

14th meeting of the EU Platform for AW

Brussels, 07 December 2023



Recent and new activities of EFSA on Animal Welfare

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Biological Hazards, Animal Health and Welfare (BIOHAW) Unit

Outline

1. **EFSA 2023 Scientific Report:** Scientific and technical assistance on welfare aspects related to housing and health of **cats and dogs in commercial breeding establishments**

2. New **EC mandates 2023 – 2025**, on the welfare on farm:
 - **Beef cattle**
 - **Turkeys**
 - **Fur animals**





Scientific Report on welfare aspects related to housing and health of cats and dogs in commercial breeding establishments

Denise Candiani, Julian Drewe, Bjorn Forkman, Mette S Herskin, Ann Van Soom, Gizella Aboagye, Sean Ashe, Maria Mountricha, Yves Van der Stede and Chiara Fabris



EC request: May 2023

Deadline: July 2023

Publication: Sept 2023



<https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.2903/j.efsa.2023.8213>

Article 31 mandate: Scientific and technical assistance

Voluntary Initiative Group – EU Platform for AW

Documents:

1. Guidelines for responsible breeding of cats
2. Guidelines for responsible breeding of dogs



EFSA to evaluate some recommendations

Areas of recommendations

Housing
Health
Painful procedures

Mandate question:

- Is there scientific evidence to support the measures for protection of cats and dogs in commercial breeding related to the housing, health considerations and painful procedures?



Specific questions - housing

TYPE OF HOUSING



- Should accommodating of cats and dogs permanently in tiered boxes and crates be avoided for welfare of these animals?

ACCESS TO OUTDOOR



- Do dogs have the need to exercise and socialise outdoors on daily basis?

LIGHT



- Is access to natural daylight important to ensure welfare of cats and dogs?
 - Is there scientific evidence in literature to suggest a minimum intensity of 50 lux during at least 16 hours per day?
 - Is setting parameters for artificial lighting (illuminance (lux), spectrum, time schedule) where needed, a key element to ensure the welfare of these animals?



Specific questions - housing

THERMAL STRESS

- Is there scientific evidence in literature to suggest the following thermal comfort zone to prevent negative welfare consequences linked to temperature?
 - i. adults dogs: between 10-26°C
 - ii. adults cats between: 15-26°C.
 - iii. whelping areas between 22 and 28°C and this during the first 10 days of pups' lives
 - iv. kittening areas between 22 and 28°C and this during the first 21 days of kittens' lives.
- Are there other considerations in that regard in relation to certain breeds or types of cats and dogs?
- Is setting thermal comfort zone for indoor accommodation of cats and dogs according to specifics of every category of animals relevant for welfare of these animals?



Specific questions – health and painful procedures



BREEDING AGE

- a. Should breeding of bitches and queens before they reach skeletal and sexual maturity be avoided?
- b. Is there scientific evidence in literature to suggest a **minimum breeding** age of 18 months for bitches and 12 months for queens?
- c. Can controlling the **frequency of pregnancies** have beneficial impact on health welfare of bitches and queens by preventing physical exhaustion?
- d. Is there scientific evidence in literature to suggest a minimum of 12 months between two whelpings or kittenings?
- e. Is the mature age a relevant element of welfare in older bitches and queens?

SURGICAL INTERVENTIONS

- Do surgical interventions, such as ear cropping, tail docking, partial or complete digit amputation, and resection of vocal cords or folds, have detrimental effect on welfare of cats and dogs?



