

An Overview of Farm Animal Care & Welfare Approaches in the United States

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NFACC's National Farm Animal Care & Welfare Conference, September 20 & 21, 2007
 La Conférence nationale du CNSAE sur le bien-être et la protection des animaux d'élevage, 20 et 21 septembre 2007

Who is responsible for animal welfare?

Scientists
 Veterinarians
 Special Consultants
 Government
 Food system

Public Consumers

Animal Welfare

Owners
 Managers
 Stock persons

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Public Issues

- Quality of life
 - Production conditions for animals
 - Working conditions and training for workers
- Quality and safety of food product
- Use of environmentally responsible & sustainable animal production practices
- Verification for food animal production practice



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Regulating Behavior

Voluntary

- Only one cup of alcoholic beverage is recommended during a 24 h period.



Involuntary

- Only one cup or glass of alcoholic beverage may be consumed during any 24 hour period. Violators are subject to penalty by law.

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U.S. Environment

- Current approach to ensuring farm animal welfare on farms & ranches is voluntary
 - Processors have Humane Slaughter Act
- State legislative initiatives have largely focused on banning specific equipment used in production
- Attempts to regulate farm animal care at the federal level have historically failed
 - Considerable infrastructure & budget to enforce



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Voluntary Regulating

Guidelines

- Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Agricultural Research and Teaching
- Producer/Commodity developed best practices



Standards

- Certified Humane Raised & Handled
- Free Farmed Certified



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Involuntary Regulating

- **State legislation/referendums: instituting bans**
 - Several passed or currently proposed
 - California – three different titles proposed
 - New Jersey - lawsuit
- **Recent Federal activity**
 - Banning horse slaughter
 - Road transport of livestock



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Current Assurance Strategies

- **Variety of products & new business claims regarding animal welfare**
 - Production system
 - Specific features of a system reflected in end-product
- **Use of labeling, branding and certification processes**
- **Private sector taking the lead**



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Animal Welfare Assurance

- **Current modes of action**
 - Food retailers or associated trade organizations/councils programs
 - Animal producer/commodity group programs
 - Animal protection programs
 - Independent professional audit organizations
 - Government programs
- **Requires the development, implementation & audit of the guidelines/standards**



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A Variety of Program Specs

- Historical breeds + alternative system + small family farm + organic or natural + audit/certification
- “Animal Friendly” specs + alternative system + selected food specs (ex. hormone free) + audit/certification
- Conventional production + animal welfare specs + assurance/audit/certification
- Commodity level production no specs + conventional production + no assurance/audit/certification



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Concerns for the Consumer

- **Confusion over terminology: animal care, humane, animal friendly, process verified, etc.**
- **If special labeling or brand – by law required to provide consumer with details of the program**
 - Typically tie back to a website where consumer may access information or brochure available from retailer
- **Differences in philosophy has resulted in lawsuits and claims against labels**
 - Government intervention could be useful in providing a definition of humane or setting an appropriate baseline



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How is best practice determined?

- **The formulation & acceptance of science-based guidelines or standards of animal care**
 - A guideline/standard is a statement of criteria that define a desired outcome
 - Typically composed of engineering and performance criteria
 - **Engineering criteria:** specific techniques/processes are named to achieve an outcome: ex. cage specs
 - **Performance criteria:** describe the desired outcome without specifying a particular technique for achieving the outcome: ex. percent lameness



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Food Marketing Institute & National Council of Chain Restaurants - Animal Welfare Initiative (2001)

- Concerned about agricultural animal production practices
 - Independent scientific advisory committee provides guidance
- Specified that guideline or standard criteria must address:**
 - Species animal husbandry practices
 - Health program and monitoring
 - Fresh water, good nutrition and proper shelter
 - Environment designed to protect from abuse and distress
 - Managers and workers must be trained, skilled and competent
- Guidelines/standards submitted and reviewed**
 - One set reviewed per food commodity group



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FMI & NCCR Directive (2001)

- Animal standards/guidelines criteria**
 - Science based
 - Empirical and peer reviewed literature as foundation
 - Consider practical concerns and perspectives
 - Derived from an appropriate review process
 - Mix of qualified experts associated with animal care and use
 - Attempt to address items of public concern
 - Don't ignore ethical or social implications of a practice
 - Avoid conflict of interest
 - Especially experts selected for advisory group



