



FRCAW Newsletter 43

March 2024

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Animal feed

[26/02/2024 : Welfare issues resulting from feed restriction in pregnant sows](#)

Document type: article published on [The Pig Site](#)

Authors: EU Reference Centre for Animal Welfare Pigs ([EURCAW-Pigs](#))

Preview: According to Council Directive 98/58/EC (1998) animals must be fed a diet that is appropriate to fulfil their physiological needs. However, pregnant sows are generally fed at a restricted level to avoid a high body condition score and the risk of farrowing problems. With a review, EURCAW-Pigs aims to support inspectors of EU member states in understanding the science and regulations related to pig welfare concerning hunger induced aggression and stereotypies. Underlying mechanisms and causes of these behaviours in sows related to hunger are described. Furthermore, measures to reduce welfare risks related to aggression and stereotypies are discussed followed by suggestions how to measure these behaviours.

Focus areas and indicators for inspections

Restricted feeding of sows results in behavioural and physiological signs of hunger, including increased competition for access to feed (aggression) and an increase in stereotypic oral behaviours. Competition over feed may be reinforced by several management and housing conditions that are described in the review. Hunger leads to frustration, that may develop into stereotypies. Inspectors can measure aggression directly, by observing behaviour, and indirectly, by assessing the resulting skin lesions. Stereotypic behaviours can be observed based on so called 'ethograms' which describe the different types of stereotypies.

Minimising welfare problems

There are several ways to reduce the welfare issues resulting from feed restriction. They divide into possibilities to reduce the underlying problem of hunger and those to mitigate the resulting aggression and stereotypies. To reduce the root cause of the problem, sows need to feel more satiated during gestation which can be achieved by e.g. a higher content of fibre in the diet. Possibilities to mitigate aggression and stereotypies relate to aspects of housing such as space, flooring, substrates, feeding system, and complexity of the environment.

Conferences-Seminars-Training

[18/03/2024 : Colloque le 12 avril "Bien-être animal et intelligence artificielle : l'Union européenne à la croisée des chemins"](#)

Document type: conference announcement from the Centre for International and European Studies, on the [University of Strasbourg website](#)

Authors: Fabienne Gazin et Anaëlle Martin

Abstract: Colloquium organized on April 12, 2024 from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. by the Center for International and European Studies

Venue: European Parliament, Room N1.2 – Allée du Printemps, 67000 Strasbourg

[Download the conference program in PDF format](#)

[Online registration](#) (registration required before April 8, 2024)

[Link to follow the conference by video](#)

13/03/2024 : Webinaire « Bien-être et élevage des veaux : les nouveaux enjeux »

Document type: announcement of a webinar organized by Idele, INRAE, Phylum and Care4Dairy on 25/03/2024

Authors: Idele, INRAE, Phylum et Care4Dairy

Preview: How calves are reared is one of the most important welfare issues in dairy farming. This webinar provides an update on new issues relating to the housing and feeding of young calves, possible solutions and how they might be implemented. It has been produced as part of the European CARE4DAIRY project to accompany the publication of manuals on the welfare of cattle on dairy farms. How should calves be housed and fed on dairy farms to best meet their behavioral needs? To offer answers to this question, this webinar will be divided into several parts:

- Recap of the scientific basics concerning the social and feeding behavior of calves
- Report on feedback from dairy farmers on some of their experiences
- Presentation of current projects looking for practical ways to rear calves in groups and manage suckling of dairy calves.

Speakers: I.Veissier, V.Brunet, D.Pomies (Inrae) – C.Le Gall-Ladeveze, F. Gary (Phylum) – C.Littlejohn, B.Mounaix (Idele).

[Link to registration](#)

06/03/2024 : Maltraitements animales : une soirée d'information le 26 mars

Document type: article published in [La Dépêche Vétérinaire](#)

Author: La Dépêche Vétérinaire

Preview: The French Association against Animal and Human Abuse (AMAH) and the AFVAC* are organising an information evening for veterinarians, veterinary students and ASVs on the topic of "Animal abuse: identification, management, new regulatory provisions concerning professional confidentiality" to be held on 26 March in Oniris. The program includes presentations on the identification and differential diagnosis of abuse, links with domestic violence, emotional evaluation of animals, professional confidentiality and a practical and clinical case study presented by Amah, with responses from a member of the GECAF** and a representative of the DDPP***, to be followed by discussion with veterinary teams.

Information evening on March 26, 2024 from 7:30 p.m. to 9:45 p.m., by email registration:

contact@amah-asso.org

* AFVAC: French Association of Veterinarians for Companion Animals.

** GECAF: Afvac Behavioural Study Group.

*** DDPP: Departmental Directorate for the Protection of Populations.

Precision farming

[08/01/2024 : Active walking in broiler chickens: a flagship for good welfare, a goal for smart farming and a practical starting point for automated welfare recognition](#)

Document type: scientific article published in [Frontiers in Veterinary Science](#)

Author: Marian Stamp Dawkins

Preview: Automated assessment of broiler chicken welfare poses particular problems due to the large numbers of birds involved and the variety of different welfare measures that have been proposed. Active (sustained, defect-free) walking is both a universally agreed measure of bird health and a behavior that can be recognized by existing technology. This makes active walking an ideal starting point for automated assessment of chicken welfare at both individual and flock level.

[01/06/2023 : Nouvelle Chaire de Recherche WELL-E : L'intelligence artificielle au service du bien-être animal](#)

Document type: article published in the magazine [Le Producteur de lait québécois](#)

Authors: E. Vasseur, R. Van Vliet, A. Baniré Diallo

Preview: The Research-Innovation Chair in Animal Welfare and Artificial Intelligence (WELL-E) will use new technologies and computer science to optimize the welfare and longevity of dairy cattle. Their research will be carried out on farm in order to respond to the real-world demands and problems experienced by the dairy industry in Canada.

[29/12/2023 : Advancements in artificial intelligence technology for improving animal welfare: Current applications and research progress](#)

Document type: scientific review published in [Animal Research and One Health](#)

Authors: Li Zhang, Wenqiang Guo, Chenrui Lv, Meng Guo, Mei Yang, Qiuyue Fu, Xiaomeng Liu

Preview: The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in various sectors has led to significant advancements, with the animal industry being no exception. This review aims to investigate the benefits, limitations, and future prospects of AI technology in improving animal welfare. First, it examines the role of AI in understanding animal behaviors and emotions, providing deeper insights into their well-being and sources of stress. Next, the paper explores how AI can revolutionize animal nutrition through innovative algorithms and data analytics. The health aspect emphasizes the ability of AI to identify and manage illnesses through intelligent systems. This review also highlights the application of AI in improving animal living conditions, with a focus on environmental management and automated cleaning and disinfection systems. In conclusion, the review emphasizes AI-driven techniques for early prediction, close monitoring, and accurate diagnosis of animal diseases, ensuring healthier and more sustainable livestock management. By leveraging its advantages,

addressing limitations, and exploring future directions, AI has the potential to significantly enhance animal welfare, sustainable agriculture, and veterinary practices.

Animal welfare assessment and Labelling

15/03/2024 : [Every step you take: Nudging animal welfare product purchases in a virtual supermarket](#)

Document type : article published in [Appetite](#)

Authors: Nina Weingarten, Leonie Bach, Jutta Roosen, Monika Hartmann

Preview: Animal welfare (AW) is a growing concern for consumers in Germany; however, not all consumers regularly purchase products that have been produced according to high AW standards. The goal of the present study is to test the effect of a multilayered nudge to increase the availability and improve the visibility of AW products in a 3D online virtual supermarket (VS). The nudge included a shelf with AW products (referred to as AW shelf) which was made visible through banners and footsteps on the floor of the VS. The sample of this pre-registered experiment consisted of $n = 374$ German consumers who regularly purchase meat, milk, and eggs. The results demonstrated that the multilayered nudge was highly effective: the percentage of AW products purchased in the nudging condition was almost twice as high as in the control group. Furthermore, we investigated variables that mediate (ease of finding AW products in the VS) and moderate (price sensitivity) the effectiveness of the multilayered nudge, but no evidence for an effect was obtained. We conclude that multilayered nudges may be a promising tool to increase consumers' AW product purchases. More research is needed to replicate this finding with a field study in a real supermarket.

