

The effects of time off feed and water on the welfare of spent laying hens - Phase 2: Behavioural indicators



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Welfare implications of different times off feed and water among spent hens known with improvements in industry policies resulting.



This project aimed to equate physiological changes induced by water deprivation with behavioural changes in order to understand its welfare implications for the transport of spent laying hens.

The results presented in this report, in accordance with the previous study (MCCP: 2009-320), questions the welfare of hens that have water withdrawn for 24h or longer. It should be recognised that factors other than feed and water deprivation are likely to influence hen welfare during transport, such as the health status of the hens prior to loading, their body condition, stress of handling, social stress of mixing, duration of transport and the weather during transport and lairage. The threshold indicative of acceptable welfare remains debatable depending on value-based judgements.