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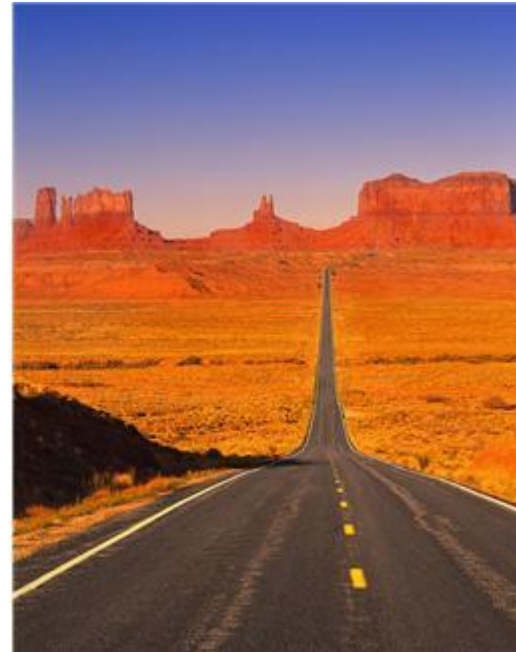
# **Improving stockperson attitudes to chickens: A novel clicker training approach**

adelaide.edu.au



# Overview of Talk

1. Background
2. Setting up the workshop
3. Results
4. Conclusions

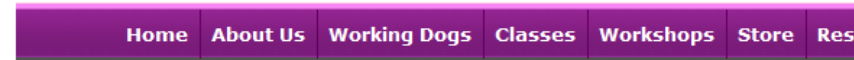


# 1. Background



# Terry Ryan's chicken clicker training classes

- Attended in July 2012
- Led to the design of a practical class for ~130 students



## Chicken Camps by Terry Ryan



Students learn to teach animal behavior with cues.

<http://www.legacycanine.com/workshops/chicken-camps.html>

# Chickens strutting their stuff..



# First class in 2012

- Unexpected informal feedback from students:

*“I didn’t think chickens were that intelligent”;*

*“I like the fact that chickens are smart, not just here to eat and lay eggs!”*

- Study designed in 2013

*Animals* **2015**, *5*(3), 821-837; doi:10.3390/ani5030386

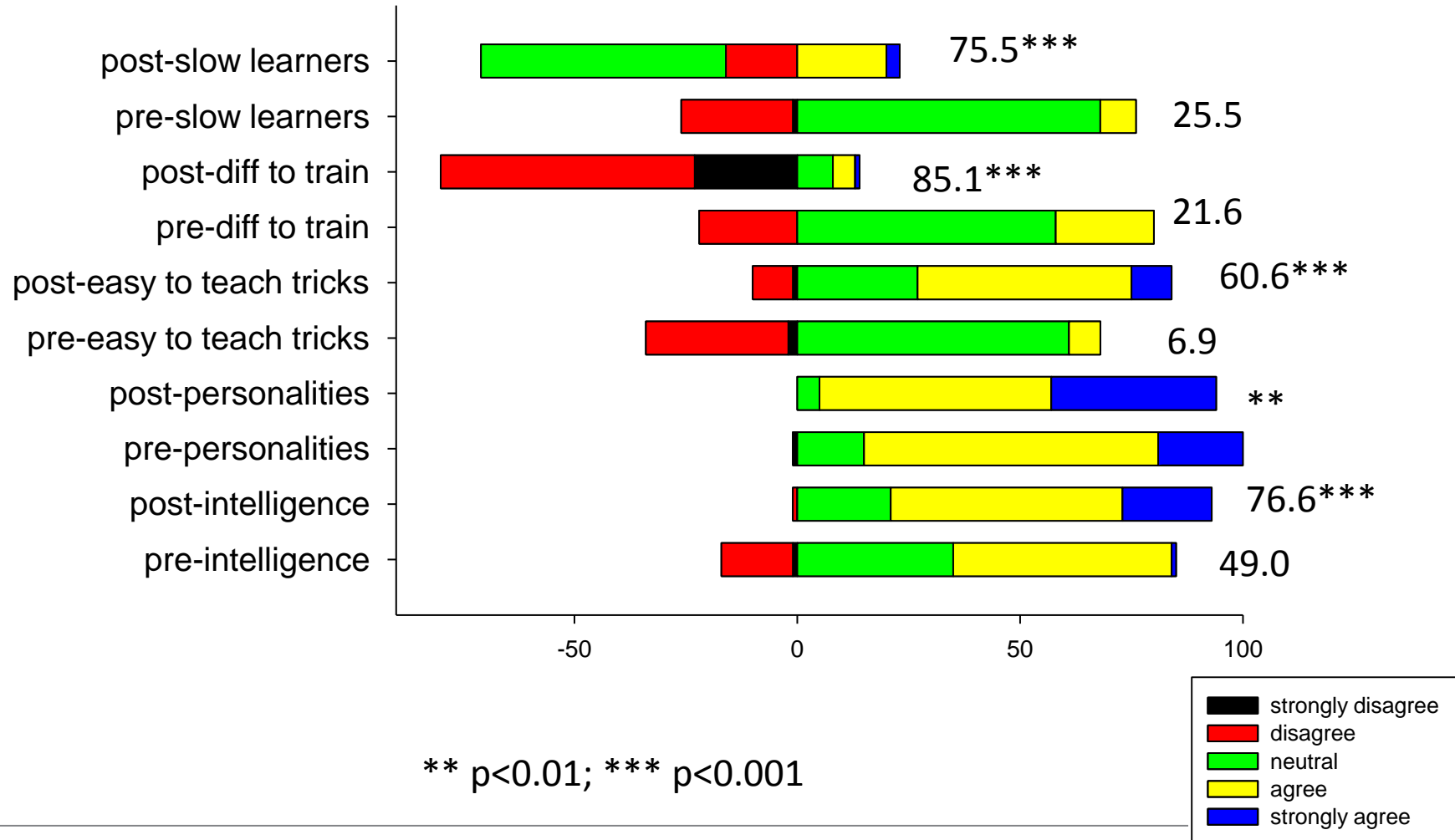
Open Access Article

## **“Chickens Are a Lot Smarter than I Originally Thought”: Changes in Student Attitudes to Chickens Following a Chicken Training Class**

Susan J. Hazel <sup>1,\*</sup> ✉, Lisel O'Dwyer <sup>2</sup> ✉ and Terry Ryan <sup>3</sup> ✉

