

# FRCAW Newsletter 57

## December 2025 – January 2026

### Editorial

For this first issue of 2026, the FRCAW team would like to send you our warmest wishes and thank you for your continued interest in our newsletter. We hope you enjoy the following selection of scientific, technical and regulatory items from the past two months' animal welfare news. For more news and information, please visit [our website](#).

Happy reading !

The FRCAW team

### Fish welfare initiatives: building a more comprehensive approach

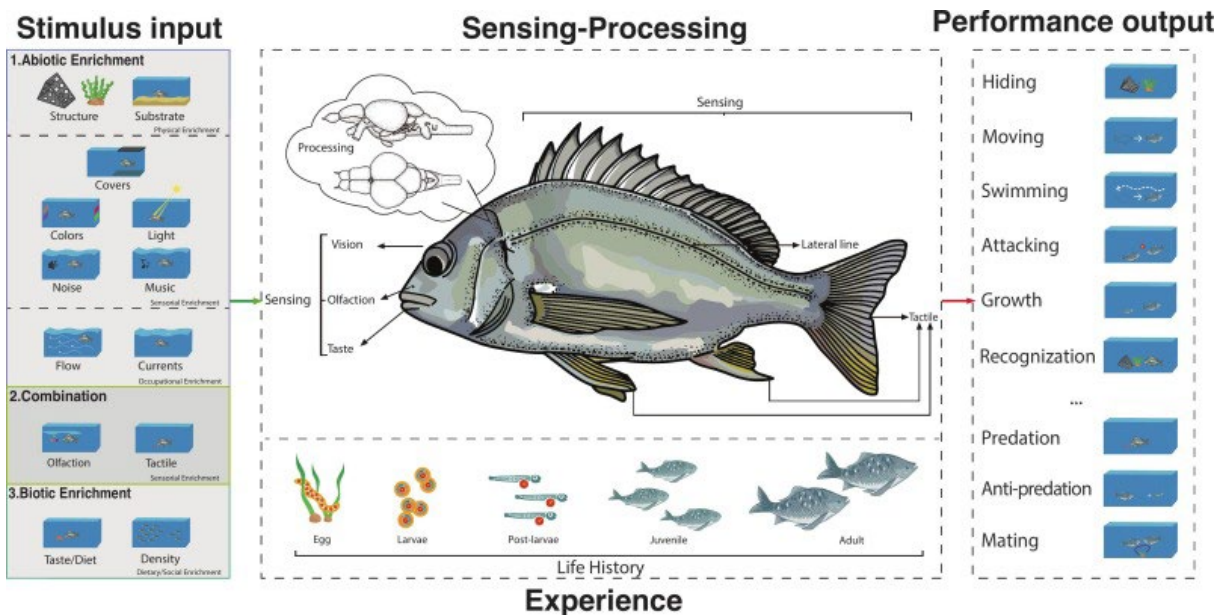


Image from [He et al., 2026, Aquaculture](#)

We are currently seeing the emergence of new strategies designed to take better account of fish welfare and improve the conditions under which fish are kept in both commercial and scientific settings. A scientific review article published in [Reviews in Aquaculture](#) has proposed a set of welfare indicator toolboxes adapted to the needs of each of the five main species of fish used for aquaculture research: Atlantic salmon, rainbow trout, European seabass, gilthead seabream and the common carp. The toolboxes take the individual characteristics of each species into account and, where possible, their different life stages. The welfare indicators they use are based on environmental parameters (water quality, lighting and noise levels, stocking density, etc.) and on animal-based measures taken at the level of both the group (behaviours, etc.) and the individual (body condition, stress markers etc.).

The utility of this comprehensive catalogue of welfare indicators extends beyond the interests of research. Within the scope of [Farm to Fork](#) strategy, for example, the availability of these toolboxes could benefit the European Commission's regulatory framework for sustainable food production and supply systems, given the ease with which they can be applied to the farming systems used in aquaculture. In anticipation of the potential creation of European regulations specific to the protection of farmed fish, the EFSA (the European Food Safety Authority) has recently conducted an [information gathering exercise](#) within its network, surveying the different fish husbandry systems currently in operation in the European Union and mapping the distribution of farmed species. The information provided in the published report will allow an insight into the changes that might feature in any new European regulation on fish welfare.

While the identification of welfare indicators is a necessary first step in addressing animal welfare, the development of strategies to improve the conditions in which animals live is equally important. A [review published in Aquaculture](#) has accordingly returned to the topic of the provision of environmental enrichment for fish in captivity. After summarising existing enrichment strategies and identifying gaps, its authors propose further frameworks to fill these gaps and guide the design and implementation of enrichment in aquaculture, with an emphasis on biotic and multi-sensory stimuli.

## Recent findings on sentience and pain management in invertebrates: a call to action



[Image](#) from [RSE Magazine](#)

A key aspect of sentience is the capacity to experience affective states, especially emotions. A recent [scientific synthesis](#) reports findings that strengthen the likelihood that insects have a subjective form of experience. The authors examine the question of sentience in insects, providing an overview of the state of current knowledge on their impressive cognitive capacities: associative learning, subjective experiences, cognitive biases, emotional states, perception of pain, the distinction of self and other, prediction, attention and active sleep. Although formal proof of consciousness in insects

is lacking, and there is as yet no agreement over the particular combination of cognitive and neural function that produces consciousness, the evidence discussed here increases the balance of probability that some form of subjective experience could be attributed to insects.

Other invertebrates have also become a focus for research on sentience and pain perception in recent years. A key [report from the London School of Economics](#) in 2021 showed that cephalopods and decapod crustaceans met many neuroanatomical, physiological and/or behavioural criteria that suggest that they are sentient beings able to feel pain. The report raised a number of ethical questions, among them the acceptability of the ablation of the eyestalks of female prawns in aquaculture to encourage reproduction, an issue [recently highlighted in the French press](#). The practice is widespread and involves the live removal of breeding females' eyestalks to stimulate the maturing of their ovaries and increase egg production. In France, some major distributors are beginning to move towards a labelling system that would guarantee the non-mutilation of prawns in this fashion. Meanwhile, the UK has responded more strongly to the LSE report. One measure currently in progress is a legal [ban on the boiling of live crustaceans](#) in England, recognising that the pain endured by crustaceans plunged into boiling water can last more than two minutes. The ban will cover crabs, lobsters, prawns and crayfish and should be enacted within four years. England will then join the ranks of Switzerland, Norway, Austria and New Zealand, where the practice is already forbidden.

## Farm animal welfare and sustainability: scientific advances and innovations



Image from [INRAE Productions Animales](#). © Valentin Brunet, Pauline Dechavanne, Julie Lamy, INRAE/Bertrand Nicolas

The most recent special issue of [INRAE Productions Animales](#) showcases the various ways that advances in scientific knowledge on animal behaviours, technological innovations and co-constructed plans of action can make it possible to develop farming systems that place animal

welfare at the heart of their sustainability goals. The list of contents includes original contributions focusing on both the animal (pain management, mental states, the assessment of behaviours) and the use of information technology to support animal welfare (sensors, artificial intelligence). Other articles argue for the benefits of participative research methods working with all stakeholders, and stress that the proper assessment of farming systems must take account of the dynamics between economic and environmental performance and animal welfare. Last, readers are reminded of the virtues of the One Welfare approach, which seeks to achieve a shared objective that encompasses animal welfare, human welfare, and on farm respect for the environment.

## Range of resources available on the FRCAW's website



### BIENVENUE SUR LA PLATEFORME DE RESSOURCES À VISÉE PÉDAGOGIQUE DU CNR BEA

The FRCAW's information service goes beyond the news items we provide for our website users, offering a substantial [Scientific and Technical Resource Platform](#) which can be accessed via the Knowledge Hub navigation tab. Meanwhile, French speakers can also consult the FRCAW's range of [animal welfare training and educational resources](#) under the Training side tab. Recent additions to the educational resources include videos produced by the IDELE to help farmers to manage animal pain during the [disbudding of calves](#), interviews with farmers conducted by the French Animal Welfare Chair on [the welfare of bees](#) and [on-farm enrichments for broilers](#), and the recording of a webinar organised by the ITAVI that looks at [on chicks farm incubation](#).

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## Cognition-émotions

### 16/01/2026 : Human emotional odours influence horses' behaviour and physiology

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

Authors: Plotine Jardat, Alexandra Destrez, Fabrice Damon, Noa Tanguy-Guillo, Anne-Lyse Lainé, Céline Parias, Fabrice Reigner, Vitor H. B. Ferreira, Ludovic Calandreau, Léa Lansade

**Abstract:** Olfaction is the most widespread sensory modality animals use to communicate, yet much remains to be discovered about its role. While most studies focused on intraspecific interactions and reproduction, new evidence suggests chemosignals may influence interspecific interactions and emotional communication. This study explores this possibility, investigating the potential role of olfactory signals in human-horse interactions. Cotton pads carrying human odours from fear and joy contexts, or unused pads (control odour) were applied to 43 horses' nostrils during fear tests (suddenness and novelty tests) and human interaction tests (grooming and approach tests). Principal component analysis showed that overall, when exposed to fear-related human odours, horses exhibited significantly heightened fear responses and reduced interaction with humans compared to joy-related and control odours. More precisely, when exposed to fear-related odours, horses touched the human less in the human approach test (effect size: Rate Ratio(RR)= $0.60 \pm 0.24$ ), gazed more at the novel object (RR =  $1.32 \pm 0.14$ ), and were more startled (startle intensity – Cohen's  $d = -0.88 \pm 0.39$ ; and maximum heart rate – Cohen's  $d = 1.16 \pm 0.47$ ) by a sudden event. These results highlight the significance of chemosignals in interspecific interactions and provide insights into questions about the impact of domestication on emotional communication. Moreover, these findings have practical implications regarding the significance of handlers' emotional states and its transmission through odours during human-horse interactions.

### 15/01/2026 : Principles of sheep behaviour: An overview from a welfare perspective

Document type: scientific review published in [Small Ruminant Research](#)

Authors: Manenti I, Toschi P, Miretti S, de la Lama GC

**Abstract:** The behaviour of sheep, like that of other animals, is the result of a complex interaction between causal mechanisms, their specific function, their development throughout life and their phylogenetic prevalence in the species. Within the domain of animal welfare, behaviour is of paramount importance, as they provide key insights into how individuals cope with environmental challenges and the way these challenges impact their mental states, biological functioning, and species-typical behavioural repertoires. The aim of this review is to critically and narratively examine key aspects of sheep behaviour to enhance the understanding of their biological needs and support improvements in the welfare of sheep raised under different production systems. The review emphasises the fundamental role of sensory systems in animal behaviour and welfare, along with the motivational systems, underlying individual, social, and maternal behaviours. It's also examines abnormal behaviours in sheep and their implications for human-animal interactions within the production context. The integration of sheep behaviour knowledge with contemporary flock

management is strategic to enhance both welfare and productive efficiency. Future research should focus on improving behavioural assessments, improved handling techniques and the possible implementation of precision farming to monitoring sheep behaviour.

