Animal Welfare Education in Austria

Assessing Student & Teacher Responses to "Tierprofi – Nutziere"

Melissa Liszewski 2009-2010

In recent years as the world has begun taking notice of the value of education for improving animal welfare, Austria too has strongly supported and encouraged the dissemination of animal welfare information to students throughout the country. Although much time and effort have gone into this dissemination of information, it remains unclear just how animal welfare education is impacting the student recipients. Therefore, this study will focus on firstly determining whether or not students and teachers find animal welfare education valuable and/or interesting and secondly, whether or not future studies are warranted in order to determine if students and teachers are truly improving their knowledge of and attitudes towards farm animals and their welfare as a result. Essentially, this research is a pilot study assessing the outcomes of Austrian classrooms who have received the Tierprofi-Nutztiere booklet from the "Tierschutz macht Schule" program.

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Introduction

The 2005 Eurobarometer report on "Attitudes of consumers towards the welfare of farmed animals" 1 confirmed that throughout much of the European Union there is a critical need for disseminating more information about the production of animals. In recent years Austria has made great strides to address this critical need; the "Tierschutz macht Schule" program being a significant example of one such effort. "Tierschutz macht Schule" has conducted learning stations, workshops, seminars and teacher training on animal husbandry in order to serve as a balanced animal welfare platform for individuals, institutions and organizations. To date, much of the program's efforts have provided educational materials on animal welfare to teachers and students in over 900 schools throughout Austria. Extensive time and effort have been devoted to developing and distributing these materials focused on companion animals, laboratory animals, captive wildlife, and farm animals. Until now however, it is widely unknown if these materials are actually being utilized after distribution and furthermore, if the students and teachers find them at all valuable and/or interesting; this project was designed to gain new insight into these unknowns.

The key hypothesis of this pilot study is:

Students and teachers are using the Tierprofi-Nutztiere booklet, and regard knowledge of farm animals and their welfare as interesting and valuable.

Furthermore, this hypothesis should be extended and tested in a future full scale study to find:

Students and teachers who utilize the Tierprofi-Nutztiere booklet are improving their knowledge of and attitudes towards farm animals and their welfare as a result.

For the purposes of this pilot study, the key hypothesis will be explored through answering five key questions:

- 1) Are students using the *Tierprofi-Nutztiere* booklet?
- 2) What are the students and teacher's general value & opinion of animal welfare education?
- 3) Do students have a basic knowledge of farm animals & their welfare in relation to animal products?
- 4) What is the general response of the students to *Tierprofi-Nutztiere*?
- 5) Do the students seem to have a deeper understanding of farm animals & their welfare?

¹ Special Eurobarometer, Attitudes of Consumers Towards the Welfare of Farmed Animals, June 2005. http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/euro_barometer25_en.pdf

Method

This research was conducted by questionnaire (See Appendices A&B) and investigated student and teacher responses to the "Tierschutz macht Schule" educational booklet on farm animal husbandry and welfare, Tierprofi-Nutztiere.

Sample

The population of interest for this study was Austrian students from the ages of 8-13 who had received the Tierprofi-Nutztiere booklet, and their teachers. Letters of invitation were sent to schools from the "Tierschutz macht Schule" database which had already received copies of the Tierprofi-Nutztiere booklet about farm animal husbandry and welfare; positive respondents were further contacted to set up an appointment for questionnaire completion. A total of 108 students and 14 teachers completed questionnaires; about 56% of the students were male and on average student participants were approximately 11 years old, ranging from 9 to 14 years of age. Roughly 86% of students surveyed had visited a farm with animals before, 64% have previously had or currently have pets at home, and less than 7% had lived on a farm with animals.

All of the 8 schools which responded for participation in the survey were located within Vienna; 7 within the Außenbezirke (outer districts) and only 1 within the Innenbezirk (Inner District). Some of the schools contained high proportions of immigrant students, many of former Yugoslavian and Turkish origin. While this sample cannot be considered representative of the original population of interest due to potential urban, cultural, religious and economic biases, generalizability was not the principal goal -- the major motivation of this study rather, was to determine whether the Tierprofi-Nutztiere booklet could be seen as a valuable tool in an accessible context (for students and teachers interested in gaining more knowledge of farm animals and their welfare). Therefore, any sweeping results evident in this study can merely be generalized to urban students and teachers within Vienna's outer districts, with a similar school type and grade level, who have received the Tierprofi-Nutztiere booklet.