Animal welfare initiatives

18/03/2024 : [Newsletter EURCAW Ruminants & Equines – volume 05](#)

Document type: Newsletter of the European Union Reference Centre for Animal Welfare Ruminants & Equines ([EURCAW Ruminants & Equines](#))

Author: EURCAW Ruminants & Equines

Preview: The site includes fact sheets on environmental enrichment for cattle, goats, horses and sheep, a code of conduct based on the ethical principles that apply in the European Union, the announcement of the creation of EURCAW Aquatic Animals, guides to animal transport and much more.

[Link to download the Newsletter](#)

13/03/2024 : [SOS maltraitance animale : l'initiative devrait aboutir cet été](#)

Document type: article published in [La Dépêche Vétérinaire](#)

Author: La Dépêche Vétérinaire

Preview: A national 4-digit hotline number for reports of animal abuse similar to hotlines for human abuse, which animal rights activists have long been calling for, has finally found a host and promoter with the Conseil national de la protection animale (CNPA). This should enable it to be up and running by summer ([see also DV n° 1685](#)). Founded by a veterinarian and chaired by our colleague Loïc Dombrevail, this historic animal protection association is looking to bring together veterinarians in support of this project and more general animal protection, our colleague has told us.

11/03/2024 : Elections européennes 2024 - Engagement Animaux

Document type: Platform of the [Engagement Animaux 2024](#) initiative

Author: Engagement Animaux

Preview: The next European elections will take place between 6 and 9 June 2024, in the 27 member countries of the European Union. In France, voters will be called to the polls on Sunday 9 June 2024 to elect 81 MEPs. The European Union has extensive powers to protect animals on its territory and beyond. The European election campaign therefore represents a unique opportunity for French politicians to commit to improving animal welfare in Europe. For this reason, [29 animal protection NGOs](#) are asking all French candidates to commit themselves to [a Manifesto of 33 actions](#) to be carried out throughout the European Union.

28/02/2024 : €600 million to support research and innovation on agroecology and animal health and welfare

Document type: news item from the [European Commission](#)

Author : Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development - Commission européenne

Preview: The European Commission, EU Member States and Associated Countries have joined forces to fund two major Research and Innovation partnerships in key areas of agricultural production. They will work over the next seven years on agroecology and on animal health and welfare, essential issues for sustainable farming and food systems.

23/02/2024 : Newsletter EURCAW Poultry-SFA - Edition 7

Document type: Newsletter of the European Union Centre of reference for the welfare of Poultry and other Small Farm Animals ([EURCAW Poultry-SFA](#))

Author : EURCAW Poultry-SFA

[Link to download the Newsletter](#)

Housing and Enrichment

23/01/2024 : Bien-être et élevage du veau de boucherie

Document type: article published in [Viandes et Produits Carnés](#)

Authors: Didier Bastien, Magdélène Chantepedrix, Virginie Lefoul, Christophe Martineau, Etienne Labussière, Manuel Tourtier

Preview: Veal calf welfare and rearing

Optimizing animal welfare and rearing conditions in veal calves. This article is a compilation of presentations on veal calves at the 74th European Federation of Animal Science (EAAP) congress, held in Lyon from August 28 to September 1, 2023.

INTRODUCTION

In a context of declining production and consumption volumes, French veal production is facing new challenges in terms of changing farming methods. Consumers are increasingly concerned about the welfare and health of their animals. Furthermore, a review of European regulations on animal welfare has been announced, covering veal calf production. In this context, a number of studies have been carried out by the French Livestock Institute in collaboration with different partners, including INRAE, and with the support of the INTERBEV Veaux interprofession or the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty. The aims of this study were to identify societal expectations, to acquire references on the impact of different housing and feeding methods on animals, to assess changes in the use of antibiotics in the sector and to develop tools for assessing biosecurity in livestock farming.

I. WELFARE OF VEAL CALVES

- Veal calf production: what are society's expectations in terms of housing and animal welfare?
- Impact of eliminating individual pens on veal calf behavior
- Impact of floor type and group size on veal calf behavior
- Veal calf housing in France: current situation and investment needs
- Promoting and supporting the transformation of French veal calf farms in response to societal expectations

II. VEAL CALF MANAGEMENT

- Effect of solid feed intake on feeding behavior and energy metabolism of growing calves
- SECURIVO: self-assessment tools for biosecurity on veal calf farms
- Trends in the use of antibiotics in the veal calf industry in France between 2013 and 2020

CONCLUSION

The two studies carried out on veal calf production in France, firstly on social expectations in terms of animal welfare, and secondly on the main characteristics of the rearing facilities used in France for this production, have enabled us to measure the gaps between expectations and the reality of production. Trials carried out on a different approach to housing calves (starting calves in group pens, fattening them on rubber floors or in large pens) revealed both positive and negative impacts on calf behaviour. While calves move around more when fattened in large groups, they develop more cross-sucking behavior when put in group housing at start-up. Trials carried out on calf ingestion of solid feed have shown that calf behaviour and nutrition can adapt to contrasted sources of dietary energy, as well as on the impact of different solid feed intakes on calf metabolism and behaviour. Finally, the implementation of biosecurity management tools on farms, combined with training campaigns, has led to a significant reduction in the use of antibiotics on veal calf farms in France.

03/08/2023 : Effect of classical music on growth performance, stress level, antioxidant index, immune function and meat quality in broilers at different stocking densities

Document type: article published in [Frontiers in Veterinary Science](#)

Authors: Xinlei Gao, Jiangang Gong, Bowen Yang, Yanci Liu, Hongjian Xu, Yanshuang Hao, Jialin Jing, Zhihua Feng, Lihua Li

Preview: High-stocking density is one of the factors that can easily cause oxidative stress and inflammatory reaction of broilers. Currently, music therapy has been proposed to help animals relieve stress to some extent. However, it is still unclear whether classical music can alleviate stress in broilers at high stocking densities. Hence, this study aimed to investigate the effects of classical music on growth performance, stress level, antioxidant index, immune function and meat quality of broilers under different stocking densities. A total of 540 one-day-old broilers with similar body weight were randomly divided into 6 treatment groups, with 6 replicates per group, which included two feeding environments (with/without classical music) and three stocking densities (15.5, 17.9, and 20.3 birds/m²), thereby making a 2 × 3 factorial arrangement. The results showed as follows: increasing stocking density decreased the average daily feed intake and average daily gain (ADG), increased feed-to-gain ratio (F/G) and mortality of broilers. Moreover, increased density resulted in an increase in serum corticosterone (CORT) and adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH) levels. Increasing stocking density decreased spleen and bursal indices, serum immunoglobulin A (IgA), immunoglobulin G (IgG), and immunoglobulin M (IgM) levels. Increasing stocking density elevated serum malondialdehyde (MDA) and decreased catalase (CAT), superoxide dismutase (SOD) and glutathione peroxidase (GSH-PX) activities. Increasing stocking density decreased serum total protein (TP) levels and increased total cholesterol (TC) and glucose (GLU) levels. Additionally, increasing stocking density decreased the cooking loss of pectoralis and increased the L24h value of pectoralis. Meanwhile, playing classical music for broilers increased their ADG and decreased F/G, and decreased serum CORT, ACTH, GLU content. In addition, the bursa of Fabricius index, serum IgA and IgG contents as well as the a24h value of pectoralis was increased under the music therapy. In conclusion, high-stocking density (20.3 birds/m²) harmed the growth performance and health of broilers, and the classical music stimulus ameliorated the negative effects to some extent.

Regulation

18/03/2024 : Elevage en cage : une action en justice inédite contre la Commission européenne pour non-respect de ses engagements

Document type: article published on the [CIWF France website](#)

Author: CIWF

Preview: Today, the Citizens' Committee of the highly successful End the Cage Age European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) launched an End the Cage legal action against the European Commission over its failure to deliver its commitment to ban cage farming.

