

Reassessing our relationship with farmed animals Industry insights



Can we reconcile the divergent views of animal farming?

Carolina Cucurella
Senior Veterinary Advisor
UECBV

Table of contents

1. Who is UECBV
2. The importance of animal welfare in the Production Chain
3. Societal perception demands
4. The role of education in bridging the gap
5. Future progress and scientific basis
6. Conclusion

European Livestock and Meat Trades Union – UECBV

Today, **UECBV** represents **50 associations** out of :

- **24 EU Member States** as well as certain EFTA countries.
- Other countries, EU trade partners in the meat sector, are also associated to the UECBV (**Japan and Ukraine**)

3 European Associations

Livestock markets (AEMB)

Casings industry (ENSCA)

Ship suppliers (OCEAN)

In total, some **20,000 firms** of all sizes and over **230,000 jobs** are represented within the UECBV through its national member federations.



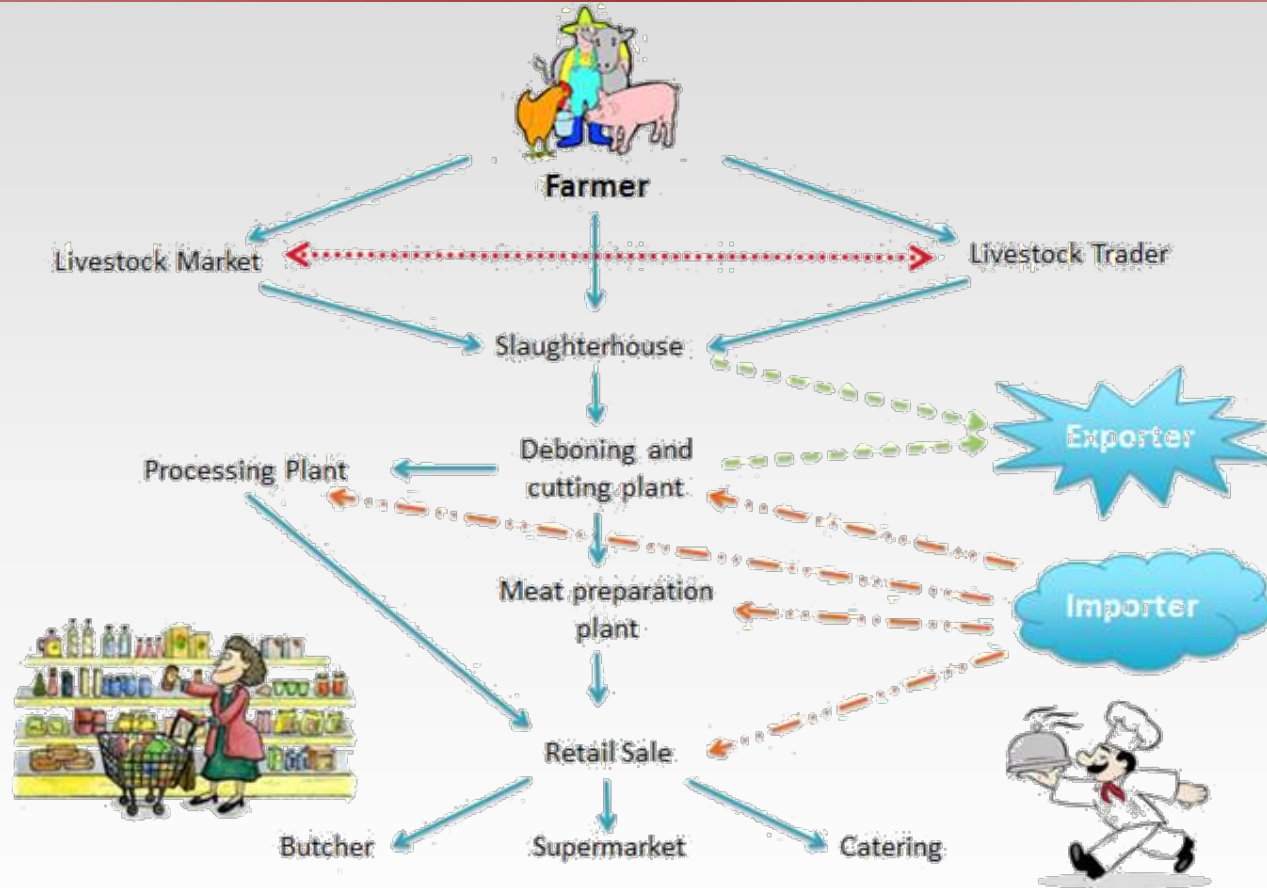
WHAT IS UECBV?

