

# Animal Welfare Labelling

Sustainable Livestock and Animal Welfare Forum – Ukraine 2025



# Introduction

- consumers demand information on the conditions under which farmed animals are kept and treated
- Animal welfare labelling is intended to provide consumer information on welfare standards applied in the production of food of animal origin
- Although various private animal welfare labels exist, there is no EU harmonized system for most products. Consumers are often unable to understand and differentiate the various labels proposed
- The only mandatory animal welfare label for products sold in the European Union is the egg coding system

# Consumer choice and credence qualities

Category of goods	Attribute characteristics	Example(s)
Search goods	The attribute is clearly searchable before purchase	Colour
Experience goods	The quality becomes known only after consumptions	Taste
Credence goods	consumers cannot accurately judge their quality, even after consumption	Place of origin, Fair trade, GMO-free, Animal welfare

## **Search-, experience- and credence qualities of food**

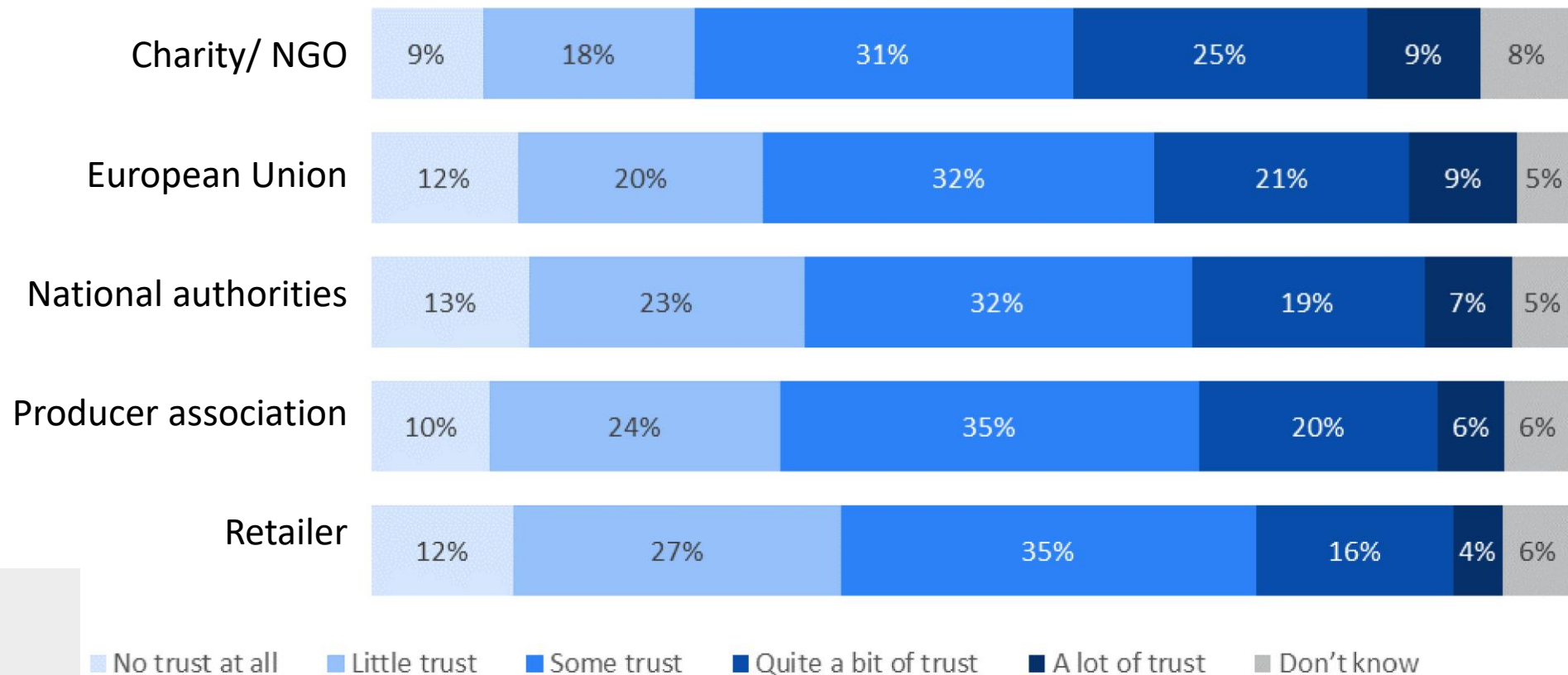
Source: modified after: Meffert H., Burmann C., Kirchgeorg M. (2012)

# Voluntary animal welfare labels in Germany



Source: modified after Verband der Milcherzeuger Bayern e. V. (2025)

