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Animal welfare: An animal science approach

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Highlights

- Animal welfare is an attention drawing issue in recent years.
- Stress can be used as means of animal welfare.
- Animal welfare affects meat quality.

Abstract

Increasing world population and demand for animal-derived protein puts pressure on animal production to meet this demand. For this purpose animal breeding efforts were conducted to obtain the maximum yield that the genetic makeup of the animals permits. Under the influence of economics which is the driving force behind animal production, animal farming became more concentrated and controlled which resulted in rearing animals under confinement. Since more attention was given on economics and yield per animal, animal welfare and behavior were neglected. Animal welfare which can be defined as providing environmental conditions in which animals can display all their natural behaviors in nature started gaining importance in recent years. This does not necessarily mean that animals provided with good management practices would have better welfare conditions as some animals may be distressed even though they are in good environmental conditions. Consumers are willing to pay more for welfare-friendly products (e.g.: free range vs caged egg) and this will change the animal production practices in the future. Thus animal scientists will have to adapt themselves for the changing animal welfare rules and regulations that differ for farm animal species and countries. In this review paper, animal welfare is discussed from an animal science standpoint.

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Keywords

Animal rights; Cortisol; Stress; Transportation

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