contexts. In this section we will look briefly at these various contexts and how animal welfare was (or

was not) perceived, but firstly we will address the issue of whether or not participants were thinking about the animal from which their meat originates from. This may be regarded as a premise for addressing animal welfare issues – if the animal is not considered, how then could its' welfare be reflected on?

*'Do you think about the animal that your meat comes from?'*

In discussions about what was important for the participants when they buy food, various aspects related to the provenance of the food and how it was produced, what is contained etc. were pointed out. Regarding products of animal origin, and in particular meat, the issue then arose that getting information about such details would also imply to 'visualise' the animal in the food context.

Some participants described how their relation to the animal in general was very distant to the food products – even though they would like to have information about the food. Below are two examples from the young singles group.

'I like to know what it [the meat] is. And I think that we are becoming very.... At least I notice that my connection to the animals is just the one you get by the counter, you know. That is very far away from the chickens and the pigs. It shall be neat and clean and proper. And...' *(Young single).*

*'When you are eating pork chops, do you think of the pig that it is made of?'* (moderator).

'Well yes... but not that thoroughly considered no. I think of it when you are mentioning it now. That is certainly true, but that is nothing I would think of when I'm selecting something at the meat counter. I do know it if you ask me, but...' *(Young single6).*

Combined with – or parallel with the urge to not thinking about the animal that the meat originates from, appeared the need or wish to 'disguise' the origin on the food in the eating context.

'If I think of the animal that I'm eating, I start to feel sorry for it. I don't like to eat food that I can see the face of while I'm eating. I could never have eaten that kind of a pig for Christmas, a glazed pig head with an apple in the mouth, and those that serve fish with the head attached, that I can't eat. I can't eat fish that has a head. I have to eat fish that has pure pieces so that it does not remind me of the animal that it is coming from. Because then I kind of feel that it is not from a living thing' *(Young single).*

*'So it is a bit uncomfortable to think that it has been a living animal?'* (moderator)

'I don't like to see what I'm eating. It becomes kind of wrong' *(Young single).*

'You are fooling yourself then' *(Young single).*

'Yes, of course. But it is just something with it that... then I see it and it comes so much closer. I do know how the animals look like but I don't like to have those eyes that are staring at me while I'm eating. That is when I get a bit bad conscience' *(Young single).*

‘You get bad conscience?’ (Young single).

‘No, I just don’t think that, it is just this uncomfortable feeling.... Actually you don’t need to have bad conscience. At least not for a fish that one catches or eats. I just, it is just uncomfortable to see (Young single).

These reflections of Astrid resembles what Vialle (1994) describes as de-animation. To be reminded of the living animal is problematic for Astrid, and she refers to uncomfortable feelings. Even though she argues against the feeling of bad consciousness, she does not seem at ease with the situation. What she expresses, could also be understood as ‘compartmentalisation’ – where she needs to keep the various spheres apart: in the eating context, meat is food, and not an animal. But in other contexts, where she could identify with other roles, such as the role of the citizen (and not the consumer, or the eater, or the hostess), the fact that meat comes from an animal is less likely to be problematic. She emphasises herself that her urge to keep ‘the animal’ distant from ‘the food’ has nothing to do with her not being completely aware of the relation between the two. There were many stories about how the fact that meat was once a living animal was not ‘good to think’ about in the eating context.

However, there were also some exceptions to the urge to keeping the eating context a ‘living animal free’ zone. These were situations where the story of how the animal has lived its’ life is perceived as a really nice one. Below is an example from wild animals having ‘run around freely on the mountains’:

‘I think it is very appetising to eat a deer which has run around in the nature all its life having a good life, until it gets shot and dies kind of... (Empty nester).

Alternative food provisioning appeared to be an important context for exercising animal welfare concerns. Several types of alternative food provisioning were mentioned and emphasised in regard to such concerns in several of the focus groups. Meat from wild, hunted animals, such as deer or moose, was perhaps the most frequently mentioned type of alternative food provisioning. But also buying meat directly from a farm perceived to provide for good animal welfare, or buying from a specialty shop such as a butcher, appeared as important contexts where issues such as animal welfare could come more to the forefront.

### *Doing vs. thinking relation to food*

Whether or not participants reflected on the animal which the food comes from and the conditions it has lived under, was related to the specific context and whether or not that was associated with a ‘doing’ or a ‘thinking’ relation to food. As discussed in the introduction section, we relate to food in a number of ways where the routinised practices dominate and where reflection is not in the forefront. Such areas where habits and practices were more prominent than reflection were described in the focus groups. They were related to shopping contexts as well as food preparation and eating contexts.

Ordinary shopping in food stores in the normal weekdays appeared to be geared mainly towards fulfilling other, more mundane needs than ‘being a politically correct citizen’,

and exercise conscious consumer choices. Habit and routine were strong elements here. In the context of shopping, the main focus seemed to be on the product as such – rather than the origins of the product, and the immediate concerns were connected to the context of the meal: finding appropriate products for the meal in mind, taste and preparation, convenience, likes and dislikes of the eaters, getting value for money etc. ‘The animal’ was certainly more in the background in this setting – and many pointed out that this is the way they want it to be: In the food store, the focus should be on ‘clean and neat’ pieces of meat – with the focus on the food and meals it was going to be turned into. The animal could be disturbing in this context.

Below is an example of the importance of habit from the young singles group. With quite a lot of self irony, they describe the process of ‘forgetting’ unpleasant incidents or good intentions and falling back into old habits:

‘When I’m forced to think of it, it is bad. But I choose not to think of it that much’ (Young single).

‘Then you are going to be a vegetarian for a couple of hours [laughter]’ (Young single).

‘Yes... and then one selects the cheapest in the shop’ (Young single).

In the next example, the dilemma of wanting detailed information about the food and at the same time experiencing limitations as to how much time one is willing to or able to spend shopping. Again, habit is pointed out as important.

*‘[I]s that something you would like to know or have an opportunity to choose from?’* (moderator)

‘Yes, absolutely. But at the same time I see that in the daily life, it is very easy to sit here and be very ideological, if I talk on behalf of myself. But in daily life I rush to the food shop and select the products that I usually buy. I don’t consider much more of it.’ (Young single).

Another point that was brought up, was the differences regarding time to reflect on issues of interest and concern in the role as a private person or citizen versus the role as a shopper:

‘Yes... but I never remember it [laughter]. When I lay in bed I remember that it is something about the bananas. It was on TV about the banana plantations that were really horrible, a lot of child labour and awful things. And I thought that this I have to remember. And then I get to the food store and then... which one was it? Del Monte or Chiquita?’ (Young single).

Differences were also expressed with regard to the likelihood of relating various products of animal origin to the living animal. Here an example from the young singles group:

‘I have never thought about the cows when I am shopping for milk and yoghurt. And other animal products. Well, it does happen with eggs. Eggs and meat. But fish, for example, there it is not relevant at all. It is actually just eggs and meat. It

is not any other animal products where I think that animal welfare means something' (Young single).

#### 6.3.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS IN SEPARATE FOCUS GROUPS

TABLE 6.3a Summary of findings for young singles

Food shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainly buy what they feel like there and then – not often based on planning</li> <li>• Some get meat from relatives who hunt oExamples of animal welfare considerations when shopping:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Never buy/eat meat from calves</li> <li>– Have bought directly from farm trusted to have good animal welfare Have received moose meat from relatives who hunt ('Then I don't feel bad about eating this meat')</li> <li>– Have bought eggs from free-range hens</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Food preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steaks and the like more often bought when eating out than at home. At home: dishes which are easier to prepare (chicken filets, minced meat, sausages)</li> <li>• Meat considered more difficult to prepare than vegetables?</li> </ul>
Food consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distance to the animal important in eating context.</li> <li>• White meat, cold cuts (on sandwiches), processed meat (minced meat, meatballs), 'pure meat'.</li> <li>• One: A period as a vegetarian because 'it felt good, physically'.</li> </ul>

TABLE 6.3b Summary of findings for empty nesters

Food shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The closest shop, most convenient everyday practice</li> <li>• Price is often important (but not always – weekend vs. everyday life) Get meat from parents who hunt (moose)</li> <li>• Often on impulse – not planned in advance</li> <li>• Examples of animal welfare considerations when shopping:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– always buys the smallest eggs</li> <li>– prefer free range and/or organic eggs</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 'The animal' must not come too much in the forefront when buying food               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 'because then it is not food anymore'. Need of deanimation and distance.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Food preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difference between weekdays and weekends/special occasions. Spend more time and effort on shopping/finding specific products and preparation on special occasions.</li> </ul>
Food consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All eat meat in various forms relatively often (on a daily basis)</li> <li>• Eating out quite often (different focus: not animal welfare)</li> </ul>

TABLE 6.3c Summary of findings for politically active/vegetarians

Food shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest and valuation of organic food – one participant ate entirely organic through an agreement with a health food retailer Spend much time in shops to find products, check ingredients ect. They tend to have a proactive role asking about ‘ethical products’ and complaining when they do not find them. Among the non-vegetarians – some alternative food provisioning: meat from wild hunted animals</li> </ul>
Food preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High interest and competence in food preparation. Emphasis on vegetarians meals not being dull meals. The vegetarians in the group prepared and ate meals in common regularly.</li> </ul>
Food consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Among vegetarians, only one had a ‘conversion’ linked directly to animal welfare. For others, becoming vegetarian had mostly to do with health or taste. Generally high awareness about what they put in their mouth. If considering eating meat (only some of them would do that), moose or lamb were among the more acceptable types of meat. Key point: outside of industrial production.</li> </ul>

TABLE 6.3d Summary of findings for seniors

Food shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tend not to buy meat and fish in discount shops, but have good experience with meat bought in supermarkets. More scepticism about buying fish in supermarkets. Particularly for special occasions, specialty shops are preferred – butchers and fish shops.</li> <li>• Generally, in this group it is a lower tendency to buy food in low price shops, but rather those which have fresh food counters. Critical towards a focus on price. Would prefer to pay a little more for good quality.</li> </ul>
Food preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animal welfare is not (spontaneously) a main concern when buying meat.</li> <li>• Differences between weekday and weekend/Sunday dinner. Although with a less sharp distinction than in other focus groups. Mostly, shortage of time is not a large problem.</li> </ul>
Food consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tendency to eat less red meat and more fish and chicken (health reasons).</li> <li>• Examples of animal welfare related practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Do not eat foie gras</li> <li>– Prefer eggs from organic of free-range production</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

TABLE 6.3e Summary of findings for urban mothers

Food shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convenience is high priority. Buying food at the closest, most convenient shop is the most common everyday practice.</li> <li>• In some cases ‘meat expeditions’ to Sweden to buy cheaper meat.</li> <li>• Differences seemed to appear in relation to place of residence. One woman living in the city centre liked to buy halal meat (considered better) as well as having the opportunity to choose between different vegetable shops.</li> <li>• Some were particularly focussed on quality and preferred direct shopping from producers or moose meat.</li> </ul>
Food preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time a major constraint both in food shopping and food preparation. All participants were working mothers – a common condition in Norway. This was considered an important influence on what was put on the table.</li> <li>• Processed foods and minced meat was more often mentioned in this group as compared to others.</li> </ul>
Food consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns about a balanced diet. Most aimed at a couple of dinners a week with fish.</li> </ul>

TABLE 6.3f Summary of findings for rural women

Food shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants in this group buy little meat, but get a large part of their meat from hunted game (moose, deer). Meat from moose is available in the families directly or bought directly on a personal basis from other hunters.</li> <li>• What they do buy is partly bought at the only local shop (with low variation and no fresh food counter), from shops across the border in Sweden, or from a more distant food shop (50 m) with a larger variety of foods.</li> </ul>
Food preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on utilising the entire animal.</li> <li>• Innovative use of moose meat in 'new', non-local dishes, for example minced moose meat in tacos or pizza.</li> </ul>
Food consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Characterised by self-sufficiency in the case of meat.</li> <li>• Meat an important ingredient in most meals</li> </ul>

TABLE 6.3g Summary of findings for hunters

Food shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'We never buy meat'. A few exceptions like half a pig directly from an organic farm, some processed meat, and pork rib for Christmas.</li> <li>• Self-sufficient with meat (and sell to others) from own hunting.</li> </ul>
Food preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on utilising the entire animal. (Ironic remarks about urban people who only want the better parts – filets, stakes etc. 'What to they think a moose look like...')</li> <li>• Traditional dishes. One complained that he didn't really think moose meat was particularly good – but remarked that that was probably because he did not know very much about how to prepare it (He did most of the cooking due to illness in the family).</li> <li>• 'Moose meat most days of the week'. The difference between weekdays and festive days was distinguished by means of food preparation and by using the cuts of meat – rather than by different types of food products.</li> </ul>
Food consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A large part of their diet was composed of meat from own hunting. Meat was frequently used and generally the main ingredient in the dish.</li> </ul>

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## 6.4 CONSUMERS KNOWLEDGE OF ANIMAL WELFARE AND WELFARE-FRIENDLY FOOD PRODUCTS AND THEIR EVALUATION OF THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON THESE SUBJECTS

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### 6.4.1 FARMING PRACTICES: KNOWLEDGE AND EVALUATION

The knowledge about farming methods among our informants is rather articulated. From the ones that could be defined as 'experts' of the living conditions of animals in industrial production, to the ones that, instead, have merely general opinions.

The kind and the level of knowledge tends mostly to depend upon three factors: the closeness to animals as a resource, the awareness about animals' rights and the concerns about the quality of food.

People living (or having grown up) in the countryside, where animals are part of their everyday experience tend to have a more direct knowledge of the life of the animals which ultimately become food. They made claims based on direct observation, or report the experience of friends and family members. In their discourses, the Norwegian situation is perceived as 'preferable': comparisons with the nearby Sweden emerges often, and local practices – as free grazing of sheep – are indicated as more responding to animal welfare.

For many of our informants which have not grown up in the countryside, instead, the direct contact with animals have gone through observing cows or sheep grazing in the fields or seeing moose or deer in the woods. It is this kind of experience that tends to represent the main way in which informants build up their opinion about how the life of food animals should be. Only seldom we meet informants that have been visiting a farm. Reporting from these experiences are rather diverging, mainly in relation to the size of the farm or the kind of farmed animal. While narrations about sheep may be rather positive, the descriptions of visits to pig or chicken farms are, instead, rather dramatic.

Besides these forms of knowledge based on experience, many informants have got a deal of indirect knowledge, mostly through television, newspaper or periodicals (to a lesser extend) and through internet. Analytically we may distinguish two ways of getting indirect information:

1. The ones actively seeking information. In this group we find the ones more concerned about animals' rights. They look for information in the net and are active in sharing it. The effort of looking for information –however- is common also among the ones particularly interested in the quality of food. In this case the search of information does not depend on internet but is instead more the result of personal contacts.
2. The ones who 'accidentally' receive information through the media (particularly television). For those, the knowledge of the living condition of animals is often related to programmes showing how terrible these living conditions are. Abstain – at least for a period- from eating meat form this type of animals (i.e. chicken) is often the result of being exposed to such programs. It has to be noted that, in most cases, these programs tend to refer to experiences happened in other countries.

We may, however, point to the fact that informants, to a large degree, have a rather superficial information about what is really happening in animals' farm.<sup>23</sup>

As observed by one of our informants:

'I think there's a lot of ignorance when it concerns this kind of thing. People don't know what a farm even looks like really and they have very vague ideas about the conditions animals live under, how they're treated, they have no idea...' (Senior).

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<sup>23</sup> The low knowledge about farming methods emerged also in Berg's study (Berg, 2002).



Among the ‘vague ideas’ there is the one that animals, in Norway, tend to have a better life than in other European countries.

*The Norwegian farming methods as compared to the ones of other European countries*

The discourses about the living conditions of animals, involved often comparisons between the Norwegian situation and how are things going on in other parts of Europe.

With few exceptions there is a widespread opinion that farm animals have in Norway a better life than the ones living in other countries.

Among the most recurrent reasons behind this statement we may find:

- consideration about the size of the Norwegian farms: according to informants Norwegian farms are smaller and with fewer animals than the ones of other countries
- the fact the farms are often family run, this implying more direct responsibility of the farmers towards hers/his animals;
- the presence of stricter forms of social control, given the fact that in small rural community everyone knows everyone, public authorities included, as commented by one of our informants ‘but I think also that on the small places like here, after some rounds around here the food safety authority knows very well how things are going. I think that they have a lot more knowledge than what we might think’.

#### 6.4.2 EXPERIENCES WITH WELFARE FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

During the focus groups, the theme of experiences with welfare friendly products was steadily brought up, mainly spontaneously but also through specific questions we asked to our informants. Initially, we thought that the discussion about welfare friendly products would focus on ‘labelled products’. Our experience has instead revealed that the recognition of products as ‘welfare friendly’ is much more articulated. The definition of welfare friendly products depends in fact on a number of considerations.

Reflecting upon the Norwegian situation, we noted in fact that labelled products are by far the main way in which people define what a welfare friendly product is and have experiences with this type of goods. In Norway, ‘harvesting from nature’ seems to be – both at discursive and practical level – the most significant way for defining and experiencing welfare friendly products.

In the next paragraph we will describe the experience Norwegian have with those kind of products, while we will consider the experience with labelled products shortly after.

*The experience with not labelled products which are perceived as welfare friendly*

In Norway there is a very limited choice of 'animal welfare' labelled products (Kjørstad, 2004; Amilien and Beckstrom, 2004). This limited choice could be regarded as a main obstacle for consumers wanting to make more concerned choices in the market.

However, the data gathered in our focus groups, suggest that informed choices of products according to animal welfare criteria do not necessarily depend on labels.

Informants seem to form their opinion about which products are better or worst on the basis of a wide range of evaluations and experiences. Hence, lack of labelled products may not be perceived so critical when other alternatives are available.

As we have seen in a previous section, most of our informants are familiar with eating meat coming from animals that have been living in the woods, as moose or reindeer.

Eating meat from this kind of animals, according to our informants, is associated to positive feelings, and represent, for many, the ideal condition for eating meat with 'clear conscience'.

'We eat meat with a clear conscience. You know that the animal has been born and lived in freedom and suddenly it gets a bullet that it barely notices. Thinking in comparison to those animals forced to stand in stalls and go outside a couple of times a year.... I just think that there's a big difference between animals who've lived in freedom and others who've been fattened up in a stall. I eat food with a clear conscience when it's... well I do like pork too but... I'm thinking more about certain types of meat production, you know chicken and the like' (Hunters).

In addition to this, other positive experiences emerge in relation to eating meat coming from sheep. As they also tend to live for long periods outdoors and can move freely.

'But when I think of the sheep... I used to live in the 'Vestlandet' when I was little, and then I saw that the sheep run around free and had good time with what they found. And that is how I prefer it to be, when I'm eating meat, I prefer lamb' (Young singles).

These considerations seem to suggest that experiences with welfare friendly products go beyond the purchase of labelled products. Indeed, as we will describe in the next section, the search for labelled products may be related more than to concerns about animal welfare, to considerations embracing quality and health.

*Consumption and evaluation of the products welfare friendly labelled*

As mentioned, during the focus groups we made people discuss about 'welfare friendly products' using some of the products present in the Norwegian market as a starting point. Table 6.4 shows the products that we have been using.

TABLE 6.4 Animal welfare friendly labelled products

	Type of information on the label		Where the products can be bought
Grøstadgris pork products:	<p>Grøstadgris has chosen animal welfare and quality as the main factor of pig production, grøstadgris has as aim that pig 'have to live nicely' from they born to they are slaughtered. Pigs go around freely inside and have minimum 200 square meter areal per pig. Pig get food that enhance the taste of the meat.</p> <p>We try to be on the animals' side, it is your choice to decide the animals' future.</p> <p>&lt;<a href="http://www.grostadgris.no">http://www.grostadgris.no</a>&gt;</p>		Some supermarkets
Chicken (Stange)	No specific information on the label		Some supermarkets
Eggs – organic and free range from Norgården	<p>'when animal welfare is important'</p> <p>For organic eggs: From hens that can move freely both in and outdoors</p>		Supermarket. in many – but not all soft discount shops
Eggs – organic and free range from PRIOR	<p>For organic eggs: <i>From hens that can move freely both in and outdoors</i></p>		
Holte gård organic chicken	From the information leaflet : 'our philosophy is happy dear from the egg to the slaughtering'		Few shops
Thulefjord meatrolls			Few shops
Viltpølse	Reindeer ham	Old recipe from sami, who have live in harmony with nature and reindeers and use nature in their food culture	Few shops

TABLE 6.4 cont.

Raw gourmet chicken from Prior Tine Organic Milk	No specific information about animal welfare*		Few shops  Most of the shops
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*Note:* \* In order to be certified as organic, producer must follow stricter rules concerning animal welfare. i.e. hens should be free range and not kept into batteries, total transport from farm to slaughterhouse should not exceed 6 hours, calves should be allowed to nurse their cows. However to buy organic products having animal welfare in mind require that consumers already know this as there is not specific information on the label.

In some instances, participants spontaneously mentioned some of these products before we introduced them. Organic products (meat and egg) have been mentioned relatively often during the discussion as well egg from free range hens. Only in few cases informants mentioned other products, such as Grøstad's farm or Stange chickens.

The discourses around these products tend to reflect the various motivations that lay beyond the interest towards welfare friendly products. Only for few people the choice of these products is strictly related to animal welfare concerns. In most cases we find the presence of blurred boundaries between different type of considerations: preferences concerning taste, worries about one owns health and concerns for the living conditions of the animals, appear as closely connected to each other.<sup>24</sup>

'What I think about is the taste....There's a big difference to whether it's very tasty or just bland. That's why I think free-range things have much better taste. So we buy free range chickens and that sort of thing. I think its important that the animal that's going to end up on my plate lives in good conditions before it gets there. Makes a difference, for the meat I mean. They've started putting the name of the farm the animals are from on the packaging. It improves the quality of the stock that's for sure, and guarantees a certain quality at the same time' (Senior).

'Of course I'd like the animal to live under good conditions, but what's more important for me is that the animal I'm going to eat is healthy. I think more about how things influence me, than whether the pig or hen was happy during its life. I want to be healthy and fit from the food I eat' (Senior).

*Evaluation of the information given on labels* The discussion from our focus groups indicates that in order to be meaningful, information on products should be contextualised.

<sup>24</sup> We may note that this is not at all a new finding. The overlapping between ethical concerns and health worries emerged clearly in studies on consumption of organic products (Hakier, 2001; Torjusen, 2001, 2004).

Where the product is purchased (in a supermarket, in a special shop, directly from a farm), who is giving the information, previous experiences related to the product or the label, are essential in generating a frame in which information is understood and evaluated.

‘[Reading the label] When I see all this, I remember a bit more of how I think in the shop. And for me, a happy pig, free pigs... I am a bit... well... It tells me actually very little. And I would have liked to get more, much more information of what it actually means. Ecological eggs, actually that tells me very little too’ (Young single).

For an empty nester, evaluate information is much easier in a special shop than not in a soft discount supermarket.

‘I think meat products at Rema1000 have poor labels. But if I go to a speciality store, I think that I get fairly good information. At least, then I can ask, even if I can’t see if that piece of meat is bad for example, I can get information on how I’m supposed to prepare it and stuff because they have knowledge about it’ (Empty nester).

Not contextualised information tends to generate scepticism. Latent is the suspicion that markets actors want to fool consumers, taking advantage from their good will.

Following is a comment about the label ‘Grøstad gris’, one of the most outstanding in Norway for animal welfare, but not known by this group of informants.

‘[Reading] The pig shall be able to walk freely with access to indoor area and the minimum 200 square meters per pig’ (Young single)

‘That was a lot’ (Young single).

‘But it turns out to be a lot of pigs who are there at the same time then. All of them can move freely [laughter]’ (Young single).

The possibility of establishing a direct link with the producer is, instead, evaluated positively: a label with the name and the address of the producer is in fact perceived as an indication that she/he has nothing to hide.

‘[W]ho only eats organically grown food without use of pesticides and manure (Empty nester) (In response to reading the package of organic eggs).

‘Free-living hens which move around freely and only eat vegetal food. The pack has a great effect’ (Empty nester) (In response to reading the package of eggs from free-living hens).

‘On eggs they have got pretty far. But eggs are the only thing that have reached so far. The address of the farm is mentioned. You can go and check out the hens’ (Empty nester).

We have however to emphasize that it seems that are ambivalences related to the amount of information consumers really want and feel comfortable to cope with.

As information implies also a more direct role from the consumers' side, we find reactions that indicate that this information is not always welcome. Some people would rather prefer not to have to worry about what they buy, assuming that others would take care that reasonably good welfare standard are implemented and inspected.

'I agree with you there. I also think that, that in a way it can't be so bad. It must be possible to buy normal Prior eggs without supporting animal mishandling' (Young single).

Others indicated that information would represent a distressful factor in the daily purchasing routines and meals preparations:

'You see of course that what is on the package and such but clearly you can't be standing there thinking 'Oh dear, how was this animal before it ended its days' that.... If one was to think about all that, I think then you went to the vegetable counter .... (Empty nester).

'But then there'll be very little left to buy. Virtually all fish come from fish farms stuffed with antibiotics. Vegetables are sprayed...' (Senior).

Finally, for some information may represent a confusing factor:

'There are so many concepts. And it's not always clear what they mean. 'Organic milk'. Everybody talks about it, but what does it mean, really? So...' (Empty nester).

'In the end it becomes too much information so it goes back to the price. You just give up. All these packs, you get tired, and just pick the cheapest.' (Empty nester).

#### 6.4.3 POSITIVE ASPECTS AND BARRIERS ASSOCIATED WITH WELFARE FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

##### *Reasons for eating welfare friendly products*

In the previous section emerged that welfare friendly products are often associated with positive feelings. In this section we will describe more in detail the reasons why people, consume or would rather prefer to consume products perceived as more welfare friendly.

From our focus groups emerged three many reasons why one, preferably, should eat meat or other products coming from animals that have had 'a good life'.

The first reason is associated with considerations related to one's own health. Welfare friendly products represent an alternative towards industrialised products, which are

often perceived as potentially dangerous, because of what the animals have been eating (antibiotic, hormones).

‘To be honest, when I go shopping and I see it says organic eggs, to be completely honest, I don’t think ‘oh, these hens have had really nice lives’. Then I probably think that they are great food for me. They are healthy products for me because of something, and maybe I can imagine that they have been free and that they had a nice life and stuff and it’s the same with meat. At the slaughterhouse I get organic food, a new-slaughtered beef. So I think that it’s good meat. Good quality. It’s good for me. That is how egoistic I am. I’m the first one to admit it’ (Empty nester).

A second reason is, instead, associated to the taste of the final product. As stated by more than one of our informants ‘stressed pigs taste horrible!’. Products that come from animals that have had a better life tend, instead, to have a better taste.

‘The taste of the meat has to do with whether the animal is happy or not. The taste is so much better as a result. I’ve been involved with tests to find this out. Therefore I think if you taste meat that really is good, the chances are that the animal it came from had a decent life’ (Senior).

Those hens that are free-range and all that, they taste completely different than the cage hens that you get. They actually do that. That is true, I didn’t believe it myself. But they are juicier, much better and rounder taste’ (Rural woman)

As some of our informants however underlined, the feeling of eating something better may most of all, be related to the ‘story’ of the product and how it has been experienced.

An urban mother, for example, told us that:

‘I bought meat once at 59kr per kilo. It was dirt cheap. We bunged it on the barbecue and everyone stuffed themselves with rib steak that was pretty tough and awful. Coincidence maybe, but it was really cheap. A few months later I went to the butcher here. Rib steak cost 235kr per kilo. This inspired me to ask the butcher about where the meat was from and he told me all about the animal and blah, blah, blah and as the price was as it was I bought a weighed amount. It tasted unbelievably much better just because I knew a bit about its origin and that created an atmosphere around the whole thing which resulted in our eating experience being all the richer’ (Urban mother).

Whereas another participant noted:

‘My mother keep chickens. I always buy ecologically eggs, but it feels extra special to eat an egg that I’ve gotten from her that I know is raised with, that all the chickens are treated with love to say it like that. It feels better to eat her eggs when she brings them around. Eggs from people who keep chickens always taste much better, just because they do!’.

*Barriers and dilemmas associated with welfare friendly products*

Despite the good feelings that eating 'welfare friendly' products imply, and despite the general opinion that animals should live a valuable life, we observe that concerns about animal are not often prioritised when people buy or eat their food.

This may be interpreted as an inconsistency between what people think and what they actually do. A 'sin' consumers often are blamed for.

As we have stated in our introduction and in other part of this rapport, consumers' behaviour is the result of a number of factors. Practices, culture and routines, the way places and times of consumption are organised, are of great importance for understanding what people, as consumers, do. However, besides this more general conditions is also possible to indicate some specific factors which, according to our informants, may represent barriers and dilemmas in the context of purchasing the products.