UECBV is the **European Livestock and Meat Trades Union**. It represents the national federations of the:

- ☐ livestock traders
- ☐ livestock markets
- ☐ meat industry: slaughterhouses, cutting and preparation plants
- ☐ wholesale meat traders
- ☐ international meat traders

UECBV focuses on **cattle, beef / horses, horsemeat / sheep and goats, sheep and goat meat / pigs, pork.**

EU MEAT CHAIN



2.The importance of AW in the production chain



2.The importance of AW in the production chain

Legal Framework:

- **Directives:**
 - Protection of animals kept for farming purposes
 - Protection of laying hens
 - Protection of broilers
 - Protection of pigs
 - Protection of calves
- **Regulations**
 - Transport
 - slaughter

2.The importance of AW in the production chain



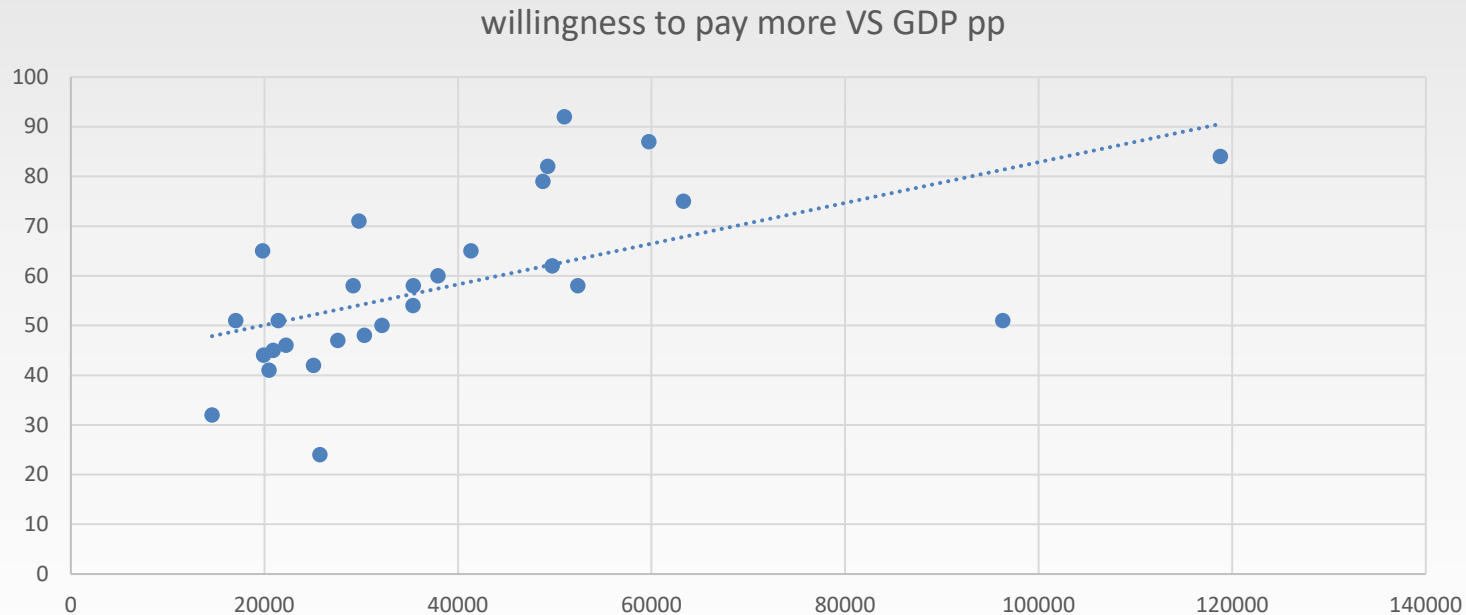
3. Societal perceptions and demands

Some of the conclusions of the Eurobarometer on “Attitudes of Europeans towards Animal Welfare” issued on March 2023 are:

- 6/10 Europeans are in contact with animals, but
- Only 6% are in contact with farmed animals
- More than 9/10 think that protecting the welfare of farmed animals is important or very important.
- 8/10 welfare of farmed animals should be better protected (but less 6%...)
- 2/3 would like to have more information on conditions of farmed animals.
- 8/10 think transport time should be limited
- 88% believe it is important or more important to improve conditions in slaughterhouses (increasing official controls/ cameras)

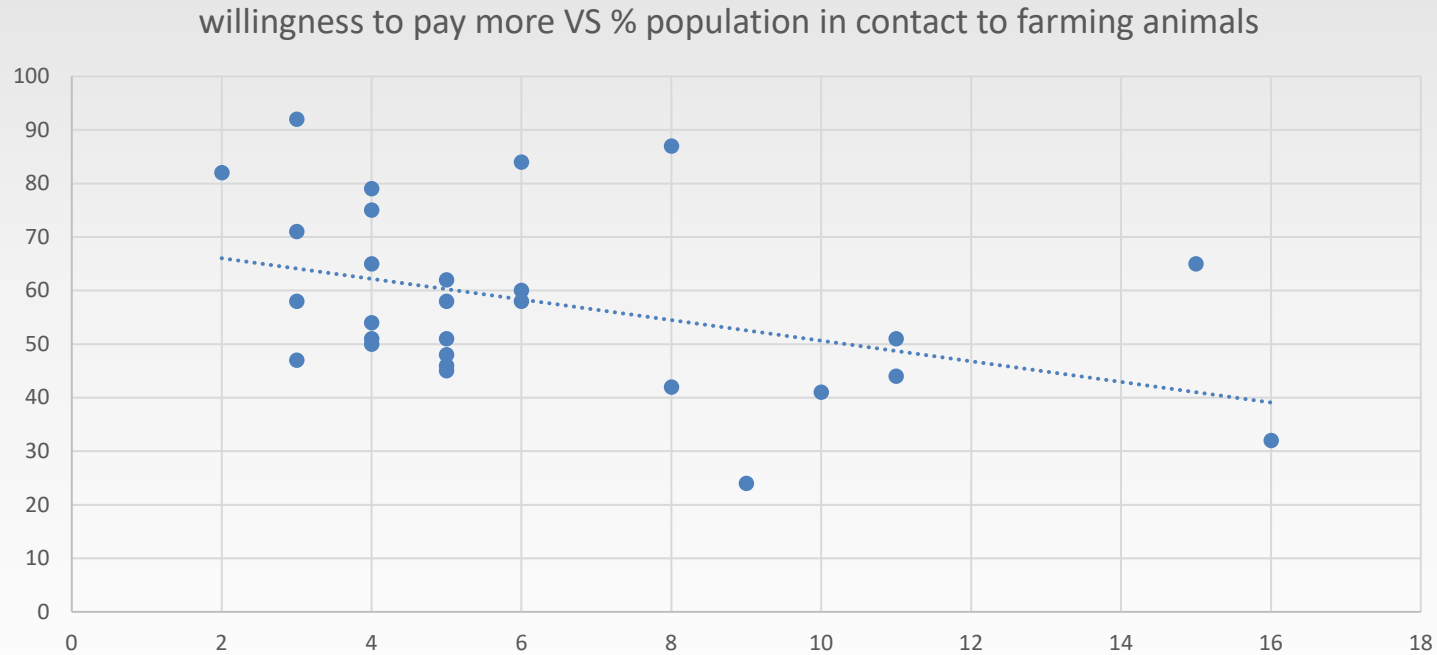
3. Societal perceptions and demands

When Europeans were asked on their willingness to pay more for products sourced in “animal welfare-friendly systems”, in average, they are ready in a 60%.



