



European
Commission

EU Platform on Animal Welfare

Eight meeting

WebEx video conference

Tuesday 3rd November 2020, 09.30 – 17.30 CET, Brussels time

The meeting was web streamed. Click [here](#) to access the recording.

– MINUTES –

Opening by Chair Claire Bury, Deputy Director General for Food Sustainability, DG SANTE

The Chair welcomed attendees and gave indications on the use of the WebEx settings. The agenda was adopted with no comments. The Chair welcomed the German Presidency and their actions on labelling and animal welfare.

German Presidency presentation on priorities regarding animal welfare

You can find the presentation [here](#).

The speaker introduced the priorities of the German Presidency within the field of animal welfare. Germany presented the results of the questionnaire on EU animal welfare label. The majority of Member States agreed that an EU animal welfare label should go beyond the minimum legal requirements and that it will be a useful tool to improve animal welfare across the EU.

Questions & Answers

Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) thanked the German Presidency for actions on animal welfare labelling and on transport. Asked what has been done and what will be done with regard to transport.

Association of Poultry Processors and Poultry Trade in the EU (A.V.E.C.) thanked the Commission and the German Presidency and stated that, according to the presentation, a majority of Member States think that animal welfare labelling is a good idea. However, 70% are in favour of a non-mandatory labelling. Wondered if a voluntary approach for labelling would lead to a competition across Member States.

Germany, on the question of transport, answered that this issue was discussed at the informal Council meeting in Koblenz and at the CVO meeting. Nevertheless, the German Presidency is not aiming to adopt Council conclusions on animal transport.

Regarding animal welfare labelling, it should be discussed further if we go for voluntary or mandatory labelling. A voluntary animal welfare label would align with the label for organic products, which is also voluntary.

Eurogroup for Animals congratulated the Presidency on the adoption of the Council conclusions on the Farm to Fork Strategy, in particular as regards the review of the animal welfare acquis and its time-table (2023). Concerning animal welfare labelling, Eurogroup strongly believes that it should be a multi-tiered label, based on the enhanced production method and on WTO compliance, and easy to comply with by industry.

The Chair had to leave the meeting and asked the *Senior Expert of SANTE G5* to take over her role.

Four Paws International thanked the German Presidency for the presentation and the commitment. Expressed concerns that the Council does not aim to draw conclusions on animal welfare transport. Stronger commitment is needed to move forward. What are the stable blocs between the current situation concerning implementation of the transport regulation and the ban on long distance transport? Identifying it will allow us to move forward with the transport issues.

European Meat Network pointed out that investments are not bought by the market. It is essential that the label ensures that farmers and retailers are included, that a wide range of stakeholders are behind the animal welfare label. It is important to improve the market on the development. The main question is how the value of the labelling should benefit to farmers?

Germany, concerning the labelling, agreed that it is crucial to involve all stakeholders and in particular the retailers.

On the fact that the Presidency does not foresee the Council conclusions on transport, *Germany* said that a choice had to be made and it was decided to focus on the conclusions on the Farm to Fork Strategy and on the labelling. This does not mean that transport is less important than other issues.

COPA-COGECA thanked for the approach on animal welfare labelling. Asked whether the German Presidency believes that harmonised labelling across Europe can help increase consumer perception of animal welfare. Or if, on the contrary, the approach should be to positively differentiate European farmers by explaining to consumers that EU farmers do more than farmers in third countries.

Germany underlined the importance of involving all stakeholders in the animal welfare label, including consumers who should be well informed to agree to pay more. Consumers must be convinced of the added value of labelled products.

Speech by Commissioner Stella Kyriakides

Stella Kyriakides, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety

Commissioner Kyriakides began by conveying a message of solidarity in this difficult time of the pandemic. Then, she presented the main animal welfare actions within the framework of the Farm to Fork Strategy, highlighting the importance of contributing to a sustainable livestock production and the role played by animal welfare in this context.