*The availability of products* According to many informants there should be more choices in the supermarket. Lack of alternative make people rely on what they simply find in the supermarket nearby:

'We've got the most choice when it comes to eggs and vegetables, between ecological and standard I mean, but I haven't seen any ecological meat' (Seniors).

*The price of the products* As stated by a number of our informants, not all the people have the possibility to spend the additional cost animal friendly products often have.

'Not everyone can just pay more. Its not only your willingness to pay.... Sometimes is not just a matter of giving priorities but to be able to survive.' (Urban mother).

'Clearly, if I would pick up that kind of products, I think that OK, if I know that I buy that it is good for the animals, for me, for everybody. Then everything is fine. But it is very often the price that is crucial. It is the price that does it, to put it that way. Because I can't afford to buy the best. Because it tends to be more expensive with ecological things' (Young singles).

We have, however, to be aware that the discourse on money hides much more relevant factors. Many, in fact, underlined that they would likely pay some more money if the amount of additional cost is not perceived as exaggerated.

'I'd pay more in order to be sure that animals get better treatment, but not five times as much. Right now you either can buy ecological rib steaks of beef for



500kr or drive to Svinesund<sup>25</sup> and buy them for 59kr. The gap is so wide that nobody wants to pay 500kr for it' (Urban mother).

There is not the suspicion that market' actors are using animal welfare instrumentally, in order to get more money from consumers:

'If it had been good marking, it would have made it easier to select. If I had known that ecological eggs were something I could trust to, I could have selected them. Because of the four crones I don't really care about. I can as well pay a bit extra. But I have not really trusted that label. Simply. I have not really understood that it was so much worth trusting. And I think that news is so full that you get fooled. All the way. And that is bothering me when I am making that kind of decision or when I should select' (Young single).

Another related barrier consists in the fact that many express that they want to have knowledge about the food, but at the same time they would rather not think about the animal which the meat originates from. When information is too much, it becomes impossible to keep a distance:

'I think that the label must not say too much either. It is not really necessary that it said 'Lille Kolle was an happy pig before he was brought to the slaughtering house. Because then is not food anymore. Then it is the animal'.

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<sup>25</sup> A Swedish town just at border with Norway where Norwegians go shopping for cheaper food, cigarettes and alcohol.

## 6.4.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

TABLE 6.5 Summary of consumers opinions of animal welfare and animal welfare friendly food products

	Knowledge about farming	Products mentioned as welfare friendly	Positive aspects with welfare friendly products	barriers
Young singles	Most indirect knowledge One actively uses internet	Wild (moose)	'Clear conscience'	Price Scepticism
Empty nesters	Most indirect knowledge	Wild (moose) Organic products Small eggs		
Politically active/ Vegetarian	Direct experience Internet Study	Wild Organic	'Clear conscience'; Feeling of doing ones part	
Seniors	Media Direct experience	Gourmet chicken	Taste Health	Difficult to find
Urban mothers	Media Direct experience	Grøstad Gris Organic products	Taste 'clear conscience'	Price
Rural women	Direct experience	Wild (moose)	'Clear Conscience'/stewardship	
Hunters (rural men)	Direct experience	Wild (moose)	'Clear Conscience'/stewardship	

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## 6.5 THE ROLE OF RESPONSIBILITY, AGENCY AND TRUST IN RELATION TO ANIMAL WELFARE

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### 6.5.1 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ANIMAL WELFARE?

The way our informants discursively frame responsibilities for animal welfare, is an important key for understanding how they see themselves as consumers, and how they regard the role of other important actors, such as producers, public authorities, organisations of the civil society.

Giving and taking responsibility is an important social behaviour embracing trust –and distrust- sense of agency, individual and collective action.

Given the importance of this dimension, we asked a direct question about that to our informants (Who do you think has the main responsibility for animals' welfare?). It was usually asked after informants have been discussing about the definition of animal

welfare. In many instances, however, the theme of responsibility emerged earlier, and it was clear that some of our informants had very strong meaning about it.

From our focus groups two main positions emerged particularly: one claiming that are consumers the ones that are responsible in the first place and one claiming instead that are farmers the ones who must be seen as the main responsible.

In addition to these, informants mentioned also other actors that could be considered as 'co-responsible', or responsible for some specific aspects; retailers, for instance are seen as having the responsibility for giving access to welfare friendly products; public authorities to implement good regulation and assure that it is respected, media for giving information and form a public opinion.

In the section that follows we will describe more in detail how these responsibilities have been framed.

#### *Framing consumers responsibilities*

The informants of our focus groups were far from the image of passive consumers who are not interested in anything else than saving money. We meet many concerned people, open to discuss their role as consumers, their responsibilities towards animal welfare, but also the contradictions emerging when trying to transfer ideals into practice.

A main indication from the focus groups is that awareness increase the tendency of seeing consumers as the most responsible for the well being of farm animals.

This was particularly clear in the in the politically active/vegetarian focus groups. When we asked: 'who is responsible of animal welfare?' there was a unanimous answer: the consumer!

*'If you think of the one who's most responsible about if the animals are treated well or better. Who has the responsibility?'* (moderator)

*'The consumer'* (Politically active/vegetarian).

*'I also think so'* (Politically active/vegetarian).

*'Yes, absolutely.'* (Politically active/vegetarian).

Also in the others groups, we noticed that participants with a higher degree of awareness and information were more likely to see consumers as the main responsible in the first place.

*'I'd say each and every one of us has a responsibility for this. All of us sitting here have a responsibility for this, even though we're not directly involved with animals on a daily basis. We buy this food even though we say we're not happy with many aspects of its production. We still go out and buy it and it's too easy to put the blame on those involved with raising the animals or the authorities or whatever. We're all involved.'* (Urban mother).

Consumers wanting to get cheap food are considered as the main cause of the deteriorating living conditions of animals' farm. :

'When the authorities see hordes of us rushing to the Swedish border to buy rib steak for 59 kr it tells the authorities, the shops and everyone else involved that we are concerned with one thing. The price. This gives a clear signal to them and thereby dictates the terms a farmer has to live by' (Urban mother).

In this approach, consumers are framed as actors that have to take some kind of responsibility. But what does imply in terms of concrete choices in the market arena?<sup>26</sup> During the focus groups informants were quite active in indicating what one 'should or should not' do. The following list shows the main suggestions emerged during our discussions.

- Do not buy controversial products. Such as i.e. foie gras, veal, baby pigs. This was a point where there was high agreement- many mentioned that they have been avoiding these products for a long time.
- Avoid buying things that are too cheap. 'When meat is too cheap you should wonder who is paying the costs', seem to be the common opinion of many .
- Buy products from animals which have been treated better. Take your time for finding information, look on the internet, ask your butcher.
- Eat less meat. Many stated that we do not need to eat so much meat. 'We can eat less, pay what is needed for good animals' welfare, and take an extra potato if we are still hungry'.
- Choose meat thinking to sustainability in general. Prefer wild or lamb to beef and pork
- Do not eat meat at all. Become a vegetarian!

#### *Framing farmers' responsibilities*

When discussing farmers responsibilities, two main positions emerged: in one of them, farmers are seen as the only ones that ultimately have the responsibility for the well being of the animals they have. Farmers can make choices, in relation to the size of their farm and on how many animals they are capable to take care of.

A woman from the urban mother focus group, represents very clearly this position:

'I think the farmer has responsibility first of all. Despite whatever strict terms he has to live with, the welfare of the animals is his responsibility and he can't relinquish this and not do his job properly. I think that's too bad and that the authorities and others have a duty that we get to hear what goes on. The buck stops primarily with the farmer. It's him who is involved with the day-to-day care, it's him that shovels out the dung. He checks whether they have ticks in their ears or skin or whatever. Him. That they are ok and have their basic needs catered for, is his job. He decides what he will earn a year. He has a choice of how many

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<sup>26</sup> The issue of consumer agency, more in general, will be discussed later on in the section.

animals he will have, if he takes on too many he can work himself into an early grave. Its up to him.... I'm not saying that the consumer plays no part in this, just that the farmer is the one with the primary responsibility' (Urban mother).

Farmers thinking just about their profits, and considering animals just as 'food machines' are quoted as negative examples of taking responsibility.

'I have a cousin who is a pig farmer, he gathers up the piglets when they're three months old. Then he only keeps them until they're ready for slaughter, 120 pigs! He'll just drive them to the slaughterhouse and disinfects the shed and makes it ready for a new batch! That's what I call a meat factory!' (Politically active/vegetarian).

Beside this position, another one emerged, which, instead tend to portrait farmers as the victims –as well as their animals- of consumers' greed.

'So a farmer, in other words, doesn't breed pigs or whatever for the fun of it. He doesn't do it the way he thinks is best, it's just a way of surviving. He does it because of the economic pressure. I'm sure of it. There is no farmer who likes to see his animals suffer.... And of course they can choose to be a farmer or something else. but when you're in that position in the first place it's very difficult for a farmer to get out of it' (Urban mother)

Farmers who really care about their animals can even portrait as a kind of 'hero':

'I think most farmers does not look at their animals as objects. A farmer that keeps animals cares about them a great deal. Like, I was up in the mountains and I went around with some sheep farmers, because there are lots of them there, to look for some of the sheep. And when they didn't find a sheep they were there in an hour. They drove up and the wandered around in the mountains and really they had... one of these farmers he had three hundred sheep and an income of two hundred thousand a year. A total turnover of two hundred thousand a year. I mean hell, he wandered around in these mountains, and I walked a bit with him. We walked ten hours and we didn't see a single, fuckings sheep and he was missing thirty-two! We got them all in (Politically active/vegetarian).

### *The responsibilities of retailers and producers*

In the discussion about responsibility, besides consumers and farmers, also other actors have been taken into consideration. A specific attention has been given, for example, to retailers. As we have seen in the previous section, choice of animal friendly products is, in Norway, rather limited.

To provide customers with a wider range of products which better reflect different sensibilities and values is indicated mainly as a retailers' responsibility. But, as many pointed out, having products in the shop is not enough.

Products should be presented with appropriate information in order to help consumers in answering this question: What do I get with this product that cost more than the other one?

Supermarkets,<sup>27</sup> therefore, are seen as an important 'information point'. It is in the shops, in fact that consumers –mostly- meet with the products.

'I believe that it is simply a choice they have to make. Should one try and maybe make a large investment on it. And then I think, at least over here it is not that easy to change peoples minds in a day or two. The store has a party once a year, and then they could have had a small [initiative] and said that actually we have thought of doing things a bit differently for this and that. Then I think that they would have sold it. But it demands a bit more because one is not used to making that selection, you know. That one has to know why one should select it. But I think that if they did it, they would've gotten response' (Rural woman).

Together with retailers, also food producers have been identified as having specific responsibility. The structure of the Norwegian food system makes producers has having an important role in creating the condition for the production and the distribution of products.

A monopolistic situation where one producer has the largest share of the market is considered as the main cause of lack of innovation and diversification of the Norwegian market.

Even when some alternative products are let into the market (as in the case of organic meat or milk) informants lament that 'not a single penny has been spent for advertising their organic products'.

#### *The responsibilities of public authorities*

As we have seen in a previous section, there is a wide consensus among our informants on the idea that farm animals in Norway have a better life than the ones living in other countries

It seems hence that the main responsibility for public authorities, consist in maintain the present agriculture's structure and protecting it from competition from outside.

'I think it should be directed at farming methods in all the EU countries, not just at Norway. If the pressure is just directed internally we'll end up putting our farmers in an impossible situation unable to compete. The consequence will be imports or people shopping in Sweden for agricultural produce. We therefore have a collected responsibility to safeguard our own agricultural industry even if that means paying more' (Senior).

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<sup>27</sup> Remember that in Norway there are few butcher shops.

‘It’s the authorities who make the terms which farmers have to maintain. There’s many farmers who have started off in a sensible way and have found the terms of how they conduct their livelihood changed with relation to money and everything else. In order to survive they’ve changed the way they run their farms and as a result treat their animals in a different way than they would have done maybe 15 years ago. They’ve had to tighten their belts so much that its inevitably got worse for the animals. I think many farmers regret this, but in order to survive in farming they have to do it this way. The premises given to them by the authorities have a lot to answer for I think’ (Urban mother).

In addition, for public authorities are frequently seen as an important ‘third party’, who protects consumers from frauds and controls that animals are actually treated following the regulation.

‘What a consumer can do for improving animal welfare? It is difficult. You are standing in the store and thinking hmm... the animals that these sausages are made of... have they had it well or not. You think more that you feel like having the product. I think that that product tastes good. And it is reasonably priced and then I buy it. Clearly it is stupid to think that consumers don’t have a say in it, but it is obvious that the authorities have a lot more power than single consumers’ (Young single).

On this specific role of public authorities we will come back later when discussing the question of trust.

### *The responsibilities of the media*

According to the data of our focus groups, media tend to have a rather important role. It is in fact through media that many informants have received information about animals’ living conditions. In some instances, having seen a specific program on TV, produced remarkably changes in the eating habits of some of them.

Despite some scepticism, it seems that there is agreement on the importance of media has an instrument for creating a public opinion, as this dialogue between our informants of the senior focus group illustrates.

‘I’m not sure that television or other media channels are particularly reliable sources for impartial information regarding animal rights or management. It would have to come from a more...’ (Senior).

‘Yes, but its nevertheless a channel of influence. If you want to reach a lot of people, the media is the thing to use’ (Senior).

‘Look at the kind of reaction the programme about slaughter practice received. There was a huge outcry when the programme ‘Rikets Tilstand’ [‘The State of the Nation’] showed a report on Gilde’s methods of slaughtering pigs’ (Senior).

‘Oh, is that so?’ (Senior).

‘Yes, it led to that they had to change their practices’ (Senior).

‘These things can help...’ (Senior).

'Yes they do' (Senior).

'Seems like we've concluded that the media is the path to take' (Senior).

### 6.5.2 MOBILIZING FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

The focus groups indicate a plurality of ways in which informants mobilise themselves as consumers. These can vary from choosing 'small eggs' instead of extra-large ones to more comprehensive choices of life as avoiding eating food from animal origin. How individuals interpret their role as consumer is relevant for understanding mobilisation and consumption practices.

In the following section we will describe how informants see themselves as consumers and how this is related to the way they mobilise – or not – as consumers.

#### *Different ways of interpreting the consumer's role*

What does it mean to be a consumer? How relevant it is this role for one's self identity? The informants we meet have rather different opinions concerning their consumer's role: from the ones that feel that they do not count nothing to the ones that on the contrary, try to change the world through their consumption choices.

A young woman of the single focus groups, expressed very clearly her feeling of not counting very much as a consumer:

'I think so. A mixture of that, and a feeling that we know, we think that I as a single person don't have that much to contribute. That we have a bit of a feeling that it does not make a difference whatever I do. I can go to my own little boycott but it does not make an effect' (Young single).

A position shared also by this empty nester:

'Yes, I think that me as a consumer I don't have anything.... As a consumer I don't have any interests in knowing it, and I don't think that we as consumers, every single consumer has competence enough to that either. That competence should be gathered with the authorities, where it belongs' (Empty nester).

In contrast, there is the one of a woman in her 50s of the seniors focus group. For her, although consumers may act individually and without connection with each other, they – together – can make a difference:

'Yes, but if more and more people go to these chain stores and ask for the same sort of things, these bosses will get the message and it can make a difference when they have their meetings and the like' (Senior).



In many instances, moreover, the consumer role is related not only to the purchasing context, but is more broadly connected with important life choices.

For this politically active/vegetarian, being a consumer is just another aspect of being a concerned person, which with its choices can give its little contribution to loose bigger problems.

‘[A]ll the greatest environmental issues. Those are as a matter of fact millions of small faulty decisions, right? Therefore we can make big changes by many small solutions! Because all big problems are actually several smaller mistakes. That’s why it makes sense, and I can recommend others to make an effort as well... You can be a part of the solution. The problem can seem incredibly difficult. But you’ll find out, like the ones who are vegetarian, how you can manage to solve it on your own. Society will not solve it for you’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

The way one represents her/himself as consumers as important implications in the way individuals mobilise themselves in the market arena .

From our interviews we can distinguish at least three ways informants represent themselves as consumers and mobilise themselves accordingly

*The role of consumer is not really something ones use for defining oneself* It is a category mostly used by others. One does not think about oneself as consumer and hence cannot think about ‘mobilising as consumer’. This does not mean that political or ethical choices are never present, but they tend to be rather accidental and sporadic.

‘But I have actually boycotted products from Israel’.

‘I have done that too... oranges’.

‘I boycott it only until they just have the Israeli product at the store.... It lasts like until you get to the store’.

*Consumer’s role is something one assumes mainly in the purchasing context* In this case people can make choices which reflect personal values and awareness and try to exert their influence in the market place. They may complain with salesmen and shop owners.

‘If more and more people go to these chain stores and ask for the same sort of things, these bosses will get the message and it can make a difference when they have their meetings and the like.’

Complaining in the store can also be part of a wider strategy. This politically active/vegetarian is particularly active in shops alongside participating in campaigns.

‘I spend a lot of time in the shops. That’s all because I can’t find the ecological products, so I wander around asking; ‘Have you got ecological eggs?’ And then I won’t find the swan labelled washing powder, so I’ll ask; ‘have you got that

washing powder?' I'm very good. I even bring bags along. So I often tell the ones who give them to you 'are you aware of that we use one billion plastic bags in Norway every year! I'm the type of consumer who speaks to the people in the shops, I tell them and I try you know? I'll ask the staff, do you have this? Do you have that? How can I get a hold of it?' (Politically active/vegetarian).

*Consumer's role is an integrated as part of identity* There is not separation between being a consumer and being the person one is. Together with a previously mentioned example of a politically active/vegetarian, this way of being a 'all around consumer' is exemplified by the following story.

'[I]nitially the choice was simple. I didn't want meat and after a while I turned to ecological products. And then ethics became more and more important.... So it's a development. It seems like if you first choose this path you'll learn more as you go along it and you'll manage to cope with more. So I'm always improving'.

Speaking about herself, she says that she consider herself as:

'[O]nly a drop of water in the sea. I try not to convince other to be like me. I just try to show them that I lead a good life. That they can be happy to chose the same type of life as me. I try to be a good example for others. To show that you don't have to sacrifice anything, to make a different choice... inspiring role model. Besides I want to do everything I can. I want to believe that it makes at least a little difference.'

For others, few indeed in our focus groups, mobilising for animal welfare implies also to take more direct action as being a member of an association, participating in campaign, using internet.

### 6.5.3 TRUST AND DISTRUST

The interviews we had with our informants tend to confirm a trend we find in other studies. that Norwegian consumers –and Norwegian in general- tend to have a high level of trust in the public authorities, in their capability of regulating and intervening if problems arise (Poppe and Kjærnes, 2003; Berg, 2005).

This represents an important frame also for understanding issues as the division of responsibility and the forms of mobilisations described above. The trust in the fact that authority are doing their job properly may in fact make people feel that taking direct action may not be so crucial. Trust in public authorities – a common aspect across all the focus groups- was even stronger among the youngest informants.

'Some days ago I bought some meat at ICA, First price, half of a kilo of minced meat... it costed just 12 kroner... you know. But then I thought that why not. It has

to have been approved in a way or another. Isn't it? I am not that sceptical to it' (Young single).

The same kind of confidence in the fact that things cannot be so bad is expressed also in the case of animal welfare, as emerged in this conversation between two members of the Young singles group.

'I also think that, that in a way it can't be so bad. It must be possible to buy normal Prior eggs without supporting animal mishandling' (Young singles).  
It is a bit like he said at the beginning, that I also can trust pretty much to that what one can buy in Norway, in a way. I have also the feeling that it is fairly safe to buy in Norway' (Young single).

Besides their role as controller, public bodies are specific trusted in their role as a 'third party':

'I believe in the Debio label. I believe in a brand. I believe in that quality. I think that's the only chance the consumers have, it's to have publicly approved brands' (Politically active/vegetarians).

Trust in public authorities may however also be a strategy for coping with the scepticism towards other actors present in the food chain. As in the word of Jon: You can't follow the beef all the way back to its birth. You've got to stop it somewhere, so you've got to trust the public bodies starting somewhere, and upwards.

A widespread scepticism seems in fact to pervade the relationship with producers and retailers. They are specifically blamed for giving misleading information. As one participant explained

'I got sort of angry when I understood that free-living hens meant that 11 hens share one square meter'.

Farmers and retailers may not really be willing of tell the truth, as this dialogue illustrates.

'The farmers will not say that the animals are suffering. They are not saying that...' (Young single).

'The distributors are not going to say that either' (Young single).

'No, there is nobody that wants that. It has to be someone that does not have own interest in it, that you have to trust. Because all those that can make money on these animals, they will of course say what they believe that the consumers want to hear. And that would be that they are fine [the animals]' (Young single).

Trust in private schemes is often associated with a relatively high level of consciousness, when people actively seek information about producers and products, then they establish relation of trust that make them confident about the products they buy, independently by the role of the state.

*Trust and mobilisation*

As we have already mentioned, how people see themselves as consumers, how they mobilise themselves, how they allocate responsibilities, are dimensions deeply interrelated with each other. In this section we would like to explore the relationship within these dimensions a little further. For instance we would like to investigate what does imply to have trust in public authorities in terms of consumers mobilisation? Who are the people who most trust schemes? And what does it happen when people do not trust anyone?

As we have described, trust in public is a widespread attitude among our informants. This kind of attitudes emerged –in our focus groups- particularly among the youngest and the oldest. From our interviews it does seem to emerge a relation between this kind of attitude and the tendency towards do not taking specific responsibility. Informants tend not to represent themselves strongly as consumers, feeling that others (namely public authorities) have more competence. If things are going pretty well, if someone would intervene in case of problems, why should I worry?

Although we have seen, there is a widespread scepticism towards private labels (i.e. Grøstad Gris), some informants have made specific choices of some labelled products and stick to them. They have gathered more information, in one case visited the farm, and feel pretty sure that what is stated on the label correspond to the truth. The informants that are part of this approach are person that have a rather high consumer power –in terms of possibility of money expenditure- and that are particularly found of good quality food: people active in the market and that know what they want.

Although there may be some overlapping, the group above tend to be different form the one where we find trust in alternative distribution systems. This group consist mainly of the ones who have made more encompassing consumption choices. It is not only a matter of choosing a product instead of another one, but choosing a different provisional system. The ones opting for organic labelling as a general choice are part of this group. But this group may also comprehend the ones who do not buy meat or fish in the shops but rely on hunting and fishing (as also a form of scepticism towards the industrialised farming methods). Vegetarian that have become such because of distrust towards the conventional methods may also be considered part of this group.

During our focus groups we have met also few persons – among vegetarians- which had what can be defined as generalised distrust: private companies are cheating, the government is cheating, max havelaar is cheating. But what happens in these cases? The examples from our focus groups indicate, a very high knowledge about products and what do they are made of (i.e. animal's protein in jelly and candies) together with rather careless choice of producers and products otherwise. From these examples we may wonder if generalised distrust can make people have practices similar to the ones that have high generalised trust. While in this second case one can buy everything as everything is safe, for the others one can buy everything as simply there is anything that is better.

## 6.5.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

TABLE 6.6 Summary of responsibility, agency and trust in relation to animal welfare

	Responsibility	Consumer role	Mobilisation	Trust/Distrust
Young singles	Mainly public authorities	'accidental'	Choose some priorities	
More active elsewhere than in the market	Trust in public authorities; scepticism towards producers			
Empty nesters	Mainly public authorities	Aware	Make specific choice in the market	Trust in public authorities
Politically active/ Vegetarians	Consumers	Part of their identity	Very high in the market but also elsewhere	Trust in alternative provision
Seniors	Meny are mentioned (public authorities, farmers, media, consumers)	Mostly related to the purchase arena	Make specific choice in the market; complain	Trust in public authorities
Urban mothers	Divided between consumers and farmers	Mostly related to the purchase arena	Make specific choice in the market	Trust in known schemes
Rural women	Farmers	Part of their identity		Trust in alternative provision
Hunters (rural men)	Farmers	Part of their identity	Do not buy controversial products; Take care of the environment	Trust in alternative provision

## 6.6 CONCERNS RELATED TO ANIMAL WELFARE

In this section we will present findings related to animal welfare concerns expressed by the participants in the focus group. The first section includes a description of the types of animal welfare concerns, which came up spontaneously in the focus groups. In the second section, reactions to the scientifically based list of criteria are presented as well as views about how they would like to be informed about animal welfare in food production.

## 6.6.1 SPONTANEOUS ANIMAL WELFARE CONCERNS

*Main issues of concern*

Animal welfare concerns among focus group participants were – as discussed in earlier sections – not necessarily easy to become aware of. Animal welfare was not among the issues, which tended to be brought up spontaneously in the introductory rounds about the types of concerns they had in relation to their food, or what they normally looked after when they were shopping. Nevertheless, it was obvious that animal welfare did matter to the participants, and it was considered a basic requirement to food production. Good animal welfare was presumed taken care of by experts and relevant actors in the food system, and products associated with poor practices were not expected to be found among the goods presented on the market. The view that animal welfare was not important was never claimed. There were some discussions about the relative importance of welfare measures between different types of animals (do fish count? Do they have feelings?). But as a main finding, the welfare of animals was considered important when the issue first had surfaced, and it was rather taken for granted as a common value that should not be violated for the sake of profit or efficiency – or low price to consumers.

A general impression of the concerns which eventually were discussed in the focus groups were that they were broad and complex and they were sometimes associated with uncertainty and ambivalence because the participants did not feel they had the insight and specific knowledge needed to make valid evaluations. Concerns among participants encompassed the entire life-span of the animals, and all the different locations in the food system – from the farm to the slaughterhouse. Animal welfare was considered to be about ‘how they live’ and ‘how they die’ as well as everything in between.

‘I think that animal welfare is about how they live. Another thing is the way they are slaughtered. And often the system of distribution has become quite long because it is so few butchers that have the permission to slaughter. (...) animal transport is quite bad, I think. And that is independently of whether they have had a good life or not in between’ (Young single).

Across all focus groups, except for the vegetarian one, there was agreement on the normality and (praxis-based) acceptability of eating meat and using animals for human needs – as long as the animals were treated well during their lives. In particular in the two rural groups (rural women and hunters), ‘harvesting from nature’ and the role of human beings as caretakers in nature including various stocks of animals were discussed in very positive terms.

*‘Animal welfare matters’ – even if distant in some contexts*

A general finding in the focus groups was that animal welfare seldom came up as an issue in the initial rounds when participants were asked to freely describe their shopping

and eating practices and what was important for them about their food. However, it was clear that the welfare of animals was an issue that awoke rather strong feelings and expressions of support when the issue first was had emerged. In no group was there any suggestion that the welfare of animals was not important or not a priority. However, it was pointed to ambivalences related to their own practices, complexities in handling good intentions of all kinds in everyday life, and negotiations between various needs and practicalities.

TABLE 6.7 Summary of main issues related to animal welfare

Factors associated with poorer animal welfare	Factors associated with better animal welfare
Living in confinement	Living freely (wild animals, free-range)
Industrial production	Extensive production
Large-scale production	Small-scale production
Indoor confinement	Outdoor access
No or limited possibility to choose (indoors/outdoors, feeding time, type of feed, mating etc.)	Ability to choose
Transportation, particularly long distance	Avoidance of / reduced transport
Animals as part of a 'mass'	Animals as singular individuals (recognised by name)
Animals thought of as 'food' while alive	Integrity as animals until moment of death
Animals killed while young	Animals having lived a 'full life'
Focus on efficiency and objective as food: speeding up time of growth, enlarged size, changed shape	Focus on 'natural': natural feeding according to species, natural shape, time for normal growth rate
No or little time and possibility of care from humans	Care from humans on an individual basis
Products 'without origin'	Identifiable products which someone 'stands by' (face, name, contact information)

It was also clear that the participants described very much a 'doing' relation to meat rather than a 'thinking' relation (see discussion also in Section 6.3). Below are some examples of statements about the importance of animal welfare. Worth noting was that such expressions often had the air of something obvious – as something that goes without saying and is therefore rarely expressed.

'It's completely obvious that it matters if I know that the pig has been slaughtered for 20 hours, right, hanging upside-down during transport. It is an emotional reaction for me.... I feel that I would rather eat meat from animals that I know have been treated well' (Empty nester).

How to balance the considerations for own health or the health of ones family against more altruistic concerns such as the welfare of animals was a typical issue raised in the focus groups. In some cases animal welfare concerns were positively associated with other preferences such as good taste or healthy food. In other cases, other concerns and demands were discussed as possibly being in opposition to good animal welfare (good taste, health concerns, convenience foods, affordable prices). Some of these 'other concerns' appear both places: lean, white meat such as meat of chicken could be perceived as good for health, while intensively produced poultry may not be associated

with good animal welfare. Choosing food primarily according to taste could result in preference for products, which are produced under poor welfare conditions (such as goose liver pâté). In other cases, 'happy animals' were associated with both tastier and healthier meat. Such reflections in the focus groups illustrate some of the complexity that the issue of animal welfare may be associated with from the perspective of consumers.

