

## Press Release

### Winners of the Research Awards of the International Society of Livestock Husbandry (IGN)

München, 30th of November 2021 – The International Society of Livestock Husbandry (IGN) announced this year's winners of the IGN Research Award for animal welfare at its general meeting on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021. It is already the 19<sup>th</sup> time that this award is given out. Due to the Corona pandemic, the award ceremony could not take place as usual during the International Conference for Applied Ethology of the German Veterinary Society in Freiburg in Breisgau.

**Dr. Beryl Eusemann**, a veterinarian, received an award of 3'000 Euros for her dissertation "*The influence of egg production, genetic background, age, and housing system on keel bone damage in laying hens*". She carried out the dissertation at the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut in Celle and submitted it to the Freie Universität Berlin. Using three experiments, she investigated the causes for keel bone damage in laying hens, which is considered to be one of the most severe animal welfare problems in laying hens. She showed that egg production and the intensive selection for high egg production were associated with developing keel bone fractures and deformations. Furthermore, the phylogenetic background has an influence on the frequency and severity of keel bone damage. The results of the dissertation indicate that the keel bone is weakened by egg production and high laying performance which lead to a greater risk of keel bone damage. Consequently, breeding and selection is of utmost importance to tackle this serious animal welfare issue.

A veterinarian and ethologist, **Dr. Charlotte Goursot**, also received an award of 3'000 Euros for her dissertation "*Laterality in pigs and its links with personality, emotions and animal welfare*". This fundamental research work was carried out at the Leibniz Institute for Farm Animal Biology FBN in Dummerstorf and submitted to the University of Rostock in 2020. It was shown for the first time, that the two hemispheres of pigs' brains process different emotions. This was achieved using theory-based behavioural experiments. Individual differences in laterality were found, which can be interpreted as "affective styles" or personality traits of the animals when gauging their environment. Another finding is that tail curling in pigs is a complex behaviour that is impaired or prevented when their tails are docked.

For the first time again in many years, a philosophical dissertation is among the award-winning works. **Dr. Samuel Camenzind** received an award of 3'000 Euros for his dissertation "*Instrumentalization. On the transformation of a fundamental category of moral in the ethics of the human-animal relationship*". The thesis, carried out at the Messerli Research Institute of the University Veterinary Medicine in Vienna, firstly answers the fundamental metaethical question under which conditions the "instrumentalization" of things, animals and humans is a moral category and what this means for the ethics of the human-animal-relationship. Secondly, a set of evaluation tools is developed that can be used to distinguish between morally permissible and morally impermissible instrumentalization, including in farm animal husbandry. In doing so, the ethical and legal protection of the dignity of animals is conceptually specified and made useful for its implementation in practice.



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The master's thesis "*Rooting for feed: Mixing corn pellets into rooting material tends to increase the presence of growing-finishing pigs in a rooting area but not its cleanliness*" submitted by **Maximilian Knoll** to Wageningen University was awarded 2,000 Euros. The study was carried out on an organic farm to investigate the effects of mixing corn pellets into the rooting material (consisting of compost) on the use and cleanliness of the rooting area by fattening pigs. It was found that the addition of corn pellets did not affect the cleanliness of the rooting area, nor did it stimulate the rooting behavior of the animals. However, it did lead to an increase in the presence of fattening pigs in that area. Such compost-filled rooting areas were therefore shown to significantly increase the attractiveness of the exercise area for the animals. They are an important component of animal welfare-friendly housing.