

Book review — Boekresensie

Human-livestock interactions – the stockperson and the productivity and welfare of intensively farmed animals

P H Hemsworth and G C Coleman

1998. CAB International, Wallingford, Oxon, United Kingdom, 176 pp. (including 10 black-and-white photographs), hardcover. Price: £ 30, US\$ 55. ISBN 0 85199 195 5.

This book provides an excellent scientific review of human-livestock interactions and quantitative measures of animal welfare. Hemsworth has published numerous articles on the behaviour and welfare of intensively farmed poultry, pigs and dairy cattle and is a world leader in this field of research.

The stockperson is considered a key factor in the welfare and productivity of intensively farmed animals. The book promotes the concept that the stockperson should be regarded as a professional rather than a labourer and discusses the skills, knowledge and status required for this to come to pass. The ethics of animal farming in relation to the stockperson are discussed and attitudes of stockpersons quantified in relation to the welfare and productivity of animals in their care.

Measures of farm animal welfare are complicated by the widespread use of the term and a plethora of definitions. According to Hemsworth and Coleman, 'without a clear definition, welfare cannot be studied, because it cannot be measured

either directly or indirectly'. The book then goes on to offer quantitative assessments of farm animal welfare using biological responses and their consequences for the animal, stress and behavioural changes. Thus risks to the welfare of the animal are assessed in terms of the magnitude of these changes and the consequences that affect the animal's ability to grow, reproduce and remain healthy.

A model of stockperson-animal interactions is proposed and guidelines given for changing stockperson attitudes and behaviour. This is an erudite book aimed at the level of the researcher into animal welfare, veterinary ethology and human psychology. References and techniques proposed would be very valuable for objective evaluation of animal welfare in intensive production systems.

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