

# AAI MASHONALAND EAST WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS



## THEME

Raising Animal Welfare Standards in Zimbabwe's Poultry Farming

10 March 2023



## **Stakeholder collaboration for the betterment of animal welfare**

A successful one day workshop attended by veterinary officers, farmers, traditional leaders , prosecutors , police officers and District officials to discuss on raising animal welfare standards in Zimbabwe's poultry farming .

The workshop desired to reinforce the importance of stakeholder collaboration in solving wicked problems which do not have an arithmetic solution like animal welfare. The workshop aimed at elevating the welfare of laying hens and accelerating transition from battery cages to free range systems. The importance of a holistic approach in addressing welfare issues is emphasized in raising animal welfare standards in the poultry industry. AAI is contributing to the advocacy of improved animal welfare standards and the adoption of free-range systems in Zimbabwe.

### ***Discussed key topics on raising animal welfare standards in Zimbabwe***

#### **The presentations covered the topics mentioned below**

- ❖ Animal Welfare Standards
- ❖ Animals and the Laws Regulating Animal Welfare in Zimbabwe
- ❖ Battery Cages and Effects on Laying Hens Welfare
- ❖ Cage Free Production
- ❖ Assessment indicators and how to improve welfare standards in Zimbabwe.
- ❖ Animal Cruelty
- ❖ Chicken Statistics in Zimbabwe

### **Intensive / Mass production for profits in the poultry industry sacrificing animal welfare**

Battery cages are being used due to the need to exploit profits alas inconsiderate of the animal's well-being and living conditions. Dr Tsamwi a veterinarian reinforced our message and explained why battery cages violate animal welfare and cannot be accepted in this evolving world. She emphasized," *Let us strike a balance between profitability and animal welfare. Let's not think of our pockets only but think of the animals* " .

Free roaming of animals is being limited due to mass productions which violates stocking density and at the same time depriving chickens of their fundamental freedom of movement.

### **Battery Cages Are Cruel to Layer Hens**

Post our trainings, attending stakeholders appreciated that battery cages are cruel and compromise animal welfare. 85 % of the participants agreed that forcing laying hens to live in cages, in extreme conditions and without any possibility of expressing their natural behavior is cruel and must be stopped. 15% of the farmers are willing to transition from battery cages to free range systems provided we capacitate them on the management of free-range systems considering they face other challenges such as predators, spread of diseases. AAI will recommend farmers to supply their free-range eggs to corporates that have committed to sourcing cage-free eggs. This transition will reduce the suffering 40 000 chickens that are currently suffering in cramped conditions.



Moreover, stakeholders supported our move to develop laws that effectively ban the use of battery cages and any other cages in animal farming in Zimbabwe. Animal welfare is a serious issue. Participants welcomed our program as ignorance is contributing largely to poor animal welfare. Once

stakeholders in the poultry farming industry appreciate that chickens are sentient beings with the capacity to feel pain and suffering, happiness, joy, depression, sadness, and satisfaction; an improvement in animal welfare is inevitable.

### **AAI's intended targets**



We are dedicated and committed to facilitate the establishment of a functional ecosystem that elevates animal welfare standards and develop legislation that protects animals from welfare malpractices influenced by various factors such as maximizing profitability. We support a transition from battery cages to free range systems. We assist in drafting strict and efficient laws that protect animal welfare consistently. In doing so, all stakeholders relevant to animal farming and law development and enforcement are pivotal in establishing such an environment for animals.