



FRCAW Newsletter 61

August – September 2026

Editorial

Live transport of animals in Europe



Image from the [Action Agricole Picarde](#) website. © F. Alteroche

Transport is one of the most stressful life events for farm animals. As Europe awaits the adoption of the new regulation on the transport of live animals, scientific studies continue to appear on the subject. A decade of research on the welfare of cattle during road transport has been surveyed in a recent [literature review](#) published in the *Journal of Animal Science*. The authors report that the focus of research is mainly on journey distance and duration, whereas other factors such as trailer microclimate and loading densities continue to receive little attention. They argue that such factors strongly influence the welfare of transported animals, and that their further investigation would therefore yield significant insights. Improvements to the monitoring of trailer microclimates could be achieved through technological advances. The potential of the latter is also

discussed in a [study of the temperature logs](#) submitted to the competent authorities on the transport of piglets from Denmark to other EU countries. The study reveals great variability and gaps in current temperature recording systems (number and positioning of sensors, sampling intervals, lack of information on external temperatures), constraining their usefulness to the assessment of pig welfare during transport. The authors conclude that, for the EU to achieve a more efficient, transparent and enforceable system to evaluate animal welfare during transport, standardised digital solutions have still to be developed.

In November 2025, France was audited by the European Commission to assess the suitability and effectiveness of the measures in place to prevent injury or undue suffering to animals (cattle, sheep, goats) transported by sea to countries outside the EU. In its [report](#), the Commission found that the French authorities were effective in carrying out the controls at ports and that all departures from France were accompanied by a stockman whose responsibility was to monitor the welfare of the animals on board. Nevertheless, it noted that the team of inspectors carrying out approval and pre-loading inspections did not include an official veterinarian or maritime expert. Further, no provision was in place for an official veterinarian to carry out formal controls during the first voyage after a vessel's approval. Recommendations were made to address the shortcomings identified.

The complex topic of the live transport of animals by sea has been discussed in a previous FRCAW newsletter ([Newsletter 58, February-March 2026](#)).

French government action plan for animals



[Image](#) from the [official website of the French Government](#)

This summer, the French Government set out its [Action Plan for Animal Welfare](#). Certain measures, put in place under the French [Animal Welfare Act of 30 November 2021](#) to combat animal abuse and strengthen the relationship between animals and humans, will be enhanced. Other elements of the Plan are new. These relate, in particular, to companion animals, with improvements to the ‘Bien-être des Animaux’ animal welfare quality label system for breeders and businesses, financial support for shelters, the roll-out of training and the strengthening of penalties for animal abuse.

Promoting good animal-welfare practices in Europe



Image from the [Process Alimentaire](#) website

31 July marked the conclusion of the European [BroilerNet](#) project, begun in 2022. The project leaves in place a network that aims to enhance animal welfare, health and sustainability by creating a space for interaction between science and practice and the sharing and co-creation of ready-to-use innovative good practices on European broiler farms. A recent [study](#) compares the measures identified and put in place in the course of the project by participating farmers with the welfare consequences and recommendations set out in the European Food Safety Authority’s [scientific opinion on broiler chickens](#). The comparative analysis shows that many good practices being implemented on farms are in line with the scientific recommendations from the EFSA: raised platforms, on-farm incubation, farmer training, and evaluation of welfare using the [Ebene](#) tool. However, some of the EFSA’s recommendations have not featured in the BroilerNet project. These include reductions in stocking densities, the provision of covered verandas and/or

access to the outside, and the use of slower-growing breeds. These measures can have major economic impacts on producers if they are not taken into account by the entire production chain, and this may explain their absence from the BroilerNet list of actions. The study's authors call for the pursuit of interdisciplinary research with on-farm applications to make it easier for producers to adopt the EFSA's recommendations for the improvement of broiler welfare.

Assessment of the economic impact of banning cages in pork production



Image from the [white paper](#) published by the [European Institute for Animal Law and Policy](#) © Stefano Belacchi, We Animals; 2011, Italy

Current European legislation only partly limits the use of cages in pig farming, with the requirement that sows should be group housed from four weeks after mating (or artificial insemination) until one week before the expected farrowing date. Before mating and during the four weeks that follow, it is permitted for sows to be housed in individual stalls in the mating area. And, at the end of gestation and during the suckling phase, it remains the general practice for sows to be confined in farrowing crates until weaning. The European Commission's current review and revision of its regulations on farm animals will make specific provision for the progressive phasing out of cages. With regard to the pig farming industry, the Commission has announced that it will publish its [proposed revision to the regulations](#) in the second quarter of 2027. Meanwhile, five Member States have already gone ahead with national legislation banning or restricting the use of

farrowing crates for sows. These are Sweden, Germany, Austria, Denmark and Finland. In its most recent [White Paper](#), which appeared in September, the European Institute for Animal Law & Policy has proposed a set of reflection points to inform the thinking of law-makers on the upcoming European proposal. It evaluates the impacts of a ban on farrowing crates on the economics of production and animal welfare. In terms of economics, the study suggests that a ban on farrowing crates can be a viable move, as the advantages linked to more rapid piglet growth could largely compensate for increased production costs, estimated to be +0.008 euros/kg. For welfare, it calculates the effects on welfare of a shift to free farrowing systems using the AQALY (Animal Quality-Adjusted Life Year) framework developed by [the authors of an article in SSRN](#) to quantify the potential welfare benefits to an animal and to calculate the benefit-cost ratio for a system. The difference in the AQALY scores obtained from the two systems (with/without farrowing crates) is converted to a monetary cost per sow-crate-day. The authors conclude that the animal welfare benefits deriving from the ban on farrowing crates would be considerable and would be significantly greater than the costs of transition. The findings of this white paper can be set against those of a different study, commissioned by professional farming organisations, which has also explored [the effects of the phasing out of farrowing crates](#). The latter study suggests that the economic consequences of a ban would be far more negative, estimating that production costs per piglet would rise by 6-10%. As the European Commission announced in its [Livestock Strategy](#), published in July this year, an independent analysis of the economic impact of the phasing out of cages is currently in preparation.

Moving towards greater protection for crustaceans?

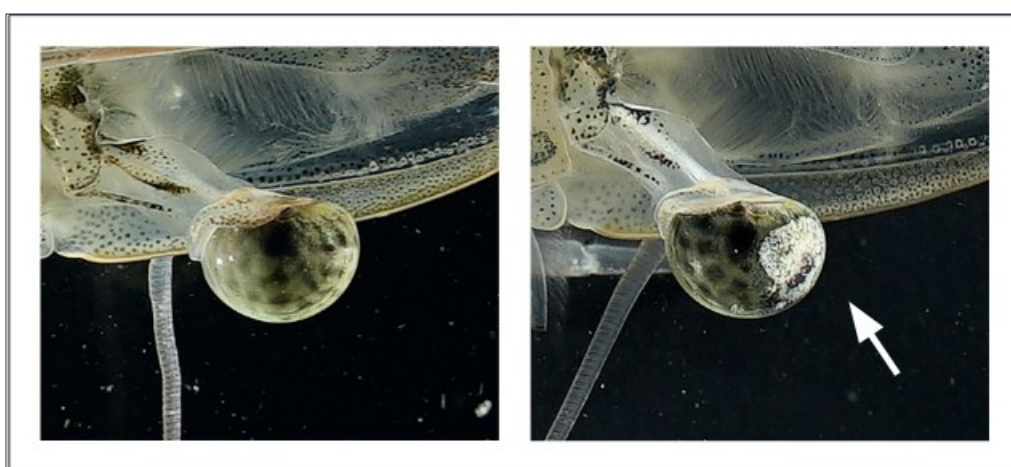


Figure 6. Eye in optimal condition (on the left, Photo: Mirko Bögner) and an extended eye whitening/cataract (right, Photo: Paolo Gamberoni).

Image from the [Manual](#) published by the [IGB](#)



For crustaceans, a growing body of evidence points to their capacity to experience pain and also to their wider sentience. [A recent synthesis](#) draws attention to the gap that has now opened up between the available science on decapod crustacean sentience and the limited protection they enjoy in law, not only within the EU but also under other international legal systems.

