

Animal Welfare in Victoria

Drivers
Future challenges
Role of government

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA



What is welfare?

Just the five freedoms?

Freedom from pain, injury and disease

Freedom from fear and distress

Freedom from discomfort

Freedom to express normal behaviour

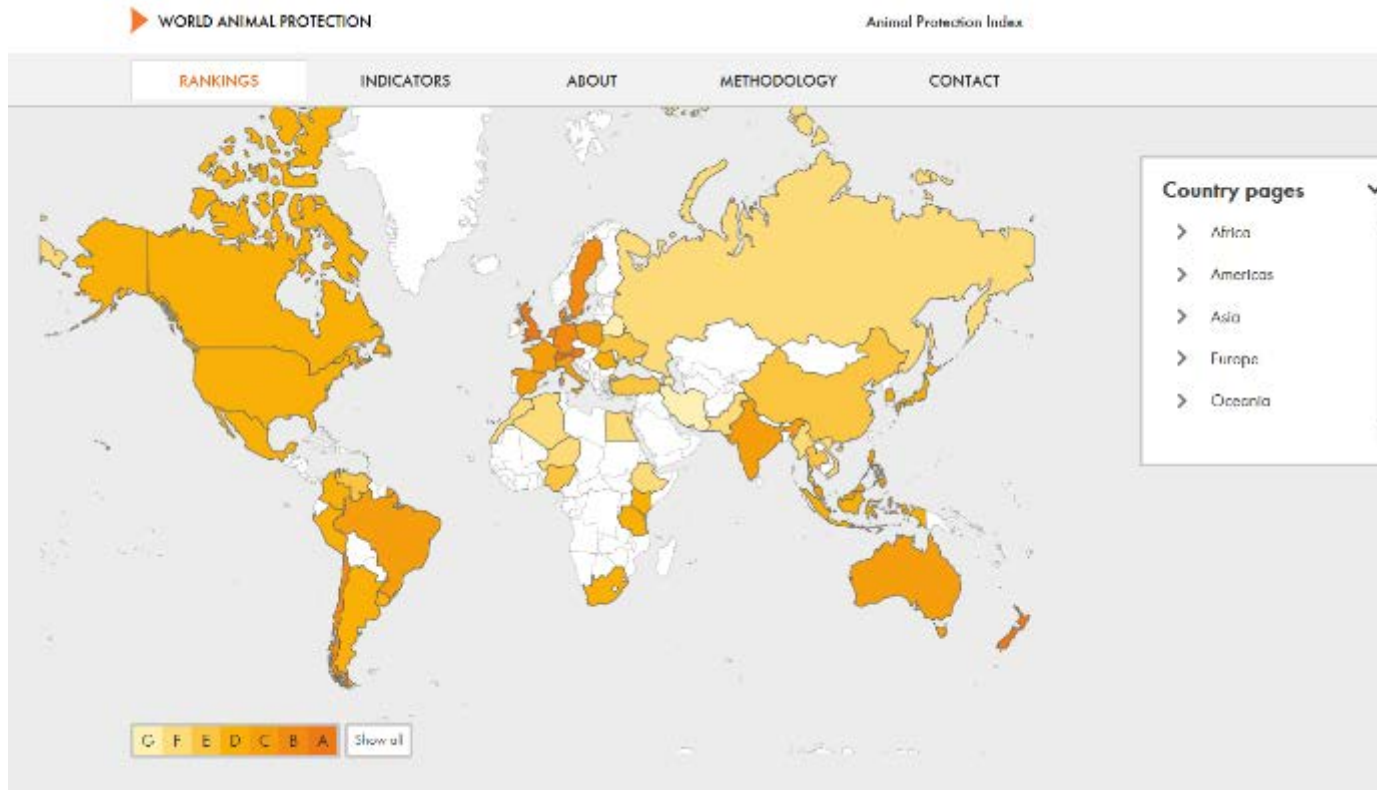
Freedom from hunger and thirst

A Good life?

Perverse outcomes



“To see ourselves as others see us” Rabbinic Burns (1786)



- “As the largest exporter of livestock in the world and a significant producer of livestock products Australian animal welfare practices are subject to intense international scrutiny.”

Farm animal welfare - C

Inconsistent legislation

Yet to phase out confinement systems

- Battery cages
- Sow stalls

Significant problems with exported animals

Decreasing red tape may dilute safeguards

Incomplete binding national standards



Biggest influences on farm animal welfare?

Economic

Climate

Social



Economic

Strong relationship between welfare and profitability

Increasing world population but:

- Need for cheap protein
- Reduced availability of farm land

Foreign investment

Retailer demands

Economic

Increasing farm size but decreased farm labour

- Increasing age of farming population
- Skill of the stockperson

Increasing input costs

- Fuel/fertiliser, etc.