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US Conventional Industry Guidelines (submitted and reviewed through FMI-NCCR)

- National Pork Board: swine industry
- United Egg Producers: laying hens
- Dairy Quality Assurance Center: dairy cattle
- American Meat Institute: meat processing industry
- National Chicken Council: broiler chicken care and slaughter
- National Cattlemen's Beef Association: beef cattle production



*Turkey and duck under review or construction
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Non-Conventional Standards

• Humane Farm Animal Care

Certified Humane Raised & Handled



- Under development
- 5 levels: Benchmark – Gold Standard

• Animal Welfare Institute

Animal Welfare Approved



• American Humane Assoc.

Free Farmed Certified



• National Organic Program



- Organic label
- Limited specs on animal welfare

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Independent Humane Label Comparison Chart

	STANDARD OUTCOMES				
Species	X Industry Standards	✓ Remedy	✓	✓	✓
hog	Conduct program to ensure no crates or stalls are used for breeding, lactation, gestation, or confinement.	Prohibit use of crates and confinement stalls.	✓	✓	✓
	Apply sow stalls, which can only be used for breeding, lactation, gestation, or confinement.	Prohibit use of sow stalls.	✓	✓	✓
	Provide for one sow per stall.	Prohibit the use of one sow per stall.	✓	✓	✓
	Provide for one sow per stall, which does not cause stress or negative effects.	Prohibit the use of one sow per stall, which does not cause stress or negative effects.	✓	✓	✓
bat	Conduct daily inspection of stalls, which includes the ability to move sow.	Prohibit the use of sow stalls.	✓	✓	✓
laying hen	Conduct daily inspection, restrict the ability to move, stop, and restrain.	Prohibit use for both inspection and fast.	✓	✓	✓
	Stop debeaking.	Prohibit debeaking by debeaking means or by hot�	✓	✓	✓
	Provide for one hen per cage.	Prohibit debeaking by debeaking means or by hot�	✓	✓	✓
dairy	Provide for one cow per stall, which includes the ability to move, stop, and restrain.	Prohibit the use of one cow per stall.	✓	✓	✓
sheep	Provide for one sheep per stall, which includes the ability to move, stop, and restrain.	Prohibit the use of one sheep per stall.	✓	✓	✓
livestock and poultry	Provide for one animal per pen, where applicable.	Prohibit pens.	✓	✓	✓
program comparison	X ✓				
	Provide pig operators time participating in the program, which includes the ability to move, stop, and restrain.	Allow pig operators with pigs.	✓	✓	✓
	Provide for one sow per stall, which includes the ability to move, stop, and restrain.	Allow sow stalls.	✓	✓	✓
	Stop debeaking.	Prohibit debeaking by debeaking, gelding, spaying.	✓	✓	✓
	Provide animal inspection by independent, qualified inspectors.	Prohibit animal inspection.	✓	✓	✓
	Not required that inspectors be in training.		✓	✓	✓
	Provide for one hen per cage.	Prohibit debeaking by debeaking means or by hot�	✓	✓	✓
	Provide for one cow per stall, which includes the ability to move, stop, and restrain.	Prohibit the use of one cow per stall.	✓	✓	✓
	Provide for one sheep per stall, which includes the ability to move, stop, and restrain.	Prohibit the use of one sheep per stall.	✓	✓	✓
	Provide for one animal per pen, where applicable.	Prohibit pens.	✓	✓	✓
	No specific laws for animals.	Have 100% of scientific evidence reported.	✓	✓	✓
	Restrict the use of three, four, five, six, and seven months old hens, which includes the ability to move, stop, and restrain.	Do not restrict the use of three, four, five, six, and seven months old hens.	✓	✓	✓
	Abuse to be the legal, freely established minimum age.	Do not restrict the use of three, four, five, six, and seven months old hens.	✓	✓	✓
	Provide for one hen per cage.	Do not restrict the use of three, four, five, six, and seven months old hens.	✓	✓	✓
	Provide for one cow per stall, which includes the ability to move, stop, and restrain.	Do not restrict the use of one cow per stall.	✓	✓	✓
	Provide for one sheep per stall, which includes the ability to move, stop, and restrain.	Do not restrict the use of one sheep per stall.	✓	✓	✓
	Provide for one animal per pen, where applicable.	Do not restrict the use of pens.	✓	✓	✓
	Program has third party accreditation.	Have a registered independent certifying organization inspect and verify the program.	✓	✓	✓
	Program has no third party accreditation.	Have a registered independent certifying organization inspect and verify the program.	✓	✓	✓