Researchers in Germany have brought out an illustrated manual that catalogues the morphological indicators of [stress in whitelegged shrimp](#) and describes observation methods for use by aquaculture professionals. The manual's authors invite feedback from their users so they can improve the body of available data. The guide also makes reference to emerging concerns over the welfare of this animal, and provides an overview of the current legislation. Overall, the authors observe a growing awareness relating to the welfare of shrimps and all crustaceans. In Europe, individual countries such as Switzerland, Norway and Austria have adopted animal protection measures for these species. In the UK, the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act of 2022 officially recognises that decapod crustaceans are sentient beings. Responding to consumer concerns, distributors have committed themselves to the gradual phasing-out of certain practices, such as eyestalk ablation, and to the adoption of more welfare-friendly slaughter techniques. However, in the absence of a complete scientific picture, the debate continues over these developments, particularly with regard to the sentience or non-sentience of crustaceans.

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Animal health

19/08/2026 : Motivational factors and financial incentives to mitigate tail biting in pig production in Finland

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

Authors: Väre M, Koskikallio H, Heinonen M, Tuominen-Brinkas M, Munsterhjelm C, Valros A, and Niemi JK

Preview: Tail biting affects the health and welfare of pigs, the quality of pig carcasses, and the profitability of production in both weaner and finishing pig production. There are specific quality criteria for weaned pigs, and tail damage can lead to a deduction in the purchase price of the weaner pigs as well as carcass rejections at the slaughterhouse. Although the issue is important, research has paid little attention to tail biting in weaner pig production. The aim of this study was to investigate the impact of various motivational factors and economic incentives on the managing of tail biting in Finnish pig farms and to assess the costs of tail biting occurring in weaner pig production. The data were collected by interviewing representatives of 15 farms producing finishing pigs and 10 farms producing weaner pigs during 2021-2022. The interviews covered risk factors for tail biting and the factors that most motivated producers to reduce tail biting. Additionally, by using a calculation model, the economic significance of tail biting in nurseries was assessed. The interviewed farmers were very or fairly motivated to address tail biting when they observed it in their own farms. Half of the representatives from farms producing weaner pigs found the managing measures laborious to implement. The economic incentives that motivated farmers producing weaner pigs most to address tail biting were the better price obtained for intact-tailed (undocked tails with no tail lesions) pigs and financial support for measures managing tail biting. Finishing farms were most motivated by the reduction in carcass condemnations and the increase in the price of meat. The results suggest that the desire to produce healthy, well-being pigs also motivated Finnish farmers. According to the calculation model and a hypothetical scenario, tail biting in weaner pig production can cause a loss of up to approximately 32 euros per bitten pig in Finland, taking into account This is a provisional file, not the final typeset article possible effects in the finishing phase, reduced growth, treatment of the tail-damaged pig, and various income losses and additional costs.

Animal welfare assessment and labelling

25/08/2026 : Is organic livestock farming more welfare-friendly than its conventional counterpart? - A systematic literature review in terms of animal health, welfare and management

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

Authors: Wagner, K., March, S., Haager, D., Brinkmann, J.

Preview: Organic farming is widely regarded as an animal-friendly husbandry system that benefits animal welfare. However, very little information is available on the situation in practice that can answer the question as to whether organic livestock farming is more welfare-friendly than its conventional counterpart. Therefore, the authors of this paper carried out a comprehensive systematic literature analysis using various databases.

Eighty-six peer-reviewed studies published between January 1990 and June 2023 were considered, which included 623 comparative pairs. Across all common livestock species and type of production within Europe and North America, the results provided no clear picture of whether organic farming has a positive effect on the individual welfare outcome than conventional farming. The comparative studies evaluated mostly focused on individual aspects of animal welfare (e.g. animal health) and predominantly on dairy cows.

No fundamental differences were found in animal health except for claw and leg health (in cattle and pigs). This indicates that management factors are of greater importance than the farming system itself. Organic farming showed advantages in 28% of the comparative pairs compared to conventional farming, in 56% no clear differences could be found.

The literature review showed that whilst organic farming has the potential to achieve good standards of animal welfare (e.g. regarding lameness), it may not be beneficial if accompanied by sub-optimal management (e.g. regarding pasture parasites). In order to safeguard animal welfare within the context of organic certification, a transparent, standardised and feasible animal welfare audit concept using animal-based indicators, should be implemented.

17/08/2026 : Rainbow Trout Operational Welfare Indicator (OWI) Protocol: Ongrowing, Seawater (Version 1.0)

Document type: scientific protocol published in [Center for Aquaculture Progress](#) (2026)

Author: Center for Aquaculture Progress

Preview: To understand, track, and compare fish welfare in commercial aquaculture production systems, the industry requires Operational Welfare Indicator (OWI) protocols that build on the full available scientific literature, provide transparency into the development of their indicators, and feature practical guidance on how to score fish welfare.

This protocol is the first such tool for assessing the welfare of farmed rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) in seawater systems, including a scoring system based on a comprehensive species- and life-stage-specific literature review for every indicator.

This protocol serves farm personnel conducting routine welfare monitoring and other industry professionals, including certification bodies, auditors, and buyers. It is designed to align with the welfare monitoring and assessment requirements of key certifications, such as RSPCA Assured and Aquaculture Stewardship Council. This protocol enables farm personnel to systematically monitor the welfare of their stock, identify potential issues early, and implement corrective actions. This proactive approach helps producers understand the relationship between welfare and production performance, resulting in reduced losses, improved regulatory compliance, strengthened consumer trust, and a stronger and more sustainable aquaculture industry.

Scope

Developed specifically for on-growing rainbow trout in seawater, this protocol may be applied to juveniles or other production systems with careful interpretation. While practical guidance on OWIs has been developed for other species, such as the Laksvet protocol for Atlantic salmon, and valuable documentation on rainbow trout welfare has been published by Nofima and APROMAR, existing resources lack comprehensive, standardized, and threshold-based assessment across a wide range of indicators for rainbow trout producers. This protocol addresses that gap. This protocol includes:

- 33 OWIs across three categories:
 - + 14 individual-based indicators
 - + 5 group-based indicators
 - + 14 environmental indicators
- Scoring system for each indicator, split into four tiers comprising levels 0–3
- Reference images and scoring guidance for practical field application

29/07/2026 : L'Étiquette bien-être animal s'affiche chez Naturalia

Document type: article published by [Welfarm](#)

Author: Welfarm

Preview: Naturalia, a Casino Group retail brand specializing in organic products, announces the rollout of the Animal Welfare Label on its line of broiler chickens. This initiative makes Naturalia the first organic brand in France to incorporate this labeling on its private-label products and offers consumers the opportunity to make informed choices at the store by providing clear, reliable, and robust information on animal welfare standards.

The Animal Welfare Label is based on a scientific, transparent, and robust methodology that assesses the level of welfare throughout the animals' entire lives, from birth to slaughter. This approach goes beyond existing standards—including those for organic farming—by providing information specifically focused on animal welfare that is directly accessible to consumers on store shelves.

What does the Animal Welfare Label offer in addition to the Organic Agriculture label?

While the Organic Agriculture (AB) label governs a set of sustainable agricultural practices (no GMOs, limited use of inputs, feed sourced from organic farming, access to the outdoors, etc.), as well as a high standard of animal welfare on the farm and at the slaughterhouse, the Animal Welfare Label provides a detailed, complementary perspective. In particular, it allows for:

- To assess the level of well-being of chickens from birth through slaughter, using criteria specific to parent stock (9 criteria), transport (29 criteria), and slaughter (136 criteria).
- In addition to requirements related to the animals' environment, conducting direct observations of the chickens by evaluating performance indicators (chicken behavior, litter cleanliness and crumbly texture, etc.).
- To provide a simple way to compare products, including those within the same organic category, using ratings that range from A to B.

As Sidonie Tagliante, Director of Marketing, Communications, and CSR at Naturalia, points out: "We firmly believe that transparency should be a standard, not an option. With the Animal Welfare Label, we aim to provide our customers with a simple, reliable, and robust guide that allows them to better understand the conditions of raising, transporting, and slaughtering animals, and to make choices consistent with their expectations regarding animal welfare."

Greater transparency for consumers

Welfarm is a member of the Animal Welfare Label Association, which promotes this labeling, alongside other NGOs and retailers, including Casino, the parent company of Naturalia. We welcome Naturalia's initiative and hope it will inspire other French organic retailers to follow suit. The growing number of retailers joining the Animal Welfare Label Association reflects a desire to gradually structure the market around a shared goal: to increase transparency for consumers regarding animal welfare standards on store shelves.

