Animal welfare: the role and perspectives of the meat and livestock sector

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Summary
Those in the livestock industry involved in rearing animals and in producing milk, meat and eggs, must respond to two demands: one expressed by consumers, and the other by the public.

Regarding consumers, demand for food produced by the livestock industry has shown steady growth for a century. Over the last few decades, this growth has been sustained by the developing countries, and is based mainly on pig and poultry production, which provides cheaper products.

Regarding the public, society is showing greater concern about the conditions in which livestock is reared, transported and slaughtered. The public demands not only that ill treatment of animals be fought against and penalised, but also that any unnecessary suffering should be avoided and even that animals should be guaranteed a certain degree of ‘comfort’.

Animal health, the most important aspect of their welfare, has vastly improved, as has the care of sick or injured animals. At the same time, the latest amenities used in livestock rearing, transport and slaughter are helping to eliminate situations involving extreme stress and suffering.

Finally, the motivation of industry players and the safety of those who work with livestock must be taken into consideration. Training of personnel and the implementation of guides to good practice or of quality control do as much to improve animal welfare as do overzealous regulations.

Keywords

Introduction
Society’s demand for improved farm animal welfare is, admittedly, nothing new, but it is being expressed with greater force today, and has become a highly sensitive political issue. A few widely circulated pictures, or a handful of serious incidents during the transport of live animals, are depicted as being a faithful reflection of the everyday activity of those involved in livestock production, trade and slaughter, and these are being used by certain pressure groups to make generalisations with regard to these excesses, and to denounce the industry. The first reaction of people working in the industry was to be shocked by the accusations of such groups, i.e. that they were not looking after their livestock properly, that they were inflicting suffering on them, and that they were not interested in their welfare, whereas, in fact, they were looking after them every day (providing healthcare, food, water, accommodation). They also felt that these criticisms were extremely unfair, since they had always been concerned about making improvements to conditions prevailing in livestock production, transport and slaughter.

The jobs of a breeder, a cattle trader, a transporter, or a meat packer are based on a close relationship between human and animal. This relationship means that people working in the industry are used to working with animals; they have a great deal of expertise in dealing with them, and an excellent understanding of their behaviour. Emotional issues have distorted the public debate on this matter for far too long, and it is time that a more rational approach prevailed.
The welfare issue is both complex (how do you define and assess animal welfare?) and emotional. Fortunately, scientists, the industry and politicians now have at their disposal scientific and technical data, drawn not only from experiments but also from the everyday observations and practices of people in the industry, on the basis of which well adapted and relevant regulations and recommendations can be developed. However, the welfare issue cannot be discussed outside the context of economic realities and the increasing demand by consumers for high quality yet reasonably-priced food products. The general public expresses concern about the ethics of animal welfare, while consumers require more food products from livestock, and so the economic players concerned must attempt to satisfy both these demands simultaneously, since the public and the consumer are one and the same thing.

The expectations of the consumer: more animal products

The world wants more food products from livestock

This may appear to be a categorical statement, but it is backed up by the increase in world demand for animal products observed over the last century.

Increasing consumption

Consumer demand has been steadily rising for meat of all kinds, as well as for milk and dairy products, and eggs. In order to satisfy this demand, producers and other economic players in the meat industry have developed production over the last decade and the results have been as follows:

– total meat production (beef + sheep and goats + pigs + poultry) rose by nearly 30% between 1993 and 2003 (Fig. 1). This 30% growth rate in ten years was the result of a sharp rise in chicken production (+ 56%), an average rise in pig meat (+ 26%) and a more moderate increase in beef (+ 12%)

– world milk production rose by nearly 10% over the same period (Fig. 2). For this product, there was a steady and continuous increase of 1% per year.

This growth in consumption of animal products has gone hand in hand with significant changes in people’s diets. With cheaper foodstuffs and higher incomes, there has been a shift in consumption away from carbohydrate-rich foods (cereals, potatoes and other tubers) to foodstuffs rich in animal protein, i.e. milk, meat, eggs, etc. Strong economic growth in developing countries is reflected in average real increases in gross domestic product of 3% per year, and this rise in incomes has been the basic cause of the shift towards animal products.

This qualitative change first started to affect developing countries in the 1970s, and this is currently where most of the new demand for meat is coming from: between 1993 and 2003 the 30% growth in meat consumption was the result of an increase in demand in developing countries of 54%, while demand in developed countries only rose by 7% (Fig. 3).