Measures

There were separate questionnaires for teachers and students, both of which aimed to gather quantitative and qualitative information through a variety of question types such as Likert Scale, Ordinal, Categorical, Multiple-choice, Open-ended, etc.

Teacher questionnaires gathered information on whether or not the Tierprofi-Nutztiere had been worked with and for how long, both in actual and ideal amounts of time spent teaching (See Appendix A, Questions 1-3 & 9). Teachers were also asked to rank their level of agreement with statements about the importance of animal welfare education, the effectiveness of teaching it, and the perceived level of interest from the students (See Appendix A, Questions 4-6). Further questions specifically addressed the Tierprofi-Nutztiere booklet; student and teacher knowledge gained, value of particular booklet sections, and suggestions for changes and/or improvements to the material (See Appendix A, Questions 7-8 & 1012). Teacher surveys concluded with background questions focusing on previous animal and/or livestock experience (See Appendix A, Questions 13-14).

Student questionnaires first attempted to assess whether or not the respondents had utilized the *Tierprofi-Nutztiere* booklet at all by assessing their recognition of the character Milly Muh, who appears frequently throughout the booklet, and questioning where they recognized this character from (See Appendix B, Question 1). Next, questions focused on assessing students' general opinion of animal welfare; if it's interesting, if it's ok to learn it in school, if they want to know more (See Appendix B, Questions 2-4). Additional questions were designed to assess what the respondents knew about farm animals and their welfare, asking specific questions which were directly related to what could be learned from reading the *Tierprofi-Nutztiere* booklet (See Appendix B, Questions 5-7). Further questions asked students to indicate which parts of the booklet they liked and/or disliked the most and why (See Appendix B, Questions 9-10). Finally, questions were designed to explore the respondent's deeper understanding of farm animals and their welfare (See Appendix B, Questions 8 & 11-14). The student questionnaires ended with several background questions which focused on previous animal and/or livestock experience, as well as respondent age and gender (See Appendix B, Questions 15-19).

Results

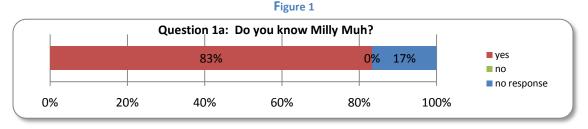
A total of 108 students and 14 teachers, at 8 different schools within Vienna completed questionnaires for this project. Not all participants answered all questions; final results were recorded and data analyzed accordingly.

Results of the student questionnaires (See Appendix B) will be broken down in order to best answer the previously stated <u>five key questions:</u>

1) Are students using the Tierprofi-Nutztiere booklet? Source: Question 1

Students <u>are</u> <u>utilizing</u> the *Tierprofi-Nutztiere* booklet. Results showed that 83% of students surveyed recognized Milly Muh (See

Figure 1), the popular character who frequently appears throughout *Tierprofi-Nutztiere* offering supplemental facts and tips to readers. Furthermore, of the students who recognized Milly Muh, 100% stated that they did so from the *Tierprofi-Nutztiere* booklet.



2) What are the students & teacher's general value & opinion of animal welfare education?

Source: Questions 2, 3, 4 & 11, Teacher survey

Students and teachers <u>do</u> find some value in animal welfare education. Results indicated that 82% of the students were in fact interested in learning about farm animal welfare (See Figure 2), and that 94% think it's a good idea to learn about the welfare of farm animals in school (See Figure 4). Furthermore, 72% of students confirmed that they do want to learn more about farm animal welfare (See Figure 3).

