**Farm animals are Sentient Beings - what indicators do we have?**Why so difficult to accept farm animals as sentient?

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**Abstract**

Since 2004, animals, including farm animals, in the European constitution are defined as “sentient beings”. This shows the growing public interest in animal welfare in European societies followed by increasing legal regulations for management, transport and slaughter representing usually minimum standards in order to avoid physical harm. However, welfare is more than an absence of negative influences. Proof of the state of an animal can be given by physiological, biochemical or neurological methods requiring sensor systems attached to the animal or blood samples. Direct methods to assess the health and the emotional status of an animal or the way that an animal experiences a situation are clinical and behavioural observations. Unambiguous indicators and objectivity are crucial to reach acceptance of more detailed laws to protect animal health and welfare in public. Knowing that animals are sentient is the basis for transforming modern livestock production into a successful and accepted future, will increase quality of life of the animals, consumer’s satisfaction and last but not least a sound economic value for the farmer.