Brazil, Thailand, the People’s Republic of China, Russia and the Ukraine are currently the countries with the most rapidly expanding poultry and pig meat production; production is expanding so quickly that these countries are able to satisfy their own consumer demand, and, in the case of Brazil, to export to countries with a meat deficit.

Over the past 40 years, there has been a rapid rise in income and changes in dietary habits in Asia, particularly in South-East Asia, and this is where growth in meat production is most pronounced.
consumption has been the highest, standing at 6% per year. Forty years ago the Chinese only consumed 4 kg of meat per capita per year, while today consumption stands at 54 kg, and is still rising. Consequently, South-East Asian countries (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, etc.), which consumed very few animal products until the Second World War, have become big importers, and have thus bolstered the growth in livestock production in the exporting countries: the United States of America (USA), Australia, New Zealand, and several countries in South America and the European Union (EU).

By way of example, Japan, the world’s biggest importer, imports annually:

- 1,000,000 tonnes of beef
- 1,140,000 tonnes of pig meat
- 650,000 tonnes of poultry meat
- US$1 billion worth of milk and dairy products.

All the economic indicators and all reasonable forecasts show that world demand will continue to grow, since consumer requirements for protein and animal products are nowhere near being satisfied. This is positive news for the many farming communities for whom the development of livestock production is important for economic development.

Per capita meat consumption in developing countries was estimated at 30 kg per year in 2003, which only amounts to one third of consumption in developed countries.

**Better quality at a lower price**

This quantitative growth in consumption is accompanied by a qualitative demand for products which are safer from a health standpoint, have improved traceability and are of better quality, all at the lowest possible price for the consumer.

The fall in the price of animal products has bolstered demand and growth in consumption, especially in developing countries (Fig. 4). The implementation of new, more intensive and rational production systems, particularly for white meats, i.e. pork and poultry, has enabled the industry to respond to this demand.

The demand for improved quality at the lowest possible price remains a permanent feature of demand for foodstuffs. Low prices also enable new sectors of the population to obtain access to animal products and to consume animal protein, so the industry will continue to have to deal with this pressure, which is even stronger regarding the production of white meats.

**The industry’s response**

Farm producers, and subsequently the meat trade and the industrial meat packers, have tried to meet this quantitative and qualitative demand by implementing more efficient farm and production systems as well as better processing and distribution methods, in order to cut costs and prices, thereby preserving the viability of the enterprise.

**The response from producers**

Over the past half century, there has been a shift, especially in pig and poultry farming, from traditional to more industrial farming, for example:

- new varieties and blood lines have been selected, in order to obtain improved feed efficiency, shorten production cycles, and improve quality (e.g. leaner meat, milk that is richer in protein). Over the last ten years in Europe, annual average milk production per head has increased by 1,000 litres, rising from 5,000 litres to 6,000 litres per head per year
- feeding of livestock has been more consistent, and better adapted to each type of production, as well as to each stage in the animal’s life: the juvenile, growth, and...
finishing stages, etc. Similarly, the composition of feed rations has been calculated so as to be better balanced between energy and protein supply, optimising feed efficiency, and thus obtaining the best possible feed conversion index. Optimising feeding in this way also aims to reduce effluents and discharge of nitrates from manure, thus lessening pollution due to intensive production, and helping to protect the environment.

- more is being done to fight infectious and epizootic diseases (foot and mouth disease, tuberculosis, brucellosis, classical swine fever, Newcastle disease, etc.), and animal health has greatly improved as a result. To obtain improved yield and performance, an animal needs to be healthy, and health goes hand in hand with welfare.
- farm buildings have been widely refurbished, not only to improve the well-being of the animals, but also to make the stock farmer's job easier.

**Increasing trade in livestock**

The rising demand has also led to an increase in the world trade of animal products and, as a consequence, to an increase in trade of livestock between different regions. Trade in live animals concerns, on the one hand, breeding and fattening animals, and on the other, slaughter animals.

**Breeding and fattening animals**

Besides the traditional trade in breeding stock often registered in herd books, the increasing specialisation of production systems leads to trade in live animals between producers and fatteners. This is particularly true for cattle and pigs: the young animals are born and reared in one region, and fattened and slaughtered in another. For example:

- piglets born in Canada are exported to the USA, where they are fattened and slaughtered
- young calves born in France are exported to Italy to be fattened.