Figure 2

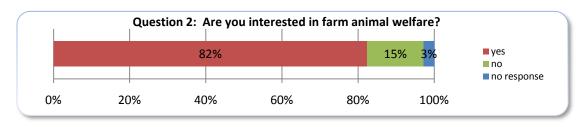


Figure 3

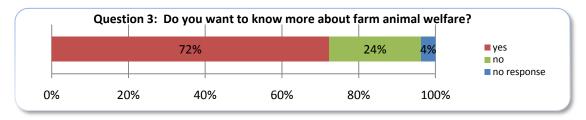
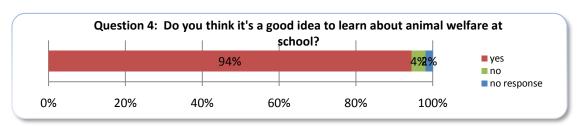


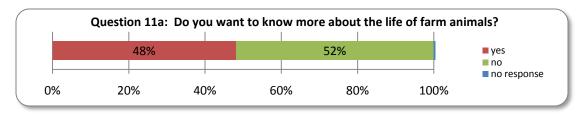
Figure 4



These student results were further confirmed through the teacher responses. The teachers generally elicited a positive response to animal welfare education, with 100% completely agreeing that it is important that students receive education on farm animal welfare. Furthermore, teachers agreed that the students were in fact interested in learning about animal welfare and that the students seemed to have learned something from the *Tierprofi-Nutztiere* booklet. Just 57% of teachers indicated they had actually worked with the booklet, but as a whole the general consensus was that more time would be spent working with the material in an ideal situation.²

² Due to small sample size and rate of non-response, teacher questionnaire results were not analyzed in depth as initially planned; specifically cross-comparisons between teacher and student responses focused on time spent working with *Tierprofi-Nutztiere*, stated value of animal welfare education, and animal and/or farm experience.

Figure 5

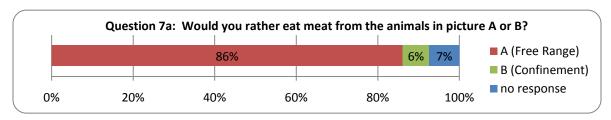


3) Do students have a basic knowledge of farm animals & their welfare in relation to animal products?

Source: Questions 6 & 7

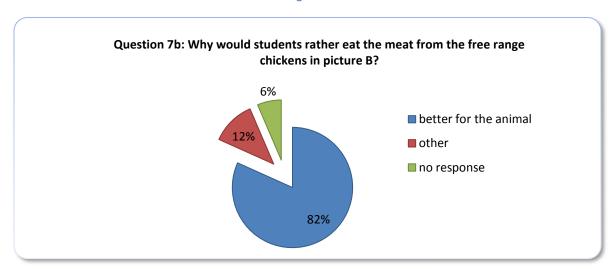
Students <u>do</u> have some basic knowledge of farm animals and their welfare, but not necessarily in relation to animal products. When asked if they would rather eat meat from chickens raised in a confinement or free range setting (based on pictures shown), 86% of students indicated they would prefer eating meat from an animal raised in a free range setting (See Figure 6).

Figure 6



Further analysis of responses from those preferring the free range chickens indicated that 82% did so because it was better for the animals (See Figure 7), with many commonly citing animal welfare or the chickens' ability to "run free" and have "more space" as justification.

Figure 7



When asked which animal products would be consumed when eating a piece of pizza with ham, sheep cheese, tomato sauce and corn³, 78% and 76% of the students knew the pizza contained a product of sheep and swine, respectively. Only 56% however, correctly answered that the pizza contained a product of only sheep <u>and</u> swine (See Figure 8). While responses to the free range chicken question clearly indicate a student preference for eating meat from animals raised in more welfare-friendly settings, responses to the pizza question still seem to indicate that many students can't fully connect the food they eat to the actual animal beings.

Question 6: Which products can you find on a pizza with ham, sheep cheese, tomato sauce & corn? sheep & pig only 56% 78% sheep 76% 20% swine 1% ■ cattle 4% none of the above 0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100% no response

Figure 8

4) What is the general response of the students to Tierprofi-Nutztiere?

Source: Questions 5, 9 & 10

The students generally seem to elicit a <u>positive</u> response to *Tierprofi-Nutztiere*. Results show that students are learning new information from *Tierprofi-Nutztiere* and seem to enjoy studying the material. Overall, 88% of students indicated finding new information within the booklet (See Figure 9).