Below is an example from the seniors group, where health was articulated quite strongly as a main focus related to food:

'I think of the animal. Of course I would like the animal to live under good conditions, but what is more important for me is that the animal I am going to eat is healthy. I think more about how things influence me, than whether the pig or hen was happy during its life. I want to be healthy and fit from the food I eat' (Senior).

However, good animal welfare was also perceived to go together with good taste of the meat.

What I think about is the taste.... There is a big difference to whether it is very tasty or just bland. That is why I think free-range things have much better taste. So we buy free-range chickens and that sort of thing. I think it is important that the animal that is going to end up on my plate lives in good conditions before it gets there' (Senior).

#### *Human beings and animals – differences and similarities*

In the focus group discussions, views about the status of animals as compared to human beings were put forward. Some emphasised the similarities rather than the differences, as in the example below:

'[A]s I have gotten older I see less and less difference between humans as animals and animals as animals. We are animals too. People are treating each other, or at least trying to treat each other in an ethically proper way.... I think that is the proper way to treat animals' (Young single).

A participant from the rural women group compares animals with human beings in a discussion about poor transport conditions:

'Like how I have seen they treat animals abroad, they beat them and hit them and pack them as tight as they can to get them into the cars and that is horrible to see' (Rural woman).

'Some of them die before they arrive. But that is not the correct way then. If we were in a bus then, and would be as tight as that, it is exactly the same thing. How many of us would be dead?' (Rural woman).



If not actually claiming that human beings and animals are the same, these kinds of statements indicate a tendency to be empathetic and identify with the animals.

One particularly urgent question in relation to animal/human relations is: Do animals have the same rights as human beings? There were different views on this. Below is an example of a debate within the young singles group:

‘Yes’ (Young single).

‘No’ [laughter] (Young single).

‘Yes. Except for not having to be eaten... apart from that kind of things’ (Young single).

‘If one has to choose between an animal and a human being...’ (Young single).

‘Yes, certainly... but in principle one should treat animals with respect’ (Young single).

Another example is from the empty nesters group. The notion of ‘respect for life’ was a recurring notion in discussion about this issue.

‘They do have rights. You are supposed to have respect for life. So you shall have great respect for the fact that it is a life’ (Empty nester).

In several focus groups, the term ‘humane treatment’ emerged – followed by a discussion of whether this was a meaningful concept or not. For many, this term stood as a paradox. Others tried to explain it. One explanation of the meaning of this term from the young singles group was: ‘That we do what we think is best for the animal’. In this particular discussion, they started with referring to the fact that we cannot know how the animal feels – we are not able to actually take the perspective of the animal, but they made the point that we should make an effort to find out as much as we can, and act upon the available information in order to do what is best for the animal. This was contrasted to merely using animals as objects for humans.

The discussion suggests a distinction between the use of the term humane to refer to the intent and conduct of the people who treat the animals (e.g. that the farmer acts humanely – according to good, human ethics), and on the other hand, the use of the term as referring to the idea that the animals are entitled to ‘humane’ conditions (e.g. that we attribute humane characteristics to the animals, such as emotional well-being). In the first case, the discussions about right and wrong are directed towards evaluating the human conduct according to human values. In the latter case, discussions tend to evolve around whether ‘it matters’ to the animal and whether or not our distinctions and preferences apply also to animals.

Some pointed out that the relevant differences between animals and humans are related to intellectual capacity, and expressed that precisely this is one reason why we should treat animals well:

‘[O]ne should expect that humans would treat animals in a proper way. Because they [people] have actually the capacity to think’ (Young single).

This informant also described what she saw as a paradox related to knowing what is 'natural' for the animals – as a reference for evaluating their welfare. As long as all farm animals are bred by humans, they are already 'constructed to suit us'.

'[W]e have bred farm animals to our own use and so humane treatment becomes those conditions that we have set for these animals we have bred and raised to our use. So that they should live in a natural way is not a real option then. Because maybe there does not exist a natural environment for milking cows or...' (Young single).

A view or hypothesis was presented that there had been a kind of cooperation between the 'original' wild animals and human beings in the breeding process.

'[B]ut it is after all those animals which have let themselves be bred that can live happier in the environment that we give them' (Young single).

### *'Living in freedom'*

Wild, hunted animals were presented as an ideal – across most focus groups. Below, a participant from the hunters group explains how eating meat from wild, hunted animals gives him a feeling of clear conscience as compared with farmed animals:

'We eat meat with a clear conscience. You know that the animal has been born and have lived in freedom and suddenly gets a bullet that it barely notices' (Hunter).

We could recognise the descriptions of the perceived advantages associated with the lives of the wild animals in what was presented as an ideal for farm animals. The contrasts between the wild animals on the one side and the intensively farmed animals, such as chicken, on the other side were typically described.

'Thinking in comparison to those animals forced to stand in stalls and get out only a couple of times a year.... I just think that there's a big difference between animals that have lived in freedom and others who have been fattened up in a stall.... I am thinking more about certain types of meat production, you know chicken and the like' (Hunter).

In the example below, similar ideas comes through in the opening remarks of a participant in the hunters group in response to the question about what he considers as important aspects for the welfare of farm animals:

'I would say it revolves around the possibility for an animal to live as close as possible to the way it would if it were in its natural habitat. Even though cows can be raised on a farm, there is a big difference in how it is done. You know, whether they can roam free, go out into the woods, be outside all year around, go in and out when they like and have food readily available. Same with sheep – they are inside all winter, but outside during the summer. So as I say, it's as close

conditions to the wild animal as possible that gives the captive animal the best animal welfare' (Hunter).

Extensive grazing on outlying fields rather than infields (arable land) was clearly considered better for the animals in the discussions in the hunters group. Odd, who used to have some farm animals himself, described how his sheep got some intestinal problems when they were on infield grazing. And the conversation continued as follows:

*'Is this because they live too close to each other?'* (moderator).

'Far too close. They are out on the same pasture. Just look at Sweden, they have had sheep grazing on the home field pasture for years. The same pasture. Look at the difference between a sheep from Norway and one from Sweden. In Norway we've got nice, big sheep, but in Sweden there are these small, black... They are like nothing and it's because they have been grazing on home fields pastures for years' (Hunter).

We see here that 'access to the outdoors' is not a sufficiently precise term in this case. Grazing on infields versus outlying fields is contrasted concerning the welfare of animals.

#### *Intensive vs. extensive production*

As discussed above, we could recognise the conceptions about the wild animals 'living in freedom' and being 'out in nature' as ideals also for the farmed animals. Living close to nature, and having experience from both hunting and extensive farming was mentioned as important frames of reference when setting standards for what to expect from good farming practices.

'For us who come from Finnskogen we think of rearing animals on a completely different scale. Like a farmer would have three or four pigs, he would have a couple for himself and sell the other so the whole concept of breeding and rearing is thought of in another sense. That is why we feel averse to the other way of doing things and would rather hunt for ourselves' (Hunter).

The intensity of production emerged as an important dimension in opinions about farm animal welfare. Extensive, small-scale production, where each animal could be recognised by its own name and receive proper recognition and care by the farmer was described as the best in terms of providing for good animal welfare. Often, the discussion evolved around comparisons of different types of animals (pigs and chicken vs. sheep) and types of husbandry (indoor pens, outdoor grazing).

Factors associated with intensive, 'industrial' farming included indoor 'confinements' with limited space, light and freedom to move. These appeared as critical points regarding animals' rights issues.

'I, on my part, never eat chicken. Never. Principally not. It is much because of having seen pictures of that kind of production, that kind of slaughtering and all of that' (Hunter).

And a young man from the group of Empty nester claims that while associations to 'the free nature' always brings positive feelings, 'no one wants to eat a beef that has stood down in a dark cellar all its life.'

Discussions about intensive farming tended to refer to a certain limit that should not be crossed. The term 'factory farming' was used to indicate that the limit had been overstepped. 'Factory farming' was perceived as intensive production aiming at maximising profits for producers and making meat as cheap as possible for consumer. Meat from these kinds of production units was considered unethical and unacceptable to eat. The point that 'cheap meat' is 'bad meat' was described by an informant from the politically active group, who told us about a kindergarten visiting a family farm with the aim of teaching the children that:

'The meat they find in the stores is actually animals. It is animals that have had lives. And the children should see that if they want cheap meat it will end up being the animal that will pay. The animals' welfare will be sacrificed' (Politically active/vegetarian).

Intensively produced pigs and chicken were among the examples that were put forward by the informants of meat that was unacceptable for this reason. In describing these kinds of production and slaughtering, informants used images of 'assembly line production'. Else, from the group of rural women, expressed that she was not sure of whether the chicken had actually been properly killed before they were parted in these kinds of production systems.

Below are other examples of chicken being emphasised as a 'bad' example of intensive production where animals may not be treated as well as they should.

'I immediately started to think of the chickens. That is pretty much the only animal I think of within food production, which perhaps is not treated well' (Young single).

'Everybody knows how they have lived in a box. And that is not a good thing' (Young single).

Enough space for the particular needs of the animals was a crucial issue, which was raised in all focus groups. Below are examples from the young singles group, where Ing. tells about an experience from a pig farm in Sweden (Skåne):

'How the pigs lived there, that made me an impression. They had so little space. And that is what I mean. Pigs are quite large animals. Large animals need large area to move about. And they most definitely did not have that' (Young single).

Outdoor access is also emphasised as important in the discussions in most groups. Several aspects are mentioned in relation to this – including the free choice of the animal of being indoors or outdoors (ideally being able to move freely between the two), the possibility of grazing (and by that exercising some degree of choice), having enough space for movement and maintaining species-specific behaviour. The perceived joy of animals connected with being let outdoors was also very much a part of the positive descriptions by the participants.

‘Here in Norway we have rules that say that cows are supposed to be out during the summer. I think it helps us improve the welfare. Especially the fact that they graze during the summer. I find that very nice.... You can see when cows are let out grazing in the summer and they jump and dance. That has to be good.... It’s only the first day, but anyway – animals like it’ (Empty nester).

‘Animals from here, they can walk outside in freedom, especially in the summer, and have a generally decent life. There is a big difference in practice in Germany or other countries for example England where these huge herds of livestock are kept inside all the time. To give you an example when I see that ‘Belgium’ or ‘Belgium Blue’, I don’t have much desire to eat that!’ (Hunter).

*‘Are you most concerned with how the meat will taste for you, or do you think of how the animal...’* (moderator).

‘I think of how the animals’ conditions are or have been’ (Hunter).

Regarding indoor conditions and the physical environment for the animals, it was emphasised that apart from providing enough space, the physical environment should be suitable for the particular needs of the animals. Care in terms of comfort was mentioned and views were expressed that conditions in Norway have improved during the later years regarding such adaptations. Below, a participant from the young singles group expresses how she that felt a change for the better had happened in public regulation recently, and that welfare had improved for at least some types of animals:

‘I don’t know that much about pigs, but concerning the cows, they have at least gotten much better conditions now. Now it is confirmed in the law that they get to go out for example. And now they are coming with open barns.... I think it is from next year, 1st of January. All the farmers or milk producers have to have foam mattresses in the barns so that the cows get to lie down softly. And it is not pens. I think that a lot has changed within the past 10 years concerning animal welfare. That makes me happy, really happy. I think that at least cows, they are fine, under the circumstances (Young single).

### *Transport and slaughter*

Concerns about transport of animals were an issue that emerged in all focus groups. Transport in itself was regarded as a stressful event for animals, and the duration as well as the physical conditions during transport (space, air, water) were discussed as key issues. Concerns were in particular related to transport of animals to the slaughterhouse, where a risk of animals being regarded as ‘meat’ or ‘already dead’ was perceived. On-

farm slaughter was in several cases mentioned as a better solution, avoiding potential hazards and pain for the animal.

‘Another thing I think about is the transport of animals. Now that slaughter on farms has been forbidden, the animals have to travel often very long distances to be slaughtered. This is a real stress factor for them, stuck packed together in a truck. Completely unnecessary in my opinion. The practice of slaughtering at the farm has become so stringent with regard to regulation that...’ (Hunter).

A participant from the young singles group told about an experience she had while helping out at a chicken farm in connection with transportation to slaughter. She felt bad about how the chickens were handled:

‘[T]hey had 2000 chickens that had to be in the boxes within an hour from the start. It is quite strict rules for that. And because the time schedule has to be followed, to keep up, to follow the rules, the transport happens quite quickly. That is when it is quite bad. They lift three and three chickens from their feet from the small cages and squeeze them into boxes and that has to happen very quickly. That is because they should not be pestered for that long. But the transport is very horrible anyway. It is small cardboard boxes in several layers. I know that that happens, and I have seen it. And I should have actually travelled with them, but I just couldn’t. That was just so horrible’ (Young single).

She maintained that she felt it is OK that we ‘use animals for our benefit’, but that the conditions should be as good as possible for the animals. In case of the chicken, her view was that it would have been better for the chicken to be ‘slaughtered there and then’.

#### *Animals are animals as long as they live*

‘I think like this – they are not just chops for you because of that to put it that way. It’s actually, as you say, a life until they become our food’ (Empty nester).

A key point that was emphasised in the focus group discussions was that animals have rights in the capacity as animals - on their own right – and not only as a resource for human beings. Whether or not the animals were thought of as ‘food’ while they were still alive was described as a ‘sign’ that things had ‘gone too far’ in the direction of factory farming. What was presented as the norm was the maintenance of a strict divide between the animal as a living being and its final purpose as food. Below is a discussion in the group of politically active /vegetarians that illustrates how the issue of price and efficiency is viewed as factors which may contribute to lack of respect for animals:

‘I have a cousin who is a pig farmer; he collects the piglets when they’re three months old. Then he only keeps them until they’re ready for slaughter, 120 pigs! He’ll just drive them to the slaughterhouse and disinfect the shed and make it ready for a new batch! That’s what I call a meat factory!’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘I call that barbaric!’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

‘That sort of thing makes me more doubtful towards eating that kind of meat’ (Politically active/vegetarian).

The reference to ‘meat factory’ in the quotation above indicates that the end goal as food is perceived as defining the farming activity, rather than the ‘raising of pigs’.

Another example, indicating the importance attributed to the clear divide between the living animal and the food products derived from it is taken from the group of rural women:

‘One wants that they shall have a good life during the time that they live. And I believe that one is willing to go far to make that happen. But the day you have shot it, then it is a resource’ (Rural woman).

We notice that she stresses that it is not until ‘the day you have shot it’ that it is acceptable to think of the animal as food or a resource. A rural woman emphasises this point in another passage in the discussion as well:

‘They are animals as long as they live and on the day they die they become foodstuffs’ (Rural woman).

### *Care*

As indicated by the above section, treating animals ‘as animals’ implies care. This was an issue, which appeared in all groups, and which was discussed in various ways. Regularity and personal contact with the caretakers were among the aspects mentioned.

‘[A] cow which comes from a farm, or a cowshed, where the farmer has a personal relationship to his animals, they take care of them, the place is clean, they feed them, milk them, and they don’t overfeed them – it is a much happier cow than the one which is taken care of by mere production, only for profit. Then it’s more welfare’ (Empty nester).

‘And then I think it is important that the animals are being looked after regularly. That the farmer checks the cowsheds at least twice a day. That one knows that the muck is cleaned up and... that they get regular meals – that they get more than one meal a day, just like us. They need a more regular life’ (Empty nester).

One point that was made was a distinction between grazing animals in extensive production and animals kept indoors with regard to positive contact with humans. As discussed earlier, animals living ‘freely, out in nature’ to the largest extent possible was emphasised as an ideal. In these cases, care from humans was not so much in the forefront (rather being as far away from people as possible, and let alone to be in charge or their own lives was regarded positive). However, for the animals living in more regular contact with the farmers, care was more explicitly described as a key issue for the welfare of the animals.

'[W]ell, I am not very animal-loving when it comes to cows, but it is a life you are supposed to take care of and have respect for. And I guess you get more of it when you keep them in captivity – you understand they need food, water and good surroundings when they can't be outside grazing.... When they are out grazing they can decide for themselves when they want to eat.... They can decide upon themselves, but when we are in charge of them, it's obvious that we have to take good care of them (Empty nester).

### *Notions of ethical consumption*

One type of distinction, which emerged in some of the focus groups refers to the eating context rather than to particular types of meat. This regards the proper valuation of the meat, and is expressed in terms of avoidance of gluttony and/or waste. This could be interpreted in terms of both the sacrifice related to the living animal having 'given its life', and in terms of sustainability issues, where the 'biological value' of meat is high in comparison with cereals and vegetables. A participant from the group of rural women, describes that she sees it as an obligation of consumers to keep such values in mind when we compose our diet:

'It is we who will buy it who demands that it should be like this and like that: 'Go on and make it as quick and cheap as possible'. We should rather boil another potato and have a little less meat for dinner' (Rural woman).

Sustainability concerns are also emphasised by a participant from the politically active/vegetarian group. He describes his family as 'quite conscious consumers' who seek out their food after what they consider as ethically and sustainably sound:

'We always ask for organic food. We search for stores who sell it. We always pick what we can get organic first before we pick the other things. I've always ruled out the thought of vegetarianism since I eat fish. I never eat fish from fish farms, and we usually limit ourselves to one dinner with meat a week' (Politically active/vegetarian).

In addition to paying attention to the amounts of meat or fish in the diet compared to vegetables and cereal, the same participant also describes how he chooses certain types of meat from a sustainability perspective:

'Personally I eat meat, but mainly moose. And some lamb. But rarely pork and cow. That's a choice I've made. It is more sustainable to eat that kind of meat in comparison to pork and so on' (Politically active/vegetarian).

A participant from the young singles group expressed the view that the value of meat should be recognised. He explains that he finds the excessive meat eating in western countries unethical and refers to considerations about equality in distribution of food and resources:



‘We eat incredibly much meat in the west compared to the rest of the world. It is quite unethical to eat as much meat as we do’ (Young single).

Ethical consumption may be viewed as somewhat separate from animal welfare issues, but in the focus groups, this topic was related to practical consumer strategies in coping with having to pay a higher price for ethically produced meat: To the extent that a higher price was a problem, the amount of meat should be reduced rather than compromising on the welfare quality in the production of the meat. In this respect, we find it relevant to include under the section of animal welfare considerations.

### *Summary of findings in each focus group*

TABLE 6.8a Young singles

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General agreement of acceptability of eating animals for food. Animal welfare issues are related to the quality of life of the animal during their entire life-span (‘how they live and how they die’). Nevertheless, certain types of animals or animals slaughtered at certain stages of life were considered less acceptable (or unacceptable) to eat (e.g. calves, suckling pigs)</li> <li>• Humane treatment of animals: Animals should not be treated as ‘things’, but be attributed rights in the capacity as animals.</li> <li>• ‘Natural’ is a key concept in this groups discussions. It is referred to as a norm in relation to 1) ‘Natural environment’ according to the specific needs of the specific species; 2) Scientific development/breeding should not take place contrary to the integrity of the ‘natural’ size/shape and function of the animal body (it should not depart too much from the ‘natural’ animal, e.g. long pigs getting back problems; too large foetuses for natural birth; cows with too large udders to walk outdoors).</li> <li>• Farm animals should be allowed a full, normal life-span and not be slaughtered too young (e.g. calves, suckling pigs). Chicken were discussed as a paradox in this context: They were frequently eaten (without being recognised as ‘young animals’), while they in fact qualified for the same scepticism as calves and suckling pigs.</li> </ul>
On farm conditions and treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical environment: Enough space, light, air. As ‘close to natural conditions’ as possible. Soft bedding so that animals can lie down comfortably.</li> <li>• Access to outdoor areas</li> <li>• Small-scale rather than large-scale</li> <li>• Feeding regime: According to the needs and what is ‘natural’ for the specific species (not meat to vegetarians); not too little and not too much (growth should not be enhanced in speed, nor should the animal be forced into an unnaturally large size)</li> </ul>
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care, human contact</li> <li>• As short as possible</li> <li>• Enough space, air, water etc. according to physical needs and minimum stress</li> </ul>
Slaughter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Careful handling all the way from barn to moment of death</li> <li>• Without suffering</li> <li>• Preferably on-farm to reduce suffering related to transport and handling. Professionalism and control are arguments for slaughter at slaughterhouses.</li> </ul>
Ethical Consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The value of meat should be recognised. Waste and excessive eating is considered unethical.</li> </ul>

TABLE 6.8b Empty nesters

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animals should have had a decent life before they become food</li> <li>• Key points in 'decent life':             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Full life span (not calves and baby pigs)</li> <li>– As natural as possible (wild animals as ideal)</li> <li>– Care from humans, regularity</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
On farm conditions and treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free range and/or organic eggs considered better regarding animal welfare</li> <li>• Integrity of the animal body – maintenance of normal functions. Worries over breeding only with regard to economic profit and not enough consideration for natural limits of the animal, e.g. size of animals, giving natural birth, laying normally sized eggs.</li> </ul>
Transport Slaughter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As short as possible and under good conditions</li> <li>• As quick and painless as possible</li> </ul>

TABLE 6.8c Politically active/vegetarians

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This was a very articulated group. The complexity of consumer/citizen choices was discussed.</li> <li>• The view of some the vegetarians in the group was that it is not ethically acceptable to use animals for meat. Some of them founded their eating practices more on personal health considerations and less on considerations for the animal.</li> <li>• For the politically active consumers, sustainability was a main issue in regard to consumption of meat.</li> </ul>
On farm conditions and treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since the moral issue to a large extent was focussed on the killing of animals as such, good treatment of the animals while alive was not something that could 'turn the moral wrong into right' (conditioned meat eating). However, the group also discussed 'better' and 'worse' conditions for farm animals.</li> <li>• 'Better': To eat meat from an animal which had been free (wild hunted game) or farm animals which had lived as close to natural conditions as possible</li> <li>• 'Worse': Meat from animals in industrial 'factory farms'. Exploited animals which had suffered.</li> </ul>
Transport Slaughter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be avoided or kept at a minimum</li> <li>• Killing animals for food (or other human use) is barbaric. 'I don't eat my brother'.</li> </ul>
Consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable diet an important issue. Fairness and global solidarity.</li> </ul>

TABLE 6.8d Seniors

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This group tended to link animal welfare to consumer health and taste of food. The idea was expressed that 'gourmet' goes together with animal welfare, e.g. gourmet chicken would have been treated better.</li> </ul>
On farm conditions and treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small-scale better than industrial production. Concern about space and good care.</li> </ul>
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As short and decent as possible.</li> </ul>
Slaughter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As quick and painless as possible.</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The question of whether it is necessary for us to eat meat was raised, and several regarded it as possible for them to reduce their meat intake of ethical reasons – or even avoid meat (all or certain types of meat)</li> </ul>

TABLE 6.8e Urban mothers

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This group was the most articulated in distinguishing farm animals from pets. They rather referred to the animals as groups or categories (pigs) than ‘the sweet little piggy’. Reflections around this.</li> <li>• The issue of distance from the animal in the eating context was emphasised.</li> <li>• Biological similarities between humans and animals (particularly pigs) were brought up.</li> <li>• Pet-like animals could not be eaten (rabbits)</li> <li>• Animal welfare related to health, e.g. the use of hormones would be bad for the animal (provoke unnatural growth, industrial purposes) as well as for human health.</li> </ul>
On farm conditions and treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As natural life as possible – the ideal. Be able to follow natural instincts.</li> <li>• Respect for animals as animals – not trying to ‘humanise’ them or measure their welfare according to human parameters.</li> </ul>
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preferably, animals should be slaughtered on the farm to avoid transportation.</li> </ul>
Slaughter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport distance as limited as possible.</li> <li>• As quick and painless as possible.</li> </ul>

TABLE 6.8f Rural women

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animals should be respected and we should do everything we can to give them a good life while alive.</li> <li>• Acceptable and natural to ‘harvest from nature’ and use animals as a natural resource.</li> <li>• The necessity of human stewardship of nature including animal stocks was emphasised.</li> </ul>
On farm conditions and treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideally, animals should be able to move freely and be indoors or outdoors to their own liking</li> <li>• Grazing, animals choose what they want to eat</li> <li>• Protect farm animals from wolves (shoot wolves which come too close to inhabited areas)</li> <li>• Enough time for natural growth and development of farm animals</li> <li>• Care. Regularity, human contact</li> </ul>
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enough space</li> <li>• Good treatment</li> </ul>
Slaughter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As painless as possible.</li> <li>• Quick and properly.</li> </ul>
Ethical Consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The value of meat should be recognised. Waste and excessive eating is considered unethical.</li> <li>• Focus on turning ‘nature’ (natural resources) into food. Regarded as a valuable contribution.</li> </ul>

TABLE 6.8g Hunters

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideal: the freedom of a wild animal – yet, under human stewardship</li> <li>• Animals should be respected and we should do everything we can to give them a good life while alive.</li> <li>• Acceptable and natural to ‘harvest from nature’ and use animals as a natural resource.</li> </ul>
On farm conditions and treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor access important.</li> <li>• Conditions as closely as possible to the ‘natural habitat’ of the animal</li> <li>• Outfield grazing rather than on infield pastures</li> <li>• Protect farm animals from wolves (shoot wolves which come too close to inhabited areas)</li> <li>• Enough time for natural growth and development of farm animals</li> <li>• Smaller-sized farms provide better possibility for personal care of animals</li> </ul>
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should be avoided</li> <li>• Enough space</li> <li>• Good treatment</li> <li>• As short as possible</li> </ul>
Slaughter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideally, quickly killed out in its’ natural environment: ‘a quick bullet which the animals barely notice’.</li> <li>• On-farm slaughter to avoid transport and reduce stress in relation to handling of animals</li> </ul>
Ethical Consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The value of meat should be recognised. Waste and excessive eating is considered unethical.</li> </ul>

### 6.6.2 CONSUMERS’ VIEWS ON EXPERT CRITERIA

During the focus group discussions, a list of ten concerns written by animal welfare experts within the Welfare Quality project was presented. In the following, we will go through the focus group participants’ reactions to the content of these criteria, as well as their views about the effectiveness of information schemes based on such criteria.

#### *Reactions to content of expert concerns*

In general there were few comments and reactions to the list of ten concerns provided by scientists. The most common reaction immediately after the presentation of the list was a long silence. Subsequently, reactions tended to be that the issues on the list make sense, and that they felt it was rather well covered already by the prior discussions in the group.

The only point that was raised and to some extent debated in some groups was the issue referring to the animals’ well-being that was interpreted as too close to human nature rather than animals. Some expressed that one would think the list was concerning children instead of animals. Social lives of animals were regarded as natural to cater to, but emotional lives of animals were more debated. However, there were several incidents in the participants’ own stories where emotions played an important role (for example the happiness and joy of animals, or the feeling of pain and stress).

It was pointed out on several occasions that we – as humans – could not really know ‘from the inside’ how animals were and what would be best for them. But it was strongly emphasised that we as responsible for farm animals which are bred for our use should do all we can to give them the best conditions possible to the best of our knowledge.

The participants own spontaneous list of concerns did not differ much in terms of content. Some of the more basic requirements, such as those referring to absence of hunger and thirst, or a suitable physical environment, were sometimes not mentioned explicitly, but clearly implicitly part of what the participants regarded as important for animal welfare. The fact that they found these relevant, but ‘obvious’ prerequisites was reflected in their reaction to the list. However, the discursive framing tended to be somewhat different. In the focus groups, a less technical language was used, and descriptions would often reflect that they did not have specific knowledge about the conditions and practicalities of farming. In those cases, the values that were felt to be important were described, but not necessarily the means to secure them. That was also to a large degree felt to be the task of professionals.

*Participants’ impressions of the likely effectiveness of a standard based on the scientists’ list of concerns*

Since relatively little was said as direct responses on the expert list discussed above, there were also relatively little explicit considerations as to how a standard based on such criteria were to work. However, much of the discussions were about information more in general, including views about to what degree information in various forms would work. We will therefore refer to findings from those kinds of discussions.

Information about animal welfare to consumers was a central issue in the discussions – both regarding the fact that this is a crucial premise for consumers to be able to make choices based on this value, and regarding the experience of a lack of such information at present.

‘How is this information supposed to reach us? We don’t get to know it. About differences and how they run the farms and...’ (Empty nester).

‘Then we get back to the controlling bodies. But what kind of authority can we possibly have? Are we supposed to travel around to control every single farm with a special label, or the ones we use for meat production?’ (Empty nester).

It is evident that as consumers we need information. And this information must be in a form that makes sense to us. When being presented with examples of information and labels during the focus group session, a participant in the young singles group makes the following comment:

‘When I see all this, I remember a bit more of how I think in the shop. And for me, a happy pig, free pigs.... I am a bit... well...It tells me actually very little. And I would have liked to get more – much more information of what it actually means. Ecological eggs, actually that tells me very little too’ (Young single).