16/07/2026 : [Bien-être animal et transparence : pour la première fois, les consommateurs peuvent comparer tous les produits en rayon, du niveau A jusqu'au niveau E](#)

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

Author: OABA

Preview: Seven years after its launch, [the Animal Welfare Label](#) has reached another major milestone: its entire rating scale, from Level A through Level E, is now available on store shelves. Until now, only animal products meeting the highest standards were marketed with the label. Now,

for broiler chickens, consumers can also identify products rated E, which correspond to the rearing conditions least favorable to animal welfare.

Products receiving the highest ratings continue to be highlighted, while the inclusion of the entire scale provides, for the first time, a comprehensive overview of farming, transport, and slaughter practices. This development reinforces the primary purpose of the Animal Welfare Label: to provide consumers with transparent, comparable, and understandable information.

Animal welfare initiatives

14/08/2026 : In-ovo sexing gains momentum as EU adoption reaches 40%

Document type: article published in [Food & AgriBusiness](#)

Author: Sunita van Es-Sahota

Preview: The use of *in-ovo* sexing technology continues to expand rapidly across the egg industry, with an estimated 40% of the European Union's commercial layer flock now produced using the technology, according to a new market penetration report from Innovate Animal Ag.

This represents a 6 percentage point increase compared with 2025 and underscores the growing shift away from day-old male chick culling.

The report estimates that more than 281 million male embryos have been identified and removed before hatching globally since 2021, while approximately 740 million hatching eggs have been processed through in-ovo sexing systems over the past 5 years. Europe remains the leading market, with production capacity now exceeding the equivalent of 100 million female chicks annually.

Switzerland and Norway are leading the transition

Several countries are approaching full adoption. Switzerland has already reached an estimated 85-100% market penetration, while Norway has surpassed 50% and is on track to phase out male chick culling completely by 2027.

New markets emerging

Outside Europe, adoption is beginning to accelerate. The United States now has 6 commercial in-ovo sexing installations in operation, with egg producers representing more than 4% of the national layer flock committing to transition as existing flocks are replaced.

Australia and Brazil have also entered the market, signalling growing international interest in the technology.

Global outlook

Looking ahead, Innovate Animal Ag expects further growth driven by Italy's upcoming ban on male chick culling and increasing retailer and consumer demand for higher animal welfare standards. The

organisation forecasts that in-ovo sexing could account for around 51% of the EU commercial layer flock by 2028.

"In-ovo sexing has moved from a niche innovation to a scalable commercial solution," the report concludes, pointing to improving economics, expanding hatchery capacity and growing regulatory support as key drivers of adoption.

04/08/2026 : Bridging the gap: a comparative analysis of industry approaches and scientific perspectives on broiler health and welfare in Europe

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

Authors: Vonholdt-Wenker ML, Nofrarías M, Cerdà-Cuellar M, Majó N, de Jong IC, and Malchow J

Preview: For the European broiler sector, the social license to produce is under pressure. Hence, farmers need to adopt a series of innovative practices. The thematic network project BroilerNet created a network to promote the adoption of ready-to-use innovative best practices on European broiler farms. Stakeholders from 13 participating countries identified 16 sector priority challenges for animal health and animal welfare and submitted 232 good practices to address them. International experts selected five best practices per challenge, which were multilingually disseminated.

In this case study, we aimed to assess whether the BroilerNet output aligns with welfare consequences and recommendations of the recent scientific opinion on broiler welfare of the European Food and Safety Authority (EFSA). In 2023, EFSA published a report highlighting, among others, 16 welfare consequences of current production systems for broiler chickens and 76 recommendations to overcome them. We investigated convergence and divergence between the BroilerNet and EFSA results.

This comparative analysis revealed that 13 welfare consequences (81%) converged with at least one BroilerNet priority sector challenge. Therefore, industry and scientific perspectives seem to largely align when it comes to animal health and animal welfare challenges. Furthermore, 55 EFSA recommendations (71%) converged with at least one of the 78 BroilerNet best practices (i.e. 33 direct convergences and 37 indirect convergences). Nevertheless, 39% of the best practices in BroilerNet were not contemplated by EFSA.

Overall, several best practices aligned with scientific recommendations (e.g. elevated platforms, on-farm hatching, and farmer training). The biggest gaps for broiler welfare improvement relate to reducing stocking densities, providing covered verandas and/or outdoor access, and the use of slower growing genetics, as recommended by EFSA but not identified as best practices in BroilerNet. The reasons for the existing gap may include market demand and small margins that seem to leave little room for rather expensive or risky investments.

Cognition – Emotions

25/08/2026 : [Balancing the animal affective scales - Can the methodology of human affect balance be translated to other sentient species?](#)

Document type: conceptual article published in [Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews](#)

Authors: Laura E. Webb, J. Elizabeth Bolhuis, Viktor Jurkovich, Allyson F. Ipema, Matteo Chincarini, Angélique Favreau-Peigné, Björn Forkman, Caroline Clouard, Frank Tuytens, Heather Browning, Laura Menchetti, Margit Bak Jensen, Özkan Elmaz, Radka Šárová, Robert Głogowski, Sandra Düpjan, Stefania Celozzi, Walter Veit, Céline Tallet

Preview: Assessing the welfare of non-human sentient animals is a multifaceted scientific endeavour. A human psychology approach that holds promise for application to animals is affect balance, based on the idea that how one feels most of the time is determined by the balance between the separate dimensions of positive and negative affect. Affect balance has been shown to have profound relationships with mental and physical health and well-being in humans.

The aim of this conceptual article is to evaluate whether the affect balance methodology might offer a useful integrative measure of the affective/hedonic component of animal welfare and to outline key considerations for its potential application. Due to the variation in human affect balance methods, any attempt to translate them to other species requires first extracting their main underlying principles.

We extracted four underlying principles, the first three relating to estimating the frequencies of positive and negative affect over time, and the fourth relating to the integration of positive and negative affect into an affect balance score or category. We then discuss how the theory behind the affect balance methodology can be translated to other species, and the theoretical and practical considerations in the development and validation of potential assessment methods.

Altogether, we think that this approach holds great potential for animal welfare science and we encourage empirical studies into this topic.

11/08/2026 : [Exploring Viewer Perceptions of Videos Depicting Cat-Dissented “Play” and Their Potential to Contribute to Harmful Interactions](#)

Type de document : article scientifique publié dans [Anthrozoös](#)

Auteurs : Lyn Henning, J. S., Nielsen, T. D., & Hazel, S. J.

Preview: Human–cat play interactions may provide valuable opportunities for increasing cat welfare and strengthening the human–cat bond. However, these benefits only apply if both parties are assenting to the interaction; otherwise, the play risks causing stress and potential injury to either party. Online videos of human–cat dyads tagged as “play” often include visible cat discomfort, raising questions about how uploaders and viewers perceive cat dissent within play interactions.

The present study aimed to explore themes in how viewers interpret and justify human–cat play interactions despite visible signs of cat distress. Eleven publicly hosted online videos of human–cat interactions, self-identified by the uploader as “play,” in which the cat is displaying dissent behaviors, were included in the study. Video comments were analyzed inductively using reflexive thematic analysis, and video contents were observed and described.

Nine major themes emerged:

- (1) If they didn’t like it, you would know – believing “real” distress would be obvious;
- (2) Lost in translation – misconceptions about cat body language and preferences;
- (3) They just get it – assuming trust and understanding;
- (4) You’ll win them over – pushing through dissent to establish bonding;
- (5) “That’s cat love” – reframing dissent behaviors, and human tolerance of them, as expressions of love;
- (6) Satisfying the killer inside – fulfilling cat predatory needs with rough play;
- (7) ...But it’s cute – overlooking dissent because of aesthetic “cuteness”;
- (8) Just having a laugh – finding humor in cat displeasure;
- (9) “Karens take a seat” – defensive reactions to external criticism.

As play is increasingly promoted by advocates and practitioners as a tool for human–cat bonding and feline enrichment, our findings highlight a critical need for educating the public about recognizing, and more crucially, respecting cat dissent, as well as cat preferences for touch and interaction and the serious human health risks of cat bites and scratches.