## 15/12/2025 : Cognition of dairy cattle: Implications for animal welfare and dairy science

Document type: short communication published in [JDS Communications](#)

Authors: Kathryn L. Proudfoot, Thomas Ede, Catherine L. Ryan, Heather W. Neave

**Abstract:** The study of dairy cattle cognition has gained increasing attention over the past several decades, offering insights into the relationship between cognition and animal welfare. The objectives of this narrative review are to summarize a selection of studies exploring different cognitive processes in dairy cattle, discuss how these processes relate to common management practices and animal welfare, and identify knowledge gaps to guide future research. We begin with a brief overview of research into how dairy cattle perceive and sense the world around them, followed by a description of different types of learning and memory studied in dairy cattle, including nonassociative and associative learning, as well as short- and long-term memory. We then discuss how researchers have explored cognitive processes in dairy cows to understand their social lives, their ability to cope with challenges, and how they feel under different management conditions. Continued research into dairy cattle cognition is encouraged, including both foundational studies asking questions about the cognitive abilities of dairy cattle, as well as applied questions that can lead to improvements to their housing and management. We end by offering several avenues of future research into the cognition of dairy cattle, including a better understanding of competence and resilience, factors that influence cognition such as sleep and individual differences, as well as other under-investigated topics, such as problem-solving and metacognition.

## 26/11/2025 : A systematic review on the effect of individual characteristics and management practices on equine cognition

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

Authors: Ricci-Bonot, C., Brosche, K., Baragli, P., Nicol C.

**Abstract:** Equine cognition is relevant to the many roles that horses serve in society, such as leisure riding, competitions, or even animal-assisted therapy. Equine cognitive abilities have been explored in recent years. However, gaining an overview of horse cognition is challenging due to the broad range of abilities studied and the diverse methodologies employed. In addition, the subjects of existing equine cognition studies vary greatly in contextual factors such as their breed, age, sex, and management conditions – each of which may influence test performance in the following cognitive categories: Discrimination Learning; Learning Sets, Categorisation and Concept Formation; Spatial Cognition; Social Learning; and Memory. The aims of this review were (1) to establish whether contextual information was provided in research articles on horse cognition, (2) to tabulate information on the characteristics, housing, and management of subjects used in different categories of cognitive test, (3) to provide an overview of cognitive abilities demonstrated by horses, i.e., the results obtained in cognitive tests, with a specific emphasis on the contextual factors shaping them. The results of this review highlighted important points for future research. Better reporting of subject

characteristics in scientific publications would enable investigation of the factors which shape horses' cognitive abilities, and the use of standardized methods and procedures across studies would facilitate future comparative work.

## Colloques-séminaires-formations

### 21/12/2025 : Formation - Intégrer la Charte Nationale pour le bien-être équin

Document type: training announcement from the [Chambre d'Agriculture Hautes-Pyrénées](#)

Author: CA des Hautes-Pyrénées

**Preview:** *Objective(s)*

Participants will develop their professional skills and improve equine welfare practices

*Program*

The main principles of animal welfare (regulatory and legal)

The agricultural and social context

The 8 measures in the French National Charter for Equine Welfare

Good practice guide and its application on the ground (time budgets, foal interactions, stereotypies, bale wrapping and silaging)

Self-assessment and identification of areas for improvement

*Target audience and qualifications needed*

Farmers who work with horses and horse stable managers and breeders

Project leaders for new business start-ups whose training needs have been identified through PPP interviews

*Qualification:* None

*Delivery format and assessment*

Slide presentations on theory, practical exercises, peer to peer discussions and group work, end of training quiz

*Speaker(s):* Nathalie Baills, Equine Expert Advisor, French National Horse Federation

*Training day leader:* Coline Hétier, Business and Installation Advisor at the Hautes-Pyrénées Chamber of Agriculture, equine sector advisor

*Date(s) and location(s)*

TBD

For more information, [contact-us](#)

### 03/12/2025 : Evaluer et améliorer le bien-être animal en élevage caprin avec Cap'Well

Document type: training announcement from [Idele](#)

Author: Idele with the support of ANICAP

**Preview:** Evaluation and improvement of on-farm animal welfare in goats with Cap'Well

In person training: January 20 2026, Nandax (42); January 29, Saint-Fulgent (85); February 10, Entrammes (53); March 19, Montmorillon (86); March 24, Sainte-Livrade-sur-Lot (47).

This training course is intended for technicians trained under the Code Mutuel caprin wishing to use the Cap'Well assessment system on goat farms.

*Audience*

Technicians, livestock farm advisors

*Eligibility*

No restrictions

*Learning objectives*

- Explain the challenges of animal welfare assessment for the goat industry
- Define animal welfare and the assessment indicators used by the goat industry
- Explain the different elements of the Cap'Well tool to assess welfare on goat farms (data entry, results, etc.)

*Content*

- Purpose of the Cap'Well tool for the goat industry and its harmonization with the Code Mutuel de Bonnes Pratiques (shared good practice code) in goat farming
- Recap of the definition of animal welfare and its indicators
- Presentation of the different steps in the Cap'Well assessment (general software structure and how to use it, animal-based and environmental indicators for goats and kids over 6 months old)
- Practical case study on a livestock farm (how to score, using indicators for a group of animals and their environment, how to enter information on the Cap'Well app)
- The four principles of assessment: scoring (calculation methods), identification of areas for improvement, existing resources for further action

*Delivery methods*

Presentations and discussions

Practical assessment exercise on a livestock farm

Small-group work

*Teaching coordinator:* Anne Aupiais

Register here

Explore other training courses offered by the IDELE:

- [Catalogue](#)
- [Animal welfare, handling and transport](#)

## **20/11/2025 : Formation : Connaître les plantes utilisables en élevage ovin pour améliorer le bien-être du troupeau**

Document type: training announcement from the [Chambre d'agriculture du Lot](#)

Author: Chambre d'agriculture du Lot supported by Vivea

**Preview:** Date: January 14 and 15, 2026. Location TBD depending on numbers

This training course will enable you to identify and use plants that benefit the health and welfare of your sheep. It offers a practical and natural approach that improves farm management!

[Registration](#)

[Program](#)

Contact details and registration required: Georgia SAUNDERS : g.saunders@lot.chambagri.fr

# Conduite d'élevage et relations humain-animal

## [09/01/2026 : Bien-être animal : avancées scientifiques et innovations pour des systèmes d'élevage durables](#)

Document type: special issue [INRAE Productions Animales](#)

Authors: research group

**Preview:** In contemporary society there is strong public demand for livestock farming systems that respect animal welfare. How can advances in our knowledge of livestock behaviors, technological innovations and co-design approaches make possible the development of livestock farming systems that fully integrate animal welfare sustainability objectives and a *One Welfare* approach?

### [Bien-être animal : avancées scientifiques et innovations pour des systèmes d'élevage durables – Avant-propos](#)

Authors: Cécile Ginane, Elodie Chaillou

### [Le bien-être des animaux d'élevage : véritable objet scientifique et politique](#)

Authors: Alain Boissy, Pierre Mormède

### [Définitions et méthodes d'évaluation des états mentaux des animaux](#)

Authors: Elodie Chaillou, Frédéric Briend, Caroline Gilbert, Claire Diederich, Baptiste Mulot, Jérémy Villatte, Alexandre Surget, Thomas Desmidt, Françoise Wemelsfelder, Matteo Chincarini, Alain Boissy

### [Peut-on aller vers du bien-être positif par l'enrichissement ? Un focus sur les poissons](#)

Authors: Aline Bertin, Violaine Colson

### [Vers une meilleure gestion de la douleur des mammifères et poissons destinés à la consommation humaine – Partie 1 : Concepts, mécanismes, causes, détection](#)

Authors: Alice De Boyer Des Roches, Violaine Colson, Raphaël Guatteo, Claudia Terlouw, David André Barrière, Pierre-Marie Boitard, Dorothée Ledoux, Catherine Belloc, Pierre Mormède, Karine Portier, Matthias Kohlhauer, Fanny Pilot-Storck

### [Vers une meilleure gestion de la douleur des mammifères et poissons destinés à la consommation humaine – Partie 2 : Prise en charge](#)

Authors: Fanny Pilot-Storck, Matthias Kohlhauer, Violaine Colson, Raphaël Guatteo, Claudia Terlouw, David André Barrière, Pierre-Marie Boitard, Dorothée Ledoux, Catherine Belloc, Pierre Mormède, Karine Portier, Alice De Boyer Des Roches

### [Les technologies numériques en élevage : de la mesure à l'évaluation comportementale du bien-être de chaque animal](#)

Authors: Masoomah Taghipoor, Aurélien Madouasse, Mathieu Bonneau, Romain Lardy, Dominique Hazard, Jean-Baptiste Menassol, Céline Tallet, Mathilde Valençon, Laurianne Canario, Lucile Riaboff

### [Apports et limites des démarches participatives et de coconception pour améliorer le bien-être de l'animal en élevage](#)

Authors: Vanessa Lollivier, Sarah Lombard, Anne Collin, Aurélia Warin, Romain Piovan, Laurence Fortun-Lamothe

### [Relations entre performance économique, performance environnementale, et bien-être animal](#)

Authors: Larissa Mysko, Jean-Joseph Minviel, Patrick Veysset, Isabelle Veissier

### [One Welfare : un objet frontière pour embarquer scientifiques et acteurs vers un objectif commun de bien-être animal, bien-être humain et respect de l'environnement en élevage](#)

Authors: Xavier Boivin, Elsa Delanoue, Amélie Lipp, Joanna Litt, Luc Mirabito, Céline Peudpiece, Michel Vidal, Yannick Ramonet, Béatrice Mounaix

## [08/12/2025 : How do domestic chickens perceive humans—and why does it matter?](#)

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

Authors: Ferreira, V. H. B., Lansade, L., Calandreau, L.

**Abstract:** Despite their ubiquity in agricultural systems, domestic chickens (*Gallus gallus domesticus*) remain widely misunderstood in terms of their cognitive and emotional capacities, particularly regarding how they perceive and interact with humans. This perspective review synthesises current knowledge on the socio-cognitive abilities of chickens, with an emphasis on how they interpret and respond to human behaviour. In the first section, we explore the practical implications of the human–chicken relationship, examining how human interactions influence production metrics and zootechnical outcomes, with direct consequences for welfare, especially in relation to fear responses and stress-related physiological markers. The second section delves into chickens' socio-cognitive capacities towards humans. While empirical studies in this domain remain limited, the available evidence suggests that chickens are far from passive or purely instinct-driven. Instead, they exhibit rich and nuanced behavioural responses to visual, tactile and auditory human cues. Chickens can discriminate between individual humans, are sensitive to human attentional states, and can even use human social cues to guide their decision-making. In the final section, drawing on comparative research from other domestic species, we identify promising directions for future work on human–chicken relationships.

