Improving animal welfare: The art

- In the field, improving animal welfare requires a considerable degree of improvisation.
- Solutions are not always based on scientific literature – experience with the species and environment is very valuable.

Migration of knowledge

- This is the challenge.
- How do we apply procedures and data that have been collected in a static environment to a dynamic production setting?

A case study: Veal stunning.

- In 2012, FSIS began posting all humane handling violations to their website for public access.
- The company has developed a reputation for high animal welfare standards and markets their product using animal welfare claims.
- Although stunning efficacy was not a problem, the plant manager wanted to be sure a problem would not arise.
Our approach

- Development and testing of a two-stage stunning approach to induce cardiac fibrillation following non-penetrating captive bolt stunning.

The outcome

- No detection of any signs of return to consciousness.
- Incomplete induction of cardiac fibrillation.
- Negative impact on blood yield and veal lightness (CIE L*).

In conclusion...

- In this case, procedural change was not necessary.
- The decision to maintain the existing stunning procedure was data-driven.
- The handheld ECG equipment has value in the troubleshooting of return to sensibility issues.
  - Currently testing for swine.
- The employment of a scientific approach to assessing animal welfare concerns in the field provides justification for management decisions.

Questions and Discussion

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