

SOA13 Assessment of positive welfare; defining animal-based measures (PAW) (OO4 Action 1)

Priority area

Procedures, methodologies and tools to analyse animal health and welfare

Operational objective

To develop diagnostic procedures, methodologies and tools to support the monitoring of animal health

Key words

Animal welfare; Cognition; Motivation; Positive emotions; Preference; Welfare indicators

Partner participation

ANSES, AU, BOKU, CBv SAV, CREA, EFSA, ELGO-VRI, FBN, FLI, INRAE, IRTA, IZS - Teramo, NMBU, NRIAP, NVI, SLU, UAB, UCPH, UMIL, UNIPD, WR, WU

Project summary

The project will:

- 1) through literature reviews identify potential indicators of positive animal welfare (PAW);
- 2) through empirical research validate potential PAW indicators e.g. by investigating whether they occur in preferred and valued situations, and by using 'gold standards' of positive affective states, and finally;
- 3) the project will integrate validated PAW indicators into on-farm welfare assessment protocols.

Project objectives

The objectives are

1. to create an overview of current potential indicators of positive animal welfare with their level of validation
2. to validate potential indicators
3. to propose how validated indicators may be used to assess positive welfare on farm in future

Outcomes and impacts

- Identify and validate indicators of positive animal welfare.
- Knowledge of how positive welfare indicators may be used in welfare assessment.

The objectives are reflected in three main tasks:

Task 1. Theoretical foundations for validating indicators of positive affect

Through systematic literature reviews:

- 1.1. Identify preferred/valued situations per farm animal species.
- 1.2. Identify potential indicators and their level of validation per species.

Task 2. Identification and validation of animal-based measures of positive affect

Through empirical research:

- 2.1. Explore the role of agency for positive welfare.
- 2.2. Validate potential indicators of positive affective states using cognitive bias tests.
- 2.3 Establish relationship between potential indicators and preferred and valued environments.
- 2.4 Further develop validated animal-based measures.

Task 3. Protocol including positive animal-based measures

Validated measures are integrated in two theoretical protocols:

- 3.1 Short-term protocol including considerations on how to aggregate positive and negative indicators of affect.
- 3.2. Long-term protocol including considerations on how to combine indicators of positive and negative affect into an 'affect balance'.