These include individual human discrimination/recognition, chickens' responses to human emotional expressions and the potential for chickens to perceive humans as sources of positive affective experiences. We also discuss how this research holds broader theoretical value for understanding the nature and evolution of human–animal relationships, including the role of domestication in shaping animals' socio-cognitive traits. While many questions remain, current evidence strongly indicates that chickens' perception of humans is far more complex than traditionally assumed. Advancing our understanding in this area holds significant potential not only for improving animal welfare practices but also for enriching our broader comprehension of interspecies social cognition and the ethical dimensions of animal management.

## 23/11/2025 : Behavioural adaptations of livestock to environmental stressors: implications for welfare and productivity

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

Authors: Oke OE, Eletu TA, Akosile OA, Fasasi LO, Adeniji OE, Ojedokun MZ, Oni AI

**Abstract:** Livestock are frequently exposed to environmental stressors that adversely affect their welfare and productivity. This review examines the behavioural adaptations of livestock to these stressors and their implications for animal welfare and performance. Environmental stressors are classified into three categories: abiotic (e.g. temperature, light), biotic (e.g. parasitism, social competition), and management-related (e.g. housing, stocking density, transportation). These are further grouped into thermal, nutritional, social, and managerial categories, each with physiological and behavioural consequences. For instance, thermal stress impairs thermoregulation and reduces feed intake; nutritional stress arises from feed scarcity or imbalance; social stress triggers aggression; and management stress results from confinement or handling. These stressors compromise immune function, disrupt endocrine balance, and provoke maladaptive behaviours. Behavioural indicators, such as panting, shivering, aggression and vocalization reflect how animals cope with stress. The review explains how behavioural adaptations influence productivity indicators and highlights assessment tools ranging from visual observation to sensor technologies and artificial intelligence. It also outlines welfare-enhancing strategies, including environmental enrichment, behavioural management, and precision livestock farming. Understanding these adaptive responses can inform context-specific welfare strategies. It also highlights the need for integrative frameworks that link behavioural insights with practical interventions, particularly in under-researched systems vulnerable to climate variability and resource constraints.

## Élevage de précision et IA

### 12/01/2026 : Behaviour recognition of tail and ear biting in pigs using AI-based computer vision

Document type: scientific article published in [Smart Agricultural Technology](#)

Authors: Qinghua Guo, Clémence A.E.M. Orsini, Patrick P.J.H. Langenhuizen, Yue Sun, Shoujun Huo, Lisette E. van der Zande, Inonge Reimert, J. Elizabeth Bolhuis, Piter Bijma, Peter H.N. de With

**Abstract:** Damaging behaviours in pigs, such as tail biting and ear biting, compromise animal welfare and farm productivity. Continuous monitoring of these behaviours is essential to intervene before escalation, gain insights into underlying causes and develop breeding programs to select pigs with lower genetic propensity for such behaviours. However, manual observations are impractical at a large-scale. To address this challenge, we propose a video-based behaviour recognition model that facilitates the automated monitoring of individual pigs. Two state-of-the-art video-based methods are investigated: SlowFast and Improved Multiscale Vision Transformers (MVITv2) for recognizing tail and ear biting in pigs, by exploiting spatiotemporal domain features. Data are collected on a commercial pig farm. In total, 532 tail-biting events (63,815 frames) and 750 ear-biting events

(78,132 frames) are annotated across seven pens of tail-docked pigs. Tail biting and ear biting are defined as nibbling, sucking, chewing, or biting the tail or the ear of a pen mate. The best-performing method is based on the MVITv2-S model, which enables efficient spatiotemporal modeling. The detection accuracies obtained for tail and ear biting are 72.22 % and 72.37 %, respectively. An important and novel aspect to our knowledge is that for the first time, behaviour detection is developed without a posture requirement on the biter or the victim. The conducted experiments demonstrate the feasibility of computer-vision-based models for the recognition of damaging behaviours on commercial pig farms. This study is a crucial step towards the development of an automated early-warning approach and breeding programs to reduce tail biting and ear biting.

## Évaluation du bien-être et étiquetage

### 09/12/2025 : Play in Fattening Pigs: Prevalence and Potential as Indicator of Positive Welfare

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

Authors: Puttkammer N., Czycholl I.

**Abstract:** Play is considered a promising indicator of positive animal welfare. However, especially in older animals, significant knowledge gaps exist regarding its prevalence and influencing factors. Thus, we analyzed play in fattening pigs at the beginning ( $n = 229$ ) and at the end ( $n = 146$ ) of fattening. The evaluation considered social (SOC), locomotor (LOC) and object play (occupation with a metal chain (CHAIN) or nibbling toy), the aggregation of SOC+LOC and play in total (Pt). The statistical analysis focused on play event duration, number of play events/(hour\*animal) and play duration/(hour\*animal), considering effects such as fattening stage, sex and group size. There was 34.7% more ( $p = 0.0076$ ) and 121.1% longer ( $p \leq 0.0001$ ) Pt in the older pigs with further effects of sex and group size. These results were strongly impacted by the predominance of CHAIN, which partly exhibited characteristics of stereotypic behavior. Additional difficulties in object play arose from possible confusion with exploratory behavior. Given further challenges in reliably identifying SOC, we propose focusing on LOC as promising indicator of pig welfare in the future, which also has greatest potential for automatic detection.

### 04/12/2025 : The use of animal-based measures collected in slaughterhouses to monitor the level of welfare of Equidae in establishments: EFSA scientific NCPs Network exercise

Document type: technical report published in [EFSA](#) supporting publication

Authors: European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), Marika Vitali, Giulia Cecchinato, Aitana López Baquero, Beatrice Benedetti, Denise Candiani, Michaela Hempen, Yves Van der Stede, Chiara Fabris

**Abstract:** The Network of the National Contact Points for scientific support under Art 20 of Council Regulation (EC) 1099/2009 on the protection of the animals at the time of killing (scientific NCPs Network) includes nationally appointed representatives of Members States, including EFTA

Countries. During the annual meeting in 2025, an exercise was performed to gather information from Network members on animal-based measures (ABMs) collected at slaughterhouses to monitor the level of welfare of *Equidae* in establishments. Prior to the meeting, Network members were requested to submit, via an online questionnaire, information on ABMs currently measured in *ante-* and *post-mortem* inspections of *Equidae* at the slaughterhouses in their countries, the availability of a database for the electronic recording of these ABMs, their feasibility, and any automated systems for their assessment. The questionnaire collected information on the species *Equus caballus* (horses), *Equus asinus* (donkeys) and their hybrids (mules and hinnies). During the meeting, a structured discussion was held on the information provided, and participants were also asked to vote and score the criteria for the provided ABMs. As a result of this exercise, an initial list of ABMs deemed useful to be collected in the slaughterhouses to retrospectively monitor the level of welfare of *Equidae* in establishments was produced, and related information was collected. The information included in this report will be used for the development of the relevant scientific opinion on the welfare of *Equidae*, expected to be adopted by end 2026.

## [25/11/2025 : Chiens hypertypés : l'alerte des vétérinaires sur la souffrance programmée](#)

Document type: article published in [Mr Mondialisation](#)

Author: Marie Waclaw

**Preview:** Who hasn't fallen in love with the sweet face of a French Bulldog or the beautiful blue eyes of an Australian Shepherd? However, behind the aesthetics of these highly fashionable dogs lies another, more harmful, trend, which involves the breeding of animals with exaggerated physical characteristics, even when this leads to an accumulation of problems ...

*What is a hypertype in dogs?*

Yes, it is true that the Chihuahua is descended from the wolf, in an evolutionary development that would have been highly improbable without human intervention. The genetic diversity to be observed in dogs today gives an illusion of great variety, but this wealth of types is actually misleading. To preserve the physical attributes patiently shaped over decades of breeding, the contribution of external genetic traits have been restricted, to the point, sometimes, of inbreeding. The result has been pedigree lines that are increasingly vulnerable. A purebred dog is said in France to be "typical" if it meets the standards required by the LOF (Livre des Origines Français). These are determined by a number of criteria, ranging from height at the withers (shoulder) to ear shape, muzzle length and coat color. When these physical details are taken to extremes, they are referred to as hypertypes: a completely flattened muzzle, folds of skin that obscure the animal underneath, blue eyes in a breed that usually has dark eyes, etc. What is wrong with this? Rather than preventing such hypertypes by avoiding the breeding of dogs that are prone to them, many unscrupulous breeders have actually developed them. It is the law of supply and demand, but it is applied to an animal's health.

Because they're attractive, because they're fashionable, Bulldogs struggle to breathe, Cavalier King Charles Spaniels have increasing heart problems, Shar-Peis suffer from very painful skin problems under their numerous folds, Shih Tzus have eyeballs so disproportionate that their eyelids can no longer cover them or keep them moist, German Shepherds end up crippled by osteoarthritis because their pelvis has become so low (...)

### *The myth of dogs "lining the pockets of veterinarians"*

Contrary to popular belief, veterinarians are fighting against the hypertypes trend. The AFVAC (French Association of Veterinarians for Companion Animals) has launched an awareness campaign on the subject: "It is urgent that all stakeholders in the industry define the recommendations and rules that must be followed for proper selection, with respect for animal welfare." (...)

### *Owners or breeders... Who is to blame?*

It is a chicken and egg question. Should we blame the breeders for continuing to produce hypertypes for owners who continue to request them, or the owners for creating demand and thus pushing breeders to continue to breed them? Beyond the identification of the responsible parties, though, the question today is how to staunch the wound. The Animal Cross association, which recently drew attention to the issue, is proposing a petition to combat this serious problem. But it is asking for more: backed by a comprehensive, 62-page dossier, Animal Cross wants to implement 13 measures to end animal suffering, drawing its inspiration from our European neighbors. These include banning the breeding of breeds that are "medically unsound," such as the Cavalier King Charles (a ban that is already in place in Norway), sterilizing unwell dogs or those carrying diseases, and strengthening veterinary controls in high-risk dog breeding facilities. "I may be naive, but I think that informing and educating people are the keys to trying to solve the problem," says Marion Arribart. "You only have to look at the number of puppies still for sale on Le Bon Coin, even though it's supposed to be banned... In the very short term, a ban may indeed become necessary if things don't move fast enough—a bit like with the environment! (...)

The widespread dissemination of accurate information now appears to be one of the essential levers to curb a phenomenon that directly threatens the health and welfare of many dogs. (...)

## **24/11/2025 : Pig welfare in scientific literature from 1991 to 2024: A text mining approach**

Document type: meta-analysis published in [Journal of Veterinary Behavior](#)

Authors: Lianlian Fu, Yu Le

**Abstract:** Over the past few decades, animal welfare has become an increasingly prominent focus across various sectors of the livestock industry. Among them, pig welfare has garnered global attention due to its profound implications for animal health, productivity, and public trust, as well as growing consumer willingness to purchase higher-welfare pork products. This study presents a systematic review of the scientific literature on pig welfare using text mining (TM) techniques—an analytical approach that remains underutilized in this field. A total of 7,031 articles were retrieved from the Scopus® database (1991–2024), of which 1,331 met strict inclusion criteria. The study employed TM methods, including Term Frequency–Inverse Document Frequency (TF-IDF) and Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) modeling, to identify prevailing topics and thematic trends. Seven major topics were extracted: stress and treatment, social behavior, transport and slaughter, housing and welfare, health and disease assessment, feeding and reproduction, and farm management. The academic output in this field has shown exponential growth, with the majority of publications originating from Europe. Keywords such as "tail," "transport," and "wean" emerged as focal points of interest. These findings highlight the potential of TM in constructing domain knowledge and identifying research gaps, offering valuable insights for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers committed to improving animal welfare systems.

