

FRCAW Newsletter 56

October - November 2025

Editorial

Slaughter practices in France: transparency and ethics

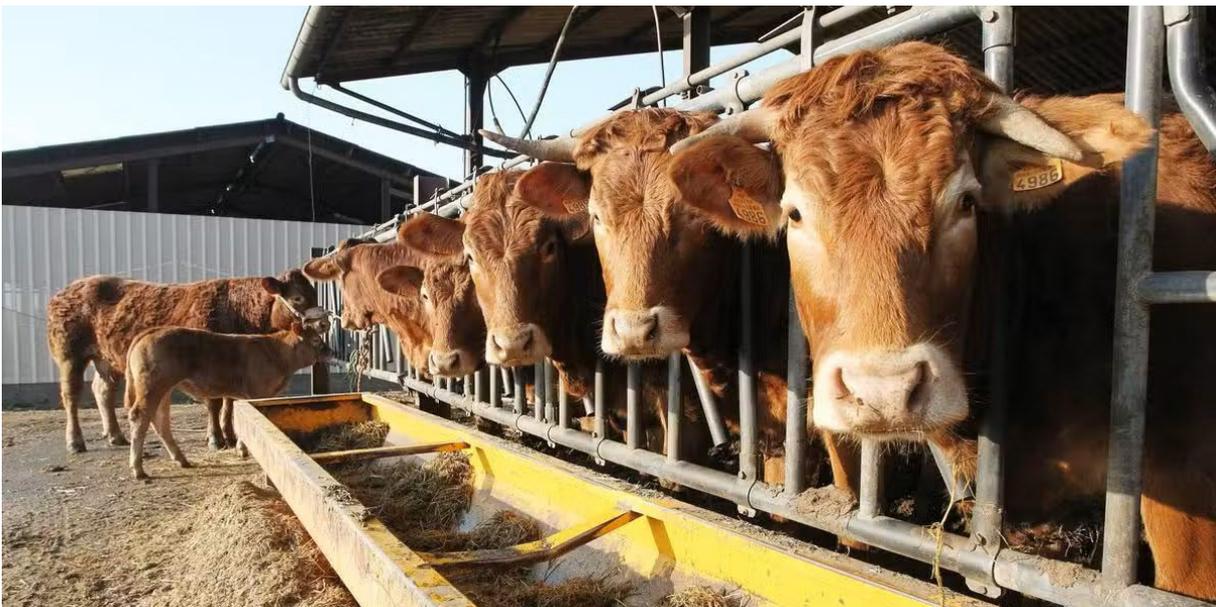


Image from the [Sud Ouest](#) website, © Pascal Bats

Non-stun slaughter involves the killing of animals without first rendering them insensible, meaning that they are fully conscious during slaughter. In France, prior authorisation for this type of slaughter may be granted to certain abattoirs that produce halal and kosher meat, exempting them from the current pre-stunning regulations. In a [press release](#) published on November 4, 2025, the OABA (Œuvre d'Assistance aux Bêtes d'Abattoirs) announced that it was taking legal action against the French government, citing lack of transparency and failure to collect mandatory data on this slaughter method. Official annual statistics on animals slaughtered without stunning in France were last published in 2014. In its press release, the OABA condemns the failure by the relevant authorities to publish activity reviews or abattoir monitoring reports. The absence of these publications prevents verification of the legal compliance of abattoirs and undermines the dependability of meat product labelling for consumers.

With or without prior stunning, the slaughter process remains a stressful experience for animals who have already undergone the trauma of transport to the abattoir. For small farms, and in areas where declining abattoir provision has led to longer journeys to slaughter sites, on-farm slaughter can offer a sustainable and ethical alternative. A recent [study published in Meat Science](#) reports that the on-farm slaughter of pigs in Italy using a mobile slaughter unit significantly reduced physiological stress and better preserved meat quality traits without compromising the microbiological safety of carcasses. These results not only demonstrate the ethical and sustainability benefits of on-farm slaughter, they also show that no greater risk to food safety and public health is involved.

New indicators for fish welfare

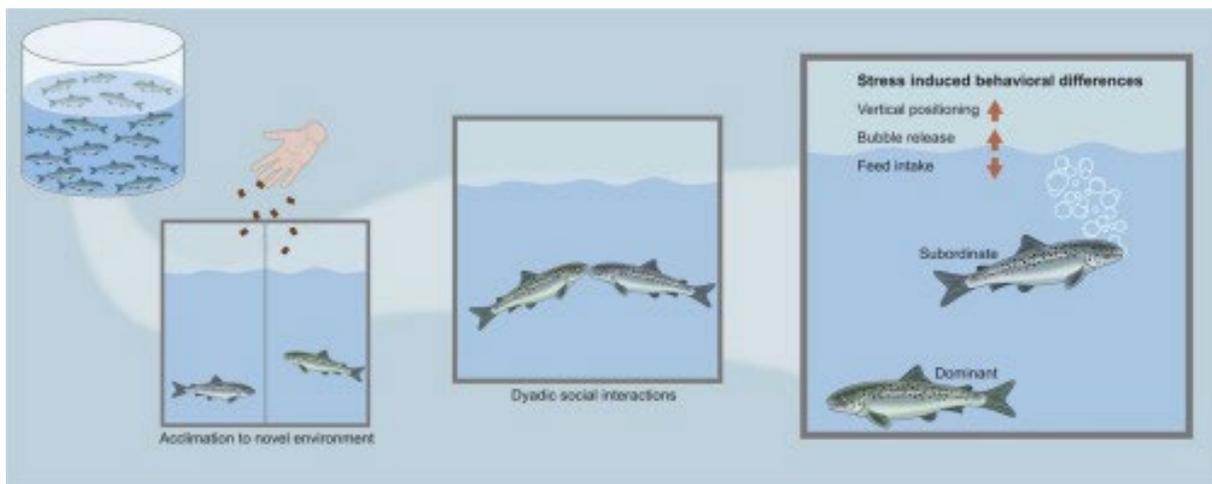


Image from [Gunnes et al. \(2025\)](#)

Global fish production is expanding significantly, raising questions over the welfare of fish farmed in ever more intensive systems. Fish welfare indicators often take the form of physical, physiological, and/or behavioural measures of biological dysfunction. October saw the publication of a [scientific review](#) arguing for the use of an integrative framework that combines an affective dimension with these traditional welfare measures. The framework's underlying principle is that the subjective experience of suffering can compromise an animal's welfare, even if the animal is otherwise healthy, growing satisfactorily, and reproducing normally. The approach assesses affective states, making particular use of paradigms such as judgment bias. It is already widely deployed in the science of terrestrial animal welfare and the authors suggest that its application to fish is worthy of further investigation.

For fish farms to be able to respond quickly to threats to fish welfare, operational indicators are also needed. A novel addition to the traditional range of behavioural indicators (swimming activity, grouping, feeding behaviours, stereotypical behaviours, aggressive behaviours, position in the water column) has recently been discovered by scientists, offering a new, reliable and non-invasive stress marker for Atlantic salmon. In their [study, published in Applied Animal Behavior Science](#), the authors report that socially subordinate fish were observed to emit gas bubbles from their swim bladders more frequently. The frequency of bubble release was positively correlated with the number of aggressive acts a subordinate fish was subjected to by a more dominant fish. This new indicator of acute stress, which is both sensitive and clearly visible on the surface, extends the existing

repertoire of fish welfare indicators. It could enable both human and automated detection of stressed individuals, thereby contributing to the improvement of welfare monitoring in fish farming.

Development of knowledge-sharing tools on animal welfare



Image from [the GECO site exploration tree](#), amarante.design / shutterstock, May 2025 ©

A growing number of tools designed to share knowledge and support decision-making are now available in the realm of animal welfare. In October, France's Research, Innovation and Transfer (RIT) special unit unveiled its new digital tool providing access to information on the five freedoms of animal welfare. The RIT partnership between the country's agricultural technical institutes (ACTA), chambers of agriculture (APCA) and INRAE has made its [exploration tree](#) available on the GECO collaborative knowledge management and exchange website, presenting the five freedoms as thematic goals to be explored. Users access an overview of possible strategies for each freedom, taking them to concise and practical resources designed by practitioners in agricultural consulting, R&D, and agricultural education. The tool is designed to centralise and facilitate access to knowledge in a way that will help the livestock sector to improve animal health and welfare. Elsewhere, [Lidi](#) has also developed a digital platform to provide animal welfare information and raise awareness among its partner farmers in collaboration with the VetAgro Sup Animal Welfare Chair, the French Agricultural Technical Institutes, the Chambre d'Agriculture de Bretagne and a number of animal protection associations. Both these new digital tools can be accessed via the [FRCAW educational resources platform](#) (in French). Meanwhile, for the poultry sector, researchers have sought to optimise existing protocols for the welfare assessment of laying hens, designing and publishing a [decision-making tool](#) in Poultry Science that is intended to help users to find the protocols that best match their needs. By offering tailored advice rather than prescriptive choices, this decision tree should enhance the consistency, ease of use, and effectiveness of welfare assessments on laying-hen farms.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial	1
COGNITION-EMOTIONS	6
13/11/2025 : Décrypter les émotions des lapins pour adapter les pratiques d'élevage	6
26/09/2025 : 5 faits étonnants sur l'intelligence des animaux	6
19/09/2025 : Ce qu'avoir un chat fait à votre cerveau (et au sien)	7
15/09/2025 : Comment décrypter les émotions des chevaux ?	8
CONFERENCES-SEMINARS-TRAINING	8
20/11/2025 : Webinaire le 2 décembre 2025 : Le bien-être des équidés attelés dans les conditions du travail	8
29/10/2025 : Master in Animal Welfare Assessment	8
29/10/2025 : EURCAW-Pigs webinar: "What is a pig?"	9
16/10/2025 : Webinaire le 18 décembre 2025 - Bien-être : la filière s'engage à l'international	10
22/09/2025 : Formation - Gestion du bien-être animal des animaux d'abattoir	10
ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND HUMAN-ANIMAL RELATIONSHIP	11
04/11/2025 : [Replay] Amélioration du bien-être animal en élevage de porcs : quelles répercussions sur le travail des éleveurs ?	11
29/10/2025 : Grippe aviaire : ces éleveurs de volailles qui demandent un assouplissement du confinement pour le "bien-être animal"	12
27/10/2025 : Human perception of goats' vocal expression of emotions	13
22/10/2025 : Main Husbandry Practices and Health Conditions That Affect Welfare in Calves: A Narrative Review	13
02/10/2025 : Human-animal relations in regenerative ranching: implications for animal welfare	14
30/09/2025 : A survey on management of milk feeding, weaning and housing of conventional and organic dairy calves in Europe	14
PRECISION FARMING AND AI	15
17/10/2025 : Using deep learning models to decode emotional states in horses	15
10/10/2025 : Advancements in machine learning applications in poultry farming: a literature review	16
10/09/2025 : Systematic Review of Acoustic Monitoring in Livestock Farming: Vocalization Patterns and Sound Source Analysis	16
ETHICS-SOCIOLOGY-PHILOSOPHY-ANIMAL RIGHTS	17
16/11/2025 : Pourquoi le XXI ^e siècle sera « le siècle des animaux »	17
15/10/2025 : Incorporating Animal Welfare into Cost-Benefit Analysis	18
ANIMAL WELFARE ASSESSMENT AND LABELLING	18
13/11/2025 : Gas bubble venting: A novel behavioral indicator of stress in juvenile Atlantic salmon (Salmo salar)	18
12/11/2025 : What are households willing to pay for higher animal welfare?	19
13/10/2025 : The right fit: A decision tree to select a protocol for assessing the welfare of laying hens	20
08/10/2025 : A functional framework for a comprehensive study of welfare in fishes	21
29/09/2025 : Willingness to pay for animal welfare across labels, products, consumers, and time	22
23/09/2025 : Systematic Literature Review on Donkeys (Equus asinus): Husbandry and Welfare in Europe	22
POPULATION MANAGEMENT AND ANIMAL WELFARE	23
13/10/2025 : Animal welfare organisations that rehome dogs from southern and eastern Europe to	



Germany: A homepage content analysis	23
18/09/2025 : Première étude nationale de la SPA et de la Fondation Affinity sur les animaux abandonnés	23
ANIMAL WELFARE INITIATIVES	24
31/10/2025 : Newsletter - EURCAW Ruminants & Equines - Volume 11	24
29/10/2025 : Newsletter - EURCAW-Pigs - Edition 14	24
28/10/2025 : Améliorer le bien-être des animaux en élevage : arbre d'exploration	24
23/10/2025 : Retour sur les Journées LIT EXPERT 2025 - LIT Ouesterel	25
13/10/2025 : Research and innovation perspectives: poultry welfare in 2050	25
02/07/2025 : Sweden now free of battery cages for hens	25
INVERTEBRATES.....	26
01/10/2025 : Shrimp Welfare Report	26
HOUSING AND ENRICHMENT	27
07/10/2025 : A review: effect of different floor surfaces and space allocation on the welfare and performance of indoor finishing beef cattle.....	27
29/09/2025 : Importance of the social environment for reproductive and general welfare of domestic horse (Equus caballus) stallions	27
17/09/2025 : Bien-être des veaux laitiers : la filière et les ONG sont parvenues à un accord sur le logement en groupe précoce des veaux	28
ONE WELFARE	28
26/09/2025 : Aligning agricultural policy: discrepancies between public and farmer priorities	28
PAIN MANAGEMENT	29
29/10/2025 : Douleur des animaux de rente : un partenariat SNGTV-CAPdouleur.....	29
29/09/2025 : Productive and welfare parameters in trimmed laying hens: A systematic review-meta-analysis.....	30
REGULATION	30
14/11/2025 : Newsletter Novembre 2025 - The European Institute for Animal Law & Policy.....	30
31/10/2025 : Vers un nouveau statut juridique pour les animaux de rente.....	30
26/10/2025 : Animal welfare policy indicators.....	31
16/09/2025 : Assemblée nationale : réponse écrite à la question n°7524 : Interdiction de l'élevage en cage	32
16/09/2025 : Assemblée nationale : réponse écrite à la question n°7147 : Quelles mesures pour éviter la prolifération des chats errants ?	34
16/09/2025 : Assemblée nationale : réponse écrite à la question n°7146 : Pour un audit de l'ensemble des abattoirs français.....	35
TRANSPORT, SLAUGHTER, PICK-UP	37
12/11/2025 : Considerations for the Welfare of Ruminants During Transport.....	37
04/11/2025 : Rapid loss of consciousness in cattle following nonstun slaughter: evidence from a systematic review.....	37
04/11/2025 : L'OABA assigne l'État devant le Tribunal administratif : l'opacité sur l'abattage sans étourdissement doit cesser	38
03/11/2025 : Animal welfare experts renew call on UK government to ban CO2 for pig stunning	39
22/10/2025 : Impacts of Reduced Stocking Density on Broiler Welfare During Transport: Evidence from a Hungarian Study Under Moderate Climatic Conditions	40
18/09/2025 : Animal welfare and meat quality: The impact of on-farm slaughter on Cinta senese pigs	41

Cognition-Emotions

13/11/2025 : Décrypter les émotions des lapins pour adapter les pratiques d'élevage

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

Authors: Fétique M, Savietto D, Janczak AM, Fortun-Lamothe L, Fillon V.

