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## Mapping farm animal welfare education at university level in Europe

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### Abstract

The aim of this study was to map farm animal welfare university education in an enlarged Europe with emphasis on identifying existing differences and gaps. Information on 210 courses dealing with farm animal welfare from 98 universities in 26 European countries were obtained. Statistical analysis was carried out on 155 of these courses within animal science or veterinary programmes, at Bachelor and Master level and with the countries grouped into five regions (North West Europe, Mediterranean, West Central Europe, East Central Europe and Balkans). There were significantly more hours of teaching in animal welfare in the North West region of Europe. This region also had more 'interactive' education methods, eg group discussion and farm visits, whereas West Central Europe had most 'transmissive' methods, eg lecturing. A course was more likely to be given in English in North West Europe (even when the UK and the Republic of Ireland were excluded from the analysis) and East Central Europe compared to West Central Europe and the Balkans. There appeared to be no regional differences in the content of the courses although the focus was significantly more 'applied', ie towards welfare assessment and legislation in the veterinary education and more 'fundamental', ie oriented towards ethology, physiology and ethics, in the animal science education. In summary, the main differences in farm animal welfare education across Europe seem to be in the reduced number of hours of education, less interactive teaching and fewer courses in English available to students outside the North West region.

**Keywords:** animal science, animal welfare, Europe, farm animals, university education, veterinary medicine