Journal of
Animal Sciences and Livestock Production

Abstract

The assessment of sheep welfare: Towards a simplification

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Abstract:

The main aim of this study was to develop a simplified tool to assess sheep welfare from existing methods. For this reason, a survey was conducted in 8 Italian sheep farms (4 dairy farms and 4 meat farms), the encountered breeds were Merino, Sarda, and Lacaune. Nine indicators concerning sheep welfare were selected according to scientific literature. They were chosen depending on their feasibility (Lean animals, Bad fleece condition, fleece dirtiness, skin lesions, docked tail, lameness, hoof overgrowth, access to pasture and mastitis) and were evaluated. Results showed that the average of leanness was 26.98%. Bad fleece condition and fleece dirtiness were 9.99 and 18.27%, respectively. A very small number of skin lesions have been observed (1.657%). The relevance given to the indicators showed that mastitis, leanness, and lameness were the three most worrying and unsolved problems, with respective scores of 83.75, 80 and 77.5%. This study suggests good feasibility and acceptance for use as an on-farm welfare indicator.

Biography:

Naceur M'HAMDI is an Assistant Professor of Animal Biotechnology and statistics at the National Agronomic Institute of Tunisia, University of Carthage; Member of the Laboratory of genetic, animal and feed resource and member of Animal Science Department of INAT. He was graduated from Higher School of Agriculture of Mateur, University of Carthage, in 2002 and a master's in 2006. Ph.D. thesis in animal genetics and biostatistics: genetic welfare indicators of dairy cattle Higher Institute of Agronomy of Chott-Meriem, University of Sousse in 2011. He worked as an assistant professor at INAT since 2013.

He is author of more than 80 scientific papers and Editor Member of more than 10 international journals. Furthermore, he serves as Guest editor of lactation and animal welfare books. Naceur M'Hamdi serves on many national and international committees.

Publication of speakers:

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Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences July 09-10, 2020. London U.K.

Citation: Naceur M'Hamdi, The assessment of sheep welfare: Towards a simplification, Veterinary Medicine 2020, July 09-10, 2020. London U.K.