

Any consideration of food animal production systems, both in agriculture and aquaculture, must take these principles as a starting point.

Statutory species-specific welfare codes of practice provide a legal basis for the care of farmed animals, in addition to voluntary codes of practice and voluntary assurance schemes. These codes encourage high standards of husbandry and are developed based on the latest scientific evidence, best practice in husbandry and meeting the five welfare needs of livestock as outlined above.

Welfare outcome assessment

BVA recognises that from an animal health and welfare point of view, it is not sufficient to carry out a tick-box exercise in terms of inputs. BVA supports welfare outcome assessment in assurance schemes as a tool to drive continuous improvement of animal management and husbandry practices, in turn promoting high animal health and welfare. The standardised assessment of welfare outcomes provides a practical and scientifically informed method of assessment that aims to provide a more objective, accurate and direct picture of animal welfare. Indicators of positive welfare should be incorporated in to welfare outcome assessments when possible, as promoted by the Farm Animal [Welfare Assurance Scheme](#). [Welfare outcome assessment](#) opportunity for animals can be a key differentiator between some assurance schemes, which is linked to the potential for good animal health and welfare when delivered with excellent health and welfare outcomes.

A welfare outcomes approach also contributes to informed considerations of the advantages and disadvantages of different production systems, assisting producers and consumers to consider how

to avoid oversimplification when considering how different production systems address animal health and welfare needs and recognise that welfare outcomes are not solely dependent on the type or size of different production systems.

Ethical and budgetary considerations

Public goods, such as animal health and welfare, have no explicit value in terms of market prices and so the market cannot efficiently allocate resources to them. BVA recognises that improved animal health and welfare standards can result in an increased cost to the producer/farmer, which must be recovered either through the marketplace and/or through public money being allocated to animal [welfare](#). [Welfare](#) argues that animal health and welfare should be recognised as a public good and receive financial government support; for example, through a Welfare Stewardship scheme.

BVA believes that there is ongoing work to be done in communicating the value of improved animal health and welfare, and of assurance schemes in achieving this, to producers, farmers, citizens,