Preview: The vast majority of rabbits are raised in enclosures, in conditions that severely restrict their movements and the expression of the species' behaviors, such as hopping, browsing, sitting up on their hind legs, gnawing, etc. In order to respect their needs, and meet the public's animal welfare expectations, it is essential to design new alternative breeding and rearing systems. To do so, we must come closer to the animals' point of view, using indicators to understand and interpret their emotions. This will allow us to design and test out different living conditions and evaluate rabbits' emotional responses to them.

Scientists from the GenPhySE laboratory have developed a qualitative behavior assessment method (QBA) that has been adapted to rabbits. The animals' emotional states are determined by direct observation. Based on three years of observations, researchers have established a grid of qualitative emotional descriptors to cover the wide spectrum of intensities and emotions, both positive and negative, that rabbits can experience.

This adaptation for rabbits of the method developed by Françoise Wemelsfelder and her colleagues in the early 2000s, is a first. It has now been applied to other domestic species, such as pigs and cattle, and is part of the Welfare Quality® assessment procedure.

Encouraging positive interactions

Rabbits' behavioral responses are influenced by both their living environment and the quality of their relationships with humans. A scientific study has investigated the influence of the human-animal relationship on the behavior and emotions of young rabbits raised outdoors on pasture or in agroforestry. Rabbits who had been familiarized with humans by considerate breeders and had received treats and stroking had a more positive perception of interactions and spent more time close to humans. They were characterized as "affectionate and interested", whereas rabbits that had experienced only distant contact with the breeder were more "indifferent".

Enriching the living environment and encouraging positive interactions, such as a regular, considerate human presence, could improve rabbits' welfare and make it easier for farmers to provide daily care.

[Link to scientific article published in 2024 in Animal Welfare](#)

26/09/2025 : 5 faits étonnants sur l'intelligence des animaux

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

Author: INRAE

Preview: *1 - Sheep learn how to undergo MRI scans while awake!*

To study the brains of sheep and understand how they react to certain sounds, scientists need to put them through MRI scanners. To avoid the need for a general anaesthetic, our teams successfully trained the sheep to go through the machine while still awake and unrestrained! This shows the

incredible power of the human-animal relationship and the ability of sheep to learn complex tasks.

[Read more](#)

2 - Chickens blush with emotion

Six Sussex hens aged 3 to 4 months were observed and filmed for 3 weeks in a variety of situations. Analysis of 18,000 images showed that hens blush according to their emotional state. Not in response to compliments, though, but by being placed in more or less pleasant situations. For example, when they were given palatable food, such as mealworms, the hens would blush a little. But when faced with a negative situation, such as capture, they turned scarlet. Conversely, when they were resting, their skin appeared much lighter. This research will help to improve hen welfare on farms. [Read more](#)

3 - Horses can recognize human faces

Can you recognize animals you met months ago just by looking at their photos? Well, horses can! A study has shown that they are able to recognize humans based solely on a photograph of a face. Even better: they remember human faces months after they've seen them! How did the scientists test this ability? They used a touch screen! Two faces appeared simultaneously on the screen: the face of a known person and that of an unknown person. The horses then had to touch the known face to obtain a reward. [Read more](#)

4 - Rainbow trout can pick out fish from multiple images

Fish can recognize other fish! To reach this conclusion, scientists trained rainbow trout. First, when shown an image of a fish, they obtained a reward via a food dispenser. Once this training was over, the exercise could begin: the scientists would show them several images and they had to pick out the image of a fish to obtain the reward. The results were unequivocal: the trout were able to identify a fish from images of objects of different shapes and colors. The study also showed that they were unable to distinguish a trout from another species of fish. The researchers hypothesized that this was due to the two-dimensional nature of the photos presented to the trout. These results could be used to improve animal welfare on fish farms. [Read more](#)

5 - When pigs tell you what they like

What do pigs seek to express through growling, squeaking or squealing? An INRAE research team investigated the emotions associated with these different vocalizations. They sought to establish whether piglets would react in the same way to other pigs, humans, or simple everyday objects. Although the piglets showed a preference for other pigs, being around the people who look after them on a regular basis turned out a real source of comfort - much more so than being around objects! The scientists didn't stop there: they developed a tool to translate pig emotions by analyzing their vocalizations. Using a library of 7,400 vocalizations and artificial intelligence, they have developed a tool to detect negative or positive emotions in pigs with 91.7% accuracy. This will certainly be useful in improving pig welfare on farms. [Read more](#)

[19/09/2025 : Ce qu'avoir un chat fait à votre cerveau \(et au sien\)](#)

Document type: article published in [The Conversation](#)

Author: Laura Elin Pigott

Preview: Stroking a cat and listening to it purr is not a trivial occurrence: behind the scenes in such shared moments there is a chemical reaction that enhances trust and reduces stress in both humans



and animals. Although cats may have a reputation for independence, recent research suggests that we share a unique bond with them, fueled by the chemistry of our brains. At the heart of the process is oxytocin frequently referred to as the "love hormone". This same neurochemical is released when a mother cradles her baby, or when friends embrace, and it has a beneficial effect on trust and affection. And now, recent research suggests that it also plays an important part in the relationship between cats and humans. (...)

A [study published in February 2025](#) showed that, when owners stroke, cuddle or cradle their cats in a relaxed manner, their oxytocin levels tend to rise, as do those of the cats themselves, provided the interaction is not imposed on them. (...)

[15/09/2025 : Comment décrypter les émotions des chevaux ?](#)

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

Authors: E. Regnier, M. Vaster

Preview: Understanding animal emotions is Léa Lansade's job as an ethologist at INRAE's Physiology of Reproduction and Behavior Unit in Tours. Using original protocols, Léa succeeds in deciphering the emotions of horses and other farm animals in order to improve animal welfare.

Conferences-Seminars-Training

[20/11/2025 : Webinaire le 2 décembre 2025 : Le bien-être des équidés attelés dans les conditions du travail](#)

Document type: announcement of a webconference organized by the [IFCE](#)

Author: IFCE

Preview: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 from 11:30 to 12:00

The number of scientific publications on horses working in harness remains small compared with those on working horses that are either ridden or worked on foot. They are nevertheless to be found in many different contexts: sport, tourism, leisure activities, racing, farm work...

This webinar aims to present the current state of knowledge specific to the welfare of horses and donkeys in harness. It will focus in particular on indicators that can be easily observed in field conditions to assess an animal's comfort or discomfort. It will also present a number of indicators that have received attention in other contexts that could potentially be transposed to equids working in harness.

Speakers

- Alice Ruet, ethologist and research and development engineer in equine welfare – IFCE
- Christine Briant, veterinarian and expert in equine welfare.

[Sign up to the webinar](#)

[29/10/2025 : Master in Animal Welfare Assessment](#)

Document type: announcement of the launch of a new Master's degree published by the [University of Aarhus](#)



French Reference Centre
for Animal Welfare

Author: University of Aarhus

Preview: The master's programme which primarily focus on farmed animals, enables the student to as well measure, assess, advise and provide guidance on animal welfare issues. The programme is now offered in English, and the website is currently under development. For direct information about the masters programme, please sign up for a mailing list by writing an email to the head of the educational programme, Tine Rousing (tine.rousing@anivet.au.dk).

The Master in Animal Welfare Assessment has been established to provide further education for professionals who, directly or indirectly, work with animal welfare in their daily activities. The programme originates from the EU Animal Welfare Strategy (2012-2015), which assesses animal welfare based on animal-based indicators rather than regulatory control of animal housing systems. This shift introduces new competency requirements for professionals in the field. Consequently, there is an increasing demand for individuals with expertise in animal welfare who can evaluate, advise, and provide guidance on welfare issues in primary production according to future requirements in the field. [You can find the EU Strategy for Protection and Welfare of Animal here.](#)

The Master's programme meets this need through a competency profile that integrates biological, production-related, managerial, political, and communicative aspects of the field. Participants will gain a broader understanding of animal welfare management and access to a valuable international network, thereby raising the overall competency level across the participant group. This programme is unique both in Denmark and within the EU. The programme will be offered for the first time in the spring of 2026, with an application deadline of November 15, 2025. Applicants holding citizenship outside the EU/EEA/Switzerland are advised to apply no later than 1 November 2025, as special entry requirements apply.

29/10/2025 : EURCAW-Pigs webinar: "What is a pig?"

Document type: announcement of a webconference organized by the [EURCAW-Pigs](#)

Author: EURCAW-Pigs

Preview:

When: December 1, 2025 at 1:00 PM - 14:15

Location: Online

Organizer: EURCAW-Pigs

The webinar "What is a pig" will highlight and show examples of species-specific behaviours and explain why the possibility to perform these behaviours are important for the welfare of pigs.

This webinar is specifically designed for National Competent Authorities and state veterinary inspectors

EURCAW-Pigs invites you to the webinar "What is a pig" to explore: - What drives natural pig behavior? - Why do these behaviors matter for pig welfare? - How can understanding them improve husbandry practices?

The session will include expert insights and video sequences, and time for open discussion.

Understanding the natural behaviours of pigs, also called species-specific behaviours, is essential for ensuring pig welfare on farms. Strong innate motivations, deeply rooted in the evolutionary history and biological needs of pigs, drive these behaviours essential for fulfilling the pigs' needs. If needs



are not met pigs experience frustration and stress, while fulfilling the needs can result in positive mental states that facilitate positive welfare.

Program 14:00–14:05 Welcome and introduction; Lene Juul Pedersen

14:05–14:10 Short introduction to EURCAW-pigs; Lars Schrader

14:10–14:55 Main Presentations: “What is a Pig?”:

Sexual behavior, nest-building, and maternal care including natural weaning; Lene Juul Pedersen

Social structure, social behaviour and communication, senses; Lars Schrader

Foraging, resting, and thermoregulation; Antje Schubbert

14:55–15:15 Q&A and discussion on how knowledge of natural behaviors can improve husbandry practices and pig welfare; moderated by Lene Juul Pedersen

15:15 Closing of the webinar.

[Registration for webinar](#)

[16/10/2025 : Webinaire le 18 décembre 2025 - Bien-être : la filière s'engage à l'international](#)

Document type: webinar announcement from the [IFCE](#)

Author: IFCE (French horse and riding institute)

Preview: Thursday, December 18, 2025 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

The issue of animal welfare is generating growing interest, which can sometimes turn into heated debate, both in France and further afield. In many European countries, the equine industry faces the same challenges: how to respond to societal expectations, reinforce the transparency of its practices and preserve its *social licence to operate*, involving the non-binding tacit approval of local authorities and organisations. Faced with these challenges, a number of professional organizations and federations have adopted proactive and innovative measures: awareness-raising campaigns aimed at the general public, targeted actions aimed at the media, support for professionals in adopting best practices, and so on.

This webinar offers an overview of initiatives that have been set up in different countries, illustrating the diversity of possible approaches.

Speaker : Amandine Julien, Head of International Relations - IFCE

[Register here for the webinar](#)

[22/09/2025 : Formation - Gestion du bien-être animal des animaux d'abattoir](#)

Document type: training announcement published by the [Chambre d'Agriculture Ile-de-France](#)

Author: Chambre d'Agriculture Ile-de-France

Preview: Training for the certificate of competence relating to the protection of animals at slaughter.

Duration: 7 hours/1 day

Cost: €366

- VIVEA scheme members: €100 to pay (subject to conditions).