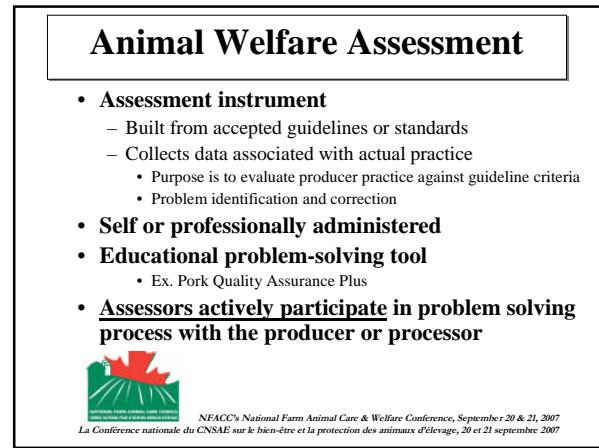
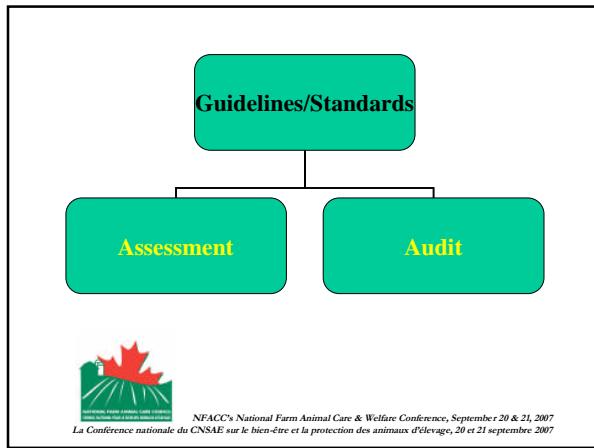
http://www.certifiedhumane.com/fact_sheets.html

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ANIMAL WELFARE INSTITUTE

A Comparison of Leading Industry and Independent Labels

	Description regarding the welfare of animals	Industry Standards	National Animal Welfare Standard (NAWS)	Certified Humane (American Humane Association)	Free Farmed (American Humane Association)
Common Practices					
Live pre-slaughter	Animals should be handled with respect to their welfare.	PROMOTED	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
Transport	Animals should be transported in vehicles that provide protection from extreme temperatures and other conditions that could result in undue stress or suffering.	PROMOTED	Not required	Not required	Not required
Independent facility	The farm, premises, or building where the animal is kept or held, must be clean, dry, well-ventilated, and have access to shade, shelter, and water.	PROMOTED	Not required	Not required	Not required
Feed and water	Animals should be fed and given water in amounts that meet their nutritional requirements.	PROMOTED	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
Housing	Animals should be provided with a place off the ground to sleep, rest, and move around.	PROMOTED	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
Handling	Handling may involve restraint, handling, and other procedures that do not cause unnecessary pain, suffering, or distress.	PROMOTED	Not required	Not required	Not required
Marketing	Marketing claims such as "natural," "organic," "free range," "free range certified," "certified humane," "certified organic," "certified natural," "certified free range," "certified animal welfare approved," and "certified animal welfare raised."	PROMOTED	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
Humane treatment	Animals should be treated with respect to their welfare.	PROMOTED	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
Animal welfare	All animal welfare issues must be addressed.	PROMOTED	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
Humane handling	Humane handling is a process of handling animals that minimizes stress and discomfort.	PROMOTED	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
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Audits

- **Utilize a data collection instrument**
 - Carefully worded questions
 - evaluate conformance
 - Objective observation of practice
- **Identifies producer compliance with guidelines or standards**

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Types of Audits Used in the U.S.

