

ANIMAL WELFARE ASSESSMENT PROTOCOLS IN RUMINANTS

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In the world, animal welfare concern about the farms, where livestock is raised, increased with the concentration of farms. Various welfare assessment protocols have been developed to measure the welfare of farm animals and to identify areas for improvement. Because the measurements are based on certain standards, one of the most important of these protocols is The Welfare Quality® assessment protocols. The Welfare Quality® assessment protocols, that developed to assess the quality of animal welfare on farms or at the slaughter, have been developed for seven livestock species, which dairy cattle, beef cattle, veal calves, sows, fattening pigs, laying hens and broilers. In the Welfare Quality® assessment protocols, three periods are taken into account in the assessment of welfare. These; the growing period, the production period, the end of life of the animal, which includes transport and slaughter. There are three broad categories of indicators used to assess animal welfare. These; resource-based indicators, management-related indicators and animal-related indicators.

Animal welfare measurement and evaluation protocols generally based on regular observation and examination of animals. However, in the world, sheep-goat breeding is carried out intensively as extensive production. In this system, it is more difficult to observe and examine animals regularly. Therefore, sheep-goat welfare to establish and improve welfare standards based on scientific studies are carried out in different countries and for different breeding systems. Dairy goat welfare measurement and evaluation protocols in European Union countries (AWIN- Animal Welfare Indicators Project), Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Principles for Sheep, New Zealand Sheep - Goat Welfare Regulation and Canadian Sheep Care and Management Implementation Regulation are some of these. In 2011–2015, an EU-funded project on Animal Welfare Indicators (AWIN) developed on-farm welfare assessment protocols for sheep, goats, horses, donkeys and turkeys, possibly using animal-based indicators. The AWIN Welfare Assessment Protocol for Dairy Goats was developed for intensive dairy goat farms.

Today, many scientific studies are continuing on the measurement of welfare for livestock in different breeding systems (intensive, semi-intensive, extensive) and with different indicators.