

FRCAW Newsletter 55

August - September 2025

Editorial

New EFSA welfare reports on beef cattle and fur farming



[Image](#) from [EFSA opinion \(2025\)](#) © Oikeutta eläimille, Supporting information SF4

The expert opinions published by the EFSA (European Food Safety Authority) are produced by its Panel on Animal Health and Welfare at the request of the European Commission. They provide the Commission with scientific evidence on animal welfare, reporting on risk factors and their impacts on animals to help it carry out its activities. Indeed, the Commission's update of the European regulations on animal welfare is currently in the news, with the launch of a public consultation on the issue.

The EFSA brought out two new scientific opinions and a technical report in July 2025. The first opinion is on the [welfare of beef cattle](#), with a focus on the animals' environment, breeding and rearing practices, and mutilations. Among its practical recommendations are proposals on space allowances, the feeding of roughage, bedding, enrichment, and the use of selected animal based measures at abattoirs to monitor highly relevant welfare consequences resulting from the animals' on-farm experiences. It emphasises the need for pain prevention, stable social groups, improved housing conditions and outdoor access. A free webinar on this new opinion will be held on [2 October 2025 at 15.00m \(CEST\)](#).

A second scientific opinion addresses the [welfare of animals kept for fur production](#) (American mink, red and arctic foxes, raccoon dog and chinchilla). It was requested by the European Commission in response to the 2022 [Fur Free Europe](#) European Citizens' Initiative calling on the EU to ban fur farming and the placement of farmed fur products on the market once and for all. In its report, the EFSA identifies the main threats to the welfare of animals farmed for their fur, mostly linked to a life spent in cages without enrichment. This restricts their movements, prevents them from exploring and hunting, leaves them in a state of under- or over-stimulation and stress, and causes injuries and walking difficulties. The report concludes that neither prevention nor substantial mitigation of the welfare consequences it identifies is possible in the current cage rearing system. A webinar on this opinion will be held by the EFSA on [29 September at 15.00 \(CEST\)](#). To accompany this opinion, the EFSA published a [technical report](#) updating the SCAHAW's earlier report entitled 'The Welfare of Animals kept for Fur Production' (SCAHAW, 2001). The new report includes the latest information on biology and production cycles and also provides details of the most common commercial farming systems and practices for the production of mink, fox, raccoon dog and chinchilla fur. The Commission has recently stated, in an [answer to a question in the European parliament](#), that it plans to communicate, by March 2026, whether it considers appropriate to impose a prohibition on the keeping in farms and killing of fur animals, or instead adopt appropriate legal standards to better address the welfare needs of such animals.

French legal framework now in place for activities associated with domestic companion animals



Image supplied by Freepik

In France, a [new ministerial decree](#) came into force on 19 June 2025, setting the health and animal protection rules relating to activities associated with companion animals of domestic species. The decree covers domestic carnivores (dogs, cats, ferrets), but also rabbits, rodents, birds and fish. It provides detailed requirements for the treatment of animals in shelters and in breeding, educational and sales establishments, also setting out how these animals should be displayed to the public. In all contexts, account must be taken of the biological, physiological and behavioural needs of each species involved, and each establishment is now required to have its own health regulations.

Closure of local abattoirs in France



Image from the [France3 Bretagne](#) website. © Charly Triballeau/AFP

In an [open letter to the French Minister](#) for Agriculture, the *Confédération paysanne*, a French agricultural union, has warned of a rapid increase in the closure of local abattoirs that is leaving farmers exposed, especially those who work within local supply chains, posing a threat to local and regional agricultural life in France. The union expresses its dismay at the failure by national government to support small-scale and mobile abattoir projects set up by local farmers in areas that have lost their abattoirs. It describes a situation where the reduction in the number of abattoirs has been accompanied by a pattern of economic and geographical concentration that benefits the country's large industrial groups. To this can be added the ever longer distances involved in animal transport. The Confederation calls on the French government to provide help to maintain these vital services for the sector and for animal welfare.

A chicken 'welfare footprint'



Image from the [Chaire Bien-être Animal](#) website

An [article](#) in this month's Poultry World looks at a scientific paper that calculates the welfare equivalent of a carbon footprint. The paper, published in Nature Food, promotes and demonstrates

a scientific method (the welfare footprint framework) for the objective assessment of welfare, allowing it to be weighed alongside economic and environmental considerations in terms of their relative impacts on agricultural systems. The study examines the European Chicken Commitment, also known as the [Better Chicken Commitment](#) (BCC), which calls on food producers to replace fast-growing breeds with slower-growing breeds and adopt higher animal welfare standards. It addresses concerns over potential higher costs by demonstrating, for example, that a switch to slower-growing breeds prevents at least 15 to 100 hours of intense pain per bird for an additional cost of just one US dollar per kg of meat. Its authors suggest that the shared standard metric provided by the welfare footprint framework enables its integration with economic and environmental indicators, allowing welfare to become a serious part of the decision-making conversation in agriculture.

Grief in horses

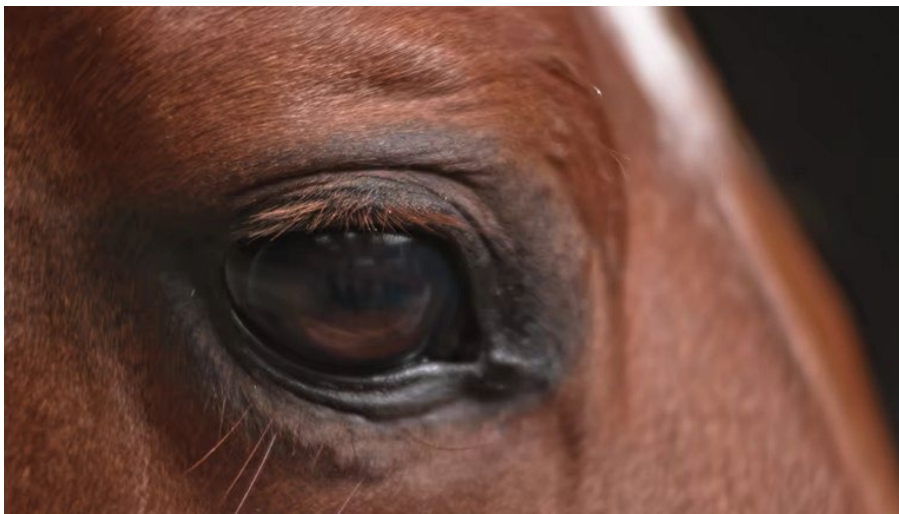


Image supplied by iStock

A survivor's emotional response to the loss of a companion can be described as grief, and research has been carried out on whether non-human animals might feel emotions resembling the feelings of grief experienced by humans. Behavioural changes towards dying or dead conspecifics have been observed in many social species of land and marine mammals (non-human primates, elephants, giraffes, wolves, dogs, cats, dolphins, orcas and sperm whales). A study in [Applied Animal Behaviour Science](#) has examined shared patterns of behavioural response in horses that have experienced the death of a conspecific. The results show that the loss of a companion leads to behavioural changes in horses (arousal, vigilance, vocalisation), reduced interactivity with humans, loss of appetite and disturbed sleep. Such behavioural changes can last for as long as six months, especially where a strong emotional bond existed with the deceased animal. The detailed documentation of the grief-related reactions of horses provided in this study may help owners to better understand and manage the emotional welfare needs of surviving animals in their care.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial	1
COGNITION-EMOTIONS	7
08/09/2025 : Just like humans, many animals get more aggressive in the heat.....	7
08/09/2025 : Grief-like distress responses in horses after the death of a conspecific.....	8
15/04/2025 : Social behaviour of the domestic pig and its importance for animal welfare on farms ..	8
CONFERENCES-SEMINARS-TRAINING	9
19/09/2025 : Public consultation : On-farm animal welfare for certain animals: modernisation of EU legislation	9
28/08/2025 : Élevages durables respectueux de la santé et du bien-être des animaux - Séminaire le 27 novembre 2025	10
27/08/2025 : Webinar on welfare of beef cattle - 2 October 2025 - EFSA	10
27/08/2025 : Webinar on welfare of animals kept for fur production - EFSA	11
ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND HUMAN-ANIMAL RELATIONSHIP	12
10/09/2025 : An analysis of behavioral characteristics and enrollment year variability in 47,444 dogs entering the Dog Aging Project from 2020 to 2023	12
01/08/2025 : Aggressive Mating Behavior in Roosters (Gallus gallus domesticus): A Narrative Review of Behavioral Patterns.....	12
30/07/2025 : Welfare of American mink, red and Arctic foxes, raccoon dog and chinchilla kept for fur production - EFSA.....	13
30/07/2025 : Biology, husbandry systems and farm practices for American mink, red and Arctic foxes, raccoon dog and chinchilla kept for fur production - EFSA.....	14
28/07/2025 : Exploring human-animal interactions beyond academic research: A rapid review of grey literature	14
25/07/2025 : EFSA opinion - Welfare of beef cattle	15
PRECISION FARMING AND AI	15
12/09/2025 : "L'IA ne remplacera pas l'éleveur" : elle peut contribuer au bien-être animal.....	15
ETHICS-SOCIOLOGY-PHILOSOPHY-ANIMAL RIGHTS	16
06/08/2025 : Cross-cultural variation in understanding of animal welfare principles and animal management practices among veterinary and animal welfare professionals in the UK and Japan ...	16
16/07/2025 : Change the world farm by farm: The moral care of audit and the paradox of animal welfare inspection in Europe	17
15/06/2025 : Balancing culinary excellence with ethical responsibility: A scientific perspective on animal welfare in gastronomy.....	17
ANIMAL WELFARE ASSESSMENT AND LABELLING	18
01/09/2025 : Are higher-welfare systems really too costly or inefficient?	18
POPULATION MANAGEMENT AND ANIMAL WELFARE.....	19
03/08/2025 : A Maisons-Alfort, un centre de soins débordé par le nombre des animaux recueillis : « On a passé quelques nuits blanches »	19
22/07/2025 : Domestic cat management in the UK: learnings from a global perspective	19
HOUSING AND ENRICHMENT.....	20
01/09/2025 : Structuring and enriching the rearing environment in conventional broiler chicken production: effects on behavioral indicators, emotional states, and cecal microbiota composition	20
21/08/2025 : Small mammal owners' experiences of housing challenges and animal welfare: A COM-B and word frequency analysis	21
20/08/2025 : Invited review: Development of a dairy barn concept to improve animal welfare	21
28/07/2025 : Effects of music enrichment on the welfare of small ornamental fishes	22
INVERTEBRATES.....	22

15/08/2025 : Assessing the Welfare of Spiny Lobsters and True Lobsters in Aquaria: Biology-Informed Best-Practice Guidelines for Captive Conditions	22
ONE WELFARE	23
23/07/2025 : Evaluation des coûts et bénéfices économiques des pratiques de bien-être animal en élevage.....	23
23/07/2025 : Loi « Duplomb » : un texte délétère pour le bien-être animal, la santé et l'environnement.....	24
PAIN MANAGEMENT	25
24/06/2025 : Efficacy of pain management for cattle castration: A systematic review and meta-analysis.....	25
REGULATION	25
08/09/2025 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-002989/2025 : Respect for animal welfare in Ukrainian poultry imports	25
04/09/2025 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-002896/25 : Mise en place de mesures miroirs en matière de bien-être animal	27
04/09/2025 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-002984/25 : Violations du règlement relatif au transport des animaux	28
29/08/2025 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-002603/2025 : Finland's derogation for mink fur farming and the ban on fur farming throughout the EU	29
27/08/2025 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-001998/2025 : Animals confined in unspeakable conditions in Malta	30
22/08/2025 : Enquête auprès des bénéficiaires d'aides de la PAC 2023-2027	31
30/07/2025 : Parlement européen : Réponse écrite à la question E-002013/2025 : Élevage des visons et protection du bien-être animal.....	32
30/07/2025 : Parlement européen : Réponse écrite à la question E-001917/2025 : Notification by the Netherlands on lowering the maximum temperature for the transport of animals	33
30/07/2025 : Parlement européen : Réponse écrite à la question E-001689/25 : Normes de bien-être animal dans l'aquaculture de l'UE visant à renforcer la compétitivité et la sécurité alimentaire	34
22/07/2025 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-002054/2025 : Fairness in the application of the new European animal welfare rules in the specific context of eastern Europe.....	35
19/06/2025 : Arrêté du 19 juin 2025 fixant les règles sanitaires et de protection animale auxquelles doivent satisfaire les activités liées aux animaux de compagnie d'espèces domestiques	36
TRANSPORT, SLAUGHTER, PICK-UP	37
24/08/2025 : Welfare of sheep, cattle, and pigs at control posts during long distance transportation across Europe	37
15/07/2025 : Lettre ouverte à la Ministre de l'Agriculture, Mme Annie Genevard Régression des abattoirs de proximité : Madame la Ministre, que faites-vous pour soutenir l'élevage ?.....	37
31/12/2024 : Blueprint for research to detect loss of consciousness and/or sensibility of fish at slaughter.....	38