- **First Party Audit**
 - Conducted by a designated employee or manager on site at a designated random frequency
 - Recommended for identifying problems and areas for improvement: Self study
 - Preparation for a second or third party audit
- **Second Party Audit**
 - Conducted by a paid consultant or affiliated industry organization - less frequent than primary
 - Provides outside expertise and evaluation
 - Preparation for third party audit

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Types of Audits.....

- **Third Party Audit**
 - Uses evaluation instrument
 - Independence from party to be audited
 - Auditor does not participate in problem solving or education of the producer: They are there to audit

Note: Neither primary nor secondary audits qualify as independent

- Conflict of interest

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Current Strategy

- **Conduct all three types of audits**
 - First: provides real time monitoring
 - Builds familiarity with standards and audit process
 - Second: shadow audits by retailer provides necessary market pressure to comply
 - Third: assures independent oversight of compliance
- **USDA -AMS** – verifies the audit process has integrity – especially if labeled or branded

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Other Considerations

- **Auditors must be trained & certified as competent**
 - Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization
 - National Organic Program
- **Conflict of interest criteria enforced & code of ethics**
- **Professional auditing organizations are engaged in animal welfare assessment too**
 - Several offering independence from producer or retailer
 - Bundling of food safety & animal welfare by processors
 - Bundling of environmental & animal welfare on-farm



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Harmonization of Auditing?

- **Animal Welfare Audit Program (AWAP)**
 - Commissioned through FMI and NCCR
 - Database and third party audit program
 - Producer or Processor owned the data
 - Query system
 - Prevent over-auditing of processors and producers
- **Program failed**
 - Industry not ready to accept coordinated approach
 - Preferred choice of auditing firms
 - Anti-Trust concerns



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Voluntary Regulating

- **A Learning Curve**
 - How do other audited industries operate?
 - Does voluntary adherence increase public trust?
 - Can we agree on labeling/marketing rules?
 - Do all current standards/guidelines have integrity?
 - Do the parties engaged in the voluntary effort have integrity?
- **Program maintenance: long term commitment**
 - Guidelines/standards are living documents
 - Also requires assessment and audit process/documents to change
 - Public concerns and mandates generate revision too
 - Must be responsive to ethical concerns



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Inherent Problems

- **Proprietary issues with animal care guidelines, standards, or audit process**
- **Recognition of universal rules for developing standards/guidelines**
 - Primary model is based on federal process and recognized guidelines for animal care of research animals
 - National Research Council – ILAR Guide
 - Federation of Animal Science Societies – Ag Guide
- **Audit exhaustion**
 - Too many audits for units that supply multiple retailers



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Will a hybrid system emerge?

- **EU Welfare Quality Project**
 - Attempt to standardize across boundaries
 - Trade objectives



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Has the Welfare of Farm Animals in the United States Improved?

- **Yes – Processing sector**
 - Religious slaughter struggling
- **Yes, Maybe, & No – On Farm sector**
 - Conventional sector still working through implementation of changes
 - Egg producers leaders
 - Overall attention to animal welfare is positive
 - ? Non-conventional programs



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Today & Future

- A consumer/public driven food system
 - Challenge: injecting objective trustworthy discourse
- Non-governmental standards currently rule
- Impact of global animal welfare standards
 - World Trade Organization and World Animal Health Organization (OIE) – trade & food security
 - Impact of multinational corporate policy on animal production practices – consistency & integrity
- Food safety & quality impact on animal welfare
 - Could pose a barrier to change if heightened animal disease or food pathogen loads



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Today & Future.....

- Environmental issues: affect conventional & non-conventional programs
- Legislative/ballot actions: state level with potential for federal intervention
 - Finding common ground & common sense to make decisions: Mission Impossible?
 - Will the desire to exert power actually result in poorer welfare?
 - Limitations of using involuntary regulation: little flex & long transaction periods



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Goal

- Innovative systems that will:
 - Provide an acceptable quality of life for agricultural animals
 - Achieve sustainable production
 - Produce affordable, safe, and socially responsible products



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