

Animal welfare in terms of evaluation criteria and methods

Summary

The objective of the work was to present animal welfare in terms of evaluation criteria and methods. It is difficult to point to a basic criterion of evaluating welfare which is easy to apply. As a result, welfare is assessed by means of many indicators including behavioural, physiological, health and production indicators in addition to supplementary parameters (technical and technological housing parameters and zoohygienic conditions). The more indicators are taken into account, the more precise and objective welfare evaluation is. The most important criterion in animal welfare evaluation is animal behaviour. In practice, the above-mentioned indicators are called objective (clinical and laboratory diagnosis, behavioural and zoohygienic methods, statistical analyses) and subjective methods (current observations of animals). Criteria and methods applied to evaluate animal welfare make it possible to select optimal solutions for animals which assure the highest level of welfare.

KEY WORDS: animal welfare, criteria, methods