## [19/11/2025 : BeBoP : Evaluer le bien-être des taurillons : des indicateurs revus pour gagner en faisabilité sans perdre en fiabilité](#)

Document type: article published in [Innovations Agronomiques](#)

Authors: Agathe Cheype, Béatrice Mounaix, Jérôme Manceau, Vincent Gauthier, Quentin Delahaye, Claire Dugue, Laure-Anne Merle, Xavier Boivin

### **Abstract: Assessing the welfare of young fattening Bulls: refined indicators to improve feasibility without compromising reliability**

The routine assessment of welfare in young fattening bulls requires rapid and remote observations. Fourteen indicators, derived from the scientific literature and validated in collaboration with farmers and technicians, were tested in two experimental farms and 31 commercial operations. These indicators proved to be generally reliable and feasible under field conditions. The main challenges relate to the direct observation of certain indicators (injuries, cleanliness, human reactivity). Most farmers found the indicators acceptable, although those based on behavioral assessment raised more concerns. To address this, an automatic behavioral analysis tool using a video-based Deep Learning algorithm was developed to enhance the reliability and ease of behavioral measurements. The algorithm showed promising performance, with specificity exceeding 80% and sensitivity over 78%.

## [18/11/2025 : Welfare Indicators for Aquaculture Research: Toolboxes for Five Farmed European Fish Species](#)

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

Authors: Chris Noble, Wout Abbink, René Alvestad, László Ardó, Marie-Laure Bégout, Nina Bloecher, Erik Burgerhout, Josep Calduch-Giner, Mauro Chivite-Alcalde, Petr Císař, Evan Durland, Åsa M. Espmark, Lynne Falconer, Martin Føre, Dimitra G. Georgopoulou, Karsten Heia, Gaute A. N. Helberg, David Izquierdo Gomez, Lill-Heidi Johansen, Gunhild Seljehaug Johansson, Kristbjörg Edda Jónsdóttir, Jelena Kolarevic, Aleksei Krasnov, Santhosh K. Kumaran, Bjarne Kvæstad, Thomas Larsson, Carlo C. Lazado, Angelico Madaro, Federico Moroni, Ingrid Måge, Jonatan Nilsson, Samuel Ortega, Nikos Papandroulakis, Jaume Pérez-Sánchez, Pamela M. Prentice, Sonia Rey Planellas, Bjørn Roth, Adrian Smith, Lars Erik Solberg, Orestis Stavrakidis-Zachou, Lars Helge Stien, Anja Striberny, Ragnhild Aven Svalheim, Bjørn-Steinar Sæther, Gerrit Timmerhaus, Hilde Toften, Linda Tschirren, Hans van de Vis, Elisabeth Ytteborg, Lucas A. Zena, Tone-Kari Knutsdatter Østbye

**Abstract:** Refining approaches to measuring, monitoring and appraising animal welfare in aquaculture research is key to (i) protecting and optimizing it, (ii) documenting the severity of how and when it deviates, and (iii) ensuring good scientific quality, reliable results and reproducibility, amongst other factors. However, different fish species and life stages can have varying welfare needs and assessing their welfare can be challenging. An array of welfare indicators (WIs) can be utilized when documenting fish welfare, and there is currently little consensus on which WIs are most applicable to the key fish species used in European aquaculture research. The aim of this review is to propose updated, fit for purpose and comprehensive WI toolboxes for aquaculture research

involving Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), European seabass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*), gilthead seabream (*Sparus aurata*), and the common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*). Where possible, these toolboxes will also include life-stage considerations. It also provides information on utilizing WIs in deciding humane end-points as well as information on how to sample different types of indicators. The review closes with information on how digitalization can affect the collection, collation and analysis of WI data in aquaculture research, including both practical and theoretical considerations. The toolboxes incorporate a range of WIs that go beyond those required for legally safeguarding fish welfare in both laboratory and operational experimental facilities in the current European 2010/63/EU Directive on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes and its amendment, the Commission Delegated Directive (EU) 2024/1262.

## Gestion des populations et bien-être animal

### 12/12/2025 : Climate Change and Livestock Welfare in the Alps: A Comprehensive Review

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

Authors: Cornale, P., Senatore, R., Battaglini, L.M., Baratta, M.

**Abstract:** Extensive livestock systems in the Alps are central to biodiversity, rural livelihoods, and cultural heritage, but are increasingly threatened by climate change. This review examines how rising temperatures, altered precipitation patterns, reduced snow cover, and extreme weather events impact animal welfare in mountain farming systems. We conducted a comprehensive analysis of scientific literature addressing direct impacts such as heat stress, water scarcity, disease prevalence, and welfare-related indicators, as well as indirect effects on pasture quality, biodiversity, and socio-ecological systems. The review is based on a structured narrative search (2005–2025) across major databases (Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar), using predefined keywords (e.g., climate change, welfare, Alps, ruminants, etc.) and inclusion criteria to screen ~350 studies, of which ~115 were retained and thematically synthesized. Results show that cattle are highly vulnerable to heat stress and forage decline, while sheep and goats exhibit greater resilience. However, all species are affected by reduced forage quality and increased disease risks. Climate-driven shifts in pasture composition threaten both the nutritional value and ecosystem diversity, with feedback loops that link animal welfare and biodiversity. Adaptive capacities differ across species, with goats showing the highest tolerance to resource scarcity. Potential adaptation strategies include breed selection, sustainable grazing practices, and policy frameworks that support smallholders and ecosystem services. We conclude that safeguarding animal welfare under climate change is crucial for maintaining livestock productivity, ecological sustainability, and the socio-economic resilience of Alpine communities. This review provides a foundation for developing integrated adaptation strategies that align welfare, biodiversity, and policy objectives.

## Initiatives en faveur du bien-être – filières, agences de financement, organismes de recherche, pouvoirs publics

### 18/12/2025 : Newsletter EURCAW-Pigs - Edition 15

Document type: Newsletter 15 from the European Reference Centre for Pig Welfare ([EURCAW-Pigs](#))

Author: EURCAW-Pigs

#### **Summary:**

- Q2E: Assessing tail length and lesions at the abattoir
- Q2E on Welfare indicators for sow feed
- Co-design of novel welfare inspection support tool
- Research needs submitted to EU Partnership on Animal Health and Welfare
- Roadshow: EURCAW-Pigs visited France and Ireland

[Link to the Newsletter](#)

### 17/12/2025 : Newsletter - EURCAW Ruminants & Equines - Volume 12

Document type: Newsletter 12 from the [EURCAW Ruminants & Equines](#)

Author: EURCAW *Ruminants & Equines*

**Preview:** Welcome to the fourth and final edition of the EURCAW *Ruminants & Equines* newsletter for 2025. In this issue, we present a new Question to EURCAW (Q2E), and report on our recent activities in Brescia, Italy, including the Annual Meeting with Competent Authorities, a Roadshow dedicated to improving calf welfare on farms, and a productive meeting with Italian stakeholders. We also share insights from our first Tabletop Simulation Exercise, which examined key animal welfare challenges during long-distance transport, and report on a co-design workshop for Official Inspectors organised by the four EURCAWs. Our Director Professor Harry Blokhuis is due to retire on 31 December 2025 and we showcase his achievements as well as introduce Professor Jens Malmkvist, the new Director from 1 January 2026. In addition, we summarise some highlights from the Danish Presidency conference on the Welfare of Farm Animals in the EU of 2050, the European Commission's 2026 Work Programme and recent research, including an EFSA technical report and an ongoing study into the welfare challenges linked to current dairy calf management practices.

[Link to the Newsletter](#)

### 16/12/2025 : Newsletter EURCAW-Poultry-SFA - Edition 14

Document type: Newsletter 14 from the [EURCAW-Poultry-SFA](#)

Author: EURCAW-Poultry-SFA

**Abstract:** In this 14th edition of the EURCAW-Poultry-SFA Newsletter, you will find, among other items, more answers under the Q2E (Questions to EURCAW) rubric, the Centre's first [Knowledge](#)

**Pill :** "How long can they stand? Determining the walking ability in broilers using the latency-to-lie test", a [guide for selecting the most appropriate depopulation method from an animal welfare perspective](#) and other items.

[Download the Newsletter](#) (in English)

## Invertébrés

### 02/01/2026 : Révolution dans nos assiettes : le Royaume-Uni veut interdire la cuisson des homards vivants, explications

Document type: article published in [RSE Magazine](#)

Author: Clément Prat

**Preview:** This bill was prompted by the realization that crustaceans feel pain. This long-debated point was settled by a report published by the London School of Economics in 2021, which confirmed that decapods (lobsters, crabs, crayfish, etc.) and cephalopods (octopuses, squids) have nociceptors, i.e., pain receptors. In 2022, the UK Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act formalized this recognition, confirms La Dépêche. The text currently being drafted now aims to ban methods deemed cruel, foremost among which is the scalding of live crustaceans.

*A deadline set for 2030*

The Labour government plans to implement this ban within four years. It will apply to all species already recognized as sentient: crabs, lobsters, shrimp, crayfish, octopus, etc. The future law would place the United Kingdom alongside countries such as Switzerland, Norway, Austria, and New Zealand, where this type of cooking is already prohibited.

*Electrocution as an alternative, but at what cost?*

In response to this ban, alternative slaughter methods are being discussed. One of the most talked about is electrocution, which is seen as more humane because it neutralizes the animal before cooking. But this technique comes at a cost: around €4,000 for a dedicated device, which is making some London restaurateurs cringe.

Opinions are divided among fishmongers: some welcome the measure as an ethical step forward, while others point to the complexity of its application in supply chains and professional kitchens.

*A broader project for animals*

The upcoming legislation is not limited to shellfish. It is part of a comprehensive reform aimed at strengthening the protection of farm animals and pets. Among the measures announced are a ban on "puppy mills," the fight against cruel breeding practices, and stricter regulations on hunting with hounds.

### 24/12/2025 : L'arrachage des yeux, une pratique cruelle généralisée dans les élevages de crevettes

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

Author: Hortense Chauvin

**Preview:** Grab a prawn from a bowl, prise open its shell between your fingers, dip it in sauce, and swallow it. It's a common thing to do, especially during the holiday season. But to make it possible,

a different, much less trivial action must first have been performed: tearing away the eyestalks of female prawns while they are still alive. Since the 1970s, French prawn consumption has tripled. However, local production is very limited: just 350 tons of pink prawns and 50 tons of tiger prawns are produced in France. To satisfy our appetite for prawns, we import 84,000 tons of the crustacean each year, mainly from Ecuador, India, Vietnam, and Madagascar. Fifty-six percent of these animals are produced by aquaculture, the rest come from fishing that is mostly industrial.