In her intervention, Commissioner Kyriakides underlined the importance of animal welfare and the adoption of the Farm to Fork Strategy. The strategy is an essential contribution to sustainable livestock production and to the need for change of our current farming system. A better balance between affordable food, food quality and better incomes to farmers is needed.

Animal welfare plays an important role in this regard. Ms. Kyriakides also explained the Council conclusions and the next actions of the European Commission, presented the subgroup on animal welfare labelling and explained the ongoing Commission involvement in the European Parliament ANIT Committee on animal welfare in transport. She also informed about her involvement and the responsibilities of the European Commission regarding the European Citizen's Initiative "End the Cage Age".

Finally, Commissioner Kyriakides announced her intention to renew the mandate of the Platform.

Questions & Answers

Four Paws International welcomed the Commissioner's commitment with the Farm to Fork Strategy and animal welfare. Acknowledged that the German Presidency will not include anything regarding the transport of live animals in its conclusions. Asked whether the Commission could do something in the meantime, apart from the Fitness Check, to help understand the type of problems Member States are having regarding the enforcement of transport regulation. The answers to these questions would allow to work on concrete solutions to solve the current transport problems in the Member States. It could also be used for the fitness check.

Eurogroup for Animals asked how animal welfare will be integrated into the broader sustainability agenda and how animal welfare stakeholders can contribute to it. For example, through a code of conduct for business?

Compassion in World Farming pointed out the need to work on measures for animal species not covered by current legislation which represent millions of animals (e.g. turkey, rabbits). Asked if the Commission will consider species specific legislation.

World Animal Protection welcomed the action of the Commissioner to send a letter to all Member States on reducing practices of tail docking in pigs. Asked what actions (such as enforcement proceedings) could be foreseen or implemented, given the low level of compliance of some Member States.

Commissioner Kyriakides confirmed that transport is high on the Commission's agenda. Stressed that more needs to be done on enforcement. The Commission is currently considering adopting implementing or delegating acts, launching the process of harmonising inspections on livestock vessels and having a single database to record the results.

Concerning the routine tail docking and non-compliant Member States, the Commission has been working on this for years. Adopted recommendations, produced educational materials, and sent a letter to Ministers of the 27 Member States reminding them of the obligation to implement EU legislation.

On the request of the Commissioner, the *Head of Unit of SANTE G5* took the floor to explain that the Fitness Check will target species that are currently not covered by the existing legislation or species for which we would like to raise standards, such as dairy cows. The empowerments of the official controls legislation constitute a good tool and once we will have more science-based knowledge, we will work to determine more standards.

Finally, *Commissioner Kyriakides* underlined that within the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Commission will present a proposal of sustainability food labelling to empower consumers to make sustainable choices. In addition, the debate is open on the animal welfare labelling.

COPA underlined the importance of protecting European farmers. Asked how does the Commission intend to carry out the scientific assessment to measure the economic impact of the Farm to Fork Strategy? And given that we are in an international context, how is the Commission going to protect the European farmers against distorted competition from products from third countries?

CLITRAVI stressed that production costs will increase due to the Farm to Fork Strategy and highlighted that we need to start educating and warning consumers already that prices will increase. Stressed that the price of meat is a sensitive issue, especially in Eastern and Southern countries.

A.V.E.C. thanked the Commissioner for the updates provided and pointed out that the recommendations on import included in the Farm to Fork Strategy are not very concrete. Therefore, what concrete measures does the Commission foresee with regard to imports of agricultural products from third countries?

European Meat Network asked who will carry out the economic impact assessment of the changes foreseen by the Strategy as this is not the role of EFSA.

Commissioner Kyriakides replied that the Commission is aware of this extremely important issue of the protection of EU producers. The Commission is working to include animal welfare requirements in the context of bilateral and multilateral relations and trade agreements. She highlighted that sustainability is a global issue and that greener alliances and collaborations between all parties involved are needed.

Regarding the “End of Cage Age” initiative, the Commissioner recalled the timetable for the actions and proposals of the Commission.

