Broiler research at the Bristol Vet School

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Research at the Bristol Veterinary School has evaluated the welfare consequences for broilers of lameness, developing a widely-used gait-scoring system and the LTL test which is used experimentally and in breeding programmes. Altered behaviour and pain (see below) have been experimentally evaluated. Welfare in transit of all poultry has been a main theme. Automated evaluation of bird health and welfare is an exciting new field of research.

Bristol has been involved in the following projects

1) iMBdatA – a project with 6 partners using Big Data in farm production to support animal health and welfare changes, and with significant potential to reduce antimicrobial use in poultry.

2) Use of automated camera and microphone systems to assess animal welfare. Part of 6M EU project with partners from 13 countries, and many commercial (SME) partners.

3) Identifying maternal features which are beneficial for welfare and production, and can be replicated artificially on commercial farms

4) Using measures of kinematics (gait analysis), leg weakness (LTL test), mobility (obstacle test) and nociceptive processing (thermal threshold testing) in combination with NSAID treatment, we have identified a component of lameness, that may represent pain or discomfort in broilers