Papers have been filed at the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), in which the ECI citizens' committee demonstrate in Luxemburg outlining the End the Cage Age legal action demonstrating that the Commission has failed to act on its promise to introduce legislation to ban cages in response to a successful ECI - the first to secure a proper commitment. For the committee, renegeing on this historic promise to ban cages goes against the very purpose of this new "democratic" tool.

In 2021, following the successful ECI signed by 1.4 million people and supported by a coalition of 170 NGOs coordinated by Compassion in World Farming, the Commission made a clear commitment to introduce legislative proposals to ban cage farming in the EU by the end of 2023. This "End the Cage Age" legal action, supported by Compassion in World Farming, is the first to hold the Commission to account over its failure to act on an ECI. If successful, the Commission would be compelled by the Court to publish its proposals within a clear and reasonable timescale, and to grant access to its file on the End the Cage Age ECI. (...)

Across the EU, more than 300 million pigs, hens, calves, rabbits, ducks, quail and geese are suffering in cages. Sows are forced to nurse their piglets in crates so small they can't even turn around, rabbits and quail endure their entire lives in barren cages, and ducks and geese are caged for force-feeding to produce foie gras. (...)

In the autumn of last year, the Commission was scheduled to publish its legislative proposals for a ban on cage farming, when President Ursula von der Leyen apparently bowed to pressure from the farming lobby to put the ban on hold. Her State of the European Union address even echoed the terms of a letter sent to her at the time by the agricultural federation Copa Cogeca. This decision was taken despite the preparations, assessments and consultations already carried out by Commission officials, and proposals for substantial financial support to help farmers during the transition away from cages. Public subsidies must be re-allocated for the support of farmers who adopt sustainable farming systems. CIWF is calling on its supporters to tag European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen (@vonderleyen) in sharing social media posts to support the legal action.

[14/03/2024 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-000130/24 : Relancer la réforme sur le transport des animaux](#)

Document type: Response from the [European Commission](#) to question E-000130/24

Authors: question : Annika Bruna (ID). Answer: Mme Kyriakides on behalf of the European Commission

Question: On December 7, 2023, the Commission presented a draft reform on animal transport. [\[1\]](#) recently raised the possibility that the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union might abandon this reform. The latter has indicated that it favors the proposal on the protection of dogs and cats. The livestock transport reform project is therefore likely to be referred to the next Commission, whose term of office will begin after the European elections. 1. What initiatives does the Commission intend to take to relaunch its reform project? 2. Can it defend, with the Council, the

development of meat transport as an alternative to the transport of live animals, in the knowledge that it involves smaller volumes and fewer negative externalities (road and sea accidents, carbon footprint)?

[1]<https://www.web-agri.fr/bien-etre-animal/article/860770/le-projet-de-loi-europeen-sur-le-transport-n-est-pas-une-priorite-pour-bruxelles>.

Answer: 1. On December 7, 2023, the Commission presented its proposal for a regulation on the protection of animals during transport to the European Parliament and the Council [1]. In accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure laid down in Article 294 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union [2] the proposal is now in the hands of the co-legislators for the next stages. 2. It is up to the Presidency of the Council of the EU to define the priorities for the examination of legislative proposals within the Council. One of the proposed changes to current EU legislation is to limit the maximum duration of animal transport to the slaughterhouse. Requirements for shorter journey times should also encourage shorter supply chains, thus stimulating the local economy.

[1] Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of animals during transport and related operations, amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1255/97 and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1/2005. COM(2023) 770 final.

[2]<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/TXT/?uri=C>

14/03/2024 : Parlement européen : réponse orale à la question O-000059/23 : Révision promise de la législation de l'Union en matière de bien-être animal et des initiatives citoyennes européennes liées au bien-être animal (débat)

Document type: oral response from the [European Commission](#) to question O-000059/23

Authors: question : Niels Fuglsang (S&D), Thomas Waitz (Verts/ALE), Günther Sidl (S&D), Sarah Wiener (Verts/ALE), Emil Radev (PPE), Michaela Šojdrová (PPE), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE), Heidi Hautala (Verts/ALE), Annika Bruna (ID), Caroline Roose (Verts/ALE), Pascal Durand (S&D), Pierre Larrouturou (S&D), Martin Buschmann (NI), Manuela Ripa (Verts/ALE), Martin Häusling (Verts/ALE), Maria Noichl (S&D), Anna Deparnay-Grünenberg (Verts/ALE), Grace O'Sullivan (Verts/ALE), Mario Furore (NI), Rosa D'Amato (Verts/ALE), Tiziana Beghin (NI), Petras Auštrevičius (Renew), Tilly Metz (Verts/ALE), Anja Hazekamp (The Left), Sylwia Spurek (Verts/ALE), Francisco Guerreiro (Verts/ALE), Martin Hojsík (Renew), Michal Wiezik (Renew), Malin Björk (The Left), Marisa Matias (The Left), Ville Niinistö (Verts/ALE), Marianne Vind (S&D), Christel Schaldemose (S&D), Karen Melchior (Renew), Alice Kuhnke (Verts/ALE), Pär Holmgren (Verts/ALE), Marina Kaljurand (S&D), Mick Wallace (The Left), Henna Virkkunen (PPE), Róza Thun und Hohenstein (Renew). Answer: Mme Ferreira on behalf of the European Commission

Question: In its farm to fork strategy, the Commission committed to revising the EU's current animal welfare legislation by the third quarter of 2023. In July 2021, in response to the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) entitled 'End the Cage Age', which collected more than 1.4 million signatures, the Commission vocalised its commitment to adopt a ban on cages for the species covered under the ECI. The Commission noted that this ban would be considered in the context of the overhaul of the EU's 20-year-old animal welfare legislation. In the meantime, in under 10 months, the ECI entitled

'Fur Free Europe', which calls for a ban on fur farming in the EU and on placing products derived from fur farms on the market, also collected more than 1.5 million signatures. In mid-October, Eurobarometer published a new special poll on Europeans' attitudes towards animal welfare, which confirmed EU citizens' huge support for better animal welfare rules in the EU.

However, when presenting its work programme for 2024, the Commission confirmed that it would publish only the proposal on the protection of animals during transport, and referred to the need for more assessments and dialogue on the other expected proposals aimed at revising the outdated EU animal welfare legislation. Yet, farmers, industry, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders have been discussing this revision for several years, not only through the usual civil dialogue groups established by the Commission, but also via the EU Platform on Animal Welfare and its numerous subgroups. In addition, in the context of the Better Regulation process, two public consultations took place in preparation of the revision, one of which collected almost 60 000 pieces of feedback, placing it among the EU consultations with the highest levels of participation. The EU institutions have also carried out significant work, including numerous scientific opinions published by the European Food Safety Authority, supporting the revision.

In December 2023, the Commission published a proposal on the welfare of companion animals, which was initially expected to be part of the 'kept animals proposal' covering a much larger scope. Even though the proposal on pets is welcomed, concerns persist regarding the adoption of the rest of the initial proposal.

In this context: Can the Commission provide a plan containing a clear timeline for the delivery of the still outstanding legislative proposals that it repeatedly promised throughout this term, notably:

1. a proposal for a regulation on the welfare of animals kept for economic purposes,
2. a proposal for a regulation on the protection of animals at the time of killing, and
3. a proposal for a regulation on animal welfare labelling?

Answer: In 2020, the Commission announced that, by 2023, it would revise the European Union's animal welfare rules and consider options for animal welfare labelling. As part of this revision, we announced, in 2021, the intention to propose rules to phase out and eventually prohibit the use of cages in animal farming. This was in response to the European Citizens Initiative 'End the Cage Age'.

By now, the Commission has established a vast range of policy options for these future rules. These options are supported by the fitness check of the current rules, several external studies, and 11 scientific opinions delivered by the European Food Safety Authority. And in 2021, we began a thorough impact assessment of their economic, social and environmental impacts. This is still going on.

As you know, on 7 December 2023, the Commission adopted two major animal welfare legislative proposals. The first one is a revised regulation (after two decades) on the protection of animals during transport. The second one is a new regulation dealing, for the first time, with the welfare and traceability of dogs and cats. The work on proposals to revise European Union rules on the welfare of animals at farm level at the time of killing and on establishing harmonised rules for animal welfare labelling is still ongoing.