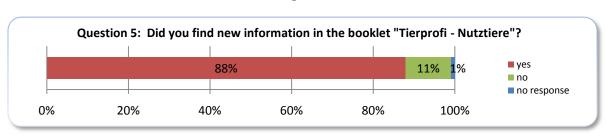


Figure 9

The most well-liked sections were those specifically related to the animals (cattle, poultry, sheep and goats, and pigs to a lesser extent) as well as consumer behavior, and responsibility to animals (See Figure 10). When asked to identify the sections they liked the least however, 53% chose transport,

³ Note that the option to respond "chicken" was originally included, but was thrown out upon data analysis due to the ambiguity of the question (several students did indicate choosing to respond "chicken" due to the egg in the dough of the pizza).

slaughter & control, with many students specifically stating the slaughter section to be their least favorite (See Figure 11). Figure 11

Figure 10

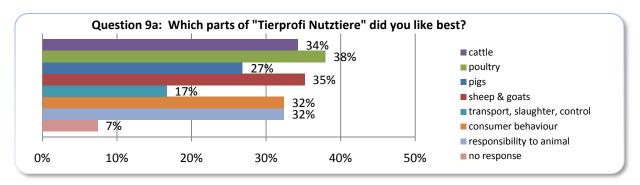
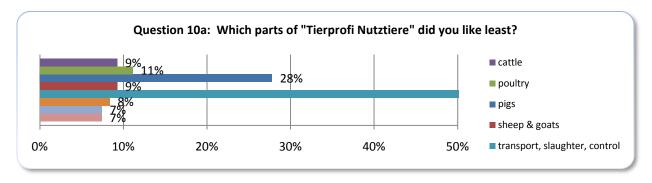


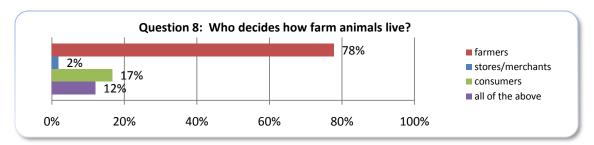
Figure 11



5) Do the students seem to have a deeper understanding of farm animals & their welfare? Source: Questions 8, 12, 13 & 14

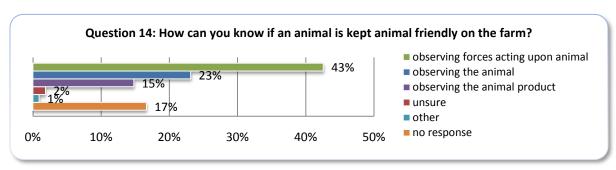
Students still <u>do not</u> fully have a deeper understanding of farm animals and their welfare. Results indicated that 78% of respondents believe that farmers decide how farm animals live, with only 2% choosing stores/merchants and 17% for consumers (See Figure 12). A surprisingly low number of students responded "all of the above", at just 12% (See Figure 12). It is significant that students generally seem to grasp that farmers hold the most weight in deciding how farm animals live on the most basic level, however a more positive result would have been seen if more students had responded "all of the above"; thus, acknowledging the role that stores/merchants and consumers play in additions to the farmers themselves, in deciding how farm animals live.

Figure 12



Initial findings from an open-ended response question were encouraging though, as 81% of responses indicated that students believed they could recognize whether an animal was being humanely kept on a farm through observation. Further analysis was completed to find that these observation responses could be further broken down into three separate categories based on the content of written responses: observing the animal (ex. health, behavior, physical appearance, etc.), observing forces acting upon the animal (ex. farmer, husbandry & environment, etc.) and finally, observing the animal product (ex. product labeling, quality and quantity, etc.). Results from this secondary analysis were slightly less encouraging than the bigger picture initially appeared however, as the responses between these three categories were disproportionate: 43% of responses demonstrated that "observing the forces acting upon the animal" indicated humane treatment on the farm, while "observing the animal" itself and "observing the animal product" were only mentioned in 23% and 15% of responses, respectively (See Figure 13).

