



# **Animal Health**

**Key Element for Wholesome  
Food and Animal Welfare**

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# **The current food safety reality and perception**

- ◆ **In general, our food has never been as safe as today**

**However**

- ◆ **Its safety has never been questioned as much as today, since...**

# Consumers and Society have Changed

**The consumers' trust in food is decreasing:**

- **The never ending chain of food scandals**
- **Supply chains are less transparent**
- **Consequences of single mistakes are bigger**
- **Diagnostics are getting better and better**
- **The media like bad news better than good news**

**The general understanding: most food safety breaches have their origin before slaughter**

# The Consequence

- ◆ **Not only the safety of our food is questioned, but increasingly also the way we raise and care for food animals is seen as wrong („mass animal production“, cruelty to animals due to neglect, unnessecary pain and suffering etc.)**
- ◆ **Organic production is believed to be an alternative to „factory farming“**

# More Consequences

- ◆ **The undebated advantages of „organic“ (minimised residue risk, increased animal welfare status through more natural conditions, lower stocking densities etc.) have led to also the belief that**
- ◆ **„Organic“ means automatically „happier“ and healthier animals**

# Animal Health is...

...not a simple „No“ or „Yes“, but a complex „Low“ or „High“

**The tools:**



**Worms  
and  
Epidemics**

**Pneumonia  
and  
Diarrhoea**

**Little disease  
with lots  
of drugs**

**Little disease  
With almost  
No drugs**

**No animal  
and no human  
pathogens**



**Low**

**Animal Health**

**High**

# **„Organic“ is healthier?**

- ◆ **Well: it's not at all proven by any scientific data**
- ◆ **It needs to be said that**
  - „organic“ provides better conditions for producing residue-free products and for „animal friendly“ husbandry systems, but poses higher risks of infectious and parasitic diseases including food safety relevant conditions (potentially zoonoses)**

# **This quite sophisticated view...**

- ◆ **Is supported by the following epidemiological experience:**

**In both the „organic“ and the „conventional“ husbandry system there are production units with a very high and a very poor animal health status**

- ◆ **I.e.: regarding animal health, none of the two systems is automatically superior**

## Or in Other Words:...

- ◆ **Both systems have their specific challenges to animal health and animal welfare (free roaming but worms vs. germ-free, but confined), which means**
- ◆ **Both systems need specifically tailored animal health and animal well being management programmes**

# **In again Other Words:...**

- ◆ **Instead of „fundamentalistic“ this or this is the right system, weakpoint analyses should be the basis for targeted animal care concepts and for realistic expectations as far as product characteristics are meant, e.g.:**
  - **„salmonella-controlled“, but animals in confinement, or**
  - **„free-range“ animals, but product may need proper cooking**

# Common Needs for Both

- ◆ **Optimised „stockmanship“, knowledge about the animals' needs, time for caring for the animals and complying with minimum standards for health and well being**
- ◆ **Implementing the „third pair of eyes principle“ through auditing and certification**

# The Changing Role of Food Animal Veterinary Medicine over Time