Work is also still ongoing in relation to the follow-up to our response to the 'End the Cage Age' initiative, where we are carefully assessing important aspects to ensure that the transition to cage-free farming is also sustainable for the agricultural sector and for our food systems, in order for the said proposals to be holistic and solid. More consultations are also needed on the costs, on how long the transition periods should be, and relevant measures at import.

The strategic dialogue on the future of EU agriculture started on 25 January 2024. It should be a good place for these discussions.

We are all aware that farmers are looking for a level playing field. Some of them are not satisfied with the scattered landscape we have on animal welfare standards across the European Union. They have to consider many different and constantly changing national requirements and private schemes for animal welfare. It is therefore our responsibility to provide them with long-term stability and clarity about what will be considered acceptable when it comes to animal welfare.

Of course, reforming animal welfare implies costs. We have to take them into account and identify solutions. But reducing the fragmentation of the internal market would allow farmers to invest in their farms and profit from the market opportunities that come with animal welfare improvements.

For all these reasons, we are continuing to look at the best course of action in these areas, keeping in mind stakeholders' views and of course, the views of the European Parliament.

13/03/2024 : Review of the rules on the protection of animals during transport

Document type: Briefing published on the [Think Tank - Parlement européen](#) website

Author: Claudia Vinci

Preview: In December 2023, the Commission presented a proposal on the protection of animals during transport, with a view to replacing and updating Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005. This proposal, along with another on welfare and traceability of dogs and cats, is part of a legislative package to reform the current EU rules on animal welfare. The reform was announced in 2020 with the launch of the 'farm to fork' strategy, which aims to create a fairer, healthier and more environmentally friendly food system. The proposed text introduces stricter rules regarding travel times, the minimum space between animals, transport conditions for vulnerable animals, transportation in extreme temperatures, safeguarding of animals transported to third countries, the utilisation of technological systems and the protection of cats and dogs in commercial transport. In the European Parliament, the file has been assigned to the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) and to the Committee of Transport and Tourism (TRAN), with Daniel Buda (EPP, Romania) and Anna Deparnay-Grunenberg (Greens/EFA, Germany) as co-rapporteurs. The 'EU Legislation in Progress' briefings are updated at key stages throughout the legislative procedure.

Publication mentioned in an [article on Agroportal](#)

[Link to pdf](#)

[06/03/2024 : Animal welfare at German abattoirs: insights into the occurrence of violations against laws and regulations from official veterinarians and judicial decisions](#)

Document type: scientific article published in [Frontiers in Veterinary Science](#)

Authors: Stephanie Janet Schneidewind, Susann Langforth, Diana Meemken

Preview: This study investigated the occurrence of various animal welfare violations at German abattoirs by analyzing the results of an anonymous online survey and relevant German court decisions. The survey targeted official veterinarians (OVs) and other individuals responsible for enforcing animal welfare laws and regulations at German abattoirs. Participants were asked to report the five most common animal welfare violations in their workplaces during the past 3 years (2019–2021), and whether 22 specific given violations had occurred or not (in the same timeframe). The court decisions were examined to determine how many abattoirs were penalized for a specific animal welfare violation and the details about the number and species of affected animals. Overall, the violations examined throughout this study fell into one of the following categories: (1) use of prohibited driving aids (e.g., illicit use of electric prods, or hitting/beatings animals); (2) inadequate husbandry in lairage; (3) inappropriate handling of animals with special care needs; (4) improper restraint, stunning, and bleeding of animals; and (5) unqualified task execution/inadequate administrative work (e.g., documentation of a violation). The violations analyzed in the scope of this study most frequently fell into categories 1, 2, and 4. Regarding the five violations that survey participants reported to be the most common in the years 2019–2021, 42.6% of responses (N = 277 reported violations) fell into category 4, followed closely by category 1 with 37.9%. Of the 22 violations surveyed in the second part of the survey, those reported by 50.0% or more participants were concentrated in categories 1, 2, and 4. Regarding the 16 relevant court rulings spanning from 2015 to 2022, the most frequently documented instances of misconduct primarily fell into category 1. The collected data suggest that there may be need for improvements regarding compliance with animal welfare legislation, especially concerning categories 1, 2, and 4. The authors suggest OVs to consider these findings when conducting monitoring activities at abattoirs and in the training and education of abattoir personnel.

[05/03/2024 : Assemblée nationale : réponse écrite à la question n°15015 : Conditions de mise à mort des animaux dans les abattoirs](#)

Document type: Answer to question no.15015 published in the [Journal officiel de la République française](#)

Authors: question: Béatrice Roullaud (Rassemblement National - Seine-et-Marne). Answer: French Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty.

Question: Mrs. Béatrice Roullaud draws the attention of the Minister of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty to the conditions under which animals are killed in abattoirs. The recent scandal exposed by L214, an association that combats animal abuse, in the municipal abattoir of Craon in Mayenne has brought unbearable images into the public domain showing animals still conscious

after stunning who are struggling before and after their throats are slit. Cows react to stabs of the knife and guillotine pliers while their front legs, horns or heads are severed. Yet, at this point in the slaughter line, the animals should be dead. This establishment's structural issues and the lack of intervention by the veterinary services have led to very serious and repeated infringements and appalling consequences for the animals. These acts of cruelty, this serious abuse, and the lack of assessment of the state of unconsciousness of animals are unacceptable. And yet this is not the first such case. The Vigan abattoir in the Gard was temporarily closed in February 2016 following videos showing cows being cut up while still alive with an electric saw, another in Mauléon-Licharre was penalized for serious abuse, including a lamb being quartered alive. Other abattoirs have been accused and, more recently, the French government was found guilty by the Administrative Court of Montpellier on May 4, 2023 of the insufficient exercise of controls by national agencies. She therefore asks what measures the Government intends to implement to ensure that abattoirs are properly monitored and controlled by the veterinary services, in order to verify that slaughter operations are carried out in accordance with the regulations in force. She also asks the minister to confirm that all abattoirs do indeed employ an animal welfare officer who is responsible for the technical enforcement of animal protection rules within the establishment, as has been required since the promulgation of the law on the balance of trade relations in the agricultural sector and healthy and sustainable food in November 2018..

Answer: Slaughter conditions in abattoirs are now subject to multiple controls involving both mandatory inspections and voluntary measures implemented by abattoir operators. For example, European Regulation 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing requires the presence of an animal protection officer who must be able to require abattoir staff to take the necessary corrective measures to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements. In addition, government officials (veterinarians and authorised auxiliary staff) regularly audit the conditions under which animals are slaughtered, report any failures of compliance and implement appropriate administrative and criminal measures. Third-party audits are also carried out on the animal welfare aspect by of slaughter by customers following commercial specification schedules. In addition, for several years now, the sector has operated a system of voluntary animal welfare audits in abattoirs, using an assessment grid developed in collaboration with animal protection associations. Last, some associations, such as the Œuvre d'Assistance aux Bêtes d'Abattoirs (OABA), have their own auditors who are invited by abattoirs to carry out an audit of slaughter conditions. It should be remembered that slaughter professionals are those primarily responsible for ensuring that animals are properly treated, supported by the mandatory duties of veterinary inspection agents concerning the on-site monitoring of abattoirs. Each animal must be inspected prior to slaughter. However, the conditions under which animals are handled, from unloading to killing, are not subject to continuous inspection by the government agencies. Compliance with animal welfare requirements is checked at least twice yearly by in-house inspection services, taking the form of comprehensive audits. In addition, internal checks carried out by operators are also audited. Last, physical checks at slaughter stations are regularly carried out. Over the past two years, additional measures have been taken by the administration to strengthen the monitoring of animal welfare compliance in abattoirs and the implementation of appropriate administrative or criminal follow-up actions, targeting those establishments whose slaughter procedures require improvement. Last, in July 2021, the Ministry of Agriculture brought in its "abattoir plan" to ensure the strict application of regulatory requirements,

including those concerning animal protection during slaughter, involving support for the work necessary to improve practices [181 abattoirs received €115 million in support], the strengthening of local abattoir networks, reinforcement of controls with a rapid intervention force and generalized controls throughout France and implementation of appropriate follow-up to controls in conjunction with prefects. In order to extend this momentum, in July 2023 the Ministry of Agriculture launched an approach involving professional sectors and local authorities to preserve the relevant network at the level of each territory and thus guarantee the sustainability of livestock sectors. The 2024 Finance Act provides for the implementation of a public guarantee on €50 million in outstanding loans, to support slaughterhouses of strategic interest for a sector and/or a production area.

