



# Fitness check and revision of the EU animal welfare legislation

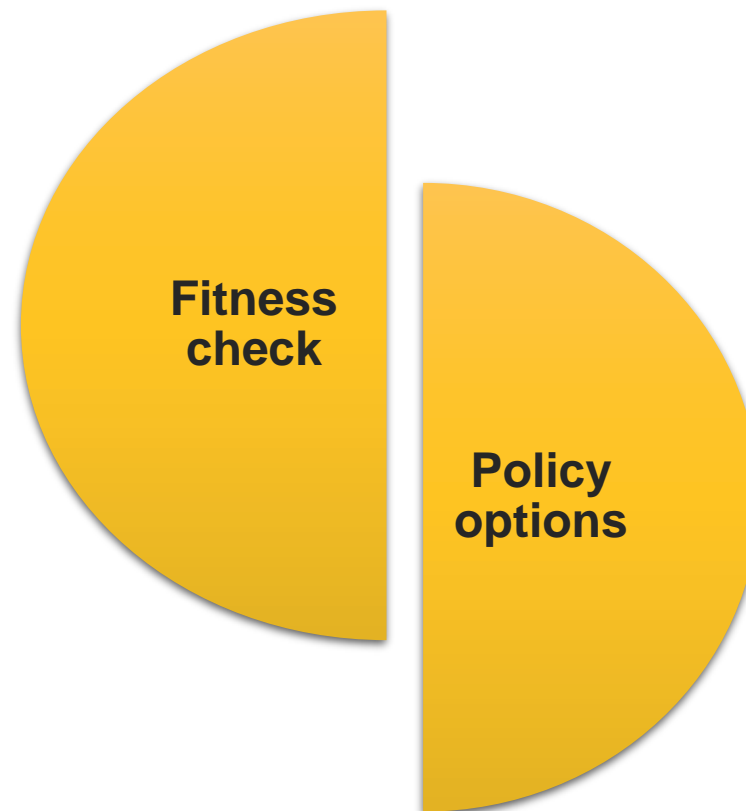
## State of play

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DG SANTE

*ANIMAL HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE, 12 October 2021*

# Farm to Fork Strategy – commitments

*“The Commission will **revise the animal welfare legislation**, including on animal **transport** and the **slaughter** of animals, to align it with the latest scientific evidence, broaden its scope, make it easier to enforce and ultimately ensure a higher level of animal welfare. (...) The Commission will also **consider options for animal welfare labelling** to better transmit value through the food chain.”*



# 20 May 2020: Fitness Check launched

*“After almost half a century since the EU’s first animal welfare legislation (1974), the suffering of EU farmed animals is greater than ever. Repeated investigations over decades show long-standing breaches of key provisions of even the minimal legal standards.”*

*“Animal welfare legislation should be developed to consider recent scientific knowledge, technical development and practical problems in the existing legislation in order to improve animal welfare.”*

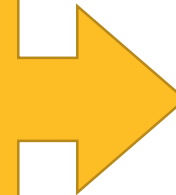
## Roadmap published for public feedback (20 May – 29 July 2020):

- Around 170 submissions from a mix of industry representatives, trade unions, NGO’s and citizens.
- The scope of the fitness check generally accepted; animal transport most prominent.
- Calls for more focus on fish welfare, cattle, fur animals, equine, invertebrates.

*“General legislation on farm animal welfare at EU level 98/58 is obsolete. In addition, there is a need to harmonize the enforcement of existing EU-legislation as it is open to different interpretations, e.g. the painful and forbidden routine of tail docking of pigs in many EU countries.”*

# Fitness Check – example of sources used

<u>DESK STUDY</u>	<u>PUBLICATION &amp; DATE</u>
Evaluation of the EU Policy on Animal Welfare and Possible Policy Options for the Future	DG SANCO (2010)
Impact assessment of the EU Animal Welfare Strategy	DG SANTE (2012)
Animal welfare in the European Union	European Parliament (2017)
Special Report on Animal Welfare	EU Court of Auditors (2018)
Evaluation of the EU Animal Welfare Strategy	DG SANTE (2021)
Animal welfare on the farm level	European Parliament (2021)
“No animal left behind”	Eurogroup for Animals (2021)