Figure 13

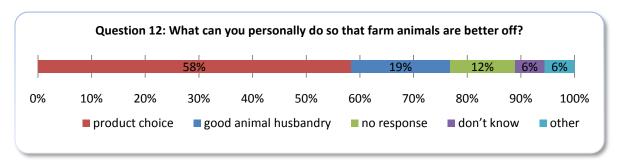


When asked what the students could personally do so that farm animals would be better off, 58% all responses directly related to choosing which products to purchase and consume (See Figure 14); further analysis within this group showed that 60% of responses included buying and consuming organic products. These results can be related back to the question about who decides how farm animals live, and the 30% response rate that consumers play a role in deciding (See Figure 12). Furthermore, 32% of responses indicating students' favorite sections of *Tierprofi-Nutztiere* identified consumer behavior (See Figure 10), with several students even explicitly stating that one of their favorite parts of the booklet was learning to shop for animal friendly products at the market. These results suggest that while many

⁴ Note that this number has been adjusted to reflect both the 17% response for consumers and the 12% response for all of the above.

students seem to grasp the general concept that they as consumers have a choice to support animal welfare friendly products, truly grasping the deeper relationship between consumer behavior and animal welfare may still be out of reach to many students.

Figure 14



Discussion

Although these results do provide some valuable insight into whether or not students and teachers are utilizing the *Tierprofi-Nutztiere* booklet, how they are responding to the material and their general thoughts about farm animals and their welfare, these findings cannot be taken as an all-encompassing outcomes assessment or other fully representative account. Due to many factors this research can prove most valuable only as a pilot study which will open the door for future, more fully representative investigations on the true impact of *Tierprofi-Nutztiere*.

The first such factor was the language barrier. Many of the students were non-native German speakers whose short-answer responses were difficult to understand. Further complicating the matter was the fact that all data for short answers and question development had to be translated from German to English or vice versa. This allowed the opportunity for slight errors in translating or modifications of words and/or meaning to alter the context of the questions and responses. Furthermore, only after the initiation of the project did it become apparent that large numbers of the participants were students not of Austrian origin, which meant that in some cases a cultural, religious and/or language bias could have influenced the results. Despite many of the smaller pitfalls of the project design, the biggest pitfall resulted from the lack of a control group. Only through the inclusion of a control group could this study have truly defined how effective the *Tierprofi-Nutztiere* booklet is in teaching young students about farm animal welfare.

The discussion of these pitfalls are not to say that the information gained from the study is not of value however; as previously stated, any sweeping results evident in this study can only be generalized to urban students and teachers within Vienna's outer districts, with a similar school type and grade level, who have received the *Tierprofi-Nutztiere* booklet. The overall trend of responses showed that students and teachers alike generally do find value in learning about farm animals and their welfare, and that the work being done by "Tierschutz macht Schule" is useful for Austrian students and well-received. Furthermore, this study highlighted the need for further outcomes assessments which will provide more complete and detailed results vital for future animal welfare education development.

Recommendations

A few central recommendations can be given based on the final results of this pilot study which will be of valuable use in the future planning and implementation of more outcomes assessments for the Tierprofi-Nutztiere booklet and the "Tierschutz macht Schule" program as a whole:

1) Addition of a control group:

Future phases of this study should incorporate some variation of a control group for more complete analysis. Control groups could be created by distributing questionnaires to classrooms which have not yet received the Tierprofi-Nutztiere booklet, who are of the same level and within the same school of the students being surveyed who have already been exposed to the material. Ideally however, control groups would be most informative and effective if only classrooms not yet familiar with the Tierprofi-Nutztiere booklet would be invited to participate so that students and teachers could complete questionnaires before and after familiarizing themselves with the booklet. This addition of a control group is essential for truly understanding how much the students are learning from the Tierprofi-Nutztiere booklet and whether or not their attitudes towards and knowledge of farm animals and their welfare is changing as a result of the information they are receiving.

2) Diversify respondents:

More effort must be made to ensure that the pool of participants is more diverse. Ideally this would mean that students throughout various districts of Vienna, as well as throughout various states of Austria would participate in the survey. Diversifying the pool of respondents is vital in order to gain more knowledge of how students from different demographics respond to the Tierprofi-Nutztiere booklet. Such information would not only provide valuable insight into differing socio-cultural attitudes towards farm animals and their welfare within Austria, but would also be fundamental for the "Tierschutz macht Schule" program in improving current efforts and further developing future efforts to teach Austrian students about farm animals and their welfare.

