

# PROCEEDINGS BOOK

## ONE WELFARE WORLD CONFERENCE

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Virtual



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# One Welfare in farm animal production: animal welfare in connection to human wellbeing and environmental sustainability

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## Keywords / Relevant Terms

Resilience, Farm animal, transition, welfare, One Welfare, laying hens

## Abstract

Farm animal production in Europe is in a transition phase. Societal pressure is increasing to move towards systems that are more sustainable and to critically review the role of livestock in our food production systems. Simultaneously, attention for farm animal welfare is growing and the livestock industry is challenged to transition towards welfare-friendly animal husbandry systems. In these systems, animals should be able to show their natural behaviour and the system should be adjusted to the animals and not the other way around. Animal mutilations, such as beak trimming in laying hens and tail docking in pigs, should be phased out. A clear illustration of this transition phase is the recent petition to 'End the Cage Age' in Europe, petitioning to ban all restrictive housing systems for farm animals in Europe.

The OneWelfare framework offers valuable tools to support this transition in such a way that it enhances both animal welfare and human well-being and supports a healthy environment. For instance in the case of laying hens, already a lot of experience has been gathered with keeping laying hens in non-cage systems, that provide opportunities for the hens' natural behaviour. As the eggs are coded based on the housing system they are produced in, the eggs from non-cage systems can easily be recognized by the customer and are sold at a small premium compared with eggs from cage systems. For free range and organic eggs, this premium is even higher, allowing the farmer to make investments in animal welfare, without negatively influencing farm income. Looking at environmental effects, the studies focusing on environmental sustainability did not find large differences between cage and non-cage systems. Major contributors to environmental sustainability are the feed and the pullets, which is similar for all housing systems. From the examples that already exist, it also becomes clear that with increasing experience

with non-cage housing systems, hens can also be more easily kept with intact beaks, taking away the need for beak trimming. To facilitate the transition to housing systems that fit within the OneWelfare framework, it is needed that countries and producers that already have relevant experience with the transition share that experience with others. Producers need to be convinced that the transition is feasible and that they will be able to recover the investments in animal welfare and sustainability that they make. OneWelfare animal farming may just become reality in the near future