- Salaried employees: €183 to pay (requests for reimbursement must be submitted to your OPCO no later than the day before the training course)



French Reference Centre
for Animal Welfare

- Other: €366/day

Who should attend?: Farmers and farm employees, those working with live poultry involved with unloading, hanging, bleeding and anesthesia control.

Objectives:

- Be able to describe the principles of animal welfare.
- Know the regulations on animal protection.
- Be able to carry out ante-mortem inspections relating to animal welfare.
- Be able to take corrective action in the event of a problem
- Identify critical points at workstation level.
- Pass the certificate of competence relating to animal protection at slaughter.

Content:

- Master the concept of animal welfare (regulatory and legislative context, knowledge of the animal).
- Know how to handle and care for animals (unloading and awaiting slaughter).
- Know and carry out the slaughter process (stunning techniques, bleeding, slaughter without stunning).

[Contact us](#)

Animal husbandry and Human-animal relationship

[04/11/2025 : \[Replay\] Amélioration du bien-être animal en élevage de porcs : quelles répercussions sur le travail des éleveurs ?](#)

Document type: replay of the webinar organized by [Idele](#) and the [Chambre d'Agriculture de Bretagne](#)

Author: Caroline Depoudent

Preview: On pig farms, improvements to animal welfare call for the review of facilities and practices. The Chambre d'Agriculture de Bretagne has investigated the impacts on the work of farmers, in terms of time, labour, mental toll and satisfaction, based on practical examples, looking at maternity units and open mating areas, ending tail-docking, and at the socialization of piglets in the maternity unit.

Key points

Over the past ten years, pig farmers have made significant changes to their farms and practices in order to improve animal welfare. Changes include the ways that animals are housed (e.g. free-range maternity pens) or the discontinuation of practices such as tail docking. These changes affect how farmers work, with physical tasks being replaced by electronic monitoring. It takes time to adapt to the new pattern and can be a source of stress, as farm workers have less control over the situation and must be more responsive. Despite this, in most cases, farmers derive great satisfaction from their new arrangements in terms of meeting their animals' needs and improving human-animal relationships. In all cases, the choice of equipment has a major impact on the farmers' working comfort and safety.



[Watch the webinar](#)

[29/10/2025 : Grippe aviaire : ces éleveurs de volailles qui demandent un assouplissement du confinement pour le "bien-être animal"](#)

Document type: article published on [France3 Auvergne Rhône-Alpes](#)

Author: Catherine Lopes

Preview: With the threat level in France for avian influenza now raised to high, poultry farmers now find themselves obliged to shut up their animals. This measure, which has been brought in during the migratory season for birds, has significant consequences for both farmers and their animals, particularly in the Auvergne. (...)

The main consequence of the high alert level is that there is a ban on poultry being allowed outside. In practical terms, this means that farmers have to be ready to shut in their animals. But this produces a dilemma for farms, such as Domaine de Limagne, where around 3,000 ducks are raised in a building of 400 square meters with access to an external grassed run covering a further hectare. The manager, Jean-François Panem, says that the company had not prepared sufficient space per animal for the first lockdown they experienced: "We've been through this before. We tried to comply as best we could. We put animals in unsuitable buildings that were nevertheless roofed, often adjacent to the farm workshops. But the conditions weren't great for the animals. So that's why we're very hopeful of obtaining a derogation to have restricted runs instead that would still give them the chance to be fully outside".

The major difficulty with shutting poultry indoors is how to maintain conditions that are satisfactory for the animals. "According to Maureen Brayat, quality manager at Domaine de Limagne, "Shutting up the population with no derogation would prevent us from adequately respecting animal welfare". Animal welfare is thus the main argument put forward by professionals to justify an exception to the rules. To get around the requirement for birds to be shut in completely, farmers apply for derogations from the Direction Départementale des Protections de la Population (DDPP). They seek to allow the animals outside along a "restricted route", with no access to outside troughs or feeders. The derogation is conditional on a full biosecurity audit being carried out at the farmer's premises and requires virological testing. (...)

Vaccination plays a crucial role in obtaining these exemptions. Domaine de Limagne ducks are all vaccinated. However, the cost is considerable, working out at almost a euro per duckling. (...) It should be noted that, for the time being, only ducks are vaccinated, not the so-called "Label Rouge" or "Bourbonnais" chickens.

Despite the situation, the prevailing feeling among poultry farmers in the Auvergne is one of caution rather than concern. Aurélien Lafoucrière is a Poulets du Bourbonnais poultry farmer in Etroussat, Allier, and President of SYVOFA, the Syndicat de Défense des Volailles Fermières d'Auvergne. He points out that local farmers, who have lived with this risk for years, are "fortunate to be in an area that suffers a little less from migratory flows, unlike other regions such as Brittany or the Vendée". The farmers' caution is manifested through their heightened vigilance in terms of biosecurity. Farmers must adopt "protective measures", similar to those used during Covid, changing into designated sets of clothing (from shoes to T-shirts) to exclude viruses before entering their poultry

houses. In cases where on farm contamination is confirmed, the protocol calls for the slaughter of the entire flock, which can lead to exclusion zones that block neighboring farms.

The raised threat level comes at a crucial time, some two months before Christmas. This end-of-year period (November-December) represents around 25% of total sales for foie gras and poultry producers, and 30% of annual sales for Domaine de Limagne. (...)

[27/10/2025 : Human perception of goats' vocal expression of emotions](#)

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

Authors: Celozzi S, Prato-Previde E, Battini M, Ntalampiras S, Ludovico LA, Presti G, Tamburini A, Mattiello S

Abstract: This study investigated the human ability to recognise emotions expressed by goats (*Capra hircus*) through their vocalizations, with the aim of improving animal welfare and the human-goat relationship. To this end, we conducted an online survey in which participants listened to goat vocalizations inferable to four emotional contexts (Pre-partum labour - PPL-; Mother-kid separation - MKS-; Mother-kid reunion - MKR+; Waiting for feed - WFF+) and described them using qualitative indicators. Participants (n = 290) correctly recognized the emotional valence of vocalizations (negative for PPL- and MKS-; positive for MKR+ and WFF+; Chi-square test: $p \leq 0.001$ in all cases) and correctly assigned vocalizations above the chance level ($\geq 25\%$) for 3 out of 4 emotional contexts (Chi-square test: $p \leq 0.001$ for PPL-, MKS- and WFF+), with a higher recognition rate for negative than for positive contexts, probably due to their greater differentiation in terms of acoustic parameters, also with regard to the level of arousal. The recognition of the emotional valence of the vocalizations was confirmed by the consistent way in which participants qualitatively described these sounds. The logistic regression analysis (stepwise backward multiple regression method, with an input and output significance of 0.2) allowed the identification of the most important factors that, in combination with the other factors, affect the human ability to assign goat vocalizations to each correct context of emission. In all the four contexts, experience with goats significantly entered the models (people with frequent direct contact with goats were more likely to assign bleats to the correct context of emission than people who were unfamiliar with these animals). This suggests the importance of stockpeople training in both farming and recreational settings. The study also suggests that people with higher levels of empathy can better recognise the emotional content of goat bleats, although further investigation is required to confirm this finding.

[22/10/2025 : Main Husbandry Practices and Health Conditions That Affect Welfare in Calves: A Narrative Review](#)

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

Authors: Eva Mainau, Laurent Goby, Xavier Manteca

Abstract: Calf welfare is critically influenced by early-life husbandry practices and health conditions. This narrative review synthesizes current evidence on key management practices affecting calf welfare, including calving, colostrum intake, milk feeding, water provision, weaning, housing, mutilations, and transport. A structured literature search was conducted in Web of Science and



French Reference Centre
for Animal Welfare

Scopus using general and topic-specific keywords, complemented by expert opinions from EFSA. Evidence-based recommendations are presented to improve calf welfare, emphasizing timely colostrum administration, biologically appropriate milk volumes, access to clean water from birth, gradual weaning, and stable social housing. Pain mitigation during disbudding and castration, along with strict biosecurity and hygiene, are essential to reduce disease risk. Despite advancements, significant knowledge gaps persist, including practical tools for on-farm colostrum assessment, optimal weaning protocols, the long-term impacts of early-life pain, and alternatives to current transport practices. The review highlights the need for standardized protocols, validated technologies, and enhanced training for farmers and veterinarians. Improving husbandry practices based on scientific evidence is essential to enhance calf health, productivity, and ethical sustainability in modern rearing systems.

02/10/2025 : Human-animal relations in regenerative ranching: implications for animal welfare

Document type: sociological article published in [Agriculture and Human Values](#)

Authors: Matías Hargreaves-Méndez, Ethan Gordon, Hannah Gosnell & Maria José Hötzel

Abstract: Regenerative ranching emphasizes ecosystem restoration and is informed by holistic decision-making. It offers an opportunity to transform human-animal relations in ranching. However, its implications for animal welfare remain underexplored. This study examined human-animal relations in regenerative ranching in the U.S. Pacific Northwest, using the four lenses from integral theory: individual perceptions, practices, cultural norms, and systemic structures. Through semi-structured interviews with 16 regenerative ranchers who practice holistic decision-making in the Pacific Northwest, and 10 key informants (i.e. NGOs, thought leaders, university professors), participant observation, and thematic analysis, we identified tensions between relational values and practices. Ranchers recognized animal sentience and expressed compassion, but their instrumental language (e.g. labeling cattle as *tools*) reflected a cognitive dissonance. Practices aligned with relational values, such as low stress animal handling and fence-line weaning, coexisted with culturally rooted stressors (e.g. branding and castration events). Cultural traditions celebrating community bonds prioritized human well-being over animal welfare, while systemic barriers (e.g. mandatory branding laws and market dependencies) appeared to constrain animal welfare improvements. Our findings highlight regenerative ranching's potential for transforming human-animal relations in ranching. This can be realized by nurturing relational values like care and responsibility and addressing cultural and institutional inertia. We propose integrating animal welfare explicitly into the holistic decision-making framework, advocating for policy reforms, and fostering dialogue with Indigenous Peoples to reconcile ethical, ecological, and economical priorities of regenerative ranching. By acting on their relational values, regenerative ranchers could be role models for compassionate, multispecies coexistence, expanding the true meaning of regeneration in agriculture involving animals.

30/09/2025 : A survey on management of milk feeding, weaning and housing of conventional and organic dairy calves in Europe

Document type: scientific survey published in [Acta Veterinaria Scandinavica](#)



Authors: Otten, N.D., Welk, A. & Jensen, M.B.

Abstract: To safeguard dairy calf welfare, European legislative recommendations on milk feeding practices and minimum standards on housing of calves exist. However, studies providing a general overview of common practices on milk-fed calf rearing across European countries are sparse. The aim of this study was to provide an overview of current milk feeding and housing practices for dairy calves in conventional and organic herds across European countries. Forty-five respondents with extensive knowledge about dairy production and calf rearing from 25 countries and regions were invited to an online questionnaire regarding farm demographics, management of the newborn calves, milk feeding and housing practices of calves 1–4 weeks of age and 5–8 weeks of age, and weaning practices. A total of 21 respondents from 15 countries and regions responded to the survey. The survey suggests that in conventional herds most calves spent a limited time with the dam after birth (≤ 12 h) with longer durations found in organic herds (≥ 2 days). Calves 1–4 weeks of age are reported to be commonly housed in individual pens and fed 6–8 L/day in two daily feedings. In most countries and regions, less than 25% of the herds are reported to be practicing *ad libitum* milk feeding. In most countries and regions, teat buckets or teat bars are reported to be used for milk feeding. In countries and regions where open buckets or troughs are more common, access to permanently mounted artificial dry teats (dummy teats) was typically provided. Calves 5–8 weeks of age are reported to be predominantly group housed and fed 8–10 L/day in two daily feedings with once a day milk feeding occurring more frequently in calves within this age group. Weaning was reported to be most frequently initiated between 8 and 10 weeks. Based on the respondents' evaluations the survey suggests that there are discrepancies between recommendations based on research and the current practices regarding milk allowance and feeding frequency, and weaning. Legislative or industry regulations on timing of separation from the dam, milk type, or weaning age are primarily implemented for organic production systems in a smaller proportion of countries.

Precision farming and AI

[17/10/2025 : Using deep learning models to decode emotional states in horses](#)

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

Authors: Phelipon, R., Lansade, L. & Razzaq, M.

Abstract: In this study, we explore machine learning models for predicting emotional states in ridden horses. We manually label the images to train the models in a supervised manner. We perform data exploration and use different cropping methods, mainly based on Yolo and Faster R-CNN, to create two new datasets: 1) the cropped body, and 2) the cropped head dataset. We train various convolutional neural network (CNN) models on both cropped and uncropped datasets and compare their performance in emotion prediction of ridden horses. Despite the cropped head dataset lacking important regions like the tail (commonly annotated by experts), it yields the best results with an accuracy of 87%, precision of 79%, and recall of 97%. Furthermore, we update our models using various techniques, such as transfer learning and fine-tuning, to further improve their performance. Finally, we employ three interpretation methods to analyze the internal workings of our models, finding that LIME effectively identifies features similar to those used by experts for annotation.