The Head of Unit of SANTE G5 added that there is a wide range of tools, such as animal welfare labelling, that the Commission is working on, while also collaborating with other Directorates-General (for instance AGRI and TRADE). Concluded by stating that the Commission is fully aware of the concerns related to the Farm to Fork Strategy and will work to address them.

Commissioner Kyriakides underlined that animal welfare is her personal priority and that one of her advisers will only work on animal welfare issues.

Session 1: Policy updates

Overview of the ongoing activities

Head of Unit 'Animal Welfare, Antimicrobial resistance' (SANTE G5), Directorate Crisis Management in Food, Animals and Plants, DG SANTE

You can find the presentation [here](#).

The Head of Unit of SANTE G5 presented the new unit on “Animal Welfare and Antimicrobial Resistance” and its current activities as well as the respective next steps and timelines. The presentation included the Fitness Check of the Farm to Fork Strategy, the evaluation of the Animal Welfare Strategy 2012-2015, the “End Cage Age” initiative, the actions of the European Parliament’s Inquiry Committee on Animal Transport (ANIT), the animal welfare labelling subgroup and the third EU Reference Centre on Animal Welfare for ruminants and equines.

Mandates and planning of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

You can find the presentation [here](#).

EFSA’ joint presentation provided an overview of EFSA’s activities on animal welfare over the period 2019-2020, including risk assessments and scientific opinions, and defined future steps planned by EFSA in collaboration with the Commission. The evaluation started last year with a roadmap, after which the Commission launched a one-year study. Finally, a series of scientific opinions on animal welfare on farm and in transport under the Farm to Fork Strategy were presented.

The scientific opinions will focus on the protection of pigs, the protection of terrestrial animals during transport, the protection of domestic fowls linked to meat production (broilers), the protection of domestic flows linked to egg production (laying hens) and the protection of calves.

Through them, EFSA will support the European Commission. Finally, possible scientific scenarios and EFSA’s working groups on animal welfare were presented.

Questions & Answers

Humane Society International, on the presentation of Unit 'Animal Welfare, Antimicrobial resistance', asked if in the context of the Farm to Fork Strategy, there has been any mandate to EFSA to cover the revision of the Directive 98/58/EC. Is there something specific on dairy cows?

Compassion in World Farming, on the same presentation, does the Commission plan to mandate EFSA to search for specific data for species such as cows or pullets? In addition, are there any plans to review the production systems in the Member States? Does EFSA have a mandate to conduct an annual review of data on other species?

FVE congratulated on the establishment of the new unit on animal welfare. On this presentation, asked if it would be possible to have a more structured collaboration between the Reference Centres and stakeholders. For a future centre, suggested to take into account fish (aquatic species) and companion animals which are so dear to EU citizens.

The Head of Unit of SANTE G5, on a possible future Reference Centre, said that there was no decision yet on which animals a Centre could focus on. Aquatics are part of the general feedback of the open consultation of the Fitness Check. The Commission will set priorities in this direction, and this is also linked to the European Reference Labs. All of these elements must be taken into consideration.

Directive 98/58/EC is not species-specific, therefore, from a scientific point of view, there is little to assess. This Directive will be at the centre of the Fitness Check. Currently, there is no need to create a mandate for EFSA on Directive 98/58/EC. The Commission has to prioritise and take into account the capacity of EFSA. In the years to come we will see if, together with EFSA, an algorithm could be developed for all species in terms of legislative approach. The Commission has developed pilot projects to cover certain areas, such as livestock and end-of-career animals.

Denmark, on the presentation of Unit 'Animal Welfare, Antimicrobial resistance', it is very important that the evaluation of the legislation covers species not included in the current legislation such as dogs and cats, and includes fish in the farmed animals (especially trout or tuna).

Recognized that there is a lot of work to be done. Recommended to give priority to amending the Pig Directive, as there is an urgent need for more specific provisions on tail docking and transport regulation to tackle recurring enforcement problems. Added to welcome the work started by the animal welfare labelling subgroup. Expressed hope that once the evaluation of the Animal Welfare Strategy is finalised, work could begin to elaborate a new strategy.