HOUSING RELATED RECCOMENDATIONS

Types of housing



Crates

Cages

Boxes

Outdoor access



Socialize - Exercise

Temperature

15-26°C



High variation across breeds and types



HEALTH RELATED RECCOMENDATIONS

Health - Reproduction



Skeletal maturity



> 8 years old

2nd oestrus

> 6 years old

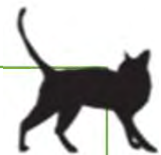
Painful surgical intervention

Tail docking

Debarking

Ear cropping

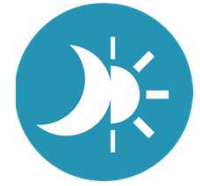
Declawing



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH/ASSESSMENT



Need for daily outdoor access



Access to daylight
Define optimal dark/light duration



Define optimal temperature



Identify ABMs for thermal stress



Minimum age
Kittenings
Whelpings





EC MANDATES 2023 – 2025 ON THE WELFARE ON FARM OF BEEF CATTLE, TURKEYS AND FUR

EFSA approach to the mandates on beef cattle, turkeys and fur

EC Mandate requests to EFSA

Article 31 in accordance to Regulation (EC) 178/2002 – **Technical Report**

Article 29 in accordance to Regulation (EC) 178/2002 – **Scientific Opinion**

Methodological guidance for the development of animal welfare mandates in the context of the Farm to Fork Strategy

[EFSA AHAW Panel, 2022](#)

1.2.2002

EN

Official Journal of the European Communities

L 31/1

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(Acts whose publication is obligatory)

REGULATION (EC) No 178/2002 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL
of 28 January 2002

laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety

SECTION 3

Article 31

OPERATION

Scientific and technical assistance

Article 29

Scientific opinions

1. The Authority shall issue a scientific opinion:

1. The Authority may be requested by the Commission to provide scientific or technical assistance in any field within its mission. The tasks of providing scientific and technical assistance shall consist of scientific or technical work involving the application of well-established scientific or technical principles which does not require scientific evaluation by the Scientific Committee or a Scientific Panel. Such tasks may include in particular assistance to the Commission for the establishment or evaluation of technical criteria and also assistance to the Commission in the development of technical guidelines.



Involvement of stakeholders from an early stage



Engagement strategy for AW mandates

1. Expression of interest + public meeting

- Set up a pool of SH for regular engagement.
- Present the mandate; discuss its opportunities and challenges.
- Listen to the views of SH as from the start.
- Identify individual contributors to be invited to ad-hoc technical hearings of the EFSA working group.

After mandate acceptance

After the public meeting

3. Ad-hoc technical hearings

SH who have submitted relevant data or information may be invited as hearing experts in the meetings of the EFSA working group.

Throughout the mandate

Before adoption (if needed)

After publication

5. Public webinar

- Present the EFSA opinion.
- Foster the understanding of EFSA's conclusions/recommendations.
- Close the feedback loop with SH by explaining how their input was considered/taken on board in formulating EFSA's opinion.

2. Call for evidence

Shortly after the public meeting, EFSA will hold a structured collection of the data/information at SH's hand to support risk assessment. SH input will be made public.

4. Targeted consultation

EFSA may require additional input on specific parts of the draft opinion. The consultation would target the pool of SH involved in the previous steps. SH input will be made public.



Consultation of EFSA Networks (AW and scientific NCPs)

Throughout the mandate & with specific exercises





NEW FARM TO FORK EC MANDATES 2023-2025

Welfare of beef cattle on farm

EFSA Staff: Sean Ashe, Marika Vitali, Martina B. Zanna

Chair: Christoph Winckler

Welfare of turkeys on farm

EFSA Staff: Cristina Rojo Gimeno, Chiara Fabris, Oana M. Balmos

Chair: Antonio Velarde



Background



EU Legal background



There is currently no specific EU animal protection legislation covering these animal species



Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes applies



Recommendations from the Council of Europe concerning turkeys that is incorporated into the EU animal welfare acquis by Council Decision 78/923/EEC

Previous EFSA Scientific outputs



EFSA 2012 SO on the welfare of beef cattle on farm



No previous EFSA SOs on the welfare of turkeys on farm



Mandate on the welfare of beef cattle on farm



- This request is about the **protection of beef cattle**
- This mandate **does not cover the welfare of veal calves**, nor the welfare of **calves born on dairy farms** that are slaughtered for beef (up to six months of age) as they have been covered in a dedicated Scientific Opinion.

Mandate Received
and accepted

31 July 2023

Risk assessment
deadline

30 June 2025

Types of cattle (animal categories)



Suckler calves

- are reared by their dam (usually a beef breed) and are weaned at approximately 6 months of age.