Increasing use of technology

- e.g. robotic milking

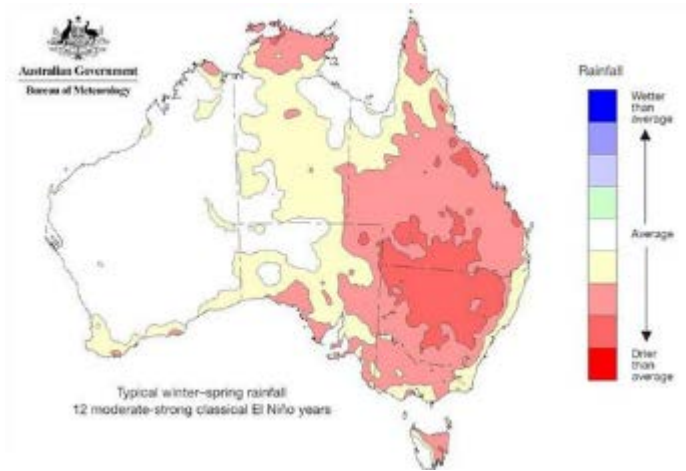
Increasing intensification

- Genetics for increased production

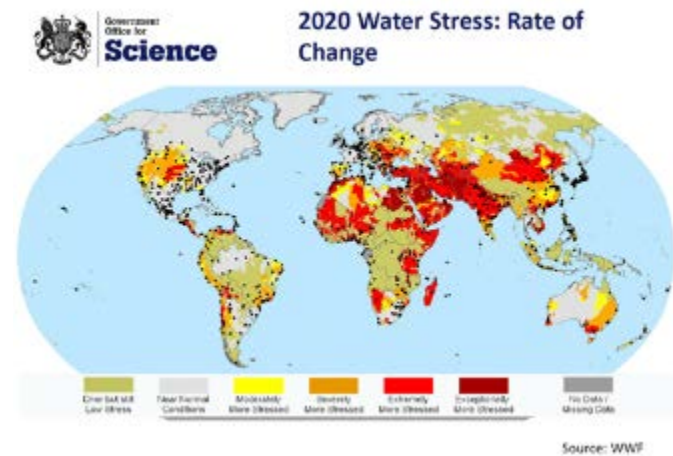


Climate

Short Term – El Nino events



Medium Term – Climate Change



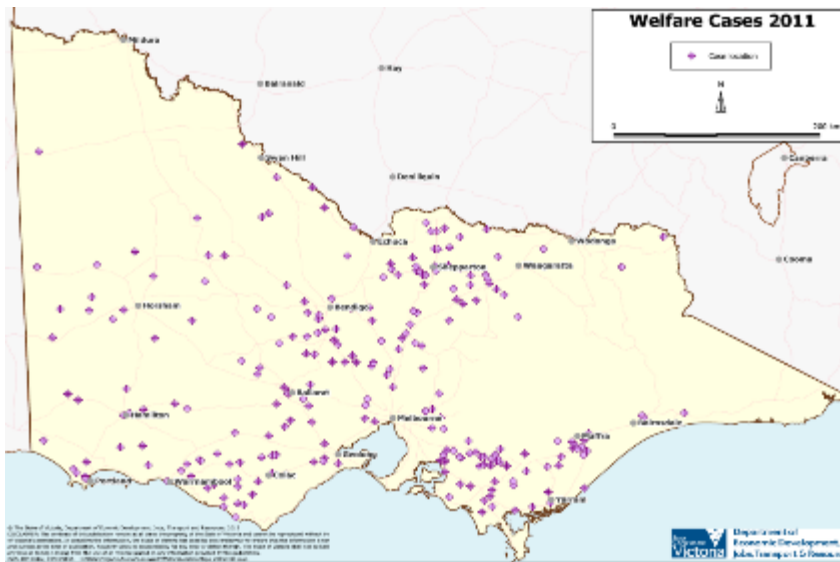
Expect 1000 welfare complaints
Increased risk of large fires
Broader expectations on emergency responses
Preparedness

Decreasing water availability
Impact on farming practices
Farming practices will need to adapt
Planning should start now

Climate

2011 - average rainfall in both Spring and Autumn (347 cases)

2013 – significantly below average rainfall in both Spring and Autumn (816 cases)



Social

Increasing urbanisation of populations

Societal expectations re farming systems e.g. free range

- Disease
- Welfare

Increasing demand for 'welfare friendly' products

- Willingness to pay

Increasing activity by animal welfare and rights groups

- Social media

Licence to operate

Pasture based production systems are an asset both for trade and animal welfare

Calving induction

Spaying of cows without the use of anaesthesia

Mulesing

Very low body condition

Greyhound racing

- NSW vs Victoria



Future role of government

Government will always have a role to play in animal welfare

- Commonwealth vs States/Territories

Role of industry partnerships

Consumer power

- Animal welfare is a first world luxury

Role of government in research



Big questions

Decreasing farm labour

Calving induction

Bobby calves

Genetics

Attitudes

Good welfare drivers

Positive welfare states