European Meat Network, on the presentation of EFSA, asked if EFSA will carry out an assessment of changes to be implemented in animal welfare and sustainability. For example, some changes to be made by farmers could lead to increased CO2 emissions. In addition, would it be possible for

EFSA to publish the composition of each expert group? Finally, how will the Commission deal with the economic assessment of EFSA' recommendations?

EFSA answered that there is no specific request on sustainability and animal welfare in the mandate. However, in the assessment related to the "End the Cage Age" initiative, some elements regarding sustainability will be provided, but climate change will not be taken into account. Concerning the list of experts, it is public but the composition of the groups it is not yet finalised. This will be published in November.

World Horse Welfare welcomed the creation of the Reference Centre devoted to equines and asked if equines would be included in other important initiatives such as the labelling scheme?

The Head of Unit of SANTE G5, replied that the Commission is aware of the importance of covering fish, and also dogs and cats in the context of commercial activities. However, it is necessary to focus first on the priorities set by the Strategy, therefore to proceed with the assessment on farm animals. The amendment of different directives will be considered based on the input from EFSA and on the reports on the implementation of the legislation, provided by the auditors of Directorate F. The economic assessment is part of it. The issue of including equines in the labelling is very interesting but first a data collection on existing scientific evidence and practices is needed.

Eurogroup for Animals asked whether the Commission intends to publish the report on the revision of the transport of dairy cows. Secondly, despite the fact that EFSA is very busy, some work needs to be done on fish welfare. This topic goes hand-in-hand with sustainability.

Four Paws, on the presentation of Unit 'Animal Welfare, Antimicrobial resistance', said - in relation to the assessment of Directive 58/98/EC - that it is necessary to assess certain aspects such as the point 14 of the Annex where it says that "no animal shall be provided with food or liquid in a manner, nor shall such food or liquid contain any substance, which may cause unnecessary suffering or injury". However, in five Member States the foie gras industry continues to use these practices. All scientific studies, with the exception of those financed by the foie gras industry, show that force-feeding is a source of animal suffering. The review of Directive 98/58 should address this issue.

The Head of Unit of SANTE G5, answered that the work of EFSA in the next months will be useful to assess the way the Commission will address the revision of the legislation based on provided data. Stress factors related to farm practices will also be analysed. Regarding fish, the Commission will try to assess all demands that have been raised during the Fitness Check feedback. Regarding Directive 98/58/EC in the work with EFSA, this will be checked, as better implementation means more transparency, capacity and investment.

The afternoon sessions were chaired by *the Head of Unit of SANTE G5*.

Session 2: Subgroup and voluntary initiatives

Selection process and composition of the subgroup on animal welfare labelling and the outcomes of its first meeting

Senior Expert, Unit 'Animal Welfare, Antimicrobial resistance', Directorate Crisis Management in Food, Animals and Plants, DG SANTE

You can find the presentation [here](#).

The Senior Expert presented the selection process, the list of appointed members as well as the objectives of the sub-group and its work plan. He informed on the main conclusions of the first meeting, highlighting the importance of the consumer perspective as one of the agreements reached by the sub-group. He stressed the importance of taking into account other aspects such as environmental and nutritional claims, taking into account the whole socio-economic impact of the food chain. The next meeting of the sub-group will be held on 23 November 2020.

Conclusions of the voluntary initiative on responsible ownership and care of equidae

Factsheets related to the Guide to good animal welfare practice for the keeping, care, training and use of horses

Danish Veterinary and Food Administration

You can find the presentation [here](#).

Denmark presented a series of factsheets based on the 'Guide to good animal welfare practice for the keeping, care, training and use of horses' (acknowledged by a Platform at the 6th plenary meeting in October 2019). The documents cover: infectious disease and biosecurity, feed, water, hoof care, social interaction and comfort behaviour, stable - indoor housing and turnout – shelter and pasture. The factsheets were the subject of an open consultation for the members of the Platform on the digital tool. The aim of the factsheets is to supplement the horse guide and thus help to improve horse welfare in the EU and beyond.