[30/07/2026 : Teaming up for welfare: a cross-institute approach to identify robust indicators of emotion in pigs](#)

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

Authors: I. Reimert, G.A. Franchi, M. Bagaria, L. Canario, J. Elizabeth Bolhuis, S. Döpjan, E. Verbeek, E. Fàbrega, L.J. Pedersen, H. Telkänranta, A. Eggert, L.R. Moscovice

Preview: Evaluating emotions in livestock is challenging due to their subjective nature and the lack of robust indicators, especially for positive emotions. We developed experiments across four facilities, all designed to induce positive and negative emotional reactions in $n = 124$ female domestic pigs tested in a within-subject design.

Our goals were to test for robust, non-invasive indicators of short-term emotional responses across pigs representing different ages and breeds and kept in different husbandry conditions. We developed a common ethogram for behavioural recording and standard operating procedures for

collecting saliva samples, which were analysed in the same lab to measure short-term changes in cortisol, as an indicator of arousal, and oxytocin, as a putative indicator of valence.

We used linear and generalised linear mixed models (LMM/GLMM) to test for effects of predicted differences in valence and arousal across different experiments on behavioural and physiological responses. We also ran a multilevel principal component analysis (PCA) to assess whether several indicators could be consolidated into a smaller set of principal components representing different dimensions of emotional responses.

More established indicators varied as predicted across facilities, with increases in locomotor play in positive contexts (GLMM, $P \leq 0.001$) and increases in escape attempts in negative contexts (GLMM, $P \leq 0.001$). Pigs more often had both ears pointed forward in positive contexts (GLMM, $P \leq 0.001$) and both ears pointed backwards in negative contexts (GLMM, $P \leq 0.001$). Pigs had greater increases in cortisol in response to negatively than to positively valenced contexts (LMM, $P \leq 0.001$), and regardless of valence, pigs exposed to more novel social or physical contexts during experiments also had greater increases in cortisol (LMM, $P \leq 0.001$). Oxytocin did not vary consistently across differently valenced contexts. Pigs' PCA scores clustered according to the differently valenced contexts that they experienced and not to their different facilities. The two principal components with the highest eigenvalues had moderate loadings for a combination of more established and novel indicators related to fearful vs playful responses.

In conclusion, this cross-institute approach helped to validate the use of locomotor play and escape behaviour as robust indicators of short-term valenced responses across pig populations. When combined with other measures, short-term changes in ear posture also have promise as a valence indicator. Changes in cortisol were related to both valence and arousal. Cross-institute approaches are useful for increasing the validity of non-invasive indicators of emotion in farm animals.

10/07/2026 : The sensory world of cattle: Abilities, limitations, and perceptual challenges in human-designed environments

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

Authors: Maria Vilain Rørvang, Rebecca K. Meagher, Johanna Stenfelt, Emily K. Miller-Cushon, Sheikh Rishad Ahmmad, Maria Camila Ceballos

Preview: Cattle have been central to human societies for millennia, yet scientific understanding of how they perceive their environment remains limited. While cattle biology has been extensively studied, sensory perception has received comparatively little direct attention and is often investigated indirectly through production-oriented outcomes.

This review provides a comprehensive and critical synthesis of current knowledge of cattle sensory abilities across vision, hearing, olfaction, taste, and touch. For each modality, we have integrated anatomical, physiological, behavioural, and evolutionary perspectives to characterise perceptual capacities and limitations and to identify key knowledge gaps.

Research coverage is highly uneven with visual and auditory systems relatively well described, whereas olfactory, gustatory, and tactile perception remain poorly understood, particularly in relation to affective experience and individual variation. Across modalities, cattle perception is context-dependent and shaped by learning and prior experience. Mismatches between species-specific sensory capacities and human-designed environments may influence behavioural responses, stress, and human–animal interactions.

By synthesising the dispersed evidence and identifying priorities for future research, this review highlights the need for stronger integration between sensory biology and ethology to improve understanding of cattle behaviour and inform the future design of environments to be better aligned with bovine perception.

Conferences – seminars – training

31/08/2026 : [EFSA exchange with experts on welfare of cats and dogs](#)

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

Author: EFSA

Preview: EFSA is coordinating an expert exchange dedicated to the welfare of cats and dogs, to be held during the next meeting of the European Platform on Animal Welfare organised by the European Commission. The event will bring together leading expertise and perspectives on cat and dog welfare and will support discussion on welfare risks associated with extreme breeding practices. The event will take place on 16 October 2026, from 09:00 to 13:00. Participation will be available via web streaming only.

To receive event updates and be notified when registration opens, please complete this [form](#). EFSA may also use the contact details provided to reach stakeholders regarding possible further engagement on this topic. Further information about the event will be published on EFSA's website in due course.

As the event is organised by the European Commission, any practical questions should be addressed to the Commission once registration will be opened.

Ethics – sociology – philosophy – animal rights

19/08/2026 : Finnish farmers' perceptions of the roles of farmers, authorities and industry in farm animal welfare and of subsidy development

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

Author: Terhi Simonen-Jokinen

Preview: Farmers' perceptions of animal welfare policies are topical issues in the development of agricultural policy. Thematic analysis of twelve Finnish cattle and sheep farmers' semi-structured interviews identified their perceptions of the roles of farmers, authorities, and industries in supporting animal welfare.

The participating farmers perceived that the role of farmers' included responsibility for farm conditions and farmers' own welfare.

Industry partners were identified as important actors in animal welfare and played a role in farm business economies and quality systems.

Authorities' roles were perceived to include providing financial support through subsidies and supervising compliance with regulations. Investment subsidies were considered effective in supporting animal welfare, whereas welfare payment was often seen as having limited additional impact.

Farmers perceived the competence of both farmers and authorities as important for the successful implementation of animal welfare regulations. Steady income, reduced administrative burden, and clear rules co-created with farmers that support the goal of improving animal welfare emerged as subsidy development proposals.

The findings highlight that improving animal welfare requires a policy approach in which subsidy design, regulatory practices, and administrative processes are evaluated through animal welfare impact assessment and aligned with farmers' economic and practical realities.

Invertebrates

07/09/2026 : [Health and welfare monitoring in Whiteleg shrimp \(*Litopenaeus vannamei*\) aquaculture](#)

Document type: manual published by the [IGB](#) (Leibniz Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries)

Authors: Paolo Gamberoni, Matthew James Slater, David Bierbach, Mirko Bögner, Sven Wuertz

Preview: This IGB Manual provides an overview of the current global status of Whiteleg shrimp (*Litopenaeus vannamei*) farming. It focuses on shrimp welfare in aquaculture, with emphasis of morphological modifications under stress conditions. Morphological lesions are presented through figures, along with recommended observation procedures. Experimental results and farm observations are described to support the index interpretation. This IGB Manual especially addresses practitioners, companies and associations from the aquaculture sector to foster animal welfare aspects in shrimp farming. It can also serve as a reference resource in experimental settings or routine farm observations, particularly at small-scale, where standardised operational protocols are often less developed. Shrimp experts are invited to provide feedback and suggestions, and to submit filled morphological index forms for expansion of the dataset.

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

One Welfare

10/07/2026 : [Cattle welfare, health, and husbandry: the sustainability connection](#)

Document type: opinion piece published in [Animal Frontiers](#)

Authors: Tom Warboys, Ruairaidh Petre

Preview: Implications

- Animal welfare is an ethical condition for sustainable production.
- Welfare impacts animal health and vice versa.
- Animal health is one of the main drivers for more sustainable production.
- Widespread adoption of animal health, husbandry, and genetic improvements can increase production while decreasing negative impacts.

Population management and animal welfare

10/08/2026 : Ils sont achetés 100 euros dans les pays de l'est puis revendus plus de 2 000 euros : le trafic de chiens explose en Catalogne

Document type: article published in [L'Indépendant](#)

Author: Léna Baurance

Preview: The Mossos d'Esquadra are warning of a rise in Catalonia in the trafficking of dogs that have been imported from Eastern Europe. Selling for up to 2,000 euros, these animals often endure deplorable transport conditions, leading to illness and death. The AP-7 is a key route for this lucrative trade.