Field Study:  
Exploratory interviews in 2021 with professional organisations along the agri-food chain (farm to fork) + animal welfare NGO

**More quantitative data welcome!!!**

# 22 June 2021: Fitness check preliminary findings

## State of Play

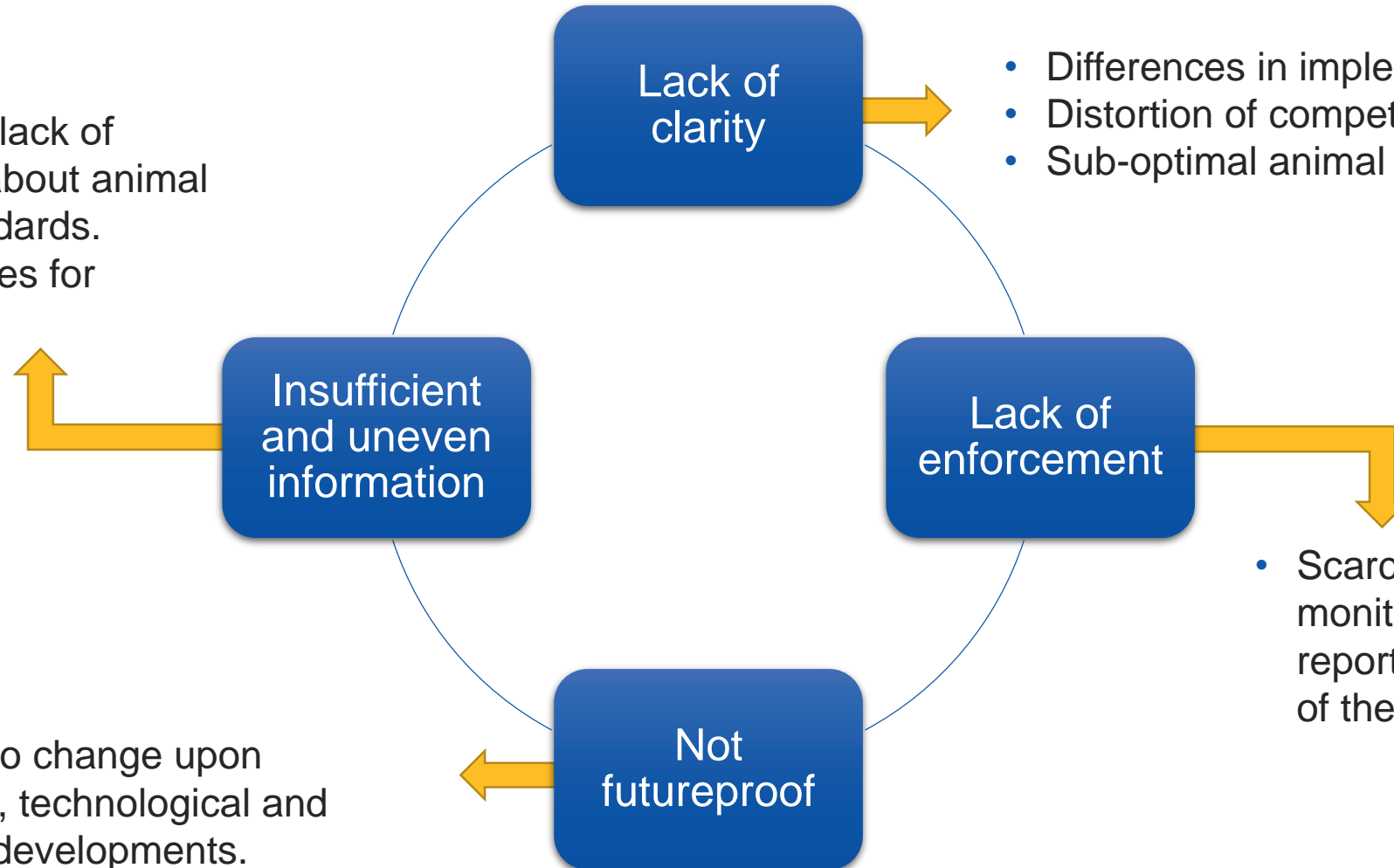
- + Improved animal welfare in Europe
- **Shortcomings of the current legislation**
- + Contributed to the proper functioning of the internal market
- **Uneven level playing field**

