On the impact of citizen perceptions of pictures from intensive broiler fattening systems on animal welfare communication strategies

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Outline

- Introduction
- Aim of the study
- Methodology
- Results
- Conclusion
Introduction

• Former mixed family farms have developed into specialized production units (*Chavas 2001*)

• Broilers are often kept in units of 40,000 animals

• Rising citizen concerns about animal welfare in these systems can be observed (*Kayser et al. 2012; Kanis et al. 2003; Vanhonacker et al. 2010*)

• No change in consumption patterns due to these concerns
Introduction

- Mass media is main information source about agriculture for the public (*TNS Emnid 2012*)

- Mass media communication relies on pictures (*Kroeber-Riel/Esch 2011*)

- Pictures can be remembered faster (*Childers/Houston 1984*) and transmit emotive messages better (*Kroeber-Riel/Esch 2011*)

- Information from the agricultural sector is provided via text and less emotive pictures are shown
Aim of the study

• Little is known about how citizens perceive pictures from intensive animal husbandry systems

• Information about the perception could improve the communication process about production systems

• This study investigates German citizens‘ perceptions of pictures from an intensive broiler fattening system to give hint on improved communication
Methodology

- 415 German citizens were asked via an online survey in July 2013
- The sample follows the distribution in Germany in terms of age, sex and size of community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picture</th>
<th>Age of animals</th>
<th>Illumination level</th>
<th>Herd size/ Stocking density (animals/m²)</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Picture 1</td>
<td>Day 1</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>ca. 39,800/ 22,1</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture 2</td>
<td>Day 7</td>
<td>Dark</td>
<td>ca. 39,500/ 21,9</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture 3</td>
<td>Day 7</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>ca. 39,500/ 21,9</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture 4</td>
<td>Day 34</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>ca. 39,000/ 21,7</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture 5</td>
<td>Day 34</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>ca. 32,000/ 17,8</td>
<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Picture 6</td>
<td>Day 40</td>
<td>Dark</td>
<td>ca. 32,000/ 17,8</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture 7</td>
<td>Day 40</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>ca. 32,000/ 17,8</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=Sample size
Methodology

Day 1

Day 40
Methodology

Day 34, 39 kg/m²

Day 34, 32 kg/m²
Results 1

- Women are more critical than men.

- 55% think, that even in a large barn the well-being of the animals could be high.

- In contrast 63% think, that in a stable of 40.000 animals, animal welfare can never be achieved.

- First associations with the pictures were negative and include words like „factory farming“, „tightness“, „cruelty to animals“.
Results II

I think a lot of broiler barns look like this today.

The legal requirements for animal welfare are fullfilled.
Results IV

I do not want to eat meat from the barn.

The animal are crowded together.
Results III

The barn is bright and friendly.

This picture enhances my trust in animal husbandry.
Conclusions

• Pictures from the broiler housing system are perceived negatively in lots of attributes.

• Trust cannot be enhanced by showing these pictures.

• A reduction of stocking densities to 32 kg/m² do not fulfill citizen perceptions.

• The definition of „large units“ differs between citizens and experts.
Thank you very much for your attention.

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