The Mossos d'Esquadra (Catalan police) are facing a surge in animal trafficking. According to the authorities, increasing numbers of dogs are being brought into Catalonia, especially highly sought-after breeds such as Chihuahuas, Dachshunds, Labradors, and Golden Retrievers. Most come from Eastern Europe, where they are bought at very low cost before being sold on at much higher prices. Dogs bought for 100 euros are resold for up to 2,000 euros. The AP-7, which connects Catalonia to the French border, is reportedly one of the main routes used by these trafficking networks. Traffickers buy animals for about 100 euros in Eastern European countries and resell them to middlemen for around 500 euros, who then sell them to their final owners for thousands of euros. But behind this highly profitable illicit trade there lies a more serious problem, involving often appalling transport conditions with no veterinary inspections. Some dogs are ill on arrival, or have serious health problems. Some even die on the journey. Toni Martín, Head of the Mossos' Regional Environmental Unit in Girona, explains that, despite the losses, the trafficking continues because it is highly profitable.

Illnesses That Emerge After Purchase

The problem is that some buyers believe they are buying a healthy dog. However, illnesses can emerge just a few days after the dog arrives in its new home. Some animals die, while others face serious health problems. According to the Mossos, for as long as this trade remains so profitable, criminal networks will continue to bring such dogs in under dangerous conditions.

During the summer holidays, many French people decide to abandon their pets. In 2025, the GRALL Association estimates that approximately 60,000 animals were abandoned in France, the equivalent of an animal abandoned every two minutes between May and August. Given this situation, it's essential for prospective owners to thoroughly research the needs of their future companions, anticipate the costs associated with caring for them, and put vacation arrangements in place,

entertaining no thoughts of abandonment as a possibility. In France, abandoning an animal is a crime punishable by a fine of 45,000 euros and up to three years in prison. Adopting an animal from a shelter is a responsible and compassionate alternative that gives an animal in need a second chance.

Regulation

08/09/2026 : [European Institute for Animal Law & Policy's Newsletter – From Cage-Free Reforms for Pigs to EU Enlargement and More](#)

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

Author: European Institute for Animal Law & Policy

Preview: This month, we are excited to present our new White Paper, which advocates for a cage-free future for pigs under EU law and provides detailed animal welfare and economic impact assessments for its proposed reforms. We also bring you recent developments in animal law across Europe and internationally, along with our recent media appearances and publications, and upcoming events and opportunities in the animal law and policy space. (...)

Our latest publication is a White Paper advocating for stronger protections for pigs under EU law through a prohibition on caged farming. “Reforming Pig Welfare in the European Union: The Case for a Cage-Free Future” aims to inform the Commission’s ongoing reform of EU animal welfare legislation by presenting the case for a ban on these confinement systems. Authored by Gabriela Kubíková, Artūrs Kaņepājs, Griffin Carpenter, and Marietheres Reinke, the White Paper assesses the potential animal welfare and economic impacts of prohibiting sow stalls and farrowing crates in pig farming and sets out policy recommendations based on these findings. (...)

[Read the White Paper](#)

[Read the Plain Language Summary](#)

02/09/2026 : [Parlement européen : Réponse à la question écrite E-002753/2026 : Concerns regarding the application of Regulation \(EU\) 2020/1054 to the non-commercial transport of rescued animals](#)

Document type: Answer to Question E-003635/2023 from the [European Commission](#)

Authors: Question: Sebastian Everding (The Left). Answer: Mr. Tzitzikostas on behalf of the European Commission

Question: Under Regulation (EU) 2020/1054, which amends Regulation (EC) No 561/2006 and Regulation (EU) No 165/2014, as from 1 July 2026, light commercial vehicles used for international transport, i.e. those weighing between 2.5 and 3.5 tonnes, will be obliged to install intelligent tachographs and comply with driving and rest times.

This weight class involves vehicles used by animal welfare organisations for the transport of adopted pets. While the rules are primarily intended for the international transport of commercial goods, animal welfare organisations warn that applying them to the non-commercial transport of rescued cats and dogs for cross-border adoptions would impose disproportionate costs and longer journey times, undermining animal welfare during transport and reducing adoption opportunities.

1. Is the Commission aware of the problems that result from the application of Regulation (EC) No 561/2006 to non-profit organisations transporting rescued animals for adoption between Member States?

2. Will the Commission consider introducing a specific exemption or an adapted legal framework for the non-commercial transport of rescued companion animals, taking into account the objectives of animal welfare during transport, including under Regulation (EC) No 1/2005?

Answer: 1. The Commission has been informed by non-profit organisations of difficulties arising from the application of Regulation (EC) No 561/2006^[1] to the transport of rescued animals for adoption between Member States.

2. At this stage, the Commission is not considering the introduction of any specific exemption or an adapted legal framework for the transport of rescued companion animals.

The extension of the tachograph and driving and rest time rules to light commercial vehicles was introduced by Regulation (EU) 2020/1054^[2] with the aim of ensuring a high level of protection for professional drivers, enhancing road safety by reducing fatigue-related risks, and promoting fair competition across the EU road transport sector.

The Commission recognises that the new rules may give rise to important operational and financial challenges for those concerned in ensuring compliance with all applicable legal obligations. Nevertheless, the protection of drivers' working conditions and well-being, as well as road safety, cannot be compromised.

In respect of Regulation (EC) 1/2005^[3], on 7 December 2023 the Commission adopted a proposal to revise EU legislation on welfare of animals during transport^[4]. Work is currently ongoing in the European Parliament and in the Council ahead of the interinstitutional negotiations.

The Commission proposal includes several improvements of provisions on protection of dogs and cats in transport in the context of an economic activity.

In addition, one of the main goals of the revision is to reduce administrative burden and to facilitate the enforcement of the requirements through more modern tools.

^[1] <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2006/561/oj/eng>.

^[2] <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2020/1054/oj/eng>.

^[3] <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2005/1/oj/eng>.

[4] COM(2023) 770 final.

02/09/2026 : Révision de la législation européenne sur le transport d'animaux : Annie Genevard est-elle réellement ministre du bien-être animal ?

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

Author: OABA

Preview: Seven animal welfare organizations have addressed the Minister of Agriculture in a letter made public today regarding the transport of live animals. QUATRE PATTES France, the OABA, CIWF France, WELFARM, the Brigitte Bardot Foundation, the 30 Millions d'Amis Foundation, and the Animal Rights, Ethics, and Science Foundation are asking Annie Genevard for clarification on the positions France is advocating as part of the ongoing revision of the European regulation on the protection of animals during transport. In fact, the minister opposes any substantial strengthening of animal protection measures in this regulation. On the most critical points of the text, France's position currently appears to boil down to defending the regulatory status quo under pressure from industry representatives, without even ensuring its long-term economic benefit.

France Opposes Several Animal Welfare Measures

For example, according to information obtained by NGOs, France is reportedly opposed at this stage to reducing transport times and to enhanced protection for vulnerable animals (such as unweaned calves, pregnant females in late gestation, and culled animals). A ban on live animal exports to third countries would also be a red line for France, even though this measure has already been adopted by the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia. These journeys—particularly those to the Mediterranean region—are, however, particularly grueling and can last several days or weeks under conditions that are disastrous for animal welfare.

The Ministry Dismisses Two Years of Dialogue

For more than two years, NGOs have engaged in dialogue with ministry officials—to no avail—despite their proposals being supported by the opinions of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Today, France—a major exporter and transit country for these shipments—is poised to lock in regulations for years to come that are out of step with current scientific knowledge and public expectations regarding animal welfare, even though pragmatic, sustainable solutions for French companies are available.

Minister Called Upon to Clarify Her Position

NGOs are calling on the minister to clarify France's position and to step up its concrete commitments to animal welfare as negotiations at the Council enter their final phase. Annie Genevard has met with industry representatives on numerous occasions; it is now time for

her to engage in dialogue with NGOs as well, in her capacity as the minister responsible for animal welfare.

[Letter to Annie Genevard](#) (.pdf)

[Full press release from the 7 NGOs](#) (.pdf)

31/08/2026 : EU authorises new animal stunning methods for slaughter

Document type: news article published by the [EURCAW Ruminants & Equines](#)

Author: Leysi Rubio Arevich

Preview: The European Commission has authorised two new animal stunning methods prior to slaughter. The EC has amended Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing, adopting Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2026/1734.

These new rules permit the use of the non-penetrative captive bolt stunning method for additional animal categories and authorise high-expansion nitrogen foam stunning, which uses nitrogen-filled foam to induce unconsciousness. The amendments update Annex I to reflect these approved methods and outline their specific technical requirements and operational conditions.