This publication was the subject of an [article published in connected.vet](#)

[10/10/2025 : Advancements in machine learning applications in poultry farming: a literature review](#)

Document type: scientific review published in [Journal of Applied Poultry Research](#)

Authors: Naeem M, Jia Z, Wang J, Poudel S, Manjankattil S, Adhikari Y, Bailey M, Bourassa D

Abstract: Integrating machine learning (ML) in poultry science presents transformative opportunities for optimizing production, enhancing animal welfare, and improving disease management. This review explores the current landscape of ML applications within the poultry sector, encompassing growth prediction, disease detection, behaviour analysis, environmental monitoring, and productivity enhancement. ML techniques, including artificial neural networks, random forests, and deep learning, have demonstrated high predictive accuracy and adaptability in handling complex and nonlinear poultry data. Key innovations include the automated detection of diseased birds via image and audio recognition, the prediction of growth and body weight using environmental and nutritional parameters, and the assessment of animal behavior and welfare. This review also highlights challenges related to data quality, model interpretability, infrastructure limitations, and the generalizability of models across different poultry systems. Despite these hurdles, case studies reported in the literature demonstrate tangible benefits in productivity gains and early disease mitigation through ML applications. Moreover, the emergence of real-time sensing technologies and Internet of Things devices enables more granular data collection, further enhancing ML's potential impact. Future strategies include fostering closer collaboration between data scientists and poultry specialists, developing explainable machine learning models, and integrating these models into decision-support systems to better assist farmers. The article advocates for scalable, ethical, and transparent ML solutions that align with both commercial viability and animal welfare goals. Overall, ML serves as a promising frontier for addressing the complex biological and operational dynamics of modern poultry farming.

[10/09/2025 : Systematic Review of Acoustic Monitoring in Livestock Farming: Vocalization Patterns and Sound Source Analysis](#)

Document type: systematic review published in [Applied Sciences](#)

Authors: Ramos Niño JN, Sousa FCd, Oliveira CEA, Coelho ALdF, Hernandez RO, Barbari M.

Abstract: Environmental sound and animal vocalizations provide non-invasive information for welfare assessment in livestock systems. This systematic review surveys their application in beef and dairy cattle, poultry, and swine, with a focus on environmental noise, vocalizations and the characterization of acoustic sources. Searches in Scopus and Web of Science followed PRISMA guidance and the PICO framework. After applying strict criteria that required peer-reviewed experimental studies in English, quantifiable acoustic data, and clear descriptions of measurement procedures, the review included 36 studies. Four approaches recur: vocalizations as welfare indicators; characterization of acoustic sources; combined analyses of vocalizations and sources; and evaluation of animal responses to acoustic stimuli. Recent work reports advances in recording



equipment, signal processing, and precision livestock tools. Important challenges remain, including heterogeneous acoustic metrics, limited physiological validation, and difficulties applying models under commercial conditions. Overall, the evidence supports sound as a candidate for real-time monitoring and highlights the need for accessible, standardized methods. The findings provide a basis for future research and practical applications in welfare assessment.

Ethics-Sociology-Philosophy-Animal rights

16/11/2025 : [Pourquoi le XXI^e siècle sera « le siècle des animaux »](#)

Document type: article published in [The Conversation](#)

Author: Réjane Sénac

Preview: In the twentieth century, the fight to achieve greater equality enabled many social groups to become legal subjects. This growing inclusiveness could turn the 21st century into the century for animals. But how are they to be integrated into our legal texts? If animals have rights, do they also have duties?

In this extract from his essay "Par effraction. Rendre visible la question animale" (Breaking In. Making the animal issue visible), Stock/Philosophie Magazine (2025), political scientist Réjane Sénac explores these questions. (...)

The antispeciesist approach accords a moral status to animals that recognizes them as subjects with rights. It does not set out to accord them rights equivalent to those of humans (e.g. the right to vote or marry), but rights that are adapted to their needs. This then creates the challenge of thinking through what would be the fairest possible way for the potentially divergent interests of different species, human and non-human, to co-exist. In *Considérer les animaux. Une approche zoinclusive* (Taking animals into account, an animal-inclusive approach) Émilie Dardenne proposes a progressive approach to the consideration of the interests of animals other than humans. She presents concrete pathways for transition at both individual and collective levels, ranging from consumption to public policy choices, education and training. She offers practical tools to help bring about lasting change. At the individual level, animal-inclusivity means, for example, taking into account the needs of the animal you wish to adopt and the commitment - financial, time-related, etc. - that such a step would entail, before deciding to take on a 'pet'. In terms of public policy, animal-inclusivity would, for example, enshrine animal rights in the French Constitution, going beyond the simple announcement of their recognition as "living beings endowed with sentience" (Article 515 of the French Civil Code since 2015) or "sentient beings" (Article L214 1 of the Rural Code since 1976), and enable them to acquire a legal personhood which would carry specific rights adapted to their needs. The core role of the French Constitution is highlighted by Charlotte Arnal, an animal rights activist, for whom "social projects begin with the Constitution and, since animals are part of society, it must include them". This measure, which she describes as symbolic, "will also unfold in practical ways over time, in the courts". With this in mind, Louis Schweitzer, President of the Fondation Droit Animal, Éthique et Sciences (LFDA), aims to turn the Declaration of Animal Rights proclaimed at UNESCO in 1978, and updated in 2018 by the LFDA, into an educational tool that can be disseminated in public places and schools, before being transposed into law.



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Through his work at Animal Cross, a general animal protection association he co-founded in 2009 and now chairs, Benoît Thomé, too, is committed to this goal. He argues for the introduction of an Article 0 to form the basis of the French legal system, and would read as follows: "All living beings, as part of the domains of nature - mineral, human, vegetable, animal -, are born and remain free and equal in their duties and rights." In answer to the argument that animals cannot be granted rights because they cannot carry out duties, he asserts that "animals more than fulfill their duties, given everything that they do for us and for other living beings." (...)

Benoît Thomé stresses his disagreement with the view taken by Tom Regan that animals are moral patients rather than moral agents in the sense that, like vulnerable people, children or people with disabilities, they have rights but cannot not perform duties. He points out that animals carry out "their duties to us human beings, to nature and to ecosystems for wild animals, naturally and freely, not as a duty. We therefore need to 'de-anthropize' the concept of duty, understanding it in the sense of gift, a service to other living beings, and participation in ecosystems". He points out that "the direction of history" has been to extend rights "from the majority to the most vulnerable"; this has been the case for humans, and now the time of non-human animals has come. (...)

15/10/2025 : Incorporating Animal Welfare into Cost–Benefit Analysis

Document type: socio-economic article published in [Sustainability](#)

Author: Marc David Davidson

Abstract: Since non-human animals also experience welfare, an increasing number of scholars advocate including non-human animal welfare in cost–benefit analysis. Recent proposals to achieve this through interspecies comparisons of welfare, however, are incompatible with the principles of positive welfare economics. Based on conceptual and theoretical analysis, this article argues that, to remain consistent with positive welfare economics, the monetary value of welfare changes should be set equal to the marginal costs of alternative options available to offset those welfare changes. This applies equally to human adults, small children, and non-human animals. The article further argues that monetary valuation is appropriate only in cases involving marginal changes in the risk of harm—for example, an increased mortality risk for birds and bats caused by windmills—but not in cases involving direct and certain harms, such as those inflicted on farm animals. Moreover, a key rationale behind cost–benefit analysis is that a positive outcome increases social wealth, thereby expanding the government's capacity to enhance social welfare through redistribution or investment in public services. In the interspecies context, however, this rationale remains doubtful as long as governments fail to give equal consideration to non-human animal welfare in policy making.

Animal welfare assessment and Labelling

13/11/2025 : Gas bubble venting: A novel behavioral indicator of stress in juvenile Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*)

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

Authors: Mikkel Gunnes, Evelina A.L. Green, Inger Lise Andersen, Øyvind Øverli



Abstract: Reliable, non-invasive behavioral indicators of stress are essential for improving real-time welfare monitoring in aquaculture, yet few validated markers are currently available for assessing the welfare of farmed fish. This study aimed to identify novel stress-related behaviors in Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*). To this end, dominant–subordinate relationships were induced through repeated dyadic interactions between size-matched pairs of territorial juvenile fish over four days, followed by an overnight interaction (n = 10 pairs), with 12 fish kept in isolation as controls. Behavioral observations were focused on traits with potential for automated detection and revealed a distinct multi-trait behavioral syndrome in socially subordinate individuals: reduced feed intake (p = 0.04), higher vertical positioning in the water column (p ≤ 0.001), and more frequent release of gas bubbles from the swim bladder (p = 0.02). Among these traits, bubble release emerged as a novel, conspicuous and sensitive indicator of acute stress. Frequency of bubble release correlated positively with the number of aggressive acts received from dominant fish (p = 0.018), though not with plasma cortisol levels (p = 0.10). Nonetheless, cortisol was significantly elevated in subordinate fish compared to controls (p = 0.003) but not compared to dominant fish (p = 0.14). This observation suggests that bubble release may serve as a more sensitive marker of acute social stress than physiological stress responses such as cortisol. Given the conspicuous nature and clear visual signature of bubble release, follow-up studies should explore the potential for automated detection using computer vision or bioacoustic methods. Such monitoring could enable earlier identification of stressed individuals in fish farming, supporting more proactive and individualized welfare assessments. Vertical positioning was also influenced by social status and may represent an additional visually accessible trait linked to stress, although further research is needed to assess its general applicability. In summary, this study suggests potential extensions to the current repertoire of non-invasive welfare indicators for farmed fish and provides a foundation for continued research into behavioral welfare monitoring in Atlantic salmon.

[12/11/2025 : What are households willing to pay for higher animal welfare?](#)

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

Author: Tony Mcdougal

Preview: A new tool for measuring the economic value of farm animal welfare improvements has been developed, potentially transforming how consumers, retailers and the government evaluate animal welfare policies. The tool, which creates a system that assigns comparable welfare scores to different farming systems, linking them to what UK households are willing to pay for higher animal welfare, has been developed at the University of Reading. (...)

Welfare scoring

The method uses a 0-100 welfare score, where 0 represents extreme suffering and 100 denotes the highest achievable welfare. An expert panel of 14 independent animal scientists assessed various farming systems, considering everything from physical health to mental wellbeing and opportunities for natural behaviours throughout an animal's life from birth to slaughter. The research then surveyed over 3,000 UK households to determine how much they would pay for welfare improvements, revealing that people value animal welfare improvements more highly when current conditions are poor, with willingness to pay declining as welfare standards rise. The research evaluated different farming scenarios, revealing some large differences in welfare scores.



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- Layers: Caged egg production currently scores just 32 out of 100, while free-range scores 51. The study found UK households would collectively pay £496 million per year to move the 21% of hens in cages to free-range housing, equivalent to 20p per egg.
- Broilers: Giving broiler chickens more space per bird would increase welfare scores from 38 to 47. This improvement, benefiting birds in their final week before slaughter, would be valued at £997 million annually or 92p per bird.
- Pigs: Indoor pig farming using farrowing crates scores 27, the lowest of all systems assessed. Taking out crates entirely would boost the score to 47 and be valued at £1.4 billion (£2.52 per kg of pork) by UK households. The report found that just limiting crate use to a shorter period of a pig's life would also have benefits.
- Dairy cows: Current dairy farming practices score 43, with around 30% of cows suffering lameness. Reducing lameness to just 5% of herds would raise the welfare score to 56, and be valued at £1.7 billion per year (11p per litre of milk). This would require improvements that would benefit other aspects of cow welfare.
- Lambs: Using pain relief for lamb castration would increase welfare scores from 53 to 56, worth £320 million annually (£1.12 per kg). Eliminating castration altogether would raise the score to 60, valued at £717 million per year.

A moral duty to safeguard animal welfare

Commissioned by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and conducted at the School of Agriculture, Policy and Development at the University of Reading, the survey found strong public support for welfare improvements. Up to 85% agreed there was a moral duty to safeguard animal welfare, while 86% supported regulation to improve welfare levels across all farm animals. (...) The new valuation tables allow policymakers to quickly estimate the benefits of proposed welfare changes. For example, if proposing a new policy to improve broiler welfare from 40 to 45, policymakers can look up the value (£22.14 per household per year) and multiply it by the UK's 28.4 million households to calculate the total annual benefit of £628.8 million. The figures can be compared against costs to decide if policies represent good value for money.

Commenting on the model, RSPCA head of public affairs David Bowles, said: "As a nation of animal lovers, people are caring more and more about where their food comes from, and deserve as much information as possible about the welfare of animals reared for food. This important research confirms consumers are often prepared to pay more if it ensures farmed animals have enjoyed a better life."

[The report can be found here](#)

13/10/2025 : The right fit: A decision tree to select a protocol for assessing the welfare of laying hens

Document type: systematic study published in [Poultry Science](#)

Authors: Muhammad Fathin Hanif, Liesbeth G.W. Van Damme, Charlotte Vanden Hole, T. Bas Rodenburg, Vera Bavinck, Xavier Averós, Inma Estevez, Ali Agus, Frank A.M. Tuytens

Abstract: Ensuring robust and context-appropriate welfare assessments in laying hen production systems requires the use of protocols that align with diverse operational conditions, user capabilities, and regulatory or market expectations. This study developed a structured decision-making



framework in the form of a decision tree to guide stakeholders in identifying welfare assessment protocols most appropriate for their specific needs. The decision tree was constructed by synthesizing criteria and decision points identified from a comprehensive review of existing assessment protocols. A systematic literature search conducted across 24 languages identified 12 eligible protocols, which were subsequently analyzed based on the type of assessment (whether the protocol involved self-assessment by farmers or external assessment by independent parties), inclusion of animal handling, benchmarking capacity, and implementation feasibility. Results indicate that self-assessment protocols provide practical advantages in terms of accessibility and frequency of use, particularly when supported by mobile technologies and visual guidance. However, the effectiveness of self-assessment protocols may be constrained by variability in observer expertise and the absence of objective benchmarking, particularly in cases where adequate training and support are lacking. External assessment protocols, which frequently include animal handling procedures, enable more rigorous and standardized evaluations but may present challenges related to cost, logistical complexity, and producer acceptance. The proposed decision tree provides a transparent and systematic tool to direct users toward protocols that best match their operational realities and assessment goals. By offering tailored guidance rather than prescriptive choices, the framework enhances the consistency, usability, and real-world impact of welfare evaluations in the laying hen sector. Further refinement of existing protocols to improve flexibility and digital integration is recommended to support broader implementation across varying production systems.