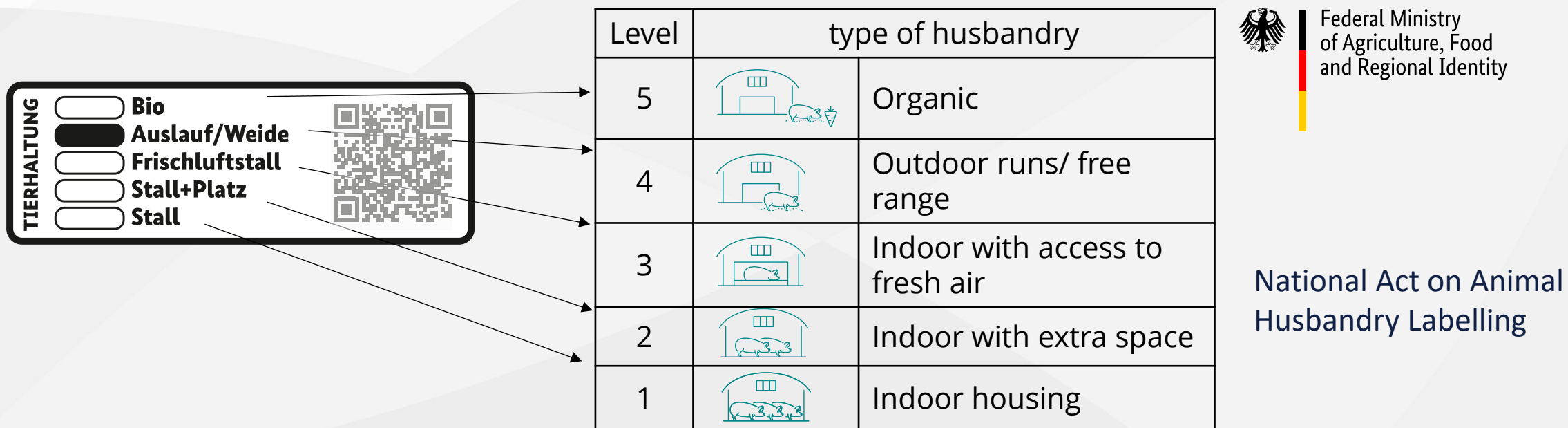
# Consumer trust in labeling organisations



## Consumer survey (n=10,089)

Source: Maestre, M., Campbell, L., Etienne, J-, Cook, E., Matulina, A. (2022)

# Example of a mandatory national animal welfare label (1/3)



- Mandatory in Germany by March 2026 for food originating from Germany, introduced by August 2023
- The label refers currently only to pigs and focuses on the animals' fattening period. Concepts for other life stages and other livestock will be developed in the future

Source: own composition based on BMLEH (2025)

# Example of a mandatory national animal welfare label (2/3)



Federal Ministry  
of Agriculture, Food  
and Regional Identity

1

- Notification  
Farmers provide accurate information about their husbandry systems

2

- Verification  
The federal state authority validates the indicated type of husbandry system

3

- Identification number  
The state authority assigns a permanent identification number to each facility

4

- Electronic register  
The state authority keeps registers of the farm's husbandry facilities

5

- Control  
The federal state authorities carry out their controls within the scope of official monitoring

Source: own composition based on BMLEH (2025)