## Future Needs

- \* More enforceable rules
- \* Address the legislative gaps
- \* More synergies with other policies
- \* Update the rules in light of new scientific evidence and technological developments

# Fitness Check – General shortcomings found

- Consumers' lack of awareness about animal welfare standards.
- Low incentives for producers.



- Differences in implementation across the EU.
- Distortion of competition.
- Sub-optimal animal welfare protection.

- Scarcity of tools to properly monitor, measure, and report the result and impacts of the legislation.

- Subject to change upon scientific, technological and societal developments.

# Fitness Check – Additional shortcomings

## Farm level

- The use of Directives has contributed to a **differing level of implementation of animal legislation and thereby differences in animal welfare** between the Member States in some cases.
- These variations in animal welfare standards have led to **competitive distortions** in the internal market.

## Transport

- The current system is **ineffective for enforcement** due to its characteristics (paper based and declarative).
- **Lack of coordination on inspections** between Member States.
- **Uneven implementation** of remedial action following non-compliance.
- **Lack of enforcement** of existing rules towards EU operators concerning the leg of the **journey in third countries**.

## Slaughter

- Some requirements are **not species-specific enough**, e.g. as regards farmed fish.
- Certain requirements are **disproportionate** to the objectives they pursue and perceived as **burdensome** by operators, especially for small slaughterhouses.

# 6 July 2021: Approaches to future policy options

- **Inception Impact Assessment**  
([https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12950-Animal-welfare-revision-of-EU-legislation\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12950-Animal-welfare-revision-of-EU-legislation_en))
- For example, to possibly:
  - prohibit the export of certain categories of live animals to non-EU countries;
  - require a further use of animal welfare indicators and thresholds for action;
  - prohibit water bath stunning for poultry and CO<sup>2</sup> at high concentration as stunning methods for pigs.

## Follow-up:

On-line public consultation

Impact Assessment studies

Stakeholder conference



# Inception Impact Assessment - Feedback

*"A sufficient transitional period must be secured for changes in production methods and investments to guarantee the financial viability of recent investments, but also to give farmers time to plan for their future."*

*"Future legislation should also cover other animals than farm animals, especially dogs and cats, which are kept or traded in the context of an economic activity."*

Published for public feedback (6 July - 24 August 2021):

- Almost 1 000 submissions.
- Policy options generally well received, but also some critical voices raised, e.g. against the proposed phasing out of cages and the phasing out of tail-docking and beak trimming.
- Calls on the Commission to do more, e.g. as regards the killing of one-day old male chicks.

*"Journey times must be calculated within an absolute maximum journey time frame of eight hours for adult livestock (including loading and unloading) and 4 hours for poultry."*

# Planning of main steps ahead

**On-line Public Consultation**  
(fitness check + policy options)  
15 October 2021 (14 weeks)

**Fitness Check  
concluded**  
July 2022

**Legislative  
proposal**  
End of 2023



**Stakeholders' Conference**  
(fitness check + policy options)  
9 December 2021

**Impact Assessment  
concluded**  
Early 2023

# Comments and reactions?

Do you have  
anything to add to  
complement (or  
challenge)  
the preliminary  
Fitness Check  
findings, and/or  
the future policy  
options?

Written contributions are welcome and may be sent by **26 October 2021** to:

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