INDUSTRY OPINIONS OF WELFARE INDICATORS ASSESSED AT SLAUGHTER: EVALUATION IN RUMINANTS (WISER PROJECT)

INFORMATION SHEET FOR ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE
You have been invited to participate in a research project run by the University of Warwick. The funding for the project comes from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

What is the aim of the study?
The vast majority of farmed animals are slaughtered in abattoirs and so it has been suggested that abattoirs are potentially a useful place to gather data on animal health & welfare both in the living animal (ante-mortem) and in the dead animal (post-mortem).

The aim of this project is to identify indicators of health & welfare in cattle and sheep that are practical to measure in abattoirs. For the purposes of this project we have defined an animal health & welfare indicator as a reliable and repeatable measure that can be made from visual observation of the animal, its carcass and internal organs that reflects its health & welfare on-farm, at-market or in-transit. These indicators would assess the animal’s health & welfare on-farm, at-market or in-transit to the abattoir.

The project aims to be of benefit to all parties in the livestock industry and we wish to ensure that results obtained are developed by and accepted across the industry. To achieve this we are actively inviting representatives widely across the industry to provide their views which will directly influence project development.

Data collected will inform on the usefulness of abattoirs to evaluate health & welfare and how data currently collected can be efficiently maximised to benefit industry. It will also be used to aid development of a robust, industry acceptable system for evaluation of sheep and cattle health & welfare at abattoirs to measure on farm, at market or in transit health & welfare.

Why have I been invited to participate?
We are inviting you to participate in this study because you work in and / or have knowledge of the sheep or cattle meat production chain. We want to include the opinions of experts from a range of backgrounds and organisations and your views will be hugely important and valuable to us.

Your involvement is entirely voluntary and you will not be at any disadvantage if you decide not to participate.

What will happen if I decide to take part?
The questionnaire will take around 25 - 35 minutes to complete. There are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers and we hope you would find it an interesting questionnaire. All responses are confidential and collected anonymously. By returning a completed questionnaire you are giving your consent for the information that you have supplied to be used in this study.

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Will the data I provide be confidential?
Yes. We will follow strict ethical and legal practice. All the information you provide will be completely confidential and used solely for research purposes in accordance with the 1998 Data Protection Act. Data will be stored securely and electronically at the University of Warwick in file space only accessible to named personnel working on the project. It will not be stored alongside any personally identifying information. Any information that you provide that is used in either written or oral publication will be anonymous. No personally identifying data will be published. After the study, data will be kept for ten years, after which it will be destroyed.

What will the benefits of this study be?
We know that health & welfare of livestock is a major concern across the industry and that health and welfare of ruminants has financial implications for producers, processors and retailers. The results of this study will help us to understand industry opinions of health & welfare assessments and uses of such data and whether and how to increase their usefulness widely across the livestock industry. Ultimately our aim is to improve sheep and cattle health & welfare and bring financial and societal benefits to industry. By taking part in this study you will have the opportunity to influence how this is achieved.

The results of the research will be published in academic journals, farming, veterinary and industry press, on websites and presented at relevant conferences and seminar events. If you would like more information about the results you are welcome to contact us at any time. If participants provide us with contact details, we can send a brief summary of results from the project and update participants as papers / articles / presentations are published.

Who is conducting this research?
The research team includes Professor Laura Green, Dr Elisabeth King, Kenneth Clarke, Jane Downes and Miriam Parker.

Who can I contact if I want to make a complaint about my experience participating in this study?
Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study or any possible harm you might have suffered will be addressed. Please address your complaint to the Deputy Registrar, who is a Senior University of Warwick official entirely independent of this study:

Deputy Registrar (currently Jo Horsburgh)  
Deputy Registrar's Office, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 8UW  
Tel: 02476 522 713       Email: J.Horsburgh@warwick.ac.uk

Who has reviewed this study?
This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by:

2. The University of Warwick’s Biomedical and Scientific Research Ethics Committee (BSREC): (REGO-2013-585 on 20/12/2013).
3. Defra Survey Control Unit (SCU): (17900949 on 20/12/2013).
Who can I contact if I have a question about the study?
If you have any questions about any aspect of the study or your participation in it not answered by this participant information leaflet, please contact:

Dr Elisabeth King
School of Life Sciences, University of Warwick, Gibbet Hill Road, Coventry, CV4 7AL
Email: elisabeth.king@warwick.ac.uk   Tel: 02476 151785

Thank you for taking the time to read this participant information leaflet.