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**LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION AND LIVESTOCK WELFARE: ARE THEY AT ODDS OR  
IN HARMONY**

These two goals in livestock farming are sometimes seen as mutually exclusive, but this is only true at the highest limits of farming practices. Poor feeding, water, housing, health care or management are all serious concerns for the welfare of animals, and improving each one of them will lead not only to an improvement in welfare, but also an improvement in production and thus in profitability. Therefore, in most cases at lower and medium levels of productivity, it can be said that livestock welfare and productivity are in harmony, improving one will improve the other. However as production increases, at the higher levels it may become increasingly difficult to maintain satisfactory animal welfare. Examples of this are the very high producing dairy cows that are more prone to a long list of diseases and problems; sows producing and raising very large litters at short intervals; Angora goats bred to produce so much mohair that they lose their ability to cope with harsh environmental conditions; beef cattle bred larger and larger until they suffer from leg problems; ewes selected for twinning or producing triplets without regard for milk production or maternal care. Even with a range of managerial, nutritional or other interventions as production rises, it becomes more and more challenging to balance out the requirements of animal production and animal welfare.

The long term solution is to maintain a harmonious balance between genetics, environment, management, housing, nutrition and production goals. All livestock farmers and their advisors should base decisions and actions on this

balance, remembering always that we are dealing with sentient beings deserving consideration and compassion, and not mere mindless biological machines from which maximum production can be extracted.