Conclusions of the voluntary initiative on the health and welfare of pets (dogs) in trade – Responsible dog breeding guidelines & Responsible cat breeding guidelines; Transport guidelines for dogs and cats by land

Dutch Ministry of Agriculture; Nature and Food Quality, Animal Supply Chain and Animal Welfare department

You can find the presentation [here](#).

The Netherlands presented the content of the three guidelines elaborated by the voluntary initiative. The guidelines on responsible dog & cat breeding cover issues such as responsible breeding principles, selection of parents, requirements for good animal welfare (feeding, housing & health and appropriate behaviour), record keeping or registration, licensing and enforcement. The transport guidelines cover general transport conditions, animal health & disease control checks, vehicle and transporter requirements and contingency planning. The guidelines were subject of an open consultation for the Platform members on the digital tool. In addition, the ongoing and future work of the initiative was presented (e.g. based on the outcomes of the mapping, a recommendations document on identification & registration of dogs and registration of breeders in all Member States).

Activities of the voluntary initiative on piglets: alternatives for surgical castration

Mr B. , Director, Connecting Agri & Food

You can find the presentation [here](#).

Mr B. presented the main results of the voluntary initiative on “Alternatives to surgical castration of pigs”. He addressed the actual challenge of immunological castration and the obstacles to its implementation related to consumer perception and market acceptance. Finally, he summarised, from a scientific point of view, immunocastration practices in organic farming.

Questions & Answers

European Meat Network, on the presentation on the voluntary initiative on piglets, on the different methods for anaesthesia. From the point of view of the meat industry, the methods presented may affect trade and exports to third countries, leading to potential restrictions. Asked to make recommendations to the Commission on these methods, so that the Commission can ensure that this scenario does not occur.

Mr B. recognised that this problem is relevant and can only be solved at European level. The right information provided to the Commission on anaesthesia techniques will be helpful in this context.

Denmark, on Mr B.'s presentation, wondered which of the considerations or conclusions presented came from the voluntary initiative itself and which from other groups, especially with regard to the practical conclusions.

Mr B. explained that the findings of several initiatives were integrated and explained the conclusions adopted by each group and the voluntary initiative.

FVE expressed its support for the voluntary initiative on responsible ownership and care of equidae and highlighted the willingness to share the task of translating documents.

Regarding the presentation of Mr B., regretted that DG AGRI does not consider immunocastration as a sustainable practice. Immunocastration is on the same level as

vaccination, so why it is not considered as organic farming? Finally, called on DG SANTE to express its opinion on this method and to try to influence the position of DG AGRI.

AnimalHealthEurope expressed its support to the point made by FVE on immunocastration and on organic farming.

The Head of Unit of SANTE G5 explained that DG SANTE is in contact with DG AGRI on this subject. The issue will be assessed in the perspective of the next actions in the field of animal welfare and the Common Agriculture Policy; the work is still ongoing.

EuroCommerce expressed interest in the sub-group on labelling, explaining that the organisation has a lot of experience in providing information to consumers. Called the sub-group not to just look at the criteria but to take a broader view, including consumer information. The intervention stressed their willingness to be part of the discussion on possible next steps, even if EuroCommerce is not part of the sub-group.

COPA-COGEACA highlighted the interest in immunocastration because there is a lack of implementation of this practice in Europe. Asked about the main bottlenecks and the reasons for the reluctance to use this practice in organic farming.

Mr B. explained that the main obstacles in Europe are at the level of consumer perception, which has a deeply rooted negative image of immunocastration linked to the fear of a potential risk to human health. Therefore, retailers are reluctant, knowing the negative attitude of consumers. Such a perception is even more negative in south-eastern Europe.

FEFAC, on Mr B.'s presentation, asked if any suggestions could be made on how to solve the perception of immunocastration in the current context. Over the past year, there were several advisory board meetings on this issue but no feedback was received.

Mr B. suggested that the impact that diet can have on fatty acid levels could be important for farmers. It might be interesting to analyse and find the balance between efficiency and quality.

