

Consumer Demand for Poultry Products with Animal Welfare Labels

**February 20, 2019
4:00 – 5:30 PM
CRTN 1042**



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*This seminar was sponsored by the Office of the
Provost Faculty Cluster Hire Community Building
Program*

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Improvements in genetics, feed, and housing have dramatically reduced the time required for broilers to reach market weight. However, some advocacy organizations have argued that the improvements in productivity have been accompanied by reductions in animal welfare and meat quality prompting minimum production days and slower growth of heritage breeds. Additionally, most large US food retailers and restaurants have made pledges to sell only cage-free eggs. If the pledges are upheld, about 75% of the egg laying flock will have to be converted to cage-free by the year 2025. However, it is an open question as to whether the consumer market will fully support such significant changes. Studies of consumer willingness to pay more for slower growth poultry and cage-free eggs show that 30-40% of consumers are insensitive to price changes if provided product information of slow growth or cage-free choices. The implications of consumer perceptions and willingness to pay for “welfare-friendly” attributes in broilers and laying hens will be explored.