04/03/2024 : Veille Droit Animal

Document type: website [Veille Droit Animal](#)

Author: Valentin Brunet

Preview: The purpose of this website is to provide an overview of animal protection legislation and regulations at European (EU) and in France. Legal monitoring allows it to be updated regularly. The aim is to help anyone who has specific questions concerning legal protections for animals, including animals in the home, farmed animals, and animals used for scientific or leisure purposes.

01/03/2024 : Directives européennes sur le bien-être animal et l'environnement : stop à l'intensification du déséquilibre concurrentiel

Document type: article published on the [ANVOL](#) website

Authors: l'Interprofession de la Volaille Française (ANVOL) et le Comité Interprofessionnel de la Dinde Française (CIDEF)

Preview: The poultry industry is calling for an end to the constant increase in the number of animal welfare regulations and a shift towards requirements based on results, training and the harmonization of practices. Professionals also point out that the living conditions of animals in livestock farming and their protection during transport and slaughter are already strictly regulated (the so-called "broiler chicken" Directive 2007/43/EC, Regulation 1/2005 on transport and Regulation 1099/2009 on slaughter), making the European Union an example to the rest of the world in terms of animal welfare. Further, animal welfare is a core issue for the poultry industry, which has also voluntarily developed the "EBENE" application to monitor on-farm welfare using the animal-based indicators (such as behaviour, injuries, etc.) developed by European researchers. The sector is also transforming its practices through the training of farmers, live-animal transporters, animal protection managers and operators in abattoirs and by investing in new infrastructure and equipment, inserting windows in more than half of livestock buildings for example and introducing innovative anesthesia systems at abattoirs, etc. In this context, the proposal for a new European regulation concerning the transport of live animals is not acceptable to the sector because: (1) the proposed container densities and heights do not allow animals to be kept in good health, as they could not only cause injuries to the animals and trucks to overturn, but would also increase the number of transport vehicles on the roads by 30 - 40%, running counter to all efforts towards decarbonisation and impacting the

economic viability of companies. (2) The proposed techniques for handling animals during capture are neither realistic nor easy to monitor, and bear new costs that will further weaken this link in the value chain. (3) The arbitrary limits set for transport durations would make it impossible for some regional farms to continue operations in cases where no nearby hatchery or abattoir is available. The setting of an arbitrary travel limit has a direct impact on the local organisation of the poultry sector and drastically limits the ability of hatchery companies to export their animals, encouraging them to relocate to outside the European Union. (...)

The Interprofession de la Volaille Française (ANVOL) and the Comité Interprofessionnel de la Dinde Française (CIDEF) are firmly opposed to the agreement adopted at the end of November by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, concerning the application of the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED). Counter to all expectations, this agreement sets different thresholds for the various poultry species, despite the fact that MEPs voted in large numbers against any reduction in the thresholds for pigs and poultry last July. In complete contradiction to their wishes, this agreement ratifies the application of the directive for turkey farms with more than 9,333 animals, as compared to the previous threshold of 40,000 birds. This drastic lowering of the threshold marks the end of the characteristic diversity of French poultry farming, since more than 73% of turkey farms would be affected. They would not be able to provide the major investment (estimated at more than 80 million Euros) necessary to comply with the directive, which requires the implementation of best available techniques to reduce environmental impacts. Additionally, the sector would also be hampered by a highly restrictive authorisation regime involving public inquiries. (...)

01/03/2024 : L'un des plus gros élevages de porcs breton lourdement condamné pour maltraitance animale

Document type: article published in [Le Monde](#)

Author: AFP

Preview: Prosecutions for animal abuse after a complaint filed by L214. On Friday March 1, the Brest court imposed a fine of 60,000 euros on each of two companies that make up one of Brittany's largest pig farms, of which 20,000 euros took the form of a suspended penalty. These judgements are in line with the prosecutor's demands at the hearing held in early February. The two companies, SARL Kerdoncuff and SCEA de Trébeolin, managed by 57-year-old Dominique Kerdoncuff, are also banned from keeping animals for one year. SARL Kerdoncuff has also been fined 4,500 euros for infractions linked to failure to comply with formal notices (...) In November 2019, the L214 Group filed a complaint after broadcasting a video showing dirty buildings and animals shut up in cages, in distress, injured or dead. Investigations by the Gendarmerie and the Direction Départementale de la Protection des Populations (DDPP) confirmed these findings: sows with necrotic wounds and sores, lack of light, uncared for animals without constant access to fresh water, etc. Several unannounced inspections in 2019, 2020 and 2021, produced the same findings, and were so condemnatory that the farm was threatened with being shut down. " This is the first case where, after four years, I am still unable to attest to the compliance of this farm", reported Loïc Gouyet of the Finistère DDPP in his witness statement at the hearing, referring in particular to "a problem of competence and supervision of employees". In court, Mr. Kerdoncuff denied any wrongdoing, claiming that he was

'passionate' about his business and accusing Eureden's vet, who had also alerted the authorities to the situation at this large farm, of excessive zeal and even of plotting against him 'with the authorities'.

[27/02/2024 : Assemblée nationale : Réponse écrite à la question n°14571 : Sur les manquements graves de l'abattoir de Craon](#)

Document type: Answer to question no.14571 published in the [Journal officiel de la République française](#)

Authors: question : Julien Odoul (Rassemblement National - Yonne). Answer: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty.

Question: Mr. Julien Odoul alerts the French Minister of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty to the shocking images from a Mayenne abattoir broadcast by the L214 Group. These videos, filmed by the group in the Craon municipal abattoir (Mayenne) in November and December 2023, clearly show failures to conform with the regulations. In particular, the footage shows an operator starting to work on an animal's hide even though it is not dead, but merely stunned, and cows reacting to strokes of the knife and guillotine pliers as their legs are cut off. In short, the animals are undeniably still alive at the time of cutting. Yet, in 2021, the French Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty launched its Abattoir Plan intended to remedy such shortcomings and combat animal suffering, creating a national task force to increase inspections. More than 115 million euros were also allocated to help abattoirs modernize. Despite these actions, it must be acknowledged that there are still many violations of animal welfare standards taking place in abattoirs. The L214 Group immediately took legal action against the Craon abattoir, and a judicial inquiry has been opened. These unbearable images and acts of unprecedented barbarity and unspeakable cruelty must cease. It is urgent to put an end to them and to slaughter animals decently, showing respect for standards and the animal condition. Here, video monitoring at the time of slaughter also offers one of the solutions that would remove the current climate of suspicion and mistrust concerning abattoirs. The evaluation carried out by the Ministry's departments of the 2019-2021 pilot has already demonstrated the benefits of video control. This topic is due to be discussed in 2024 by the Comité national d'éthique des abattoirs, whose members include both professionals and animal protection associations, in order to decide whether nation-wide use of video monitoring would be of assistance in curbing this kind of behaviour. The MP would like the Minister to take a serious look at animal conditions in abattoirs, with a view to putting a definitive stop to the compliance failures that cause intolerable suffering. He would like to know what regulations he intends to introduce, following the meeting of the Comité National d'Ethique des Abattoirs, to ensure that animals are slaughtered in dignified conditions.