A policy officer of SANTE G5 intervened on surgical castration of pigs and immunocastration. She informed that the report of a European Parliament pilot project on best practices on immunocastration was published at the beginning of last year. The findings of the report have been used in the elaboration of leaflets and videos on this subject. These educational materials will be available at the end of the year. She thanked all those who, through their participation in the advisory board of this project, made their valuable contributions.

The Head of Unit of SANTE G5 for his part also thanked all those involved for their support to the project.

World Horse Welfare thanked Denmark for her presentation and the overall work in the voluntary initiative on horses which resulted in remarkable conclusions. Stressed the importance of the availability of the translated guidelines on the Platform's website for further dissemination in Member States. Said that many important horse welfare issues still need to be tackled and

wondered if there could be a dialogue on this in the coming months and how the Platform could contribute to it.

Denmark confirmed that there is a need to continue working on horse welfare issues. The question is whether the current members of the voluntary initiative wish to continue or whether the group should be recomposed. This will be discussed with the group.

COGECA, on the presentation of Mr. B., asked if there were any studies on the impact of the consumption of meat from immunocastrated animals on human health. Until we have such data, we must be careful using this method for food producing animals. In addition, informed of the current reluctance of consumers in some countries, such as Poland, to buy meat from non-castrated animals. In addition, carcasses are not accepted by retailers.

Mr. B. explained that the studies he was referring to are based on solid scientific evidence applied according to the protocol, adding that there could be risks when the protocol is not correctly applied. As for the negative perception in some countries, it is indeed correct and it is necessary to provide proof of concept to increase confidence, to come with a reliable solution.

World Animal Protection (statement made by Four Paws because of connexion problem) expressed support for the FVE's position on this issue and that more information on hormones and immunocastration is needed to avoid any confusion. There is no scientific reason to exclude immunocastration. Asked what Member States and NGOs can do to change the decision to exclude immunocastration recently taken by the Standing Committee on Organic Agriculture.

The Head of Unit of SANTE G5 answered that the question was noted and that it would be transferred to colleagues in DG AGRI.

Eurogroup for Animals highlighted the need to stick to science-based conclusions and not opinions about castration. Supported the studies presented by Mr. B. and the FVE position. As regards to the sub-group on labelling, they understand the objectives of the group but wonder about a link with the study to be implemented by DG AGRI.

Belgium supported the position of FVE and other members of the Platform on the need to end painful surgical castration through immunocastration as a good solution for this. Asked how is it possible that part of the Commission accepts the immunocastration solution and that DG AGRI refuses it.

A policy officer of SANTE G5 explained that the European Parliament wanted to include immunocastration in the updated organic farming regulation but finally after discussions it was decided that it would not be included. Therefore, DG AGRI is not responsible as this is linked to the regulation.

The Chair submitted the documents presented by the voluntary initiative on responsible ownership and care of equidae and on the health and welfare of pets (dogs) in trade for endorsement by the Platform.

All documents were endorsed by the Platform.

The Chair congratulated the members of the two voluntary initiatives for their achievements.

SESSION 3: Information and knowledge sharing

Introduction to the Commission's procedure for the European Citizens' Initiative

*Policy Officer, Unit 'Animal Welfare, Antimicrobial resistance', Directorate
Crisis Management in Food, Animals and Plants, DG SANTE*

You can find the presentation [here](#).

The presentation gave an overview of the Commission procedure, timelines and planned meetings on the European Citizens' Initiative 'End the Cage Age', as well as the deadlines and coordination with the European Parliament for next steps.

The End of Cage Age European Citizens' Initiative by Compassion in World Farming

Compassion in World Farming EU

You can find the presentation [here](#).

CIWF briefly presented the background information of the European Citizens Initiative for seven species of animals, its main objectives and procedures. The Commission is invited to propose legislation to prohibit the use of cages for farmed rabbits, pullets, broiler breeders, layer breeders, quails, ducks and geese and enriched cages for laying hens; farrowing crates for sows; sow stalls, where not already prohibited and enclosed calf pens, where not already prohibited. CIWF gave examples of existing alternatives to the cages.

