Animal Welfare Assessment Method through Stockmanship Competence: The Context of Backyard Goat Production in the Philippines

Authors : M. J. Alcedo, K. Ito, K. Maeda

Abstract : Measuring animal welfare is a newly emerging area of research and it needs multi-disciplinary way to do it. Due to the diversity of what constitutes the definition of animal welfare, different methods and models were developed and mostly conducted in semi and commercial farms in developed countries. Few studies have been conducted in developing countries and in backyard livestock operation. Recognizing that majority of livestock operations are categorized as backyard in developing countries, it is crucial to come up with parameters that can assess the welfare of the animal in the backyard level. This research had made use of stockmanship competence as the proxy indicator to assess animal welfare. Stockmanship competence in this study refers to the capacity of the animal owner to ensure the welfare of their animal by providing their needs for growth and reproduction. The Philippine recommend on goat production, tips on goat raising and goat scientific literatures were used as references to come up with indicators that are known to be important in meeting the needs of the animal and ensuring its welfare. Scores from -1 to +2 were assigned depending on how close it is of satisfying the animal's need. It is hoped that this assessment method could contribute to the growing body of knowledge on animal welfare and can be utilized as logical and scientific framework in assessing welfare in backyard goat operation. It is suggested that further study needs to be conducted to refine and standardize indicators and identify other indicators for goat welfare assessment.

Keywords : backyard goat production, stockmanship competence, animal welfare, Philippines
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