This indicates that information must be about something relevant and real which consumers may relate to the concerns they have. General claims of 'happy' animals and the like are less likely to be satisfactory in this connection – they need to be substantiated somewhat more. In addition to the general claims, uncertainty was expressed regarding the meaning of more technical terms such as 'free range' or 'organic'. There were several aspects to this uncertainty – one issue was uncertainty about what the terms referred to, another was related to whether or not it provided for better animal welfare.

'I don't know either that, if they are free range chicken, how much space do they get to move around. It is not sure that it is that much better than getting a cage for yourself' (Young single).

You don't really know how well free range chicken are, because it is some that have far too many free range chicken in an area. Then I might as well not care about it' (Young single).

At the same time as uncertainty about the meaning of the terms were expressed, free-range and access to the outdoors were indeed central issues and they were described as having an appeal to themselves as well as to 'consumers in general':

'Just take a look at this egg-thing. Free-living hens, right? Stuff like that sells' (Empty nesters).

Identification of the provenance of the foods in general emerged as a central issue in the discussions, and it was seen as relevant for making choices according to animal welfare. Traceability was perceived as the producer or manufacturer 'standing by' the product, and as such it was seen to indicate dedication and responsibility for the product towards the consumer. In some cases, products were discussed where animal welfare was included explicitly in the product information, but more often, knowledge about a specific farm or type of production was necessary to make the connection. As discussed elsewhere, there were several examples where gourmet products were related to animal welfare by the participants. Below is an example where the participant refers to a specific type of free-range chicken from a given producer (Stange-kylling).

'You can get it from Centra for example. Probably at Ultra and several other places too. It's got the name of the farm on the pack so they have to provide a level of quality. That's a very good thing' (Senior).

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## 6.7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 6.7.1 KEY FINDINGS

In the following, some key findings in the form of central themes which emerged in the focus groups will be summarized.

#### *The importance of various contexts and roles*

The welfare of animals, including farm animals, is clearly an issue that is considered important and there are expectations that this is prioritised and taken care of by professionals involved. However, linking these considerations to the consumer role is not unproblematic. Some of these challenges are related to the different roles that are relevant in different contexts. The results indicate that the context of eating could be problematic in relation to reflecting on animal welfare. Also in the context of shopping, 'the product' in itself or the social context of the meal to be prepared tended to be more in focus than the animal which it originates from. Still, it was obvious that animal welfare was an issue that mattered and even evoked strong feelings. A key question is how to address the issue in a suitable and relevant way with sensitivity to the relevant contexts.

#### *Doing vs. thinking relation to food*

The nature of our relation to food in various contexts proved to be very relevant. This is a basic theoretical issue in understanding food consumption, and it is highly relevant in finding good approaches to understanding how we as consumers or citizens (or other social roles) relate to the issue of animal welfare. The fact that our relation to food in many cases is a 'doing' rather than 'thinking' (discursive) relation poses some challenges as to how to address the issue of animal welfare in a successful manner. Meat in particular is connected to some specific challenges regarding the need for 'de-animation' in the eating context.

#### *Citizen/consumer involvement the securing of animal welfare*

A view that emerged across the focus groups was that as consumers, we should basically be able to walk into any place where food is sold, and pick out meat (with the focus on meat as a food product, within a cuisine-discourse), without having to worry about it being produced in an ethically indefensible way. The position that animal welfare should be the responsibility of professionals and not primarily a responsibility of consumers as 'choosers' in a market represents an important issue to address further.

One aspect of consumer involvement is the level of knowledge and insight that they are likely to have. Farm animals and their destiny are (sometimes very deliberately) remote from citizens/consumers. This poses challenges as to how to best involve citizens/consumers in the setting of premises for conditions in food production in general and the treatment of farm animals in particular.

Another issue – apart from discussion about the degree of responsibility of different actors in the food system – is the wanted minimum level of welfare. A view presented was that it was of interest to them to be able to choose products with better animal welfare, but risking that other products based on worse conditions for animals was not acceptable. An implication of this would be that a market-oriented approach to securing animal welfare that is followed by a differentiation along this value (e.g. that some products would actually have very low welfare quality), may be in conflict with this view among consumers. To the degree that focus groups participants expressed a wish to choose products in the market according to welfare criteria, it was expressed that this must be on top of a basic level of mandatory criteria securing an acceptable level of welfare for all animals in food production. This may be specifically related to the Norwegian context, where consumers are used to quite similar levels of quality across the products offered in the market. It could also be of relevance that in Norway there is a tendency to trust public authorities more than the market. There is in fact scepticism towards private schemes.

#### *Human animal relation*

Similarities and differences between animals and human beings were discussed explicitly, as well as appearing as an underlying theme. The status of animals vs. humans was discussed as a basis for moral positions. It was also discussed in relation to more mundane matters. Paradoxes appeared, for example related to such ideas as 'humane treatment' of animals. This issue is a basic theme to be further explored in the project.

#### *Limits and norms for the human 'use' of animals*

The main impression from the focus groups was that there was mostly an agreement that human 'use' of animals in itself was acceptable. However, there were strong views about how this should happen, and (often implicit) references to limits, rules and norms. The contents of these norms as well as views about what they are based on will be of interest for further analyses.



### 6.7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the following, we will summarize some points of relevance for the further development of the project. In particular, this includes results regarding participants' views about information, as well as relevant themes for the survey analyses.

Key points about information related to products were that it should be:

- Clear.
- About something which consumers can relate to and understand the significance of.
- Substantial – not (only) general unsubstantiated claims such as 'happy'. 'Happy' is relevant, but reasons why the animal is more happy should be pointed out.
- Traceable. The possibility to identify someone who claims responsibility and 'stands by' the product is seen as positive. Even though participants thought it to be unlikely that they would actually make contact, the possibility in itself gave a basis for trust.
- From a reliable source. In Norway, public authorities are generally trusted to a much higher degree than market actors. However, there are differences between various types of actors in the market. Farmers, for example, are quite highly trusted.

Regarding participants' reactions to the expert list, there were few specific reactions - across all focus groups. Most likely, this was because the items on the list were perceived as good and relevant – and perhaps quite obvious. Those were the most typical reactions we received – following the initial silence. Almost without exception, a long silence was the initial reaction after having read the list.

A few points that were discussed were that similarities with human beings had perhaps been taken too far. There were some comments about certain points resembling something meant for children rather than for animals, and it was some debate over whether the reference to emotions were appropriate and relevant. But the main reaction was agreement and support of these aspects as well.

The silence and agreement without a lot of comments could be interpreted as a view that these are professional tasks, and that as consumers, we have neither the knowledge nor the responsibility to address these issues or have specific opinions about them. It follows from this point of view that consumers may express values, wishes and expectations to food and how it is produced in much broader terms – such as simply stating that 'we are in favour of farm animals having the best welfare possible', or 'we regard taking care of animal welfare as a basic requirement to our food and production system'.

Regarding relevant themes for the survey analysis, one central issue is the relative role of information as basis for consumer choice, versus other ways of securing animal welfare. Information systems (contents of information, way of informing) as a premise for the individual consumer to be able to make individual choices in the market is an

important issue, It is also important that other types of premises are treated in the analysis, such as:

- the availability of alternatives (which are in fact substantially different from each other with regard to the value/concern in question)
- that prices are affordable
- that needs for convenience in everyday life are met.

# FRANCE

by

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY<sup>28</sup>

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Except for those actively involved in animal welfare/well-being issues, most participants in the focus groups felt that animal welfare was not a major concern. However, many felt that participation in the focus groups had made them more aware of this issue.

In France meat consumption appears emblematic of wider cultural attitudes to food. Within the focus groups we identified several broad consumer profiles with regard to meat consumption. The first profile consists of people who do not like meat and consume very little, the second consists of people who like meat but are concerned about food safety issues, especially post the BSE crisis and so have reduced their consumption. The third profile includes people who still enjoy eating meat and are strongly attached to the food.

Many focus group participants said that labels influenced their buying decisions; they believed that organic labels (Bio label in France) and Red Label (Label rouge), but also 'free range' labels, contained a welfare component. However, most participants were not familiar with labels that were promoting welfare as a single issue.

People who are in favour of animal welfare are led by two types of rationality: rationality in value (the animal must be respected and has rights) or instrumental rationality (animal welfare guarantees both the quality and the flavour of food).

There is a range of views on the nature of human/animal relationships: some participants make a clear difference and hierarchization between humans and animals: animals are made to be eaten by men. For other people, there is a deep connection, which can go as far as anthropomorphisms and treating animals like children.

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<sup>28</sup> We would like to thank Marc Higgin and Adrian Evans for the final editing of the French report.

The question of animal welfare raises several ethical dilemmas:

- a cultural one, with the symbolic status of 'foie gras' or even meat in French culture and identity;
- cultural also in the sense that animal welfare issues are perceived as 'exotic' and imported from northern countries of Europe (which are quite different from Latin cultures with regard to human-animal relationships);
- social question: animal welfare implies an increase in the cost of food production and for some people it can make it more difficult to buy meat, which leads to greater inequalities;
- this in turn is linked to the problem of hierarchy: as human welfare is nearly always considered to be more important than animal welfare.

On the whole participants agreed with the list of concerns developed by animal scientists working on the Welfare Quality project. However, whilst there was a consensus around the first six areas of concern, many participants felt that the remaining four concerns were unrealistic given the nature of modern intensive farming systems and that they were overly anthropomorphic and sentimental in their treatment of animals.

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## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

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The emergence of a human sensibility towards animals is a social process that is still a subject of discussion in France. Indeed, this question has grown in importance to the extent that it appeared in a special issue of the journal *Sociologie du Travail* in co-edition with the INRA, bearing the title 'Bien être et souffrance en élevage: conditions de vie au travail des hommes et des animaux'<sup>29</sup> by Jocelyne Porcher (2002). At the same time, the publication of the thesis written by this same author and awarded the prize 'Le Monde de la recherche universitaire' (The World of Academic Research) was the object of radical critiques by one of the specialists of animal domestication anthropology and member of the Association of pluridisciplinary research 'L'Homme et l'Animal' (Man and Animal), Jean Pierre Digard. In brief, the thesis would be a 'delirium of the sensibilities', 'in writing that is not outstandingly flowing' and,

'By confusing the issue, by keeping alive the confusion between men and animals, J. Porcher becomes the advocate of a new obscurantism. The distances she displays towards the radical animal 'protectors' are purely formal. What is even more serious, for a zoo technician, is that the perspectives drawn here appear to be devoid of practical impact because of idealism' (Digard, 2002:301).

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<sup>29</sup> 'Welfare and suffering in rearing: living conditions at work of men and animals'.

Jean Pierre Digard's words remind us that the question of animal well-being is still emergent and fiercely contested in France and that, contrary to some Nordic countries, it is still an object of discussion.

The question lies within a dynamic that also concerns, maybe above all, the scientific circles. In 1994, Robert Dantzer wrote 'Welfare and comfort are recent notions in the French veterinary field'. Animal welfare and the question of slaughter emerged with the foundation of the SPA (Société protectrice des animaux) in 1845 and materialized with the vote of a law five years later: 'It is for his own benefit that the duty of mankind is to protect the animal, and he recognizes that he has a certain number of duties towards it. Men have to protect animals because of financial interest (higher output when applying care, maintenance of the animals) and because progress and morality require it (contagion effect of violence, blood calls for blood)'. About thirty years later, the interests of man is not the primary motive for ensuring animal welfare, but rather comes from the recognition of animal rights. The example of the creation of a refuge for stray animals brings a different idea of animal protection: the animal must be protected for itself, mankind is not the absolute master of all creation and cannot have the existence of animals at his disposal. Behind these changes lies the difficult problem that vivisection poses, because according to animal rights campaigners it cannot be beneficial to humans, given that medical progress depends on suffering inflicted on animals and should therefore never be legitimate.

Before we present the results and the analysis of the study, we will make a brief survey of the general situation relative to the question of animal welfare in France. We will begin with a quick history of the way it is taken into account by the authorities and the scientific authorities, as well as French public opinion.

We will see that despite the fact that animal welfare is a relatively recent issue of public concern there is a growing level of public awareness and even political mobilization around this issue. We will also broach the way this question is perceived by consumers and how it can influence the consumption of animal products.

### 7.1.1 SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT AND HISTORY OF LEGISLATION

In France, the law was initiated from a utilitarian perspective to protect animals as property (1791 and 1810). In 1976, animals were recognised as 'sentient beings'. It is because of this recognition that a certain number of statutory measures were put in place, which condemn serious ill-treatment and acts of cruelty towards animals. These measures decree that a duty of care should be present in the different stages of production: from rearing, during transport and at slaughter. Yet the recognition of 'the ability of animals to suffer' (Burgeat and Dantzer, 1997) has not elevated them from the world of things, indeed the law has not functioned to remove all animal exploitation but only to change the ways in which they are exploited. The animal is recognized as having a sensibility, an individuality, a subjectivity. Recognizing these characteristics in animals and their capacity to suffer problematizes the principles of animal exploitation.

It has 'major socio-economic repercussions on animals farmed for food, through the interdiction of some rearing techniques and the promotion of other practices more respectful to welfare' (Burgeat and Dantzer, 1997:69). Thus there are two conflicting tendencies within the French legal system: on one side a protection of usefulness and on the other a protection of sensibility. This gave rise to a split of the structures and institutions aiming at the protection of animals and, around 1910, the state intervened in sanitary and hygienic issues in order to restore a strong dimension of utility to the protection of animals, by imposing the culling of stray refugee animals when they are old and ill.

Since 1960, the legislation concerning animal protection strengthened in France as well as in Europe. In France, the pilot law of the 17/07/76 which 'considers the animal as a sentient being' that has to be reared by its owner in conditions compatible with the biological imperatives of its species' (concerning rearing, transportation and slaughter) is fundamental. Various community initiatives have had direct repercussions on French animal welfare legislation.

- Directive of the Council of the 18th November 1974 about stunning preceding slaughter.
- In 1985 the White Book about the completion of the internal market stresses the necessity of harmonizing animal welfare legislation.
- Report gathering the opinions of different stakeholders in June, 1986 (producers, organizations of animal protection, scientific experts etc.) and resulting in the adoption of the political resolution aiming to ensure animal welfare.
- Transcription into French law of community dispositions relative to veal welfare (normalisation of housing and rearing practices).
- November 2003: meeting of the Minister of Agriculture with the consultative committee of health and animal welfare (reflection about the protection of pets, animal transportation, slaughter conditions and animal status).

In France, Article 9 of the 1976 law constitutes the guiding line of all the decrees and orders which follow. Thus the decree 80-791 from the 01/10/80 taken for the application of Article 276 of the Rural Code specifies the 'compatible conditions' for animals. All the owners of animals have to:

- feed and water animals in order to satisfy their needs;
- treat illness or injuries;
- keep animals in living conditions or an environment not 'susceptible to be a cause of injuries or accidents';
- not use, unless of absolute necessity, any form of detention not adapted to the considered species or likely to cause suffering' (Article 1).

Professional organizations are very active in this field, including associations of producers but also consumer lobby groups. Some of the key organisations are listed below:

- le Syndicat National de l'Industrie des Viandes (SNIV, National Union of the Meat Industry);

- le Centre d'Information des viandes (CIV, Meats Information Center): provides information via the site 'marché aux bestiaux et bien être animal' (Livestock market and animal welfare);
- la FNSEA ('Fédération nationale des syndicats d'exploitants agricoles', National Federation of Farmers Unions);
- le MHR Viandes (European): provides information, through various media organisations, relating to welfare legislation, product labelling, marketing and staff training.

Consumers are present in the media through consumer protection and lobbying organizations, such as the UFC – que choisir? - an authority of representation, awareness and information for consumers, for example they have helped to initiate product boycotts, however, at present, they are not that active in relation to animal welfare and welfare labelling issues.

Newspapers also play an important role, for example, an article in *Le Monde*: 'How to decipher the labelling of foodstuffs' (05/05/2003) underlined the problem of the proliferation of food labels, which baffle consumers. A similar article also appeared in the *NouvelObs*, entitled 'Imposing the information on guests' (19/12/2002). French television also provides a certain amount of information about animal welfare issues.

#### 7.1.2 MOBILIZATION, PRESSURE GROUPS AND RAISING AWARENESS

Although animal welfare has been taken into account relatively recently by French public opinion, action and pressure groups exist which try to alert the general public and the political authorities about the life conditions of animals. The SPA was the first of such organisations and remains one of the best known. Its aim is to fight against animal suffering at different levels: cruel traditions (cockfights, bullfights, certain forms of hunting etc.) and animal 'murder' linked to fashion (furs), the living conditions of animals in urban environments and 'criminal gastronomy'. Another important organization in France and various countries is the 'foundation Brigitte Bardot', this has 57 000 members based in more than 60 countries and has financed 323 advertising campaigns. The Committee for vigilance and action regarding animal well-being (Comité de vigilance et d'action pour le bien-être animal) has 26 members. They act in order to make animal welfare part of the public debate and they lobby politicians to make animal welfare a major part of their electoral campaigns. The French foundation of animal rights of 1977 restored a balanced relationship between humans and other animal species. The French branch of 'Compassion in World Farming' named PMAF tries to influence food habits in order to lower the sales of products obtained through industrial production. In 2004 'Academie de la viande' (Academy of Meat) included animal welfare concerns as an additional criterion in its awards.

### 7.1.3 RESEARCH AND SURVEYS

Several organizations are involved in institutional or private research on animal welfare issues. 'AGRI Bien-être animal' (AGRIBEA, AGRI Animal Welfare) is a research group drawing together researchers from INRA and other institutions (including CNRS, AFSSA, ACTA, DGAL, IE, ITAVI and ITP). This group consists of biologists, production line specialists, social scientists, sociologists and economists. The aim of the work done within this framework is to produce knowledge about animal welfare, in order to propose innovative solutions with respect to welfare in breeding, farming and slaughter.

The missions of AGRIBEA are:

- to animate and coordinate research in the following fields:<sup>30</sup> sensory and cognitive capacities of livestock, components of welfare: behavioural needs, pain, emotions, methods of 'objectification' of animal welfare, genetic and ontogenetic factors determining the adaptation of animals to breeding conditions, ethical and socio-economic dimensions of animal welfare;
- to ensure a scientific debate in the form of seminars and meetings;
- to promote inter-institutional relations in the field of animal well-being.

The main fields of research are: emotion and cognition, emotions linked to isolation, pain, indicators of suffering, the genetic effects of health disorders on animal welfare, questions linked to the evaluation of health and welfare in breeding, social scientific dimensions of animal welfare.

### 7.1.4 PUBLIC OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES ON ANIMAL WELFARE IN FOOD PRODUCTION

Concerning animal welfare, in particular rearing conditions, intensive breeding is seen as the symbol of intensive business practices, and is strongly rejected. The bad food given to animals, profit motivation, transportation conditions, and accelerated production are denounced. Yet the fact that people like to eat foie gras shows limits to their sensitivity towards conditions of animal rearing. There is a greater acceptance of the force-feeding of geese and ducks especially among the higher classes, men, and people of 35 years or younger. On the other hand the facts of being an occasional consumer of meat, of having a pet and of having ties in the agricultural world contribute to the rejection of this practice.

Cultural dimensions have to be seriously taken into account because of the presence of a large Muslim component within the national population. Societal and political debate has been going on to ensure that religious practices comply with legal constraints

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<sup>30</sup> The agronomic and agricultural schools act on the formation, research in the fields linked to breeding, production and the animal welfare.



concerning hygiene.<sup>31</sup> Yet debates exist about the question of animal welfare and suffering (regularly reopened by Brigitte Bardot and the SPA). An article entitled 'France: the rapid expansion of halal chicken' was published in the newspaper *Libération* on the 14/02/2004, in order to underline the appearance in Paris during the previous months of the fast food industry (Chicken Corner, Tasty Fried Chicken etc.) posting '100 per cent halal meat', in order to attract French Muslim customers. In many French supermarkets (Carrefour, Monoprix etc.), halal food is offered to consumers, for a large range of products. Large retail chains view halal as an opportunity for growth and competitive commercial positioning, especially in the context of a growing lack of consumer trust in small halal butchers in the wake of the BSE crisis. Questions concerning the distribution and consumption of halal meat in France have been studied by Florence Bergeaud-Blacker.

In French society, preoccupations concerning the question of animal welfare are quite recent and socially diversified. Opinion is marked by an opposition between 'executives' and 'liberal professionals' both of whom say that they are 'concerned by the controversies of animal breeding conditions', whereas more working class consumers say they are 'not at all concerned'. Those who do not consume or consume few animal products are more sensitive. Organic food consumers are also more concerned than those who never buy these products. People sensitive to environmental issues are more concerned. City dwellers are more interested than rural or urban people who spent part of their childhood in the countryside. Working women, women living with a partner and women with children are more concerned about animal welfare than single women, women without children and unemployed women.

#### 7.1.5 LABELS

Marks, labels and appellations are signs of quality whose symbolic function is to reassure the consumer by giving an identity to the product even if, as a survey realised by the CREDOC in March 2001 states, 27 per cent of consumers declare that they do not trust the quality labels on foodstuffs (Pichon, 2004). Institutions in charge of consumer protection show vigilance in this field. Animal welfare campaigners invite consumers to buy only from labels guaranteeing welfare-friendly breeding conditions. Certain special interest groups encourage consumers to buy calf meat where the label indicates that the calves were reared in groups, as opposed to individual animals raised in 'crates'. At the moment, few labels exist in the field of animal welfare. Another important issue regards whether French consumers really want to have information that makes them more aware of the living conditions experienced by farm animals and the manner in which they are slaughtered.

Labels on 'health' and 'welfare' (e.g. anti-stress, youth, good transport conditions, fat free) are often proposed by manufacturers and advertising executives. Public authorities

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<sup>31</sup> From the legal point of view 'the ritual slaughter can be carried out without preliminary dizzy spells of the animal, but only under certain conditions' (specified in decree 77-565 of 2 June 1977, art. 10-11 of decree 80-791 of 1 October 1980, and art.13 of decree 97-903 of 1 October 1997).

have taken many measures to ensure that the claims made on these labels are genuine. The concept of 'pleasure' is at the centre of French food culture, however recently it has been subjected to public health constraints (e.g. in relation to obesity). Institutions for consumer protection have shown a great interest in labelling issues, especially those relating to 'bio' (or organic) foods. It is necessary to place the questions of animal welfare within the framework of the changes in food behaviours (and in particular attitudes towards meat) but also within the dynamics of innovation in agro-food companies (e.g. innovations in products, processes, organizational structures) (Etude Agreste, Enquête innovation 2001; we can add that the agro industry of the meats counts among less innovating in France).

#### 7.1.6 CONSUMERS AND CONSUMPTION (FOOD OF ANIMAL ORIGIN)

Food is not a banal product for human consumption, it is incorporated: 'it enters in the body of the eater, becomes the eater himself, taking physically and symbolically part in the maintenance of its integrity and the construction of its identity' (Poulain, 1997). The change of food provisioning with industrialization and the multiple transformations of foods led to the development of new food behaviours and new consumer requirements and expectations. Consumers pay more attention to the quality of products, they have become distrustful of farming practices, and the concept of animal welfare seems to be a concern in which the relation between man and animal has to be redefined.

As a general trend in France, meat consumption increased rapidly between the Second World War and 1985; after this period, the quantity consumed began to decrease. Upper class consumers decreased their consumption more than others. During the second BSE crisis, meat consumption reduced but it has now returned to the previous level.

TABLE 7.1 Statistics of wholesales last 10 years

	Milk***	Beef*	Pork*	Eggs**	Poultres*
1991	78.5	30	33	850	20.86
1995		28.1	35.75	950	23.72
1999		27.7	37	960	24.8
2000	73	26.4	38	950	26.16
2001		25.7	36	950	25.9
2002	71	27.8	37.1	940	26.4

Notes: \* Individual Consumption (kg par habitant and per year) \*\* Unite : 1000 TECOQ et \*\*\* kg/hab./year.

Yet meat occupies a very important place in food culture. Thus, to the question 'What does 'eating well' (bien manger) mean for you?', 93 per cent of people answer 'meat dishes' and 68 per cent 'beef dishes'.

TABLE 7.2 Meat Consumption in France in 2003

Order	Type of meat	Consumption (1000s of tons)
1	Pork meat	2254
2	Beef and veal meat	1663
3	Poultres	1430
4	Ovine and caprine meat	264
5	Other meat	27

Sources: OFIVAL d'après FAO, Eurostat, Scees.

### *Milk and beef*

Current milk consumption in France is relatively low (90 litres per annum and per capita) in comparison with that of other countries (253 litres in Sweden and 175 in the United States). Cheese consumption, which is important in France, varies according to the area: from 10 to 20 grams per day in the East of France, to 40 or 50 grams in the Centre. Milk is associated with health, well-being and the concept of 'purity', in particular for young people but it also causes disgust in certain cases (too strong a smell and association with blood and secretions).<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, certain consumers have become more concerned about their milk consumption in the light of the growth of naturopathy and the warnings on behalf of some doctors blaming milk (especially cows' milk) and certain dairy products in the development of certain illnesses.

Beef, as with other red meats, is positively connoted with pleasure and (for women especially) with health. Pleasure on account of its taste and health because it provides iron. However, some surveys point to a decline in public trust of beef (and especially its perceived health benefits) during the 1980s. This was due to new nutritional recommendations that highlighted the dangers of animal fats and the effects of the BSE crisis.

### *Eggs and poultry*

Although poultry and eggs constitute important components of French food culture, their consumption is linked to globalisation and environmental degradation. Eggs, which benefit from an overall positive image, were partially criticised by nutritionists: egg white is considered to be good for health, but the yoke is associated with high levels of cholesterol. On the other hand, poultry meat benefits from a positive image from this point of view: white poultry meat remains the basis of a nutritionally 'good food'. The type of product consumed has changed: urbanisation and increases in the number of women in employment have led consumers to seek more practical products, which are ready to consume. Surveys underline the passage from 'ready to cook' to 'ready to consume' and they highlight the limited response of producers in proposing products in this field. If the so-called 'battery chicken' remains a product eaten by some because of

<sup>32</sup> Programme AQS: CRITHA, CIDIL 'l'Imaginaire du gras d'origine laitière', 1999, Jean-Pierre Corbeau, Jean-Pierre Poulain.

its low price, the image of industrial excess in breeding and of 'chickens which cannot walk any more' has negatively effected poultry consumption.

### *Pork*

Consumers want pig meat with increased medical security and taste and many consumers (especially wealthy and highly-educated consumers) would be ready to pay more for higher quality products.<sup>33</sup> In relation to animal welfare, wealthy consumers, highly educated consumers, older consumers, consumers with children and people who frequently consume pig meat tend to prioritise medical security and are not that concerned about animal welfare, in contrast low income consumers and younger consumers tend to prioritise animal welfare.

### *What about vegetarians?*

The majority of surveys report that 1–2 per cent of the French population are vegetarians. In a survey conducted in 1999, 9 per cent declared they respect philosophical or religious principles in food choice and 2 per cent specified that they did not eat meat. During the BSE crisis the number of vegetarians increased to 6.1 per cent (November 2001) as people stopped eating meat out of anguish and self-protectionism but a year later, the number fell to 2.5 per cent.

### *Outline of the report*

Before we start the presentation of the results themselves, we shall go over the main dimensions of the methodological approach used as well as the three main theoretical lines that underlie the analysis of the collected data.

Then we shall present the data by beginning with an analysis of the culinary practices of the focus group participants, including shopping practices, culinary preparation habits and food consumption practices. This reflection shall focus on the relationship between consumers and animal products and, taken as a whole, the relationship between humans and animals.

Next, we will focus on consumer understandings and perceptions of animal welfare, in particular we will ask: what do consumers know about farming practices and animal welfare? What is the degree of familiarity with the products (or labels) promoting the respect of animal welfare (in particular from the presentation, during the focus group, of products and labels existing on the subject)? What do the participants think about the legitimacy of the question of animal welfare?

In the following step, we shall identify the representations of participants concerning the question of who should take responsibility for ensuring that farm animals have good

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<sup>33</sup> Results of a 2002 INRA inquiry of about 1000 individuals.

welfare. We shall also seek to understand the implications of these allocations of responsibility and what this might imply in terms of the types of specific measures that are adopted to improve welfare. In particular, we will focus attention on the issue of product labelling (as one potential device for improving welfare) and we will examine consumer's perceptions of and attitudes towards product labels.

We will conclude by discussing consumers' spontaneous animal welfare concerns and comparing these concerns with the ten welfare concerns developed by animal scientists working on the Welfare Quality project.

