European trends in animal welfare policies and research and their potential implications for US Agriculture

Dr. Ed Pajor
Associate Professor
Director, Center for Animal Well-Being
Department of Animal Sciences

PURDUE UNIVERSITY
Outline

- European activities
  - Legislation, Regulations, Standards
  - Quality Assurance Programs
  - Research Welfare Quality Project
- OIE – beyond Europe
- US activities
- Future direction
Animal Welfare in Europe

- Citizens look to Government for leadership and legislation on this issue
- National Governments
- Supernational Institutions
  - Council of Europe
  - European Union
Council of Europe

- Founded 1949. Animal welfare 1960’s
- 46 member states
- Committee of foreign ministers
- Parliamentary assembly – 315 representatives
- Issues both binding conventions and non-binding guidelines
Council of Europe conventions for farm animals

- Protection of animals during international transport
- Protection of animals kept for farming purposes
- Protection of animals for Slaughter

Conventions state minimum requirements which are fixed and need to be included in national laws.
European Union

- Formerly European Economic Community
- Different animal protection laws could impose unfair competitive advantages
- Issue legislative text (directives)
- Directives based on reports of scientific experts
General trend for EU Directives

- To increase space allowance per animal
- Permit social interactions
- More freedom of movement
- Provide enriched environments
- Feed animals consistent with physiological and behavioral needs
- Limit painful interventions
EU directives

- Become national regulations
- New European rural policy (2007-2013)
- Direct payments to farmers will depend on following good farming practices that incorporate animal welfare legislation

.....$$$$$$
National Regulations

- Conforms to European regulations but may also define more stringent measures
  - Norway – castration by a vet using anesthetic
  - Other countries – no anesthetic required before 7 days of age

- In addition to laws certain countries may have Codes of Practice
Quality Assurance Programs

- Industry based
- Retailer “gate keeping device”
- Aimed at niche markets
- More strict than other regulations
3 types of Quality Assurance Programs

- **General quality**
  - Animal welfare part but focus is on food safety, product quality and traceability,
  - Welfare criteria meet basic legal requirements

- **Animal Welfare**
  - Surpass national legislation
  - Surpass standards in quality programs

- **Organic Schemes**
  - Animal welfare included as part of a production philosophy which includes environmental and human health, food safety and food quality
Summary

- Super-national and national guidelines, quality assurance programs, legislation

- Increase space, natural behavior, decrease pain

- Economic incentives

- Public opinion reflected in legislation and directs research
Public Opinion in Europe: Eurobarometer
Eurobarometer

- European commission
- Series of surveys on the attitudes of Europeans on a variety of topics
Attitudes of Consumers Towards the Welfare of Farmed Animals

1. The Welfare of Farmed Animals

1.2 Opinion on the protection of farmed animals

Question: 8.2. In general, how would you rate the welfare/protection of the following farmed animals?

Option: Dairy cows (producing milk)

Answers: Total “Good”
Animal welfare is an important attribute of overall food quality (Eurobarometer, 2005)

- Reluctance to purchase animal friendly products due to a lack of transparent, reliable, understandable information about how animal products are produced
Welfare Research in Europe:
The welfare quality project
Welfare Quality Project

- Largest piece of integrated research work carried out in Animal Welfare in Europe
- Expanded to include 5 Latin American Countries
- 44 institutes and universities
- 17 countries
- 17 million Euros
Welfare Quality Goals

- To develop practical strategies, measures to improve animal welfare
- To develop a European standard for the assessment of animal welfare
- To integrate and interrelate the most appropriate specialist expertise in the multidisciplinary field of animal welfare in Europe
Measures

- Clear, scientifically valid, address welfare concerns and allow clear communication
- 4 welfare criteria that capture public’s description of animal welfare
- 12 welfare principles that should be covered in the measurement systems
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welfare criteria</th>
<th>Welfare principles</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good feeding</td>
<td>1. Absence of prolonged hunger</td>
<td>Animals should not suffer from prolonged hunger</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Absence of prolonged thirst</td>
<td>Animals should not suffer from prolonged thirst</td>
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<td>Good housing</td>
<td>3. Comfort around resting</td>
<td>Animals should be comfortable, especially within their lying areas</td>
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<td>4. Thermal comfort</td>
<td>Animals should be in good thermal environment</td>
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<td>5. Ease of Movement</td>
<td>Animals should be able to moving around freely</td>
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<td>Good health</td>
<td>6. Absence of injuries</td>
<td>Animals should not be physically injured</td>
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<td>7. Absence of disease</td>
<td>Animals should be free of disease</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8. Absence of pain induced by management procedures</td>
<td>Animals should not suffer from pain induced by inappropriate management</td>
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<td>Appropriate behaviour</td>
<td>9. Expression of social behaviours</td>
<td>Animals should be allowed to express natural, non-harmful, social behaviours</td>
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<td>10. Expression of other behaviours</td>
<td>Animals should have the possibility of expressing other intuitively desirable natural behaviours, such as exploration and play</td>
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<td>11. Good human-animal relationship</td>
<td>Good Human-animal relationships are beneficial to the welfare of animals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12. Absence of general fear</td>
<td>Animals should not experience negative emotions such as fear, distress, frustration or apathy</td>
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http://www.welfarequality.net
Welfare Quality Project

- Combined analyses of consumer/citizen perceptions and attitudes with existing knowledge from animal welfare science

- Recent publications
- On farm Assessment/Monitoring systems currently being piloted out for numerous species
- Emphasis on Animal based criteria
- Project will likely have significant impact on North American Agriculture
Animal Welfare Standards and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)