# Example of a mandatory national animal welfare label (3/3)



Federal Ministry  
of Agriculture, Food  
and Regional Identity

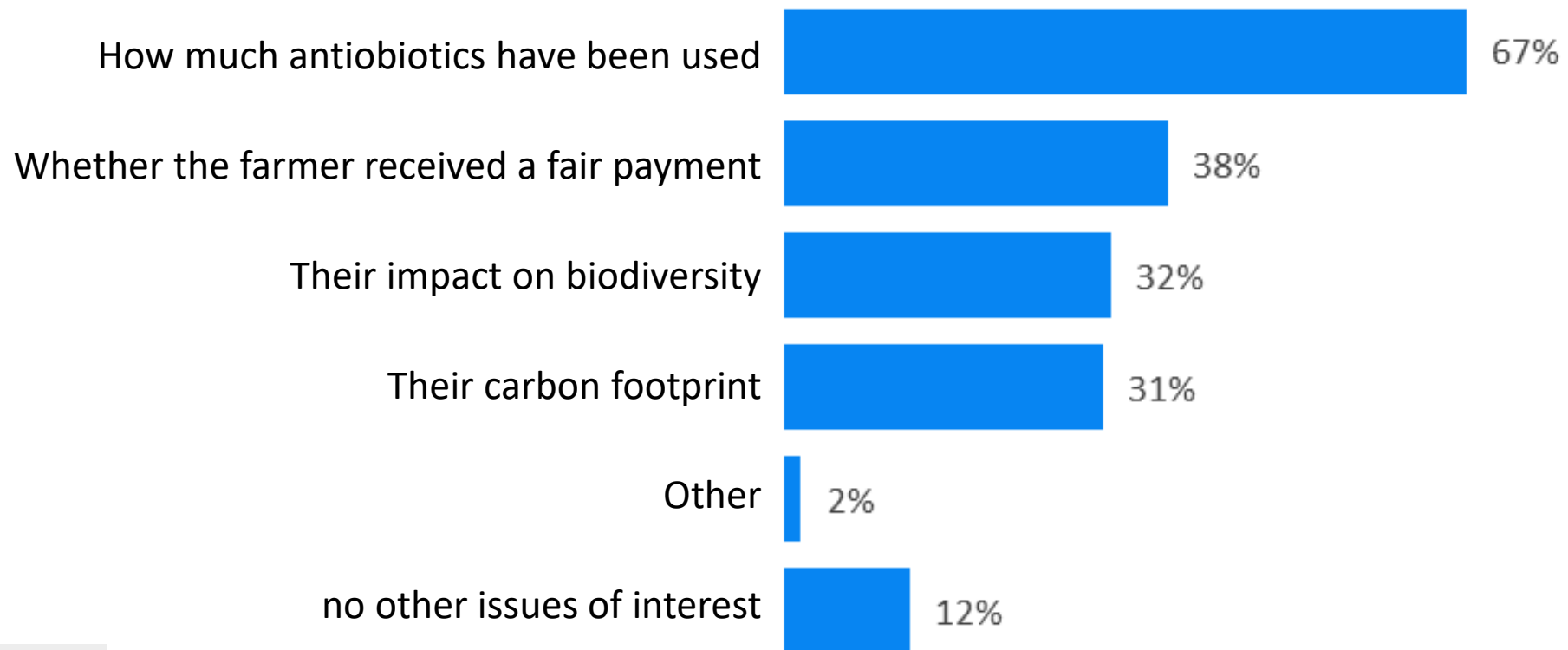
## Participation of third countries

- Foreign farms (from other EU or third countries) may participate in the labelling system on a voluntary basis
- Therefore they must obtain an identification number from the German Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (BLE). This identification number enables food companies to apply for voluntary labelling for products originating from these foreign holdings

Source: own composition based on BMLEH (2025)









# Issues of sustainability labels other than animal welfare



**Consumer survey (n=10,089)**

Source: Maestre, M., Campbell, L., Etienne, J-, Cook, E., Matulina, A. (2022)

# EU quality policy and animal welfare

	European quality schemes		National voluntary certification schemes
Scheme	Organic farming	Geographical Indications	National quality schemes
Legal basis	Regulation (EU) 2018/848	Regulation (EU) 2024/1143	Recognised* by the European Commission
Example(s)	    meat products from organic farming	 Protected geographical indication: Pork from the Swabian Hall pig	 "Products of Quality" national quality scheme of the federal state of Baden-Württemberg, Germany

## EU and national quality schemes for agricultural and food products

Source: own composition. \*notified as national quality scheme

# Conclusions

- Credence qualities in food, such as animal welfare, are difficult for consumers to verify even after consumption. Third-party certifications from independent bodies, particularly if overseen by public authorities, provide a solution
- Mandatory labelling schemes on animal welfare such as the EU egg coding system guarantee common standards
- in addition to animal welfare consumers are interested in all dimensions of sustainability issues on products from animal origin: economic (fair pay), environment (biodiversity and carbon footprint) and social (health). Existing EU and national quality schemes for agricultural products such as organic, geographical indications etc. are serving as essential tools for communicating a product's production methods

# Literature

- BMLEH (2025) . The state animal husbandry label. Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity (BMLEH). URL: [www.tierhaltungskennzeichnung.de/en/](http://www.tierhaltungskennzeichnung.de/en/) [accessed on 05.09.2025]
- Maestre, M., Campbell, L., Etienne, J-, Cook, E., Matulina, A. (2022): Study on Animal Welfare Labelling. European Commission, Brussels. DOI 10.2875/676603
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- Verband der Milcherzeuger Bayern e. V. (2025). URL: [www.milcherzeugerverband-bayern.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Tierwohl/HF\\_Siegel\\_in\\_der\\_Haltungsform\\_alle\\_Tiere.jpg](http://www.milcherzeugerverband-bayern.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Tierwohl/HF_Siegel_in_der_Haltungsform_alle_Tiere.jpg) [accessed on 05.09.2025]

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