#### *Cutting, cauterizing, ligating*

Prawn farming has harmful effects on the environment. In particular, it encourages the destruction of mangrove forests that grow in the margin between land and sea, replacing them with pond systems. According to data from the Solagro association, the annual consumption of prawns by the French public is responsible for the deforestation of 43,000 hectares of overseas mangroves. This means that there are fewer nursery habitats for wild fish larvae.

It also raises ethical questions. Around 440 billion farmed prawns are killed each year, making them by far the most consumed animal in the world (in monetary terms). This industry relies on a little-known but widespread practice: eyestalk ablation. This involves the severing of the antennae that connect the eyes of breeding females to the rest of their bodies by cutting, cauterizing, or ligation. A prawn's eyes contain a gland that influences its hormonal system. Ablation is thought to speed up how quickly the ovaries of breeding females mature, synchronizing their cycles and increasing the frequency of egg-laying. All of which is intended to increase production.

#### *Invisible suffering*

But at what cost? Whereas the suffering of farm animals on land has become an issue that slightly impinges on our awareness, the suffering inflicted on their aquatic counterparts remains absent from public debate. The explanation given by Amy P. Wilson, a researcher at the University of Johannesburg and a specialist in aquatic animal rights, is the lack of research on crustacean "sentience" (i.e., their ability to feel pain and have subjective experiences). "*There is a huge gap in our scientific knowledge of the needs of each of the hundreds of aquatic species we farm.* Unlike land animals, fish, octopuses, and other decapods are not part of our everyday landscape. "*Their suffering is invisible.*" Research on the welfare of farmed prawns is patchy. But there is enough information for eyestalk ablation to be described as "*problematic*", according to Amy P. Wilson. A number of studies [1] have shown that breeding prawns, after having their eyes removed, exhibit behaviors that may indicate pain: erratic swimming, sudden tail movements, prolonged rubbing of the amputated area, curling up at the bottom of the tank, etc. These behaviors were absent when an anesthetic was applied before removal, as part of the experiment.

#### *"Frozen to death"*

After their eyestalks have been being pulled out, prawns tend to feed less (presumably due to impaired vision), notes a [review of scientific literature](#) published in 2024. It has also been observed that the offspring of such prawns are more vulnerable to infections, which are very common in aquaculture facilities—10 out of the 11 infections that can be contracted by crustaceans are regularly identified on farms—according to a [report](#) by the NGO Rethink Priorities in 2023. In a substantial [report](#) coordinated by the prestigious London School of Economics, researchers concluded that all decapods (an order that includes prawns, crabs, lobsters, etc.) should be considered sentient beings. As such, they argue that eyestalk removal should be banned, as should killing by immersion in an iced-water bath (which remains the norm in prawn farming and the farming

of other aquatic animals). *"They are frozen to death for hours,"* says Kathy Hessler, Associate Dean of the Animal Law program at George Washington University Law School. *"It's outrageous."*

#### *France: a long way from a ban*

In the United Kingdom, the publication of this report led, in 2021, to the legal recognition of all decapods and cephalopods (such as octopuses) as *"sentient"* beings. Since then, eight British supermarket chains have committed to no longer selling prawns from farms that use eyestalk removal and slaughter by ice slurry methods.

France is still a long way from achieving this. The majority of large retailers (Lidl, Carrefour, E. Leclerc, U, Casino, Auchan, Metro, etc.) continue to sell such products, according to a survey conducted in October by the NGO International Council for Animal Welfare (ICAW). *"Consumers are completely unaware of this fact"*, says Justine Audemard, head of negotiations at the NGO. For the present, only the Mousquetaires group (Intermarché, Netto, etc.) has committed to ceasing eyestalk removal by January 2026. The multinational has also promised that by 2030, the prawns sold on its shelves will be electrically stunned before slaughter. Aldi, meanwhile, is hiding behind the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) label, which some of its products carry. This certification program gives the guarantee that "ASC" prawns will no longer be mutilated by 2031. In the organic sector, the removal of shrimp eyestalks has been banned since 2018. (...)

## **27/11/2025 : The exploration of consciousness in insects**

Document type: review published in [Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B](#)

Authors: Chittka Lars, Skeels Sarah, Dyakova Olga and Janbon Maxime

**Abstract:** Consciousness is a state of subjective experience or awareness, e.g. of an emotion, the self or external objects. In humans, this awareness is underpinned by a suite of cognitive functions, from attention to metacognition. To understand the evolution of consciousness, the study of these cognitive functions across a variety of animal taxa is critical. Insects are useful organisms because we have a sophisticated understanding of their cognition from over a century of study and modern tools are revealing the intricacies of insect brains with increasing clarity. Here we cover the rich history of this venerable field as well as more recent discoveries relating to consciousness in insects, specifically focusing on the following areas: emotions, the distinction of self and other, prediction, attention and active sleep. There can still be no formal certainty about consciousness in insects; even in humans, there is currently no agreement over the particular combination of cognition and neural function that produces consciousness. Nonetheless, evidence from all the lines of investigation summarized here builds up to an increasing probability that insects might possess some form of subjective experience. We encourage further investigation of insects to explore the building blocks of consciousness and its evolutionary antecedents.

## **Logement et enrichissement**

### **16/12/2025 : Do pigs like to brush? An observational study of pig brushing behaviour in a commercial production environment**

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

Authors: Niclas Högberg, Lena Skånberg, Oleksiy Guzhva, Rebecka Westin, Axel Sannö, Anna Wallenbeck, Maria Vilain Rørvang

**Abstract:** In semi-natural environments, pigs have been observed rubbing or scratching against trees and bushes, and in commercial settings, they often rub against pen structures and may allow handlers to scratch them. Whilst human-applied scratching of pigs has been studied, little is known about their self-scratching behaviour. Research on brush use in cattle suggests potential welfare benefits, while research on brushing behaviour in pigs is, to the best of our knowledge, absent. To address this gap, this study investigated whether gestating sows use a mechanical brush when housed in a social setting; how brushing varied in duration, frequency, body region, and time of day; and whether individuals differed in brush use. The study was conducted on 29 loose-housed gestating Yorkshire sows with access to deep straw bedding, a transponder-controlled feeder, and a mechanical brush (Comfort Pig, Comfy-Solutions B.V., Roelofarendsveen, the Netherlands). Observations included 192 h of continuous video recordings covering the brush area. An ethogram adapted from cattle studies and refined for pigs was applied to record brushing, sniffing, oral manipulation, and displacements. Brushing was further categorised by body region, initiation, intensity, and duration. Data were summarised descriptively, and differences between groups, times, and individuals were assessed using nonparametric methods. All sows engaged in brushing at least once, during the study, averaging 1.5 (interquartile range, IQR = 1–2) bouts per day. The median bout duration was 12 s (IQR = 8–17), with active brushing comprising nearly half of the total time. Brushing was mainly directed to the middle body region (29.8%) and often initiated at the head (46.2%). No consistent diurnal pattern was evident. Sniffing preceded brushing in 85 of the 297 observed brushing bouts, whilst oral manipulation was only observed five times. Incomplete bouts and occasional displacements (3% of bouts) suggest that internal and social factors may influence access. Taken together, this study provides an initial systematic description of the brushing behaviour in pigs and suggests that mechanical brushes may serve as an enriching resource for pigs in production. Further research, including comparisons across different brush types, production stages, pig-to-brush ratios, and housing systems, is needed to evaluate their potential as welfare-enhancing tools in commercial pig production.

## [27/11/2025 : Welfare and productivity in muscovy ducks: Impact of swimming pond availability](#)

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

Authors: Lukáš Zita, Ondřej Kruent, Jitka Edrová, Jakub Vorel, Eva Chmelíková, Antonella Dalle Zotte

**Abstract:** Housing conditions strongly influence both the welfare and productivity of farmed poultry. Muscovy ducks, unlike many other commercial species, are naturally adapted to water and may benefit from access to swimming facilities. In this study, we explored how providing a pond environment affects the overall health, growth, and product quality of these birds, while also considering natural differences between males and females. Ducks allowed to swim displayed better hygiene, with cleaner plumage and healthier eyes and nostrils, suggesting a direct link between water access and welfare. Their physiological status also indicated a more balanced metabolism. Growth patterns differed over time, but ultimately ducks with swimming access achieved similar or superior body development compared with those kept without water. Differences were also apparent

in carcass composition and bone quality. Swimming birds carried less excess fat and produced stronger skeletal tissue with greater mineral content, outcomes that can be considered both a welfare and a production advantage. Sex differences were evident across many traits: males generally grew larger and had heavier carcasses, while females tended to show higher fat loss after processing. These observations underline that management practices interact with biological factors in shaping performance and meat quality. Overall, the findings demonstrate that incorporating swimming ponds into Muscovy duck housing not only enhances bird welfare by improving hygiene and natural behavior but also contributes to valuable production traits. Such housing adjustments may therefore represent a sustainable step forward in balancing animal welfare with the expectations of modern poultry production.

## [24/11/2025 : Focusing on biological stimuli: a new framework for environmental enrichment in aquaculture and fisheries fields](#)

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

Authors: Yijie He, Zonghang Zhang, Zhenghao Xiao, Bo Liang, Jiezhong Mo, Boshan Zhu, Wenhua Liu

**Abstract:** Barren environments can lead to sensory deprivation and impaired behavioral functions, resulting in significant negative outcomes. However, increasing environmental complexity can mitigate these effects and enhance adaptability, a practice commonly known as environmental enrichment (EE). EE is gradually becoming an essential tool for animal behavior intervention, yet its development faces several challenges, including unstable experimental results and limited applicability of findings. These issues impede both the understanding of animal behavior mechanisms and the advancement of EE itself. This review provides an overview of the development and current applications of EE, and discusses key challenges that may constrain its further advancement, including the underrepresentation of biotic enrichment (BE), deficiencies in the existing classification frameworks, and the absence of effective implementation strategies. We further propose the Stimuli Input – Fish (Sensing - Processing) - Behavioral Output model and the stimuli-sensing classification system to address these gaps and enhance the scientific rigor of the current framework. Additionally, we present a practical framework for the design, validation, and application of EE strategies, with an emphasis on biotic and multi-sensory stimuli relevant to aquaculture settings. By further examining the role of EE in shaping individual behavioral adaptability, this review underscores its dual function not only as a practical tool for enhancing fish welfare, but also as a conceptual framework for investigating adaptive behavioral circuits. This integrative perspective supports both the refinement of hatchery design and release strategies, and the broader understanding of how environmental complexity drives behavioral plasticity across aquatic systems.