[08/10/2025 : A functional framework for a comprehensive study of welfare in fishes](#)

Document type: scientific review published in [Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences](#)

Authors: Alvarado Maria Victoria, Cerdá-Reverter Jose Miguel, Espigares Felipe

Abstract: Fish production is expected to grow significantly in the coming years. The welfare of captive animals in increasingly intensive systems has historically raised ethical concerns, suggesting that such intensification in fish production will drive public debate and inform policy discussions. Traditional assessments in fish welfare have relied on physical, physiological and/or behavioural measures of biological dysfunction, offering insights into health and functional integrities, yet these approaches face notable limitations. By contrast, affective-based approaches, which use behavioural measures to assess affective state and are widely employed in welfare science, remain underexplored in fishes. Recent advances, such as judgement bias paradigms, provide reliable tools to measure affective states. These support integrative welfare assessments that combine affective evaluations with measures of health and biological functioning. A multi-level approach ensures a comprehensive and robust evaluation of fish welfare, avoiding reliance on any single type of evidence and enabling the exploration of different facets of the welfare construct. While this work synthesizes existing indicators, its main contribution lies in proposing a functional framework that prioritizes affective state evaluation while systematically integrating and validating complementary metrics. By aligning with contemporary ethical and scientific standards, this approach aims to advance the conceptualization and operationalization of fish welfare.

[29/09/2025 : Willingness to pay for animal welfare across labels, products, consumers, and time](#)

Document type: socio-economic article published in [Food Quality and Preference](#)

Authors: Malte Oehlmann, Irina Dolgoplova, Christina M. Neubig, Jutta Roosen

Abstract: In recent years, the number of labels indicating improved animal welfare conditions on meat products has increased making it difficult for consumers to understand, evaluate, and compare husbandry conditions across products. Based on a discrete choice experiment implemented in three cross-section surveys over a period of 15 months with a total of 6000 German respondents, we estimate the willingness to pay (WTP) for various levels of animal welfare associated with different meat products. We use three existing labels with overlapping animal welfare requirements mimicking the situation in the German meat market: The well-established organic label as well as a binary animal welfare label by the Animal Welfare Initiative and a multi-level animal husbandry label which were introduced in Germany in 2015 and 2019, respectively. We show that the multi-level label scheme leads to more product differentiation and, subsequently, higher WTP estimates. WTP further depends on meat type, where animal welfare improvements for beef and chicken products are valued much higher compared to those for pork. WTP for the organic and the highest level of the husbandry label increases with higher household incomes. WTP for these labels on chicken is also higher among women.

[23/09/2025 : Systematic Literature Review on Donkeys \(*Equus asinus*\): Husbandry and Welfare in Europe](#)

Document type: meta-analysis published in [Animals](#)

Authors: Masebo NT, Benedetti B, Angeloni MG, Lee L, Bigi D, Padalino B.

Abstract: The number of donkeys in Europe has significantly declined in recent decades due to mechanization; however, recently, the demand for donkey milk and other purposes has led to a slight increase in their population. However, information on how they are kept and managed, and their welfare is limited. This review aimed to explore the husbandry, management, and welfare of donkeys (*Equus asinus*) across European Union member states, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) technique was used. The search was conducted using Scopus and Web of Science, identifying 797 records that were screened using titles, keywords, and abstracts, resulting in 78 retained records. An additional 19 records were identified using snowballing and experts' suggestions, bringing the total to 97. Dairy donkeys have been studied mainly in Italy, and there they are usually managed under extensive to semi-intensive husbandry systems. Donkeys involved in human intervention therapies are generally managed semi-intensively. Based on the literature, most donkeys are provided with shelter and outdoor access, and this can be with or without pasture, except the free-range donkeys that graze year-round. Health and management-related issues (e.g., obesity, dental disorders, and hoof disorders) could be overlooked, potentially compromising their welfare. The feeding management of donkeys is generally traditional and poorly studied, relying mainly on forages supplemented with concentrates. Most donkeys suffer from overweight/obesity except for lactating donkeys, which are often underweight. This may indicate unbalanced feeding practices. Improved understanding of



housing and feeding management is essential for establishing evidence-based welfare guidelines tailored to the donkeys' species-specific needs.

Population management and Animal welfare

13/10/2025 : Animal welfare organisations that rehome dogs from southern and eastern Europe to Germany: A homepage content analysis

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

Authors: Graf J., Kuhne F.

Abstract: Each year, over 100,000 dogs are imported into Germany from other EU countries by animal welfare organisations, mainly from Romania. This study conducted a systematic content analysis of websites belonging to 241 animal welfare organisations that rehome dogs from southern and eastern Europe to Germany. Assessment included transparency, legal compliance, and availability of educational and medical information for adopters. The study shows that many organisations lacked information regarding dogs' origins, transport methods, or health status which sometimes makes it difficult to distinguish between dog rescue and illegal dog trade. Photos were mainly used in adoption advertisements and behavioural descriptions were only included in two-thirds of the dog advertisements which poses a risk of increased dog relinquishment post-adoption due to behavioural unsuitability. Information on vector-borne diseases and typical behaviour of imported rescue dogs was not provided comprehensively. Few organisations violated legal standards, offering underage or banned breeds and failing to use the TRACES transport system. Most organisations relied upon private foster homes, while few had no temporary housing available in Germany. Although most claimed to conduct pre-adoption checks, comprehensive contract details were rarely published. The number of existing animal welfare organisations that rehome dogs from southern and eastern Europe to Germany is unable to be determined due to high fluctuation and the lack of central registry. Inadequate health disclosures and behavioural descriptions risk poor adoption matches and increased returns. Lack of legal compliance may endanger both animal and public welfare and opens the door to illegal dog trade. Sustainable animal protection requires better adopter education, reliable medical testing, and local engagement in source countries to reduce reliance upon transnational rehoming.

18/09/2025 : Première étude nationale de la SPA et de la Fondation Affinity sur les animaux abandonnés

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

Author: SPA and Affinity Foundation

Preview: First study on abandonment and adoption in 2025 (data from 2024).

Who are France's abandoned animals, what has happened to them and who takes them in? The SPA and the Affinity Foundation have published a major exclusive study on abandonment, following



a survey of over 800 associations and groups, to provide a reliable assessment of the situation and to move thinking on solutions forwards.

[Link to the report \(pdf\)](#)

This publication led to an article published in [Le Monde on 21/09/2025](#)

Animal welfare initiatives

[31/10/2025 : Newsletter - EURCAW Ruminants & Equines - Volume 11](#)

Document type: Newsletter 11 from [EURCAW Ruminants & Equines](#)

Author: EURCAW *Ruminants & Equines*

Preview: Welcome to the third edition of the EURCAW Ruminants & Equines newsletter in 2025. In this edition, we share details of our outputs and activities since June 2025 including the 2025-2027 Work Programme, a new Welfare Topic, five new factsheets, a Question to EURCAW, Spanish translations, the four EURCAWs meeting with National Reference Centres and Supporting Bodies and other news related to ruminant and equine welfare.

[29/10/2025 : Newsletter - EURCAW-Pigs - Edition 14](#)

Document type: Newsletter 14 from the European Reference Centre for Pig Welfare ([EURCAW-Pigs](#))

Author: EURCAW-Pigs

Preview:

- Pig Welfare in Action podcast with Lotte Nygaard Holbech
- Q2E on Roofs over organic outdoor runs
- Q2E on Head only stunning of sows
- Fifth annual EURCAW-Pigs MS officials meeting
- A new Master in animal welfare assessment
- ...

[28/10/2025 : Améliorer le bien-être des animaux en élevage : arbre d'exploration](#)

Document type: digital tool published by [GECO](#)

Authors: Cellule RIT (Recherche Innovation Transfert)

Preview: The knowledge exploration tree presents five objectives, corresponding to the five individual freedoms (see "Find out more about the BEA"), on which livestock sectors can act to improve animal health and welfare.

For each of these objectives, a set of livestock practices, agricultural materials of interest or research results has been identified for the main livestock sectors. Browsing the thematic space provides an overview of all the strategies that can be deployed within a given objective, and access to synthetic and practical resources (see "How to use this exploration tree").



These resources are the fruit of technical monitoring or R&D projects, and have been designed by players in the fields of consulting, R&D and agricultural education. They are designed to help farms address the issue of animal welfare. This knowledge exploration tree is not intended to be exhaustive, and users are encouraged to contribute to its enrichment and development (see the "You want to contribute" section).

This initiative to share resources between different players was led by INRAE, as part of the Research Innovation Transfer (RIT) unit.

[23/10/2025 : Retour sur les Journées LIT EXPERT 2025 - LIT Ouesterel](#)

Document type: recordings of presentations published by the [LIT OUESTEREL](#)

Author: LIT OUESTEREL

Preview: On October 15 and 16, 2025, LIT OUESTEREL organized the 5th Journées LIT EXPERT event in Rennes on the theme of " animal welfare : updates, prospects and innovations". Did you miss it? Go to our [website](#) to view the [event program](#) and all presentation materials and videos.

[13/10/2025 : Research and innovation perspectives: poultry welfare in 2050](#)

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

Authors: Shawna L. Weimer, Elena Myhre, Anne-Marie Neeteson-van Nieuwenhoven, Rodolfo Arreaga, Kate Barger, Ruth C. Newberry, Katy J. Tarrant, Gregory S. Fraley

Abstract: Dear Dr. Kogut, we are writing to inform the readership of *Poultry Science* about conversations that have occurred over the last year regarding the future state of poultry welfare globally. These conversations involved members of academia, industry, and allied stakeholders and were led by the Research and Innovation Committee of the International Poultry Welfare Alliance (IPWA). The IPWA conducted a series of seven icebreaker activities at poultry industry and scientific conferences to gather global perspectives on poultry welfare, looking ahead to 2050. This letter summarizes the key insights and discussions from these sessions, based on input from over 200 participants from nearly every continent. Discussion topics regarding the path to poultry welfare in 2050 covered housing and management, positive welfare measures, artificial intelligence (AI), cross-species applications of poultry welfare research, welfare from the end of production to processing, nutrition, robustness, and sustainability across all levels of the poultry industry. Across geographical regions, common themes emerged from these discussions, highlighting key points for improving poultry welfare, health, and sustainability globally as we move towards 2050. This letter summarizes the input received during these icebreaker events.

[02/07/2025 : Sweden now free of battery cages for hens](#)

Document type: article published in [The Nordic Times](#)

Author: the editorial team

Preview: According to Animal Rights Sweden (Djurens Rätt), Sweden is now completely free from caged hens – despite the absence of a legal ban. This is shown by statistics compiled by the animal



French Reference Centre
for Animal Welfare

rights organization from Swedish county administrative boards and the egg industry. The organization describes it as a breakthrough after more than 50 years of work against cage farming and claims a significant part of the credit for this development. (...) According to the organization, Sweden is the first country in the world to eliminate caged hen farming without an explicit legal prohibition.

“Advocacy work makes a difference”

Opposition to cage farming began in the 1970s. In 1988, the Swedish Parliament decided to ban cages, but when the ten-year transition period expired, cage farming remained – and the law was changed. According to Animal Rights Sweden, this led to an intensification of their work. The organization highlights reports such as “The Hen or the Egg” (2009) and “Release the Cages” (2022), along with recurring information campaigns and corporate dialogues. Another important step was the “Animal-Friendly Municipality” initiative, where all Swedish municipalities eventually opted out of caged eggs in public procurement. Since 2008, over 85 companies in Sweden – including grocery chains, hotels, and restaurants – have rejected cage farming after discussions with the organization. According to Animal Rights Sweden, this has been crucial for the development. They estimate that at least 17 million hens have avoided a life in cages since then. (...)

« Sweden must take the next step »

In parallel, Animal Rights Sweden has been involved in the EU’s work to phase out cage farming. The organization has collected over 50,000 signatures for the European Citizens’ Initiative “End the Cage Age”. A legislative proposal was expected in 2023 but has been postponed to 2026. Even though cages are practically gone in Sweden, Animal Rights Sweden argues that the work is not finished. – *We have seen fantastic development, but now Sweden must take the next step. Animal Rights Sweden demands an immediate legal ban on cage farming. There’s nothing to wait for now,* urges Benny Andersson. Despite the empty cages, many critics argue that Swedish hens still live under substandard conditions – for example, in crowded barns with thousands of individuals, where access to outdoor areas is often completely lacking.