Short open roundtable of exchange of views

European Meat Network thanked for the presentations on the 'End the Cage Age' initiative. Explained that many farmers are willing to change the system but face the big challenge of investment costs, not covered by the market. Another challenge is the conflict with environmental legislation. Often the only solution is to reduce the number of animals. It is good to ask the Commission for financial support for farmers, but it is not enough. In addition, a look at environmental legislation is necessary. The farmers cannot be champions of both, animal welfare and the environment. A sustainable financial solution is needed, including the willingness of consumers to pay more.

COPA thanked CIWF for the presentation and said it was an important initiative also from the farmers' point of view. However, in some cases there are positive factors of the cage system (e.g. farrowing crates for sows). Expressed willingness to collaborate on improving animal welfare, but more scientific data on alternative systems is needed. Furthermore, a right balance is needed between alternative systems and practicality if we want to have total livestock production that protects animals. It is necessary to move from an emotional approach to a science-based

approach and to secure financial support for farmers. Expressed concerns regarding the competitiveness of EU farmers given the increase in production costs.

The Head of Unit of SANTE G5 pointed out that there will be a debate in the European Parliament on the 'End the Cage Age' Initiative and that the Commission is preparing a response.

A.V.E.C. congratulated the success of the initiative regarding the number of signatures collected. Wondered, however, whether Compassion in World Farming has any strategies to inform consumers that this initiative will lead to higher food prices. Will consumers be willing to pay more?

CIWF said she would very much like to have a debate without the disparaging comments. She highlighted that their initiative is science-based, developed over the past 30 years. She explained that CIWF supports alternative systems, already used by some farmers. Good knowledge and good training for farmers are important. It is also necessary to look at the management of the system which goes hand in hand with the training of farmers. Regarding consumers, they already pay subsidies for animal farming, not necessarily used for animal welfare. We need to take a closer look more at the subsidy system and the Common Agricultural Policy. Many farmers are embracing the change and the transition to a cage-free Europe. This transition is possible and we would like to work with farmers to make it happen.

The ban of laying hens in cages by the Czech Republic

Department of Animal Health and Animal Welfare, State Veterinary Administration of the Czech Republic.

You can find the presentation [here](#).

The presentation informed that following strong public demand to improve welfare of laying hens, a proposal on ban keeping laying hens in cages was submitted by a group of members of Parliament and adopted in September 2020. The lower house of the Parliament has agreed to ban cages for laying hens from 2027. Also, retail food chains are urging the sale of eggs from cage-free farms. Therefore, the Czech Republic perceives this ban as an incentive to prepare the Czech agricultural sector for the expected changes.

EU Reference Centres for the welfare of pigs: presentation of educative materials

EU Reference Centre for Animal Welfare – Pigs

You can find the presentation [here](#).

EURCAW Pigs presented the activities of the Centre concerning the training of inspectors in the field of pig welfare. The training is built around eight priority welfare areas: tail biting and tail docking, farrowing housing and management, sow group housing and mixing, climate control and space allowance, fitness for transport, handling in lairage, stunning and on-farm killing. The training materials are multilingual. *EURCAW Pigs* also informed about the workshop on the training for inspection, held at the end of October, in which 12 delegates from competent authorities of eight countries participated.

Questions and Answers

Eurogroup for Animals asked CIWF about problems and challenges encountered when collecting signatures. Regarding *EURCAW Pigs* presentation, considering the urgent need to improve the enforcement of the Pig Directive, how does the Commission intend to monitor progress? How will the Commission assess the impact of the Centre's activities?

A.V.E.C. said the poultry sector has never been subsidised by the EU. Highlighted that A.V.E.C. wants to collaborate in all possible ways to find a solution, for example sent several collaboration proposals to the EU Reference Centre on poultry and other small farm animals. A good compromise must be found through dialogue.