## [30/10/2025 : Review on environmental enrichments for farmed rabbits](#)

Document type: scientific review published by [EURCAW-Poultry-SFA](#)

Authors: Moles Xénia, Abdelli Nedra, Tolini Clara

**Abstract:** Domestic rabbits are social and exploratory animals requiring environmental stimulation to perform natural behaviors such as gnawing, digging, foraging, and social interaction. Conventional housing systems often restrict these behaviors, leading to stress, aggression, and poor health. Environmental enrichment—including physical, occupational, nutritional, social, and sensory elements—significantly improves rabbit welfare. Elevated platforms enhance behavioral diversity and movement opportunities, while gnawing materials reduce abnormal behaviors in growing rabbits. Social enrichment benefits growing rabbits, though group housing for does presents challenges. Despite positive outcomes, research gaps remain regarding long-term effects, standardized protocols, and practical implementation in commercial settings.

[Link to pdf](#)

## One Welfare

### [15/01/2026 : Relationships between farmer well-being and the welfare of their animals: A One Welfare scoping review](#)

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

Authors: Levallois P, Buczinski S, Desmarchelier M, Lupien S, Robichaud MV.

**Abstract:** Although there are public expectations regarding improvements to farm animal welfare, farmers' well-being remains largely overlooked. This is particularly concerning given the high prevalence of physical and mental health issues among farming populations. As key stakeholders in the implementation of animal welfare practices, farmers play an essential role in welfare outcomes. Improving animal welfare may require addressing farmers' own well-being. To support this hypothesis, it is necessary to examine the relationship between farmers' well-being and the welfare of their animals. This scoping review aimed to: (1) map the methods used to describe relationships between farmer well-being and animal welfare in primary research; and (2) compile pieces of evidence of such relationships. Following the PRISMA extension for Scoping Reviews, the same search was carried out on three databases (Web of Science Core Collection, MEDLINE, CABI digital library). Twenty-two articles from the 10,189 retrieved met the inclusion criteria. Results underscored the need to standardise methods to enable cross-study comparisons, as different questionnaires were used to assess the same construct (e.g. four for psychological stress), and none of the animal welfare indicators were fully comparable. Moreover, 94 pieces of evidence regarding the relationships between farmer well-being and the welfare of their animals were compiled. Ninety-three pieces described positive associations where improved farmer well-being was associated with improved welfare of their animals, and vice versa. This result suggests that welfare improvement strategies on farms should address not only animal welfare, but also farmer well-being. The results therefore support a One Welfare approach on commercial farms.

### [30/11/2025 : A scoping review of \(dis-\)incentives for animal welfare-improving farming practices](#)

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

Authors: Trevor Woolley, Sharon Pailler, Jonathan McFadden, Zach Raff, Sharon Raszap Skorbiansky, Kevin Kuruc

**Abstract:** Public interest in improving farm animal welfare has increased in recent years, but research on implementation of on-farm enhanced welfare practices lags behind. This review examines the incentives and barriers to adoption of animal welfare-improving farming practices from the perspective of key stakeholders: farmers and other animal product producers. We perform a machine-learning aided scoping review of the academic literature studying how different rearing practices influence economic outcomes for producers, providing direct evidence on the (dis-)incentives of adopting the practices studied. This allows us to (1) identify existing consensus and (2) highlight research gaps on the economic factors related to adoption of (or lack of) welfare-improved practices. Operating costs emerge as a near-universal disincentive for welfare-improving practices. Conversely, improved indoor environment shows potential benefits for animal health and productivity, suggesting the possibility of interventions that have only negligible impacts on overall profits. These takeaways are drawn from a relatively sparse literature, underscoring important research gaps. Addressing these gaps can inform evidence-based policies that align practice with public expectations for farm animal welfare while being cognizant of producer constraints and incentives.

## Prise en charge de la douleur

### 12/12/2025 : Foie gras : derrière la tradition, la maltraitance

Document type: article published by [La Fondation Droit Animal, Ethique et Sciences](#)

Author: LFDA

**Preview:** *A biological reality that is not compatible with animal health*

As the holiday season approaches, foie gras takes center stage in French cuisine and in the collective imagination. Often presented as an exceptional product associated with conviviality and tradition, it is even undergoing a sharp commercial uptick. In the first half of 2025, sales of foie gras in supermarkets jumped by 55% in volume compared to 2024, according to industry data. However, this strong return to popularity, which has received extensive coverage in terms of the market, conceals a much less obvious reality in terms of production conditions and their effects on the animals involved. Underlying this commercial success story is a particular practice, that of force-feeding, without which foie gras would not exist. Every year in France, nearly 30 million ducks and geese are subjected to this process. Foie gras is legally defined as the liver of a duck or goose that has been specially fattened by force-feeding, a reminder that it is not a natural product, but the result of deliberate human intervention intended to cause extreme hypertrophy of the liver. The available scientific data is unequivocal. 'Foie gras' is not normal liver. Force-feeding leads to pathological hepatic steatosis, characterized by the massive enlargement of a liver saturated with fat, accompanied by cellular change that is incompatible with a state of health. This pathology brings about significant metabolic disturbances and a change in the animal's essential physiological functions. It cannot in any way be equated with a simple process of fattening comparable to those that might be observed under natural conditions. The process of force-feeding also induces a series of instances of suffering that have been documented. Force-feeding, carried out using a tube



inserted into the oesophagus, causes acute stress, mechanical damage to the oesophagus and crop, and behavioral disorders. The excessive increase in liver volume compresses the internal organs, causing breathing difficulties, chronic fatigue, locomotor disorders, and overall physiological distress. These findings are supported by robust scientific analysis and a number of official European reports on animal welfare.

#### *The myth of natural behavior*

From an ethological point of view, the argument frequently put forward by the foie gras industry, and sometimes repeated by public authorities, that force-feeding reproduces natural pre-migratory behavior, does not stand up to scrutiny. The ducks used for foie gras production in France are mainly Mulard ducks, a crossbreed that is sedentary and does not migrate. Such ducks do not therefore have any natural behavior where they would build their energy reserves in preparation for migration. Forcing them to eat large amounts of food does not meet any biological or behavioral need. When it comes to geese, the comparison is equally misleading. In some species of wild geese, it is true that a slight fattening of the liver can be observed before migration, but this remains limited and generally does not exceed a doubling of the liver's size. Such fattening remains compatible with normal health and the animal's ability to fly. By contrast, force-feeding as practised in foie gras production can result in a liver up to ten times larger than its original size, a state that would prevent a bird from flying and clearly indicates ill health. The argument that this follows natural behavior is therefore a rhetorical construct with no serious scientific basis.

#### *French uniqueness or a denial of reality*

From a legal standpoint, foie gras production is particularly paradoxical. European law on the protection of farm animals is based on clear general principles, notably those set out in [Directive 98/58/EC](#), which requires farmers to take all reasonable measures to ensure the welfare of animals and avoid unnecessary or avoidable suffering. This text, like other European instruments, recognizes that animals are sentient beings whose biological and behavioral needs must be respected. However, no European directive explicitly forbids force-feeding. Several countries have nevertheless decided to ban the practice, including Germany, Italy, Sweden, and Poland. Outside Europe, the courts have also taken a position on these grounds. In the United States, the State of California has banned force-feeding and the sale of foie gras produced by force-feeding, on the grounds that the practice constitutes cruelty to animals. The situation in France would appear all the more non-normative, given that foie gras enjoys symbolic and legal recognition as part of the country's cultural and gastronomic heritage. However, this recognition does not alter the biological reality of force-feeding or the general legal principles applicable to animal protection.

To overcome culturally embedded views, a clear and rigorously referenced booklet entitled *Le foie gras, une gourmandise au prix de la souffrance* (Foie gras, a delicacy built on suffering) [has been published by the LFDA](#) to answer key questions about force-feeding, regulations, and the ethical issues raised by this method of production. Based on scientific studies and institutional sources, it sets out to provide the French public with comprehensive and accessible information. A paper version can also be ordered. (...)

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

## Réglementation

## [22/12/2025 : Animal welfare strategy for England](#)

Document type: ministerial guidance document published on the [Gov.UK](#) website

Author: Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

### **Preview: Key messages**

The government is committed to a generational step change in animal welfare, considering the developing body of scientific knowledge and our changing responsibilities.

Animal welfare is a complex area that spans across species and sectors. The government will take an approach which considers animal welfare in the round, prioritising those actions which make the biggest difference.

This involves understanding and delivering what only the government can do, such as establishing a regulatory framework and providing a clear direction of travel, while also working in partnership with industry and others to collectively improve animal welfare, underpinned by an effective enforcement strategy.

This strategy sets out how the government will take forward an ambitious programme of reforms across four key areas: companion animals, wild animals, farmed animals and internationally.

This strategy identifies the priority actions for animal welfare to be taken throughout the course of this parliament. These include addressing loopholes around regulations governing the breeding of dogs and cats, banning snare traps, introducing a close season for hares, delivering on the manifesto commitment to ban trail hunting, consulting on phasing out the use of cages in farming, moving away from the use of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) to stun pigs, and introducing standards for the humane killing of fish.

While the actions focus on England, some policies are relevant to other parts of the UK. We will continue to work closely with Devolved Governments on animal welfare matters to take coordinated action where appropriate.

Underpinning all this work is the need for good enforcement. Effective compliance and enforcement of regulations are necessary to achieve good welfare. We are reliant on our network of operational delivery organisations, particularly local authorities, to ensure legislation is working effectively.

The government will work with stakeholders to monitor the impacts of these changes and ensure that they are delivering the welfare improvements promised. This will be a continuous endeavour as we continue to strive for the highest animal welfare standards.

## [16/12/2025 : Parlement européen : Réponse écrite à la question E-004010/2025 : Ambition et portée de la prochaine révision de la législation sur le bien-être des animaux d'élevage](#)

Document type: Answer from the [European Commission](#) to question E-004010/2025

Authors: Question : Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE), Maria Noichl (S&D), Sebastian Everding (The Left), Anja Hazekamp (The Left), Tilly Metz (Verts/ALE), Manuela Ripa (PPE), Sigrid Friis (Renew), Krzysztof Śmiszek (S&D). Answer: Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission

### **Question: Ambition and scope of the upcoming revision of on-farm animal welfare legislation**

The Commission has committed to revising the EU's animal welfare legislation as part of the Farm to Fork strategy. Many species remain poorly covered by current rules, which are often too general,

such as Directive 98/58/EC, and do not reflect scientific progress or the scale of societal concern. The European Food Safety Authority scientific opinion of June 2025 entitled 'Welfare of beef cattle' confirms that existing legislation is outdated and not fit for purpose. Species-specific gaps coexist with older legislative acts that urgently require revision. Meanwhile, public expectations are high – repeated Eurobarometer surveys show that EU citizens want the EU to take stronger action on animal welfare and support meaningful reforms.

1. How does the Commission plan to ensure that the upcoming revision of on-farm animal welfare legislation will address species that are currently under-regulated, including beef cattle and aquatic animals?

2. How will the Commission replace or significantly update unfit, outdated legislative acts, in line with the latest peer-reviewed scientific evidence?

3. Can the Commission provide a clear and detailed timeline for the publication and adoption of the revised legislative proposals, including consultation, impact assessment and legislative drafting stages?