**Slaughter animals**

Of course, most world trade in the various kinds of meat is in the form of carcasses and cuts. However, there is a regular and permanent flow of trade in live slaughter animals. For example:

- live cattle from Australia are exported to the Middle East or South-East Asia
- live cattle from the EU to Lebanon
- live sheep from Australia to the Persian Gulf
- slaughter pigs from Canada to the USA.

Table I provides further details of the number of animals involved in this trade, the economic justification of which lies in the nature of the areas of production and the areas of consumption, favouring slaughter in the area of consumption because it enhances the value of the livestock, and also because of religious traditions and practices (ritual slaughter).

**Adaptation of slaughtering and processing method**

In parallel with changes in the structure of livestock production (larger farms, industrial pig and poultry production units), slaughterhouses and meat processing plants have increased in size, are increasingly located in the area of production, and have implemented slaughtering and processing methods that ensure improved standards of hygiene when working with animal products. Here again, there has been a shift from traditional to more industrial methods both in milk processing and in meat processing, with production lines even producing consumer-ready products.

The integration of slaughtering and processing plant has become necessary due to the need to keep production costs as low as possible. It is also caused by the need to attain a volume of activity which is sufficient to enhance the value of all the edible products and by-products, as well as to offset the cost of products which have to be discarded.

The stringent animal health requirements at all stages of animal production, especially since they were strengthened after the serious incidents of the last decade (bovine spongiform encephalopathy, dioxin, severe acute respiratory syndrome, etc.), necessitate new investments, which need to be compensated for by an even greater volume of activity.

Given the need to increase the volume of activity, keep costs low and meet strict animal health standards, it is clear that...
that there is a need for the integration of slaughterhouses, meat processing units and dairy plants. However, bigger, more integrated plants mean that the livestock have to be collected over a wider area, which in turn means greater transport time from farm to abattoir, especially for livestock production that is very much linked to the land, such as cattle and sheep farming.

It should not be thought that all the modernisation of livestock production that has taken place over the past few decades has been to the detriment of animal welfare. On the contrary, the improved quality of feed, the fight against disease, and the improvements made to farm buildings have all helped to enhance welfare.

From now on, however, more attention will need to be paid to factors linked to more intensive livestock production, whose effects are already beginning to be felt in pig and poultry production: factors such as density in poultry houses and piggeries, the younger age of slaughter animals, or too much selection for a specific character, which can lead to unbalanced physiological development.

There are limits to the intensification of livestock production, beyond which producers venture at their peril: production cycles cannot indefinitely continue to become shorter, since the livestock become weaker and more prone to disease, and the products lack maturity. The economic impact of this soon becomes apparent, because a product which is too young does not taste as good, and consumers soon shun it.

The industry is endeavouring to respond to, and even where possible to anticipate, foreseeable demand by consumers for more animal products, better quality and hygiene, and lower cost. To this end, the industry is implementing all the techniques which make it possible to intensify and rationalise the production, processing, and distribution of animal products, while increasingly paying attention to demand by the public for improved ‘animal welfare’.

Despite the controversy once surrounding the issue, it is now accepted that animals are prone to suffering, and as early as the 19th Century laws were passed in some countries banning and punishing the ill-treatment of animals. It is also obvious that whether these laws were applied or not depended very much on how aware people were of this issue, and of the importance they attached to it. At first, these laws concerned only deliberate acts of torture willingly carried out on pets and domestic animals. However, situations where negligence or unfavourable economic conditions led to animals suffering because of bad food, lack of care, or lack of treatment of disease have only started to take on more importance recently, as societies have become wealthier and public opinion is better informed by the media and by animal welfare organisations.

Just how aware and concerned public opinion is about animal welfare varies considerably, depending on the degree of development of societies, and also on cultural and religious traditions and influence. Thus, it is only more recently, since the 1970s, that both the law and the industry have begun to look more closely at the conditions under which livestock is produced, transported and slaughtered.

Progress has been made in these areas thanks to scientific research and discussion with a certain number of animal welfare organisations, and also thanks to the technical progress of the last 30 years. Improved technical and economic knowledge of the processes of production, transport and slaughter has led to a more effective approach to welfare issues.