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## 7.2 METHODOLOGY

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In this section, we present the rationale behind the choice of participants selected for the focus group research. We also present the theoretical orientations that underlie our approach. This survey is part of a European project (Welfare Quality®) and takes place at the same time in seven countries (Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, France) with common aims and methods. Adopting a similar approach across all countries will permit cross-country comparisons and cross-cultural analysis.

### 7.2.1 THE FOCUS GROUPS

The focus group methodology allows the detailed analysis of perceptions and systems of values (qualitative and socio comprehensive method), and the emergence and the capture – within a group dynamic – of collective attitudes and representations. Indeed, according to recommendations regarding the construction of groups, one can either group together individuals having common socio-descriptive variables (e.g. sex, age, marital and familial situation, level of education, living region or socio professional category) and/or life-style variables (vegetarians, politically committed, religion, etc.) or one could gather, in the same group, several subgroups according to the same modalities outlined above. This latter grouping strategy mainly aims to confront the points of view concerning an identical question according to strong and diverse variables (most of the time explicative) that underlie convergences or divergences in position.

In this survey, the two approaches have been combined because they are complementary. As an example, in the focus group 'country specific', we grouped together people from different religious denominations (both non-practising and practising) as well as hunting enthusiasts and individuals involved in the protection of breeding stocks. The implicit objective of this grouping consisted in particular in the validation (or invalidation) of the following hypothesis: religious practices, particularly concerning Hinduism (some connections with animal killing or vegetarianism among

the Brahmans), Judaism and Islam (linked to ritual methods of slaughter: kosher and halal) and practices linked with hunting (in locating and killing prey) could induce reflections and debate on human-animal relations and animal welfare (e.g. absence of suffering and respect for animals).

The underlying idea to this methodological approach to focus groups is that, in a situation of group interaction the exchanges between participants favour more easily the emergence of positions, representations, opinions, attitudes and beliefs than individual interviews. However, in order to institute a group dynamic, many contextual elements are essential. The focus group meetings have to be well planned to ensure good attendance, the participants have to be selected with care (according to given criteria), and the facilitators have to be well-prepared (mastering the technique of survey, the interview guide, etc.).

In the case of focus groups, the verbal interactions between the participants and with the discussion guide and/or reflections by the leader can have a stimulating effect. The context allows the former to express their opinions, to clarify their words, to illustrate them with examples, to speak about them, to agree or disagree with their interlocutors and to question each other. This context can even favour the emergence of collective thought about the questions addressed during the discussion. Key ideas can be born from the exchanges and 'carry weight' on the group dynamic by orientating the discussion and articulating it around a particular theme. We can, for example, mention the fact that in several groups, someone (often from a high socio-cultural background) gave prominence to a form of food elitism, which can come from the installation of an animal welfare reasoning in food supply. This theme emerged very often in the focus groups thanks to a 'key' person arousing strong reactions from the other participants.

Focus group participants were selected via a two-step recruitment process. The first step determined the initial criteria for the selection of participants: it was defined and then validated by all national teams. The second step involved matching our requirements with the lists of available participants offered by the sub-contracted agency (however individuals in the 'country specific group' were recruited directly by the ERITA team).

In order to favour more open exchanges we invited participants who did not know each other. We believe that anonymity and the fact they will not meet each other again after the focus group allows them to express themselves more freely.

At the time of the meeting, each facilitator outlined once again the themes to be covered and the operating procedures for the discussion (e.g. outlining the sub-themes to be discussed, encouraging free speech but with respect towards other participants). It was very often specified at the beginning of the discussion that the aim was not 'marketing' but 'research', which generally reassured participants and made them feel, at least in principle, more inclined to speak freely.

Concerning the management of the meetings in Toulouse, Paris and Albi, the setting, the date, the time and the duration were chosen in order to favour the exchanges between the participants. The interviews were made in meeting rooms adapted to this form of discussion (comfortable armchairs, meticulous but neutral design, wide range of

drinks and biscuits). Usually the focus group discussions took place in the afternoon and lasted for 3 hours, including a 10 minute break. Each focus group had at least two facilitators: a leader and a reporter. In addition to the audio-visual recordings (that were transcribed in full), one of the facilitators also took detailed notes.



FIGURE 7.1 Geographical distribution of the focus groups

The facilitation of the focus groups is important and quite demanding; one had to channel the discussions around the suggested themes; arouse the participation of the less talkative or those embarrassed to speak; limit the contribution of participants who were dominating proceedings; listen and register the information and know how to react to questions and to synthesise what has been said; and ask participants to take positions (consensus or dissension) about a theme.

Of course it was important for the facilitators not to express opinions and unduly influence the nature of the debate. One of the important tasks was to express ideas without influencing the discussion (verbally as well as on a behavioural level). Sometimes, when the discussion was engaged enough and a climate of confidence had been established, we could stimulate the interlocutors by prompting them to verbalize some of the emerging ideas.

We have to specify that at the beginning of the meetings, everyone was invited to introduce his or herself, which was useful for the main facilitator but also for the reporter and the other members of the group. It also highlights the common characteristics of the participants and establishes a level of group cohesion. For example, 'you have been chosen because you are all young and single'. After presenting

the general theme and discussing how we wanted to run the session, the focus group began with the following request 'I'd like you to speak about your meat consumption'.

It seems interesting to underline an aspect that can constitute a limit to the focus group research. Even when the sampling criteria have been rigorous and relevant and the sessions led in a way to bring out everyone's opinions, the dynamic of the group privileges the emergence and dominance of a collective-consensus viewpoint, which many participants acquiesce to in order to avoid any kind of sanctions from the group. So on the one hand an enabling affect exists: we recognize each other and feel that we belong to the same group, however this also serves to promote consensus and limit dissent as participants can hide behind the values of the majority. However, this 'consensus effect' can be deceptive, as the interaction demands an instantaneous statement of viewpoint, which can lead participants to prematurely adopt a certain stance (which is often in agreement with the group). Moreover we noticed that some less vocal participants allowed themselves to take a stand, either when someone else opposed the group, or during the breaks (where more informal discussions often arose). For example, during the 'Urban Mothers' focus group three participants confessed (between themselves and without the rest of the group knowing) that they were buying meat in hard discount supermarkets. It seems that they did not dare to assert themselves concerning this subject during the focus group discussions, in particular because it implied that their economical capital was weaker than other members of the group.

We examined this aspect relating to group dynamics in the linear analysis, which we carried out on the focus groups. Seeing in which context an idea emerges and in which conditions it propagates. Measuring how other ideas are born and how they relate to previous statements (e.g. do they run counter to or nuance previous ideas). Trying to bring to light forms of non-adhesion that can be non-verbal (silences) or verbal, escape, uncertainty, etc.

### 7.2.2 WHY NVIVO?

The main interest of the utilisation of this software lies in the fact that all the teams of the Welfare Quality project use it; this promotes greater data compatibility, which in turn facilitates comparative analyses between countries. However, particularities specific to the theoretical approaches of different teams introduce elements of differentiation between countries. As such, it seems important to specify, even in a non-exhaustive way, that the reasoning adopted by France in the analytic qualitative treatment of focus group data was as follows:

First, all the focus groups were transcribed in French and were the subject of content analysis (linear as well as transversal). This took place in several steps: first, a linear analysis by a person, then, a rereading of the whole (focus group transcript and analysis) by members of a working group and finally a discussion. Regular meetings were organized to discuss the different points of view raised in the focus groups and to provide sociological insights into the participants' practices and understandings. This



resulted in the development of a ‘typology of meat eaters’ (this is discussed later in the text) and opened the way to the transversal analysis of the focus groups. This first stage aimed to bring out thematic categories.

In the second step, the focus group transcripts were re-read in order to remove any unnecessary content. The edited texts were then translated into English. The English texts were imported into the software package N’Vivo and were the subject of a second content analysis using the themes that were developed in collaboration to enable international comparisons to be drawn. More precisely, we can say that the team only coded the texts by broad themes and elaborated only a thematic and analytic arborescence (classification and organization into a hierarchy of categories). We did not wish to use N’Vivo to explore more complex associations and to compare segments of speech and test hypotheses as this work had already been done beforehand without the help of this software (see stage one outlined above). It is advisable to say that we were interested in consumer perceptions and we were eager to identify the main discursive ‘objects’ that circulated in the transcripts (themes, concepts, words, ideas etc.) and to understand the conditions of their circulation if it was necessary. As such many of our N’Vivo codings reflect this pre-occupation.

TABLE 7.3a Focus group details

Focus Group	Animateur	Lieu	Nombre d’interviewés
Country Specific	Jean-Pierre Poulain	Toulouse	7
Empty Nesters	Jean-Pierre Poulain	Toulouse	11
Political/Vegetarian	Jean-Pierre Poulain	Toulouse	6
Rural Women	Helmut	Albi	8
Seniors	Anne Dupuy	Paris	8
Urban Mothers	Anne Dupuy	Toulouse	8
Young Singles	Anne Dupuy	Paris	7
Total			55

TABLE 7.3b Gender

Focus Group	Female	male	Total
Country Specific	5	2	7
Empty Nesters	6	5	11
Political/Vegetarian	3	3	6
Rural Women	8		8
Seniors	4	4	8
Urban Mothers	8		8
Young Singles	4	3	7
Total	38	17	55

TABLE 7.4 Composition of focus groups

ID Number	Focus Group	Gender	Age	Marital Status	No. of Children	No. Children <5	Rural/Urban	Education	HHIncome	Occ. Status	Vegetarian	Politically Active	Meat Consumption
109	paveg	Female	ag4	Partner	1child	NCU5	Urban	highed	highinc	OS1	Yveg	YPA	NA
110	paveg	male	ag1	Single	0child	NCU5	urban	highed	lowinc	OS4	Yveg	YPA	NA
111	paveg	male	ag4	Separated	2child	NCU5	Urban	highed	medinc	OS1	Yveg	YPA	NA
112	paveg	Female	ag3	Single	1child	NCU5	Urban	lowed	lowinc	OS2	nveg	YPA	highmeat
113	paveg	male	ag3	Single	0child	NCU5	rural	lowed	medinc	OS3	Yveg	YPA	NA
114	paveg	Female	ag4	Widowed	1child	NCU5	Urban	lowed	medinc	OS4	nveg	YPA	medmeat
115	Yosing	male	ag1	Single	0child	NCU5	Urban	lowed	lowinc	OS3	nveg	NPA	highmeat
116	Yosing	Female	ag1	Single	0child	NCU5	Urban	lowed	medinc	OS2	nveg	NPA	highmeat
117	Yosing	male	ag1	Single	0child	NCU5	Urban	highed	lowinc	OS4	nveg	NPA	highmeat
118	Yosing	Female	ag1	Single	0child	NCU5	Urban	lowed	medinc	OS2	nveg	NPA	highmeat
119	Yosing	male	ag1	Single	0child	NCU5	Urban	highed	medinc	OS1	nveg	NPA	highmeat
120	Yosing	Female	ag1	Single	0child	NCU5	Urban	lowed	lowinc	OS2	nveg	NPA	highmeat
121	Yosing	Female	ag1	Single	0child	NCU5	Urban	meded	lowinc	OS2	nveg	NPA	highmeat
122	Urbmo	Female	ag3	Partner	1child	NCU5	Urban	meded	highinc	OS1	nveg	NPA	medmeat
123	Urbmo	Female	ag2	Partner	1child	NCU5	Urban	meded	medinc	OS2	nveg	NPA	highmeat
124	Urbmo	Female	ag3	Partner	3pluschild	NCU5	Urban	meded	medinc	OS4	nveg	NPA	highmeat
125	Urbmo	Female	ag3	Partner	2child	NCU5	Urban	highed	highinc	OS4	nveg	NPA	highmeat
126	Urbmo	Female	ag2	Partner	1child	NCU5	Urban	meded	highinc	OS4	nveg	NPA	highmeat
127	Urbmo	Female	ag2	Partner	1child	NCU5	Urban	highed	highinc	OS1	nveg	NPA	lowmeat
128	Urbmo	Female	ag3	Partner	2child	NCU5	Urban	highed	highinc	OS1	nveg	NPA	highmeat
129	Urbmo	Female	ag3	Partner	1child	NCU5	Urban	highed	highinc	OS1	nveg	NPA	highmeat
133	emptynest	Female	ag4	Partner	2child	NCU5	Urban	meded	highinc	OS4	nveg	NPA	highmeat
134	emptynest	Female	ag1	Partner	0child	NCU5	Urban	highed	highinc	OS2	nveg	NPA	highmeat
135	emptynest	male	ag5	Partner	0child	NCU5	Urban	highed	highinc	OS1	nveg	NPA	highmeat
136	emptynest	male	ag2	Partner	3pluschild	NCU5	Urban	meded	medinc	OS3	nveg	NPA	highmeat
137	emptynest	male	ag1	Partner	0child	NCU5	Urban	meded	medinc	OS3	nveg	NPA	highmeat
138	emptynest	male	ag4	Partner	0child	NCU5	Urban	lowed	medinc	OS3	nveg	YPA	highmeat
139	emptynest	Female	ag2	Partner	0child	NCU5	Urban	highed	medinc	OS2	nveg	NPA	highmeat
140	emptynest	Female	ag1	Partner	0child	NCU5	Urban	meded	medinc	OS4	nveg	NPA	highmeat
141	emptynest	Female	ag4	Partner	1child	NCU5	Urban	meded	medinc	OS4	nveg	YPA	highmeat
142	emptynest	male	ag3	Partner	0child	NCU5	Urban	meded	medinc	OS3	nveg	NPA	highmeat
143	emptynest	Female	ag5	Partner	0child	NCU5	Urban	meded	medinc	?	nveg	NPA	medmeat
145	seniors	male	ag5	Partner	2child	NCU5	Urban	lowed	medinc	OS4	nveg	NPA	medmeat
146	seniors	Female	ag4	Partner	2child	NCU5	Urban	meded	highinc	OS2	nveg	NPA	highmeat

TABLE 7.4 cont.

147	seniors	male	ag4	Single	0child	NCU5	Urban	highed	highinc	OS1	nveg	NPA	highmeat
148	seniors	male	ag5	Partner	2child	NCU5	Urban	lowed	highinc	OS4	nveg	NPA	highmeat
149	seniors	Female	ag4	Widowed	3pluschild	NCU5	Urban	lowed	highinc	OS3	nveg	NPA	highmeat
150	seniors	male	ag5	Partner	0child	NCU5	Urban	highed	highinc	OS4	nveg	NPA	highmeat
151	seniors	Female	ag4	Single	0child	NCU5	Urban	meded	lowinc	OS3	nveg	NPA	lowmeat
152	seniors	Female	ag5	Partner	3pluschild	NCU5	Urban	meded	highinc	OS4	nveg	NPA	highmeat
153	Countryspecific	Female	Ag2	Partner	3pluschild	YCU5	Urban	highed	?	OS4	nveg	NPA	highmeat
154	Countryspecific	Female	ag3	Partner	2child	YCU5	Urban	?	?	OS4	nveg	YPA	highmeat
155	Countryspecific	Female	Ag3	Partner	2child	NCU5	Urban	highed	?	OS4	nveg	YPA	highmeat
156	Countryspecific	Female	AG1	Single	0child	NCU5	Urban	highed	lowinc	OS4	nveg	NPA	medmeat
157	Countryspecific	Female	AG2	Partner	1child	YCU5	Urban	highed	?	OS4	nveg	NPA	highmeat
158	Countryspecific	male	AG1	Single	0child	NA	rural	meded	lowinc	OS4	nveg	NPA	highmeat
159	Countryspecific	male	AG3	Partner	1child	YCU5	Urban	highed	?	OS1	nveg	NPA	highmeat
160	rural women	Female	AG2	Partner	2child	NCU5	rural	meded	highinc	OS2	nveg	NPA	highmeat
161	rural women	Female	AG2	Partner	2child	NCU5	rural	lowed	highinc	OS2	nveg	NPA	highmeat
162	rural women	Female	AG3	Partner	2child	NCU5	rural	meded	highinc	OS2	nveg	NPA	highmeat
163	rural women	Female	AG2	Single	0child	na	rural	meded	medinc	OS2	nveg	YPA	medmeat
164	rural women	Female	AG1	Separated	2child	NCU5	rural	meded	medinc	OS4	nveg	YPA	highmeat
165	rural women	Female	AG1	Partner	0child	na	rural	meded	highinc	OS4	nveg	NPA	highmeat
166	rural women	Female	AG3	Partner	3pluschild	NCU5	rural	lowed	highinc	OS2	nveg	NPA	highmeat
167	rural women	Female	AG4	Separated	1child	NCU5	rural	highed	medinc	OS2	nveg	YPA	highmeat

TABLE 7.3 Age

Focus Group	ag1	ag2	ag3	ag4	ag5	Total
Country Specific	2	2	3			7
Empty Nesters	3	2	1	3	2	11
Political/Vegetarian	1		2	3		6
Rural Women	2	3	2	1		8
Seniors				4	4	8
Urban Mothers		3	5			8
Young Singles	7					7
Total	15	10	13	11	6	55

TABLE 7.3 Marital status

Focus Group	partner	separated	single	widowed	Total
Country Specific	5		2		7
Empty Nesters	11				11
Political/Vegetarian	1	1	3	1	6
Rural Women	5	2	1		8
Seniors	5		2	1	8
Urban Mothers	8				8
Young Singles			7		7
Total	35	3	15	2	55

TABLE 7.3 Number of children

Focus Group	0child	1child	2child	3pluschild	Total
Country Specific	2	2	2	1	7
Empty Nesters	8	1	1	1	11
Political/Vegetarian	2	3	1		6
Rural Women	2	1	4	1	8
Seniors	3		3	2	8
Urban Mothers		5	2	1	8
Young Singles	7				7
Total	24	12	13	6	55

TABLE 7.3 Rural/urban

Focus Group	Rural	Urban	Total
Country Specific	1	6	7
Empty Nesters		11	11
Political/Vegetarian	1	5	6
Rural Women	8		8
Seniors		8	8
Urban Mothers		8	8
Young Singles		7	7
Total	10	45	55

TABLE 7.3 Education

Focus Group	?	highed	lowed	meded	Total
Country Specific	1	5		1	7
Empty Nesters		3	1	7	11
Political/Vegetarian		3	3		6
Rural Women		1	2	5	8
Seniors		2	3	3	8
Urban Mothers		4		4	8
Young Singles		2	4	1	7
Total	1	20	13	21	55

TABLE 7.3 Income

Focus Group	?	highinc	lowinc	medinc	Total
Country Specific	5		2		7
Empty Nesters		3		8	11
Political/Vegetarian		1	2	3	6
Rural Women		5		3	8
Seniors		6	1	1	8
Urban Mothers		6		2	8
Young Singles			4	3	7
Total	5	21	9	20	55

TABLE 7.3 Occupational status

Focus Group	?	OS1	OS2	OS3	OS4	Total
Country Specific		1			6	7
Empty Nesters	1	1	2	4	3	11
Political/Vegetarian		2	1	1	2	6
Rural Women			6		2	8
Seniors		1	1	2	4	8
Urban Mothers		4	1		3	8
Young Singles		1	4	1	1	7
Total	1	10	15	8	21	55

TABLE 7.3 Vegetarian

Focus Group	Nveg	Yveg	Total
Country Specific	7		7
Empty Nesters	11		11
Political/Vegetarian	2	4	6
Rural Women	8		8
Seniors	8		8
Urban Mothers	8		8
Young Singles	7		7
Total	51	4	55

TABLE 7.3k Politically active

Focus Group	NPA	YPA	Total
Country Specific	5	2	7
Empty Nesters	9	2	11
Political/Vegetarian		6	6
Rural Women	5	3	8
Seniors	8		8
Urban Mothers	8		8
Young Singles	7		7
Total	42	13	55

TABLE 7.3l Meat consumption

Focus Group	highmeat	lowmeat	medmeat	NA	Total
Country Specific	6		1		7
Empty Nesters	10		1		11
Political/Vegetarian	1		1	4	6
Rural Women	7		1		8
Seniors	6	1	1		8
Urban Mothers	6	1	1		8
Young Singles	7				7
Total	43	2	6	4	55

#### 7.2.4 THE GENERAL ORGANISATION OF THE FOCUS GROUPS

##### *Summary results from the de-briefing questionnaire*

##### General impressions:

The general feeling was positive, people found the discussions interesting, 'democratic', rich and full. Some participants were surprised by the choice of research topic. Several participants said they learnt a lot:

- most participants recognised that they didn't know that much about religious aspects linked to food (French specific focus group in particular);
- most participants knew little about animal breeding and slaughter issues.

Most participants said they would think more deeply about these issues in the future.

##### Position:

##### 5 groups emerge:

- definite sceptics: they thought that the aims of the Welfare Quality project would be impossible to carry out;
- partly septic: many of the project's proposals are unrealistic;

- people who are not very interested or consider this issue as a secondary one compared to other problems and priorities;
- consensus: the situation regarding animal welfare must change (the AW initiative is good). Participation in the focus group either generated or increased this conviction;
- those who need to think about this new issue to build a clear position.

We register a general satisfaction concerning the ability to express opinions during the focus groups.

When participants provide additional written feedback it deals with:

- the necessity to be patient in order to change the situation and the difficulties likely to be encountered;
- some of them underline the gap between the ethical approach and the professionals' vision;
- one of the participants adds that we should trust human beings;
- for many participants, the term 'bien être animal' is not appropriated and it is unrealistic;
- some propose to include animal welfare concerns within the 'label rouge' assurance scheme.

Do they want more information on WQ project? What kind of information?

- Most people want more information about the leaders of the Welfare Quality project (which countries, which institutions?).
- Many participants would like to know how the data collected in the focus will be used.
- Some want to be informed on the way that Welfare Quality takes transportation and slaughter into consideration.
- Some are curious to see how the Welfare Quality project will be applied across different European countries (i.e. the problem of harmonisation)
- Participants wanted to know information about the concrete result of the project: will the project produce a new animal welfare label, new laws or new control systems?

How would participants like to be informed about this issue?

- 1st TV, newspapers, radio (but clear and respectful information not brainwashing).
- 2nd The Internet.
- 3rd Directly by mail.
- Others Directly during another meeting, using consumer associations ('because we trust them').

Usual sources of information about this issue.

- 1st TV and Magazines ('60 millions de consommateurs', 'Que choisir?').
- 2nd Discussion with farmers, producers or small retailers.
- 3rd Internet (e.g. Greenpeace).
- 4th 'Bouche à oreille'.
- Others Never looked for information on this issue before the focus group.

### 7.2.5 THEORETICAL APPROACH: MAIN DIMENSIONS

Two main theoretical approaches are used in the analysis. The first one deals with the relationship between consumers and animals (eater and meat). Two directions are followed: the perception and management of food safety and health risks, and the perception of killing animals for food.

- Health risks, such as BSE, obesity and the use of G.M. foods (in both human and animal foods) highlight the contradictory and ambivalent nature of food – as both a source of health and sometimes a source of illness.
- The significant media coverage of the slaughter of cows and sheep are experienced by the public in a context where the borderline separating humans from animals is more and more uncertain. In particular, pet owners often view their animal companions in anthropomorphic ways which re-ignites fundamental questions concerning the killing of animals for food and the guilt felt about this killing.

The questions which concern us are:

- how does an animal become eatable?
- how does an animal enter into the food category?
- what keeps them there?
- what is the risk if we change the status of their classification?

Two main lines of thought can be followed: first the organization of the rules of categorization (the law of proximity and the intricacies of classifying categories) and second the social mechanisms, which legitimise killing animals for food.

The question of the relationship between humans and animals, and above all the killing of animals for food and the analysis of how certain animals become edible/inedible has been the object of significant work in sociology and ethnology (Leach, 1980, Vialles, 1987, Méchain, 1992, Fischler, 1990, 1998, Millet, 1994, Poulain, 1997, 2002).

The second angle of analysis refers to the rationalities developed during buying, cooking and eating, two modalities interest us: the instrumental one (we do something with a certain aim) and the rationality in value (we are led by certain values, e.g.



religious, ethical, familial etc.). This system organizes the behavioural schemes and routines in eating habits.

Rational choice theory (RCT), which adopts the assumption that consumers chose products in a rational fashion (often to maximise their economic utility), dominates traditional economic thinking. This approach lends itself to mathematical modelling. However, this model has limited predictive capacity and often poorly reflects real life situations where both consumers and markets tend to act irrationally.

Since Max Weber, sociological thought distinguishes several forms of rationality. 'Instrumental rationality', in which acts are justified by their consequences and 'rationality in values' in which respect for certain values guides decisions and not the consequences of actions. But there is another fiction that we have to avoid, namely the notion that consumers reason and reflect every time that they make a decision, instead many actions can be non-reflexive and led by routines. A routine is a sequence of programmed actions. It avoids the mental charge of the decision and is a cognitive economy. Routines are the result of decisions taken in the past (decisions which were led by either instrumental rationality or rationality in values). It is in the name of this old decision process that the social actor begins today an action without having to consciously reflect upon their motivations, rather he/she just takes the decision to launch a routine. In the field of food choices, routines are small scenarios, which can structure purchase decisions, cooking activities and eating behaviours.

The Sociological Eaters Rationality Theory (SERT) (Corbeau and Pouliau, 2002), broadens the rational choice theory (RCT) of economics. It makes the distinction between three kinds of rationality: instrumental rationality, rationality in values and routines. This perspective seeks to identify the different forms of rationality adopted by food consumers. At the very least, it tries to outline the imaginary and interactionist contexts in which different ways of legitimising actions take sense. It tries to bring out the ambivalences within human-animal relations and food cultures. It points to the fact that decisions often reflect attempts to arbitrate between (and even exceed) these ambivalences. It also sheds light on the ways in which social interactions help to influence decisions.

TABLE 7.5 Ambivalences of feeding

	Positive	Negative
Pleasure/displeasure	Food brings gustative pleasure (Neophily)	Food can bring disgust (Neophobia)
Health/illness	Food is source of energy and health	Food can be a source of illness and troubles
Life/death	Food allows the preservation of life	Food 'takes the life' of the consumed organism. Food can also kill the eater (e.g. poisoning).

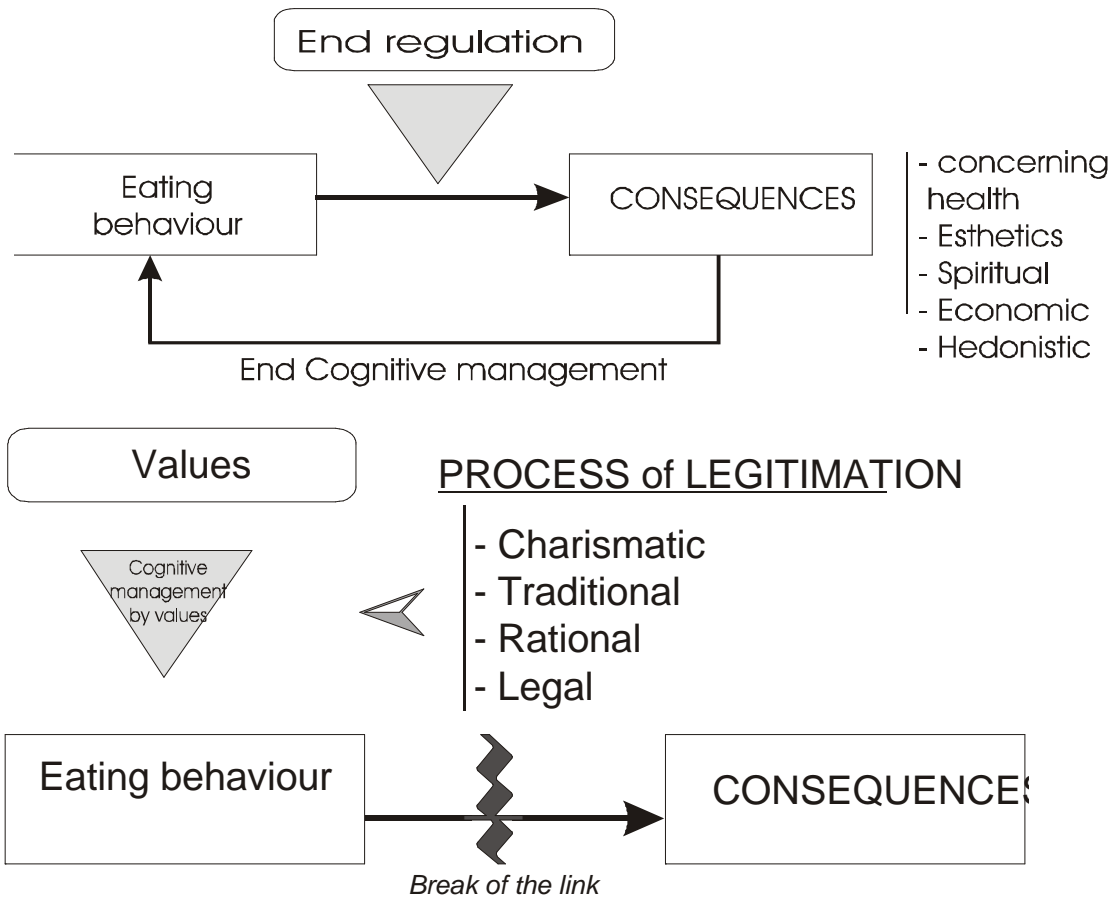


FIGURE 7.2 Food regulation: end or values rationality

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### 7.3 CULINARY PRACTICES: EATING, PREPARING AND BUYING ANIMAL FOOD PRODUCTS

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#### 7.3.1 MAIN TRENDS

The increasing distance between products and consumers, due to transformations in modes of food production, distribution and consumption helps to generate a feeling of insecurity and anxiety, where many consumers believe that ‘what we eat, deeply transforms us’ and changes our identity (Fischler, 1979). According to a survey of Credoc in 2000, about 70 per cent of French people think that foodstuffs can present health risks (this figure was 55 per cent in 1996).

