

# Benefits of human-animal interaction in poultry production and hen welfare

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## SUMMARY

One of the main challenges of modern poultry farming is the limited interaction between keepers and birds, as the high workload, the use of automated technologies and the high density of animals handled per person make close interaction difficult. In addition, routine activities such as vaccinations, weighing, or transportation can generate negative links of birds to human presence.

Studies have shown that positive and predictable contact between keepers and birds, such as acalm presence, use of a soft voice, and slow movements, not only reduce fear and stress in hens, but also improve production and their overall well-being. Additionally, high levels of stress in parents can generate more anxious offspring with unwanted behaviours that affect well-being. In a complementary way, these practices also benefit workers, by facilitating their work, reducing the occurrence of occupational accidents associated with poultry management, and promoting a safer and more rewarding environment. In summary, a good human-to-animal relationship improves the quality of operational work in poultry farms, raises the level of animal welfare and production efficiency.

## Case study impacts

- Positive human interaction decreases fear and distress in birds, improving their welfare and productive performance.
- The lack of contact can generate hormonal alterations in the eggs, which can negatively affect the behaviour of the chicks.
- The scientific evidence generated serves as a basis for new research and for designing animal welfare standards applicable to intensive systems.
- Encouraging this type of practice promotes more responsible, sustainable production that is aligned with current social expectations.



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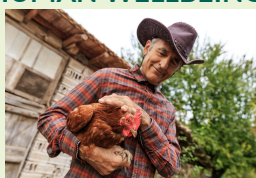
## One Welfare Pillars

### ANIMAL WELFARE



Careful and predictable handling fosters birds' trust in humans, reduces avoidance behaviours, and makes it easier to adapt to their environment. Positive interactions from an early age contribute to the development of social skills, less aggressiveness and better general health, which translates into greater productivity.

### HUMAN WELLBEING



A better human-animal relationship improves the quality of work on poultry farms. Keepers face fewer difficulties when interacting with less fearful birds, reducing the risk of accidents. In addition, receiving training in good practices generates greater job satisfaction and a sense of purpose among workers.

### ENVIRONMENT



#### Physical

- It is essential to design facilities that facilitate contact between hens and keepers, control factors such as ventilation, light and population density, and incorporate technologies that stimulate the birds sensorially, respecting their natural behaviour.

#### Social environment

- Proper welfare practices can reduce mortality, waste and odours, as well as improve consumer perception of animal production. This translates into better living conditions for birds and greater economic benefits for producers.

## Multidisciplinary relevant areas

Animal welfare, ethology, animal husbandry, veterinary sciences, social sciences, psychology, food production, environment, animal health and sustainability.

## References / Source

- Hemsworth, P. H., & Coleman, G. J. (2010). Human-Livestock Interactions: The Stockperson and the Productivity and Welfare of Intensively Farmed Animals. CABI.
- Guerrero-Bosagna, C., Morisson, M., Liaubet, L., Rodenburg, T. B., de Haas, E. N., Košťál, L., & Pitel, F. (2018). Transgenerational epigenetic inheritance in birds. *Environmental Epigenetics*, 4(2), 1-8.