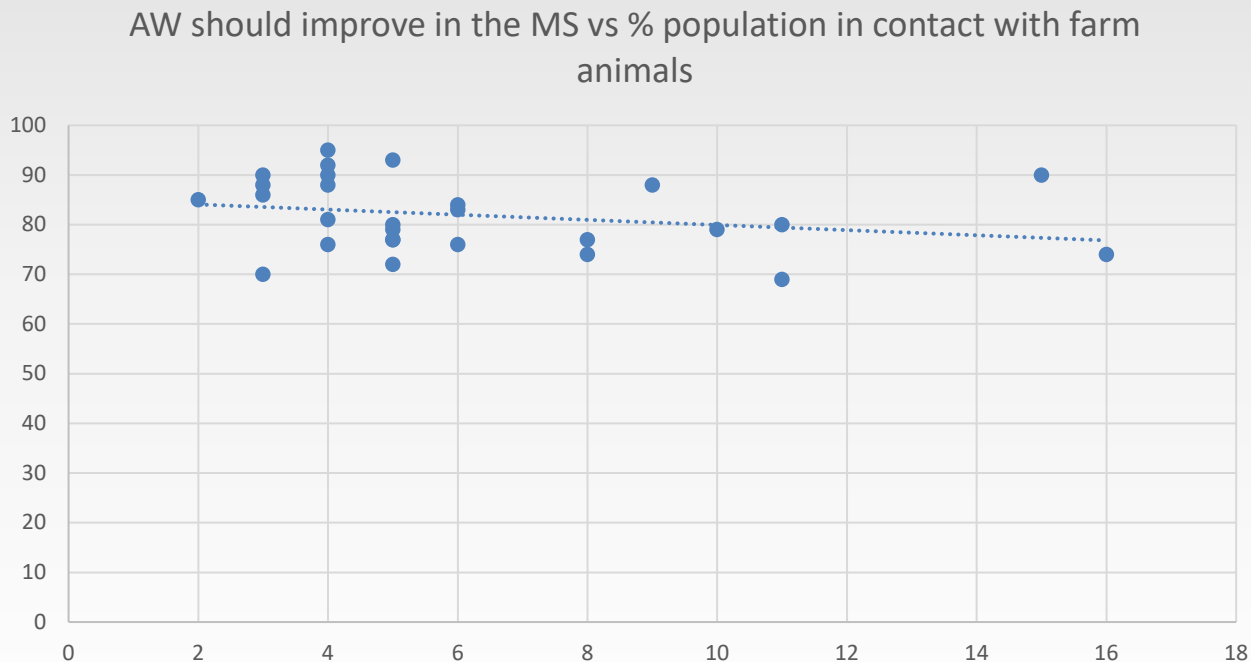
3. Societal perceptions and demands

When Europeans were asked on their willingness to pay more for products sourced in “animal welfare-friendly systems”, in average, they are ready in a 60%.