Answer: The conditions under which animals are killed in abattoirs are now subject to numerous controls, whether these are provided for by the regulations or are implemented voluntarily by abattoir operators. For example, European Regulation 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of slaughter requires the presence of an animal protection officer, who must be able to require abattoir staff to take the necessary corrective measures to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements. In addition, state officers (veterinarians and official auxiliaries) regularly audit animal slaughter conditions, report any cases of non-compliance and take appropriate administrative and legal measures. Third-party audits are also carried out on animal protection issues by abattoir customers as part of commercial contractual requirements. In addition, over the past few years, the

industry has set up a system of voluntary animal protection audits in abattoirs, with an assessment grid drawn up in collaboration with animal protection associations. Last, some associations, such as OABA (l'œuvre d'assistance aux bêtes d'abattoirs), have their own auditors who are invited by abattoirs to run diagnostic assessments of slaughter conditions. It should be remembered that abattoir professionals have the primary responsibility for respecting animal welfare, to which are added the mandatory duties of veterinary inspectors with regard to abattoir inspections. Each animal must be inspected before slaughter. However, the conditions under which animals are handled, from unloading to slaughter, are not subject to constant oversight by government departments. Compliance with animal protection requirements is checked at least twice a year by the inspection services based at slaughtering plants, in the form of comprehensive audits. The implementation of internal monitoring by the operator is also verified. Last, physical checks are regularly carried out at slaughtering stations. Over the past two years, additional measures have been introduced by the government to increase checks on compliance with animal protection standards in abattoirs, and to implement appropriate administrative or punitive follow-up measures, targeting establishments whose slaughtering procedures require improvement. Last, in July 2021, the Ministry of Agriculture initiated an "abattoir plan" to ensure strict compliance with regulatory requirements, including those relating to animal welfare during slaughter, which includes support for the work required to improve practices [115 million euros (€M) provided to support 181 abattoirs], strengthening of local abattoir networks, strengthening of controls via a rapid intervention task force, and wider monitoring throughout France, accompanied by the implementation of appropriate further action in conjunction with prefectures. In July 2023, the French Ministry of Agriculture launched an initiative to preserve the appropriate network of abattoirs in each region, so that the long-term viability of the livestock industry can be ensured. The 2024 Finance Act makes provision for the government to underwrite €50 million of outstanding loans, to provide support for abattoirs that are of strategic interest to a sector and/or area of production.

27/02/2024 : Assemblée nationale : réponse écrite à la question n°14567 : Non-conformité de certains abattoirs de Mayenne

Document type: Answer to question no.14567 published in the [Journal officiel de la République française](#)

Authors: question : Vincent Ledoux (Renaissance - Nord). Answer: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty.

Question: Mr. Vincent Ledoux draws the attention of the Minister of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty to the release of terribly shocking images from an abattoir in Mayenne. Videos made at the Craon abattoir in November and December 2023 clearly show breaches of the regulations. For example, an operator starts to work on an animal's hide even though it is not dead, but only stunned, or cows react to strokes of the knife and guillotine pliers when their legs are cut off. In short, the animals are still alive when they are cut up. To prevent these barbarities, the Ministry launched the 2021 Abattoir Plan to strengthen controls, created a national task force and allocated over 115 million euros to support the modernization of abattoirs. However, it must be acknowledged that there are still many offences committed in these facilities. The matter has been referred to the courts and a judicial inquiry has been opened. These acts of barbarity and unspeakable cruelty must cease. It is

imperative to put an end to them and to slaughter the animals with dignity and without any form of abuse. Video monitoring at the time of slaughter would undoubtedly be one of the answers to lighten the atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust hanging over over abattoirs. Moreover, an assessment conducted by the ministry's services of the 2019 - 2021 pilot has shown the value of video monitoring. In 2024, the topic will be debated by the Comité national d'éthique des abattoirs (National Abattoir Ethics Committee), whose members include practitioners and animal protection associations, to determine whether the widespread use of video control would be of use in reducing situations of this kind. Concrete proposals and strict protocols will have to be drawn up. He therefore asks how [the Minister's] departments intend to tackle this issue, to put a definitive stop to these failures of compliance, and whether he intends to take any decisions following the session of the National Abattoir Ethics Committee to ensure that animals are slaughtered decently. He also asks for his opinion on [the member's] parliamentary Bill, registered with the Presidency of the National Assembly on October 17, 2023, which would institute parliamentary control of establishments where animals are slaughtered for consumption.

Answer: The conditions under which animals are killed in abattoirs are now subject to numerous controls, whether these are provided for by the regulations or are implemented voluntarily by abattoir operators. For example, European Regulation 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of slaughter requires the presence of an animal protection officer, who must be able to require abattoir staff to take the necessary corrective measures to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements. In addition, state officers (veterinarians and official auxiliaries) regularly audit animal slaughter conditions, report any cases of non-compliance and take appropriate administrative and legal measures. Third-party audits are also carried out on animal protection issues by abattoir customers as part of commercial contractual requirements. In addition, over the past few years, the industry has set up a system of voluntary animal protection audits in abattoirs, with an assessment grid drawn up in collaboration with animal protection associations. Last, some associations, such as OABA (l'œuvre d'assistance aux bêtes d'abattoirs), have their own auditors who are invited by abattoirs to run diagnostic assessments of slaughter conditions. It should be remembered that abattoir professionals have the primary responsibility for respecting animal welfare, to which are added the mandatory duties of veterinary inspectors with regard to abattoir inspections. Each animal must be inspected before slaughter. However, the conditions under which animals are handled, from unloading to slaughter, are not subject to constant oversight by government departments. Compliance with animal protection requirements is checked at least twice a year by the inspection services based at slaughtering plants, in the form of comprehensive audits. The implementation of internal monitoring by the operator is also verified. Last, physical checks are regularly carried out at slaughtering stations. Over the past two years, additional measures have been introduced by the government to increase checks on compliance with animal protection standards in abattoirs, and to implement appropriate administrative or punitive follow-up measures, targeting establishments whose slaughtering procedures require improvement. Last, in July 2021, the Ministry of Agriculture initiated an "abattoir plan" to ensure strict compliance with regulatory requirements, including those relating to animal welfare during slaughter, which includes support for the work required to improve practices [115 million euros (€M) provided to support 181 abattoirs], strengthening of local abattoir networks, strengthening of controls via a rapid intervention task force, and wider monitoring throughout France, accompanied by the implementation of appropriate further action in conjunction

with prefectures. In July 2023, the French Ministry of Agriculture launched an initiative to preserve the appropriate network of abattoirs in each region, so that the long-term viability of the livestock industry can be ensured. The 2024 Finance Act makes provision for the government to underwrite €50 million of outstanding loans, to provide support for abattoirs that are of strategic interest to a sector and/or area of production.

20/02/2024 : Assemblée nationale : réponse écrite à la question n°12294 : Castration à vif et claquage des porcelets

Document type: Answer to question no.12294 published in the [Journal officiel de la République française](#)

Authors: question: Béatrice Roullaud (Rassemblement National - Seine-et-Marne). Answer: French Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty.

Question: Mrs. Béatrice Roullaud asks the Minister of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty about the use of live castration, slapping and systematic tail docking on piglets on certain pig farms. Criticized for years by animal protection associations, live castration is an operation performed without anesthesia to eliminate an unpleasant odor during the cooking of uncastrated pigs. However, scientific studies have shown that only 5% of male pigs are susceptible to this smell, and that not all consumers are sensitive to it. Slamming consists in killing piglets deemed too weak to be economically viable, by slamming them against a wall or on the floor. These two techniques, as well as the systematic cutting off of tails, are cruel to these animals and contravene the end-of-life conditions that society should guarantee them. In 2020, the French Minister of Agriculture pledged to end live castration of piglets by the end of 2021. A first decree was then signed in February 2020 to ban live castration from January 1, 2022, and to provide a framework for the performance of castration by requiring the management of the piglet's pain. Henceforth, breeders must use anesthetics and analgesics or no longer castrate piglets. But the use of these products is difficult to control and, in fact, uncontrolled. Indeed, the L214 association recently revealed that violent and illegal handling of piglets was still taking place on certain farms. She therefore asks whether the Ministry intends to ban the slapping and castration of piglets outright, in order to prevent these intolerable abuses.