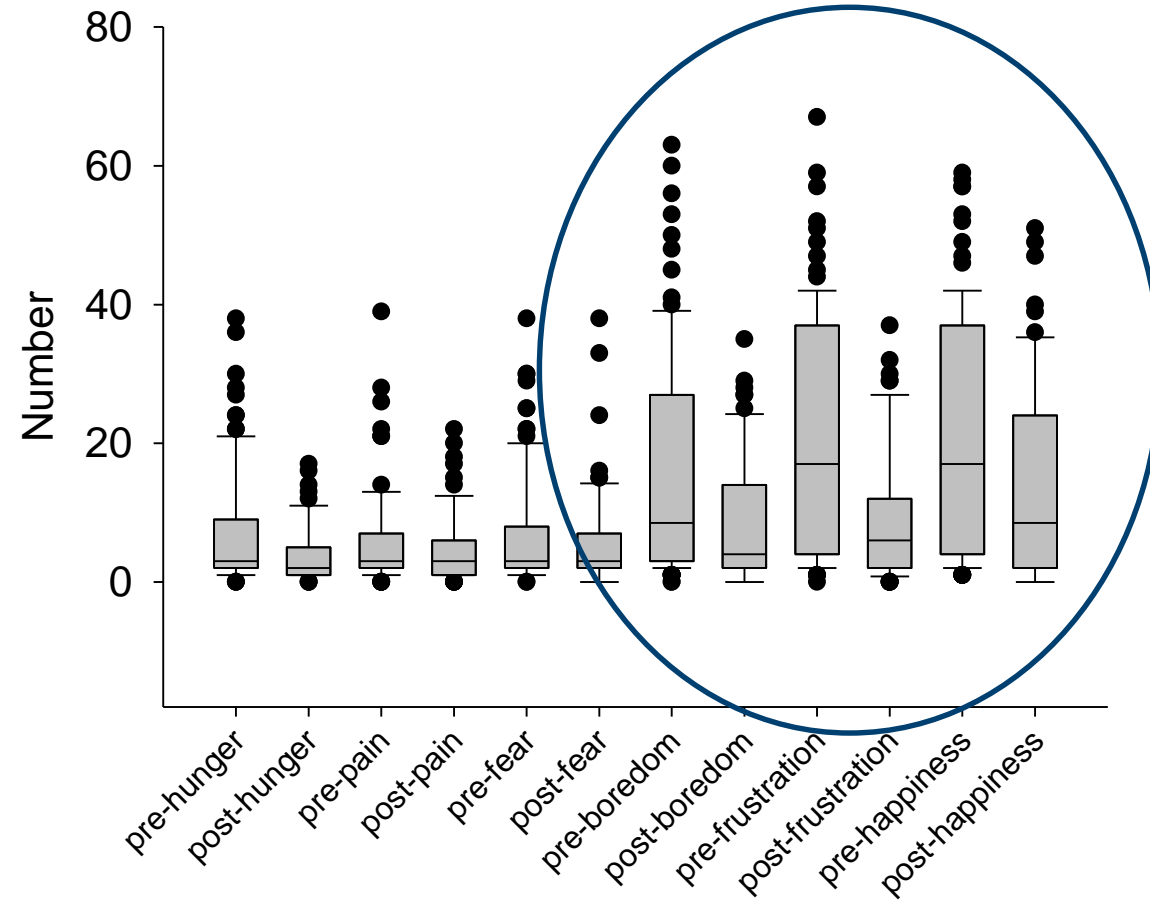
<http://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/5/3/0386>

