

## Final grant report form: Student Grants

<b>Project title:</b>	Public perception and poultry production: comparing public awareness and opinion of the UK poultry industry with published data
<b>Researcher:</b>	Victoria McCulloch
<b>Year awarded:</b>	2017

### Provide a lay summary outlining the project, focusing on the project's achievements and potential impact to animal welfare.

Poultry makes up close to half of all meat consumed in the UK and demand for poultry products is on the rise. Policies within the poultry and livestock industries are affected by consumer demands which are influenced by consumer perception and overall understanding of industry practices. Public opinion can have strong effects on policy, however these views are not necessarily based on scientific evidence. This study set out to elucidate using a survey addressing current consumer understanding of poultry production systems, product labelling within the UK, and public opinion on the relative importance of various aspects of poultry husbandry and housing systems and how this relates to evidence from published data on poultry health and welfare.

The factors ranked most important in public opinion are disease control, access to outdoors and size of individual enclosure. Published data shows both beneficial and harmful effects of these factors on poultry well-being, and due to this complexity as well as varied indicators of welfare between studies, overall contribution can be difficult to assess. This study found public knowledge of production terms and product labelling to be low, but despite this lack of knowledge, there is a mid to high level of concern for poultry welfare among members of the Scottish public.

A challenge to this study was recruiting survey participants. It took longer than had been previously expected with fewer participants than we had set out to achieve, 150 instead of 200 as stated in the study proposal.

Statistics used in the study were t-tests and chi-square tests. T-tests found that factors such as disease control, size of individual enclosure and access to outdoors were ranked significantly higher than others while age at slaughter and lighting were ranked significantly lower ( $p < 0.05$ ). Chi-squared tests showed that participants had a significantly high level of concern of poultry and that understanding of production terms showed no significant relationship to grocery store in which surveys were carried out ( $p = 0.89$ ).

### Provide a short description of your personal experience in undertaking this project

**As a second year/ graduate entry Veterinary student I have a deep interest in animal welfare and this grant allowed me the opportunity to pursue research on a topic that is important to me.** I knew little myself about poultry and poultry welfare despite being in a field associated with animal health and welfare, and as a consumer of animal-based products, I make purchasing decisions every day that can impact the poultry industry. For this project, I wanted to learn what the general public understands about the poultry industry and how concerned they are with animal welfare, especially in the UK where welfare standards tend to be higher than most countries.

While at times this project was challenging, it was overall a great learning experience. I have never had the opportunity to take on a research project of my own and in this case, **I was able to design and execute a study from start to finish and I am proud of what I was able to accomplish in just 8 short weeks.**

I feel that this project has given me the chance to work independently, develop my writing skills, learn to create and follow a work schedule, it has given me valuable experience in study design and applying statistical knowledge that will be beneficial to my studies and career in Veterinary Medicine.

**Use the space below for any other relevant information you wish to report.**

Now that I have completed this report I feel that there is the potential for further study on the subject. I am hoping to extend this study for my Student Research Report which I will be pursuing in the upcoming years of my BVM&S degree and will be looking to apply for further funding. This project has given me a launching pad with which I have been able to explore an area of interest and hope to pursue in the future.