Cognition-Emotions

08/09/2025 : Just like humans, many animals get more aggressive in the heat

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

Author: Katarina Zimmer

Preview: Humans aren't the only animals with hot tempers. In 2016, ecologist Kristen Cecala and a colleague watched black-bellied salamanders (*Desmognathus amphileucus*) from Appalachian streams lunge at one another inside a lab incubator. The little animals — barely a hand's length — can be fiercely territorial, thrashing to bite their opponents or send them fleeing, says Cecala, of the University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn. "Salamander fight club," as Cecala calls the experiment, was set up to test how rising temperatures would affect the amphibians' behavior. Black-bellied salamanders, it turned out, were nearly four times as likely to act aggressively at 25° Celsius — much warmer than their stream habitats — compared with more natural conditions at 15° or 20° C.

And salamanders aren't alone in their raucous behavior. Studies show that many animals — monkeys, rats, mice, fish, ants — tend to get more aggressive at higher temperatures. As the planet warms due to climate change, rising temperatures could subtly affect some species' social structures and ecosystems. But the findings may also tell us something deeper about how heat affects animals physiologically — and potentially reveal clues to increased violence and crime among humans in hot weather. (...) In one 2024 study, freshwater biologist Erin Francispillai and her colleagues placed bluntnose minnows (*Pimephales notatus*) in tanks where temperatures fluctuated from 18° to 24° C within a day — a change that mimics similar conditions documented in streams that have lost shade due to deforestation. At higher temperatures, the small fish behaved more aggressively toward their shoalmates compared with fish kept at constant temperatures. (...) One possible explanation for this heat-aggression link in ectotherms is that warmth dials up the animals' metabolisms, using up more of their energy. This requires more calories, making animals more territorial and aggressive to secure food. (...)

By contrast, warm-blooded endotherms like mammals may be less sensitive to these effects, Francispillai says, because they can cool their bodies through sweating or panting, for instance. But the heat-aggression association has been documented in some monkeys, rats, mice and, according to Linnman's research, even dogs.

Even for endotherms, warmth boosts metabolic rates, and calorie loss may be exacerbated by the energy needed to cool their bodies, Francispillai says. When the priority is getting more calories, less energy may go toward maintaining social behaviors and regulating aggression, she speculates. Yet Linnman suggests that increased aggression could also arise from the discomfort that warm-blooded animals feel in hot weather. (...)

In humans, scientists debate the extent to which the aggression-heat relationship is due to biological effects of heat on behavior versus increased outdoor activities on hot days. But "as the heat-aggression correlation is consistent across multiple species, it suggests that simple 'sociological explanations' ... are not sufficient," Linnman says. (...)

08/09/2025 : Grief-like distress responses in horses after the death of a conspecific

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

Authors: Claire Ricci-Bonot, Emily Wilson, Stefania Uccheddu, Daniel Simon Mills

Preview: As a social species, it would be anticipated that horses may display altered behaviours toward dying or dead conspecifics. However, there is remarkably little literature on this subject. The aim of this study was to identify behavioural changes in horses who have experienced the loss of a companion equid. An online survey was used to collect data on the housing and management of the equids, information on the surviving and deceased equid (including relationship), the passing of the deceased equid, and the type and duration of immediate and sustained behavioural changes in the surviving horse. The survey was completed for 325 surviving horses. Horse owners reported multiple changes in behaviour in the surviving horse within 24 h of the companion's death; most often related to arousal (88.96 %), behaviour directed towards other equids (77.67 %) and people (77.64 %), alertness to stimuli (72.92 %) and vocalisation (68.63 %). Multiple logistic regression models indicate that horses who had shared an affectionate relationship, rather than simply tolerated each other, were more likely to change their excitement to interact with others or at feeding time (parental-dependant vs. mutual tolerance: $p = 0.006$; friendly vs. mutual tolerance: $p = 0.023$) and behaviour towards humans (parental-dependant vs. mutual tolerance: $p = 0.026$; friendly vs. mutual tolerance: $p = 0.029$). These behavioural changes often persisted for 6 months after the death of their companion. Horses who had witnessed the death of their companion were more likely to show alterations in time spent sleeping ($p = 0.028$) and feeding ($p = 0.030$) within 24 h of death, compared to before companion death. These surviving horses were also more likely to have a change in excitement towards interacting with others and/or around feeding time ($p = 0.004$) and vigilance ($p = 0.016$). Whether or not the surviving horse had spent time with the dead body did not affect its behaviour in the first 24 h of loss. However, within 6 months after the death of the companion, horses who could spend time with the body had no change in vocalisation ($p = 0.005$) and excitement to interact with others and/or to feed time ($p = 0.022$). Conversely, horses who could not spend time with the body were more likely to show a change in arousal ($p = 0.038$) and vigilance ($p = 0.033$). These findings indicate that horses may express grief-related behaviours, but further independent empirical evidence is required. The death of a companion can have negative consequences for the survivor's welfare. This study may help owners manage emotional welfare better during this difficult time.

15/04/2025 : Social behaviour of the domestic pig and its importance for animal welfare on farms

Document type: scientific synthesis published in [INRAE Productions Animales](#)

Author: C. Clouard-Mésange

Preview: The pig is a social species that lives within groups whose hierarchical structure is regulated by a set of agonistic interactions, such as aggression, as well as non-agonistic ones, such as snout contacts. This review aims to (i) provide an overview of current knowledge on the social behaviour of the domestic pig, (ii) describe the impact of farming practices on the expression of these

behaviours, and (iii) propose research perspectives on social behaviour to improve animal welfare on farms. On pig farms, several husbandry conditions and practices, including social mixing, the formation of inadequate groups in terms of size or composition, or unsuitable infrastructures strongly affect the expression of social behaviours and relationships. Until recently, pig research on social behaviour has primarily focused on agonistic interactions. The role of these interactions in dominance relationships and in resource defence, as well as the impact of certain husbandry practices on these behaviours, are well-documented. In contrast, non-agonistic social behaviours have received little attention to date. Yet, their prevalence is significantly greater than that of agonistic behaviours, and they are believed to be involved in various biological processes, such as social recognition and communication, affiliation, and stress reduction. By favouring positive mental states, these behaviours could play a crucial role in maintaining animal welfare on pig farms. We need to better understand their functions and determinants. This knowledge should be incorporated in the design of new management practices in pig production systems.

Conferences-Seminars-Training

19/09/2025 : Public consultation : On-farm animal welfare for certain animals: modernisation of EU legislation

Document type: public consultation published by the [European Commission](#)

Author: European Commission

Preview: Consultation period: 19 September 2025 - 12 December 2025 (midnight Brussels time)

Target audience

Any group directly affected by the legislation, such as farmers and other food business operators, and the public, animal welfare NGOs and consumer organisations.

Why we are consulting

The initiative will explore several options to address certain shortcomings identified in the 2022 fitness check of the EU animal welfare legislation. The aim is to revise this legislation insofar as on-farm welfare is concerned, including phasing out the use of cages.

Responding to the questionnaire

You can contribute to this consultation by filling in the [online questionnaire](#). If you are unable to use the online questionnaire, please contact us using the email address below. Questionnaires are available in some or all official EU languages. You can submit your responses in any official EU language. For reasons of transparency, organisations and businesses taking part in public consultations are asked to register in the [EU's Transparency Register](#). In order to contribute you'll need to register or login using your existing social media account.

Personal data and privacy statement

The European Union is committed to protecting your personal data and to respecting your privacy. When carrying out public consultations we adhere to the policy on 'protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions', based on Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 on processing of personal data by the EU institutions.

Further information on the [protection of your personal data](#)

ContactSANTE-CONSULT-G3@ec.europa.eu

28/08/2025 : Élevages durables respectueux de la santé et du bien-être des animaux - Séminaire le 27 novembre 2025

Document type: seminar announcement published by [CIAg](#) (Crossroads of agronomic innovation)

Author: CIAg

Preview: On Thursday, November 27, 2025, from 8.30am to 5pm, INRAE, VetAgro Sup, Agreenium, GIS Avenir Élevages, Ifip, Itavi and Idele will be holding a refresher day for stakeholders. Participants will be able to update their knowledge and exchange views with the experts on research directions in animal health and welfare, which often have synergies but can sometimes be conflicting. Designing farms that encourage animal health and welfare is a no-brainer for farmers and meets the expectations of the public. In the course of the day, we will look at a number of questions: What are the synergies and tensions between welfare and health? What are the impacts of practices that encourage the relationship between animals and their young? How can stakeholder partnerships help to bring about change in the design of more sustainable livestock farms? How can value be added to these practices in the production chain?

You can participate in person at VetAgro Sup: 1 avenue Bourgelat, 69280 Marcy-l'Étoile or attend online.

To register: <https://sondages.inrae.fr/index.php/142317?lang=fr>

27/08/2025 : Webinar on welfare of beef cattle - 2 October 2025 - EFSA

Document type: seminar announcement published on the [EFSA website](#)

Author: EFSA

Date and time: 02 October 2025, 15.00 - 17.15 (CEST)

Preview:*Background*

In this webinar, EFSA will present its recently published [scientific opinion on the welfare of beef cattle](#). This opinion provides the most up-to-date scientific research on the effects of housing and management conditions on the welfare of cattle reared for beef. This work was requested by the European Commission and may serve as a basis for potential future legislation, as currently, there is no EU legislation specifically regulating the housing and management conditions of beef cattle. This scientific opinion is part of a series of mandates focusing on the welfare of farm animals and published in the last three years by EFSA.

Who should attend?

This webinar is free of charge and open to anyone interested in learning about EFSA's work in this area, including its recommendations for enhancing the welfare of beef cattle. EFSA stakeholders are especially encouraged to participate.

Online registration

The registration form can be found at: <https://events.efsa.europa.eu/event/ar/904/webinar-on-welfare-of-beef-cattle>

The deadline for registration is 25 September 2025 at 12.00 CEST.

Your participation will be automatically confirmed after registration. The link to attend the event will be sent a few days before the webinar, after closure of the registration.

Organisational details

The event will be held online on 02 October 2025, 15.00-17.15 CEST

The webinar will be conducted in English. Please note that no interpretation will be provided.

Contact

For more information, do not hesitate to contact the organising committee at webinars [at] efsa.europa.eu (webinars[at]efsa[dot]europa[dot]eu).

27/08/2025 : Webinar on welfare of animals kept for fur production - EFSA

Document type: seminar announcement published on the [EFSA website](#)

Author: EFSA

Date and time: 29 September 2025, 15.00 - 17.30 (CEST)

Preview:

Background

EFSA will present its newly published [scientific opinion on the welfare of American mink, red and Arctic foxes, raccoon dog, and chinchilla kept for fur production](#). This contains the most up-to-date research on housing and management conditions for these animals. This work was commissioned by the European Commission in response to the European Citizens' Initiative "Fur Free Europe" (launched in 2022), which calls for a ban on fur farming and fur products across the EU.

