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## PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF PRACTITIONERS AND CITIZENS TOWARDS WELFARE IN POULTRY LOW INPUT OUTDOOR AND ORGANIC PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

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To promote animal welfare, it is important to understand the views of practitioners and citizens to poultry welfare in different farming systems. The aim of this study was to examine the perceptions and expectations of practitioners and citizens towards poultry welfare in low input outdoor and organic production systems. In total 15 on-line focus group discussions and a policy focus group were carried out in Autumn 2020 in France, Belgium, Finland, United Kingdom, Italy and Romania. The participants were low-input outdoor and organic laying hen and chicken farmers, processors and retailers of poultry meat and eggs, consumers, and policy actors. Welfare issues and themes examined by the focus group meetings were identified based on a literature search and key informant expert interviews carried prior the focus groups. All discussions were recorded, analysed and summarized first in local language and then in English, to facilitate cross-country analysis. Consumers, farmers and veterinarians were seen as key actors when animal welfare is considered. Consumers themselves considered space, investment required, disease control, over-use of medicines and predation as major issues relating to animal welfare in low-input outdoor and organic poultry production systems. The discussions suggested that many consumers have limited knowledge about different poultry production systems and quality assurance schemes. Locally produced, better-quality food and value for money were among the main factors that people considered when purchasing organic or low-input outdoor-produced eggs and chicken. The concept of low-input farming was understood poorly by the participants. Supply side actors considered the management of environmental parameters and a well-maintained range with appropriate vegetation or agroforestry as challenges in poultry production. Achieving the full use of range was also indicated as a challenge. Poultry meat producers considered the cost of production and weather challenges as the main issues affecting production whereas thermal comfort and disease were mentioned by egg producers as the key issues affecting production. Feeding organic poultry was an issue affecting both chicken and egg production. In conclusion, the analysis suggested several animal welfare issues that were common to producers in indifferent countries. *The PPILOW project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement N°816172.*