(Standards beyond Europe)
The OIE

- World Organization for Animal Health
- Created in 1924 – 28 countries
- Standards to combat outbreak of animal diseases
- Still primary mission – 167 Member Countries
- OIE standards are the international reference in the field of animal diseases and zoonoses for WTO
Animal diseases linked to suffering and welfare

2002 receive mandate to provide leadership in developing standards in animal welfare

OIE Terrestrial Animal Health code and Aquatic Animal Health Code

Aim to produce standards in the area of animal welfare that could be used for international trade

Use as foundation for legislation in countries that currently do not have legislation in animal welfare
Guidelines need to be science based

Different measures for health, affective states, behavioral responses

8 guiding principles for animal welfare

5 freedoms
5 freedoms

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst
2. Freedom from discomfort
3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease
4. Freedom to express normal behavior
5. Freedom from fear and distress
Guidelines need to be science based
- Different measures for health, affective states, behavioral responses

8 guiding principles for animal welfare
- 5 freedoms
- 3 R’s (reduction, refinement, replacement)
- Value assumptions are part of welfare
- Animal based criteria rather than design criteria should be the basis for comparing standards
Guideline criteria

- **Resource based (design/input)**
  - Space allowances, trailer condition, temperature ranges, air quality, provision of food and water bio-security, inspection rates.
  - Easy to measure
  - Limited to specific breeds, established systems and problems

- **Animal-based (performance/output) criteria**
  - Survival rate, disease and injury, body condition, reaction to handlers, behavior
  - Better criteria as they reflect the influence of variables and handler experience
  - Difficult to measure
- 2005- Four sets of codes
- Slaughter for human consumption
- Land transport
- Sea transport
- Humane killing of animals of disease control purposes
OIE Future Activities

- Companion Animal Welfare – stray dogs
- Wild animal welfare – harvesting/culling
- Lab animal welfare
- **Terrestrial (Farm) Animal welfare**
  - Housing and Production systems
  - Extremely challenging, diverse systems and priorities
  - Dairy cattle and lameness
  - Broilers
Animal Welfare in Europe and Beyond

- Legislation, standards, guidelines, codes
- Supernational, national, niche, local
- Economics and Trade
- Important to the Public
- Part of the culture of agriculture
Animal Welfare - USA
Regulating Animal Welfare

- Voluntary (Guidelines) vs. Involuntary (laws)

- On farm – mostly voluntary but state bans on specific production systems are appearing
Quality Assurance Programs

- Development, Implementation and audit of the guidelines/standards
- Private sector taking the lead
- Emphasis has been on engineering criteria
Handling and Welfare Guidelines

- American Meat Institute
- United Egg Producers
- McDonald’s, BK, Wendy’s & KFC
- Whole Foods
- Agricultural Animal Alliance
- Animal Welfare Institute
- Certified Humane
- Independent companies
Mainstream consumers driving animal welfare

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN. — Consumer perceptions are crucial in a fast-moving world in which food companies are linked closely to suppliers, Rob Langert, senior public affairs director at McDonald’s Corp., told producers and veterinarians attending the Allman Swine Conference Sept. 17-18 here.

In consultation with livestock handling experts and suppliers, McDonald’s is developing welfare guidelines in response to public demands, Langert explained.

McDonald’s social responsibility policy is designed to anticipate consumer concerns and minimize overreactions, he said.

As part of corporate citizenship policies, the company has adopted handling, auditing and compliance programs for packers and cage space standards for egg suppliers. McDonald’s has just completed its third annual audit of packing plants that supply it with raw material. By year-end, it will buy eggs from producers who support its welfare guidelines. Dedicated suppliers must provide at least 72 sq. in. of cage space and 4 in. of feeder per bird. The company no longer accepts suppliers of
95 percent of respondents agreed with the statement, "It is important to me that animals on farms are well cared for."

68 percent think the government should take an active role in promoting the welfare of farm animals.

75 percent would vote for a state law requiring producers to treat farm animals better.

76 percent disagreed with the statement, "Low meat prices are more important than the well-being of farm animals."
Animal Law

- Rapid growing area of law
- 98 Law schools in the US now offer at least 1 course in animal law
- Journal of Animal Law and Ethics (Penn)
- Feb 24-24, 2007 National animal advocacy competition at Harvard Law School
- Practices being banned on ballot initiatives
Animal Welfare in the USA

- Legislation, standards, guidelines, codes
- National, niche, local
- Economics and Trade
- Important to the Public
- Becoming part of the culture of agriculture
Improving Animal welfare?
Standards

- US guidelines driven by retailers, producers
- Market factors

- Plethora of programs
  - Different standards
  - Difficult to understand
  - Assurance, enforcement varies with program
Standards and the Public

- Concerns of consumers/citizens must be included in the process
- Need better/more information about public attitudes
- Dialogue with public/external critics necessary as they can influence animal welfare policy
A useful model?

- Eurobarometer
  - Attitudes of citizens and consumers
- Welfare Quality Project
- Standards and principles reflect scientific knowledge but are based on the public’s shared values
- The US is not Europe but perhaps the time has come for science-based national standards that reflect US values and the unique challenges faced by US agriculture
The welfare quality project will have a significant impact on standards, guidelines, and legislation in the US.

Global players

Recommendations will be science based and reflect public attitudes.

Research and guidelines on transport, handling, and euthanasia will be presented to European Stakeholders this fall.
National Dialogue and Process about Farm Animal Welfare

- Set standards where sufficient science exist
- Develop and validate animal based standards of animal welfare
- Follow-up mechanism
- Increase and sustain dialogue among producers, scientists, veterinarians and other stakeholders
- Facilitate transparency and ethical consistency
- Provide incentives for producers to adopt and follow practices
Farm Animal welfare

- Reflection of a new social ethic concerning animals
- Part of the culture of agriculture
- pajor@purdue.edu