



WAGENINGENUR

*For quality of life*

wetenschapswinkel



## “Kip, ik heb je!”

Het vangen van vleeskuikens – een economische verkenning van verschillende potentieel dierenwelzijnsverbeterende alternatieven

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Maart 2009

Rapport 256

## Summary

Situations that result in reduced animal welfare occur mainly because of cost-reducing measures in the livestock industry. Improving animal welfare seems inevitably related to an increase in production costs. The limited way in which farmers are compensated for these costs by a related increase of the price in consumer markets and in the rest of the supply chain, is an important barrier for improving animal welfare. By calculating what consequences a given welfare improving alternative has on cost price it becomes possible to communicate with the sector and the consumer about the implication of an alternative and to create support.

Objective of this study is to study the impaired welfare situation of catching broilers and to calculate the costs of the different alternative catching methods. Nowadays, catching of broilers is done by catching crews, who lift the broilers upside down, at their legs, with 6-8 broilers at a time. This method of catching results in injuries and diminishes welfare of the broilers. The following alternatives for catching broilers are elaborated for a chosen enterprise; i) basic scenario (use of one catching crew), ii) Swedish way of catching (with 2 chickens lifted upright at one time), iii) the use of two catching crews, iv) the use of a catching machine in full possession (two types), and v) the use of a rented catching machine. In this study, for all scenarios the costs in comparison with the basic scenario are calculated. The data for this calculation come from literature and consulted experts.

All alternative scenarios give rise to extra costs in comparison with the basic scenario. The use of the Swedish method of catching broilers is most expensive, followed by the rent of a catching machine. The costs of the use of a catching machine in full ownership or the use of two catching crews do not differ much with those of the basic scenario. In case of an enterprise with a larger than average size the use of a catching machine is more profitable than the use of one catching crew. The Swedish catching method gives compared to using a catching machine 0,02% less fractures and 0,014% less bruises for 9 eurocents extra per broiler. Using a catching crew gives compared to using a catching machine between the 0,11% and 0,25% less “Dead-on-arrivals” for the same costs in a average size farm. The introduction of alternative scenarios for catching broilers and a possible corresponding quality increase does not result in extra returns. In the Netherlands a payment system for quality does not exist. Because of this, the introduction of an alternative for catching broilers is financially not desirable. By informing consumers a possible support for extra costs can be created for a payment system based on quality.