



**ClearFarm**

**PRACTICE ABSTRACT**

## Labelling for high animal welfare products

Farm animal welfare is increasingly emphasised as a quality attribute of food and a growing number of EU citizens would like to have more information about how farmed animals are treated. Product labelling can inform consumers effectively about food quality and sustainability, increase the transparency of farming and provide better protection to EU producers who apply a high animal welfare standard.

Animal welfare labels reviewed by ClearFarm mostly measured animal welfare by using resource- rather than animal-based measures. Only few of them referred to the technical specification ISO/TS 34700:2016 on animal welfare management.

Generic EU product labelling regulations apply also to animal welfare labelling. For instance: 1) product must not be marketed with properties it does not have or that can be assumed to be shared by all other products, such as minimum legal requirements, 2) the marketing must not be misleading, and 3) comparative claims should be verifiable.

All packing labels should also be easily noticeable, readable, and comprehensible. In addition, the European Commission has provided best practice guides for voluntary certification schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

The **key factors to successful animal welfare labelling** are 1) business operators' desire for **openness**, 2) the **participation** of industry, retailers, and interest groups in designing and implementing the labelling,

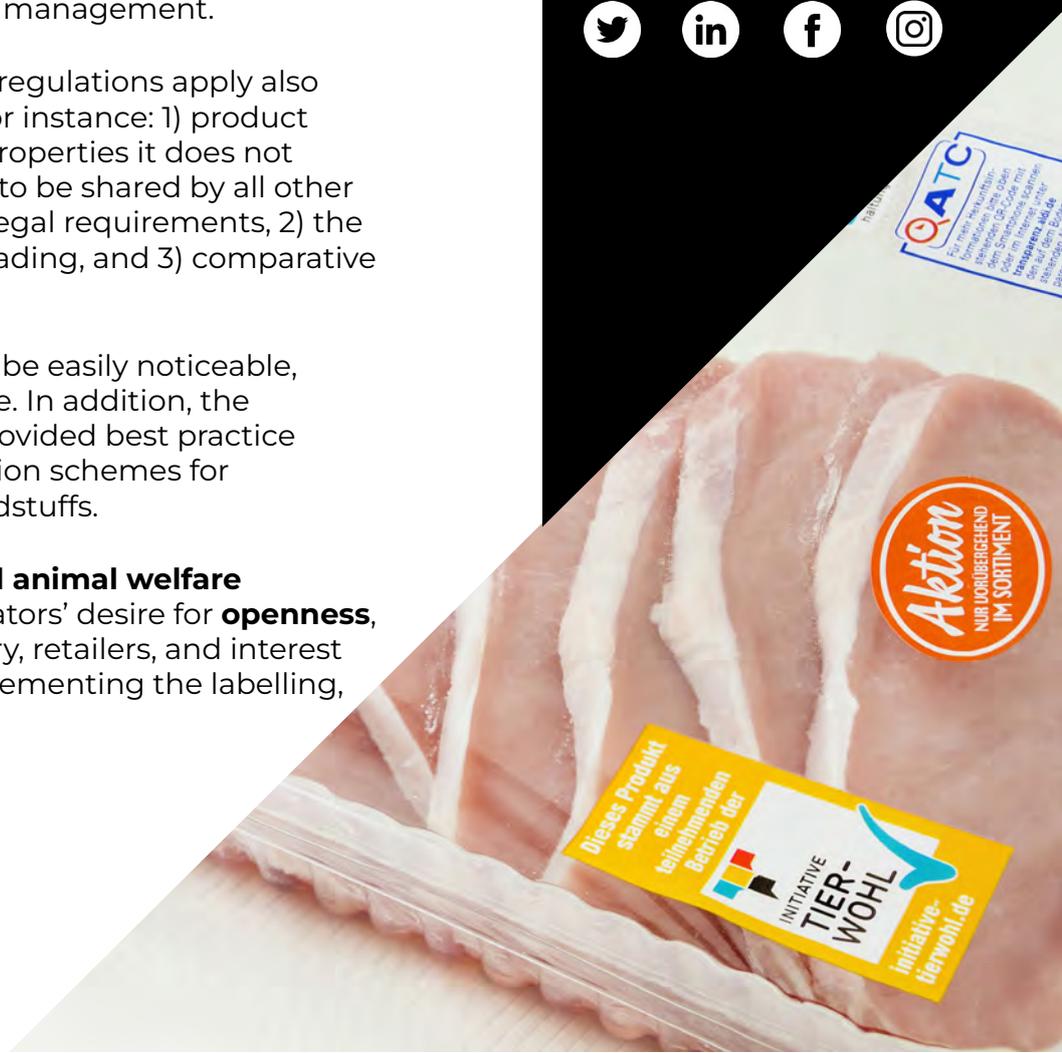
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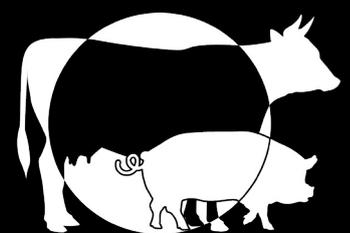
as well as 3) **consumers' awareness** of the label and its benefits. Moreover, 4) the **transparency** of the labelling scheme and 5) **wide involvement of actors** in decision-making were identified as additional important factors. Particularly farmers appreciate the possibility to take part in the label's decision-making. Informing consumers requires adequate, correct, and coherent **communication** so that they understand the benefits of the label. It is recommended that the verification of conformity is **reliable**, made by **an independent body**, and that **regular inspections with clear, understandable, and realistic criteria** take place.

Financial viability of labelling is important. A commercial label must provide adequate value to all relevant actors, including animals, consumers, farmers, food business operators and other business entities involved.

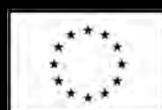
Studies ([Yang & Renwick, 2019](#); [Cicia & Colantuoni, 2010](#)) suggest that consumers are typically willing to pay some 15-30% price premium for products originating from high animal welfare farming systems. However, products are different, and consumers are a heterogeneous group, with dynamical changing shopping habits. While some are interested in animal welfare and willing to pay a price premium for welfare improvements, others may not be.

Digitalisation offers new opportunities to change the way labels are used in a business environment. It allows innovative technologies to be used for the benefit of consumers, which can both change the way of communication and give rise to new business models based on precision livestock farming technologies and data.

Quality labels are recommended to adhere to the principle of continuous improvement. The technical standard of animal welfare label affects how much impact the label can generate. Enhanced quality is not delivered for free. Rather, it requires effort at the different stages of the value chain. As the price rises, some consumers become excluded as the buyers of welfare-labelled products. Thus, the additional cost of delivering high quality cannot be too high.



**ClearFarm**



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