3) Standardize survey methods:

Future work should standardize survey methods in order to ensure reliability, validity and, generalizability. The initial study design should remain unchanged- the questionnaire and the administration of the questionnaire-throughout the entire process. Especially in relation to questionnaire administration a survey method must be standardized; for example, researchers must decide how to introduce themselves and the questionnaire to the students, whether or not the teachers are allowed in the classroom during the process, and how to ensure each student has the same opportunity to clarify uncertainties through asking questions. Other important factors that should be standardized could include time limits, survey location (ex. in the regular classroom, or in the school library, computer lab, etc.), group size (ex. comparing the responses of a noisy and crowded 28 student classroom to those of a quiet and small classroom of 8 students should not be acceptable, and larger classes should be broken down accordingly). The most important goal of standardizing survey methods for future studies should be ensuring that students are comfortable and relaxed, with a clear understanding that there is no right or wrong answer.

Conclusion

Results of this study confirm the initial hypothesis that:

Students and teachers are using the Tierprofi-Nutztiere booklet, and regard knowledge of farm animals and their welfare as interesting and valuable.

The confirmation of this hypothesis is supported through the answers of the five key questions:

- 1) Students <u>are</u> using the *Tierprofi-Nutztiere* booklet.
- 2) Students and teachers do find some value in animal welfare education.
- 3) Students do have some basic knowledge of farm animals and their welfare, but not necessarily in relation to animal products.
- 4) The students generally seem to elicit a <u>positive</u> response to *Tierprofi-Nutztiere* however;
- 5) Students still do not fully have a deeper understanding of farm animals and their welfare.

These results confirm that a full scale study is necessary and warranted in order to test the extended hypothesis that:

> Students and teachers who utilize the Tierprofi-Nutztiere booklet are improving their knowledge of and attitudes towards farm animals and their welfare as a result.

In terms of animal welfare and especially animal welfare education, Austria has a great deal of potential to continue down the path of becoming a model in the field if programs like "Tierschutz macht Schule" continue their work. Through further outcomes assessments of the Tierprofi-Nutztiere booklet (and other educational materials), Austria can continue pioneering animal welfare education and developing innovative new educational tools.

Appendix A



Fragebogen für Lehrkräfte zum **Unterrichtsmaterial**, Tierprofi – Nutztiere'



	Bitte geben Sie den Schul nen Sie das "Unterrichtsho	• -					
	Schultyp:		•••••				
	Klassenstufe(n):	•••••					Tierprofi – Nutztiere Vom Schnitzel zum Stall. Welche Trae stecken britar Bestachen Konsumgüten? Unterrichtsmaterial für die 37. Schulstufe
2.	Haben Sie bereits mit de Nutztiere' gearbeitet?	m Unte	rrichtsm	naterial	'Tierpro	ofi –	
	Ja			No	ein		
3.	Haben Sie das gesamte F	Heft ode	er nur Te	eile dav	on eing	esetzt?	Remarkation and the state of th
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Bitte geben Sie den Grad Ihrer Zustimmung zu den Aussagen in Punkt 4-8 auf einer Skala von 1 bis 5 an, wobei 1 'ich stimme vollständig zu' und 5 'ich stimme überhaupt nicht zu' bedeutet.							
4.	Es ist wichtig, dass Schü Nutztierhaltung unterrich			chüler z	um The	ema Tierschu	tz in der
		1	2	3	4	5	
5.	Unterricht zum Thema T Verbesserung der Lebens					-	

1

2

3 4

5

6.	Die Schü	lerinnen und S	Schüler	sind gru	ndsätzli	ch an F	Fragen des Tierschutzes interessie	rt.
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7.		lerinnen und S z erweitert.	Schüler 1	haben dı	urch 'Ti	erprofi	– Nutztiere' ihr Wissen über	
			1	2	3	4	5	
8.		habe durch 'laltung erweite	-	i – Nutz	tiere' m	ein Wis	ssen über Tierschutz in der	
			1	2	3	4	5	
9.	eingesetz		geben S	sie außer	rdem an	, wie vi	profi – Nutztiere' im Unterricht iel Zeit Sie unter idealen ürden.	
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10				_			die 3 Ihrer Meinung nach besten Sie bitte kurz Ihre Auswahl.	
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11. Bitte stufen Sie die Bedeutung der unten aufgeführten Bereiche/Themen von 'Tierprofi –

