



On farm animal welfare self-assessment tool for dairy goats

M. Romero-Huelva¹, A. Gomez¹, I. Rivelli¹, J. Fernandez-Alvarez², D. Yanez-Ruiz¹

¹ Estación Experimental del Zaidín (EEZ, CSIC, Granada (Spain)

² Caprigran, Cortijo Peinado, 18340 Fuente Vaqueros, Spain

*E-mail: manuel.romero@eez.csic.es




1. INTRODUCTION

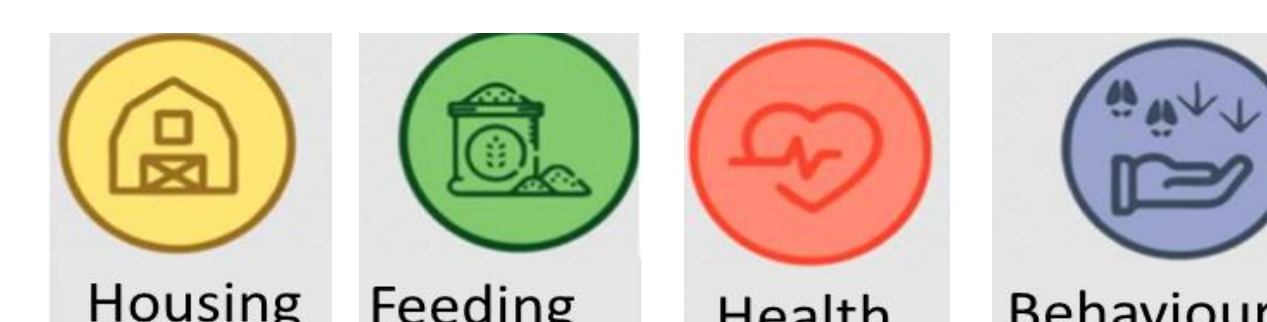
Dairy goat farms have experienced a strong process of **intensification** in Spain in the last decade, which, in many aspects, could compromise optimal **animal welfare (AW)**. **Caprigran** (the largest dairy goats breeding association in Spain, 500,000 dairy goats) have implemented a **precision farming tool** based on individual animal data collection (RUMIA®) to improve farm management, however *i)* the tool is used by a low number of farmers and *ii)* so far only includes a limited number of variables, related to breeding purposes, but not other issues that are critical for **livestock sustainability**, such as **animal welfare**.

AIM: to develop and test an **AW assessment tool** for dairy goat systems in collaboration with relevant stakeholders in the sector.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

1  **Discussion** with stakeholders and **literature** review to identify relevant issues and indicators to be considered

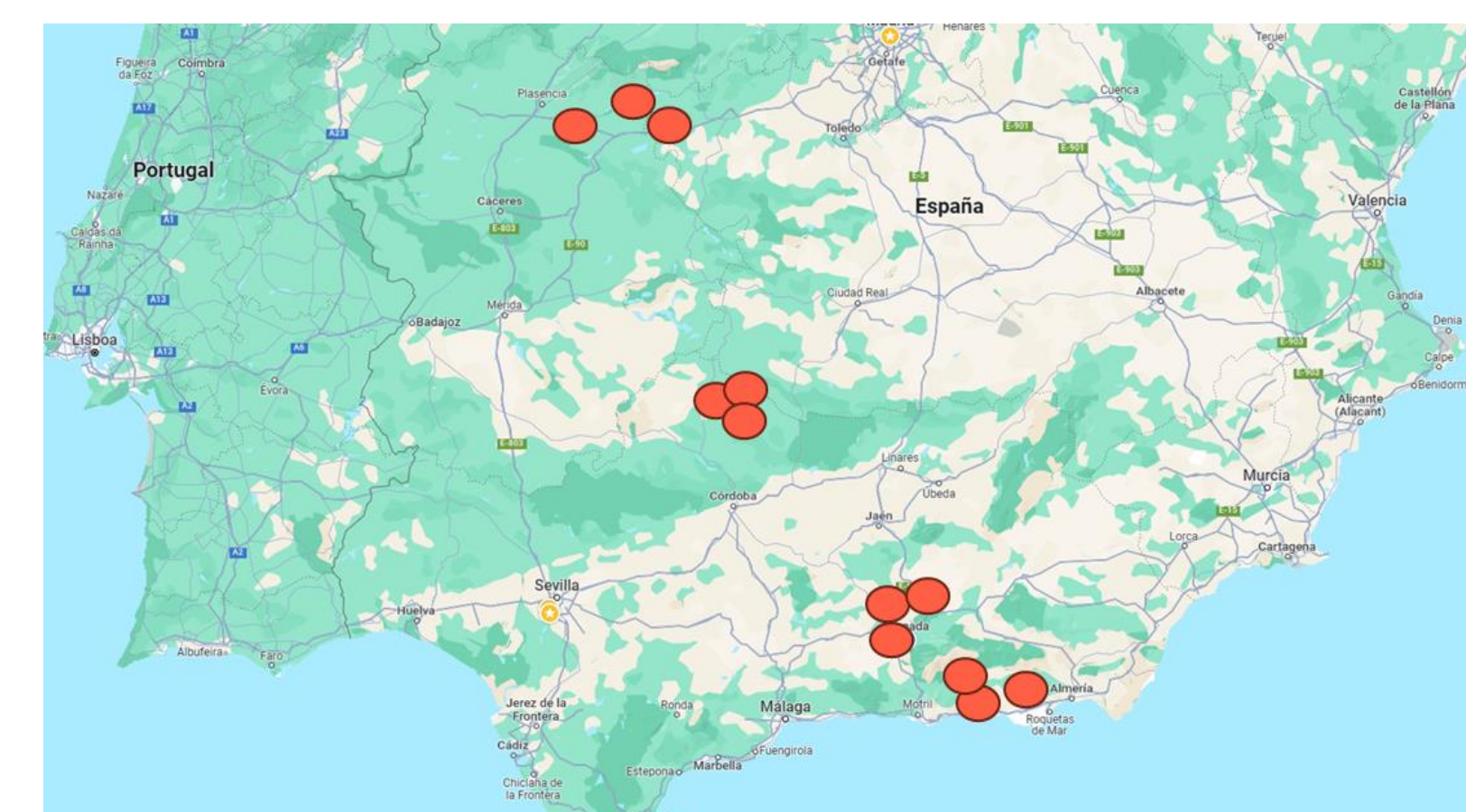
2 Four AW domains:



Number of **indicators** assessed: 23 19 14 3

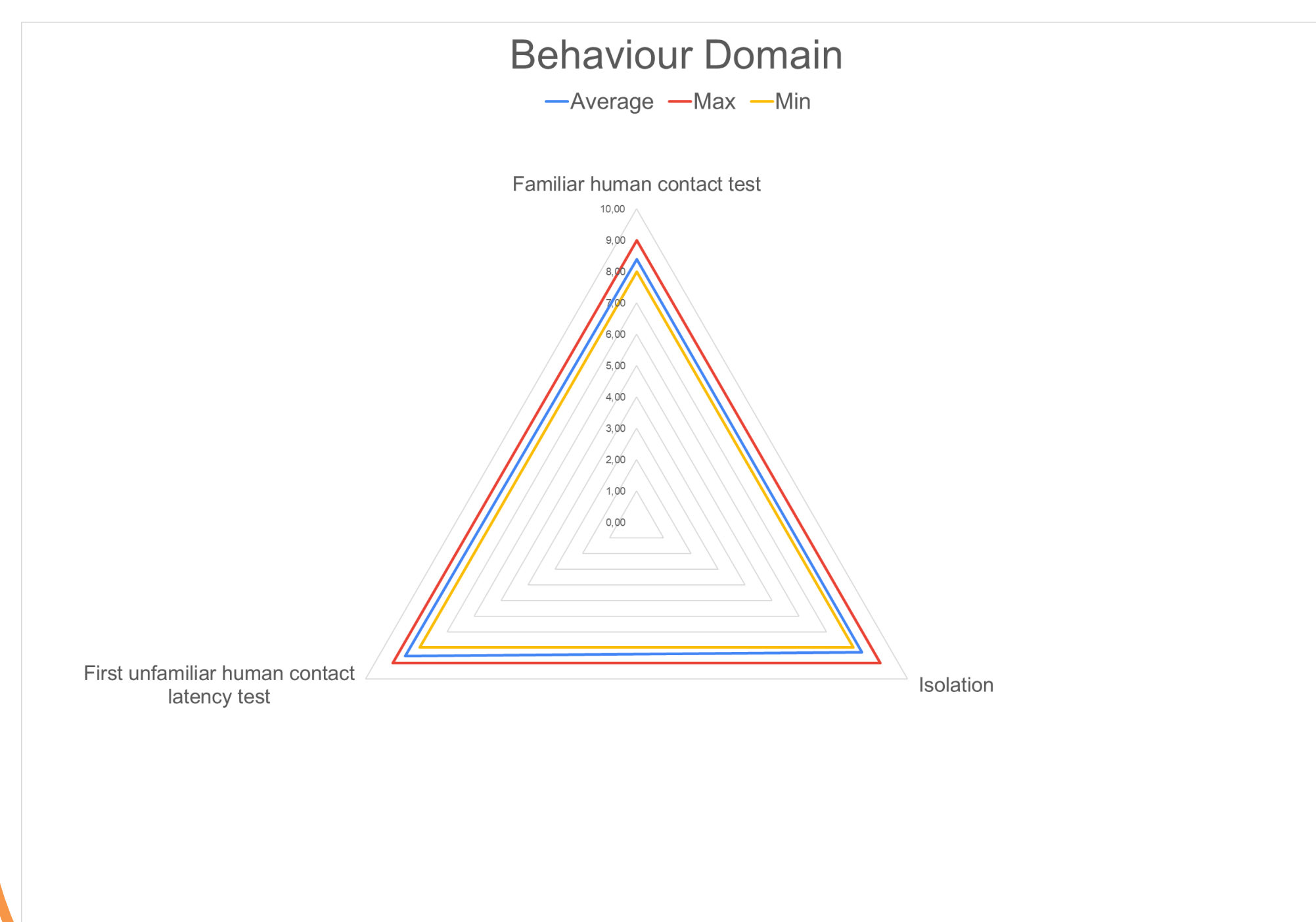
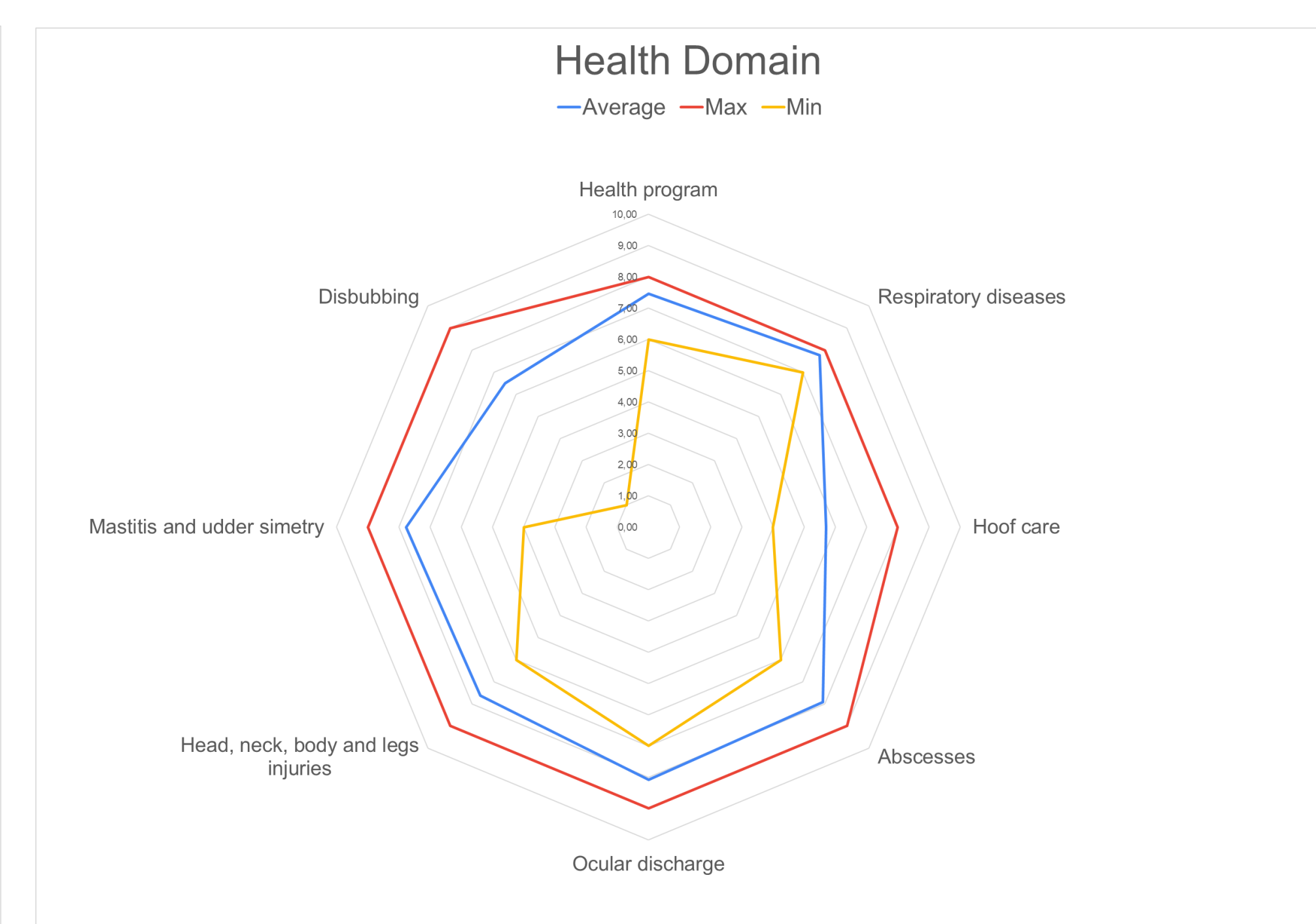
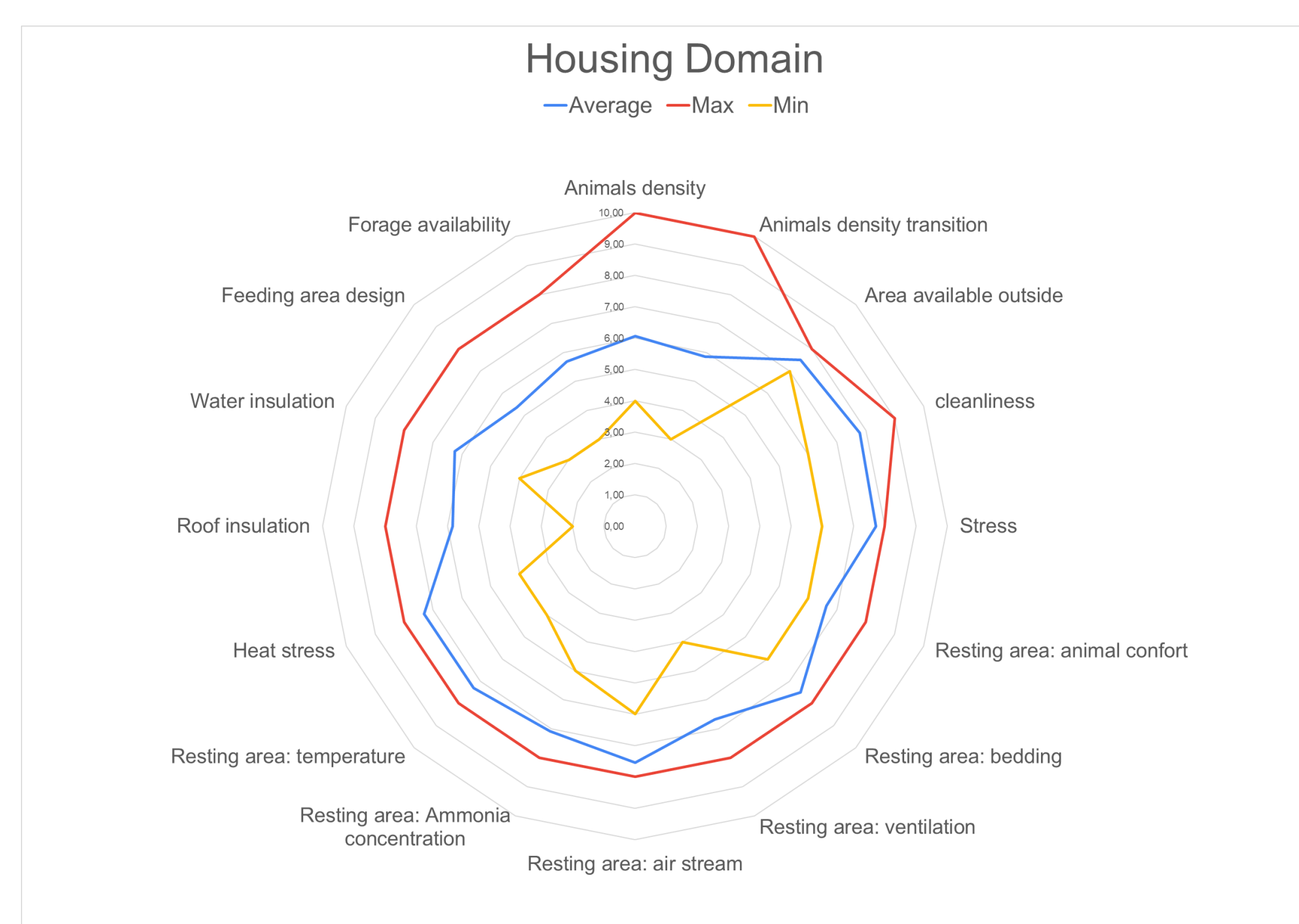
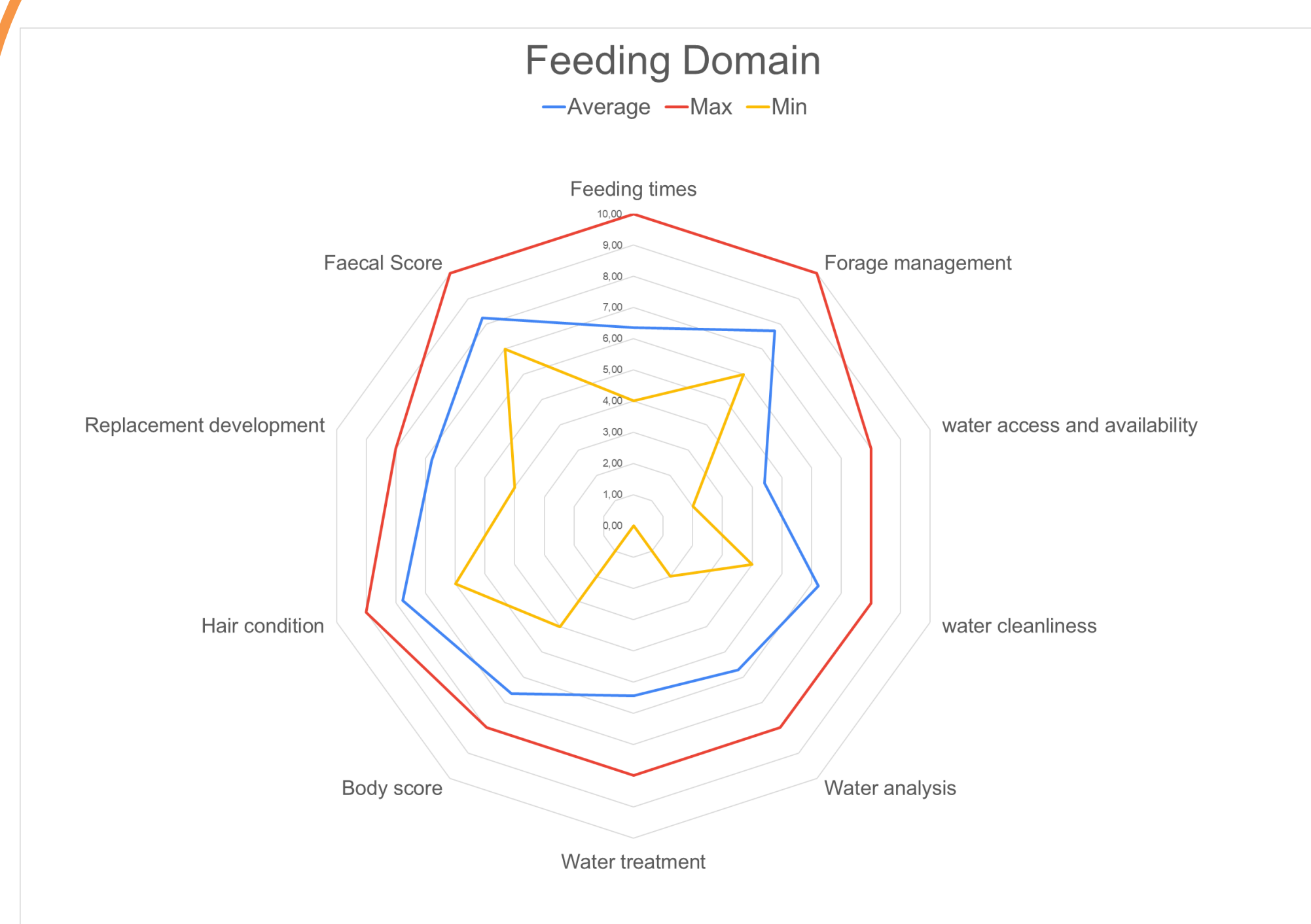
Scoring system: 1-10

3 **12 farms** tested covering different regions and feeding systems



3. RESULTS

Main AW indicators scores for the four Domains



The results showed that the categories that exhibit lower average scores and larger differences across farms were:

- Feeding domain i) **water availability** and ii) **management**
- Housing domain: i) **density of animals**, ii) **roof and water insulation of buildings** and iii) **feeding area design and forage availability**.
- Health domain: **hoof care** .

The rest of parameters averaged above 7-8 with very low variation across farms and no differences between the main feeding systems.

4. CONCLUSION

The questionnaire developed showed **potential** to be used as a tool to evaluate the **animal welfare status** in dairy goats' farms and identify '**hot spots**' for future actions.