

MEDIA INFORMATION

Leibniz Institute for Farm Animal Biology

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LEIBNIZ INSTITUTE
FOR FARM ANIMAL BIOLOGY

Which research topics matter for people?

MeLa visitors are particularly interested in species-appropriate animal husbandry and animal welfare

At this year's 27th Exhibition for Agriculture and Food, Fisheries, Forestry, Hunting and Horticulture (MeLa) in September in Güstrow, the Leibniz Institute for Farm Animal Biology Dummerstorf has launched a campaign to conduct a visitor survey with theme cards. The aim of the initiative was to question visitors under the motto "Continue as before" about their opinion on future relevant research fields in dairy and poultry farming. To this end, facts on the development of milk and egg production over the last few decades were presented in the thematic cards. No answers were provided. The evaluation has now shown that more than one third of the participants have emphasised the issues of animal welfare and species-appropriate animal husbandry.

"FBN's card action at the joint stand of the agricultural research institutions in MV (within the framework of its overall motto "Agricultural Research Yesterday - Today - Tomorrow") has confirmed our experience that more and more people want to have a say in deciding on relevant research topics and to be involved in finding solutions ", emphasised FBN director Prof. Klaus Wimmers. Citizens are keenly interested in animal welfare and want to see the framework conditions that will ensure adequate long-term income for livestock farmers ". According to a representative survey conducted by the Wissenschaftsbarometer 2017*, this is important or even very important for around 56 percent of all respondents in Germany. Climate and energy as well as health and nutrition are considered to be most important for future research activities.

More than 200 MeLa visitors took part in the survey on the four days of the event. The question "Which research aspects are important to you in the future?" was answered by 199 participants. "Many people wanted to link biological research with economic or social issues," said Wimmers.

Aspects and current research tasks of modern animal husbandry in dairy cows and poultry breeding were discussed in two thematic cards (see annex). Among the 97 completely filled out cards on dairy cattle, the MeLa visitors cited 32 times animal welfare and species-appropriate husbandry as the most important goal, followed by feed efficiency and methane reduction (15), grazing and economic sustainability (14), longevity (13) and better milk quality (11); multiple answers were possible and desired. Regarding the 102 poultry cards, the participants were mainly interested in species-appropriate husbandry (37) and dual-use fowl and thus the survival of male chicks (29), but also in efficient feed conversion (10) closely followed by a reduction in the use of antibiotics, economic sustainability and free-range husbandry.

* The [Wissenschaftsbarometer](http://www.wissenschaftsbarometer.de) has surveyed the attitudes of German citizens to science and research annually since 2014. The initiators, the non-profit organization "Wissenschaft im Dialog" (WiD), are committed to public exchange on science and research in Germany and want to involve as many people as possible in the discussions. All the results of the 2017 survey as well as further information and background information can be viewed at www.wissenschaftsbarometer.de



Foto: privat

The great response to the theme card campaign surprised the initiators at the FBN in a positive way. Dr. Norbert K. Borowy (left) discusses new research tasks in animal production with a visitor at the MeLa.

Anlage: Theme Cards

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