Suckler cows/heifers

- give birth to and rear suckler calves until they are weaned.



Fattening cattle

- are weaned cattle (greater than 6 months old) being farmed for the production of beef.
- This assessment covers the production of these cattle until they are slaughtered at various ages depending on the production system in question.



Breeding bulls

- sire calves, naturally or via artificial insemination, that are used for the beef production.



End of career suckler cows

- are cows no longer being used to produce and mother suckler calves but are being kept for the production of meat.



End of career dairy cows

- are dairy cows who are no longer producing milk and are being kept for meat production.

Photo courtesy of Bernadette Earley

Link to openEFSA

<https://open.efsa.europa.eu/question/EFSA-Q-2023-00535>



Mandate Terms of Reference



ToR1 (Technical report)

- A **review of the most common husbandry systems and current practices** for keeping suckler calves, fattening cattle, suckler cows, heifers, breeding bulls, end of career dairy cows and end of career suckler cows in EU

ToR2 (Scientific opinion)

- Identify the **most relevant welfare consequences**
- Describe suitable **ABMs** to detect and monitor the most relevant welfare consequences on farm
- Provide **qualitative or quantitative recommendations** to **prevent or mitigate** the **welfare consequences**

ToR3 (Scientific opinion)

- The assessment of **animal-based measures collected in slaughterhouses** to monitor the level of welfare on farm for fattening cattle.



Mandate Terms of Reference (Scientific opinion)



ToR2

<p>a. Welfare assessment of housing conditions in relation to:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooring and bedding • Space allowance • Water access • Nutrition and feeding • Extreme environmental condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental enrichment • Lack of outdoor access • Mixing of cattle
<p>b. Welfare of cattle kept at grass considering:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outwintering • Nutrition and feed • Water access 	
<p>c. The risk to the welfare of suckler cows and calves in relation to weaning of suckler calves.</p>		
<p>d. The risk to welfare associated with the mutilation of cattle including:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castration • Disbudding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dehorning • Tail docking
<p>e. The risk to welfare associated with breeding strategies and genetics in relation to:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hyper-muscularity • Dystocia and caesarean section • Polledness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternal ability • Temperament
<p>f. Decision-making criteria for the euthanasia of end-of-career dairy and suckling cows being kept for the production of beef.</p>		



Mandate on the welfare of turkeys on farm

- This request is about the **protection of turkeys *Meleagris gallopavo gallopavo*** on farm, covering **turkeys of all ages** (breeding turkeys and turkeys kept for meat production) **including hatchery conditions.**
- Slaughter/killing and transport are not object of this request because they are covered by previous EFSA Scientific outputs



Types of turkeys (animal categories)



Breeding turkeys



Hatchery conditions



Poult



Turkeys kept for meat production.

Link to openEFSA

<https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2023-00648>

<https://open.efsa.europa.eu/questions/EFSA-Q-2023-00647>



Mandate Terms of Reference



Request 1 (Technical report)

- **A review of the most common husbandry systems and current practices for keeping turkeys *Meleagris gallopavo gallopavo* on farm, covering turkeys of all ages (breeding turkeys and turkeys kept for meat production) including hatchery conditions in the EU.**

Litter



Enrichment



Light Scheme



Access to outdoors



- Thinning
- Type of housing
- Stocking density

Separation of sexes



Mutilations

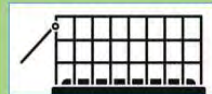


Hatchery conditions



Breeding practices including Artificial Insemination

Cages



Mandate Terms of Reference (Scientific opinion)



Request 2
To assess:



<p>a. For turkeys kept for <u>meat production</u>, <u>turkey breeders</u> and <u>poults</u>, the risk to welfare posed by the following risk factors and practices:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the type and condition of the litter • type and presence of enrichment • availability and condition of outdoor space (including covered veranda) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • space allowance • environmental (ammonia, CO2, temperature) and light conditions • group size and mixed keeping of males and female
<p>b. For turkeys kept for <u>meat production</u>, the risk to welfare posed by the following risk factors and practices:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the final weight, • average daily weight gain, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the practice of thinning and the practices of feed and water restriction
<p>c. For <u>turkey breeders</u>, the risk to welfare posed by the following risk factors and practices:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • age of onset of breeding, • nest conditions, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • artificial insemination • practices of feed and water restriction;
<p>d. The risk posed by the hatchery conditions, on the welfare of <u>turkeys</u> of all ages relevant</p>		
<p>e. The risk to welfare associated with beak trimming and other mutilations where performed (e.g. de-toeing and de-snooding)</p>		
<p>f. The breeding and genetic traits that improve and/ or impair welfare</p>		

Mandate Terms of Reference (Scientific opinion)



Request 3

- Identify the **relevant welfare consequences of the housing systems and the risk factors** and practices described in Request 1 and 2, by using ABMs for the assessment of these welfare consequences

Request 4

- Provide **qualitative and, where applicable, quantitative recommendations to prevent or mitigate the welfare consequences** on farm identified in Request 3

Request 5

- **Assess and define suitable animal-based indicators collected at the slaughterhouse to monitor the level of welfare of turkeys on farm.**



Engagement strategy for AW mandates: beef cattle and turkeys



1. Expression of interest + public meeting

- Set up a pool of SH for regular engagement.
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3. Ad-hoc technical hearings

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5. Public webinar

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2. Call for evidence

Shortly after the public meeting, EFSA will hold a structured collection of the data/information at SH's hand to support risk assessment. SH input will be made public.

4. Targeted consultation

EFSA may require additional input on specific parts of the draft opinion. The consultation would target the pool of SH involved in the previous steps. SH input will be made public.



Consultation of EFSA Networks

May 2023 (ABMs at slaughter)

specific exercises

March 2024

23





NEW EC MANDATE ON THE WELFARE OF FUR ANIMALS

EFSA Staff: Marika Vitali, Eliana Lima,
Michaela Hempen, Neil J. Turchett

Mandate on the welfare of fur animals on farm



EU Legal background



There is currently no specific EU animal protection legislation covering these animal species



Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes applies

Previous Scientific outputs



SCAHAW, 2001 – The welfare of animals kept for fur production

Mandate Received and accepted

5 December 2023

Risk assessment deadline

28 February 2025



Mink – *Mustela vison*



Foxes:

Red Fox - *Vulpes vulpes*



Arctic Fox - *Alopex lagopus*



Raccoon Dogs - *Nyctereutes procyonoides*



Chinchillas - *Chinchilla laniger*

Mandate Terms of Reference



Technical report

ToR1a

- An **update** of the **literature review** of the report "*The welfare of animals kept for fur production*" (SCAHAW, 2001), on:
 - Section 4: General aspects of **carnivore biology** (foxes, mink and racoon dogs)
 - Section 5: General aspects of **rodent biology** (chinchillas)

ToR1b

- A **review** of the **most common husbandry system(s)** (including field-tested systems) and **rearing practices** for keeping **animals for fur production** for the species named.

Scientific opinion

ToR2a

- **Identify the most relevant welfare consequences** and corresponding **hazards in relation to common husbandry systems and practices** for fur production

ToR2b

- For the **most relevant welfare consequences** (max 5), assess whether the welfare consequences identified above can be **prevented** or **substantially mitigated under current farming** conditions or **other field-tested farming systems**.
- The **welfare assessment** will be **focused** on the **welfare consequences** considered highly relevant in a certain animal category.



Engagement strategy for AW mandates: fur animals

1. Expression of interest + public meeting

- Set up a pool of SH for regular engagement.
- Present the mandate; discuss its opportunities and challenges.
- Listen to the views of SH as from the start.
- Identify individual contributors to be invited to ad-hoc technical hearings of the EFSA working group.

22 January 2024

After mandate acceptance

After the public meeting

2. Call for evidence

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Throughout the mandate

4. Targeted consultation

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Before adoption (if needed)

5. Public webinar

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After publication



Consultation of EFSA Networks



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