

Communicating animal welfare in agriculture: public and private information and dialogue*Diane Ryland**University of Lincoln, Law School, United Kingdom; dryland@lincoln.ac.uk*

Increasingly, the ethical consumer is interested in animal welfare enhanced agri-produce, but is not informed adequately as to the welfare needs of farm animals, nor of the standards of animal welfare practised in the food supply chain. Public farm animal welfare standards are not comprehensive and can be said to be minimum, consensus standards which are based on science. A requirement to signal the animal welfare credentials of meat does not exist in law beyond that applicable to quality produce meeting good agricultural practice promoted as organic in a 'niche' market. Purportedly higher private animal welfare farm assurance standards and certification schemes have evolved, with the tendency for a business to business certificate of conformity to operate in a business context, from which the consumer is distanced. This paper will examine the potential for the public and private sectors to communicate indicators and standards of animal welfare promoted for food producing animals. Its methodology is desk-based doctrinal research. It will, for example, extract information from the website of GLOBALG.A.P. It will suggest soft law tools of governance to increase the sources and flow of private, *prima facie* voluntary, credible, transparent and verifiable information on animal welfare. It will propose an industry-led business to consumer animal welfare label and private animal welfare platform with which to educate and inform on the level of animal welfare practised in agricultural produce certified for supply in the global food chain. It will also explore the significance of opening up animal welfare dialogue between the public and private spheres. It will, further, evaluate the roles for market standardisation to act as a communicative tool and to incentivise added value animal welfare practices, strengthened by public and private collaboration.