In December 2023, the Commission committed to assess policy options. As part of that commitment, EFSA was formally mandated to produce this scientific opinion.

Please note: this webinar is strictly focused on the scientific content of EFSA's opinion. Policy discussions or matters beyond the opinion's scope will not be addressed.

Who should attend?

This free webinar is open to all interested in EFSA's work on fur-animal welfare. We especially encourage stakeholders in this field and those following the "Fur Free Europe" initiative to join.

Online registration

The registration form can be found at: <https://events.efsa.europa.eu/event/ar/902/webinar-on-welfare-of-fur-animals>

The deadline for registration is 22 September 2025 at 12.00 CEST. Your participation will be automatically confirmed after registration. The link to attend the event will be sent a few days before the webinar, after closure of the registration.

Organisational details

The event will be held online on 29 September 2025, 15.00-17.30 CEST The webinar will be conducted in English. Please note that no interpretation will be provided.

Contact

For more information, do not hesitate to contact the organising committee at webinars [at] efsa.europa.eu

Animal husbandry and Human-animal relationship

10/09/2025 : An analysis of behavioral characteristics and enrollment year variability in 47,444 dogs entering the Dog Aging Project from 2020 to 2023

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

Authors: Li Y, Sexton CL, DAP Consortium, Fitzpatrick A, Ruple A

Preview: Understanding dog behavior, especially in the context of the human social environment, is critical to maintaining positive human-dog interactions and relationships. Furthermore, behavior can be an important indicator of health and welfare in companion dogs. Behavioral change can signal transitions in life stages, alert caretakers to potential illnesses or injuries, and is an important factor in understanding and measuring stress. In order to take advantage of behavioral change as a biomarker, however, we must first have a behavioral baseline to assess. Thus, using owner-reported data from dogs enrolled in the Dog Aging Project (DAP) from 2020–2023, our aim was to establish baseline behavioral measures for 47,444 dogs, with the goal of using these measures in future research investigating behavioral change in dogs and short- and long-term health outcomes. Given that the data collection period spanned the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) lockdown period and its immediate aftermath, a secondary aim of this study was to evaluate whether year of project entry impacted average reported behavior scores in dogs and to investigate additional variables that may influence observed differences. In our analyses of cohort baseline and year-over-year changes among four composite behavior domains — Fear, Attention/Excitability, Aggression, and Trainability — we find that time (year of enrollment) had the highest influence on Trainability, wherein dogs enrolled in all three years after 2020 (2021–2023) had lower average reported scores than dogs enrolled in 2020. Several other variables, including breed, life stage, sex, spay/neuter status, size, primary residence, and primary activities, have positive and negative statistical associations with mean behavioral scores in all four domains.

01/08/2025 : Aggressive Mating Behavior in Roosters (*Gallus gallus domesticus*): A Narrative Review of Behavioral Patterns

Document type: magazine article published in [Life](#)

Authors: Mihnea Lupu, Dana Tăpăloagă, Elena Mitrănescu, Raluca Ioana Rizac, George Laurențiu Nicolae, Manuella Militaru

Preview: This review explores sexual aggression in broiler breeder males, aiming to synthesize existing scientific evidence regarding its causes, behavioral manifestations, and consequences, while addressing the genetic, neuroendocrine, and environmental mechanisms involved. Through an extensive analysis of scientific literature, the paper highlights that intensive genetic selection

aimed at enhancing growth and productivity has resulted in unintended behavioral dysfunctions. These include the reduction or absence of courtship behavior, the occurrence of forced copulations, and a notable increase in injury rates among hens. Reproductive challenges observed in meat-type breeder flocks, in contrast to those in layer lines, appear to stem from selection practices that have overlooked traits related to mating behavior. Environmental and managerial conditions, including photoperiod manipulation, stocking density, nutritional imbalances, and the use of mixed-sex rearing systems, are also identified as contributing factors to the expression of sexual aggression. Furthermore, recent genetic findings indicate a potential link between inherited neurobehavioral factors and aggressive behavior, with the *SORCS2* gene emerging as a relevant candidate. Based on these insights, the review emphasizes the importance of considering behavioral parameters in breeding programs in order to reconcile productivity objectives with animal welfare standards. Future research may benefit from a more integrative approach that combines behavioral, physiological, and genomic data to better understand and address the multifactorial nature of sexual aggression in poultry systems.

30/07/2025 : Welfare of American mink, red and Arctic foxes, raccoon dog and chinchilla kept for fur production - EFSA

Document type: report published by the [EFSA](#)

Authors: EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW)

Preview: This Scientific Opinion (SO) addresses a mandate from the EC regarding welfare of the following animals when farmed for their fur: (i) American mink (*Neogale vison* or *Neovison vison*), (ii) Red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*, also known as ‘silver fox’), (iii) Arctic fox (*Vulpes lagopus*, also known as ‘blue fox’), (iv) Raccoon dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*, also known as ‘Finnraccoon’) and (v) Chinchilla (*Chinchilla lanigera*). The request was to identify the most relevant welfare consequences (WCs) for each species and to determine whether these could be prevented or substantially mitigated in the current husbandry systems. ‘Current system’ refers strictly to the cage systems and cage dimensions as described in the EFSA Technical report produced under this mandate, as there was no or very limited information available on animals kept in alternative farming systems. Using information obtained from a review of literature, consultations with stakeholders and consideration by EFSA experts, the SO addresses for each species these WCs along with their underlying hazards and potential preventive or mitigating measures. In all species, Restriction of movement, Inability to perform exploratory or foraging behaviour, and Sensorial under- and overstimulation were selected as the most relevant WCs, sharing common hazards linked to current cage size and barrenness. Species-specific WCs include: soft tissue lesions and integument damage (mink), and handling stress (mink and foxes); locomotory disorders (Arctic fox); group stress (red fox), locomotory disorders and isolation stress (raccoon dog); and inability to perform comfort behaviour, resting problems and predation stress (chinchilla). In the majority of cases, it is concluded that neither prevention nor substantial mitigation of the identified WCs is possible in the current system. The SO also includes conclusions on limited or substantial mitigation measures in the current system and, when not possible, on substantial mitigating measures which would require a change to a different system.

30/07/2025 : Biology, husbandry systems and farm practices for American mink, red and Arctic foxes, raccoon dog and chinchilla kept for fur production - EFSA

Document type: technical report from the [EFSA](#)

Authors: European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), Maria Díez-León, Sabine Dippel, Sandra Edwards, Angela Schwarzer, Denise Candiani, Michaela Hempen, Eliana Lima, Claudia Millán Caravaca, Neil J. Turchett, Yves Van der Stede, Marika Vitali, Mette S. Herskin

Preview: This Technical Report was prepared in response to a mandate from the European Commission under Article 31 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002. The request focused on updating the literature review from the 2001 report “The Welfare of Animals Kept for Fur Production” (SCAHAW, 2001), specifically addressing Section 4 (general aspects of carnivore biology—mink, foxes, and raccoon dog) and Section 5 (general aspects of rodent biology—chinchilla). Using information obtained from a review of literature, a call for evidence from stakeholders, field visits and consideration by experts in an EFSA working group, this report reviews the most up to date information on the species’ biology, production cycles, most common husbandry systems, including field-tested systems, and farming practices used for the commercial fur production of the following species: i) American mink (*Neogale vison* or *Neovison vison*, previously classified as *Mustela vison*), ii) Red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*, and also known as 'silver fox'), iii) Arctic fox (*Vulpes lagopus*, previously classified as *Alopex lagopus* and also known as 'blue fox'), iv) Raccoon dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*, also known as 'finnraccoon'), and v) Chinchilla (*Chinchilla lanigera*).

28/07/2025 : Exploring human-animal interactions beyond academic research: A rapid review of grey literature

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

Authors: Siyu Ru, Daniel Villarreal Hernandez, Szymon Parzniewski, Haorui Wu

Preview: Increasing recognition of the diverse benefits of human-animal interactions (HAIs) has propelled related studies. Although most of the benefits have been illustrated by academic literature (e.g. journal articles, academic theses, and project reports), the grey literature contributes to a comprehensive understanding of HAIs and offers new perspectives, informing prospective research, practices, and policies. Adapting the Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) approach, this rapid review examined 151 articles covering HAIs from 2016–2022. The univariate analysis results revealed that the sources covered various animal species (e.g. dogs, cats, birds), types of animals (e.g. companion animals, therapy animals, zoo animals), and vulnerable populations (e.g. older adults, people with disabilities). HAIs could be found across different settings, such as households, schools, healthcare facilities, and more. The thematic analysis identified three primary categories associated with HAIs’ benefits in public education: (1) HAIs benefit the well-being of individuals, families, and animals; (2) HAIs promote prosocial behaviours and community development; and (3) HAIs improve disaster preparedness and response. The results highlight the multifaceted positive influences of HAIs on human well-being, animal welfare, and building healthy and resilient communities. Grey literature plays an essential role in knowledge mobilisation through public education, promoting the interconnectedness between human well-being and animal welfare.

25/07/2025 : [EFSA opinion - Welfare of beef cattle](#)

Document type: opinion of the [EFSA](#)

Authors: EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW)

Abstract: This Scientific Opinion provides an assessment of beef cattle welfare focusing on risks related to flooring, water access, nutrition and feeding, high environmental temperatures, lack of environmental enrichment, lack of outdoor access, minimum space allowance and mixing practices. In addition, risks related to pasture and feedlots, weaning of suckler calves, mutilations (castration, disbudding, dehorning and tail docking), and to breeding practices (hypermuscularity, dystocia and caesarean sections, polledness, maternal ability and temperament) are assessed. Decision-making criteria for the euthanasia of cull cows are also addressed. A selection of animal-based measures (ABMs) suitable for collection at slaughterhouses is proposed to monitor on-farm welfare of fattening cattle. Recommendations to improve the welfare of housed fattening cattle include increasing space allowance and feeding more roughage in relation to current practice, and promoting the use of well-managed bedded solid floors. Provision of enrichment such as brushes and roughage and an outdoor loafing area for housed cattle are recommended. Cattle kept outdoors should have access to a dry lying area and sufficient shade. Water should be provided *ad libitum* via large open water surfaces, and the use of nipple drinkers should be avoided. Mixing of unfamiliar cattle should be avoided and groups should be kept stable. Mutilations should be abstained from, but if carried out, a combination of analgesia and anaesthesia should be applied regardless of the calf's age. Early weaning of suckler calves should be avoided (≤ 6 months). Homozygous double-muscling animals should be excluded from breeding. Selected ABMs for collection at slaughterhouses to monitor some of the highly relevant welfare consequences experienced by fattening cattle on farm are body condition, carcass fat levels, carcass condemnation, lung lesions and skin lesions. Key data gaps identified are thresholds for dietary fibre, ABM thresholds for fitness for transport and potential long-term effects of mutilations on pain sensitisation.

[Link to EFSA infographic](#)

Precision farming and AI

12/09/2025 : ["L'IA ne remplacera pas l'éleveur" : elle peut contribuer au bien-être animal](#)

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

Author: AFP

Preview : AI can contribute to animal welfare and the fight against climate change, believes Florence Gondret, Research Director at the French Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and the Environment (Inrae), according to AFP. The specialist in farm animal physiology will be giving a talk on AI at the Space international livestock show, held from September 16 to 19 in Rennes (Ille-et-Vilaine).

Does AI favor intensive farming?

It's true that we still lack the hindsight to really know who will be able to take advantage of AI. But farmers are very often already digital farmers. Today, 50% of dairy farmers in western Brittany have

a milking robot, and two-thirds of goat farmers have at least one connected tool. AI ultimately supports the farmer's know-how, an extension of what he can observe for himself: it offers real-time monitoring capacity, over long periods, where the farmer cannot be 24 hours a day watching his animals. Today, in agriculture, and particularly in livestock breeding, several examples show that AI enables progress to be made and is part of what are known as agroecological principles, i.e. a reconnection with nature. In the field of health, we are able to diagnose a respiratory infection or an animal's malaise at an earlier stage, before the veterinarian or the farmer has detected the first signs.