(8) Non-penetrative captive bolt is already listed in Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 for use in ruminants up to 10 kg, as simple stunning method. Based on the evidence provided in the Opinion on sheep and goats, and to ensure legal certainty, it is appropriate to amend Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 to allow its use as killing method for lambs and goat kids up to 4,5 kg of live weight and to lay down the specific requirements for the use of that method as regards piglets, lambs and kid goats.

The Regulation was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 17 July 2026. Read the full document [here](#).

31/08/2026 : Protection animale : le Gouvernement présente un plan d'action

Document type: press release published by [info.gouv.fr](#)

Author: The Government

Preview: On July 28, 2026, the French Prime Minister presented an action plan for animal welfare. This calls for the implementation of several measures introduced in the 2021 legislation to combat animal abuse, along with new initiatives aimed at strengthening animal protection and welfare.

A Plan to Strengthen Animal Protection

Presented by the Prime Minister as part of a government inter-departmental initiative, this action plan calls for the implementation of several measures introduced in the French [legislation dated November 30, 2021](#) accompanied by new initiatives to promote animal welfare.

Measures to be implemented from the 2021 Law

The government has announced a number of measures intended to complete the implementation of the 2021 legislation:

- publication of the Decree establishing penalties for the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores, which has been prohibited since 2024;
- creation of a positive list of wild species that may be kept as pets, in order to regulate the sale and ownership of non-traditional companion animals (NTCAs);
- Strengthening inspections at dog and cat fairs and shows and oversight of online sales, to combat trafficking and fraudulent practices;
- Enhancing training for professionals in the animal sector, particularly dog and cat breeders; and implementing new measures to protect animals during heat waves.

New measures for animal welfare

– For pets

Key provisions include:

- strengthening the “Animal Welfare” label to improve identification of farms and businesses committed to animal welfare;
- updating official government websites to reassure pet owners that it is legal to bury a pet at home and to clarify the conditions under which this is allowed.

– Increased support for shelters

A budget of 10 million euros will be allocated to shelters and local organizations, especially to address the [rise in animal abandonments](#) and to support sterilization campaigns.

– Other measures to protect animals

Equally, the government has announced an upcoming ban on the import of hunting trophies from endangered species.

New measures have also been announced to support the development of alternative methods for scientific research and to gradually reduce the use of animals for scientific purposes, particularly dogs.

– Tougher penalties for animal abuse

Penalties for acts of animal abuse will be increased by re-classifying such offences from fourth-degree to fifth-degree misdemeanors. Starting in 2027, a module dedicated to animal abuse will also be included in the training of legal decision-makers in the courts.

The rollout of training for “animal cruelty” advisors within the ranks of the police and gendarmerie will also be accelerated, continuing the implementation of the agreement signed in 2023 between the Ministries of Agriculture and the Interior and the French [Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals](#).

Last, the government has announced that it is exploring a mechanism by which organizations and animal shelters could verify that any individual seeking to adopt a pet is not subject to a court order banning them from keeping animals.

21/08/2026 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-002498/2026 : Bien-être animal et importations bovines issues du Mercosur

Document type: Answer to Question E-002498/2026 from the [European Commission](#)

Authors: Question: Mathilde Androuët (PFE). Answer: Mr. Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission

Question: In its Farm to Fork Strategy, the Commission recognised that animal welfare is a key aspect of a sustainable EU food system [\[1\]](#). It also maintains that the EU-Mercosur agreement upholds the EU's standards on animal health and promotes reinforced cooperation on animal welfare [\[2\]](#).

However, images recorded by the Animal Welfare Foundation between August 2025 and March 2026 in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay [\[3\]](#) show cattle intended for the EU market in particular being reared in feedlots, confined to open-air pens and subjected to artificial diets based primarily on grains and soybeans to accelerate weight gain before slaughter.

These practices appear to be directly at odds with the commitments made by the European Union. In light of the above:

- 1.Has the Commission verified this information with the Brazilian, Argentinian and Uruguayan governments?
- 2.Can it guarantee the that beef imported into the EU is not a product of these practices?

[\[1\]](#) Communication COM(2020) 381 final of May 20, 2020, titled “A ‘Farm-to-Table’ Strategy for a Fair, Healthy, and Environmentally Friendly Food System,” in which the Commission commits to revising animal welfare legislation to “ensure a higher level of animal welfare.”

[\[2\]](#) European Commission, Directorate-General for Trade and Economic Security, “Factsheet: EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement – Respecting Europe’s Health and Safety Standards,” https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/mercotur/eu-mercotur-agreement/factsheet-eu-mercotur-partnership-agreement-respecting-europes-health-and-safety-standards_en?prefLang=fr

[\[3\]](#) “Images of cattle feedlots in Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay reveal animal suffering, an NGO reports,” Contexte, May 4, 2026.

Answer: The Commission recognises that animal welfare is an important component of sustainable food systems. It also recalls that the EU - Mercosur Interim Trade Agreement (ITA) does not lower EU rules and preserves each Party’s right to regulate, including in areas linked to food safety, animal health and animal welfare.

The ITA, which has been provisionally applied between the EU and the Mercosur Signatory Parties since 1 May 2026, also provides for cooperation and dialogue on animal welfare with Mercosur partners.

Current EU legislation on the protection of animals at the time of slaughter applies to imports. However, the same principle does not currently apply to EU rules on the welfare of animals at farm. Over the last two years, welfare of animals at slaughter has been checked during audits conducted in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. Although not all audit reports are published yet, the outcomes of such checks were satisfactory.

As announced in the Livestock Strategy^[1] of 7 July 2026, the Commission intends to propose by the end of 2026 a targeted revision of animal welfare rules for laying hens and broilers, and in 2027, a similar proposal aims to address pig welfare.

These proposals aim to follow-up on the Citizens' Initiative 'End the cage age' and also aim to provide an opportunity to introduce equivalent animal welfare requirements for imported products specifically in those sectors.

At this stage, no legislative proposal on the welfare of beef cattle is planned. There is no specific EU animal welfare legislation applicable to beef cattle.

Only the general rules of Directive 98/58/EC apply^[2], which do not prohibit open-air pens or feeding practices provided health and weather protection are ensured, and nutritional needs are satisfied.

^[1] Commission Communication entitled "EU Strategy for Livestock Farming," COM (2026) 576 final.

^[2] Council Directive 98/58/EC of July 20, 1998, concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes (OJ L 221, Aug. 8, 1998, p. 23).

21/08/2026 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-002447/2026 : Compensation for additional costs resulting from new animal transport rules

Document type: Answer to Question E-003635/2023 from the [European Commission](#)

Authors: Question: Daniel Buda (EPP). Answer: Mr. Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission

Question: The modernisation of the European rules on animal welfare during transport pursues a legitimate aim, but the introduction of new requirements entails significant logistical, technological and operational adjustments for farmers and transporters. Without adequate support, these additional costs could affect scrupulous operators in particular and widen the gaps between Member States in terms of their implementation capacity.

In order for the high welfare standards to be complied with in practice, they must be accompanied by instruments that make the transition economically viable. Otherwise, there is a danger that the financial pressure will be shifted onto producers who are already vulnerable, particularly in outlying areas or in regions where logistical distances are greater. Good regulation must also be enforceable, not just ambitious.

Does the Commission intend to provide for a European financial support mechanism to help the sector adapt to the new animal transport rules so that the compliance costs do not disproportionately affect farmers and operators in logistically disadvantaged regions?

Answer: As indicated in Commission's answer to the Parliamentary Question E-004663/2025 [\[1\]](#), the impact assessment [\[2\]](#) accompanying the proposal on the protection of animals at the time of transport [\[3\]](#) distinguishes between costs borne by farmers and those borne by transporters and other sectors.

Specific costs for vehicle improvements, space allowance and weather-dependent logistical planning, are primarily borne by transporters. To mitigate the impacts, the proposal includes transition periods.

As the most important economic impacts identified relate to space allowance requirements, the Commission looks forward to discussing with the co-legislators in the context of the interinstitutional negotiations of the proposal how the final rules can best balance animal welfare improvements with their economic impacts.

There are various EU funds that are relevant, which include, among others, the Common Agricultural Policy for farmers.

Nevertheless, existing EU funding and financing instruments may support investments where relevant. In particular, support for farmers can be provided under the common agricultural policy, for investments in infrastructure and equipment facilitating compliance with the proposal's requirements.