Invertebrates

01/10/2025 : [Shrimp Welfare Report](#)

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

Author: ICAW (International Council for Animal Welfare)

Preview: Shrimp welfare is gradually gaining momentum across Europe, with several leading retailers now committing to phasing out eyestalk ablation and adopting pre-slaughter electric stunning - setting important new benchmarks for the industry. At the same time, scientific recognition of shrimp sentience and the proven effectiveness of humane slaughter methods continues to strengthen. As aquaculture expands and shrimp remains considered as a key source of sustainable protein, it is vital that retailers take responsibility for ensuring meaningful welfare standards throughout their supply chains. With consumers increasingly concerned about the conditions in which animals are farmed and slaughtered, higher welfare practices are not only an ethical obligation but also a business imperative.

Link to the [report](#) (pdf)

This publication was the subject of an article [in *Savoir Animal*](#) on 01/10/2025

Housing and Enrichment

[07/10/2025 : A review: effect of different floor surfaces and space allocation on the welfare and performance of indoor finishing beef cattle](#)

Document type: scientific synthesis published in [Journal of Applied Animal Research](#)

Authors: Keane, M. P., Cuevas-Gómez, I., & Earley, B.

Abstract: This review evaluates current knowledge on how flooring and space conditions influence beef cattle welfare and growth performance. Flooring type and space allowance are key environmental factors affecting animal comfort, hygiene, and performance. Optimizing these elements is essential to promote welfare while maintaining production efficiency. Straw bedding, and rubber mats (RM) placed over concrete slatted floors, enhance comfort and support natural behaviours, including lying and rising. Cattle show a clear preference for softer flooring, which reduces slipping and increases mobility. While RM can reduce slipping and enhance comfort, its impact on cleanliness is variable, depending on environmental and management conditions. RM use may also support improved growth performance in finishing steers, though outcomes differ based on age, mat characteristics, and space allowance. Health benefits include reductions in lameness and locomotor issues, but prolonged RM can lead to claw overgrowth. Straw bedding and increased space allowance significantly improve animal welfare outcomes without compromising performance. Absolute space allowances often yield inconsistent results. However, using allometric k-values offers a more reliable measure of space requirements relative to animal size. Future research should refine space and explore long-term flooring impacts on hoof health. These insights can guide housing strategies that support animal welfare and performance.

[29/09/2025 : Importance of the social environment for reproductive and general welfare of domestic horse \(*Equus caballus*\) stallions](#)

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

Authors: Aleksandra Górecka-Bruzda, Christine Aurich

Abstract: The obligation to ensure the welfare of domestic horses is evident. Social bonds are an essential part of the daily life of feral horses. In human-controlled conditions, stallions usually live alone in a barren environment of individual boxes or paddocks with contact to conspecifics limited to visuals. Still, many stallions do not have regular access to paddocks and pastures. This provokes frustration and stress which has been shown to contribute to the development of stereotypies, self-mutilations, abnormal sexual behaviour and reproductive problems. This review highlights how domestic environments may negatively diverge from the natural conditions necessary for the healthy behavioural development of stallions. We address stallions' welfare and reproductive problems that may arise from their lack of social contact. These issues are discussed along the stages of a stallion's

life under free ranging conditions. We postulate that today's breeding stallions must be enabled to enjoy the positive aspects of a bachelor stallion's life. This should include adequate consideration of the stallions' reproductive behaviour including contact with a sexually receptive mare. This will not only improve animal welfare but also ensure optimal semen quality and fertility.

[17/09/2025 : Bien-être des veaux laitiers : la filière et les ONG sont parvenues à un accord sur le logement en groupe précoce des veaux](#)

Document type: article published by the [OABA](#)

Author: OABA (Œuvre d'Assistance aux Bêtes d'Abattoirs)

Preview: Animal protection NGOs have presented the results of their consultation with industry professionals on early group housing of dairy calves. At SPACE, the annual gathering of livestock industry professionals and stakeholders held in Rennes, France, the animal protection NGOs presented the main conclusions of their consultation with dairy industry professionals on early group housing of dairy calves. To support farmers who wish to house their calves in groups rather than individually, participants in the consultation provided their collective views on the benefits of this practice, along with the possible issues that can arise. In order for this practice to develop, the NGOs maintain that it is necessary for the industry to lay down a clear pathway towards the dairy farming of the future, and to follow a coherent strategic action plan, particularly with regard to the forthcoming revision of European legislation and the drafting of the next version of the "France Terre de Lait" industry plan. (...)

One Welfare

[26/09/2025 : Aligning agricultural policy: discrepancies between public and farmer priorities](#)

Document type: scientific synthesis published in [Agricultural and Food Economics](#)

Authors: Nadja El Benni, Robert Finger, Jeanine Ammann, Judith Irek, Antonia Kaiser, Christian Ritzel, Yanbing Wang, Gabriele Mack

Abstract: Agricultural policy in Europe is the subject of extensive debate due to the unmet agri-environmental goals, despite high levels of support. For example, the public is critical of agriculture's impact on the environment and animal welfare. At the same time, farmers protest due to low incomes and high bureaucracy. This apparent polarisation may hinder progress in agricultural policy reform, and a more nuanced understanding of the perceptions of both non-farmers and farmers is needed. This study systematically compares non-farmers' and farmers' preferences and levels of consensus across a comprehensive set of agricultural policy goals using surveys in Switzerland (N = 1668). We also assess the polarisation among farmers, non-farmers, and the entire population. We find consensus and polarisation in the perception of agricultural policy goals among Swiss farmers and the general public. Both prioritise domestic food production and farmers' income as main policy goals. However, non-farmers put more emphasis on low food prices and agri-environmental goals

than farmers. We find strong divides within the farming population, particularly regarding the need to mitigate climate change. Our analysis provides key insights for policymakers. Firstly, the broad consensus on different agricultural policy goals underlines the legitimacy of focusing on multiple objectives that support the multifunctional role of agriculture. Secondly, farmers are not homogeneous but have differing views, particularly regarding environmental objectives, especially those related to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Policies need to take this heterogeneity into account, for example, by more efficient allocation of agri-environmental payments. Thirdly, while farmers and non-farmers generally agree on the importance of securing farmers' incomes and food production, there are divergent views when it comes to reducing food prices and environmental impacts. Future agricultural policy reforms must find a balance between environmental goals and safeguarding farmers' incomes, while also ensuring affordable food prices.

Pain management

[29/10/2025 : Douleur des animaux de rente : un partenariat SNGTV-CAPdouleur](#)

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

Author: La Dépêche Vétérinaire

Preview: "CAPdouleur and the SNGTV* have signed a partnership agreement to improve pain management in livestock", explains Christophe Brard, Honorary President of the SNGTV, who is responsible for the coordination of this project for the SNGTV.

The aim is to provide veterinarians who work in animal production with subject-specific scientific information, technical data sheets, videos, webinars and training courses in the fields of analgesia and anesthesia. "This partnership is a showcase for the involvement of rural veterinarians in animal welfare," he stresses, noting that practices in this field have evolved considerably. He takes the example of Caesarean sections, which are now accompanied by systematic pre- and post-operative pain management. (...)

Long-term commitment

This new partnership mobilizes the SNGTV's technical committees. "We will also be working with teacher-researchers from the national veterinary schools, with major input from our colleague Raphaël Guatteo (Oniris)", explains Christophe Brard.

Partners drawn from the profession will be able to join this project, Axience for example, with whom the two organizations have designed a first newsletter aimed at CAPdouleur and SNGTV members, to be followed by the distribution of videos on animal pain management during veterinary surgery. Other laboratories will also be approached to join the partnership.

Co-founder of CAPdouleur, Thierry Poitte stresses the expertise that CAPdouleur will bring to the table, particularly in the field of digital pain assessment tools. Both partners emphasize their "long-term" commitment. Members of the SNGTV will benefit from special subscription rates to CAPdouleur Rural. "Pain management for livestock will help to improve their welfare and productivity, and will strengthen the public image of veterinarians in this area", states Christophe Brard. M.J.

* SNGTV: Société nationale des groupements techniques vétérinaires.

[29/09/2025 : Productive and welfare parameters in trimmed laying hens: A systematic review-meta-analysis](#)

Document type: meta-analysis published in [Research in Veterinary Science](#)

Authors: Henrique Sonda Gallina, Maria Eugênia Andrighetto Canozzi, Pietra Viertel Molinari, Juahil Martins de Oliveira Júnior, Ivan Bianchi, Fabiana Moreira, Débora Cristina Olsson, Paula Gabriela da Silva Pires, Javier Sanchez, Vanessa Peripolli

Abstract: The objective of this study was to evaluate the effects of beak trimming—using a hot blade or infrared radiation—on mortality, egg production, feather pecking, and corticosterone levels in laying hens, using systematic review-meta-analysis (SR-MA) methodology. A total of 1775 citations were identified. The number of birds evaluated was 76 for corticosterone, 6172 for mortality, and 5460 for egg production. Twenty-three articles were assessed, with 13 included in the quantitative synthesis. Birds subjected to hot blade trimming showed a lower probability of mortality (Relative Risk - RR = 0.47; $p = 0.087$) compared to untrimmed birds, with high heterogeneity ($I^2 = 94.64\%$). Both shallow (≤ 5 mm; RR = 0.64; $p \leq 0.0001$) and deep (≥ 5 mm; RR = 0.02; $p \leq 0.0001$) beak trimming reduced mortality compared to untrimmed birds. No consistent evidence was found linking beak trimming to changes in egg production or corticosterone levels; however, due to the low number of studies and methodological variability, these findings should be interpreted with caution. Infrared beak trimming appears to be a promising, less invasive alternative, showing potential welfare benefits without compromising performance. Further standardized research is needed to strengthen conclusions, especially on stress-related physiological responses.

Regulation

[14/11/2025 : Newsletter Novembre 2025 - The European Institute for Animal Law & Policy](#)

Document type: Newsletter from [The European Institute for Animal Law & Policy](#)

Author: Animal Law Europe

Preview: Welcome to the November edition of the European Institute for Animal Law & Policy's newsletter!

This past month has brought significant challenges for animal protection in the EU. The publication of the Commission's 2026 Work Programme clarified that animal welfare will not be prioritized in the current mandate. The meat-denomination amendment was adopted despite strong civil-society opposition (see our [joint letter](#)), and the revision of the Transport Regulation remains stalled. Nevertheless, we look ahead with resolve as we prepare for our conference in Brussels and continue advocating for meaningful legislative advances.

[31/10/2025 : Vers un nouveau statut juridique pour les animaux de rente](#)

Document type: press conference announcement published by the [OABA](#)



French Reference Centre
for Animal Welfare

Author: OABA

Preview: Faced with the rise in animal abuse, a number of animal protection associations, including the Fondation Brigitte Bardot, Co&xister and OABA (Œuvre d'Assistance aux Bêtes d'Abattoirs), are taking on responsibility for what are known as "production" animals at the request of governmental or judicial authorities. (...) Gabriel Amard, a French Deputy, has tabled a simple and practical legislative proposal that would give livestock animals that are no longer part of the food chain the status of companion animals, thus enabling them to be cared for within a legal framework and avoiding government euthanasia. The dual legal status of "livestock" and "companion animals" already exists for rabbits and, to a certain extent, for horses, proving that it is legally possible for a single species to have two distinct legal statuses. As the field of food safety is largely defined by the European Union framework, the legislative vehicle chosen is that of a proposed European resolution (PPRE), which will be considered by the French National Assembly before the end of 2025. The proposal includes:

- Irreversible exclusion from the food chain for animals adopted by sanctuaries or private individuals. This exclusion will rule out any health risk associated with the administration of unauthorized treatments for livestock, as is already the case for horses.
- Authorization to prescribe medicines or courses of treatment without being subject to the constraints associated with the standards in force for animals destined for human consumption.
- An alternative identification system to complement or replace ear tags in order to prevent fraud.
- The introduction of appropriate and relevant veterinary control criteria for facilities hosting these animals.

Adoption of the proposal could also encourage the inclusion in veterinary curricula of training modules on individual animals of this type as well as approaching them as whole populations, thus opening up new opportunities for professional activity. The Deputy stresses that the scope of the proposal is limited to animals already removed from the agri-food chain, and in no way affects the livestock farming sector. (...)

Other countries such as Italy and Spain have already put regulations in place for animals in sanctuaries. If the PPRE is adopted, France will be one of the first countries to make this change, and the rules will be harmonized at European level.

A press conference is being organized by Gabriel Amard, Member of the French National Assembly, in the presence of associations who support the plan, on Tuesday November 4 at 4:30 pm. Location: Assemblée Nationale, 126 rue de l'Université 75007 Paris - Salle des conférences de presse (next to the Salle des 4 colonnes).

[Download the press release \(pdf\)](#)

26/10/2025 : Animal welfare policy indicators

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

Author: European Commission

Preview: Established in 2024, within the EU Platform on Animal Welfare, the new sub-group on animal welfare policy indicators will help the Commission to identify meaningful indicators in line with EU animal welfare policy objectives and the corresponding methodology to collect, consolidate and interpret them for policy purposes.



The subgroup will work on policy indicators for the keeping of the main farmed species (cattle, pigs, sheep and goats, poultry, rabbits and fish) and regarding the most critical husbandry systems and practices affecting their welfare through nutrition and diet, housing, health or behavioral needs. The mandate does not cover the transport or the killing of animals.

The composition of the working group is available in the [Register of the Commission expert groups](#).