**Answer:** 1. Animal welfare is a key priority for this Commission, and the Commission is committed to a comprehensive approach that ensures that the EU maintains high standards in this area. The exact scope and content of the upcoming legislative proposal on on-farm animals remains yet to be decided, based on the outcome of broad stakeholder consultations and a thorough assessment of the economic, environmental and social impacts of different potential policy options. 2. The European Food Safety Authority has in recent years delivered a series of important scientific opinions on animal welfare. The revision of the EU animal welfare legislation will be based on this new scientific evidence, as well as on research projects, including the European partnership on animal health and welfare<sup>[1]</sup>. The revision will also take into account the socioeconomic impact on farmers and the agri-food chain, in order to arrive at well-balanced, evidence-based and future-proof solutions.

3. A public consultation has been conducted from 19 September 2025 until 12 December 2025<sup>[2]</sup> to gather the views of farmers, citizens, businesses, national and regional authorities, non-governmental organisations, and other interested parties on the revision of the EU legislation for on-farm animal welfare. Preparatory actions for the impact assessment are also ongoing, including stakeholder interviews and targeted surveys, and will conclude in the first half of 2026<sup>[3]</sup>.

<sup>[1]</sup> <https://www.eupahw.eu/>.

<sup>[2]</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14671-On-farm-animal-welfare-for-certain-animals-modernisation-of-EU-legislation/public-consultation\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14671-On-farm-animal-welfare-for-certain-animals-modernisation-of-EU-legislation/public-consultation_en).

<sup>[3]</sup> For further information: [https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-welfare/evaluations-and-impact-assessment/revision-eu-animal-welfare-legislation\\_en](https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-welfare/evaluations-and-impact-assessment/revision-eu-animal-welfare-legislation_en)

## **09/12/2025 : Fish husbandry systems: exercise of the EFSA AHAW Network**

Document type: technical report published by the European Food Safety Authority ([EFSA](#))

Authors: European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), Aitana López Baquero, Claudia Millán Caravaca, Chiara Fabris, Yves Van der Stede, Denise Candiani

**Abstract:** There is no specific EU legislation dedicated to fish welfare during farming, transport, or killing; however, fish are covered under the general provisions of Council Directive 98/58/EC (protection of animals kept for farming purposes) and Regulations (EC) No 1/2005 (on the protection of animals during transport and related operations) and No 1099/2009 (on the protection of animals at the time of killing). Significant advancements in fish farming practices in recent years have introduced new welfare concerns. In this context, and to prepare for potential mandates on fish welfare, EFSA conducted an information-gathering exercise on fish farming during the 25th meeting of the EFSA Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) Network aimed at mapping current fish farming systems in the EU. A pre-meeting survey was circulated to network representatives, and most responded. The aggregated results were discussed during the meeting, together with clarification questions and a poll. Not all major EU-farmed fish species are produced in every country. Some species are widely distributed, such as brown trout (*Salmo trutta*), carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*), rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and salmon (*Salmo salar*). In contrast, species such as bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) are only farmed in a few countries, while others are restricted to the Mediterranean areas, including seabass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*), and seabream (*Sparus aurata*). Common husbandry systems include Recirculating Aquaculture System, Flow-through System, freshwater ponds and net pens while almadraba traps and saltmarsh ponds are mainly used in Southern Europe. The links to all relevant national legislation or guidelines, as well as information on additional species and husbandry systems provided, were collected and are annexed to this report.

## [04/12/2025 : Sénat : Réponse à la question n°05751 : Interdiction de la vente en ligne d'animaux de compagnie](#)

Document type: answer to question no. 05751 published in the JO of the French [Senate](#)

Authors: Question: M. SZCZUREK Christopher (Pas-de-Calais - NI). Answer: French Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Food Sovereignty

**Question :** Christopher Szczurek draws the attention of the Minister of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty to the worrying failure to enforce the ban on the sale of dogs and cats in pet shops, provided for by Law No. 2021-1539 of November 30, 2021, to combat animal abuse and strengthen the bond between animals and humans. Since January 1, 2024, the sale of dogs and cats in shops has been prohibited for establishments selling live animals, in accordance with Article L. 214-6-3 of the Rural and Maritime Fishing Code. However, many retailers continue to sell these animals by using alternative routes such as online platforms, social media, and in-store pick-up using "click and collect" services. The Fondation 30 Millions d'Amis recently documented these abuses, which it describes as contrary to the spirit and letter of the law. Even more worrying is the fact that the ministerial Decree of July 2, 2025 temporarily permitted these establishments to continue on-line sales of dogs and cats for a further six months. This decision, which was taken in light of the absence of a decree laying down the penalties applicable for non-compliance with the sales ban, effectively suspends the force of the law passed by Parliament. He therefore asks the Minister when the implementing decree specifying the penalties for non-compliance with the ban on sales in pet shops will be published, and what instructions are currently being provided to the veterinary and monitoring

bodies to prevent online or click-and-collect sales by pet shops which, in all logic, clearly work against the principles of animal welfare and the considered and responsible adoption of pets.

**Answer:** The government has been committed to animal welfare for a number of years in response to the powerful and justified expectations of the public, and it condemns all abuse of animals, whether on farms, at abattoirs, or in people's homes. In this respect, since 2020 and thanks to the France Relance plan, more than €36 million has been granted to animal protection associations and veterinary medicine support initiatives. Similarly, since the adoption of the Law against animal abuse on November 30, 2021, four implementing decrees and six ministerial orders have been published to strengthen the training of those working with companion animals, to provide information to new owners, to control the identification of animals in online offers, and strengthen penalties for acts of abuse. To continue the positive momentum initiated by the government, a pet welfare plan was announced on May 22, 2024. This plan's national monitoring committee, chaired by the Minister for Agriculture, brings together four ministries, professionals from the industry, and key players in civil society to ensure the effective coordination of its actions. For the French State, the objective is to support and fully promote both current and future actions relating to three issues: the prevention of, and fight against, pet abandonment, improvement of the management of stray dogs and cats, and the prevention of, and fight against, the abuse of pets. To this end, the plan is built around practical measures involving five main spheres of action: building an understanding of the situation and identifying levers for action; informing, listening to and educating those involved; facilitating synergies between those working in animal protection; strengthening the protection provided by the regulations; and ensuring the continued provision of funding mechanisms. One year after the publication of the national action plan, we are seeing its first outcomes, with concrete measures that include data collection to improve our understanding of abandonment, the launch of a €3 million call for projects to combat the straying of animals, consultation on government action via an interministerial protocol, the publication of a decree regulating professional pet-related activities, and the strengthening of animal welfare inspections in pet shops. In accordance with the Law of November 30, 2021, to combat animal abuse and strengthen the bond between animals and humans, pet shops have been prohibited from selling or giving away dogs and cats on their premises since January 1, 2024. However, they may display cats and dogs belonging to animal protection foundations or associations if volunteers from these foundations or associations are present. The final clause in Paragraph VI of Article L. 214-8 of the Rural and Maritime Fishing Code permits pet shops to sell pets online for profit. The publication of the Decree of June 19, 2025, establishing the health and animal protection rules that must be met in activities related to companion animals of domestic species, provides a more detailed framework relating to the premises where these animals are kept, including animals in pet shops awaiting transfer to their online buyers.

The "penalties" decree, authorizing the prosecution of pet shops that continue to sell or give away dogs and cats in their establishments, a practice that has been prohibited since January 1, 2024, is currently being drafted by the French Ministry of Agriculture with a view to publication in late 2025 or early 2026. Further, with regard to online sales, the Law on animal abuse has brought in a requirement for advertising sites and publications to check offers of dogs, cats, and ferrets, whether for a fee or free of charge, before they are posted or published. Only verified advertisements containing all mandatory information may be approved and posted online. The verification of this mandatory information, relating to both the animal and its owner, must be carried out using the

national database of domestic carnivores. To this end, the Ministry of Agriculture has worked with Ingenium Animalis, which operates the identification database, to create a verification tool for mandatory information, and this has been available to advertisers since May 2024. The validation process will provide those who wish to acquire a dog or cat through an online transaction (purchase or sale) with a guarantee concerning the animal's origin, the accuracy of its description, and the consent of the registered owner. Although failure to check advertisements can incur a fine of €7,500, a major challenge for the success of the measure remains the lack of awareness among individuals of the importance of this validation. The government is therefore committed to renewing its efforts for the protection of animals and will remain vigilant in its response to reports of stray, abandoned, and abused animals. Cases may be subject to prosecution in mainland France and overseas territories. A press pack (in French) setting out the practical measures taken to ensure the welfare of pets, published on July 11, 2025, can be found on the ministry's website using the following link: <https://agriculture.gouv.fr/dossier-de-presse-des-actions-concretes-pour-assurer-le-bien-etre-des-animaux-de-compagnie>

## **28/11/2025 : Retour sur la conférence “Animal Protection and EU Law: Recent Developments and Prospective Change”**

Document type: News from [La Fondation Droit Animal, Éthique et Sciences](#) (LFDA)

Author: Tancrède Girard

**Preview:** On November 18, 2025, in Brussels, the Fondation Droit Animal, Éthique & Sciences (LFDA) and the European Institute for Animal Law & Policy (EIALP) jointly organized a conference on recent developments and prospects for European animal protection law. The event brought together more than fifty people from over thirty organizations (NGOs, institutions, universities, etc.), confirming the growing importance of animal welfare issues in the European legal and political landscape.

### *Understanding the limits of the current European framework*

The day began with a presentation of the event, its challenges, and its objectives by Nicolas Bureau (LFDA), and a tribute to Louis Schweitzer, former president of the Foundation, who passed away on November 6.

The first round table, introduced by Gabriela Kubíková (EIALP), laid the groundwork for the debate. Christian Juliusson (European Commission, DG SANTE) pointed out that many European texts on animal welfare are still based on general standards, formulated in terms such as "appropriate" or "non-routine," leaving a wide margin for interpretation and hindering harmonization. He also highlighted a major issue: the lack of impact of European standards outside the EU, which sometimes leaves EU producers at a disadvantage compared to importers from countries with less stringent rules.

Denise Candiani (EFSA) then presented the central role played by the agency in producing scientific opinions to inform the Commission. She reviewed the evolution of the missions carried out by the EFSA, which has gradually acquired increased resources to cover all species covered by European law, from farm animals to equines and animals raised for fur. She described the various ways in which the public and stakeholders can participate (consultations, calls for information, expressions of interest) in the development of scientific opinions.

Last, Pauline Phoa (University of Utrecht) offered a clear analysis of the different forms of extraterritoriality in European law. She distinguished between "strict" extraterritoriality, illustrated by the application of European law to the transport of animals beyond the borders of the EU or by the ban on whaling, the "Brussels effect," which sees foreign producers voluntarily adopting European standards in order to access the market, and extraterritoriality based on the Union's external action, for example through the integration of animal welfare into trade agreements. She set these mechanisms in a historical perspective, showing how the way that modern international law was constructed still places limitations on contemporary debates.

