

The use of behavioural tests in evaluation of chinchilla
(*Chinchilla lanigera* Molina, 1782) reproduction welfare

S u m m a r y

The use of the term „reproduction welfare" is justified by the fact that it is the breeding rate is an adequate criterion indicating optimal environmental conditions provided to the female. The aim of the study was to estimate the reliability of behavioural tests based on the reproduction welfare in standard chinchilla. Three behavioural tests, namely, sound-move, feed and empathic, were conducted. There were no aggressive individuals in the examined chinchilla population. Regarding fertility and weaned puppies in the litter, no significant differences were observed among females reproducing 1 to 3 times a year, as well as among groups of females, characterized by different types of behaviour in the feed and emphatic tests. The highest fertility and the biggest number of weaned puppies of one litter were observed in the females which were classified as reserved in the sound-move test. The females described as confident in the feed and empathic tests showed lower reproduction success during a year. The type of the behavioural test is a very important factor in classification of females into particular behaviour groups. The research conducted indicates that nowadays, instead of improving environmental conditions (which are on an excellent level in some chinchilla farms) one may select animals that are best adapted to the conditions offered by the farmer. This does not involve any additional costs from the farmer for many months. The only requirement is selection of females (reserved - in the sound-move test, confident - in the feed and empathic tests) based on one of the behavioural tests analyzed in the present work. Consequently, it is not the improvement of the already good environment conditions but the selection of animals characterized by the optimal reproduction welfare in the conditions created by the farmer that may yield a considerable production profit.