16/09/2025 : Assemblée nationale : réponse écrite à la question n°7524 : Interdiction de l'élevage en cage

Document type: Answer to question no 7524, published in the [Journal officiel de la République française](#)

Authors: Question: M. Charles Fournier (Indre-et-Loire (1re circonscription) - Écologiste et Social). Answer: Ministère de l'agriculture et de la souveraineté alimentaire.

Question: Mr. Charles Fournier questions the Minister of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty on the government's position on cage farming. In France, the percentage of hens raised in cages fell from 68% in 2016 to 24.9% in 2025, and should reach 10% by 2030, according to the egg industry. Despite encouraging results compared to the European average (39% of laying hens are still raised in cages in Europe), France has not met its commitments in this area. Emmanuel Macron, during the 2017 presidential campaign, pledged "to do away with the battery farming of laying hens in favor of alternative farming methods. By 2022, eggs from battery hens will be banned from sale to consumers". In addition, the European Commission pledged, following the *End the Cage Age* European citizens' initiative, to present a legislative proposal before the end of 2023, to ban cage farming throughout the EU. The French President has banned only the installation of new cages and the extension of existing ones through the 2018 "EGAlim" Law. The Commission, for its part, has simply failed to make any provisions and has in fact failed to meet its commitments. What is more, according to the AnimaFrance association, the observed drop in the proportion of hens raised in cages in France is mainly due to the *marketing* actions of distributors. In particular, the latter have encouraged the French egg industry to change its practices. For example, on April 1, 2013, the Monoprix supermarket chain undertook not to sell a single egg laid in a cage, which had a knock-on effect on other supply chains. These measures are seriously lacking in a society concerned over animal welfare, where 89% of French people are in favor of ending cage farming in the EU. It is essential to remind ourselves of living conditions in these cages: hens develop behavioral abnormalities (prolonged performance of compulsive movements, aggressiveness, even cannibalism towards their fellow hens), they never see the light of day, live surrounded by their own excrement and the corpses of their fellow hens, in a very restricted space where it is difficult to move around, with their feet lacerated by the wire flooring. Faced with this unacceptable situation, the Deputy alerts the Minister to the need to act at national level, without waiting for the European Commission's legislative proposals. Many European countries have taken steps to ban this type of farming in favor of alternative methods that are more respectful of animal welfare. This is the case in several Member States where legislation to ban the practice has already been passed, notably Luxembourg and Austria, along with Germany, where the ban will take effect from 2025. The conclusion is clear: binding legislation at EU level can only be achieved through initiatives at national level. With this in mind, he would like to know whether the government will quickly enact a ban on



cage farming at national level, thereby positioning itself at the forefront of European countries in terms of animal welfare.

Answer: Improving animal welfare and combating animal abuse are government priorities. There is a strong and growing societal expectation on the part of consumers and citizens regarding animal welfare issues, and this expectation must be met. The improvement of animal welfare is a key factor for the future of the European livestock industry, and bringing an end to the use of cages in farming, through a Europe-wide campaign, must play its part in this. The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) to "End the Cage Age", which was submitted in September 2018 by CIWF, calls on the European Commission to propose legislation banning the use of: cages for laying hens, rabbits, pullets, broiler breeders, layer breeders, quail, ducks and geese; farrowing crates for sows, sow stalls, individual calf pens.

In its response to the ECI, the Commission undertook to present, by the end of 2023, a legislative proposal aimed at phasing out and eventually banning the use of cage systems for all animals mentioned in the initiative. Work on the revision of European legislation on farm animal welfare is continuing, but to date the draft document on livestock farming has not yet been published. Work is therefore focusing on transport, and the contents of the European Commission's proposal concerning an end to cages are not yet known. France supports the approach proposed by the European Commission to determine the procedures for the phasing out of cages, based on expert scientific opinions and an impact analysis. The approach adopted, which takes into account social, economic and environmental impact assessments, as well as changes in consumer needs and expectations, is highly appropriate. On March 10, 2023, the French government launched a preliminary consultation with stakeholders as part of the review announced by the European Commission of its legislation on animal welfare and protection, with the aim of identifying areas of common ground between the many actors involved in animal protection in France, and of showcasing the French experience and its specific characteristics to those working at European level. Several principles underpin the government's action. A first challenge is to prevent any distortion of competitiveness. To this end, we are focusing on two levers: providing support for European harmonization, and ensuring that animal welfare requirements applicable within the European Union are matched by equivalent rules for animals that are the source of imported products. Second, transition has a cost. This additional cost must be shared across all links in the livestock industry supply chain, including distributors and consumers. Last, the government seeks to provide sufficient visibility for operators, particularly the next generations, enabling them to plan ahead and invest.

At the same time, the government is supporting a number of research projects, some of which are designed to assist in ending the use of cages in farming. The reduction of cage farming is underway in many sectors, for example the CAREFUL project is supporting a project for the cage-free production of fattening palmipeds [for foie gras], and the numbers of cage-farmed hens have been steadily decreasing since 2018. It should be remembered that, as early as October 2019, the Comité National pour la Promotion de l'Oeuf (CNPO) announced that it was ahead of schedule on the commitment to achieve 50% of hens raised in alternative systems to intensive cage production. Laying-hen farms are constantly updating their systems and, according to projections on the website of the Comité national pour la promotion de l'œuf (CNPO), by 2024, less than 20% of laying hens would still be farmed in cages in France, i.e. more than three-quarters of hens would be farmed in



non-caged systems. This compares to a European figure of just 58% in 2021, which has improved to an average of 39% by 2024. France is therefore ahead of its European partners, and well on the way to ending the use of cages. To this end, the French government is supporting a number of research projects, some of which aim to bring an end to the use of cages. Investment aid schemes such as the Competitiveness and Adaptation Plan under the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the France Relance Plan offer support measures to livestock farmers planning to change their production methods from cages to free-range. In a more general way, investment aid is expected to provide support for farmers wishing to make the transition to cage-free farming, and the entirety of the work undertaken by the government is expected to help French farms to make the necessary transition to meet the public's expectations with regard to animal welfare and adaptation to climate change. The authorities do not carry out inspections of poultry housing at such a level that are specific to this matter, but they do so during animal protection and health inspections, since farmers of layers are required to declare the establishment of flocks of animals to the Departmental Directorates for the Protection of Populations (DDPP). In most Départements, animal protection inspectors in the poultry sector are aware of caged layer farms, which are declared under CERFA no. 13989-04, and are regularly inspected under the French health charter. Given that farmers are required to declare their use of cages, an annual documentary check could be carried out on all farm buildings containing caged hens, which could be cross-checked against the most recent declarations of the installation of cage-based housing, and appropriate action could be taken in response to the various situations identified in the process. A specific technical instruction on the monitoring of this ban will be published to strengthen these monitoring mechanisms, to specify the checks to be carried out, the actions to be taken and the data to be passed on, so that the monitoring of caged layer hen farms can be improved.

[16/09/2025 : Assemblée nationale : réponse écrite à la question n°7147 : Quelles mesures pour éviter la prolifération des chats errants ?](#)

Document type: Answer to question 7147 published in the [Journal officiel de la République française](#)

Authors: Question: Mme Sandra Delannoy (Nord (3e circonscription) - Rassemblement National).
Answer: Ministère de l'agriculture et de la souveraineté alimentaire.

Question: Sandra Delannoy draws the attention of the Minister of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty to the worrying proliferation of stray cats in France, particularly in rural areas such as the Avesnois region, where the situation is causing serious health, animal welfare and social consequences. According to the One Voice Association, there are now over 11 million stray cats in France. Left to their own devices, these animals reproduce rapidly, cause a public nuisance in communities (meowing, smells, disease transmission) and are all too often euthanized in the absence of a formalized sterilization and care system. Current legislation, notably Articles L. 211-22 and L. 211-27 of the French Rural and Maritime Fishing Code, gives mayors the option, but not the obligation, to implement sterilization campaigns. This approach, which is purely optional, gives rise to major disparities between local areas, leaving many communities powerless to deal with the situation. In areas such as the Avesnois, the uncontrolled proliferation of stray cats is leading to a clear ecological

imbalance: the resurgence of foxes, attracted by these cat colonies, is becoming a growing source of concern for local residents. Such predators no longer hesitate to attack and devour the stray cats. This situation reflects a vicious circle in which lack of action by the authorities both encourages animal suffering and aggravates the nuisance in rural areas. Initiatives by associations (such as those by the 30 Millions d'Amis foundation and the SPA) have proved effective in the sterilization, identification, release and ethical supervision of cat populations. However, their success largely depends on local decision making and the capacity of voluntary groups, which creates major disparities between local areas. She therefore asks whether the government intends to make the sterilization and identification of stray cats compulsory at national level, and what possible immediate measures it proposes to address the growing presence of foxes in rural areas and prevent the proliferation of stray cats from bringing about an ecological imbalance that is damaging and cruel for the animals concerned.

Answer: The straying of animals is a major concern, given the health and animal protection issues it creates. Under current legislation, stray animals are impounded under the authority of the mayor. As an alternative, under Article L. 211-27 of the French Rural and Maritime Fishing Code (CRPM), cats living in groups can be captured, identified, sterilized and then released. This solution has the advantage of preventing the recolonization of sites. It does, however, require that the released population should be monitored and funds are needed for capture, veterinary procedures and feeding. Funding is provided by the local authorities, possibly with the support of animal protection associations. The challenge of financing these operations appears to be a major obstacle to the implementation of the system. The Finance Act for 2024 provides for an exceptional sum of three million euros ringfenced for the sterilization of stray cats by local authorities. In this context, the Ministry of Agriculture launched a call for projects to support stray cat management projects run by communes and voluntary public inter-communal cooperation establishments (EPCIs). This grant was awarded as part of the pilot project provided for in the Law of November 30, 2021 to combat animal abuse and strengthen the bond between animals and humans. There is indeed provision made in this law for the establishment of agreements between the State and mayors or chairs of local authorities and EPCIs for the purpose of improving the management and care of stray cat populations, bringing together the skills and resources of each signatory with this objective in mind. To apply for this grant, the communes and EPCIs concerned were able to respond to this call for projects, from September 2 to October 10, 2024. As a result, 164 successful communes have benefited from this grant. An assessment of the actions carried out within this framework will be conducted once the funding periods agreed with the successful applicants have come to an end. It is intended that the attention drawn to best practices should enable a more sustainable system to be put in place. However, at this stage, no new funding stream has been earmarked to repeat this experiment, due to budgetary constraints. In addition, the sterilization of cats owned by private individuals is encouraged by the Vétérinaire pour Tous association, a beneficiary of the France Relance plan. All veterinary care establishments are also required to display information to raise awareness of the need to sterilize cats, in accordance with Law no. 2021-1539 of November 30, 2021 to combat animal abuse and strengthen the bond between animals and people.

[16/09/2025 : Assemblée nationale : réponse écrite à la question n°7146 : Pour un audit de l'ensemble des abattoirs français](#)

Document type: Answer to question 7146 published in the [Journal officiel de la République française](#)

Authors: Question: M. Aurélien Le Coq (Nord (1re circonscription) - La France insoumise - Nouveau Front Populaire). Answer: Ministère de l'agriculture et de la souveraineté alimentaire.

Question: Mr. Aurélien Le Coq draws the attention of the French Minister of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty to the inhumane slaughtering practices used in certain abattoirs in France. On April 25, 2025, an investigation by the L214 group shed light on slaughtering techniques employed in an abattoir. The investigation revealed acts of cruelty, severe abuse and mistreatment of animals. Unfortunately, these practices are not an isolated case, and questions are asked about many abattoirs. As well as highlighting the continued use of cruel slaughter methods, these revelations also demonstrate the inability of the public authorities to properly ensure compliance with their own standards. These practices contravene the objectives set out in Regulation (EC) No. 1099/2009, in particular that "operators or any person involved in the killing of animals should take the necessary measures to avoid pain and minimize distress and suffering in animals". He requests an audit of all French abattoirs, with publication of the reports, to guarantee transparency and compliance with standards.

Answer: It should first be pointed out that, despite the sometimes shocking nature of the images broadcast by certain associations from inside French slaughterhouses, the comments made by these associations are often exaggerated in relation to the reality of the facts. In fact, in the most recent videos posted online and cited, although anomalies in animal handling and the operation of certain equipment can be observed, these videos do not show animals being decapitated or cut up alive, let alone conscious, contrary to what has been reported in the press. Finally, it should be remembered that the footage taken by the L214 association in slaughterhouses was taken without the slaughterhouse's consent and by illegally entering its facilities, whereas the association cannot claim whistleblower status (<https://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr/le-lanceur-dalerte-une-definition-precise-pour-beneficier-dun-statut-protecteur-696>). The slaughter of animals for slaughter is one of the most closely controlled economic activities in any sector. In fact, government agents are permanently on hand to carry out checks during all slaughtering periods. This control activity currently mobilizes 1,265 full-time equivalents (FTEs) for French slaughterhouses. DDPP (Direction Départementale de la Protection des Populations) staff are on hand in slaughterhouses on a daily basis to carry out regular checks on meat quality, production hygiene and animal welfare. In addition, full animal protection audits are carried out at least once a year, or more frequently if the slaughterhouse is identified as posing a particular risk. These inspections give rise to reports and, where necessary, to proportionate administrative and penal follow-up, up to and including closure of the establishment. The Direction Générale de l'Alimentation (DGAL) monitors slaughterhouses on a national scale, and since early 2022 has strengthened its intervention capacity by setting up a national inspection force (FINA) to support departmental services in the most complex cases. This force, which stems from the 2021 slaughterhouse plan referred to above, can be mobilized at the request of the departmental prefect, who alone is competent to decide on the closure of a slaughterhouse. To date, FINA has intervened in 26 slaughterhouses, taking the necessary steps to bring them into line with regulations. Finally, as mentioned above, video monitoring of animal protection in slaughterhouses is a tool for progress, enabling the detection and reduction of any non-conformities in slaughterhouse animal protection control procedures. However, the cost of installing the system and its acceptance by

slaughterhouse personnel remain a limiting factor to its widespread use. Further action on this subject is currently under discussion with the industry and animal protection associations. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty is particularly aware of the suspicions currently hanging over slaughterhouses, but is also fully aware of the vital role they play in the food chain. It remains determined to provide all the necessary responsiveness to maintain the confidence of its fellow citizens and consumers in the slaughtering business, and to impose sanctions that are proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the non-compliances observed, on operators who fail to comply with the animal protection requirements that apply to all. The future of the meat industry depends on it.