Nutztiere' auf einer Skala von 1 bis 5 an, 'vollkommen uninteressant/unwichtig' be	
□ Rinder	□ Transport, Schlachtung &
□ Hühner/Puten	Kontrolle
□ Schweine	 Rolle des Verbrauchers
□ Schafe & Ziegen	□ Ethik & Verantwortung
12. Gibt es Bereiche/Themen von 'Tierprofi - oder verändert werden sollten? Wenn ja, l	,
13. Halten Sie derzeit Heimtiere oder befinde leben?	n sich Heimtiere in dem Haushalt, in dem Sie
Ja	Nein
Ja 14. Haben Sie derzeit oder hatten Sie zu einer landwirtschaftlichen Nutztieren?	
14. Haben Sie derzeit oder hatten Sie zu einer	
14. Haben Sie derzeit oder hatten Sie zu einer landwirtschaftlichen Nutztieren?	m früheren Zeitpunkt Erfahrung mit Nein
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Vielen Dank für Ihre Mitarbeit!



Appendix B

Fragebogen für Schüler/innen zum Unterrichtsmaterial 'Tierprofi – Nutztiere'



1.	Kennst	du	Mil	lly	Muh?

Ja Nein Wenn ja, woher?



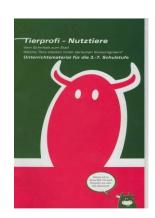
2. Interessiert dich Tierschutz für Nutztiere (=Tiere am Bauernhof)'?

Ja Nein

3. Möchtest du mehr über das Thema Tierschutz für Nutztiere (=Tiere am Bauernhof)'wissen?

Ja Nein

4. Findest du es gut, wenn du in der Schule etwas über Tierschutz erfährst?



Ja Nein

5. Hast du im Heft 'Tierprofi – Nutztiere' etwas Neues erfahren?



Ja Nein

6. Angenommen, du isst eine Pizza mit Schinken, Schafkäse, Tomatensauce und Mais. Von welchen Tieren sind Produkte in deiner Pizza enthalten (die zutreffenden Tiere bitte ankreuzen)?









Keines der oben genannten 7. Würdest du lieber Fleisch von Tieren in Bild A oder Bild B essen?





Α В

Erkläre deine Entscheidung:		
8. Wer entscheidet, wie Nutztiere leben?		
 □ Die Leute, die die Tiere halten (Bauern/E □ Die Leute, die das Fleisch z.B. im Supern □ Die Leute, die das Fleisch kaufen und ess □ Alle, die oben genannt wurden. 	markt	*
9. Welche Teile vom Heft 'Tierprofi – Nutztie	re' hat	oen dir am besten gefallen?
 □ Rinder □ Hühner/Puten □ Schweine □ Schafe & Ziegen 		Transport, Schlachtung & Kontrolle Rolle des Verbrauchers Ethik & Verantwortung
Beschreibe genau, was dir gefallen hat:		

10. Welche Teile vom Heft 'Tierprofi – Nutzti	ere' haben dir am wenigsten gefallen?
 □ Rinder □ Hühner/Puten □ Schweine □ Schafe & Ziegen Beschreibe genau, was dir nicht gefallen hat:	 □ Transport, Schlachtung & Kontrolle □ Rolle des Verbrauchers □ Ethik & Verantwortung
11. Möchtest du mehr über das Leben von Nutz	ztieren wissen?
Ja	Nein
Wenn ja, was?	
12. Was kannst du persönlich tun, damit es den	Nutztieren besser geht?
13. Was kann der Bauer/die Bäuerin am Bauer	nhof tun, damit es den Tieren besser geht?

14. Woran kannst du erkennen, ob ein Tier am Bauernhof tie	erfreundlich gehalten wird?
15. Gbt es bei euch zu Hause Heimtiere wie z.B. einen Hund früher Tiere gehabt?	
Ja	Nein
16. Warst du schon mal auf einem Bauernhof mit Tieren?	
Ja	Nein
17. Lebst du auf einem Bauernhof mit Tieren?	
Ja	Nein
18. Wie alt bist du? Jahre	
19. Ich bin: Junge Mädchen	
	Vielen Dank für deine Mithilfe!