Better Training for Safer Food
BTSF

Workshop on EU Legislation for Animal Welfare

EU Legislation on Animal Welfare in the Farm

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Animal welfare standards in EU: an evolutive story

A first general legislation (umbrella directive 98/58/EC) on animal welfare and 4 specific legislation for farm animal raised in intensive systems (laying hens, pigs, calves, chicken bred for meat (broiler chickens)) regarding animal welfare standards based on evolving scientific knowledge, expertise and practical experience.
I. The Umbrella directive

Council Directive 98/58/EC on the protection of animals kept for farming purposes: general welfare framework directive which sets down minimum standards for the protection of animals of all species kept for the production of food, wool, skin or fur or for other farming purposes, including fish, reptiles or amphibians =>

transposes into EU law the European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes (which opened for signature in 1976)
Based on the **five freedoms** as adopted by the Farm Animal Welfare Council:

- Freedom from hunger and thirst
- Freedom from discomfort - an appropriate environment,
- Freedom from pain, injury and disease - prevention or rapid treatment,
- Freedom to express normal behaviour - adequate space and facilities, company of the animal's own kind,
- Freedom from fear and distress - conditions and treatment which avoid mental sufferings.
Responsibility is placed on owners and keepers of animals to ensure the welfare of animals under their care and prevent unnecessary pain, suffering or injury.

An Annex to the Directive requires animals to be cared for by sufficient numbers of appropriately trained workers.

About breeding methods, it specifies that “natural or artificial breeding or breeding procedures which cause or are likely to cause suffering or injury to any of the animals concerned must not be practiced”.

Health and Consumers
It also lays down other general principles, such as regular inspection, rapid treatment for sick animals, recording of veterinary treatment and mortality, general provisions with regard to livestock buildings, outdoor shelter, feed and water.
II. Specific directives: 1. *LAYING HENS*


three types of rearing systems for laying hens:

- **non enriched cage systems** where hens have at least 550 cm² of cage area per hen.

  system prohibited since 1st January 2012
enriched cages: this must provide
-a minimum height of 45 cm
-at least 750 square cm floor space per hen
-It must also be equipped with
  - a nest
  - litter so that pecking and scratching are possible,
  - at least 15 cm of perch space per hen and a claw shortening device
non-cage systems (barn/ free range) with nests (at least one for 7 hens), adequate perches and where the stocking density does not exceed 9 laying hens per m² usable area.
Report of the
Scientific Veterinary Committee,
Animal Welfare Section
on the
Welfare of laying Hens

(Brussels, 30 October 1996)
II. Specific directives: 2. *PIGS*

This legislation lays down minimum standards for the protection of pigs and aims in particular to:

- **Ban the use of individual stalls** for pregnant sows and gilts during a period starting from 4 weeks after service to 1 week before the expected time of farrowing and the use of tethers, (fully into force by 1 January 2013)
- Improve the quality of the *flooring surfaces* (Minimum unobstructed floor space)
- Increase the living space available for sows and gilts,
EU Legislation applicable to Animal Welfare in the Farm

- Allow the sows and gilts to have permanent access to materials for rooting,
- Introduce higher level of training and competence on welfare issues for the stockmen and the personnel in charge of the animals,
- Request new scientific advice in relation to certain issues of pig farming.
Supplementary improvements have been achieved for all categories of pigs concerning the following issues:

- Light requirements and maximum noise levels: 40 lux for a minimum period of eight hours per day and 85 dB (max continuous noise levels)
- Permanent access to materials for rooting and playing,
- Permanent access to fresh water,
- Additional restrictive conditions to carry out mutilations on pigs,
- Minimum weaning age of four weeks.
The two Directives 2001/88/EC and 2001/93/EC were initially proposed by the Commission on the basis of the Scientific Committee's report "The Welfare of Intensively Kept Pigs" Report of the Scientific Veterinary Committee Adopted 30 September 1997
EFSA scientific opinions on the welfare aspects of pig farming:

- Scientific Opinion on the welfare aspects of the castration of piglets
- Scientific Opinion on the welfare of weaners and rearing pigs: effects of different space allowances and floor types
- Scientific Opinion on animal health and welfare in fattening pigs in relation to housing and husbandry
- Scientific Opinion on the animal health and welfare aspects of different housing and husbandry systems for adult breeding boars, pregnant, farrowing sows and unweaned piglets
• Scientific Opinion on the risks associated with tail biting in pigs and possible means to reduce the need for tail docking considering the different housing and husbandry systems
• Scientific Opinion on Food safety aspects of different pig housing and husbandry systems
ALCASDE Study - Final report

The European Commission launched a Call for tender concerning a "Study on the improved methods for animal-friendly production, in particular on alternatives to the castration of pigs and on alternatives to the dehorning of cattle" (SANCO/2008/D5/018) in 2008. Please find here the final report of the study:

Deliverables

Further initiatives on the welfare of pigs are foreseen in the framework of the action plan (2009).

Q-PorkChains - EU funded project of the EU 6th Framework Program
II. Specific directives: 3. CALVES

*Council Directive 91/629 EC*


**Housing:**

- No individual pens after the age of eight weeks (01.01.2007)
- Minimum dimensions for calves kept in group.
- Perforated walls for individual pens and minimum size
Management
- not permanently in the darkness
- not to be tethered (except under very specific circumstances) and not to be muzzled
- calves must be fed according to their physiological needs. In particular their food must contain sufficient iron (Hb 4.5 mmol/L)
- minimum daily ration of fibrous food shall be provided for each calf over two weeks old.
**Basis:**

- Scientific Veterinary Committee (Animal Welfare Section) report (9 November 1995)

- Scientific Opinion on « The risks of poor welfare in intensive calf farming systems »

II. Specific directives: 4. Chickens bred for meat (broiler chickens)


It does not apply to flocks with less than 500 birds, to those birds reared as extensive indoor (barn reared chickens reared at stocking densities less than 25kg/m² and slaughtered at 56 days of age or later), free range or organic, or to breeding stocks limits on stocking density of 33 to 39kg/m², depending on the conditions in which broilers are kept
Housing
adequate access to a litter tray, a drinking channel and food adequate lighting and ventilation system
**Staff training**
Farmers must follow training courses on the following subjects:
- the characteristics of holdings and stocking density;
- animal physiology;
- handling chickens and administering emergency care;
- preventive biosecurity.
High densities holdings

Producers who seek to stock up to a maximum of 39 kg/m² will have to comply with an additional set of standards.

(owners of high-density holdings must supply the competent authorities with specific documentation containing technical details relating to the holding and its equipment)

holdings must be equipped with ventilation, heating and cooling systems to maintain the appropriate temperature, humidity and CO2 and NH3 concentrations

There is also a system whereby this upper limit can be increased by 3 kg, to a maximum of 42kg/m², providing the mortality rate is below a given threshold and if there have been no infringements of the Directive for 2 years
The Commission proposal, already adopted on 30 May 2005, was based on a scientific opinion of the Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare (SCAHAW) and extensive consultations with stakeholders and Member State experts.
Thank you for your attention