Furthermore, in the framework of the recently published EU Livestock Strategy [\[4\]](#), the Commission will explore the possibility of a potential dedicated financial instrument for the livestock sector including for animal welfare measures.

[\[1\]](#) https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-004663-ASW_EN.html.

[\[2\]](#) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52023SC0401>.

[\[3\]](#) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/HIS/?uri=CELEX%3A52023PC0770>.

[\[4\]](#) COM/2026/576 final.

[21/08/2026 : Parlement européen : réponse écrite à la question E-002317/2026 : Révision du règlement \(CE\) n 1099/2009 et suppression progressive de l'étourdissement des porcs au CO₂](#)

Document type: Answer to Question E-002317/2026 from the [European Commission](#)

Authors: Question: Tilly Metz (Greens/EFA), Petras Auštrevičius (Renew), David Cormand (Greens/EFA), Anja Hazekamp (The Left), Manuela Ripa (EPP), Krzysztof Śmiszek (S&D), Sebastian Everding (The Left), Sigrid Friis (Renew), Ville Niinistö (Greens/EFA), Marianne Vind (S&D), Niels Fuglsang (S&D), Emma Fourreau (The Left), Sirpa Pietikäinen (EPP). Response: Mr. Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission

Question: Revision of Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 and phase-out of CO₂ stunning of pigs

Each year, over 150 million pigs in the EU are stunned with CO₂ before slaughter. The method causes pain, fear, aversion and severe respiratory distress before loss of consciousness. In opinions from 2004 and 2020, the European Food Safety Authority identified CO₂ stunning as a serious animal welfare concern, concluding that the suffering is inherent and cannot be mitigated by technical improvements. The Commission has acknowledged, including in replies to Written Questions E-003066/2025^[1] and E-000625/2026^[2], that the PigStun project had identified feasible, already authorised alternatives in Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009^[3].

No timeline has been provided for revising or phasing out CO₂ stunning. The expectation that the sector will voluntarily transition is not supported by evidence, including PigStun's finding that slaughterhouses are unlikely to abandon established systems because of cost, reliability and competitiveness concerns. Given the suffering, the available alternatives and the Commission's commitments under the farm to fork strategy to revise animal welfare legislation, the continued delay raises serious questions regarding compatibility with Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The revision should include binding, time-bound rules to phase out CO₂ stunning of pigs.

Given the above:

1. When will the Commission present the revision of Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009?
2. If no revision is planned, what are the reasons for this?

^[1] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-003066_EN.html.

^[2] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2026-000625_EN.html.

^[3] Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 of 24 September 2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing (OJ L 303, 18.11.2009, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2009/1099/oj>).

Answer: As mentioned in the reply to the written parliamentary Question E-000625/2026^[1], alternatives evaluated within the PigStun project^[2], as well as methods including lower CO₂ concentrations, are already included in the positive list in Annex I of Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009^[3] and are authorised for use in the EU without requiring regulatory changes.

As announced in the 2025 Communication on A Vision for Agriculture and Food^[4], the Commission is working on the revision of the animal welfare legislation. The Commission is focusing on the areas that are most in need of modernisation, which at this stage, do not include Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009.

^[1] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2026-000625-ASW_EN.html.

^[2] <https://eurcaw-pigs.eu/dossier/pigstun>.

^[3] ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2009/1099/oj>.

^[4] COM/2025/75 final.

14/07/2026 : Assemblée nationale : réponse écrite à la question n°13575 : Fermeture des abattoirs de proximité

Document type: response to Question No. 13575 published in the [Journal Officiel de la République Française](#)

Authors: Question: Damien Girard (Morbihan (5th district) – Ecologist and Socialist). Answer: Ministry of Agriculture, Agri-Food, and Food Sovereignty

Question: Mr. Damien Girard has alerted the Minister of Agriculture, Agri-Food, and Food Sovereignty to the risk of closure of the last local slaughterhouse in Morbihan.

The number of slaughterhouses in France has declined sharply over the past few decades, falling from about 400 in 2003 to nearly 220 today. Nearly 30% of these slaughterhouses are publicly owned and provide an essential slaughtering service, particularly for farmers involved in short supply chains. These facilities are facing increasing profitability challenges. While closures affect both public and private slaughterhouses, volumes are tending to concentrate in a limited number of large private slaughterhouses. This is leading to an economic and geographic concentration of this essential link in the supply chain, benefiting large industrial groups. Many local slaughterhouses are struggling due to competition from much larger facilities that process significantly higher volumes. Over the past two years, the pace of closures among these local slaughterhouses has accelerated, with at least one closure per month.

The closure of a local slaughterhouse has direct consequences for livestock farmers. Certain services become unavailable—such as the emergency slaughter of injured animals—and transport distances increase considerably. Farmers must travel dozens of additional kilometers for slaughter and then to retrieve the carcasses, which significantly increases their workload and costs, at a time when working conditions are already grueling and cash flow is strained. Without local slaughterhouses, some farms are thus forced to cease operations.

Local slaughterhouses, however, are an essential link in the food supply chain. They help reduce workloads, promote small-scale farming, and support short supply chains and direct sales—all of which ensure better compensation for farmers. They also allow farmers to oversee the conditions under which their animals are slaughtered. Their disappearance leads to a loss of value for local livestock operations and a shift toward long distribution channels that do not benefit local communities.

In 2023, the Ministry of Agriculture launched an assessment to develop a “slaughterhouse strategy” aimed at addressing the sector’s crisis. However, this initiative did not result in any concrete action and appears to have been abandoned. In Morbihan, the Vannes slaughterhouse—the department’s last multi-species facility—may close soon. Farmers risk being unable to have their animals slaughtered and, as a result, to continue their operations. As a result, the entire livestock industry in the region is under threat.

Faced with this situation, livestock farmers have organized to create a cooperative society of collective interest, the SCIC Abattoir des Éleveurs du Morbihan (SCIC ADEM), with the goal of maintaining a sustainable local slaughterhouse. The prefect of Morbihan had opposed the creation

of a new slaughterhouse, fearing it would compete with the existing private slaughterhouse in Vannes. It was then agreed that this slaughterhouse could be taken over by SCIC ADEM, a project financially supported by the Golfe du Morbihan–Vannes Agglomeration local authority. Studies on the buildings, land, and equipment were conducted in 2024.

However, in September 2025, the owners of the Vannes slaughterhouse indicated that they did not wish to sell the facility at the proposed price and announced its closure, despite efforts at dialogue initiated by the prefecture, the local authority, and the SCIC. He therefore asks her what measures she intends to implement to save the last slaughterhouse in Morbihan and, more broadly, to support and ensure the long-term viability of local slaughterhouses throughout the region.

Answer: The decline in France’s livestock population, particularly its cattle herd, has had a significant impact on the operations of slaughterhouses in recent years; some of these facilities are facing the challenge of modernizing to meet animal welfare and environmental standards. At the same time, slaughterhouse activity fluctuates significantly depending on the time of year (religious holidays, seasons, the return from the mountain pastures), requiring economic and technical flexibility in operations. These factors highlight the challenges related to streamlining and logistical efficiency in France’s slaughter sector, requiring adjustments to optimize value chains while ensuring animal welfare the economic viability of livestock production sectors.

Another key challenge is to preserve this production and processing capacity in France, in line with changing consumption patterns and the goal of regaining food sovereignty. The “Slaughterhouses for Meat Animals” strategy, launched on July 6, 2023, by the Ministry of Agriculture, builds on the slaughterhouse plan launched in 2021, and in particular on the slaughterhouse measure included in the Recovery Plan.

This strategy aims to preserve a network of slaughter facilities that meet the needs of the livestock sectors, using a regionalized approach. This strategy, organized into four pillars, constitutes one component of the government’s plan to regain sovereignty over the livestock sector. At the same time, the General Council for Food, Agriculture, and Rural Areas has been tasked with assessing the consequences of the emergence of slaughterhouses managed by livestock producers.