FESASS, on the presentation of *EURCAW Pigs*, asked if farm inspectors are checking the implementation of current legislation or, as it was mentioned to change behaviour, do inspectors go beyond legal requirements?

Antonio Velarde explained that the EU Reference Centre for the welfare of poultry collects from Member States good materials for the training of competent authorities, including on small farmed animals. Answering to Eurogroup and A.V.E.C., he said that the Centre is still in the phase of setting up activities but that the contact with the stakeholders is in the picture.

EURCAW Pigs, concerning the training for inspectors, said the aim is to pass a message to farmers in the best possible way regarding the control of current legislation and how it is implemented. Confirmed interest in cooperation with industry on this issue.

Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority, on the presentation by *EURCAW Pigs* asked if there are guidelines on the use of the scoring systems and the scoring indicators.

EURCAW Pigs, explained that there is information on how to score animal welfare legislation, but not an inspection handbook, as this has never been requested, but it could be considered for the future work programme.

EFFAB highlighted its willingness to work together on ways to move forward on animal welfare. A good place for this would be the Advisory Board of the Reference Centres. Said that the pig sector does not receive any subsidies from the Common Agricultural Policy.

The Head of Unit of SANTE G5 said enforcement of the legislation, in particular on the welfare of pigs, remained a priority for the Commission. DG SANTE is also collaborating with DG AGRI on the new CAP and its possibilities to improve animal welfare.

Conclusions and closing of the meeting

The Chair informed that:

- All documents endorsed today by the Platform will be available on the website of DG SANTE and on Transparency Register;
- The Commissioner informed about her intention to renew the Platform mandate after June 2021;
- Underlined the Commissioner commitment in the field of animal welfare and the importance of the work of the subgroup on animal welfare labelling;
- Thanked to all participants and organisers of the meeting.

List of Participants

European Commission:

Commissioner Stella Kyriakides

Cabinet

DG SANTE

DG AGRI

DG DEVCO

EEAS

DG ENV

DG GROW

DG MARE

SG

DG TRADE

Council of the EU

German Presidency of the Council of the EU

European Court of auditors

Speakers:

German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture

Head of Unit, DG SANTE, European Commission

European Food Safety Authority

Senior expert, DG SANTE, European Commission

Danish Veterinary and Food Administration

Dutch Ministry of Agriculture

Director, Connecting Agri & Food
Policy Officer, DG SANTE, European Commission
Compassion in World Farming EU
State Veterinary Administration of the Czech Republic
EU Reference Centre for Animal Welfare – Pigs

Member States:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden

European Economic Area (EEA) members: Iceland, Norway

International Organisations: FAO, OIE, EFSA

Business and Professional Organisations:

Animal Health Europe
Association of Poultry Processors and Poultry Trade in the EU (a.v.e.c.)
COGECA - European Agri-Cooperatives
COPA – European Farmers
European Association of Livestock Market (AEMB)
EuroCommerce
European Dairy Association (EDA)
European Federation of Animal Health Services (FESASS)
European Feed Manufacturers Federation (FEFAC)
European Forum for Animal Welfare Councils (EuroFAWC)
European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders (EFFAB)
European Liaison Committee for the Agricultural and Agri-Food Trade (CELCAA)
European Livestock and Meat Trades Union (U.E.C.B.V.)
European Meat Network (EMN)
European Rural Poultry Association (ERPA)
Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE)
International Society for Applied Ethology (ISAE)
Liaison Centre for the Meat Processing Industry in the European Union (CLITRAVI)

Civil Society Organisations:

Animals' Angels
Compassion in World Farming (CIWF)
Eurogroup for Animals
Humane Society International/Europe (HSI/Europe)
Organisation for Respect and Care of Animals (ORCA)
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)
Slow Food

VIER PFOTEN International (VIER PFOTEN)
World Animal Protection (WAP)
World Horse Welfare

Independent experts:

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Observers:

Switzerland
European Reference Centre for Animal Welfare - Welfare of pigs
European Reference Centre for Animal Welfare – Welfare of poultry and other small farmed animals