Will AI inevitably lead to greater automation?

No, AI will not replace the farmer; it is a support tool for a certain number of decisions, but it cannot replace the farmer's know-how. The idea is to help the farmer with the arduousness of certain tasks, to replace him where automation is interesting and where human decision-making capacity is ultimately of little importance, to enable him to have more quality time to spend with his animals.

Will AI applied to livestock farming inevitably worsen global warming?

Agriculture is based on living organisms, so we have to ask ourselves what we want to do with AI and what benefits we hope to derive from it. We're betting that AI will help us fight global warming more effectively, for example by reducing methane emissions from ruminant systems, reducing nitrogen pollution from pigs, improving animal welfare and detecting problems earlier, so we can react without using drugs.

Ethics-Sociology-Philosophy-Animal rights

06/08/2025 : Cross-cultural variation in understanding of animal welfare principles and animal management practices among veterinary and animal welfare professionals in the UK and Japan

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

Authors: Yuki Otani, Mariko Kanamori, Hiromi Kato, Cathy M. Dwyer

Preview: The World Organisation for Animal Health describes animal welfare as a “complex and multi-faceted subject with scientific, ethical, economic, cultural, social, religious and political dimensions.” In this study, an online survey in English and Japanese was developed based on the Five Freedoms, with the aim of investigating attitudes of veterinarians and behaviour/welfare scientists in the United Kingdom (UK) and Japan toward management of companion, farmed, experimental, zoo and wildlife animals. Respondents from the UK (n = 212) were more familiar with the Five Freedoms than those from Japan (n = 321) but both countries tended to prioritise ‘survival-related’ attributes (health and nutrition) over ‘situation-related’ attributes (behaviour) and the environmental impacts (discomfort). In Japan, however, fewer respondents recognised the ‘Freedom to express normal behaviour’ as important for domesticated animals compared to UK respondents. When considering vignettes with practical situations of cat management and dog euthanasia, UK respondents considered the provision of outdoor access to represent better management for cat welfare while most Japanese respondents thought cats should be managed entirely indoors, although the benefits and risks of going outdoors were similarly recognised in both countries. For the vignette of dog pain relating to an incurable tumour, severe pain and the dog’s mental stress

motivated respondents from both countries to consider euthanasia. However, for Japanese respondents, the data suggested a perception that mental stress did not have an association with the dog's inability to express normal behaviour. These data highlighted the importance of understanding the manner in which people perceive animals in different contexts and the value of considering different cultural approaches.

16/07/2025 : Change the world farm by farm: The moral care of audit and the paradox of animal welfare inspection in Europe

Document type: sociological article published in the [Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute](#)

Author: Mc Loughlin

Preview: In European animal welfare inspection on farms and at slaughter, inspectors encounter moral challenges that reveal the paradox at the heart of animal welfare. Against the harsh realities of industrial agriculture, not only are their idealized notions of animal wellbeing unrealizable, but inspectors are instrumental in perpetuating standards of welfare that they feel are unsatisfactory and at times inadequate. An ethnographic study across four European countries elaborates on the moral practice of care and the ways that veterinary epistemic regimes have been captured by audit rationalities. By focusing on those who audit, the ostensibly 'powerful' actors who are rarely studied in audit literature, I examine the ways that inspectors negotiate farmer, animal and their own welfare through the veterinary-audit gaze. This encompasses veterinary expertise and regulatory indicators but is not unaffected by farmer interests and the animals whose welfare they are responsible for safeguarding. Burdened with an illusory form of power, inspectors mitigate the alienation of audit by innovating ways to make a difference that counts. Amidst the growing prominence of veterinary knowledges in mediating human-animal relations, this article advances the emerging field of veterinary anthropology by describing how audit culture erodes the care that animates veterinary expertise.

15/06/2025 : Balancing culinary excellence with ethical responsibility: A scientific perspective on animal welfare in gastronomy

Document type: review article published in the [International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science](#)

Authors: Anastasio Argüello, Marta González-Cabrera, Antonio Morales-de la Nuez, Lorenzo E. Hernández-Castellano, Manuel Betancor-Sánchez, Noemí Castro

Preview: The culinary industry not only seeks gastronomic excellence but must also address society's mounting concern for animal welfare. This review explores scientific and technological advances shaping animal welfare across the contemporary food system, mapping five critical value-chain stages, animal breeding and rearing; transport and handling; slaughter practices; distribution and procurement; and culinary preparation, where ethical tensions and welfare risks converge. It synthesizes welfare frameworks from the "Five Freedoms" to sentience-based and competence models, highlighting empirical gaps, particularly for crustaceans and insects, that have prompted

precautionary bans such as Switzerland's prohibition on boiling lobsters alive. It is catalog key innovations, cultured meat regulatory milestones on March 21 and July 2023, plant-based analogues from pea protein to seitan, and emerging insect-protein applications and assess their potential to decouple gastronomic quality from animal harm. By comparing EU and US regulatory frameworks and private certification schemes, it identify fragmented standards as a barrier to coherent supply-chain compliance. The paper concludes by outlining a roadmap to integrate animal welfare science into culinary curricula, foster multi-stakeholder partnerships, and leverage precision livestock and vertical-farming technologies to advance a sustainable, responsible, and compassionate gastronomy.

Animal welfare assessment and Labelling

01/09/2025 : Are higher-welfare systems really too costly or inefficient?

Document type: article published in [Poultry World](#)

Author: Tony Mcdougal

Preview: A [new commentary published in the journal Nature Food](#) evaluates the impacts of the European Chicken Commitment, an initiative calling on food companies to adopt slower-growing breeds and higher welfare standards. While concerns over increased costs and emissions have been barriers to adoption, the paper looks to put those concerns into perspective.

Challenging assumptions

For example, using EU carbon externality costs (the cost for companies to emit 1 tonne of CO₂ under the EU Emissions Trading System), the work showed that it costs less than one-hundredth of a cent to prevent each hour of intense pain, which is equivalent to the emissions from driving a standard car for about 15 m.

The paper shows that switching from fast-growing to slower-growing chicken breeds, in line with the European Chicken Commitment, prevents at least 15-100 hours of intense pain per bird, at a cost of just US\$1 more per kg of meat. The findings challenge assumptions that higher-welfare systems are too costly or inefficient, and offer a robust framework for weighing welfare, economic, and environmental considerations.

Environmental metrics

They also call into question the idea that the intensification of animal agriculture, with a focus on faster growth, can be defended on environmental grounds, given the disproportionate and severe welfare harms intensive production entails and the minimal differences in environmental metrics. The research applies the Welfare Footprint Framework, a scientific method that now makes it possible to put numbers on animal welfare. When applied to broilers – the most populous land vertebrates on earth (more than 70 billion birds each year) – it reveals the toll of current industrial practices; rapid growth rates lead to widespread lameness, cardiovascular problems, heat stress, and chronic hunger, leading to disabling and excruciating pain.

Making animal welfare a priority policy

“These are not abstract values. They allow us to put animal welfare on the same footing as other policy priorities,” said Dr Kate Hartcher, senior researcher at the [Welfare Footprint Institute](#) and

one of the authors of the paper. "When you compare the cost of avoiding intense pain to the cost of other externalities, the numbers speak for themselves."

The welfare impact estimates also include the hidden conditions of the parent birds used to produce meat chickens. Because they share the same genetics for fast growth and weight gain but need to survive for much longer, these birds must be severely feed-restricted, resulting in lifelong hunger and thousands of hours in intense distress. (...)

Understanding animal welfare impacts

Until now, animal welfare has lacked a standardised metric that can be integrated alongside financial and environmental indicators. The Welfare Footprint Framework fills that gap, enabling animal welfare impacts to be understood and compared in common and easy-to-understand units. This work marks a turning point in how animal welfare is considered in food systems. By providing a clear, science-based way to measure animals' experiences, the Welfare Footprint Framework makes it possible to drive meaningful reforms and ensure animals are no longer left out of the conversation. (...)

Population management and Animal welfare

03/08/2025 : [A Maisons-Alfort, un centre de soins débordé par le nombre des animaux recueillis : « On a passé quelques nuits blanches »](#)

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

Author: Lina Tamine

Preview : One by one, the birds are carefully picked up, then fed crickets with a pair of tongs. At the Faune Alfort wild animal center, located within the Ecole Nationale Vétérinaire d'Alfort (Val-de-Marne), caretakers, trainees and volunteers, dressed in blue and white lab coats, cross paths and bustle about seven days a week. Two trainees from the association (...) are busy feeding some 250 young swifts taken in over the last few weeks, in a room refurbished for the occasion. (...) Pending favorable weather conditions for their release, the chicks are housed in cardboard boxes and require constant care. *"We feed them four times a day, that's what we spend our days doing".* he adds.
[end of text available to non-subscribers]

22/07/2025 : [Domestic cat management in the UK: learnings from a global perspective](#)

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

Authors: Jenni L. McDonald, Dave J. Hodgson, Claire Roberts, Lauren Finka, Vicky Halls, Rae Foreman-Worsley

Preview: The overpopulation of domestic cats has the potential to result in negative outcomes for cats, people and the surrounding environment. A whole-population approach to management requires a system of services considering owned, shelter and free-living, unowned cats. Population management should also be considered at a localised level, with thought given to the unique populations of both cats and people in each environment. There is no simple, overarching solution

to effective cat population management. Long-term management improvements require the addressing of root causes of overpopulation, rather than simply controlling the abundance of unowned cats. The role of rehoming organisations can be optimised by taking in only those cats that are suitable for rehoming and managing other unowned cats through community-level interventions. These approaches are beneficial for cat welfare, the welfare of cat carers and ultimately help more cats. Population processes, including reproductive output and survival of cats, and the carrying capacity offered by their environment, should also be critical considerations for the management of free-living, unowned cats. Compensatory effects, such as the movement of cats from neighbouring unowned or owned populations following population declines due to trap-neuter-return or rehoming, may contribute to the limited success of management programs. Education of cat carers around feeding and its effect on local carrying capacity is likely to be a valuable component of population management. Unrealistic expectations for the success of population management will be mitigated via better understanding of the population processes of domestic cats and of the attributes, attitudes and behaviours of people within local communities. It can take time for population numbers to reduce meaningfully via natural-cause mortality, and short-term population reductions can be misleading as populations may return due to compensatory processes. This wider understanding both within affected communities and for those actively participating in management is critical to developing practical solutions with realistic outcomes. Indeed, where there are owned cats or neighbouring free-living, unowned cats, then population management should be considered a permanent range of services that need to be sustained and adapted over time.

Housing and Enrichment

01/09/2025 : Structuring and enriching the rearing environment in conventional broiler chicken production: effects on behavioral indicators, emotional states, and cecal microbiota composition

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

Authors: M. Guinebretière, M. Guyard-Nicodème, F. Mocz, L. Calandreau, A. Scheubel, J.P. Moysan, M. Chemaly, A. Keita, L. Warin

Preview: Providing a variety of elements in the rearing environment may offer a promising way to transition conventional broiler production towards more animal-friendly production systems. This study aimed to investigate the effect of a complex and structured rearing environment on broiler welfare by comparing three complex enriched rooms (E) with visual cues and multiple elements for resting or exploration, to three control rooms (C) with minimal enrichments. Each room housed 2450 Redbro chickens and received natural light. We evaluated how the rearing environment influenced chicken behavior, emotional state, and the cecal microbiota composition at the end of the rearing period. E chickens stood, foraged and moved more often than C chickens (e.g. 38% vs. 19% walking; 4% vs. 1% foraging, $P \leq 0.001$), while dustbathing frequency did not differ. In group-based tests, E chickens were more likely to approach and peck at a novel object or human ($P \leq 0.05$), suggesting reduced fearfulness and increased curiosity. In the detour test, E chickens exited the U-shaped area

more frequently ($P \leq 0.001$) and vocalized less ($P = 0.004$), indicating greater exploratory motivation and possibly better spatial cognition. Microbiota analysis revealed no differences in alpha diversity, but beta diversity differed significantly between treatments ($P \leq 0.001$). E chickens had higher relative abundances of Bacteroidota, while C chickens had more Bacillota. Overall, the complex environment promoted natural behaviors, reduced emotional reactivity, and altered gut microbiota composition, supporting its potential to improve broiler welfare under semi-commercial conditions.