[10/07/2026: Memorandum for animal welfare to the Irish presidency 2026](#)

Document type: position paper by [Eurogroup for Animals](#)

Author: Eurogroup for Animals

Preview: Ireland’s Presidency of the Council of the European Union (1 July – 31 December 2026) presents an important opportunity to advance an ambitious and credible EU animal welfare agenda. Ireland has embedded a One Health, One Welfare approach across key policy areas, recognising the links between human wellbeing, animal welfare and environmental sustainability. The official Irish Presidency Programme also identifies animal welfare as a central consideration in discussions on the future of the livestock sector, emphasising that policy should be grounded in scientific and technical

evidence. This creates an important opportunity to advance evidence-based animal welfare reforms, including the implementation of scientific recommendations, improved animal transport standards, and support for higher welfare animal farming systems through appropriate EU policy and investment mechanisms. At the same time, placing Ireland in a strong position to lead a pragmatic but ambitious reform agenda at EU level.

As a major livestock-producing Member State, Ireland has consistently emphasised food security, farmer viability, competitiveness and livestock sector resilience. The country is well placed to demonstrate that ambitious welfare reforms can coexist with resilient and competitive farming systems. [...]

Eurogroup for Animals calls on Ireland to focus on the issues listed in this memorandum during its Presidency:

1. Ensuring a strong legislative basis for the EU On-Farm animal welfare revision
2. Financing the transition: aligning animal welfare with CAP and the MFF
3. Advancing the revision of the live transport regulation
4. Positioning animal welfare within food security and competitiveness
5. Ensuring consistency of welfare rules for dogs and cats
6. Equine identification and traceability
7. Championing animal-free innovation and ensuring policy coherence
8. Supporting discussions on the fur farming ban
9. Ensure policy coherence and long-term investment viability of animal welfare implementation in Ukraine
10. Progressing towards an EU Positive List for pets

12/06/2026 : France CT-2025-0121 - Food Audits and Analysis : Final report of an audit of France carried out from 13 to 21 november 2025 in order to evaluate animal welfare controls during transport by livestock vessel to non-EU countries

Document type: audit report published by the [European Commission](#)

Author: the European Commission

Preview: This report describes the outcome of an audit of France, carried out remotely on 13 November and on the spot from 19 to 21 November 2025 as part of the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety work programme. The objective of the audit was to evaluate the suitability and effectiveness of the measures in place to prevent injury or undue suffering to animals (cattle, sheep and goats) during transport by livestock vessel to non-EU countries. France had a similar audit in 2020, which found that the controls on approvals for vessels and pre-loading were inadequate to minimise the animal welfare risks. The report included five recommendations which were accepted by the French authorities. Therefore, this audit focused mainly on the follow-up of those

recommendations and France's implementation of new legal requirements laid down in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/372 and Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/842. The audit found that the French authorities carry out the controls at port effectively to minimise the risk of injury or undue suffering to animals during transport by livestock vessel to non-EU countries. However, the controls are done in a manner deviating from EU legal requirements. In particular, the team of inspectors carrying out approval and pre-loading inspections does not include the required official veterinarian and maritime expert. In addition, there is no provision for an official veterinarian to carry out official controls on board the vessel during the first voyage following approval. In 2025 all voyages from France included the presence of a stockman to monitor the welfare of the animals on board. These observers report their findings from the voyage to exporters and importers. This scheme is considered good practice. The report contains three recommendations to the competent authorities to address the shortcomings identified.

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

Transport, slaughter, pick-up

07/08/2026 : Systematic mapping review of cattle welfare research during road transportation (2015–2025)

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

Authors: Lily Edwards-Callaway, Davida Rimm-Kaufman, Huey Yi Loh

Preview: This systematic mapping review aimed to characterize research trends, aggregate existing evidence, and highlight knowledge gaps in studies evaluating the impact of road transportation-related factors on cattle welfare outcomes. Four databases (Agricola, CAB Abstracts, Medline, Web of Science) were searched, and 125 peer-reviewed studies were included in the final analysis after a rigorous screening process. Data were extracted and synthesized using systematic review software and visualized using evidence gap maps. The review revealed studies were conducted across all regions of the globe, although Africa and Oceania had minimal representation ($n=8$, 6.4% and $n=6$, 4.8%, respectively). Transport duration or distance was the most studied transportation factor across the literature, included in 46.4% ($n=58$) of the studies. Other factors commonly associated with transport stress, such as the external environment during transportation and the trailer stocking density, were minimally represented in the data ($n=15$, 12.0% and $n=16$, 12.8%, respectively). Studies included a wide range of cattle types, including a variety of stages of production (calf vs adult), sex classes (steer vs bull vs cow), and breed types (dairy vs beef). Research included multiple types of outcomes with physiological parameters measured in over half of the studies ($n=70$, 56.0%). The characterization of transportation research across regions highlights the global differences in cattle production systems, infrastructure, and regulatory frameworks. This systematic map provides

a valuable resource for researchers and stakeholders, identifying key areas for future research, and contributing to efforts to identify best management practices for transportation to improve cattle welfare.

04/08/2026 : Brittany Ferries ends live animal transport following NGO pressure

Document type: article published by [Eurogroup for Animals](#)

Authors: Eurogroup for Animals

Preview: The announcement follows more than a year of sustained international campaigning by Compassion in World Farming, Ethical Farming Ireland, WELFARM, FOUR PAWS, L214, Eyes on Animals, Eurogroup for Animals, Southampton Animal Action and Dorset Animal Action.

Brittany Ferries was at the centre of controversy after in March of 2025, it resumed the transportation of live farmed animals from Ireland to France, reversing a policy of 30 years. On these journeys, calves are kept inside trucks for an 18-hour ferry crossing, exposed to prolonged hunger, distress and lifetime health consequences. Following the crossing, some were transported onwards to Netherlands, Spain and Poland, with journeys lasting up to 50 hours.

The transport of unweaned calves is in direct breach of the EU Transport Regulation, noted by a European Commission audit. Since its decision to resume transport, animal protection organisations coordinated campaigns, collected over 100,000 signatures from citizens and held regular demonstrations in Ireland, France and the UK. The NGO coalition also met with the company several times asking for an end to the practice, until the company finally listened.

In a survey released in January, 82% of EU citizens expressed concern about the transport of very young and unweaned animals, with only 22% convinced that current protections were adequate.

This news is a landmark victory for animals that shows the power of mobilising NGOs and citizens, while it sends a clear message to EU policy-makers who are negotiating the revision of the EU's 20-year-old animal transport legislation.

Irish Ferries is now the only operator continuing the trade from Ireland to France, and animal protection organisations call on the company to urgently follow suit.

Animal protection organisations urge the EU to prohibit the transport of unweaned animals over long distances, introduce strict journey-time limits and replace the export of live animals for slaughter and fattening with a trade in meat and carcasses.

Over 60,000 citizens have already signed an open letter asking policy-makers to ensure that a revised EU legislation adequately protects animals during transport.

22/07/2026 : Quality of in-vehicle temperature data collected by competent authorities as part of inspection of animal welfare during long-distance transport of pigs: a Danish case study

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

Authors: Herskin MS, Toft-Petersen E, Krogh MA

Preview: This paper focuses on temperature data collected by public authorities as part of animal welfare inspections of long-distance transport of pigs in the EU and evaluates the quality of these data in terms of monitoring animal welfare. It is a legal requirement that transporters collect temperature data and that temperature recordings are made available to the public authority upon request. Using the extensive transport of weaner pigs from Denmark to other EU member states as a case, the aim of this paper was to map and review the quality of records collected in this way by public authorities for the purpose of informing about animal welfare during transport. Our analysis involved a spot sample of data containing 180 returned logs representing 124 journeys from selected weeks in 2023. Data analysis revealed a highly heterogeneous material constituting text files in multiple designs. Variables considered critical to understanding the content of the file and interpreting the consequences in terms of animal welfare were identified. For the vast majority of the returned logs, only a limited number of these variables were present. The diversity was evident in terms of, for example, the number of sensors providing the data per vehicle (one to six sensors), highly heterogeneous sampling intervals, lack of information on outdoor temperatures, and lack of multiple data types. Factors such as lack of knowledge about sensor placement (horizontal and vertical), lack of knowledge about the behavior of the pigs during data collection, and missing data are discussed as potential limitations for the quality of returned temperature logs in order to monitor animal welfare. In conclusion, the heterogeneity of the material and the lack of knowledge about sensor placement and pig behavior during data collection constitute significant limitations for the interpretation of the returned temperature logs in terms of animal welfare. In parallel with a future development of standardized digital solutions creating a more efficient, transparent, and enforceable system, further validation studies are needed to identify minimum requirements for how temperature data and associated metadata should be systematically collected in order to be able to assess animal welfare during long-distance transport of pigs.