



Consumer studies - A call for proposals to fulfil work-package 4.4.1 of project area SP4 (Implementation) of the Welfare Quality® project

Background: The Welfare Quality® project

Welfare Quality® (WQ) is an EU funded project focusing on the integration of animal welfare in the food quality chain: from public concern to improved welfare and transparent quality.

Animal welfare is of considerable importance to European consumers. Nowadays food quality is not only determined by the overall nature and safety of the end product but also by the perceived welfare status of the animals from which the food is produced. This project aims to accommodate societal concerns and market demands, to develop reliable on-farm monitoring systems, product information systems, and practical species-specific strategies to improve animal welfare. Thirty-nine institutes and universities (representing thirteen European countries) with specialist expertise participate in this integrated research project. The project started in May 2004 and will be completed by May 2009. More information on the project is available on our website www.welfarequality.net.

The call

Sub Project 4 (SP4) is tasked with drawing together some of the work already carried out in the first 3 years of the WQ project to create information resources, to assess ways of maximising the benefit of the findings of the WQ project, and to train those who may use it in the future. We invite written proposals to carry out the specific work package described below. Proposals are welcomed from existing and new partners. (*The latter are advised to contact and/or liaise with research groups already within the WQ consortium to ensure integration of their proposed activity with the ongoing WQ effort*). All proposals received by the deadline will be scrutinised by a panel appointed by the steering committee (SC), and evaluated for timeliness, relevance, quality and added value.

All persons who have submitted a proposal will be notified of the panel decision immediately after the evaluation process has been completed. Enquiries regarding the process can be directed to the SP4 co-ordinator Dr Andy Butterworth +441179289652 andy.butterworth@bris.ac.uk.

Description of task 4.4.1 - Consumer studies

Main objective: To evaluate the consumer response to product information systems

Task 4.4.1 Consumer Focus groups (Months 36-45)(May 2007 – April 2008)

Objective of Task 4.4.1: To identify the key label attributes of importance to consumers for a product produced to higher welfare standards.

Description of the work - The key tasks of this work package are;

- a) The construction of a guide to identification of label attributes which are important to consumers.
- b) The construction of a Prototype label (or information system) for a welfare friendly product.
- c) The construction of an outline document describing the route toward a product information standard.

The identification of label attributes which are important to consumers will facilitate identification of combinations of attributes, which will then guide the development of the final prototype label for a welfare friendly product.

The issues which are to be addressed during this work package are likely to include:

- The level of 'detail' requested by consumers regarding animal welfare, and as a part of general issues (e.g. organic, quality, provenance, supermarkets' own labels)
- The preferred format for information transfer (on the product, in the shop, via mass media, internet, etc.)
- The content (- which welfare issues, should welfare issues stand alone or be bundled together with other issues – like organics or local food)
- The practical constraints of labels and information systems (size, space, time taken to read material, the impact of the use of images, and the potential for misleading messages)
- The organisation of the information system – by whom and how, expectations for transparency, and the ability to audit the use of symbols and marks.
- Analysis of organisational links to welfare standard and monitoring systems and the related links to public/private/NGO/interests.

It is foreseen that the work will be carried out in a number of participating countries to ensure analysis of a spread of consumer values, and the successful applicant will be required to demonstrate links to participating countries to ensure that any focus group or research activity reflects the international nature of the WQ project.

The need to link to existing work partners.

Because the data that will be displayed in this information resource will have been compiled in existing areas of the WQ project, the successful proposal will demonstrate a clear plan for communication links with the existing teams in WQ operating in these areas, and demonstration of previous knowledge or experience in the area of information and web presentation will be considered advantageous.

Deliverables

Month 45. Construction of a guide to identification of label attributes which are important to consumers.

Month 45. Prototype label for a welfare friendly product.

Month 45. Outline document of a route toward a product information standard.

Milestones

Month 40. Interim report (and meetings with WQ sponsors) to determine direction and effectiveness of activity in consumer focus study activity.

Month 45. Delivery of guide to label attributes, a prototype label and a guide to the requirements of the product information standard.

Expected results

The construction of a guide to identification of label attributes which are important to consumers. And the construction of a prototype label (or information system) for a welfare friendly product and the construction of an outline document describing the route toward a product information standard.

Foreseen budget

This overall budget for tasks within this work area has been fixed, and so a guide amount that can be made available to perform task 4.4.1 is **187,000 EUR**.

It is recommended that proposals are structured to fit within this amount.

The overall value of the proposed work will be a key component of the decision on the suitability of the proposal – the reviewers will be looking for proposals which offer maximum value in terms of coverage (in both depth and extent) of the area to be covered along with evidence of planning to ensure delivery of the requested outcomes within the timescale.

Guide to writing the proposal

The proposal should, as a minimum, state why the applicants expertise, resources, facilities and background make them the most fitting applicant, and should cover the following areas;

- Description of the approach to carrying out the work task.
- Timetable and milestones for activities which will be carried out.
- Proposal for establishing and maintaining links between this work package and others specified in the description of the work task. This should include a timetable for planned meetings with these linked groups.
- Management structure for the team carrying out the work.
- Financial outline for allocation of the funds to areas of the work package.
- Qualifications of the personnel who will carry out the work.
- Description of expected deliverables and their dates of delivery.

Procedure and timetable

	Date
Descriptions of work packages and tender process released	Friday February 16 th '07
Closing date for receipt of proposals	Friday March 30 th '07
Participants to be informed of decision of panel	Friday April 20 th '07
Start of research activity	May '07

Submission of proposal should be by post and by email by the closing date;

a) **By post** – to the SP4 co-ordinator Dr Andrew Butterworth, University of Bristol, Clinical Veterinary Science, Langford, N Somerset, SB49 5DL, UK

b) **By email** - to andy.butterworth@bris.ac.uk