21/08/2025 : Small mammal owners' experiences of housing challenges and animal welfare: A COM-B and word frequency analysis

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

Authors: Carroll G, Taylor K, Stallard C, Wills A.

Preview: Small mammals are particularly dependent on owner-provided housing and husbandry yet are frequently kept in conditions that do not meet their welfare needs. This study used the COM-B model (Capability, Opportunity, Motivation = Behaviour) to identify behavioural drivers influencing housing provision among 723 UK small mammal pet owners. This model of human behaviour proposes that behaviour occurs when individuals have the capability, opportunity, and motivation to act. Owners of the eight most commonly kept small mammal species were surveyed: rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), guinea pigs (*Cavia porcellus*), hamsters (*Cricetinae*), gerbils (*Gerbillinae*), rats (*Rattus norvegicus*), mice (*Mus musculus*), chinchillas (*Chinchilla lanigera*), and degus (*Octodon degus*). Opportunity, particularly the availability of suitable enclosures, emerged as the primary barrier, while Capability and Motivation were identified as facilitators, with most pet owners willing and able to provide good levels of welfare. Owner approaches to assessing health and welfare at home were examined through qualitative word frequency analysis, with responses mapped to the Five Domains model. This analysis focused on rabbits, guinea pigs, rats, and hamsters due to limited data availability for other species. Overall, behavioural indicators were most commonly used to identify positive health and welfare, while nutritional and physical signs were cited most frequently for negative states. Changes in eating behaviour were the most frequently cited indicators of ill health or poor welfare across all four species, suggesting this may serve as a practical health and welfare indicator for owners. Improving access to suitable housing and further exploring eating behaviour as an early health and welfare indicator may together support better husbandry for small mammal pets.

20/08/2025 : Invited review: Development of a dairy barn concept to improve animal welfare

Document type: pre-published scientific synthesis in [Journal of Dairy Science](#)

Authors: R. Wulf, S. Demba, V. Röttgen, J. Langbein, S. Döpjan, B. Weise, S. Rose, A. Sixt, J. Harms, I. Steinhöfel, H.-S. Bruckert, P.A. Guhl, M. Heppelmann, S. Jahn, M.J. Oettler, T. Homeier-Bachmann, L. Bachmann

Preview: Owing to political and societal requirements, farmers are required to produce animal-friendly and sustainable products in an economic manner. Investments have been made to improve housing conditions for farm animals such as cattle, but further improvements regarding animal

welfare of dairy husbandry are needed to regain societal acceptance. In this review, we first provide a brief overview of current housing and management conditions of dairy cattle worldwide as well as their impact on animal welfare of calves, young stock, and dairy cows. This framework was the basis to develop a concept for an alternative demonstration and research barn, the “future dairy barn” (FDB). Crucial for this barn concept was the consideration of the natural behavior of all cattle belonging to a herd to improve animal welfare. Consequently, the FDB concept integrated a family herd that avoids regrouping and enables stable social relationships, a free lying area to allow species-typical lying behavior and pasture or paddock access to enable the cattle to stay indoors or outdoors. This alternative dairy barn concept should help answer research questions on animal welfare in a uniform social and physical environment in long-term investigations. The construction of the FDB aims to support the future of dairy farming.

28/07/2025 : Effects of music enrichment on the welfare of small ornamental fishes

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

Authors: Tianyu Niu, Bochun Xiang, Puyi Huang, Xigui Yang, Longhui Chai

Preview: Auditory enrichment is an emerging method to enhance the welfare of ornamental fish, yet its effects remain poorly understood. This study evaluated how music style and tempo influence stress-related behaviors and cortisol secretion in two model species: zebrafish (*Danio rerio*) and guppies (*Poecilia reticulata*). Fish ($n = 4 \times 3$ per species) were exposed for five consecutive days (4 h/day) to one of four auditory treatments—slow-tempo piano (SP, 40–65 bpm), fast-tempo piano (FP, 150–210 bpm), slow-tempo guzheng (SG), fast-tempo guzheng (FG)—or to silence (control). Positive behaviors (touching the water surface, following, wandering) and negative behaviors (freezing, aggression, sprinting) were quantified from 15-min video recordings. Whole-body cortisol concentrations were measured using ELISA. Music enrichment significantly affected both behavioral responses and cortisol levels (ANOVA, $p \leq 0.05$). In zebrafish, SP and SG promoted positive behaviors, whereas FP and FG increased negative behaviors; SG alone significantly lowered cortisol relative to the control. In guppies, FP, SG, and FG increased positive behaviors; SG reduced negative behaviors; and all music treatments significantly decreased cortisol levels. Novel tank test performance was unaffected in either species. Overall, slow-tempo guzheng music exerted the strongest anxiolytic effect, particularly in guppies. We conclude that playback of slow guzheng music offers a practical, non-invasive approach to reduce stress and improve welfare in ornamental fish housed in barren aquaria.

Invertebrates

15/08/2025 : Assessing the Welfare of Spiny Lobsters and True Lobsters in Aquaria: Biology-Informed Best-Practice Guidelines for Captive Conditions

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

Authors: Fruscella L., Elwood R.W., Passantino A.

Preview: The welfare of decapod crustaceans held in captivity, whether in aquariums, holding facilities, seafood restaurants, supermarkets, or fishmongers, is attracting growing attention and concern. This review focuses on three species that are commonly found in European commercial environments: the European spiny lobster (*Palinurus elephas*), the European lobster (*Homarus gammarus*), and the American lobster (*Homarus americanus*). We examine the biology and behavioural ecology of these decapods, emphasising their natural habits and environmental requirements. Based on current scientific knowledge, we propose conditions for their confinement that better align with their biological and behavioural needs. These crustaceans are commonly subjected to stressful captive environments characterised by overcrowding, claw immobilisation through banding, an absence of shelter or hiding spaces, and continuous exposure to direct lighting. Such practices contrast starkly with the animals' innate behaviours and natural habitats, likely compromising their physical health and psychological welfare. It is thereby recommended that spiny lobsters and lobsters be kept separated and stocked at an appropriate density, that each animal should be provided with a shelter and have enough space to turn around, that true lobsters should never have their claws tied, that no direct light should be placed above the aquaria, and that water quality should be routinely monitored. By exploring the welfare challenges associated with confining these species, this review aims to promote a more ethical and humane approach to their care in commercial settings, and to encourage practices that enhance their quality of life in captivity.

One Welfare

23/07/2025 : Evaluation des coûts et bénéfices économiques des pratiques de bien-être animal en élevage

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

Author: LIT OUESTEREL

Preview: "Animal welfare is all very well, but what will it cost, and above all, how will I benefit from it?". IN January 2025, to provide answers to these typical questions from farmers, LIT OUESTEREL launched an 18-month project to assess the profitability of Animal Health and Welfare practices. The objective was to develop a method of cost-benefit analysis that included economic, zootechnical and social factors. The methodology will be field-tested using three animal welfare practices.

Genesis of the project

In their empirical study of farmers' attitudes to animal welfare, Bock and Van Huik (2007) concluded that the main obstacle to farmer participation in particular animal welfare programs was the lack of confidence among farmers in the economic benefits of participation. This was also one of the findings of LIT OUESTEREL's 2021 study of farmers' commitment to animal welfare certification. To find a way round this obstacle, the LIT worked on the provision of technical support for farmers who wanted to introduce animal welfare measures, notably through the creation of the multi-criteria evaluation tools [MULTIPORC](#), [MULTIBOV](#) and [MULTIPOUL](#). These tools can be used to assess the effects of animal welfare practices on the entire livestock production system, taking into account economic, environmental and social criteria (working conditions, etc.). They compare a control system with alternative scenarios, providing an overall view of the advantages and disadvantages of the practices in the scenarios. To take this a step further, an analysis tool is now under development by LIT

OUESTEREL that will quantify the actual contributions of animal welfare at farm level, regardless of the nature of these contributions.

Methodology for diagnosing the costs and benefits of animal welfare practices

The methodology currently being deployed takes into account the direct (inputs, investments, etc.), indirect (labor, dependence on suppliers, etc.) and intangible (work demands, skills requirements, etc.) costs associated with the farmer's implementation of animal welfare practices. Similarly, direct (productivity, input savings), indirect (time savings, long-term animal longevity, etc.) and intangible (moral satisfaction, intangible value of the farm) benefits are assessed. This method is tested in the field through three "proofs of concept": socialization of piglets, feeder cows for dairy calves and winter gardens for poultry. Partner farmers take part in interviews to express their perception of the practices, their advantages and limitations, in relation to data from the literature. Visual indicators, such as radars, complete this assessment. With their agreement, a quantitative follow-up is then set up. This is based on data collection in six areas: buildings, feed, animal health, animal welfare, labor, and technical and economic performance. This makes it possible to compare, in concrete terms, the costs and benefits of a livestock operation with or without the animal welfare practice under study.

What next?

If you would like to hear how this study is progressing, you can catch up with us at the end of the year at the Journées LIT EXPERT 2025, where we'll be giving a brief presentation.

23/07/2025 : Loi « Duplomb » : un texte délétère pour le bien-être animal, la santé et l'environnement

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

Author: Ian Fafet

Preview: Passed without debate by the French Assemblée Nationale on July 8, 2025, the law to relax constraints on the farming profession, championed by Senate Member Laurent Duplomb, marks a historic step backwards in terms of animal welfare and environmental protection. Over 1.7 million signatures. As of July 23, 2025, this was the number of signatures on a petition first posted on the French National Assembly website on July 10, two days after the "Duplomb Law" had been passed. This figure far exceeds the 500,000-signature threshold required for a petition to be debated in a public session. This unprecedented level of popular outcry can be explained by the numerous fears that have quite rightly been raised by the legal document. The petition opens up the future possibility of a debate that was ruled out by a motion to deny passed in May 2025. The motion authorised a vote to be held without the need for discussion in the public session of the French National Assembly. If the French lower house agrees to organize a debate in response to the petition, this will not, however, allow the Law to be re-examined on its merits. And the President of the National Assembly, Yaël Braun-Pivet, has declared that a debate "can in no way go back on the Law that has been passed". In other words, it would not create a pathway for the Law to be repealed. [...] Although critics of the Duplomb Law often cite its main purpose as being the reintroduction of permission to use the so-called "bee-killer" pesticide acetamiprid, it contains two other measures that establish major retrograde steps for animal welfare and environmental protections. In particular, the new Law facilitates the construction and expansion of intensive livestock farms by raising number of animals for which environmental authorization is required for pig and poultry farms under the ICPE (Installations Classées Pour l'Environnement) framework. Previously, prior authorization was

required for pig farms with 2,000 animals or more. Under the Duplomb Law, if implemented, this threshold will be raised to 3,000 animals, and smaller operations will be able to follow a simplified registration procedure. For breeding sows, the threshold will be raised from 750 to 900 animals, for layers, it will rise from 40,000 to 60,000, and for broilers it will rise from 40,000 to 85,000. The text also paves the way for a future increase in the thresholds that apply to cattle farms. These provisions are a response to a request made in February 2025 from the industries involved. [...]