Answer: Improving animal welfare and combating animal abuse are government priorities. France is actively involved in all European and international efforts on this subject, with a view to ensuring a sensible transition in farming methods, taking account of societal expectations and seeking actions to leverage the additional costs incurred by farmers in particular, without creating unfair competition on the European market. The French government considers that the changes must be supported by the most recent scientific knowledge, and accompanied by the existence of alternative production methods and prospective impact studies. In particular, it is essential to take into account the capacity of the industry to adapt over time to new requirements before such measures are defined. France and Germany have led the way in banning the live castration of piglets, and in the management of the pain the practice causes. With regard to the grinding of piglets' teeth and tail docking, regulations prohibit the routine performance of these practices. Farms that contravene the regulations are subject to administrative and legal measures that reflect the seriousness of the case. Last, the practice of slamming piglets against a structure is currently permitted by the regulations, to prevent

further suffering due to their state of weakness. However, work is underway with all representatives of the industry, veterinarians and research and scientific institutes to find solutions to support farmers and ensure the best possible protection for piglets. The on-farm practices of castration, tail docking and killing - are the subject of in-depth study by government departments, working with all the pig industry's professional partners, scientists, technical institutes and veterinarians, to find solutions to the practical problems encountered on the ground. The aim is for two dedicated technical groups to draw up a roadmap on the subjects of castration-caudectomy and killing in 2024. It is intended to revise the protocols, support the "castrabea" resource center, make veterinary products and alternatives to castration available to farmers, specify a positive list of pig health problems that should lead farmers to isolate pigs in hospital pens, determine what proofs of exceptional circumstances should be accepted in the event of an inspection, and revise good practice guides for killing pigs on farm... All these actions should not only help farmers to meet the regulatory requirements in terms of animal welfare, but also help inspection services to better understand the circumstances at the farms they inspect.

[20/02/2024 : Assemblée nationale : réponse écrite à la question n°8820 : Mise en application de l'interdiction du broyage des poussins mâles](#)

Document type: Answer to question no.8820 published in the [Journal officiel de la République française](#)

Authors: question: Josy Poueyto (Démocrate (MoDem et Indépendants) - Pyrénées-Atlantiques).
Answer: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty.

Question: Mrs. Josy Poueyto draws the attention of the Minister of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty to the implementation of the ban on the crushing of male chicks in the egg industry. Indeed, in January 2020, Minister Didier Guillaume announced the forthcoming end of chick crushing. The equipment for in ovo sexing was to be ordered by French hatcheries in the first quarter of 2022, and installation work was to begin before June 1, 2022, with a view to implementing the ban on chick crushing from January 1, 2023. A number of regulatory texts have meanwhile been issued to clarify the ban and give information on exceptions to the general principle. Only gassing remains authorized for the post-hatching culling of male chicks from white-feathered strains used for scientific purposes and animal feed. She would therefore like to know how the French government is monitoring the situation, to ensure that all French hatcheries are now equipped with in ovo sexing equipment, and that male chicks are no longer crushed. She would also like to know what proportion of chicks are currently covered by regulatory exceptions and can therefore still be gassed after hatching, and how the Government intends to monitor and control the application of these exceptions. Last, she would like to know whether the government intends to extend the ban on crushing to female ducklings, millions of which are still culled every year after hatching.

Answer: Improving animal welfare and combating animal abuse are priorities for the French government. In order to ensure a sensible transition in farming methods, taking into account societal expectations and seeking ways to leverage the additional costs for farmers in particular, without creating unfair competition on the European market, France is an active participant in all European

and international efforts on this matter. Up until now, nearly 50 million male chicks have been culled each year in the egg industry in the absence of profitability or an economic market for them. With a shared determination to put an end to this practice, and in response to strong societal expectations, the government and the egg industry worked together throughout 2022 to ensure that, as of January 1, 2023, egg-crushing systems would be taken out of use, and that no more male chicks in the egg industry would be culled by crushing. Only one derogation has been granted for the culling by gassing of chicks used in animal feed. This exception allows captive wild fauna, reptiles and birds of prey to be fed on the whole carcasses of day-old chicks. Disposal by crushing or grinding is therefore not authorized under this derogation. In addition, this derogation is limited to strains whose embryo sex cannot be determined using a method based on the difference in feather color, i.e., exclusively to strains of hens producing white-shelled eggs and traditional strains, which account for 15% of laying hens in France. Current technologies for determining the sex of the embryo for strains of hens producing white-shell eggs are not sufficiently advanced for general application. As a result, all shell eggs sold to consumers are produced by brown hens, for which the culling of male chicks will be strictly forbidden, representing 85% of all laying hens in France. The French government has provided 10.5 million euros to help hatcheries install in ovo sexing machines. The industry has made arrangements to share the additional costs incurred by all links in the production chain as a result of these new technologies, estimated to be 45 million euros a year. On-site inspections of hatchery equipment by FranceAgriMer agents confirm that all hatcheries are equipped with fully-operational equipment. France thus remains the first country in the world, along with Germany, to put an end in this way to the crushing of male chicks in the egg-production sector.

[16/02/2024 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-000006/24 : Favoriser le développement des abattoirs mobiles](#)

Document type: Response from the [European Commission](#) to question E-000006/24

Authors: question : Annika Bruna (ID). Answer: M. Wojciechowski on behalf of the European Commission

Question: On 14 December 2023, the Commission amended the Regulation on hygiene rules for products of animal origin to authorise mobile slaughterhouses for all species. Mobile abattoirs have many advantages: firstly, they obviate de facto the need to transport the animals and the cruel conditions that entails (long, cramped, sometimes very hot journeys); Secondly, they replace conventional abattoirs, many of which are closing, meaning that there are fewer of them and they are further away from farms, and the animals have to be transported even further; Thirdly, they avoid the ill-treatment noted in traditional slaughterhouses, such as ritual slaughter without prior stunning. With a view to fostering the development of mobile abattoirs, can the Commission say: 1. Whether it is considering funding mobile abattoir projects? 2. Whether it will encourage the Member States to fund them as well, despite the resistance of the industrial abattoirs that have opposed this competition, particularly when the recovery plans were being devised? 3. Whether it is ready to raise public awareness, by supporting labelling indicating use of these mobile abattoirs by local operators for instance?

Answer: During both the 2014-2022 and 2023-2027 programming periods, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) could fund investment support for local small-scale slaughterhouses, including mobile

ones. Mobile slaughterhouses present an interest from the point of view of limiting the transport of animals. It is up to Member States to include such support in their Rural Development Programmes or CAP Strategic Plans, in line with their needs assessment and intervention strategy. For the CAP Strategic Plans this option is possible under Article 73 — Investments of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 [\[1\]](#) establishing rules on support for strategic plans. In addition, recognised producer organisations in the livestock sector can invest in physical assets such as a mobile abattoir equipment, provided it is part of its approved operational programme. The investment may be used at the premises of the producer organisation or of its producer members (under the provisions of Articles 66 et 47 (1) (a) — Investments in tangible and intangible assets of the same Regulation (EU) 2021/2115). Under both the 2014-2022 and 2023-2027 rural development programming, Member States may support under Technical Assistance awareness actions, including for the certification and labelling of mobile slaughterhouses, but it is up to them to propose and implement them.

[\[1\] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R2115](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R2115)

Transport, Slaughter, Pick-up

29/02/2024 : Abattoir mobile : retour sur la mise à l'arrêt du premier dispositif d'abattage à la ferme en France

Document type: article published in [GoodPlanet mag'](#)

Author: Louise Chevallier

Preview: Inspired by the model of the mobile abattoir that travels the Swedish countryside, Emilie Jeannin set up France's first on-farm cattle slaughter facility 3 years ago. Between August 2021 and February 2023, Le Bœuf Ethique's mobile abattoir made its way along the roads of Burgundy. Its activities ended because it was not financially viable, despite the fact that this alternative model seemed to satisfy all the expectations of consumers and farmers in terms of animal welfare, meat quality and local supply chains. We take a look back at the challenges and obstacles involved in this landmark experiment, which has paved the way for new slaughter practices.

The advantages of on-farm slaughter

With her mobile abattoir, Emilie Jeannin has proved that a different approach to slaughtering is possible. The former livestock farmer dismisses "the central argument that industrial establishments are needed to comply with standards", she says. Taking animal welfare into account while offering meat of impeccable quality for sale "requires resources, but either it's a priority or it's not". The mobile abattoir operates with three trucks that travel from farm to farm: one for the changing rooms, washing facilities and the office for veterinary services, another for the abattoir and the last for the refrigeration unit where the carcasses are stored. The carcasses are then taken to an abattoir for storage and cutting. Animals are thus spared the stress of transport and are slaughtered in a familiar place, respecting animal welfare needs. "This system is designed so that the animal doesn't notice a thing," explains Marie-Pierre Ellies, who teaches on animal production at Bordeaux Sciences Agro and is an INRAE researcher. The absence of stress can also indirectly improve meat quality. (...)