For 51 per cent of consumers beef represents a health risk (source: Agri-Marchés Enquête International, LSA March 2001) followed far behind by seafood, poultry and pig meat. The same study by Credoc confirms that consumers believe that they are under-informed about the processing and manufacturing of food (75 per cent), the breeding conditions of animals (64 per cent) and the processes of food preservation (51 per cent). Lastly, the 2003 Taylor Nelson Sofres survey (on consumer confidence in food and attitudes to meat) found that 36 per cent of consumers had less confidence in beef than before and 27 per cent of consumers had less confidence in other meats than before. In such a context of insecurity, consumers often adapt by modifying their practices: they reduce their consumption of meat, they increase their purchases from more trusted sources (such as local butchers), they increase their consumption of higher 'quality' products, less risky meats and organic products and they increase their attention to labels (see for example, Pichon (2003) who has highlighted the growing importance of food labelling).

Meat is one of the most symbolic foods. In the West before the 60s, meat was one of the more valorised foods in the culinary system (due to social distinction and special nutritional virtues). It seems that there has been a transformation of the representations around meat due to a 'vulgarising' of meat consumption by the progress of agriculture and industry (attenuation of its distinctive value) and by a swing towards a more regulated diet (De Labarre).

In *La symbolique de la viande* (1997), Colette Méchin, underlines that eating meat is not without significance, in many societies it is used as an indicator of social hierarchy. In rural French society, meat occupies a central place, not in relation to the quantities consumed but by the signification assigned to it in the field of health: energy and force. However there is a hierarchy in the symbolic value of meats that rests on the colour of the flesh (ranging from dark red (almost black) to white): red meat, is associated with masculinity and violence, whereas white meat is considered to be feminine, as it is similar to dairy products (which symbolise purity, maternity and life). Blood is at the centre of the system of representations of meat and (with some exceptions) it is considered to be unsuitable for consumption in many European societies.

A survey led by the INRA in 2002 shows that in the hierarchy used by French consumers relating to important dimensions about meat, food safety comes first, followed by taste, then animal welfare; effects on the environment occupy the last position.<sup>34</sup> Many studies about food behaviours show that the consumption of red meats has dropped to the profit of the white meats, fish and vegetables. Whilst red meat has kept a strong symbolic value, especially for middle and low class consumers, the BSE crisis has badly damaged its image.

Consumers also seem to be favouring meats that hide their animal origins (e.g. chicken and ham, pre-prepared and butchered meats, products without blood). These tendencies show what certain observers have termed neo-vegetarianism. Religion also exerts an important influence over meat consumption habits (e.g. the consumption of halal and kosher products)

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<sup>34</sup> Results of a 2002 INRA inquiry of about 1000 individuals.

Jean-Pierre Poulain believes that in relation to the symbolic importance of foods 'values of quality have substituted those of quantity'. One does not work any more to gain his bread but his beefsteak. Consuming meat everyday is considered to be beneficial for health. However, whilst certain meats such as beef and veal enjoyed a significant amount of prestige, their image has been damaged in the light of the BSE crisis and the use of artificial growth hormones.

### 7.3.2 SUPPLYING: MATERIAL AND IDENTITY LOGICS

Different aspects intervene when consumers choose to buy meat. Next to economic dimensions, which are particularly significant in the choice of low-price products and corresponding selling places (e.g. discount stores such as 'Leader Price'):

'I am not used to going to the butcher because my parents were not very well off, they made us eat meat but they went to the supermarket because it was less expensive; it's true that I admit that quality is not the same because when I eat at my cousin, she does it all by herself with 5000m<sup>2</sup> of land, therefore she has everything there. And it's true that the taste is not the same but well the price too. If we want to eat it everyday. It's expensive and you must be able to continue doing it' (Female, high income).

We also find practical criteria, often linked to the organization between a professional and a domestic universe (e.g. the supermarket is on the route between home and work)

'I buy mostly in supermarkets when I am in a hurry. But my husband has more spare time, when he is free; he goes to butcheries once a week. He buys for a whole week in a butchery. Whereas in a supermarket, you go inside, you see a sirloin, you need three or four sirloins, you buy them and that's it. But it is all a question of time' (Female, high income).

The choice of buying place is also determined by the degree of demand for quality and the relationship between meat quality and price.

In this regard there is the following hierarchy of stores (running from least to best quality): discount and low price stores, supermarkets, butchers (neighbourhood butchers and local market butchers), products with labels (in supermarkets), Kosher and halal butchers, farmers and stockbreeders.

'Other than chicken, which I buy at times at the supermarket (I take the red label), I buy all my meat at the butchers. Ok it's just at the end of my street and it's indeed really expensive' (Female, high income).

This hierarchical organization is superimposed with a different relationship to the animal and an association between place of sale and the fact that animal welfare is taken into account. We can also say that according to this hierarchical organization, we go

from a distance to a greater proximity with the place and the universe of rearing (and the animal world).

These aspects also go with a differentiated relationship with meat. Thus we spot three types of consumer:

- An occasional meat eater, for whom two dimensions weigh in the meat purchase: the link between quality and price and product provenance. This consumer does not like meat that much.
- A more regular eater, who likes meat but has concerns about meat consumption. For this kind of consumer, taste is an important criterion but he has to be reassured as the food crises that affected France have an important impact on his attitude. This sort of eater wants more product labels. Several are looking for the proximity and the link with the world of production, either directly (farm), or indirectly (butcher).
- A 'relaxed' eater liking meat. The taste and the quality are the two main criteria that condition his choices. He is usually a connoisseur and lets his good habits lead him: he prefers certain labelled products and can recognize a good meat by touch and appearance.

### 7.3.3 FOUR EATERS PROFILES

The relationship with meat is differentiated within the studied population. Four profiles emerge according to the perceptions of meat, which also refer to types of consumers.

According to the first profile, the 'forced eater', the appetite for meat is weak, and consumers within this profile are more inclined to purchase fish and seafood products. The taste and texture of meat are only appreciated in a relative way. In this world, we find mainly women (35 years old and over) and individuals who give a large importance to health and human bodily appearance (thinness) in their relationship with food.

'But once a week, it is my maximum. I don't like this and I can't go inside a butchery because all these raw things, yuck! I can't go to a fish-stall because of all these raw things, yuck! All this is too complicated! I force myself because I think that one should eat something, to feed oneself' (Female, low income)

Meat consumption is strongly influenced by social and family forces: in this first consumer profile we believe that meat consumption is the result of social situations in which the eater is 'constrained', mothers are frequently in this position.

'I easily refrain myself from eating meat, I cook meat because of family, but if I only was concerned, I would not eat it. I force myself to eat' (Female, 45 years old, housewife, urban dweller).

Consumers within this group like to avoid handling meat:

'it is not that much the fact to eat meat that disturbs but rather the manipulation of flesh and raw meats.'

'I can't go in a butchers, because of all those raw things ... yuk!' (Female, 56 years old, employed, urban dweller).

Consumers within this group also 'de-animalise' meat. This attitude is different from the previous one because here the matter is to distance everything that can remind consumers about the living animal.

'But, on the contrary, I will manage to eat cooked chicken, cooked chicken fillets, I will eat it more easily. A roasting chicken, I can't. There is an unbearable taste for me' (Female, 38 years old, shopkeeper, urban dweller).

Meat does not have a strong symbolical status in the models of this category of eaters who often have to force themselves to consume it, in particular for cultural reasons.

'I really force myself to eat it at least once a week, I must take food all the more, it's my maximum even if I cook it the best I can, I can't eat it twice at a stretch!' (Female, 56 years old, employee, urban)

Consumers in this profile rarely (or indeed never) consume red meats: this aversion for red meat leads some to increase their consumption of white meat, and in particular poultry.

'I try to favour white meat because of the taste and because I think it is better for health' (Female, 46 years old, shopkeeper, urban).

According to the second profile, the 'anxious eater', meat is an integral part of eating culture but a certain anxiety underlies (and often limits) its consumption, in particular linked with the BSE crisis and other food scares. Furthermore the individuals concerned are very preoccupied by their health and the nutritional dimensions of food. However, they have a hedonist approach to food: pleasure and conviviality around food are key motivating factors in their systems of eating values. Finally, this profile is characterised by a certain distanciation in relation to the world of animal production and living animals. From socio-economic and socio-demographic points of view, the concerned persons are mostly city dwellers from middle and high social classes. The following quotes reflect different dimensions of the representations and attitudes of these consumers:

(a) The positive tasting and hedonistic view. This attitude could amount to the idea that 'without meat, there is no pleasure'.

'I can totally abandon myself to a marvellous entrecote ... Sometimes, a great entrecote, it is really very good' (Female, 47 years old, Post-Graduate, Executive).

(b) Meat consumption is nearly inescapable but it is regulated, especially at dinner:

‘... rule number one is never eat it for dinner, it is too fatty and we sleep badly’ (Male, 64 years old, Employee, urban dweller).

‘... we became vegetarians for dinner 20 years ago’ (Male, 63 years old, post-graduate, urban dweller).

(c) Meat is appreciated but its consumption is regulated as consumers have become more sensitive and reflexive in the wake of various food crises.

‘... during the mad cow crisis, I totally stopped eating beef, when they were talking about chicken, I stopped eating chicken too, so it changes with the news’ (Female, 59 years old, Post-graduate, urban dweller).

(d) Maintaining distance/division between food and living animals:

‘When we were in Corrèze, we did not eat veal because they were in the garden, so I find it too lovely’ (Female, 47 years old, post-graduate, urban).

‘I prefer when meat is pre-packed’ (Female, 60 years old, urban dweller).

A third profile becomes apparent, in which we find the most relaxed/non-concerned meat eaters. They like to eat meat regularly and place it at the centre of their eating culture: for them, ‘a meal without meat is not a real meal’ and meat has strong symbolical power:

‘I was brought up with steak! So I eat steak daily. I liked that so much, when I was small they used to say that it was a sign of good health to eat meat everyday so I think that I still have this in my head’.

Also for consumers in this group, the key values are taste, conviviality and pleasure. Within this group we must differentiate between consumers from high and low socio-economic groups.

(a) Consumers from high socio-economic groups: these people tend to be highly reflexive and are often experts on meat consumption. Their decisions to purchase meat are driven by quality (aspect, origin, touch) rather than price. Consumers in this sub group often have strong links with the rural world, that of rearing and, sometimes, hunting and fishing.

(b) Consumers from low socio-economic groups: these people are less reflexive about meat purchases and their behaviour is more routinised and influenced by more indirect indicators of quality, such as; place of purchase, product labels and price. These consumers also often have strong links with the rural environment, usually through familial origins.

'Yes, we eat meat everyday too. I buy meat at the butcher. It's true that it is very expensive! But when it's too expensive we eat less in quantity. I am very much for red meat so I made the children used to red meat. They love it and actually we could eat a rib steak daily but it's too expensive so we do not buy it on a daily basis. So as a matter of fact we will eat sometimes ham, at times a minced steak, which is less expensive meat. Or a chicken filet. But it's more a question of budget than of taste' (Female, age group 3).

The following quotes reflect different dimensions of the representations and attitudes of these consumers:

(a) The symbolic importance of meat: meat is an integral part of food culture and constitutes a central element of eating identity

'Meat is a necessity during family gatherings' (Female, 60 years old, Graduate, Employee).

'I was brought up with steak! With daily steak' (Female, 46 years old, Post-Graduate).

(b) Cooking and eating meat lead to a strong hedonistic sensation. The consumption and also the preparation of meat bring an almost sensual pleasure. Touching and contact with meat (e.g. removing feathers, butchery) do not cause concern.

'I like [meat] very much, I prepare canned food of foie gras, I keep liver, I remove the bile [myself]' (Female, 46 years old, Post-Graduate, Urban dweller).

'Cooking has always been a hobby' (Female, 57 years old).

'Once a year, I capture a pigeon, I kill it and I eat it, it tastes delicious' (Male, 55 years old, post-graduate).

(c) Meat is consumed daily and a meal is not considered to be a proper meal without meat.

'There is always meat for meals, or sometimes there is fish' (Male, 63 years old, retired, post-graduate, urban dweller).

'When I was young, I even ate it for breakfast' (Female, 33 years old, graduate, craftswoman).

(d) A wide range of meats are consumed, including offal. Red meats are generally preferred.

'I regret laws banning certain offal, brain and things like that because it is very good to eat' (Male, 55 years old, post-graduate).



Vegetarians also participated in the focus group discussions and one focus group was dedicated to vegetarian and politically active consumers (vegetarians constitute the fourth consumer profile). The majority of vegetarians who participated in the focus groups were very tolerant about other consumers' meat consumption habits (some even tolerated foie gras consumption, as they were aware of the cultural and symbolic importance of this food to certain consumers). Whilst all vegetarian participants supported increased respect for animals, none of them adopted extremist views. It is possible to identify two sub groups within this vegetarian profile.

TABLE 7.6 Two profiles of vegetarians

Profile 1	Profile 2
No animals, no eggs (except in cakes) Allowed: dairy products	No 'meat' Allowed: fish, seafood, eggs and dairy products

Two forms of rationality also stand out concerning the motivations for being a vegetarian:

(a) Rationality in aim

- Health constitutes an objective: 'I feel that my health will improve, if I become a vegetarian.'
- Not being contaminated by pollution: 'I am wondering about today's food quality... we know that even penguins are touched by pollution'.
- Economy: 'I can only afford meat for my daughter'.

(b) Rationality in values

- Education: 'My parents were vegetarians, so am I'.
- A way of identity construction through opposition: 'My parents forced me to eat red meat ... I haven't eaten meat since adolescence'.
- Desire to reform the social order (Pythagoras): 'I saw a bit how breeding works and I didn't like it at all'.

#### 7.3.4 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANS AND ANIMALS

Three subsets appear concerning the relation that consumers have with animals. The first group refers to a vision, whereby the living world is organized into a hierarchy in which humans occupy the highest position and animals occupy a lower tier and as such can be utilised for food consumption. This is a 'functionalist' vision of animals that consists of the following elements:

- There is a clear difference between humans and animals: 'We cannot link human beings and animals, man is at the top of the scale of living creatures'.

- Animals are born to be eaten: 'We have to improve their living conditions but we do not have to become vegetarians'. 'If we consider that animals are born to be eaten, we must accept that animal welfare is not totally possible'.
- Humans as omnivores: 'We eat all kinds of food, so eating meat, it is normal, biologically speaking'.

In the second group, the separation between humans and animals is maintained but it is not based on a hierarchical vision of the living world but rather a necessity to distanciate food from the living animal. The aim is to erase, as much as possible, the signs reminding us that the meat originated from a living animal. The view consists of the following elements:

- Dis-animalisation of the meat: 'Rabbit, whole chickens, they keep too much the form of living animals'.
- Voluntary amnesia: 'When it is on the plate, we do not think about the cow or the calf. It is better for me, during the dinner I avoid thinking of that'.
- Proximity to living animals affects their edibility (law of proximity by E. Leach): 'I do not eat horse and I will not make my children eat horse'.
- Difference between nature/culture: 'There is the animal and there is cooked meat'.

Finally, in the third group, we identify a 'humanizing' relationship with animals. For some people, humans and animals are on an equal footing, as both are sentient beings capable of experiencing feelings and, as such, animals should be entitled to certain rights. People who hold this view often make anthropomorphic statements about animals.

- Human beings and animals are equals: 'I feel the equal of animals, I take care of my actions for not inflicting them any suffering'.
- Anthropomorphism: 'We treat them [animals] like in concentration camps'. 'As a woman, it is true that sometimes this image of a cow forced to produce milk ... it makes me suffer'.
- Spiritual anthropomorphism: 'If I image myself as a duck, I would prefer to be a duck in a field rather than in a factory'.
- Animals considered as children: 'We force feed it [talking about cattle], it has no choice, it's like a baby being over-fed on baby food'.

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## 7.4 CONSUMERS' KNOWLEDGE OF ANIMAL WELFARE AND WELFARE-FRIENDLY FOOD PRODUCTS AND THEIR EVALUATION OF THE INFORMATION ON THESE SUBJECTS

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### 7.4.1 GENERAL TRENDS FOR FRANCE

In a speech about the notion of animal welfare, Robert Dantzer (2002) underlined the importance of the transformations which took place with, on the one hand, the industrialization of rearing, and on the other hand, the evolution of the status of animals as living sentient beings. This last aspect results from socio-anthropologic evolutions that took place in our societies concerning representations of the status of animals and animal suffering. The range of animal welfare concerns present in French society are very diversified and go from 'simple' preoccupations concerning rearing conditions, transportation and slaughter to the position according to which 'eating meat is a philosophical mistake'.

Research conducted by Arouna P. Ouedraogo (2003) underlines the social differentiation of representations relative to the rearing of animals destined for consumption. Occasional or non-consumers of products from animal origins (10% of the population) are more sensitive to the question of rearing than people who consume these products more frequently. Consumers who purchase organic products tend to be more concerned about animal welfare issues, in contrast, people who never consume organic products declare themselves 'not at all concerned' by the question of rearing. Income level does not constitute an exclusive discriminating criterion in the purchase of organic products; it is more a political and ideological commitment that accounts for consumers' desire to purchase these products. More generally speaking, people sensitive to environmental problems are more concerned by controversies about animal rearing.

The degree of urbanization is a discriminating variable and people who have lived in cities all their lives are more interested by this public debate than rural people (or people who grew up in rural areas). Opinions about rearing and slaughter conditions are also socially differentiated: upper social classes are more preoccupied by rearing conditions, whereas working class consumers tend to be more concerned by slaughtering conditions. Representations of modern farming are socially differentiated too. Artisans, shopkeepers, managers/professionals and farmers tend to view modern farming as less problematic for animals than people from other socio-economic backgrounds.

Finally, the status of foie gras in French eating culture and gastronomy serves to limit proposals to improve animal welfare. Consumers from the upper classes, men and people under 35 years old tend to support the production of foie gras, whereas pet owners, occasional meat consumers and people with environmental concerns reject this practice.

In the remainder of this section we present the following results: first we examine the perceptions and knowledge of participants about animal welfare, in particular we explore the images and representations which condition those perceptions and we assess consumers' familiarity with welfare-friendly products. Second, we examine participants' understandings of the notion of animal welfare (do they think it is a legitimate concern, is it an important issue for them).

#### 7.4.2 PERCEPTIONS AND LEVELS OF INFORMATION

Although it does not seem to be one of the usual preoccupations of the focus group participants, the notion of 'animal welfare' mobilizes a certain number of ideas, images, and perceptions, many of which are influenced by the media. We would first note that the term 'bien être animal' (our translation of the term 'animal welfare') is not in common usage and was quite an exotic and unusual concept for many participants. Delving deeper, we discovered that consumer perceptions of animal welfare are strongly influenced by topical food scandals (e.g. the BSE crisis, the affair of 'infected blood', Chernobyl etc). and by the graphic media imagery that often accompanies such scandals (e.g. shock media images of slaughter, animal carcasses, battery-reared chickens).

'We were talking about breaches and frankly, a long time before, there were some problems with the presence of hormones in veal meat and there was a graphic campaign about the slaughter of veal. It's been a long time, approximately 20 years. Well, I personally and my family, were traumatised and I've never, since 30 years, eaten veal meat. This is why one must be wary. Because each product, it's like an image. I acknowledge that. We are always a bit influenced by the images that a campaign talks about when we live in town. And since 30 years, I no longer eat veal meat as I've got the impression that it is a meat which contains more hormones and that it is always infected down to its very pores. I'm so disgusted that I've never eaten veal meat again! Do you imagine?' (Male, age group 5, medium income).

Whilst certain participants supported the use of welfare-friendly food labels, others believed that any additional labels would be redundant as welfare issues were already adequately handled within existing schemes, such as organic and label rouge.

Finally, four major attitudes emerged concerning food consumption and animal welfare.

- An optimistic vision: 'It is common sense, it seems to me that we are already going in this direction in any case, it is necessary that the lawmaker accompanies us'. 'From the recent crisis, people are more conscious and this will continue'.
- Nostalgia, especially favouring traditional farming methods: 'Going back to traditional farm conditions, it is better'.

- Pessimistic vision: ‘It is a consideration from rich countries’. ‘I do not believe in it so much, it changes habits too much’.
- Hypocrisy and fatalism: ‘It doesn’t matter anyway, we still kill them’.

7.4.3 THE CONSUMPTION OF WELFARE FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

TABLE 7.7 Animal welfare friendly products


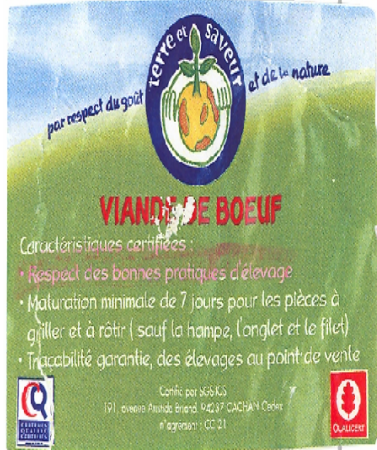
Label	Label’s photo	Information on the label	Supplies	Level of connaissance
Mère Poulard, Le Mont Saint Michel		Mère Poulard, Le Mont Saint Michel, 6 fresh eggs. Hens reared in the open-air. The eggs ‘Plein Air’ Mère Poulard come from hens reared in the open-air. They enjoy the possibility to go out of the henhouse. So Near, So Fresh: the freshness commitment. Control of Conformity Quality and Freshness Mère Poulard.	Hypermarkets Supermarkets Groceries	Label known and appreciated.
Terre et Saveur		Terre et Saveur, Viande de bœuf (beef meat), out of respect for taste and nature. Certified characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect of good rearing practices</li> <li>• Minimal maturation of 7 days for the pieces to be grilled and roasted (apart from flank, prime cut of beef and fillet)</li> <li>• Guaranteed tracability, from the rearing to the selling place.</li> </ul> Certified Quality Criteria, Qualicert.	Some supermarkets	Unknown by most participants

TABLE 7.7 cont.

<p>Coop Natura plan Charcuterie</p>		<p>Coop Natura plan Charcuterie, Swiss meat reared with respect for the animals</p>	<p>Swiss supermarkets</p>	<p>Unknown</p>
<p>Label Rouge</p>		<p>Label Rouge, Poulet Jaune farmers from the South-East, reared in the open air, Quality Grouping, Origin South-East, Class A, fresh products, characteristics contributing to superior quality : free-range reared in the open-air. Rearing duration at least 81 days. Fed with 100% of plants, minerals and vitamins of which 80% of minimum cereals. Certified by Agrocet. Ready to cool, eviscerated without offal.</p>	<p>Hypermarkets, Supermarkets, Groceries</p>	<p>Known and valued</p>
<p>Matines</p>		<p>Matines, 6 fresh eggs from hens reared in the open- air, from organic agriculture, certified AB (Biological Agriculture). These eggs are laid by hens reared in the open-air and fed with 90% organic products. Production of Organic agriculture certified by an organism approved by the State. Qualité-France SA.</p>	<p>Hypermarkets, Supermarkets, Groceries</p>	<p>Know</p>

TABLE 7.7 cont.

Halal		<p>Minced halal meat, fat content rate inferior to 15%. Collagen relation on meat protein inferior to 15%. Ingredient: 100% of pure beef meat. Store between 0 and 2°C.</p>	<p>Some supermarkets and hypermarkets</p>	<p>Not that well known</p>
Agneau de l'Adret		<p>Agneau de l'Adret, Agneau de nos terroirs, Quality Criteria Certified characteristics: lamb reared with maternal milk, traditional food. Lamb born in France, reared in its place of birth, and controlled from the stockbreeder to the distributor. Product certified by: Qualité France SA</p>	<p>Some supermarkets and groceries</p>	<p>Unknown</p>

7.4.4 TRUST AND DISTRUST IN ANIMAL WELFARE

As we have seen, many focus group participants believed that the notion of animal welfare was not rooted in French value systems. The participants came to a decision about the possible devices to take into account and control animal welfare in food production. A great number of them suggested that devices should be set up to improve animal welfare and raise public awareness about this issue, however some participants remained sceptical about the need to improve welfare and considered that some aspects of the Welfare Quality project were too utopian.

Some consumers were sceptical about whether it would be possible to completely control animal welfare in food production: 'We can't control anything 100 per cent'. However, many consumers placed their trust in local, small-scale distributors:

‘When I go to supermarkets, I look at the labels, which I think are very important. Whereas when I go to the Yonne, I go to a small butcher in the village where the farmer kills his own beef and whose son is the butcher. Again, there is a board on which it is written: ‘animal killed on such a date, sold on such a date, fed in this plain, followed by such veterinary - Mr X’. Personally this reassures me. Whereas in supermarkets, we can read labels but they can be distorted sometimes?’ (Male, age group 5, high income).

It is possible to identify two distinct groups of consumers with different attitudes towards product labelling. In the first group we find consumers who place their trust in product labels and believe that they guarantee a certain level of quality. Labels are viewed as a proof of quality and a tool to build trust: ‘I will tend to trust in a product certified by the Red Label, because there is a ‘cahier des charge’, because it is a way of guaranteeing a quality product’. Furthermore, labels enable routine/regular rationality:

‘On the labels in fact, on the fresh products, we look especially at the date of packing, the time of conservation. I do not know but if I do the shopping quickly, when I saw that a product is good I take the same brand again all the time’ (Female, age group 2, high income).

Consumers in this group also believe that welfare-friendly product labels could lead the way in bringing about improvements in animal welfare. Furthermore, they were supportive of the role of existing labels (including organic and label rouge, both of which contain a welfare component: ‘Bio is a lot more expensive, but it is done seriously’).

In the second group, we find consumers who are often suspicious about product labels and view them as marketing devices.

- Mistrust: ‘Well there is a need to be re-educated here. Because we have lost all trust in labels and so we must start over again’. ‘I wonder if it is reliable, for consequences, there is no tracability! Between having a label or not, it is true that I will tend to trust all the more in the label. But, all the same, I am not sure they tell us about everything’ (Female, age group 3, high income).
- Marketing argument: ‘It is an additional means, used by marketing people, to make us buy their products’. ‘It is marketing’. ‘We can’t check what it is written’.
- Out of habit: ‘Red Label has become too banal and it is more trendy to think about animal welfare’.
- Organic food: ‘It is not a guarantee [of animal welfare] because it is a means obligation and not a result obligation’.
- The perceived utility of labels varies from product to product: ‘Meat and eggs, yes, but milk, not so clear’.



TABLE 7.8 Existing and discussed labels

Quality indices		Quality characteristics	
Intrinsic	Extrinsic	Tangibles	Intangibles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aspect</li> <li>• Colour</li> <li>• Form</li> <li>• Size</li> <li>• Structure</li> <li>• Texture</li> <li>• Smell</li> <li>• Cut</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Price</li> <li>• Consumption date, expiry date</li> <li>• Brand (Industrial, distributor, collective)</li> <li>• Assurance schemes (Label rouge, A.B., AOC, CQC.)</li> <li>• Non official assurance schemes (Product of the year, agricultural prize etc.)</li> <li>• Indications and appellations of origin</li> <li>• Indications soils</li> <li>• Nutritional information</li> <li>• Manufacture information</li> <li>• Buying place</li> <li>• Advertising slogans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensorial Pleasures and especially taste</li> <li>• Freshness</li> <li>• Convenience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health, natural character</li> <li>• Origin,</li> <li>• Proximity</li> <li>• Soil</li> <li>• Animal welfare</li> <li>• Environmental issues</li> <li>• Breeding and production condition</li> <li>• Hygiene</li> <li>• Rare, exclusive character</li> <li>• Tracability</li> </ul>

*Source:* Paul-Emmanuel Pichon, Thèse 'La réduction du risque lors de l'achat de produits alimentaires: Une approche par la confiance', 2004. From Oude Ophuis et Van Trijp 1995, Sirieix, 1999.

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## 7.5 ANIMAL WELFARE ... WHY?

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Two forms of rationality, which sometimes overlap, underlie consumers' desires to improve animal welfare. The first is instrumental, in the sense that animal welfare is not viewed as an end in itself but as a means to produce higher quality food products.