#### *Case law in flux*

The second round table, moderated by Inês Grenho Ajuda (Eurogroup for Animals), revealed the growing importance of strategic litigation in the evolution of animal law. Alessandra Donati (legal secretary at the CJEU) reviewed three major judgments handed down by the Court in 2020. In particular, she detailed the decisions relating to [ritual slaughter](#) and [traditional methods of bird trapping](#), in which the Court had to reconcile cultural traditions with growing animal welfare requirements. She also presented the [ASCEL](#), concerning the protection of wolves, in which the Court recognized that psychological harm to a protected species can constitute environmental damage.

Alice Di Concetto (EIALP) and Joren Vuylsteke (KU Leuven), speaking jointly, put these European developments into perspective with an account of national dynamics. They presented recent cases in the Netherlands and Belgium, where associations are increasingly using the law to challenge inaction from the authorities, or to obtain stronger animal protections. They highlighted two key trends in European case law: the growing reference to animal sentience, now explicitly enshrined in treaties, and the weight given to animal interests in the proportionality test. These trends, they explained, pave the way for more ambitious litigation strategies in the years to come.

#### *Tools, innovations, and political perspectives*

The third round table, introduced by Laurence Parisot (President of the LFDA), highlighted emerging legal tools and current political perspectives.

Nicolas Bureau (LFDA) and Emilie Chevalier (University of Limoges) presented an online database containing all European animal-related legislation: regulations, directives, decisions, recommendations, and case law from the courts. This project, carried out in collaboration with a network of academics, will be launched in early 2026 in French and English.

MEPs Tilly Metz (Greens/EFA) and Michal Wiezik (Renew Europe) then shared their experience on the ground, particularly concerning the revisions to transport regulations. They described a tense political context and complex negotiations, where animal protection regularly clashes with divergent economic interests between Member States. Last, Pascal Vaugarny (Fermiers de Loué) and Agathe Gignoux (Compassion in World Farming France) presented joint feedback on the French animal welfare label. They showed how NGOs and economic actors can work together to bring about material improvements, provided that ethical objectives, economic viability, and market fairness are aligned. Their presentation illustrated a key point of the day: real progress requires structured dialogue between civil society, scientists, businesses, and institutions.

## **[25/11/2025 : European Parliament: Protection of dogs and cats: deal on EU rules to stop abuse](#)**

Document type: press release from the [European Parliament](#)

Author: European Parliament

**Preview:** Parliament and Council negotiators agreed on new measures to stop abusive practices, curb cruel business practices, and protect the health of cats and dogs. The draft bill informally agreed on Tuesday by the two institutions sets out the first ever EU standards for the breeding, housing, traceability, import and handling of cats and dogs. Negotiators agreed dogs and cats kept in the EU, including these in private ownership, will be identifiable with a microchip and will be registered in interoperable national databases. Sellers, breeders and shelters will have four years to prepare for this, while for pet owners who do not sell animals, the measure will be mandatory after 10 years for dogs and after 15 years for cats.

#### *Stopping commercial practices leading to abuses and health risks*

Breeding between parents and their offspring, grandparents and grandchildren, as well as between siblings and half-siblings, will be banned according to the deal. MEPs also successfully negotiated a ban on the breeding of dogs or cats to give them exaggerated or excessive traits that lead to significant health risks.

The text also includes a prohibition on these animals – and on mutilated dogs and cats – being used in shows, exhibitions, or competitions. Tying a dog or a cat to an object (tethering), except when necessary for medical treatment, and the use of prong and choke collars without built-in safety mechanisms will also be prohibited.

#### *Dogs and cats from non-EU countries*

To close potential loopholes that would allow dogs and cats to enter the EU as non-commercial pets only to be subsequently sold, MEPs managed to extend the rules to cover not only imports for commercial purposes but also non-commercial animal movements. Dogs and cats imported from third countries for sale will have to be microchipped before their entry into the EU, and then registered in a national database. Pet owners entering the EU would be obliged to pre-register their microchipped animal on a database, at least five working days before arrival, except if they enter from certain countries or already registered in EU countries databases.

#### *Quote*

Rapporteur and Chair of the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee, Veronika Vrecionová (ECR, CZ), said: “Today we have taken an important step towards bringing real order to the trade in dogs and cats in the EU. Stronger rules on breeding and traceability will make it harder for abusive and illegal operators to hide. We are pushing back against those who see animals as a means of quick profit, and are making a level playing field for honest breeders. Our message is clear: a pet is a family member, not an object or a toy.”

#### *Next steps*

The provisional agreement now needs to be approved by both Parliament and Council before the new rules can enter into force.

#### *Background*

Around 44% of EU citizens has a pet and 74% believes their welfare should be better protected. The trade in dogs and cats has grown considerably in recent years and is worth €1.3 billion a year. According to the Commission, around 60% of owners purchase their dogs or cats online. In the absence of animal welfare standards for dogs and cats across EU countries, the Commission proposed the new rules on 7 December 2023.

## [06/11/2025 : Parlement européen : réponse à la question prioritaire P-003765/2025 : Commission response to ongoing animal welfare breaches in transport and the need to ban live animal transport to safeguard animal welfare](#)

Document type: answer from the [European Commission](#) to question P-003765/2025

Authors: Question : Anja Hazekamp (The Left). Answer: Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission

**Question:** During his Parliament hearing in November 2024, Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi said that ‘we should not wait for the [animal transport] proposal to be adopted to improve the situation on the ground’ and that ‘we cannot just wait until the authorities agree or do not agree and leave animals stranded for weeks’, stating that ‘this is unacceptable’. The Commissioner also stated that ‘it is equally important to enforce the current rules, because the pictures we have seen just this week, about animals stranded on the borders, cannot wait until a new legislation is in place’ and ‘these are things that are happening much too frequently’. Since this hearing, animals have continued to be stranded at borders, confined in trucks under stressful and poor conditions. In the light of the above:

1. What has the Commission achieved so far to ‘improve the situation on the ground’, particularly regarding animals stranded at borders?
2. Does the Commission agree that guaranteeing animal welfare during live transport is difficult, in particular if animals are moved beyond EU borders, and that, therefore, the only effective way to protect animal health and welfare is to ban live exports?
3. What is the Commission’s view on promoting the trade of meat, carcasses and genetic material instead of live animals?

**Answer:** The Commission proposal currently discussed with the co-legislators provides for several innovative tools to improve the current situation. However, the actions of the Member State authorities can reduce the rate of undesirable incidents described by the Honourable Member, since the implementation of EU legislation is a responsibility of the Member States.

1. The Commission is working closely with the Turkish and the Bulgarian authorities, as well as with all other Member States, with the objective of establishing a specific procedure for the export of live animals from the EU to Türkiye based on a pre-approval of the veterinary certificates via a new module in TRACES , to limit the reoccurrence of such incidents in the future.
2. The reasoning behind the revision of the current EU legislation on the protection of animals during transport is to propose [\[1\]](#) changes to the existing legislation [\[2\]](#) which will allow better protection of animals during their transport both within the EU, as well as of the imports from and exports to third countries.
3. The Commission is supportive of replacing transport of animals with meat, carcasses and reproductive material wherever this is possible. However, a comprehensive impact assessment accompanying the Commission proposal in 2023 showed that such replacement is not feasible in all cases. Maintaining the transport of animals is necessary for continuation of trade, livestock and food production within the EU and in third countries. The Commission is promoting such replacements by incentivising shorter transports of animals as reflected in the Commission proposal.

[1] COM(2023)770.

[2] Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations and amending Directives 64/432/EEC and 93/119/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1255/97 OJ L 3, 5.1.2005.

## 01/09/2023 : Nouveaux Animaux de Compagnie : état des lieux en France métropolitaine et problématiques liées à leur détention

Document type: veterinary thesis report deposit on [DUMAS platform](#)

Author: Blanche Montero

### **Abstract: New Pets: Current Situation in Metropolitan France and Issues Related to Their Ownership**

Exotic pets occupy an increasingly important place in french households, and a strong enthusiasm causing a sharp increase in demand for exotic animals has been observed for several years. This growing popularity has required the adaptation of ad hoc regulation, but also raises various issues related to the keeping, importation and trade of these animals. This thesis aims to expose these issues and highlight the importance of the role of veterinarians and public awareness in their resolution. It consists of a first part providing an overview of the regulation regarding the possession of exotic pets and their population on the territory, and a second part addressing the issues of animal welfare, illegal trade, risks associated with naturalization as well as potential health risks (zoonoses, imported animal diseases, etc).

## **Transport, abattage, ramassage**

### 15/01/2026 : Le bien-être animal, grand perdant des accords MERCOSUR

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

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

#### **Preview: A direct threat to animal welfare standards**

Trade agreements between the European Union and MERCOSUR countries are about to be signed. Concealed behind the economic issues, one key question remains absent from public debate: are we prepared to accept the fact that meat products from systems where animal welfare is not considered will enter the European market without providing any information for consumers? The agreements will open up the European market to meat produced in countries with lower standards, particularly in terms of animal welfare. Intensive farming conditions, long-distance transport, less regulation of slaughter practices - the facts are all documented, yet there is no clear requirement for the transparency that would enable consumers to identify such meat or know how the animals that produced it have been treated.

*Organized opacity: a denial of the right to information*

At a time when the public is demanding more information and ethical guarantees, the MERCOSUR agreements are creating even greater opacity. Several major retailers have understood this and have announced that they will not buy the imported meat. This sends out a strong signal. But will the food companies adhere to the same ethical standards for processed products? Meanwhile, the French livestock sectors, which are subject to strict rules and controls throughout the supply chain, risk being undermined by lower-cost competition. It is true that there are tools in existence that ensure animal welfare and guarantee accurate information, starting with the [Animal Welfare Label](#), which provides consumers with information on farming, transport and slaughter conditions. But these tools, unless they are made mandatory, cannot function when confronted with the organized opacity of the MERCOSUR agreements. The question is simple: are we prepared to accept that trade agreements undermine animal welfare requirements and food transparency, to the detriment of animals, farmers, and consumers?

## [15/12/2025 : Ensuring ethical production of beef: A comprehensive risk assessment of animal welfare during transportation and slaughter processes](#)

Document type: article published in the [EFSA Journal](#)

Authors: Piotr Janiszewski, Marco Misuraca, Egidia Costanzi, Beniamino Cenci Goga

**Abstract:** Animal welfare is a recognised and important issue within the European Union, addressed through comprehensive regulations such as Regulations 1/2005 and 1099/2009, which emphasise the necessity to respect and protect the welfare of animals, particularly during transport and slaughter procedures. These legislative measures are part of an ongoing European commitment to ensure ethical treatment and minimise suffering for food-producing animals, aligning with broader food safety and public health goals. This project aimed to create a prototype of an updated cattle path designed to minimise stress and reduce reliance on coercive means such as electric prods, while also decreasing the risk of injury due to trauma or falls. The approach focused on implementing evidence-based methods and integrating preventative design features that support both animal behaviour and safety in handling environments. The ultimate goal was to guarantee the welfare and protection of animals as specified in European guidelines, while also achieving improvements in meat quality. By advancing these objectives, the project demonstrates how compliance with animal welfare standards can be harmonised with operational efficiency and product quality, benefitting both animals and consumers across the European Union.