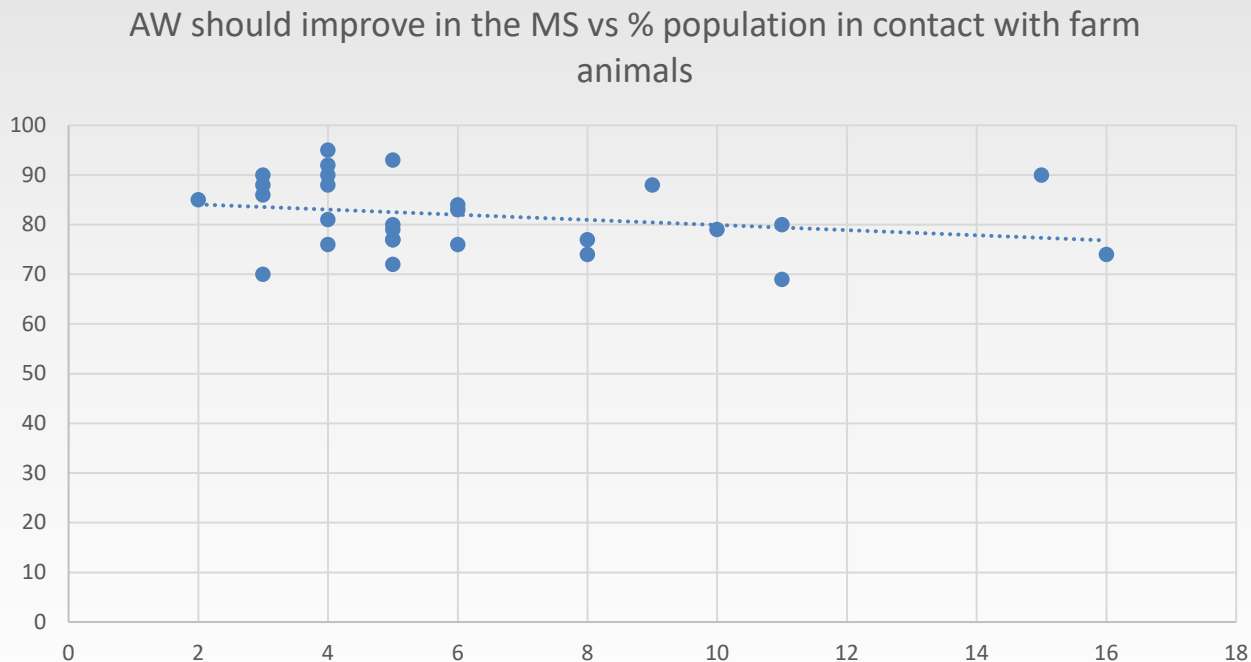
3. Societal perceptions and demands

When Europeans were asked the need to improve AW in their own MS... No significative relation.



3. Societal perceptions and demands

When Europeans were asked the need to improve AW in their own MS... No significative relation.



3. Societal perceptions and demands

But Europeans were not asked on their knowledge of the legal framework or common rules and practices in farming, transport or slaughter.

3. Societal perceptions and demands

Myths and misconceptions on animal farming

- Animal welfare level in large-scale farms is poor



3. Societal perceptions and demands

Myths and misconceptions on animal farming

- All animals on farms are kept in cramped, inhumane conditions or free range animals are happier



3. Societal perceptions and demands

Farmers prioritize profits over animal welfare



3. Societal perceptions and demands

Some misconceptions

1. Free-range and organic farming always provide better welfare than conventional farming.
2. Animals on farms are constantly stressed and unhappy.
3. Farming animals for food is unnecessary in a modern society.
4. All farm animals are treated the same, regardless of species.
5. Farmers are resistant to change and new welfare practices.



4. The role of education in bridging the gap

- Introducing agricultural education into primary schools would help to bridge that gap.
- So far: countries with special needs in terms of food security and a vast population in rural areas such as:
 - India
 - Nigeria
 - Kenya
 - Uganda
 - Philippines
 - Brazil
 - Zimbabwe
 - South Africa
 - Ethiopia
 - Rwanda

What about Europe?

4. The role of education in bridging the gap

Why should we teach our children how to crop a tomato or to take care of cows for obtaining food?

- Knowledge on farming and food production
- Hand-on experience to introduce children to farming... maybe here's the solution to generational change issue.
- Understanding the value of farmer's work
- Understanding needs of animals
- Learning sustainable practices on farming
- Empathy towards other people and animals
- Respect for farmers and farming activity
- Reducing food waste
- Realistic expectations of future generations



Future progress and scientific basis

Looking forward, the future of animal welfare depends on continuous scientific research. Advances in areas like animal behaviour, health monitoring, and housing are crucial for improving welfare standards.

Collaboration between farmers, scientists, and policymakers will ensure that these improvements are both scientifically sound and practically feasible.



Conclusions

- Animal welfare is a priority and is necessary for meat industry.
- Farmers and industry seek to find the balance between an appropriate level of animal welfare and economically sustainable business.
- Societal expectations can be readressed if citizens have a better knowledge of actual rules and practices in farming.
- Agriculture and farming education would be key to fill the gap between citizens' perception and reality, while attracting new generations to agriculture. Let's support education initiatives in our countries.
- Scientific research is the only way to have new knowledge for having products from animal welfare friendly systems in balance with the survival of farming activity.





UECBV

European Livestock and Meat Trades Union

Thank you very much for your attention!