- Animal welfare is seen as a guarantee of quality
  - Taste: 'If the animal has lead a good life, one has the impression that the taste is better'. 'We know how stress can spoil meat quality';
  - Health: 'It is better for health'. 'It is like cigarettes, we must make people aware of that, if animals suffer, it is bad for health, for us and for our children'.
- Animal welfare can also be viewed as a strategy to relieve human guilt: 'It is very egoist but we like to feel virtuous'. 'If animals suffer it is not good for us' (magical rationality, incorporation).

The second form of rationality is value-based. In this type of reasoning improvements in animal welfare are valued as ends in themselves.

- Humans have no rights over animals: 'animals do not 'belong' to anyone, we cannot alienate them'.

- The obligation to respect animals: 'It is a question of respect'.
- Ethical: 'It does not need any act or charter ... it should be natural for all human beings [to treat animals well]'.
- Religion prescriptions (e.g. Judaism and Islam): Whilst this is a highly contentious issue, some consumers believe that certain religious beliefs and practices are beneficial for animal welfare: 'When we cut the throat [in halal slaughter], we do this in such a way that the animal does not suffer too much'.

'Kosher is upper animal welfare. Well in fact with kosher, there is a guiding principle, which is that the animal should not be made to suffer. So all kosher food, in fact is not kosher if the animal is made to suffer because it is slaughtered with one blow. Meaning the rabbi when he goes through his ritual, he makes sure that the animal does not suffer' (Male, age group 1, medium income).

Most of the focus group participants believed that humans should treat animals well, however many identified several barriers to actually achieving improvements in animal welfare in practice. One of the key barriers relates to the fact that animal welfare is considered to be a peripheral concern and of limited importance when compared to the many issues of human welfare that still need to be addressed. As such, concerns for human well-being often supplant concerns for animal welfare. Indeed, Cartesian perspectives on human-animal relations (in which animals are viewed as mere automata, capable only of responding to stimuli and humans are viewed as superior beings, as they are endowed with souls and minds capable of abstract thoughts) are still present within French consumers' understandings of human-animal relationships. This Cartesian perspective helps to maintain a clear caesura between mankind and other living species and it reinforces not only the negation of all ethical questions relative to animal suffering, but also the human/animal dichotomy and its corollary; the hierarchy of the species in which humans are dominant. This in turn can lead to a mechanistic, even materialistic and functionalist, understanding of animals.

Five strong interconnected ideas emerged from the transversal analysis of the focus groups:

1. Selective improvements in animal welfare (for high quality products) could result in a new form 'eating elitism'
2. It might not be economically viable for producers to improve animal welfare
3. Animal welfare concerns might conflict with important cultural traditions
4. Animal welfare represents a form of 'sentimentality', which is excessive and out of place
5. Political constraints mean that it will be hard to achieve improvements in welfare

### 7.5.1 CULTURAL ASPECTS

#### *Foie gras*

The importance of foie gras in French cuisine invites people to question themselves about animal welfare issues. Certain consumers support foie gras production, whereas others are against it.

#### *Pro foie gras: 'it is our culture'*

- Justification by reference to nature: 'Migratory birds stuff themselves naturally'.
- Tolerance: 'Do not be absolutist. People can eat foie gras' (vegetarian).
- An irreversible movement: 'In France, we [vegetarians] are not strong enough in front of consumers ... foie gras has become a product for frequent consumption'.

#### *Anti foie gras: refusal to contribute to the suffering of animals by consuming foie gras*

'Wild geese stuff themselves to migrate, not to make foie gras'.

'I don't want to contribute to the duck's suffering by eating foie gras'.

#### *The North versus the South of Europe?*

Certain focus group participants, especially those who perceived themselves as belonging to a Latin culture (in which human-animal relationships adopt more traditional and ostensibly more barbaric forms) questioned whether animal welfare was an issue that was being imported from Northern European countries. For them, it is only possible that this issue appeared – and could only be born – in the Northern countries. It could have emerged in the Southern countries only in a minority way. Indeed, we observed in their words a comparison between the Northern countries, which were assumed to be richer but also more environmentally and socially aware (and more respectful to animals) and Southern countries, where practices such as hunting, bullfighting and the force-feeding of ducks and geese still persist.

Whilst we have already covered these issues in greater detail elsewhere in the report, it is worth noting that our focus group sample consisted of individuals for whom meat was a central element of their diet. Many participants consumed meat daily (or even twice daily), very few participants adopted anthropomorphic approaches to animals. Most participants (at least tacitly) supported the idea that there is a clear species hierarchy in which humans have primacy and whilst animal suffering was not denied, it was considered to be of far less significance than human suffering.

### 7.5.2 THE SOCIAL JUSTICE IDEAL AND THE QUESTION OF A TWO-SPEED ALIMENTATION

During the urban mother focus group, one of the participants highlighted the parallel she was making between the question of 'well-being' and the welfare state. Indeed, reasoning by analogy, she was associating animal welfare and the Welfare Quality project with the Welfare State. Furthermore, she viewed the presence of a welfare state as symptomatic of failings in economic liberalisation policies, which have led to economic benefits for some but increased misery for others (those who have to rely on welfare provision). Despite the anecdotal character of this formulation, we believe that these words illustrate quite clearly a recurrent issue that emerged during the discussions, namely the presence of a two-speed society. Two speeds for jobs, for incomes, for health and of course for consumption. All in all, participants expressed the fact that we live in societies that are socially, culturally and economically unequal, and that, as a consequence, products coming from animal welfare would not be available for all consumers. Indeed, participants believed that the increased costs of welfare-friendly rearing and production methods would necessarily be reflected in purchasing costs. Following the example of current labelled and/or certified products (e.g. organic produce) it seems likely that welfare-friendly products would cost significantly more than their conventionally produced counterparts (due to the increased cost of rearing, transport and slaughter).

This approach to improving welfare raises a number of issues concerning social justice and eating elitism (especially if one believes that welfare-friendly products have certain health and taste benefits). Furthermore, the following dialectic arises: between rich consumers who would be able to make ethical choices concerning animal welfare (which in turn serves to alleviate any guilty feelings that they might possess about the mistreatment of animals) and poor consumers who would effectively be denied the opportunity to promote animal welfare.

### 7.5.3 ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

In this section we discuss the likely economic implications that producing welfare-friendly foods would have for producers. Production methods that are respectful to animals often require specialised housing facilities, adapted equipment, special foods and increased labour and veterinary costs. This is one of the primary barriers, which prevents all producers from farming in this manner. These considerations are valid at a national level (in France), and at a European or international level (especially in relation to the poorest countries). Many focus group participants put forward the idea according to which the states of each country should contribute by giving assistance to farmers, so that they could cover any additional costs arising from implementing more welfare-friendly production systems. This financial help would also serve to provide consumers with lower cost welfare-friendly products.

#### 7.5.4 AN OUT OF PLACE FORM OF SENTIMENTALITY? 'POOR ANIMALS' RATHER THAN 'POOR PEOPLE'

Whilst many focus group participants were concerned about animal suffering, this issue was considered to be almost insignificant in relation to issues of human suffering (many of which still need to be resolved). This belief is partly due to the presence of societal norms and expectations, which dictate the forms that human-animal relations take in Latin cultures.

Moreover, many focus group participants reacted very negatively to the concept of 'animal welfare', indeed the very mention of the term caused participants to downplay the importance of animal suffering and to even dismiss the issue. This is because many participants believed that terms such as 'well being', 'positive emotions', and 'social behaviours' should be reserved exclusively for use in relation to humans. The focus group participants preferred the term 'respect' as opposed to 'welfare'. Let's take notice of the fact that this term reintroduces a distancing between the place of humans and that devoted to animals. Indeed it is a form of distancing that testifies to a clear hierarchical organization between the two species.

Some participants believed that the concept of 'animal welfare' was associated with an inappropriate level of identification with animals and with unwarranted anthropomorphisms, furthermore they associated it with the attempts of animal rights protagonists to unfairly stoke-up public awareness about issues of animal suffering. This 'humanisation' of rearing methods is, in the absolute, accepted and even desired, however the language used to promote animal 'welfare' might weaken animal causes as protagonists tread a thin line between a position of 'tolerated sensibility' and a position of 'out of place sentimentality', in which animal suffering is treated as being of equal importance as human suffering. Resistance to the use of the term 'animal welfare' was also succinctly summarised by one of the focus group participants: 'for an animal that we are going to kill, I do not know if we can speak about welfare'.

To finish let's underline that talking about animal welfare has the undesired affect of casting suspicion on existing rearing and production methods. That is to say that the more we inform consumers, the more consumers believe that we are hiding things from them. Consumers begin to reason that if people are working to improve animal welfare conditions, then current farming conditions must be inappropriate and this in turn serves to reduce the credibility of meat provisioning.

#### 7.5.5 THE POLITICS OF IMPLEMENTING IMPROVEMENTS IN ANIMAL WELFARE

Out of the five dimensions suggested in this part, the 'political' question stands out in a less meaningful way than the four others that we have identified. It is hinted at in participants' observations and it overlays the ethical dilemmas we have already discussed. Ultimately, every consumer wishes that animals were more respected and as a result that the meat they consume was of a higher quality. However, many fear that

this is impossible (due to cost barriers for both producers and consumers), as such animal welfare becomes a kind of utopia for which we can aim but never really achieve in practical terms.

This is why we must consider the political dimensions to animal welfare. We must consider the type of society that we want to build and how we want to build it. Many participants did not want to see the Welfare Quality project implemented in a way that perpetuated inequalities between large and small producers, or between rich and poor consumers, or between European Union countries.<sup>35</sup> Instead, they wanted the project to serve as a global resource, which was accessible to everyone and which was supported by state and international financial assistance.

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## 7.6 THE ROLES OF RESPONSIBILITY, AGENCY AND TRUST IN RELATION TO ANIMAL WELFARE

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Most of the focus group participants believed that improvements in animal welfare could only be achieved if there was a change in mentalities:

‘Yes, I’ve got the impression that people do not pay much attention to [animal] welfare right now. In a general way, I think that people do not pay much attention. They pay attention mostly to the origin [of food products]. This is due to previous food scares. Otherwise, I think that it doesn’t motivate many people at the moment’ (Male, age group 5, high income).

Participants point, with more or less optimism, to the necessity of making different publics aware of animal welfare issues (e.g. consumers, stockbreeders, distributors) and of creating awareness in this field. They believe that local authorities, consumer associations and the media should be responsible for informing suppliers and consumers.

Two positions can be identified relating to raising public awareness about animal welfare and changing peoples’ mentalities:

(a) A sceptical view (reasons for inaction):

‘There are too many differences in the European and the French production system’.

‘I do not see any interest in a control system, labels are enough’.

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<sup>35</sup> The recurring references to European harmonisation, in particular concerning the supposed difference of wealth between the ‘rich’ and ‘poor’ countries of the community also have to be replaced in the context of the realisation of the focus groups – that is, of the referendum concerning the project of the European Constitution.

(b) A positive view (with incentives and accompanying measures at different levels):

- It is necessary to settle a legal system: ‘We need a law, a label is not enough’. ‘The lawmaker must reinforce citizen measures’.
- It is necessary to provide financial and social support to bring about improvements in welfare

*For consumers:* ‘As long as income does not increase, it will be difficult because it will be impossible to buy these kinds of products’.

*For suppliers:* ‘We must support suppliers, give them subsidies’.

*For poorer EU countries:* ‘Countries like Poland, they cannot afford these kinds of changes’.

‘If the State puts money at the beginning of the chain reaction and if for example the farmer needs more money to produce quality, well the State can provide the money then, the chain reaction is established, what ends up on the plate is of good quality and the person who does not have the means, later he won’t necessarily have to go to the doctor. Somebody who doesn’t eat proper food will fall sick more often’ (Female, age group 2, medium income).

- It is necessary to change mentalities:

‘We must consume in another way’.

‘If demand is changing, supply will change’.

‘The French do not respect the law’.

‘I think to avoid the problem actually, the rich have access [to information], the poor not, I think that on the contrary it would be necessary to have an enormous publicity campaign, so that everyone is to be concerned in fact, that we force the farmers to act rightly’ (Male, age group 1, low income).

From the institutional point of view, discussions indicate that two aspects are important for building trust: neutrality and absence of marketing aims. Many focus group participants also pointed to the importance of independent institutions and expert committees.

Control is perceived as having to take place at different points in the food chain: producers, distributors and consumers. Opinions diverge about which authorities should be in charge (public authorities, private organisations, or mixed bodies). Participants proposed the following organisations for controlling improvements in animal welfare:

*Public:* Health Ministry; Farming/Agriculture Ministry (veterinarians)

*Private:* Consumer associations; Ecologists

*Mixed:* Assurance schemes backed by public authorities

It seemed significant, at a time when the European Constitution project had an important place in the news in France, to try to measure the views of our participants concerning the eventual role of the EU in implementing improvements in farm animal welfare.

- We can stress the fact that the people we asked have a positive vision of the potential role of the authorities installed at the political European Union level. Europe is perceived on this level as a catalyst for change: 'I think that the European Union will make things change'.
- However, concerns about the potential role of the EU also exist. In particular, participants were worried about processes of homogenisation failing to take into account the cultural specificities of different countries. For example, participants raised issues such as: 'How do we make it in harmony?' 'I am afraid concerning foie gras'. Furthermore, religious minority groups are also concerned (e.g. Jewish and Muslim groups are concerned about how EU regulations might affect religious slaughtering practices).

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## 7.7 CONSUMERS' EVALUATION OF A PROPOSED SCIENTIFICALLY BASED STANDARD FOR FARM ANIMAL WELFARE

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### 7.7.1 CONSUMERS' SPONTANEOUS ANIMAL WELFARE CONCERNS

Participants' spontaneous animal welfare concerns related mainly to issues of the provision of adequate space, good feeding, good medical care, good transportation and humane slaughter conditions.

- Space: enough space, clean, well-equipped, well adapted housing, animals must live in their natural space.
- Food: well adapted, 'balanced', no over-feeding.
- Physical respect: no bad treatment, good medical and veterinary care.
- Quality of life: sufficient life cycle (i.e. reach maturity before death).
- Living conditions in harmony with 'animals' natures' (e.g. females should be given the opportunity to give birth at least once, to preserve family considerations).
- Good end-of-life conditions (transport and slaughter).
- Transportation: no over-crowding.
- Slaughter: no stress during slaughter, animals preferably killed on farm to reduce transport.



### 7.7.2 RESPONSES TO THE SCIENTISTS' LIST OF 10 WELFARE CONCERNS

When we presented participants with the list of ten welfare concerns, developed by animal scientists working on the Welfare Quality project, a consensus emerged on some points, whereas there was disagreement on others.

- Consensus on concerns 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, (6): these were seen as 'basics', 'common', 'realistic' (see appendix for full list of concerns).
- Points (6), 7, 8, 9, 10 were seen as 'unrealistic', 'utopian':
  - for technical and financial reasons
  - for reasons linked to intensive production
  - because they reorganize human/animal relationships.
- For some people, terms like 'emotion' and 'frustration' seemed inappropriate to use in relation to animals: 'It is too human'; 'frustration for an animal, it is rare'.
- Use of the linguistic term 'animal welfare' caused some dissent: 'This term would be better suited to domestic animals'; 'Do we consider animals as children, as our dear little child or do we talk about animals in relation to their final purpose, that is to say as food'.
- Participants commented on an internal contradiction between the idea of letting animals have a sexual and social life, and the fact that they are raised to be eaten: 'If we put hens and cocks together, eggs will be fertilized'.

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## 7.8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Whilst participation in the focus groups seems to have heightened participants' awareness about farm animal welfare issues and the living conditions of farm animals, it has also brought anxiety to some participants and increased their suspicions about the whole meat supply chain.

The vast majority of participants were very supportive of the first 5/6 farm animal welfare concerns/principles identified by animal welfare scientists. However, there was a great deal of debate concerning the final 4/5 concerns: animal activists saw these as a form of progress, whilst they were rejected by advocates of egalitarian food (as they thought this would lead to a two-speed alimentation) and by people who believed that the use of the term 'welfare' should be reserved for humans.

Many participants believed that the question of foie gras (and the force-feeding of ducks and geese) represented a significant cultural obstacle to the implementation of improved farm animal welfare in France

Concerning methods of control; many participants believed that independent bodies were capable of setting up controls, but that ultimately it was the role of state authorities to enforce rules concerning animal welfare.

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# APPENDICES

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## RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

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This questionnaire is intended to accompany the recruitment guide and to provide a more detailed explanation of Filter 1, Filter 2 and the selection of politically active consumers. Furthermore, it illustrates the types of questions that are necessary to fulfil all of the different criteria in the recruitment guide. Whilst we have presented the questionnaire in the form of a written survey, we realise that individual research teams will want to adapt the STYLE in which the questions are presented (BUT NOT THE FUNCTION) in accordance with the methods they intend to use to administer the questionnaire (e.g. via the phone, face-to-face with a facilitator, via the post etc.). Furthermore, we have presented this questionnaire in a format to illustrate the ways in which questions relate to the selection criteria in the recruitment guide and individual research teams will clearly need to alter this ordering in the versions that they administer.

### Filter 1

*How often do you eat meat?*

(Place a tick in the box that best applies)

(a) Everyday	
(b) A few times a week	
(c) Once a week	
(d) Less than once a week	
(e) I am a vegetarian	
(f) I am a vegan	

### Instructions:

To pass filter 1, respondents must eat meat at least once a week (options a, b and c above)

To qualify as a vegetarian, respondents must tick option e (vegans (f) should be excluded)

### Filter 2

Please indicate how often you have done each of the following in the last year. For each statement, place a tick in the relevant box.

1 Checked the labelling or packaging of a food product for information about where or how it was produced (e.g. free-range, organic, freedom foods).

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
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2 Chosen not to purchase a food product because of the way it was produced (e.g. Battery cage eggs, veal, foie gras).

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
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3 Read newspaper articles or listened to radio programmes about animal farming.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
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4 Watched television programmes about animal farming.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
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5 Thought about issues concerning animal farming when buying, preparing or eating food.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
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6 Thought about the content or origin of a meat product you have bought.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
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#### Instructions:

This filter should select those consumers who have at least some bare minimum level of interest in either the farming of animals for food (e.g. the different systems of production that are used), or animal welfare issues.

Only the following participants should be selected:

Those who have answered 'often' or 'very often' to at least one of the questions above.

Those who have answered sometimes to at least two of the questions above.

#### *The selection of 'politically active' consumers*

Please indicate whether or not you have participated in any of the following activities in the last year.	Yes	No
Deliberately chose certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons		
Deliberately avoided certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons		
Encouraged friends or family to purchase products for political, ethical or environmental reasons		
Voted in a European, national or local election		
Participated in a protest or demonstration		
Contacted a politician		
Wrote a letter supporting a political, ethical or environmental cause		
Donated money or volunteered time to a political organization or interest group		
Signed a petition		
Worn a campaign button or T-shirt		

## Instructions:

These questions should be used to select innovative health conscious consumers. Respondents would qualify as 'innovative' if they agree to the '+' questions, and disagree with the negative questions.

I am usually the first in my group of friends to know about new brands and products +
I like to follow a well organised routine
I like to try new and different things +
I prefer things to stay stable and settled
I am prepared to pay more for foods that don't contain artificial additives +
I do not like that everything is changing too quickly nowadays
I try to eat healthier foods because it makes me feel better +
There is too much fuss and worry about what people eat nowadays

*Other questions for recruitment*

1 What is your name?

2 What is your address?


3 What is your telephone number?

4 What is your gender? (Inclusion of this question depends on method of administration)

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
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5 What is your date of birth?

6 What is your present marital status?

(Tick the box that best applies)

Single	<input type="checkbox"/>	Widowed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Married or living with partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	Divorced or separated	<input type="checkbox"/>

7 Do you have any children, if so how old are they and do they live at home with you?

Yes (at least one child)		No (No Children)	
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	Age	Live at Home (yes/no)
Child 1		
Child 2		
Child 3		
Child 4		
Child 5		

8 What type of area do you live in at present?

Predominantly rural	
Predominantly urban	
Mixed	

9 What type of area did you grow up in?

Predominantly rural	
Predominantly urban	
Mixed	

10 Are you or your partner farmers?

Yes		No	
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11 Approximately what proportion of your household's food shopping do you do, either on your own or with your partner?

(a) All	
(b) More than half	
(c) About half	
(d) Less than half	
(e) None	

(Note: Question 11 is to assess whether a potential participant 'does at least 50 per cent of the food shopping' – categories a, b and c above would qualify)

*Other information to collect:*

N.B. Whilst we are no longer using income, social class or level of formal education as selection criteria, we still think that it is important to record these details (see recruitment guide). Individual research teams are encouraged to develop their own means of recording this data in accordance with their own national contexts. However, for comparative purposes it would be useful if we all adopted a three-tier classification (low-medium-high). The examples listed below are provided for illustrative purposes.

The recording of low, middle and high income groups

## 1 What is your household income?

(Tick the box that best applies)

Less than £25,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
£25,000–£70,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over £70,000	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Notes:

The question above is purely meant to be illustrative of possible bands for low, medium and high household income groups. Each research team will have to set their household income thresholds to reflect the economic situation in their study country. However, we do feel that household income should be used as opposed to individual income. If desired, individual research teams can record occupational status rather than income but again a three-tiered classification would be preferred.

The recording of low, middle and high formal education groups

## 1 What educational qualifications do you have?

(Tick the box that corresponds to your highest level of achievement)

(1) No qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>
(2) O levels, CSEs, GCSEs, School certificate, NVQ level 1 or 2, Foundation or intermediate GNVQ	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3) A levels, AS levels, Higher school certificate, NVQ Level 3, Advanced GNVQ	<input type="checkbox"/>
(4) First degree (e.g. BA, BSc), Higher degree (e.g. MA, PhD, PGCE), NVQ levels 4-5, HNC, HND	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Notes:

In the question above people ticking boxes 1 and 2 would be classified as low formal education, people ticking box 3 as medium formal education, and people ticking box 4 as high formal education. Clearly, the categories for individual countries will be different.

In the example above:

The ‘low formal education group’ consists of people with either no formal educational qualifications or people who have qualifications that are usually (but not always) taken whilst it is compulsory for them to still attend school (e.g. 16 in the UK and the qualifications listed in box 2)

The ‘medium formal education group’ consists of people who have qualification that are below degree level but above those listed in the first group (e.g. in the UK those exams usually (but not always) taken at around 18 years old and listed in box 3)

The high ‘formal education group’ are educated to degree level (or equivalent) or above. Care was taken to include equivalent national vocational qualifications (such as NVQs, GNVQs, HNC and HNDs in the case of the UK)

Care was taken to account for those people who have gained qualifications as mature students

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## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

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### *Introduction*

Before we begin, I would like to say a little bit about what we are researching. We are conducting this research as part of a large European project that is interested in issues surrounding the consumption of food, in particular meats, eggs and dairy products. We are interested in finding out more about the different ways in which people consume, prepare, and shop for food. We are also particularly interested in what people think about the amount and types of information that is available about these products. Throughout the conversation we would like to discuss your views concerning the provision of information about the following food products; beef, veal and dairy products (including cheese, milk and yoghurt); pork, ham and sausages; chicken meat and eggs; and lastly other processed foods containing any of these products. Finally, we would like to remind you that there are no right or wrong answers to the topics we will be discussing and that we are interested in the ideas, feelings and opinions of all participants.

Begin by asking each member of the focus group to introduce themselves to the others and to say a little bit about themselves (for example, where they live and what their hobbies are). N.B. this is the 'icebreaker question', whereas Theme A is an important topic in its own right – see title.

*Theme A: Food consumption, preparation and shopping habits (this session should last about 10 minutes)*

Introduction: I would like to begin today by asking you all some simple questions about your food consumption and shopping habits.

1. This theme should begin with at least one question regarding general food consumption habits.

Individual research teams are free to develop their own questions, as long as they provide insights in to general food consumption habits, for example one could ask: Try to think back to your main meal yesterday – what did you eat, where did you eat it and whom did you eat it with? (The overall logic of the ordering of Theme A was to start with what is most familiar (eating) and work our way backwards).

2. (OPTIONAL) Question exploring food preparation and cooking practices.

3. Where do you usually buy your meat, dairy products and eggs and why do you shop there? What do you look for when choosing which meat, dairy products and eggs to buy and are you satisfied with the choices available?

In relation to whether respondents are happy with the choice of products available try to find out what their frame of reference is because satisfaction is relative and dependent



on previous experience. If they are not happy with the range of choices available what other types of products would they like to see for sale?

There should be scope to explore other issues within this theme, such as food preparation and cooking, recent changes in participants' eating habits, food norms/expectations and routines, and any other topics that might be of particular relevance to the specific study country.

*Theme B: Information and involvement; political consumption, ethical dilemmas and barriers; human-animal relationships (this session should last about 45 minutes)*

(Bi) Information and involvement

Introduction: I would now like to move on to consider what you think about the types of information that are available to consumers about meat, dairy products and eggs.

4. (OPTIONAL) What do you understand by the term animal welfare in relation to farming and food production?

5. How well informed do you think you are about the different ways in which animals are farmed? Where do you get your information? What do you think about the information currently available? (Initially allow unprompted comments regarding animal welfare but if these don't arise, the facilitator should explicitly ask about welfare.)

For example, do participants know much about the treatment of farm/husbandry animals in their country and are they satisfied with the current situation? Do participants get their information from television, video, newspapers, radio, books, magazines, the Internet, from shops, from labels on food products, or from friends? What other specific types of information would participants like to know about animal products? How do participants evaluate the information currently available?

6. What do you think about the public debate on animal welfare and to what extent are you interested in this debate?

What do participants think are the most effective ways of being involved with, and influencing, the animal welfare debate (when voting for political parties, by joining animal welfare NGOs, by protesting etc.)? If participants are not personally involved in the debate do they feel that it is still important for others to be involved?

At this point participants should be presented with some examples of the types of information about welfare friendly products that are already available to consumers (ideally from within their study country). This could include product packaging, product labels, product logos, leaflets about products, or alternative information sources (we should avoid giving the impression that the provision of information about animal welfare is limited to labels) and if possible the actual products that these refer to should also be used. The information should relate to a selection of (but not necessarily all of) the following products: beef, veal and dairy products (including cheese, milk and yoghurt); pork, ham and sausages; chicken meat and eggs; and finally other processed foods containing any of these products (no other products should be used as these will

not be covered by the project's monitoring and information systems, however if participants choose to mention other products they should be permitted to make their remarks). Some of these stimuli should relate to items with an explicit welfare content (e.g. free range eggs, freedom foods (in the UK), others should relate to items where the welfare content is more implicit (e.g. organic) and finally some should relate to quality assurance labels (such as corn-fed chicken, in which the welfare component is even more uncertain/contested or totally absent). The resources should also be chosen to represent a wide range of different styles of information presentation.

TO ENSURE CONTINUITY FACILITATORS SHOULD USE THE MARKET AUDITS CONDUCTED BY MEMBERS OF WP2 IN THEIR STUDY COUNTRY TO HELP THEM CHOOSE THEIR PRODUCTS. After having sufficient time to look at the information, participants should then be asked the following questions.

7. (OPTIONAL) Are you familiar with any of these products and have you ever bought or eaten any of them? If so, did you buy them for animal welfare reasons?

Do participants ever look for animal welfare information on the products they buy? Are animal welfare considerations important for participants in influencing the types of products they would buy? Try to find out what the different logos actually represent to the participants, i.e. what other expectations do they have of the products (such as higher quality, healthier).

8. Which of these labels/leaflets etc. do you think provide the best information about the welfare of the animals used in making these foods? Is there any important information that these sources leave out that you would like to see included?

What do you think would be the best way of informing people about animal welfare issues? How would you like to be provided with this information (i.e. what type of source)? What level of detail would you want to know? What types of information would you want to know?

9. (OPTIONAL) Which of these labels/leaflets etc. would be the most useful for helping you to choose between products?

(Bii) Political consumption, ethical dilemmas and barriers

10. (OPTIONAL) Do you ever think about animal welfare issues in your everyday routine of shopping, eating, or preparing food?

In what circumstances do participants think about animal welfare issues - at home, watching television, reading the newspaper, talking with friends, during dinner, at the supermarket, whilst buying goods? What types of things do they think about?

11. (OPTIONAL) What do you think that you personally could do to improve the welfare of animals used in the production of food and what difficulties or barriers might you encounter in trying to achieve this?

Do participants feel that they have an important role to play in bringing about better welfare standards or do they feel powerless?

12. Have you ever deliberately avoided buying certain meat, dairy products or eggs because you dislike or distrust the producer/company involved in making or selling them, or have you ever deliberately purchased specific types of these products for their positive image?

