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Workshop **Animal production & ethics – Are we on the right track?**

Organics Europe Youth Event – 1st September 2022

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Group animal husbandry and breeding @ FiBL CH

- Improving welfare of animals in organic production
- Improving the social and non-social environment
- Increasing their choices
- Examples:
 - Mother-bonded rearing of dairy calves
 - Rooting areas for pigs
 - Free-range pigs
 - On-farm killing
 - Housing of entire male pigs (instead of castration)
 - Species-specific feeding in cattle, pigs or chicken

Animal ethics

- No right or wrong
- Discussion and arguments
- Who should be attributed an intrinsic moral value?

- Do we have the right to use AND/OR kill animals for meat, dairy and egg production?
- What kind of responsibility do we have towards livestock?

Animal ethics - Radical anthropocentrism

- Animals don't have an intrinsic moral value
- Equal to objects
- Everything is ok, as long as it does not affect the owner

- Kant (18th century): Cruelty should be avoided because it may lead to «brutalization»

→ Contra-intuitive, outdated

Animal ethics - Pathocentrism

- “The question is not, "Can they reason?" nor, "Can they talk?" but "Can they suffer?” (Jeremy Bentham, 1748-1832)
 - Many animals show signs of experiencing pain
 - They have an interest to not suffer
- Classical animal protection
- Basis of animal welfare legislation

Animal ethics – Animal welfare

- Not suffering is not enough, animals want to live a «good life»
- Animal health and productivity are just the basis
- Animal welfare integrates behaviour, social environment, emotions
- Positive situations instead of just absence of negative situations

→ Position within modern animal welfare science

Animal ethics – Animal rights

- Animals are subjects of their life – in the same way as humans
- Animals have an intrinsic value which is more important than our nutritional interests
- They should have the same rights, especially the right to live

→ Speciesism, veganism

Animal ethics – Four main positions

Radical antropocentrism



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graph TD; A[Radical antropocentrism] --> B[Pathocentrism]; B --> C[Animal welfare]; C --> D[Animal rights];
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Pathocentrism

Animal welfare

Animal rights

Group discussion I

- Groups of 3-4 person
 - One position per group
 - Discuss your position and sharpen it. You will defend this position.
 - Discuss the three examples and how your position would evaluate them.
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- 15 Minutes

Examples – Group discussion I

Castration of pigs
WITHOUT anaesthesia



Conventional housing of
growing-finishing pigs

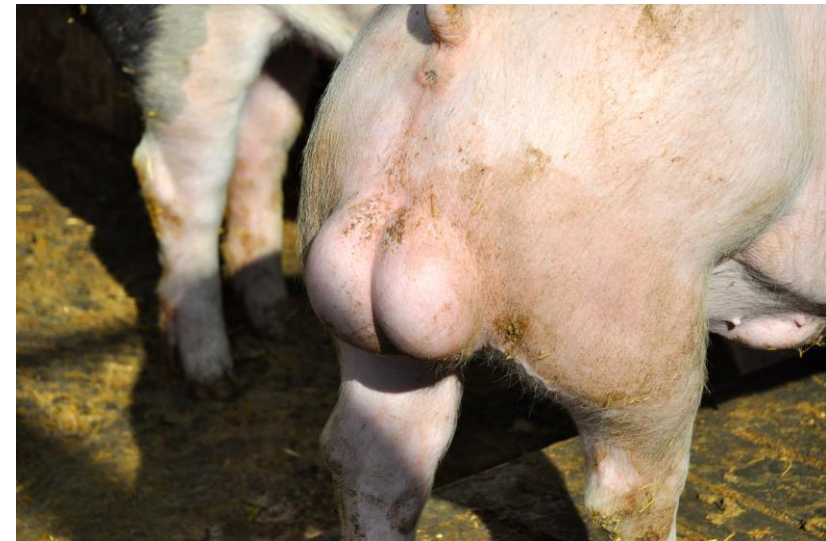


Free-range pigs



Castration of pigs **WITH** anesthesia or analgesia

- Male pigs are castrated to avoid «boar taint» within the first days of life
- Some countries don't castrate
- Allowed under organic regulations (with anesthesia OR analgesia!)
- Anesthesia: Injection or inhalation



Separation of cow and calf in dairy production

- Calf is usually separated from the mother within the first day of life
- Cow and calf experience distress
- Mother-calf-interactions are suppressed

- Reasons: Milk yield, management, stress of separation might be larger later on



Tie-stalls for dairy cows

- Traditional housing system, mountain regions
- Reason: less space needed
- Cows often have horns
- Allowed in organic farming in CH if:
 - In winter: 13 days / month access to outdoor run or pasture
 - In summer: 26 days / month access to pasture



Group discussion II

- Are these practices still ok in organic animal husbandry?
- If no, where do we want to be in 30 years? How could organic animal husbandry look like in 30 years from now?

- Discuss in groups of 5 based on examples or in general
- Collect ideas on flip charts
- 20 Minutes

Examples – Group discussion II

Castration of pigs WITH anaesthesia or analgesia



Separation of cow and calf



Tie-stalls for cows



Organic animal husbandry in 30 years – Results of group discussions

Castration of pigs

- Ban of castration in pigs?
- If entire male pigs: Slaughter earlier vs. Longer life?
- Produce sausages from entire male pigs
- Is pig production really the future?
 - food / feed competition
 - small-scale pig farming with waste as feed could be a more sustainable system in the future

Organic animal husbandry in 30 years – Results of group discussions

Separation of cow and calf in dairy production

- Mother-bonded rearing should become standard in organic production
- Dual purpose breeds would help to get there
- Higher price of milk and meat
- Communicate the difference to consumers
- If separated, then in a good way (healthy milk, enough milk, in groups, protected)

Organic animal husbandry in 30 years – Results of group discussions

Tie-stalls with daily outdoor access

- Should not be banned from organic production
- Consider economic situation
- Regional differences, in some regions it is difficult to change
- Financial support for pasture milking parlour

Organic animal husbandry in 30 years – Results of group discussions

General:

- Work with dual purpose breeds!
- Limitation of farm size, animals per farm
- All animals have to stay on the same farm until slaughtering -> closing the cycle
- Higher prices of animal products