Transport, Slaughter, Pick-up

12/11/2025 : Considerations for the Welfare of Ruminants During Transport

Document type: scientific synthesis published in [Veterinary Clinics of North America: Food Animal Practice](#)

Authors: Lily Edwards-Callaway, Genaro C. Miranda de la Lama, Daniela M. Meléndez, Karen Schwartzkopf-Genswein

Abstract: Despite efforts to reduce stress via best management practices, protocols, and training, transportation is still one of the most stressful events in an animal's life. Livestock can be exposed to many different stressors during transportation such as handling events, social mixing, exposure to new facilities, and the trailer environment. Although it is evident through various training programs and animal care guidelines created and followed by industry stakeholders that ensuring livestock welfare during this time is a critical component of livestock production, it is often difficult to control all associated variables. Numerous studies have demonstrated that many transportation factors (eg, trailer density, driver experience, and transport duration) and logistic operations can impact livestock welfare. Given the high volume of livestock transported throughout their life, from farms to feedlots, auction markets, and slaughter plants, the magnitude of impact that transportation has is substantial. Considering shipment to slaughter alone, in 2024, 31.8 million head of cattle and 2.21 million head of sheep and lambs were slaughtered at federally-inspected facilities in the United States representing many transport events. While transportation presents significant challenges to livestock welfare, the potential for marked positive impact through improved practices is equally impactful. This article will provide a brief overview of a selection of critical areas of transportation that are important for veterinarians to consider when working to maintain and improve good animal welfare for ruminants. There are several more in-depth reviews available examining the impact of transportation on ruminant welfare.

04/11/2025 : Rapid loss of consciousness in cattle following nonstun slaughter: evidence from a systematic review

Document type: scientific synthesis published in [American Journal of Veterinary Research](#)



Authors: Hascalovici J.R., Schipper H.M., Regenstein J.M., Rosen S.D., Zivotofsky A., St-Jean, G., Freilich S., Morrison T.J., Rabkin S.W., Haut, S.

Abstract: Accepting that it is ethical for meat to be consumed as food, then, in any context, religious or secular, it is indefensible for animals to be subjected to undue pain. Animal slaughter must therefore be predicated on the minimization of pain. Nonstun slaughter (NSS) of bovines involves ventral neck incisions, resulting in an abrupt loss of cortical blood flow and causing nearly instantaneous loss of consciousness (LOC). However, some reports have suggested that LOC after NSS is not instantaneous. This paper presents an overview of the neurobiology underlying NSS and a systematic review of the literature on time to LOC in bovines following NSS. A literature review was conducted across PubMed, Google Scholar, the Cochrane Library, Medline, and the Web of Science, with 3 coauthors independently screening articles to reduce bias. Only original research and review articles specifically addressing time to LOC in bovines after NSS were included; studies not focused on this outcome were excluded. The quality of evidence was ranked based on hierarchy of evidence utilizing predefined criteria. 15 studies were identified: 4 high quality, 3 medium quality, and 8 low quality. High-quality evidence consistently indicates that LOC occurs within 10 seconds of NSS of bovines when done correctly with low-stress, ideal slaughterhouse conditions. Our findings provide important insights to optimize NSS practices, promoting animal welfare while maintaining religious requirements.

[04/11/2025 : L'OABA assigne l'État devant le Tribunal administratif : l'opacité sur l'abattage sans étourdissement doit cesser](#)

Document type: press release issued by the [OABA](#)

Author: OABA

Preview: Announcement from the OABA (Œuvre d'Assistance aux Bêtes d'Abattoirs) that it is taking legal action against the French Ministries of Agriculture and the Interior and against 79 Prefects for their failure to fulfil their duties of transparency and the collection of data on the slaughter without stunning [\[1\]](#) of animals in France.

Legal framework not respected

Article R214-70 of the French Rural Code requires abattoirs with permitted derogations relating to stunning requirements to file records of their adherence to strict procedures, including in particular the registration of customer orders where the exemption is called for. In order to verify that the orders and slaughter quantities match, records must specify:

- the number of animals slaughtered (by head, weight or piece),
- order and slaughter dates,
- descriptions of the animals (kosher or halal rites followed, slaughter conditions).

However, despite these regulatory requirements, the Ministries and Prefectures in question refuse to release the records and inspection reports of authorized establishments, despite several requests from the OABA and two opinions in favor of their release from the Commission d'Accès aux Documents Administratifs (CADA).

Disappearance of core data

In 2014, the Ministry of Agriculture reported that 15% of cattle and 27% of sheep were slaughtered without stunning in France^[2]. Since then, no consolidated data have been published, which the Ministry attributes to a change of IT system in 2015 and the absence of full data collection. However, a DGAL memo^[3] states that these records are mandatory. Without them, no verification of the compliance of abattoirs with the current regulations can be carried out, and citizens who are concerned over animal welfare are deprived of information of public interest.

Appeal to re-establish transparency

Faced with this refusal to be transparent, the OABA is taking legal action to:

- obtain recognition of the State's responsibility for the failure to collect this data;
- demand that the systematic collection of this data be resumed, in accordance with the regulations;
- obtain the imposition of penalties for the lack of effective control over a controversial slaughtering practice that raises major ethical, health and societal issues. (...)

^[1] Stun-free slaughter involves the killing of animals without anaesthesia, i.e. while fully consciousness. This derogation applies in the production of halal and kosher meat.

^[2] <https://www.senat.fr/questions/base/2021/qSEQ21071762S.html>

^[3] Service note DGAI/SDSPA/SDSSA/N2012-8056 modified

<https://info.agriculture.gouv.fr/boagri/instruction-N2012-8250>

^[4] 92% of the French population would like to see an improvement in slaughter conditions in France, with tighter controls - [Special Eurobarometer 533](#) - March 2023

[Download the press release](#)

03/11/2025 : Animal welfare experts renew call on UK government to ban CO2 for pig stunning

Document type: article published in [The Chemical Engineer](#)

Author: Sam Baker

Preview: A COMMITTEE of animal welfare experts has recommended a ban on the use of high concentration CO₂ to stun and kill pigs in a new report for the UK government. The Animal Welfare Committee (AWC), an independent expert panel commissioned by the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs and Scottish and Welsh governments, has recommended abattoirs switch to using inert gases like argon, nitrogen or helium.

The use of high concentration CO₂ as a method to stun and kill pigs has increased in recent years and is now used for 90% of all pigs reared for meat in England and Wales. Its popularity has grown as large, mechanised abattoirs have gradually displaced smaller sites, since the method can be used to slaughter multiple pigs simultaneously, unlike electrical stunning methods that were more common historically.

However, high concentration CO₂ is known to cause “severe pain and stress” in pigs before they fall unconscious which has provoked long-held calls from animal welfare experts for its prohibition. CO₂ is an asphyxiant which dissolves in mucous membranes and affects blood pH, and a recent EU-funded study found that the concentrations used in abattoirs, usually greater than 80%, “greatly exceed” the level at which pigs begin feeling extreme pain. The study found that pigs can hyperventilate when exposed to concentrations as low as 30%.



The meat industry claims that CO₂-based slaughter has welfare benefits since it allows pigs to be stunned and killed while surrounded by other animals which reduces anxiety and stress. The process works by lowering up to 40 pigs into a pit as CO₂ is continuously pumped, knocking the pigs unconscious and then killing them. The AWC reported that inert gases, while still asphyxiants, would have the same outcome, including equal meat quality, without causing pain. The report added that argon would be compatible with existing infrastructure since, like CO₂, it is lighter than air so would sink to the bottom of the pit.

Under UK law, inert gases are already permitted for pig slaughter, as are mixtures of CO₂ with inert gases, although the AWC said that there are no “welfare benefits” to using this method.

No progress in 20 years

The AWC’s report is the latest in a long line of calls for CO₂-based slaughter to be banned. In 2003, the Farm Animal Welfare Council, a predecessor to the AWC, said the method was “not acceptable” and should be completely phased out by 2008. That report also recommended more research into using inert gases, which was subsequently commissioned by the government in 2005, since the “lack of viable alternative stunning methods for commercial throughputs has...helped to maintain the status quo”.

The latest report, however, said “there have been no significant alterations” to existing CO₂-based systems since 2003. The AWC has now urged the industry to switch to alternative methods by 2030.

Nick Allen, CEO of the British Meat Processors Association, told TCE that the lack of progress since 2003 is likely because “no one has been prepared to fund the research”. He added: “The UK pig sector is tiny in international terms so if research is going to [be] done it is unlikely to take place here as we have not got the research facilities to carry out this sort of work. “The Animal Welfare Committee report raises as many questions as it does answers and only experimental research work will provide those answers.”

The meat industry has long favoured CO₂ as it kills pigs more quickly than inert gases. According to EU-funded research by the Institute of Agrifood Research and Technology, argon systems would cost 2-3 times more per pig than CO₂ systems. Allen said that a switch would “decimate” the UK pork industry and render it “completely uncompetitive”.

[22/10/2025 : Impacts of Reduced Stocking Density on Broiler Welfare During Transport: Evidence from a Hungarian Study Under Moderate Climatic Conditions](#)

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

Authors: László Szöllősi, Dániel Fróna, Laura Mihály-Karnai, Attila Csorbai

Abstract: Broiler transport density plays a crucial role in animal welfare, meat quality, and economic efficiency. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has recently recommended increased space allowances for broilers during transport to improve welfare. This study statistically evaluated the effects of reduced stocking density under commercial Hungarian conditions. A total of 176,198 Ross 308 heavyweight broilers were transported over a 19 km distance at moderate springtime temperature (7–13 °C) using 33 trucks, of which 14 (7 control and 7 test) were included in the comparison. Control trucks followed the EU-regulated density (160 cm²/kg; 5610 birds/truck), while test trucks applied the lower EFSA-recommended density (200–210 cm²/kg; 4334 birds/truck).

Dead-on-arrival (DOA) birds and carcass condemnations were evaluated for all transported birds, while injuries and bruising were assessed by sampling 277 carcasses per truck, consistent with industrial auditing practice. Significant differences were observed between the two treatment groups. The reduced-density group showed higher rates of DOA birds (0.61% vs. 0.36% in the control, a 69% relative increase), more wing injuries (6.91% vs. 4.28%, +61%), more bruising (6.76% vs. 3.40%, +98%), and a higher rate of carcass condemnations (0.78% vs. 0.57%, +38%). These findings indicate that increasing space allowance during transport may not improve welfare under moderate continental conditions and may even increase injury risk, with potential economic and environmental consequences for stakeholders. The results highlight the need for further research covering longer journey durations, wider temperature ranges, and alternative crate designs before the broad implementation of the EFSA-recommended transport densities.

[18/09/2025 : Animal welfare and meat quality: The impact of on-farm slaughter on Cinta senese pigs](#)

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

Authors: Roxana Elena Amarie, Jacopo Goracci, Laura Casarosa, Sara Tinagli, Giorgio Briganti, Giampaolo Giunta, Matteo Senese, Giuliana Terracciano, Francesca Campeis, Alessio Del Tongo, Andrea Serra

Abstract: This study evaluated the effects of on-farm slaughter (OF) compared to traditional slaughter (TS) on animal welfare, meat quality, and microbiological safety in Cinta senese pigs reared outdoors. Forty pigs were slaughtered using both methods across different seasons, allowing for the analysis of environmental influences via the Temperature-Humidity Index (THI). Blood parameters (cortisol, LDH, CPK), carcass and meat microbial loads, and technological meat quality traits were assessed. Pigs slaughtered on-farm showed significantly lower levels of cortisol, LDH, and CPK, indicating reduced physiological stress. Meat from these animals also had a lower pH 24 h post-mortem, suggesting improved glycolytic activity and better preservation of quality traits. Microbiological analysis showed no significant differences between the two methods, with all carcasses remaining within safety thresholds, although mesophilic counts tended to be lower in OF carcasses. Environmental conditions, especially THI in the two weeks before slaughter, affected some microbial loads in meat but not in carcasses. The results demonstrate that OF slaughter is a viable alternative that can significantly reduce animal stress and maintain both meat quality and microbiological safety, offering a sustainable and ethical option for small-scale or pasture-based pig farming.