Obstacles to success

On-farm slaughtering faces a number of challenges compared to conventional practices. It "takes more time than a normal abattoir with more staff, so they can't slaughter many animals a day, and on top of that there's the travel involved, so it's not necessarily profitable", comments Marie-Pierre Ellies. But the particular way that the mobile abattoir operates may not be the main reason for the failure of Emilie Jeannin's business. Between delays in subsidy payments, lack of government support and excessive invoicing by the abattoir, "there were a lot of problems", admits the project leader. Emilie Jeannin points out that the abattoir's performance could not be matched: temporary health approvals were obtained in 8 days and confirmed after 6 months, in contrast to other organizations which take years to obtain this, and sales reached 1,100,000 euros in 13 months(...) "It's not a question of saying that it's everyone's fault, but we had to admit that by offering an alternative we provoked a lot of tension and fear. There wasn't much support provided for the change, except from customers and consumers, who were there for real," says the project manager. "It was entirely thanks to the consumers that we were able to get the mobile abattoir off the ground", with support from social networks and crowdfunding platforms.

Change can be annoying

In Emilie Jeannin's view, "this alternative way of doing things was very annoying for current abattoir owners, so a lot of obstacles were placed in our way to bring down the project". The mobile received grants that amounted to only 35% of the investment required, whereas conventional businesses receive funding for 60 or even 80%. "They are in a different league ", says the entrepreneur. She points out that "conventional abattoirs are paid millions to make sure that nothing changes", although none of them would appear to have achieved the same sales figures in their first 13 months of business. "The economic side of things is a fake excuse. They didn't want it to work. It suited them that I should fail," she claims. (...)

Advice for those who want to try it again (...)

She acknowledges that "going it alone", even with the help of partners, was one of her "weaknesses", but "nobody else wanted to do it". One solution would be "to get involved in collective projects where the public authorities really put their money where their mouth is. I've learned a lot from this experience, and I think it's possible. But there's no ready-made formula, as each region has its own particularities," she explains. For Marie-Pierre Ellies, "the alternative provided by on-farm slaughtering is a great idea, but it will never be able to cope with the volumes that go through the current system". Nevertheless, the fact that it can be associated with a high quality approach means that it remains "a possibility in certain cases". The model could also work for other species, as could on-site processing when a farm has its own facilities. But "this will always raise the issue of how many farmers are interested and how many animals can be slaughtered in a day", the agronomy professor reminds us.

And if you had it to do all over again?

" If I had it to do all over again, I would," says Emilie Jeannin. "If only to prove that it was possible. She points out that "at the beginning, everyone believed that it would be technically impossible to achieve a faultless result in terms of quality, health and respect for animal welfare". Skeptics included

health authorities, members of the meat industry and lobbying groups such as Interbev, and even some animal protection associations, who were concerned that controls might be less stringent. However, "they are wrong: we've proved that we did it in a way that was good, precisely, for the animals". (...)

[22/02/2024 : Training of transport drivers improves their handling of pigs during loading for transport to slaughter](#)

Document type: scientific article published in [Animal](#)

Authors: S. Wilhelmsson, P.H. Hemsworth, M. Andersson, J. Yngvesson, L. Hemsworth, J. Hultgren

Preview: Pig transport drivers' (TDs') handling actions are of great importance as these drivers handle a large number of finishing pigs during stressful situations. Poor handling techniques can have negative consequences for working conditions, pig welfare and meat quality. We studied the effects of a training intervention on Swedish TDs' attitudes towards pigs and their handling actions during loading for transport to slaughter. Twenty TDs working with commercial pig transportation in Sweden were recruited and completed an attitude questionnaire. Ten of them were observed during one loading of pigs before training, and one or two loadings after training (49-265 pigs per loading), and eight of them completed the attitude questionnaire again 50-160 days after training. The cognitive-behavioural training program ProHand Pigs® was adapted and delivered to the ten TDs during a group session, followed by individual meetings. TDs' handling actions were video recorded and summarised as binary variables per 5-s interval. Factor analysis, principal component analysis and paired *t*-test were conducted to investigate effects of the training intervention on TDs' attitudes, and mixed-effects logistic models were used to examine effects on negative and positive handling actions. Training tended to decrease TDs' beliefs that it is important to move pigs quickly ($P=0.095$). Training decreased the odds of a 'moderately-strongly negative' action by 55% ($P=0.0013$) and increased the odds of a 'positive' action by 97% ($P\leq 0.0001$). This study provides valuable insights into the possibilities to improve TDs' handling actions, and implications for pig welfare during slaughter transport. The study supports previous findings that attitudes and behaviour of handlers can be improved by cognitive-behavioural training. While our previous research has shown reciprocal relationships between TDs' actions and pig behaviour, further research on TDs' attitudes towards handling that underlie the nature of their behaviour when handling pigs is necessary to fine tune the cognitive-behavioural training program applied in the present study.

[04/12/2023 : Stop culling male layer-type chick: an overview of the alternatives and public perspective](#)

Document type: scientific article published in [World's Poultry Science Journal](#)

Authors: Francesca Coppola, Gisella Paci, Matteo Profeti, Simone Mancini

Preview: Demand towards healthy, high-quality animal products is growing, and at the same time, more ethical animal husbandry methods which consider animal welfare and sustainability are under a high social spotlight. Culling of day-old male layer chicks is one of the main animal welfare concerns in the poultry sector, along with cage use, also in relation to changes in social demands. Political and societal disapproval towards this practice led to consider alternatives to day-old male

layer chicks culling such as the rearing of male chicks, the use of dual-purpose strains and *in ovo* sex determination of embryos. This review summarised the available literature sources about the alternatives to the culling method and the public perspective on these approaches. Regarding *in ovo* sex determination several techniques were released in the last decades employing genetic, optical, biological, physicochemical, and biotechnological approaches. Animal welfare, costs, and ethical aspects, along with customers' acceptance, are the main aspects to be considered in the choice of alternative methods. Although rearing dual-purpose chicken or layer-type cockerels produced very socially acceptable alternatives, their production costs are excessively expensive to be appropriate for mass markets. Based on the literature, *in ovo* sex determination seems to be the main potential alternative method to male chicks culling and the most preferred by consumers especially if performed during the first days of incubation. However, all the commercially available technologies are applicable only in the late stage of embryo development and are not yet ready to be used on large scales. Therefore, the development of an early, non-invasive, rapid, economical, and ethically acceptable *in ovo* sexing technique remains the main challenge as well as a priority. Moreover, the potential benefit or risk balance of the use of genetic methodologies needs to be discussed more globally.

Working animals

[27/02/2024 : A Reexamination of the Relationship between Training Practices and Welfare in the Management of Ambassador Animals](#)

Document type: scientific article published in [Animals](#)

Authors: S. Martin, G. Stafford, D.S. Miller

Preview: There is an ethical need to document and develop best practices for meeting ambassador animals' welfare needs within the context of meeting zoo and aquarium program objectives. This is because ambassador animals experience direct and frequent contact with humans. This paper rigorously synthesizes behavioral research and theory, contemporary practices, and personal experiences to offer key concepts that can be applied to meet ambassador animal welfare needs. These key concepts include addressing an animal's recognition of choice and control, the use of the most positive and least intrusive effective interventions when training animals to participate in programming, and an overall reduction in aversive strategy use. Our model for increasing ambassador animal welfare focuses on seven main areas of concern, including the following: choosing the most suitable animal for the program; choosing the human with the right skills and knowledge for the program; using the most positive, least intrusive, effective training methods; developing a strong trusting relationship between trainer and animal; developing a comprehensive enrichment program; the need for institutional support; and creating opportunities for animals to practice species-appropriate behaviors. Our model will provide guidelines for improved ambassador animal welfare that can be refined with future research.