

RABBINOUT

Sistemi no cage per conigli: scenari indoor e outdoor

In Europe, rabbits are mostly raised in cages (112 million per year) and this is in contrast with the Initiative of European Citizens "End the Cage Age", presented in 2020 to the European Commission, which solicited the banning of cages in livestock farms. However, in Europe, the implementation of cage-free systems for rabbits in commercial farms as well as the development of organic systems are not yet fully supported by scientific results and technical standards. Structural, management and ontogenetic factors work differently in conventional vs. alternative systems and under indoor vs. outdoor conditions. These steps require an experimental evaluation before implementation in the field to be successful as well as tools and framework to understand consumer behaviour and assuring farmers a sustainable income, which is the general objective of the project. RABBINOUT aims to address the role of ontogenetic factors, housing enrichments, management, reproduction and feeding, in cage-free systems following the approach of One-Welfare (figure 1), which recognizes the relationships between animal health and welfare (Animals), human wellbeing and product quality (Society), productive performance (Economics) and Environmental impact (Environment). To achieve these objectives, the project will be developed during 24 months in 4 working packages (WP) in which 2 research units (Universities of Perugia, UNIPG and Padova, UNIPD) will share their equipment, tools and expertise. The WP1 (Project Management) will assure the coordination, regular overflow and delivery of the project. Within WP2 (in vivo trials), a total of 4 trials (2 in UNIPG + 2 in UNIPD) will be realized outdoor and in indoor parks for both reproducing does and growing rabbits to address the role of different rearing factors. WP3 (One Welfare Assessment) aims to assess, with a holistic approach, the different strategies tested in WP2. Behaviour, welfare and health condition of animals, performance, life cycle costs, meat quality, environmental impact (LCA) as well as multicriteria analysis (MCDA), obtained in the experimental trials of WP2 (indoor and outdoor), will be assessed. Data from literature and commercial farms will be collected and used as control for comparison with experimental findings. WP4 will be devoted to dissemination and communication of results with different strategies also relying on the net of stakeholders supporting the project.

Ente finanziatore: MUR

Bando: D.D. 104 del 02/02/2022

Responsabile scientifico: Xiccato Gerolamo

Ruolo del DAFNAE: Partner