**Scientific research**

In a field where there is always a tendency to think of animals as if they were humans, it was clearly essential to observe them and their behaviour in different situations in greater detail, as well as to assess their stress, fatigue and ability to recover. Initial scientific research in the 1970s and the 1980s was mainly focused on the effects of the conditions under which livestock was reared and transported, as well as of stunning methods, and their importance for meat quality (dark meats with high pH). It proved relatively easy to demonstrate the effects of the stress that is caused by transport and slaughter. This research has made it possible to install facilities at loading areas and in lairage pens in abattoirs which calm the animals down and reduce their stress, as well as to organise supply to abattoirs in such a way as to allow the livestock sufficient time to rest before being slaughtered.

Subsequent research in the 1990s was focused on the direct measurement of various physiological constants of the live animal, such as heartbeat or the blood parameters.
that indicate the animals’ state of dehydration, undernutrition and fatigue at each stage: mustering (rounding up), loading, transport, unloading, lairaging, etc. This research has shown that during the handling of livestock the times when the most serious effects are felt are:

- when livestock from different farms are brought together
- when they are loaded and unloaded
- when persons intervene to move livestock, separate them, keep them moving, etc.

The key demand by some animal welfare organisations, especially in Europe, is the banning of long-haul transport, but journey time and the period during which the livestock transporter is in motion are not the most stressful stages for livestock (1).

The most recent research has also undertaken systematic observation of livestock behaviour at each stage, by means of continuous video recordings. Researchers study behaviour such as:

- standing and lying positions in stationary and moving livestock transporters
- the way the head is held, and how much time the cattle devote to rumination, which is a good indicator of their well-being
- how frequently animals drink from waterers and whether or not there is any aggressive behaviour (e.g. head-butting) when they attempt to access waterers.

This ongoing scientific research shows that trying to understand animal welfare in different situations is a complex business, and that, although scientists have an essential role to play, it is equally necessary to listen to those who are in everyday contact with livestock. In order to improve animal welfare and to facilitate their handling and transport, it is essential to have an understanding of the key features of livestock behaviour. For cattle, for example, it is important to understand the following:

- cattle have panoramic vision and are disturbed by bright colours, while it takes their eyes five times as long as ours to adapt to changes in luminosity, which is why they are so reluctant to move from light to dark places
- cattle use their sense of smell to identify each other
- cattle have a more highly developed sense of hearing than humans, which is why they are so sensitive to noise when in mustering yards, lairage pens, transporters, etc.
- cattle are gregarious animals, and herds are social groups with a highly organised hierarchy which should be disturbed as little as possible.

There has been great progress in the understanding of the behaviour of cattle, sheep, pigs and horses, and this should help us to improve the way we work with livestock.

Finally, there has been great improvement in the conditions of livestock transport over the last decade, particularly with regard to long-haul transport. Some of these improvements include:

- improved livestock transporters, which are now equipped with smoother engines and gradual gear shift and braking (Fig. 5a)
- livestock transporters with pneumatic suspension with three axles
- livestock transporters equipped with mechanical ventilation, compartments with watering systems, etc. (Figs 5b and 5c)
- improved road networks, with motorways shortening journey times and making for more comfortable travel conditions
- lairages in abattoirs designed so that livestock can rest and be showered, and noise reduced as much as possible
- passageways and restraining chutes designed to ensure movement of livestock without overexciting them.

A quick look at European figures shows that journey time of young calves from France to Italy, for instance, has halved in the last 20 years, from 30 h to 15 h.

This shows that the industry is always looking for any innovations and improvements that can improve both quality and return on investment.

**The demands expressed by animal welfare organisations**

One of the main demands of animal welfare organisations is the reduction of journey time in order to improve conditions for the animals. Improved conditions are also an essential requirement for the industry, but unlike some animal welfare organisations in Europe, we do not believe that this will be achieved by banning transport which exceeds a particular distance or length of time, but rather by implementing the best possible professional practices on a day-to-day basis.

There can be no doubt that action by animal welfare organisations has made the public considerably more aware of animal welfare issues, and the industry is working and talking with numerous organisations with the aim of responding to their concerns and improving animal health and welfare. However, in some organisations, other voices
can be heard openly calling for the banning of certain activities, or even actively combating livestock farming and calling for a ban on the use of domestic animals for the production and sale of foodstuffs.

It is clear that the importance given to a handful of unidentified pictures depicting accidents during transport, or dead livestock on farms during an outbreak of epizootic disease or a heat wave, constitute a deliberate attempt to misinform, or even manipulate, public opinion.

Confronted with an increasingly radical contestation of their activity by these highly organised, even sectarian, pressure groups, which do not reflect public opinion, the industry is responding by emphasising all the work it has done in order to improve animal welfare.