Article on the same topic published on July 13, 2025 in [Le Monde](#) (subscribers only): "[L'adoption de la loi Duplomb constitue un moment de rupture démocratique inédit](#) "

Pain management

[24/06/2025 : Efficacy of pain management for cattle castration: A systematic review and meta-analysis](#)

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

Authors: Emeline Nogues, Jane Stojkov, Biljana Jonoska Stojkova, Marina A.G. von Keyserlingk, Daniel M. Weary

Preview: Much research has assessed methods of pain control for cattle castration, but there remains a lack of consensus regarding best practice. We conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of published research including both an untreated control (i.e. castrated without pain mitigation) and at least one unimodal or multimodal analgesia treatment (i.e. castrated with a local anaesthetic alone, or in combination with a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug) to summarise findings on castration pain management. Studies were included if they castrated by surgery, elastration or crushing, and reported at least one of the following outcomes: cortisol, change in bodyweight, foot stomping, wound licking, a subjective assessment of pain using a visual analogue scale, or stride length. Our search identified 383 publications, of which 17 were eligible for inclusion. Most publications focused on surgical castration (n = 14), and the most frequently reported outcome was blood cortisol (n = 13). None of the included studies were assessed as having a low risk of bias, mostly due to a lack of reporting blinding procedures and reasons for missing data. Using a three-level random effect model, we concluded that multimodal analgesia reduced blood cortisol concentrations in the first hour following surgical castration in comparison to the control group; this effect was diminished but still evident at 3 and 4 h, but not beyond at 6, 12 and 24 h. Too few data were available to meaningfully assess other outcomes and methods. Variability in methods and outcomes between studies, and risks of bias, hinder our capacity to provide science-based recommendations for best practice.

Regulation

[08/09/2025 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-002989/2025 : Respect for animal welfare in Ukrainian poultry imports](#)

Document type: reply from the [European Commission](#) to question E-002989/2025

Authors: question : Mathilde Androuët (PfE). Answer: Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission

Question: The issue of animal welfare on our farms has become a major source of concern for many consumers. The Commission itself, which takes note of the ethical demands voiced in this regard, was at the origin of Directives 2007/43/EC and 98/58/EC, which are applicable to European farmers. European farmers are, of course, required to comply with these directives, and must shoulder the economic consequences arising from this compliance. At EU level, the maximum quota for poultry exports from Ukraine to the EU for 2024 was set at 132 000 tonnes. However, according to a statement from the Ukrainian Government based on customs data^[1], actual poultry exports from Ukraine to the EU amounted to 373 800 tonnes (poultry and poultry products) from January to October 2024 alone.

1. Does the Commission dispute the cited figures?
2. Is the Commission able to certify – and if so, on what basis – that Ukrainian poultry imported into the EU market was reared under conditions compatible with animal welfare standards (density ≥ 50 kg/m² and unregulated transport), as laid down in the above-mentioned directives?
3. If the Commission is unable to do so, how does it justify the entry of products resulting from practices that are banned in the European Union, which would be tantamount to dumping, both ethically and economically?

^[1] 'Ukraine halves the EU poultry export quota', 14 January 2025,
<https://www.poultryworld.net/the-industrymarkets/market-trends-analysis-the-industrymarkets-2/ukraine-halves-the-eu-poultry-export-quota/>

Answer: In 2024, Ukrainian imports into the EU took place under the Autonomous Trade Measures (ATMs) for Ukraine^[1]. Article 4(7) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1392 (the ATM Regulation) provided for an emergency brake for several products, including poultry, that could be automatically triggered if import volumes reached the average yearly imports between 1 July 2021 and 31 December 2023. For poultry, this volume amounted to 137 042.80 tonnes. In 2024, EU imports of poultry from Ukraine amounted to 136 825 tonnes, thus remaining below the threshold^[2]. The cited figure of 373 800 tonnes relates to Ukraine's global poultry exports. Imports of agricultural products from any third country into the EU are subject to the Union's rules on sanitary and phytosanitary standards (SPS). The referenced Directives do not include equivalency for imports, meaning that imported poultry products are not bound by animal welfare standards relating to the conditions under which poultry are kept on farms. Article 44 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625^[3] stipulates that the competent national authorities are responsible for carrying out official controls on goods introduced into the EU. As part of the review of the EU-Ukraine Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA)^[4], Ukraine has committed to align its legislation to a number of EU agri-food standards by 31 December 2028. These encompass, among others, relevant EU legal acts on animal welfare, including Directives 2007/43/EC^[5] and 98/58/EC^[6]. If the EU assesses the alignment as unsatisfactory, it may suspend all or some of the preferences granted in this review.

^[1] Règlement (UE) 2024/1392 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 14 mai 2024 relatif aux mesures de libéralisation temporaire des échanges en complément des concessions commerciales applicables aux produits ukrainiens au titre de l'accord d'association entre l'Union européenne et la

Communauté européenne de l'énergie atomique et leurs États membres, d'une part, et l'Ukraine, d'autre part, JO L, 2024/1392.

[\[2\]](#) Eurostat.

[\[3\]](#) Règlement (UE) 2017/625 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 15 mars 2017 concernant les contrôles officiels et les autres activités officielles servant à assurer le respect de la législation alimentaire et de la législation relative aux aliments pour animaux ainsi que des règles relatives à la santé et au bien-être des animaux, à la santé des végétaux et aux produits phytopharmaceutiques, JO L 95 du 7.4.2017.

04/09/2025 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-002896/25 : Mise en place de mesures miroirs en matière de bien-être animal

Document type: reply from the [European Commission](#) to question E-002896/25

Authors: question : Anne-Sophie Frigout (PfE), Rody Tolassy (PfE), Angéline Furet (PfE), Valérie Deloge (PfE), Mélanie Disdier (PfE). Answer: M. Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission

Question: European farmers have to comply with increasingly stringent animal welfare standards. This implies a strong ethical commitment, but also a significant additional cost for farmers. However, the EU continues to authorise imports of meat from third countries, such as Brazil, where breeding and slaughter standards are often very different to those applied in the EU. Brazil is the EU's second largest beef supplier, with annual imports of 41 000 tonnes, yet it does not guarantee equivalent animal welfare practices, which distorts competition and undermines our farmers' efforts in this regard. In view of this:

1. How will the Commission implement legally binding mirror measures tailored to livestock imports to ensure that imported products comply with animal welfare standards equivalent to those imposed on European producers?
2. What steps will it take to effectively monitor compliance with these animal welfare standards in third countries exporting to the EU, thereby avoiding any distortions of competition or ethical breaches?

Supporter[\[1\]](#)

[\[1\]](#) This question is supported by a Member other than the authors: Jean-Paul Garraud (PfE)

Answer: 1. As set out in the Vision for Agriculture and Food[\[1\]](#), the EU aims to promote sustainable and fair agri-food systems, which includes ensuring that high animal welfare standards apply not only within the EU but also to imported products, in compliance with the EU's World Trade Organisation (WTO) obligations. In the Vision, the Commission commits to ensuring that future legislative proposals in the area of animal welfare will apply equivalent standards to imported products that fall within its scope in ways that are compliant with WTO obligations. In line with the principles of better regulation, the upcoming proposal on on-farm animal welfare will be accompanied by a comprehensive impact assessment, which will include a thorough assessment of the trade dimension.

2. EU legislation already requires that imported products meet certain animal welfare standards. Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing[\[2\]](#) applies to third country establishments exporting meat to the EU, and 100% documentary checks are made

at border points. The competent authority of the exporting country must provide a signed attestation certifying that these standards are complied with. Furthermore, these requirements are monitored by the Commission through a risk-based programme of controls, with regular audits in third countries, that include checks on third countries' regulatory framework and their follow up to Commission recommendations. The Commission cooperates closely with third country authorities to verify compliance and follows up with actions when needed.

[1] <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0075>.

[2] <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2009/1099/oj>.

04/09/2025 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-002984/25 : Violations du règlement relatif au transport des animaux

Document type: reply from the [European Commission](#) to question E-002984/25

Authors: question : Maria Noichl (S&D), Thomas Waitz (Verts/ALE), Sebastian Everding (The Left), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE), Annalisa Corrado (S&D), Michal Wiezik (Renew), Tilly Metz (Verts/ALE), Anja Hazekamp (The Left), Krzysztof Śmiszek (S&D). Answer: M. Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission

Question: In spring 2025, the non-governmental organisations *Soko Tierschutz* and The Marker documented systematic violations of the EU Animal Transport Regulation^[1]. One specific case is the transport of more than 34 000 calves, which were just a few weeks old, from Austria and Germany to Spain. Here, they were fattened in some cases in serious violation of their rights, and were later slaughtered without stunning in North Africa and the Middle East. It is particularly barbaric that the calves' documented travel time was over 22 hours without sufficient rest breaks or care, which is a clear violation of the applicable EU regulations. Criminal charges have been filed with the Augsburg Public Prosecutor's Office.

1.Does the Commission recognise a violation of the EU Animal Transport Regulation in the documented case, and what concrete steps is the Commission taking, in cooperation with the Member States concerned, (Germany, Austria and Spain) to clarify the case?

2.Does the Commission have information on comparable cases of systematic infringements in other Member States?

3.What measures does the Commission propose to prevent such structural abuse in the future – in particular with regard to controls, transparency and sanctioning mechanisms?

[1] Règlement (CE) n° 1/2005 du Conseil du 22 décembre 2004 relatif à la protection des animaux pendant le transport et les opérations annexes et modifiant les directives 64/432/CEE et 93/119/CE et le règlement (CE) n° 1255/97 (JO L 3 du 5.1.2005, p. 1: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2005/1/oj>).

Answer: 1. The Commission is not aware of the details of the specific case mentioned by the Honourable Members and therefore cannot comment on it.

2. The Commission has received several complaints concerning the transport of unweaned calves in various Member States and is concerned by the alleged practices. The investigation of these complaints is ongoing. Animals must be handled in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1/2005^[1], which governs their protection during commercial transport. The enforcement of EU rules on the protection of animals during transport is primarily the responsibility of the Member States. It is

important that the competent authorities in Member States take appropriate measures to prevent the mistreatment of this vulnerable category of animals.

3. In December 2023, the Commission adopted a proposal for a regulation on the protection of animals during transport^[2], which provides for stricter rules aimed at ensuring higher protection of calves and other vulnerable categories of animals during transport. The proposal aims to facilitate better enforcement of these rules through clearer provisions. Further development of digital tools used for administrative tasks, aims to improve data collection and transparency regarding the transport of animals. In addition, the proposal introduces a new approach to harmonise sanctions in the event of rule infringements on animal transport. The debate is ongoing, and the Commission remains open to working with the co-legislators in this area.

^[1] Règlement (CE) no 1/2005 du Conseil du 22 décembre 2004 relatif à la protection des animaux pendant le transport et les opérations annexes et modifiant les directives 64/432/CEE et 93/119/CE et le règlement (CE) no 1255/97 (JO L 3 du 5.1.2005, p. 1).

^[2] COM(2023) 770

29/08/2025 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-002603/2025 : Finland's derogation for mink fur farming and the ban on fur farming throughout the EU

Document type: reply from the [European Commission](#) to question E-002603/2025

Authors: question : Maria Ohisalo (Verts/ALE). Answer: Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission

Question: The Commission has added the American mink to the EU list of invasive alien species.^[1] However, Finland wants to continue mink fur farming and is therefore going to apply for a derogation to do this. To obtain a derogation, it must be demonstrated that there are compelling reasons of public interest for mink fur farming. However, public interest does not come into play in this case because fur farming in Finland is not economically viable, nor is it important for the country's economy. Fur farming actually poses huge problems in terms of animal rights^[2] and pandemic risk^[3]. The vast majority of EU Member States have already banned fur farming either partially or completely. Significant fur farming activities now only take place in Finland, Poland, Greece and Lithuania. The European Citizens' Initiative on a fur-free Europe, which calls for an EU-wide ban on fur farming, has garnered over 1.5 million validated signatures and has been referred to the Commission for consideration. The Commission's response to the initiative is due by March 2026.^[4]

1. Why is the Commission granting problematic derogations to a list of invasive alien species that has already been drawn up on the basis of scientific assessment?

2. Is the Commission planning to propose an EU-wide ban on fur farming?

^[1] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/invasive-alien-species_en

^[2] <https://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/news/new-scientific-report-fur-farming-animal-welfare-needs-cannot-be-met>

^[3] <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-025-09007-w>

^[4] https://citizens-initiative.europa.eu/initiatives/details/2022/000002_en

Answer: Article 9 of the Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Regulation[1] provides for authorisations that may be granted by the Commission in exceptional cases, for reasons of compelling public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. If and when an authorisation request arrives from a Member State, the Commission will assess it based on the criteria laid out in the relevant provisions of Articles 8 and 9 of the IAS Regulation. The Commission responded to the European Citizens' Initiative 'Fur Free Europe' in December 2023 with the adoption of a Communication outlining its legal and political conclusions[2], as well as the actions it plans to take in response. Any follow up action must be science based, proportionate and effective. The European Food Safety Authority[3] scientific opinion on the welfare of fur animals, was published on 30 July 2025[4].