# Changes in attitudes





# Changes in attitude to chicken sentience

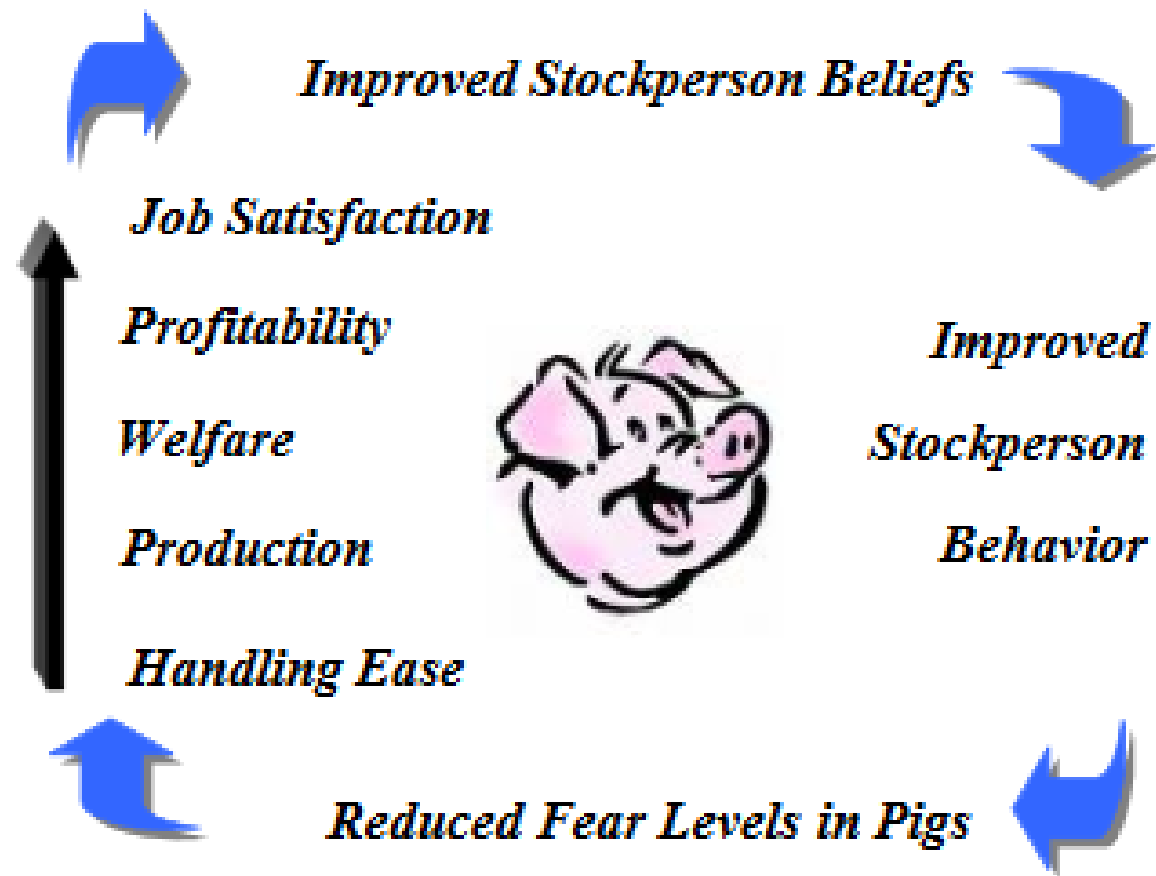


# Student attitudes to animal sentience

- What is animal sentience?
- Cross cultural study of students rated animal sentience as monkey > dog > newborn baby > fox > pig > **chicken** > rat > fish (Phillips and McCulloch 2005)
- Rating of animal sentience influenced by complex factors
  - Cuteness
  - Cultural
  - Intelligence?

# Stockperson Attitudes

- Positive attitudes → Positive behaviour → Increased production
- Programs to improve stockperson attitudes and behaviours available for pig and dairy industries
- Priority issue at Hen Welfare RD&E stakeholder workshop = stockpersonship for all poultry systems
- To date, no interventions on stockperson attitude/behaviour available for the poultry industry



# Aim

- Are there changes in attitudes to chickens when stockpeople in the chicken industry participate in a clicker training workshop?

## 2. Workshops



# Schedule

1. Introduction to clicker training and chickens
- 2. Mechanical skills exercise 1 - the 'home' position**
- 3. 1<sup>st</sup> bringing chickens to table and feeding**
- 4. Mechanical skills exercise 2: Playing cards**
- 5. 2<sup>nd</sup> bringing chickens to table and feeding**
- 6. Pair work-** using free shaping to train one's partner to perform a simple behaviour.
- 7. Begin shaping** of chickens to peck on a target (the coloured circle).

# Surveys

- Pre- and Post-Workshop
- Questionnaires:
  - 5 scale Likert questions
    - I think that chickens are a difficult animal to train
    - It is easy to teach chickens to do tricks
    - Chickens are intelligent animals
    - Chickens are slow learners
    - Chickens all have individual personalities



# Surveys cont'd

- Do you think that most chickens can feel the sensation of...
  - hunger
  - pain
  - fear
  - boredom
  - frustration
  - happiness

For the following questions please mark a cross on the line for your answer (eg if you believe the answer is close to the 'Yes' then mark the cross close to the 'Yes' on the line

Yes                    ...X.....                    No, not at all

Do you think that most chickens can feel the sensation of hunger?

Yes                    .....X.....                    No, not at all

# 3. Results



# Results

- 12 participants
- Significant changes in:
  - Ability of chickens to experience frustration
  - ‘It is easy to teach chickens to do tricks’
  - ‘Chickens are intelligent animals’
  - ‘Chickens are slow learners’ (disagree)
  - ‘I think it’s easier to work with chickens if you understand how to train them’

# Other feedback

- *‘How intelligent they are. It is quite enjoyable.’*
- *‘Birds are smart and can be trained in a short period of time.’*
- *‘That chickens are smarter than I gave them credit for in the past.’*
- *‘The most interesting thing was actually seeing the chicken respond to the clicker and watching them learn its amazing knowing they can learn just like us.’*
- *‘That training chickens is something anyone can do. Sense of achievement in getting the bird to do what it was trained to do.’*

# 4. Conclusions



# What now?

- Longer term changes in attitude and impact on behaviours need further study
- Potential for use of knowledge of clicker training to be used more in industry



# Questions

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