



Economic aspects of range and outdoor run management in outdoor and organic broiler and pig production systems

Based on feedback obtained from national practitioners, the PPILOW project has identified a set of welfare-improving practices in low-input outdoor and organic broiler and pig production systems. An in-depth qualitative and quantitative analysis was carried out to shortlist economically viable ways to improve animal welfare, health and performance in these systems.

Improvements in the quality and usage of outdoor run enable the expression of natural behaviors and improvements in several welfare and performance indicators. Measures of improving outdoor run quality, such as enriching range with vegetation and grazing management and crop rotation, mobile houses and measures reducing the risk of parasitism and diseases, are recommended for both broilers and pigs.

Providing proper fences and guard animals help to limit contacts with predators and other wildlife that may transmit pathogens. The costs of labor, land and materials needed to enhance the outdoor run quality, include the costs of trees, plants, fences, shelters, shall be kept under control as they can increase the costs of production substantially.

Despite being labour-intensive, the relatively high labour costs of mobile housing systems might be compensated by lower veterinary costs and higher revenues per kilogram of poultry meat.

Conclusion

In outdoor paddocks and straw yards, pigs have less adventitious bursitis, injuries, stomach ulceration, mortality and morbidity and lung damage compared to slatted pens. Costs incurred with the implementation of such practices can be compensated by lower mortality and infections, or by market revenues and product branding in some cases.



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