The Commission will assess the welfare, economic, social, and environmental consequences of different options, including the bans proposed by the 'Fur Free Europe' Initiative. After it has concluded its assessment, the Commission will publish a Communication announcing its conclusion in terms of the appropriate measure to take and the timeline for any follow-up action.

[1] Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species, OJ L 317, 4.11.2014, p. 35.

[2] <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2023/1559/oj>.

[3] <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en>.

[4] <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa.2025.9519>.

27/08/2025 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-001998/2025 : Animals confined in unspeakable conditions in Malta

Document type: reply from the [European Commission](#) to question E-001998/2025

Authors: question : Lara Magoni (ECR). Answer: Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission

Question: The discovery of four lions and a panther kept in unfit conditions in Naxxar, Malta, has sparked public outrage and raised concerns among animal rights organisations. Left to their own devices for days on end, the animals were found in dark, filthy, cramped cages, without food or adequate care. Condemned by animal rights group Vuçi għall-Animali, their suffering points to serious violations of EU animal welfare legislation. In particular, this case goes against Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which establishes the obligation to pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals, since they are sentient beings. Following several protests, the animals have apparently now been moved to a wildlife park, which, according to press reports, nevertheless fails to meet the welfare standards laid down in Article 3 of Directive 1999/22/EC.

In light of the above:

1. What steps will the Commission take to fully enforce EU animal welfare legislation among the Member States (including Malta) and prevent the occurrence of similar abuses?
2. What measures will it propose to tighten up EU legislation on the holding and trading of wild animals from outside the EU?

Answer: 1. The Zoos Directive[1] requires that Member States adopt measures for the licensing and inspection of zoos to ensure that zoos falling under Article 2 respect the specified conservation

measures, including appropriate accommodation and care of the animals. Member States may exempt entities from the Directive's requirements, provided this will not jeopardise its objectives. If an inspection indicates that licencing conditions are not met, the authority must close the zoo or part thereof or impose requirements addressing the identified deficiencies within an appropriate time not exceeding two years.

2. The EU Wildlife Trade Regulation[2] lays down the overall provisions for international and internal EU trade in specimens of protected species. For lions and panthers an import and export permit must be obtained from the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)[3] Management Authority of the country of destination and origin. The CITES authority in the EU Member State must also ensure that the intended accommodation for the live specimen at the place of destination is adequately equipped to conserve and care for it properly. Moreover, in accordance with Article 8 of the Regulation, Member States may prohibit the holding of specimens covered by that Regulation. The new Environmental Crime Directive[4], which entered into force in May 2024 and must be transposed by all Member States in May 2026, strengthens the definition of wildlife criminal offences – such as wildlife trafficking – and the related penalties. In line with the revised EU action plan against wildlife trafficking[5], the Commission is exploring ways to tighten legislation on the holding and trade of wild animals from outside the EU[6].

[1] Council Directive 1999/22/EC of 29 March 1999 relating to the keeping of wild animals in zoos, OJ L 94, 9.4.1999, p. 24–26.

[2] Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 of 9 December 1996 on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein, OJ L 61, 3.3.1997, p. 1–69.

[3] Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora: <https://cites.org/eng>.

[4] Directive (EU) 2024/1203 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on the protection of the environment through criminal law and replacing Directives 2008/99/EC and 2009/123/EC, OJ L, 2024/1203, 30.4.2024, to be transposed by all Member States in May 2026.

[5] <https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/env/items/773992/en>.

[6] The Commission is currently conducting a study on a 'positive list' of exotic pets, and recently concluded a study to assess the potential to criminalise all trade in illegally sourced wildlife <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/3f466d71-92a7-49eb-9c63-6cb0fadf29dc/library/13062c04-a41e-434a-837b-65e5ed2bda9f/details>.

22/08/2025 : Enquête auprès des bénéficiaires d'aides de la PAC 2023-2027

Document type: opening of a survey by EY

Authors: Evaluation team EY Advisory, Bankiva and Bureau Etre as mandated by the Minister of Agriculture

Preview : EY Advisory, Bankiva and Bureau Etre have been commissioned by the French Ministry of Agriculture to provide supporting evidence for the evaluation of France's National Strategic Plan (NSP) under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2023-2027. This survey is intended for those who have received CAP 2023-2027 subsidies. Its purpose is to collect your views on the implementation, efficiency, coherence and relevance of CAP subsidies intended to improve livestock

farming practices and on their impact on herds. The results of this survey will be made public and will be presented to the Ministry of Agriculture. Your answers will be treated in confidence and anonymously. The data collected will be used for research and analysis purposes only. No personal information will be divulged. This questionnaire takes about 15 minutes to complete. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at the following address EvaluationPSN@fr.ey.com. Please provide your answers by September 26, 2025.

[Take the survey](#)

30/07/2025 : Parlement européen : Réponse écrite à la question E-002013/2025 : Élevage des visons et protection du bien-être animal

Document type: reply from the [European Commission](#) to question E-002013/2025

Authors: question : Sigrid Friis (Renew), Maria Noichl (S&D), Petras Auštrevičius (Renew), Günther Sidl (S&D), Tilly Metz (Verts/ALE), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE), Maria Zacharia (NI), Anna Strolenberg (Verts/ALE). Answer: Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission

Question: Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes^[1] explicitly includes animals bred for fur production. Articles 3 and 4, along with the relevant provisions in the Annex, set out obligations that apply to mink farming. In 2023, 24 scientists addressed an open letter to the Commission, presenting assessments such as:

‘There is no doubt that the practice of farming animals for fur breaches the most fundamental principles of animal welfare. It has never been possible to design a farming system in line with the species-specific needs of animals bred for their fur.’

‘The evidence is clear that no more research is needed to confirm that fur farming and animal welfare cannot go hand in hand.’

In light of this, we ask the Commission:

1. Will the Commission provide a legal analysis as to whether the practice of keeping mink in small wire-mesh cages is compatible with the requirements set out in the Directive?
2. Is the Commission legally obliged to ensure full compliance with this Directive, and does it consider itself committed to strengthening enforcement of EU legislation, particularly in view of the Commission President’s mission letters to the current Commissioners?

Answer: 1. The Commission is currently looking at the welfare of fur animals in the context of the European Citizens Initiative (ECI) ‘Fur Free Europe’^[1], asking the Commission to take action to prohibit: (i) the keeping and killing of animals for the sole or main purpose of fur production; and (ii) the placement of farmed animal fur, and products containing such fur, on the EU market. The requirements of Directive 98/58/EC^[2] will be considered in this context. The Commission adopted a Communication on the ECI^[3] setting out its legal and political conclusions and actions it intends to take in response.

2. The Commission has planned to communicate, by March 2026, whether it considers appropriate to propose a prohibition, after a transition period, on the keeping in farms and killing of fur animals, including mink, or alternatively to adopt through EU legislation, appropriate standards suited to better address the welfare needs of such animals. Prohibition of or requirements for imports will also be considered.

The primary responsibility for implementing and enforcing EU law lies with the Member States. Directives need to be transposed in Member States' national legislation and the Commission assesses whether this process is complete and meets the objectives set by the Directive. The Commission is committed to strengthening the Member States' proper application of the EU animal welfare legislation, as enforcement is a crucial element to ensure a high level of animal welfare. In its role as guardian of the Treaties, the Commission will continue monitoring the situation and may decide to take appropriate action.

[1] https://citizens-initiative.europa.eu/initiatives/details/2022/000002_en.

[2] OJ L 221, 8.8.1998, p. 23–27, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/1998/58/oj>.

[3] OJ C, C/2023/1559, 21.12.2023, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2023/1559/oj>.

30/07/2025 : Parlement européen : Réponse écrite à la question E-001917/2025 : Notification by the Netherlands on lowering the maximum temperature for the transport of animals

Document type: reply from the [European Commission](#) to question E-001917/2025

Authors: question : Claudiu-Richard Târziu (ECR). Answer: Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission

Question: On 25 February 2025, the Government of the Netherlands notified the Commission of an amendment to its policy guideline on animal transport at high temperatures (notification number 2025/0111/NL). The policy amendment lowers the maximum temperature at which animals may be transported to 30 degrees Celsius. In accordance with the notification procedure under Directive (EU) 2015/1535, the Commission may block this policy rule for a period of 12 to 18 months if harmonisation at EU level in the area concerned is planned or already under way. As the Animal Transport Regulation is currently being revised (2023/0448/COD), that is indeed the case.

1. Does the Commission intend to block the policy rule that has been notified on the ground that revision of the Animal Transport Regulation means that EU harmonisation in the same area is already under way?
2. Does the Commission agree that as a result of this policy amendment, were it to come into force, there would be significant distortion of the EU internal market?
3. Is the Commission prepared to respond to the submissions made by various stakeholders in connection with the notification?

Answer: 1. The issue of high temperatures is being discussed in the ongoing inter-institutional negotiations on the legislative proposal on the protection of animals during transport [1]. The Commission sent a letter to the Member States urging them to stress their concerns at the Council rather than focusing on national measures, asking them to refrain from adopting national measures in the area of animal transport.

2. The Commission agrees that diverging national rules do not ensure a smooth functioning of the internal market. The adoption of national rules while inter-institutional negotiations on the Commission's proposal for new legislation on this subject are ongoing can have potentially negative impact for the level playing field of operators. One of the objectives of the legislative proposal is to ensure a clearer legal framework and one that avoids the need for diverging national rules.

3. According to the provisions of Directive (EU) 2015/1535 [2], it is at the discretion of the Commission and the Member States to issue a reaction on draft technical regulations notified by a Member State. The Commission takes note of the contributions made by several stakeholders regarding this notification.

[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 Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005, COM/2023/770 final.

[2] Directive (EU) 2015/1535 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 September 2015 laying down a procedure for the provision of information in the field of technical regulations and of rules on Information Society services (codification), OJ L 241, 17.9.2015, p. 1-15.

30/07/2025 : Parlement européen : Réponse écrite à la question E-001689/25 : Normes de bien-être animal dans l'aquaculture de l'UE visant à renforcer la compétitivité et la sécurité alimentaire

Document type: reply from the [European Commission](#) to question E-001689/25

Authors: question : Niels Fuglsang (S&D), Robert Biedroń (S&D), Thomas Pellerin-Carlin (S&D), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE), Krzysztof Śmiszek (S&D), Tilly Metz (Verts/ALE), Marianne Vind (S&D), Sebastian Everding (The Left), Maria Noichl (S&D), Isabella Lövin (Verts/ALE), Günther Sidl (S&D), Per Clausen (The Left), Michal Wiezik (Renew), Alice Kuhnke (Verts/ALE), Pär Holmgren (Verts/ALE), Christel Schaldemose (S&D). Answer: Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission

Question: While up to one billion fish are farmed in the EU each year, there are no rules to protect them. This allows unethical practices to persist. Yet several opinions of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) demonstrate that fish are sentient beings, and nine out of ten EU citizens want better protection for farmed fish. Cost-effective solutions are available, with a recent report by environmental economist Griffin Carpenter showing that implementing stunning in EU aquaculture is economically feasible^[1]. The Commissioners for animal welfare and fisheries have reiterated their commitment to modernising the rules on animal welfare and making aquatic animal welfare a priority of their respective mandates. The Commission's Vision for Agriculture and Food calls for animal welfare standards to be applied to imports in order to boost food security and competitiveness in the EU. In view of the above:

1. Will farmed aquatic animals be included in the scope of the upcoming consultations on the animal welfare legislation taking place this year?