**The industry's response**

Scientific understanding of the issues involved, as well as the experience amassed by those working in the industry day by day, make it possible to define some basic principles on which action should be based, as follows:

- it is better to develop recommendations, standards and good practice guides than to introduce regulations which may not be appropriate in all cases
- adequately trained and well qualified personnel who have a good understanding of animal behaviour are of the utmost importance for animal welfare
- suitable transporters and well designed abattoir equipment can greatly reduce animal suffering

Each of these issues will be discussed in further detail below, but it is important to note here that the industry fully supports severe penalties for all serious and deliberate acts which result in ill treatment and acts of cruelty, which are absolutely unacceptable. These are serious misdemeanours, or indeed deviant behaviour, which should be treated as criminal offences. Most countries have already passed legislation in this area, and the priority must be to take effective measures to monitor the situation and impose penalties where necessary.

**Alternatives to regulation**

For methods and conditions of production, transport and slaughter, which are key factors in animal welfare, the industry believes that the emphasis should be placed on recommendations, standards, guides to good practice, and quality control, by working with, motivating and giving responsibility to the people working in the industry.

Animal welfare is best served by a global approach covering the whole process from production to slaughter, placing emphasis on the many key points described in guides to good practice, which specify at each stage the best solution to adopt or, if necessary, to adapt, should the circumstances demand. There can thus be no hard and fast rules, and making it mandatory, for instance, to unload and feed livestock after a specified number of hours of journey time may well cause more hardship to the animals (since they have to be unloaded and loaded back on again) than feeding or watering the livestock in the transporter while continuing to drive on, and thus reach the destination as quickly as possible.
This pragmatic approach is illustrated well by the regulations laid down in the ‘Australian model code of practice for the welfare of animals: land transport of cattle’ (3), which states that:

– ‘Transport should be completed with minimal delays.’
– ‘Where delays cannot be avoided, feeding, watering, ventilation and protection from extreme weather must be addressed, and any such delay must be as short as possible’.

Similarly, in the USA, the ‘Cattle and swine trucking guide for exporters’ produced by the Department of Agriculture (4) states that the maximum recommended times for transport are:

– 48 h for adult bovines
– 34 h for young calves
– 36 h for pigs

This guide also specifies that ‘deciding how long animals should be on the road requires good judgement. Maximum transit time depends on many factors, such as weather, species and condition of animals’.

Regular assessment of animals during the transport process is necessary in order to make timely decisions regarding their well-being. Conversely, for these same issues, i.e. density, journey time, etc., the EU, in our opinion, wrongly prefers a strict regulatory approach which lays down time periods which must be respected.

Training and qualifications

The behaviour of the people who are in direct contact with the livestock, who rear and transport them, is central to the animal welfare issue and the training and qualification of personnel is of paramount importance. Training also helps to motivate personnel and increase their understanding, which will enable them to deal with each situation adequately.

When livestock are being handled, especially during mustering, loading and unloading, it is important to be concerned not only about their welfare, but also above all about the safety of the handlers, particularly if the animals are large. Safety and welfare go hand in hand, and a person under stress, or who is afraid, is likely to show aggressive behaviour towards the livestock. This underlines the importance of installing adequate facilities and equipment: passageways and restraining chutes, holding pens with partitions and exit gates, loading ramps, etc., which all help to make the personnel’s work and the handling of the livestock easier, resulting in improved welfare for the latter, and a safer working environment for the former.

Amenities and accreditation

Animal welfare during transport can also be enhanced by improvements to livestock transporters and transport vessels. Transport professionals and manufacturers have defined standards and improvements for the building of these transporters. Several countries, such as Australia and Ireland, have regulations which make accreditation mandatory for ships authorised to load livestock in their ports, on the basis of specifications which take into account the stability of the ship, the status of the crew, the qualifications of the personnel in charge of looking after the livestock, amenities such as automatic watering, ventilation (which must be able to replace the air 40 times per hour), adequate drainage, two independent electricity supplies, etc. (Fig. 6). The EU is about to bring in similar legislation providing for the accreditation of livestock trucks used for long-haul transport (over 9 h), and for livestock transport vessels loading livestock in its ports.

The organisation of work in lairages in abattoirs, the design of drive chutes leading to the stun box and point of slaughter, and restraining chutes for the livestock before stunning, have all improved considerably over the past 20 years and have benefited from the results of scientific research. For example, new methods of stunning prior to bleeding have been developed, with the aim of lessening the suffering of livestock when they are stunned. These new methods include:

– electronarcosis, used mainly with smaller livestock (pigs, sheep, calves)
– suffocation by carbon dioxide, used for pigs and poultry.