Do participants feel that their consumption choices exert any influence or do they feel powerless? If participants mention certain products that they have boycotted or 'buycotted' try to find out why. If it does not come up in the conversation try to find out if participants ever purchase any 'ethical' foods, such as organic foods, 'freedom foods' (in UK, equivalent elsewhere) or fair trade products. If so, which ones and why?

13. What properties or qualities do you think meat, dairy products or eggs should possess? Do these properties ever conflict with each other?

Prompt only after their spontaneous answers

Properties or qualities might include taste, healthiness, cost, welfare, appearance etc. Conflicts (or ethical dilemmas) might include good taste but unhealthy, good welfare but expensive etc.

Is animal welfare an important property/quality and does this conflict with other properties/qualities. If participants do experience conflicts (or ethical dilemmas) how do they overcome them? Do different family members have different dilemmas?

14. Is there anything that would prevent you from purchasing welfare-friendly products?

This question is designed to investigate the barriers to purchasing welfare-friendly goods, these might include; lack of choice, price, convenience, lack of or unclear information, poorer quality, health reasons, reliability of supply.

(Biii) Human to (non-human) animal relationships

15. Do you think that animals are entitled to similar rights to humans?

If not what rights do animals deserve? Are there any rights that animals should not be entitled to? Should some animals have more rights than others, if so which ones and why? (differences between species e.g. great apes versus other mammals versus insects or differences between companion animals and farm animals). How should humans relate to animals - should we hunt animals, use animals for food, use animals for medical experiments, keep animals in zoos, keep animals as pets, use animals for sport and entertainment? This question is an attempt to address the issue of how participants position themselves in relation to animals.

*5/10 minute break (it is suggested to offer coffee and refreshments)*

*Theme C: Assessing animal welfare; ten welfare principles from the 'Welfare Quality' project; towards an information system (this session should last about 45 minutes)*

Introduction: Before we move on to the next discussion topic I would like to tell you more about the nature of this research project. (Provide participants with an edited copy of the first page on the Welfare Quality public website). As you can see from the handout this research is part of a major European project that is looking at issues of animal welfare in the food chain. As such, one of the major aims of this research is to develop and improve ways of monitoring and measuring animal welfare in cattle, pigs and chickens across Europe.

Task 1: Ask each individual participant to consider what animal welfare actually means to them in the context of food production and ask them to draw up a list of the issues that they think should be important when assessing the welfare of animals used in food production. Once everybody has finished their own list the group as a whole should be asked to share their insights to produce a combined list. Participants should also be asked to consider whether they think that the importance of the issues they have identified varies between cattle, pigs and chickens.

After they have completed the above task, participants should be informed that people working for the Welfare Quality project are also in the process of developing a list of animal welfare principles. Participants should then be presented with a short written summary of the 10 preliminary welfare categories being developed by the Welfare Quality project. The facilitator should then briefly discuss these categories (reading the text aloud should be sufficient) and address any questions that the participants might have. The facilitator should then ask the following questions:

16. What are your overall impressions of these ten animal welfare categories?

Which of the ten categories do you think are the most important and which do you think are the least important and why? Try to find out how participants interpret each of the categories and try to probe the meanings they invest in the different categories.

17. Does this list cover all the concerns that you developed in your own list?

In other words, do participants feel that there is anything important missing from the list? If so, what? Do participants feel that anything should be excluded from the list?

18. If the EU developed an animal welfare standard based on the ten welfare categories we have shown you, do you think it would help to improve the welfare of animals involved in food production? Do you think it would help you to choose between animal products? Would it influence your food consumption habits?

18 a. IF YES: How would you like to receive information about this welfare standard?

By a simple system similar to the stars for hotels (e.g. 1 to 3 smiley-faced animals depending on how welfare-friendly a product is), or something with more detailed information? Do you see this standard as a tool for helping consumers to choose

between products, or as a tool to allow producers to communicate to retailers what they do (and then retailers could reward/penalise producers according to their performance, but not necessarily call on consumers to choose between products)?

18 b. IF NO: Why? And what are your concerns, or what information you would like to receive that is not included in this list?

For example, concerns that are not addressed in the list developed by the Welfare Quality project might include the agreed list of issues elaborated in task 1 of theme C, go back to the agreed list.

*Theme D: Trust and responsibility (this session should last about 15 minutes)*

19. Who would you trust to provide fair and unbiased information about animal welfare issues related to food products?

Prompt only after their spontaneous answers

For example, which of the following organisations do participants trust; The European Union, national governments, local or regional governments, independent scientific bodies, independent organisations like the Food Standards Agency, food producers, retailers, the media, NGOs such as the RSPCA. Does their level of trust in these bodies vary in relation to the issue being considered?

20. Who do you think should be responsible to ensure that animals used in food production experience a good level of welfare and Why?

Prompt only after their spontaneous answers

For example do you think that consumers have a role to play through the types of products they purchase or do you think that the government or producers or retailers should take responsibility? Who do you think is actually taking responsibility for these issues at present? Should different people/organisations be responsible for different issues?

*Thank everybody and close*

*Debriefing questionnaire*

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## ANIMAL WELFARE: TEN AREAS OF CONCERN

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Animal scientists working on the Welfare Quality project have identified ten key areas of welfare concern to use as a starting point for assessing the welfare of cattle, pigs and chickens on farms, during transport and at slaughter. Researchers are also in the process

of developing a range of specific welfare measures that can be used to assess each of these concerns. An important feature of this scheme is its emphasis on assessing welfare from the animal's 'point of view', as such increased importance will be placed on animal-based welfare measures (e.g. bodily condition, presence of injuries) rather than on resource or management-based measures (e.g. space, temperature, handling), which only measure risk to welfare rather than actual welfare status. The ten preliminary concerns are as follows:

*Ten broad areas of concern*

1. Hunger, thirst or malnutrition

This occurs when animals are denied a sufficient and appropriate diet or a sufficient and accessible water supply and can lead to dehydration, poor body condition and death. Malnutrition may also arise when diets are sufficient in volume but deficient in key nutrients.

2. Physical comfort and security

Animals can become uncomfortable and have problems lying down, getting up, walking and standing. This can occur when they are kept in inappropriately designed housing (e.g. insufficient space, poor ventilation, unsuitable flooring and bedding) or when they are transported in poorly designed or poorly ventilated vehicles.

3. Health: injuries

Animals can suffer physical injuries, such as skin lesions, bruises and broken bones due to factors such as: poor bedding conditions, uneven or slippery flooring, enclosures with sharp edges and environments that promote aggressive behaviours between animals.

4. Health: disease

Animals can suffer a range of diseases (e.g. inflammation of the udder in cows or heart disease in broiler chickens). Poor hygiene, irregular monitoring and unnecessary delays in treatment can amplify these problems.

5. Pain (not related to injuries or disease)

In addition to suffering pain from injuries and disease, animals can experience intense or prolonged pain due to inappropriate management, handling, slaughter, or surgical procedures (e.g. castration, dehorning) and as a result of intense aggressive encounters.

6. Normal/natural social behaviours

Animals can be denied the opportunity to express natural, non-harmful, social behaviours, such as grooming themselves and each other and huddling for warmth. Separating females from their offspring and preventing sexual behaviour are specific examples of this.

7. Normal/natural other behaviours

Animals can be denied the possibility of expressing other intuitively desirable natural behaviours, such as exploration, foraging, running, flying and play. The denial of these possibilities might lead to abnormal and/or harmful behaviours such as tongue rolling in cattle and feather pecking in chickens.

8. Human-animal relationship

Poor interactions with people can be reflected in increased avoidance distances and fearful or aggressive animal behaviours. This can occur due to inappropriate handling techniques (e.g. slapping, kicking and the use of electric prods), or when farmers, animal transporters or slaughterhouse staff are either insufficiently skilled or possess unsympathetic or non-compassionate attitudes towards animals.

9. Negative emotions (apart from pain)

Animals can experience emotions such as fear, distress, frustration or depression when they are kept in inappropriate physical or social environments (e.g. where there is mixing of unfamiliar groups of animals, or when there is not enough space to avoid aggressive interactions). These emotions can be reflected in behaviours such as panic, flight, social withdrawal and aggression and in behavioural disorders.

Areas of Concern	Animal Based Parameters (Cattle)	Resource and Management Based Parameters (General)
Hunger, thirst or malnutrition	Body condition & dehydration Mortality	Provision of food and water on farm, during transport and prior to slaughter Management strategies
Physical comfort and security	Difficulties rising or lying Slipping and falling (on farm and during loading) Cleanliness of animal Panting after stress or effort	Housing design (e.g. space, flooring, bedding and litter) Air quality Duration of transport Method of slaughter
Health: injuries	Injuries on farm/at slaughter Mortality and life expectancy	Handling strategies Records of injured, diseased and culled animals Treatment procedures
Health: disease	Mortality and life expectancy Occurrence of disease Carcass damage	Records of diseases, treatments and culls Identification and treatment
Pain	Lameness Routine mutilations (e.g. dehorning) Effectiveness of stunning Meat quality at slaughter	Presence of sharp edges Use of electric prod Stunning method
Normal/natural social behaviours	Frequency of allo-grooming (grooming each other) Occurrence of other natural social behaviours.	Grouping and regrouping of animals Physical contact with members of the same species
Normal/natural other behaviours	Abnormal behaviours (e.g. tongue-rolling) would receive a negative score	Presence of key resources
Human-animal relationship	Avoidance distance Fear Aggression	Attitudes and skills of farmers, drivers and slaughterhouse staff
Negative emotions	Fear (freezing, running away) Vocalization (on farm and at slaughter) Qualitative assessment	Does the environment foster the ability to avoid aggressive interactions and to make choices?
Positive emotions	Play (in young) Qualitative assessment	Environmental enrichment Does the environment foster the ability to groom, explore, play etc.?

#### 10. Positive emotions

Animals can also experience positive emotions such as comfort, satisfaction and excitement when they are healthy and kept in good physical and social environments. Positive emotions are difficult to assess but may be reflected in certain behaviours, such as: play, group activity, 'choice' of partner animals within a group, exploration, grooming, and by certain vocalizations.

#### *Specific parameters relating to each concern*

In order to assess each of the ten broad concerns, scientists working on the project are in the process of identifying and measuring a series of welfare parameters. The table below provides a small illustrative selection of the parameters that researchers intend to use as a starting point for assessing the welfare of cattle. Over the course of the next five years researchers will develop and test a variety of different measures that relate to each of these parameters. Only measures that are deemed to be valid, reliable, repeatable and feasible to collect will be included in the final welfare assessment scheme.

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## HUNGARY

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#### *List of products used in the discussion*

Explicit animal welfare products:

- Gyulai Quality, controlled pork, labeling: Fed with exclusively natural forage, processed in a unique, closed system.
- Mastergood, Red Master „Farmer chicken’, labeling: reared in a traditional, free range.
- Herbahús turkey medallion: Hungarian meat specialty produced by herb technology. Free of medicines, controlled environment- and animal friendly program. Certification of origin: fed at least with 50 per cent of corn, free range, processed without animal proteins, medicines and antibial adjuvant. Motto: „Again in harmony with the nature’.
- Farm Bio eggs, labeling: a product from controlled ecological farm. It suits EU’s prescriptions. The feed of our animals does not contain any additives, colorants and chemicals, and are no treated by antibiotics. We think the prevention to be the most important in health protection. We provide optimal conditions to our animals, our hens can live free in spacious pounds. It is our mission to protect the World, the environment and our health. Our methods are always harmonizing with the natural laws and we refuse all kind of environment destructing methods.



Implicit animal welfare products:

- Zöld Farm (Green farm) Bio Milk, labeling: In the course of the forage production we do not use materials contaminating soil and waters, do not feed cattle with transgenic plants. We do not use antibiotics, adjuvant. In order to keep the health of our animals we think the prevention and natural rearing circumstances to be the most important. Naturally healthy. Quality guaranteed by XY bio-farmer (personally). Additional labels: Bio product controlled by Biokontroll Public Benefit Organization. Winner of prize of „Bio product of the year 2003’.
- Zöld Farm (Green farm) Bio Yogurt, labeling: Bio product controlled by Biokontroll Public Benefit Organization. From controlled ecological farming.
- Hercsi Chicken, labeling: Controlled feeding conditions, ISO 9001, HACCP system, Fed by forage free from antibiotics. Quality food from Hungary.

Quality labels with ambiguous or non existent welfare:

- Pick Békebeli (=from good-old times) snapping sausage, labeling: Made from gentle meat parts. With the recommendation of „Pick Tradition Keeping Committee’. Traditional Hungarian meat.
- Mangold Mangalica (special Hungarian type of pork) sausage, labeling: Taste and tradition. Product from controlled livestock.
- Omega Farm eggs, labeling: The eggs are from hen livestock held in coop

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ITALY

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*Summary results from the debriefing questionnaire<sup>36</sup>*

1. Were you able to sufficiently express your views and opinions within the focus group?

Yes	No	Enough	No answer
49		2	

2. Is there anything that you would like to add to the comments you made in the focus group?

Yes	No	No answer
4	37	10

Further comments:

Positive, serious and concrete discussion

I would like to participate to a debate on this issue

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<sup>36</sup> Of a total of 52 participants, 1 person didn’t complete the questionnaire.

3. Do you think that the focus group was a useful exercise that shed light on the topics being discussed?

Yes	No	Enough	No answer
48		1	2

How do you think it could have been improved?

More time.

More workshops and conferences.

More questionnaire.

4. Would you like to find out more information about the research being conducted by the welfare quality project? If so, what topics are you particularly interested in?

Yes	No	No answer
40	5	6

5. How would you like to be informed about the project results?

Website	Email	Brochure	Workshops	No answer
16	16	19	13	6

6. Where would you usually look for information on issues relating to food and animal welfare (e.g. what websites, what magazines etc.)?

newspapers and magazines	12
Television	8
Websites	7
Scientific and environmental websites (Green Planet, WWF)	5
Brochure (LIKE coop)	5
Specialized magazines (Informatore Zootecnico)	4
Books	2
Public and private bodies (Tuscany Region, Arsia - Rural Development Agency)	2
Radio	1
Universitary books	1
Products packaging	1
Publicity	1
Every instrument	1
No look for	3
No answer	14

7. Are you interested in receiving further information about the project?

Yes	No	No answer
35	3	15

UNITED KINGDOM

*Group characteristics*

**Group 1: Urban mothers**

Group	n.	gender		Age	Marital Status	Children	Rural /urb	Family income			Education			
		M	F					Low-med-high			Low-med-high			
								L	M	H	L	M	H	
1			X	44	M	2	U		X			X		
2			X	48	M	2	U		X			X		
3			X	42	M	3	U		X			X		
4		X		40	D	2	U		X				X	
5		X		30	M	2	U		X			X		
6		X		34	M	3	U		X					X
7		X		38	M	2	U		X			X		
8														

**Group 2: Young singles**

Group	n.	gender		Age	Marital Status	Children	Rural /urb	Family income			Education			
		M	F					Low-med-high			Low-med-high			
								L	M	H	L	M	H	
1		X		27	S	0	U		X					X
2			X	23	S	0	U		X					X
3			X	32	S	0	U		X					X
4		X		24	S	0	U			X		X		
5		X		24	S	0	U			X		X		
6			X	25	S	0	M		X					X
7			X	23	S	0	U		X			X		
8														

**Group 3: Seniors**

Group	n.	gender		Age	Marital status	Children	Rural /urb	Family income			Education			
		M	F					Low-med-high			Low-med-high			
								L	M	H	L	M	H	
1		X		60	M	3	U		X					X
2		X		56	M	3	M		X			X		
3		X		66	M	3	U		X				X	
4			X	66	M	3	U		X			X		
5			X	60	M	3	M			X				X
6			X	68	M	2	U		X			X		
7		X		66	M	3	U		X			X		
8			X	61	D	0	R		X					X

**Group 4: Politically active/vegetarians**

Group	n.	gender		Age	Marital Status	Children	Rural /urb	Family income			Education		
		M	F					Low-med-high			Low-med-high		
								L	M	H	L	M	H
1	X			22	S	0	U	X					X
2			X	63	D	3	R	X			X		
3			X	59	D	2	M	X			X		
4	X			29	M	0	U		X				X
5			X	26	S	0	U		X				X
6			X	30	M	0	U	X				X	
7													
8													

**Group 5: Empty nesters**

Group	n.	gender		Age	Marital Status	Children	Rural /urb	Family income			Education		
		M	F					Low-med-high			Low-med-high		
								L	M	H	L	M	H
1	X			>40	M	0	U		X		X		
2			X	>40	M	0	U	X			X		
3			X	>40	M	0	U	X			X		
4			X	<40	M	0	U	X				X	
5			X	<40	M	0	U	X			X		
6	X			61	M	0	U	X				X	
7	X			<40	M	0	U		X				X
8	X			<40	M	0	U		X		X		

**Group 6: Rural women**

Group	n.	gender		Age	Marital Status	Children	Rural /urb	Family income			Education		
		M	F					Low-med-high			Low-med-high		
								L	M	H	L	M	H
1			X	41	M	3	R		X				X
2			X	27	S	0	R	X					X
3			X	41	M	4	R		X		X		
4			X	50	D	2	R	X			X		
5			X	39	M	2	R		X		X		
6			X	43	M	2	R	X			X		
7			X	39	M	2	R		X		X		
8			X	46	M	3	R		X		X		

## Group 7: Young singles North

Group	n.	gender		Age	Marital Status	Children	Rural /urb	Family income			Education		
		M	F					Low-med-high			Low-med-high		
								L	M	H	L	M	H
	1		X	29	S	1	U	X			X		
	2		X	<35	S	0	U	X				X	
	3		X	<35	S	0	U	X			X		
	4	X		34	S	0	U	X			X		
	5	X		34	S	0	U	X			X		
	6		X	28	S	1	U	X			X		
	7		X	<35	S	1	U	X			X		
	8	X		<35	S	0	U	X			X		

*List of products used in the Reading focus groups*

- Tesco's Free Range Fresh Chicken Thighs  
This product has the Little Red Tractor logo and written on the label is 'Free range specialist breed grown on selected farms with trees and shelter to encourage ranging'
- Cotswold Old Leg Bar Free Range Eggs
- Merchant Gourmet Quails Eggs
- Wild and White Organic Semi-skimmed Milk
- Tesco's Organic Wafer Thin Ham  
The product has the Organic Farmers and Growers logo and written on the label is 'Produced to strict organic standards. Organic production prohibits the use of genetically modified materials.'
- Tesco's Organic Chicken Nuggets  
This product has the Soil Association logo and the following on the label 'Produced to strict organic standards. Organic production prohibits the use of genetically modified materials'
- Duchy Dry Cured Bacon Unsmoked  
This product has the Soil Association logo. The label reads 'Made from free-range pigs reared outside on the soils of East Anglia and Yorkshire. They spend their lives outside in family groups and have warm shelters and strawbedding to provide shelter in the winter and shade in the summer.'
- Yeo Valley Organic Yoghurt  
This product has the Soil Association logo. The label reads 'We make it with milk from cows that graze on the clove-rich organic grass.'
- Loosely Farm Yoghurt
- Helen Brownings Chipolatas  
This product had an enormous amount of writing on the label. It has the soil association logo and the following written on the label 'From pigs who live life on the wild side. Total traceability means that from the day the pigs are conceived we supervise their progress under our pioneering organic system which demonstrates the ultimate in high welfare standards. Living life on the wild side, our hardy breeds are reared outside, fed on an organic gmo-free diets, rooting in pesticide

free clover-rich pastures. Treated homeopathically as required, antibiotics only used in emergencies. From British pigs, no overseas travel.'

- Sainsbury's 'Taste the difference' Pork Chops  
This product carries the Little Red Tractor logo, and the label says 'Fully traceable to approved farms that comply with our comprehensive animal welfare standards.'
- Tesco's Finest Aberdeen Angus Sausages

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## THE NETHERLANDS

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### *Composition focus groups*

#### Group 1: Urban mothers

ID-number	301	302	303	304	305	306	307
Attributes							
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age	47	43	30	41	34	39	45
Marital status	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner
Number of children	2	2	1	2	2	2	More than 3
Children below 5	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Rural / urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban
Education	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
Income	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
Vegetarian	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Meat consumption	High	High	High	?	High	High	Medium

#### Group 2: Empty nesters

ID-number	311	312	313	314	315	316	317	318	319
Attributes									
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Male	Male	Female	Male	Female	Female
Age	53	56	54	43	28	35	49	23	57
Marital status	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner
Number of children	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Education	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	High	High	Medium
Income	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	High
Vegetarian	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Meat consumption	Medium	Medium	?	High	High	High	High	Medium	High

**Group 3: Seniors**

ID-number	321	322	323	325	326	327	328
Attributes							
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Male
Age	70	59	59	62	57	72	63
Marital status	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner	Partner
Education	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	High
Income	Low	High	High	Medium	High	High	Medium
Vegetarian	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Meat consumption	High	Medium	High	High	High	High	High

**Group 4: Rural women**

ID-number	331	332	333	334	335	336	337	338
Attributes								
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age	47	50	43	41	39	33	33	47
Rural / urban	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural
Education	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Income	High	High	High	Medium	High	High	High	High
Vegetarian	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Meat consumption	High	Medium	High	High	High	High	High	High

**Group 5: Young singles**

ID-number	341	342	343	344	345	346	347	348
Attributes								
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female	Male
Age	33	35	29	23	22	24	25	30
Marital status	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single
Rural / urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban
Education	High	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	High	High	High
Income	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Vegetarian	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

**Group 6: Politically active/vegetarian**

ID-number	351	352	353	354	355	356	357	358
Attributes								
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Female	Male	Female	Male	Male
Age	26	39	60	56	45	40	54	24
Education	High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High
Income	Low	Medium	High	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium
Vegetarian	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Politically active	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No

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SWEDEN

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Explicit animal welfare concerns (ecological products)

1. Minced meat in plastic packing. Ecological and KRAV- labelled.
2. Ecological light milk from the major producer.
3. Ecological Eggs with KRAV – label. From a major, well-know producer.



Explicit animal welfare concerns (leaflets)

4. Text: ‘They treat us like animals’. Leaflet from ‘Naturkött’ (Nature meat) . Inside the consumer find information about the animals’ conditions and where they are brought up.
5. Leaflet from a small chicken farmer called ‘Bosarp’. Text: Bosarpkycklingen – it simply taste better! One the back you can find a map to the Bosarp farm in southern Sweden and inside very specific information about the animals’ conditions. KRAV – label.





Explicit animal welfare concerns (poster)

6. 'Ugglarps – Swedish meat from selected farms.' The text says: - Our animals are brought up in family boxes with a lot of space and a lot of grass, tells Mats and Bodil Persson at Kärra farm, one of the Swedish farms that works with the Ugglarps – model. Do you want to know more, call 020-55551.'

7. Poster from the retailer 'Konsum'. The text says: 'We have quite selling eggs from cages hens. Bring 51 persons with you into the milk fridge and you will understand why.'



No explicit animal welfare concerns

8. Eggs from free range hens. From the same producer as the ecological eggs above.

9. Ham from 'Pärssons' a well-known brand. A Swedish flag in the corner on which it says: 'Buy Swedish quality.'

10. Sausage from the major brand 'Scan'. On the packing it says:

' Swedish meat' and down in the right corner there is a European Union label for traditional food.

11. Schnitzel from 'Scan'. As on the other packing it says ' Swedish meat' and you can also find a 'Piggham' label with a pig.



*Composition of Swedish focus groups*

ID Number	Focus Group	Gender	Age	Marital Status	No. of Children	No. Children <5	Rural/Urban	Education	HHIncome	Occ. Status	Vegetarian	Politically Active	Meat Consumption
501	Urbmo	F	32	Partner	2Child	YCU5	Urban	Meded			NVEG		Highmeat
502	Urbmo	F	45	Partner	1Child	YCU5	Urban	Highed	Highinc		NVEG		Medmeat
503	Urbmo	F	30	Partner	1Child	YCU5	Urban	Meded	Highinc		NVEG		Medmeat
504	Urbmo	F	28	Partner	1Child	YCU5	Urban	Highed			NVEG		Medmeat
505	Urbmo	F	48	Separated	3Child	NCU5	Urban	Meded			NVEG		Medmeat
506	Urbmo	F	47	Partner	3Pluschild	NCU5	Urban	Highed	Highinc		NVEG		Highmeat
507	Urbmo	F	48	Partner	1Child	NCU5	Rural	Meded			NVEG		Medmeat
508	Urbmo	F	46	Partner	3Child	NCU5	Urban	Highed	Highinc		NVEG		Highmeat
511	Rurwo	F	31	Partner	2Child	YCU5	Urban	Highed	Medinc		NVEG		Medmeat
512	Rurwo	F	21	Partner	0Child		Urban	Highed	Lowinc		NVEG		Lowmeat
513	Rurwo	F	44	Partner	2Child	NCU5	Urban	Meded	Highinc		NVEG		Lowmeat
514	Rurwo	F	23	Single	0Child		Urban	Meded	Lowinc		NVEG		Highmeat
515	Rurwo	F	46	Separated	3Pluschild	NCU5	Urban	Meded			NVEG		Medmeat
516	Rurwo	F	37	Partner	1Child	YCU5	Rural	Meded	Medinc		NVEG		Medmeat
517	Rurwo	F	26	Partner	0Child		Rural	Highed	Medinc		NVEG		Medmeat
521	Emptynest	M	55	Partner	2Child	NCU5	Urban	Highed	Highinc		NVEG		Medmeat
522	Emptynest	F	20	Partner	0Child		Rural	Meded	Meded		NVEG		Highmeat
523	Emptynest	F	48	Partner	1Child	NCU5	Urban	Highed			NVEG		Medmeat
524	Emptynest	M	50	Partner	2Child	NCU5	Urban	Lowed	Highinc		NVEG		Medmeat
525	Emptynest	F	58	Partner	0Child		Urban	Highed			NVEG		Medmeat
526	Emptynest	F	24	Partner	0Child		Urban	Highed	Medinc		NVEG		Medmeat
527	Emptynest	M	22	Partner	0Child		Urban	Highed	Lowinc		NVEG		Medmeat
528	Emptynest	F	54	Partner	3Child	NCU5	Urban	Meded	Lowinc		NVEG		Medmeat
531	Yosing	M	22	Single	0Child		Urban	Highed	Lowinc		NVEG		Highmeat
532	Yosing	F	27	Single	0Child		Urban	Highed	Lowinc		NVEG		Medmeat
533	Yosing	F	25	Single	0Child		Urban	Meded	Highinc		NVEG		Highmeat
534	Yosing	F	26	Single	0Child		Urban	Highed	Lowinc		NVEG		Highmeat
535	Yosing	M	22	Single	0Child		Urban	Highed	Lowinc		NVEG		Highmeat
536	Yosing	F	28	Single	0Child		Urban	Highed	Lowinc		NVEG		Medmeat
537	Yosing	M	34	Single	0Child		Urban	Highed	Lowinc		NVEG		Highmeat
541	Seniors	M	61	Single	0Child		Urban	Highed	Medinc		NVEG		Medmeat

*Composition of Swedish focus groups cont.*

542	Seniors	F		Partner					Highinc		NVEG		
543	Seniors	F	62	Single	2Child	NCU5	Rural	Meded	Medinc		NVEG		Medmeat
544	Seniors	M	60	Partner	1Child	NCU5	Urban	Meded	Highinc		NVEG		Highmeat
545	Seniors	F	58	Partner	1Child	NCU5	Urban	Highed	Highinc		NVEG		Medmeat
546	Seniors	F	55	Partner	1Child	NCU5	Rural	Highed	Highinc		NVEG		Medmeat
551	Paveg	M	27	Partner	0Child		Urban	Highed	Lowinc		YVEG	YPA	
552	Paveg	F	23	Single	0Child		Urban	Highed			YVEG	YPA	
553	Paveg	F	19	Single	0Child		Urban	Lowed			YVEG	YPA	
554	Paveg	M	19	Single	0Child		Rural	Highed	Lowinc		NVEG	YPA	Highmeat
555	Paveg	F	58	Partner	1Child	NCU5	Urban	Highed	Highinc		YVEG	YPA	
556	Paveg	F	45	Partner	0Child		Urban	Highed			YVEG	YPA	
561	CSSW1	M	45	Singel	1Child	NCU5	Urban	Highed	Highinc		NVEG	YPA	Highmeat
562	CSSW1	M	36	Partner	2Child	YCU5	Urban	Meded	Medinc		NVEG		Medmeat
563	CSSW1	M	42	Partner	1Child	NCU5	Urban	Highed	Medinc		NVEG		Highmeat
564	CSSW1	M	63	Single	0Child		Urban	Highed	Medinc		NVEG	YPA	Medmeat
565	CSSW1	M	53	Single	1Child	NCU5	Urban	Highed	Lowinc		NVEG	YPA	Highmeat
566	CSSW1	M	22	Single			Urban	Highed	Lowinc		NVEG	YPA	Highmeat





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