2. Will the Commission commit to delivering species-specific welfare provisions for farmed fish and other aquatic animals, as part of the comprehensive modernisation of animal welfare laws on kept animals, slaughter and labelling, based on the upcoming EFSA opinions on farmed finfish and invertebrates?

^[1] <https://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/library/stunning-results-eu-aquaculture>.

Answer: As announced in the Vision on Agriculture and Food^[1], the Commission intends to present a targeted review of the animal welfare legislation, also aiming to follow up on the European Citizens' Initiative 'End the Cage Age'^[2]. The Commission will do this in line with the latest science provided by the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA), taking account of ethical, scientific and economic

considerations, as well as the EU's multilateral obligations. At this stage, aquatic animals are not included in the scope of the consultations that will be carried out this year in preparation of the on-farm welfare legislative proposal. Concerning aquatic animals, the Commission is focussing on improved implementation of the existing rules applicable to these animals. The recently established EU Reference Centre for Animal Welfare on aquatic animals (EURCAW aqua) will, amongst others, support Member States in carrying out official controls. It will furthermore increase scientific and technical knowledge on aquatic animal welfare needs. Work is ongoing on animal welfare indicators for farmed fish, through the work of the EURCAW aqua, the EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism, as well as an ongoing study on animal welfare indicators.

[1] <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0075>.

[2] https://citizens-initiative.europa.eu/initiatives/details/2018/000004/end-cage-age_en

22/07/2025 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-002054/2025 : Fairness in the application of the new European animal welfare rules in the specific context of eastern Europe

Document type: reply from the [European Commission](#) to question E-002054/2025

Authors: question : Claudiu-Richard Târziu (ECR). Answer: Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission

Question: In Romania and other central and eastern European countries, livestock breeding is not just an important economic activity, but also a part of rural identity and cultural heritage. The new European animal welfare initiatives – such as the elimination of cages or the limiting of transportation – can place excessive burdens on small and traditional farms that do not have the resources necessary for a rapid transition.

There are concerns that these regulations are designed for large farms in western Europe and are being applied uniformly, without reflecting the Union's economic diversity. This approach could have an adverse impact on farmers in the East and reinforce the perception of an unequal single market. In this context, we request the following clarifications from the European Commission:

1. What concrete measures will it take to ensure that the animal welfare standards will be implemented in a proportionate manner that reflects the structural differences between the Member States, especially those in eastern Europe?
2. What types of financial support or transition mechanisms does it intend to offer to small farmers to enable them to adapt without the risk of being forced to cease their activity?
3. How will it guarantee that the application of these rules will not lead to distortions in single market competitiveness to the detriment of farmers in less developed regions of the Union?

Answer: 1. In line with the principles of better regulation, the upcoming legislative proposal on animal welfare on farm will be accompanied by a comprehensive impact assessment, just as the legislative proposal from 2023 on the welfare of animals during transport was [1]. These assessments consider the structural differences across Member States, including the diversity of farm sizes and production methods. In addition, the Commission performs extensive stakeholder consultations to take into account the realities on the ground. The objective is to ensure proportionate rules while still achieving the intended welfare outcomes.

2. Based on the outcome of the impact assessment and stakeholder consultations, the Commission will aim to propose proportionate rules for on-farm animal welfare with a gradual approach, species-specific transition period, and to provide farmers with sufficient financial support and time to adapt. The harmonised and modernised rules will also provide farmers with the assurance of a long-term stability for their investments. The transport proposal adopted in 2023 is now in the hands of the co-legislators.

3. Modernising EU animal welfare rules presents a strategic opportunity to enhance the competitiveness of the entire EU livestock sector while fostering innovation. Many of the current EU animal welfare rules are outdated, many Member States have adopted national rules going beyond minimum EU requirements, and private initiatives have flourished, leading to a fragmentation of the internal market and causing distortions in competitiveness. Harmonisation of the standards across Member States will promote fairer competition and a smooth functioning of the single market.

[1] https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-welfare/eu-animal-welfare-legislation/animal-welfare-during-transport_en

19/06/2025 : Arrêté du 19 juin 2025 fixant les règles sanitaires et de protection animale auxquelles doivent satisfaire les activités liées aux animaux de compagnie d'espèces domestiques

Document type: order published in the [Journal officiel de la République française](#)

Author: Maud Faipoux

Preview: *Publics concerned:* professionals involved in activities related to pets of domestic species, in particular those mentioned in [articles L. 214-6-1](#), [L. 214-6-2](#), [L. 214-6-3](#) and [L. 214-6-5 of the French Rural and Maritime Fishing Code](#).

Purpose: this document lays down the health and animal protection rules that must be met in the course of the following activities: management of a pound, shelter or association operating without shelters, the breeding of dogs or cats, commercial activities involving the keeping, transport, or education and training of dogs or cats, and commercial activities involving the sale and presentation to the public of pets of domestic species. This Order specifies the conditions under which activities related to pets of domestic species must be carried out, taking into account the physiological and behavioral needs of animals of different species, as well as the importance of the characteristics and health requirements of activities related to pets of domestic species. The text sets out in detail the content of the health regulations to be drawn up by the responsible parties for such activities in collaboration with the designated health veterinarian, along with the conditions for the official presence of a qualified representative, who must provide proof of his or her knowledge as mentioned in paragraph 3 of Article L. 214-6-1. The activities mentioned in [Articles L. 214-6-1](#), [L. 214-6-2](#), [L. 214-6-3](#) and [L. 214-6-5 of the French Rural and Maritime Fishing Code](#) must be carried out in accordance with the provisions of this Order. This text does not apply to establishments that breed animals for scientific purposes.

Entry into force: this order enters into force the day after its publication.

Application: this order is issued in application of [articles L. 214-6-3](#), [R. 214-27-3](#), [R. 214-28](#), [R. 214-29](#), [R. 214-30](#), [R. 214-30-1](#) and [R. 214-30-3 of the French Rural and Maritime Fishing Code](#).

Transport, Slaughter, Pick-up

24/08/2025 : Welfare of sheep, cattle, and pigs at control posts during long distance transportation across Europe

Document type: scientific article published in [Italian Journal of Animal Science](#)

Authors: Angeloni MG, Padalino B, Ambra CD, Serrapica M, Iavecchia C, Costa LN, Nodari SR, Vecchio D

Preview: Long journey is an animal welfare concern. For this reason, in Europe, (EC) No 1/2005 regulates journey conditions. According to the law, if the maximum journey time is exceeded, animals must be unloaded for resting, watering, and feeding at control posts (CPs) for at least 24 h. At CPs, animals are checked by Official Veterinarians (OVs) to ensure their welfare and fitness for transport. This study documented the activity of a CP in Southern Italy (2019-2024) analysing journey logs and OVs' inspection reports. Different transport-related issues-i.e. welfare (e.g. dead on arrival, DOA), documentation, and general transport problems (e.g. non-compliance with space requirements or mandatory rest periods)-recorded for stopover journeys were analysed in relation to various factors, such as the species of animals transported, the origin and destination of the journeys, their duration, and the identity and behaviour of the drivers. A total of 97 vehicles stopped at the CP, transporting 24,135 animals. Vehicles came mainly from France (71.1%) and went mainly to Greece (73.2%), with sheep as the main cargo (78.4%). DOA cases were recorded in 4 vehicles and pigs were confirmed as the species at higher risk of poor welfare during transport (Fisher's Exact Test p-value ≤ 0.001). Longer journeys-especially those from Northern Europe or involving multiple CPs-were more frequently associated with general transport problems (Wald test p-value = 0.002). This study documented recurring patterns of higher-risk journeys and provides evidence to support potential policy changes aimed at protecting animal welfare during long journeys.

15/07/2025 : Lettre ouverte à la Ministre de l'Agriculture, Mme Annie Genevard Régression des abattoirs de proximité : Madame la Ministre, que faites-vous pour soutenir l'élevage ?

Document type: open letter from the [Confédération paysanne](#) to the French Minister for Agriculture and Food Sovereignty

Authors: Stéphane Galais, Yves-Pierre Malbec, Jean-Jacques Bailly

Preview : Dear Minister, The number of abattoirs continues to decline, having fallen from 400 in 2003 to a current figure of 226. Of these, 30% are public abattoirs providing slaughtering services for clients, primarily farmers, who operate within local supply chains.

This decline in the number of abattoirs has been accompanied by an economic and geographic concentration of the services provided by this essential link in the food chain that has benefited large industrial and private business groups. Over the past two years, the rate of local abattoir closures has increased, with one closing every month!

This pattern can be seen, for example, in the Hautes-Pyrénées Region, where the Bagnères-de-Bigorre abattoir closed last September. [...] Farmers in the region need a strong message to be sent

by the government if this part of the system that supports their livelihood is to be preserved: in a mountain region such as this, the disappearance of the abattoir threatens the very existence, not only of livestock farming but of all agricultural activity.

The situation in Bagnères-de-Bigorre is far from an isolated case: the French government is still failing to support projects led by livestock farmers, in particular, in those areas that must now operate without an abattoir, including the Lubéron (mobile abattoir project), Sud Loire-Atlantique / Nord-Vendée (AALVIE project, following the closure of the Challans abattoir), Tarn-et-Garonne (definitive closure of the Montauban abattoir), Gard (project set up following the closure of the Alès abattoir), Haute-Vienne (project responding to the closure of the sheep and pork lines at the Limoges abattoir), and Nord Loire-Atlantique (APPPOC project)...

Other abattoirs that have been shut temporarily are slow to reopen. Examples can be found in Puy-de-Dôme (Ambert), Côtes d'Armor (Quintin), Nièvre (Corbigny) and Alpes-Maritimes (Mercantour). In all these areas, farmers are finding it extremely difficult to get their animals slaughtered. The difficulty is compounded when all or part of what they produce is sold locally. But this is not the only problem: the disappearance of abattoirs is also disrupting long distribution chains that are dependent on local sources to generate added value and hence better remuneration for farmers. In addition, we are aware that other départements could be affected by abattoir closures in the coming months. In the Lot, the Saint-Céré abattoir is operating below capacity and is experiencing major financial difficulties, exacerbated by the pressures of meeting the standards imposed by the veterinary services. Local farmers fear that their slaughter facility will disappear. Similar fears are shared by others elsewhere, for example by those farmers who use the abattoirs in Vannes (Morbihan), Bergerac (Dordogne), Saint-Girons (Ariège), Charlieu (Loire), Quillan (Aude), and Montmorillon (Vienne)... [...] There is a vital need in the world of livestock farming for these local slaughter facilities, which serve as essential links in the networks that add value to the work of farmers and meet society's expectations in terms of animal protection. We are relying on you, Minister, to help farmers win back the use of these support services and regain their dignity, and to help regions reestablish their agricultural vitality by following a variety of different models, rather than having to conform to single model whose limitations have already been exposed. What we seek from you is the provision of positive and effective support to keep our local farmers in business and our countryside alive, with a view to maintaining the country's food sovereignty.

31/12/2024 : Blueprint for research to detect loss of consciousness and/or sensibility of fish at slaughter

Document type: scientific synthesis published on the [EURCAW AQUA website](#)

Authors: Saraiva, J., Brijs, J., Cabrera-Álvarez, M. J., Arechavala-Lopez, P., & Gräns, A.

Preview: The rapid expansion of aquaculture has emphasized the urgent need for humane slaughter practices and reliable validation tools for the loss of consciousness. Many current methods, such as asphyxiation and live chilling, fall short of ethical standards due to prolonged fish suffering and poor outcomes. Gas immersion shows modest improvements but cannot yet be classified as humane. Electrical stunning holds potential, but its effectiveness is undermined by rapid recovery times and a lack of data validating its reliability under intensive culture conditions. Percussive stunning and central nervous system destruction is a better option but lack validation at commercial scales. Anaesthetics could reduce stress yet face regulatory and consumer challenges. Studies, especially

on gilthead seabream and European seabass, highlight the importance of neurological assessments to evaluate stunning efficacy. The review stresses the need for rigorous, large-scale studies and collaborative efforts to refine techniques and set industry standards for ethical, humane fish slaughter.