Electronarcosis can also be used as a solution to the problem of ritual slaughter, since it offers the possibility of reversible anesthesia (it simply causes an epileptic fit rather than a heart attack). More research is still needed into this
matter, which is of importance to Jewish and Muslim consumers.

While the issue of animal welfare should not be trivialised, it is equally desirable that the industry become aware that there is also an economic side to this question and that the welfare of animals should be considered as a factor of quality in the same way as their feed or health. The implementation of a quality approach and of specifications for the supply of certain distribution chains (such as MacDonald’s), which include recommendations for animal welfare during the production and transport of livestock, provides a good illustration of the economic aspect of this issue. This way forward represents significant progress for the whole livestock industry, and, moreover, offers a practical response to consumer concerns.

**Conclusion**

Those who work in the industry have not been very vocal about welfare issues, because even though they have been paying increasing attention to these questions as understanding and techniques improve, they have above all been focused on economic performance, which is the best guarantee of the long-term activity of the livestock industry. It is pointless to lay down principles or set up regulations about animal welfare, if their effects threaten the profitability of the livestock industry or prevent it from being able to satisfy consumer demand. On the contrary, it is desirable to bring about a ‘win-win’ scenario by seeking synergies between improved animal welfare and better economic performance. From this perspective, it is preferable for the industry to encourage, motivate and recommend, rather than restrict or ban. Moreover, in a complex field like animal welfare, which in most cases depends on a good understanding of animal behaviour, training of personnel must take top priority.

There is now enough awareness of the animal welfare issue in many parts of the world to make it possible to seek to set up global standards and to propose international guides to good practice and codes of conduct. It is to be welcomed that the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) is working to this end. The industry should back this move to standardisation, which will not only respond to society’s concerns, but also facilitate global trade.

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Bien-être animal : rôle et perspectives du secteur des viandes et de l’élevage

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**Résumé**


En ce qui concerne les consommateurs, la demande d’aliments produits par le secteur de l’élevage est en augmentation constante depuis un siècle. Au cours des dernières décennies, cette croissance a été soutenue par les pays en développement et repose essentiellement sur la production porcine et avicole qui offre des produits moins chers.

Pour ce qui est de l’opinion publique, la société manifeste un plus grand intérêt pour les conditions d’élevage, de transport et d’abattage des animaux. Les citoyens réclament non seulement que les mauvais traitements infligés aux animaux soient bannis et sanctionnés, mais aussi que les souffrances superflues soient évitées, voire que l’on assure aux animaux un certain degré de « confort ». La santé animale, aspect le plus important de leur bien-être, a été très améliorée,
Funciones y perspectivas del sector cárnico y ganadero en cuestiones de bienestar animal

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Resumen
Los sectores de la industria ganadera que se dedican a criar animales y producir leche, carne o huevos deben responder a dos demandas, una expresada por los consumidores y otra vehiculada por la opinión pública.

En lo tocante a los consumidores, la demanda de alimentos procedentes de la industria ganadera ha ido aumentando paulatinamente a lo largo de un siglo. En los últimos decenios son los países en desarrollo los que han sustentado este crecimiento, centrado básicamente en la producción porcina y avícola, cuyos productos son más baratos.

Respecto al gran público, la sociedad se muestra cada vez más preocupada por las condiciones en que se cría, transporta y sacrifica a los animales. La opinión pública exige no sólo que se combatan y castiguen los malos tratos sino también que se evite todo sufrimiento innecesario e incluso se garantice un cierto nivel de ‘confort’ a los animales.

La sanidad de los animales, que es el principal ingrediente de su bienestar, ha mejorado sobremanera, al igual que el tratamiento dispensado a los ejemplares enfermos o heridos. Al mismo tiempo, los servicios punteros que se utilizan para criar, transportar y sacrificar a los animales están ayudando a erradicar situaciones que se acompañaban de altas dosis de tensión y sufrimiento.

Por último, deben tenerse muy en cuenta las motivaciones de los ganaderos y la seguridad de quienes trabajan con el ganado. La formación del personal y la aplicación de manuales de buenas prácticas o de control de calidad hacen tanto por el bienestar animal como el más implacable de los reglamentos.

Palabras clave
References


