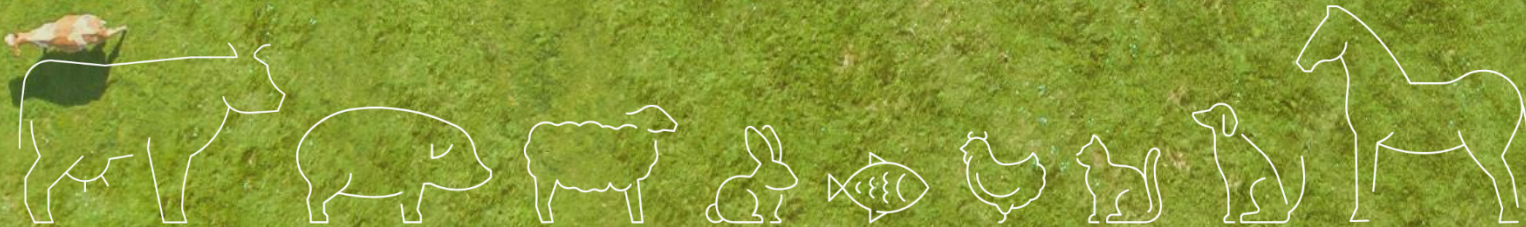


# 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EU Platform on animal welfare

Subgroup on Calves and dairy cows

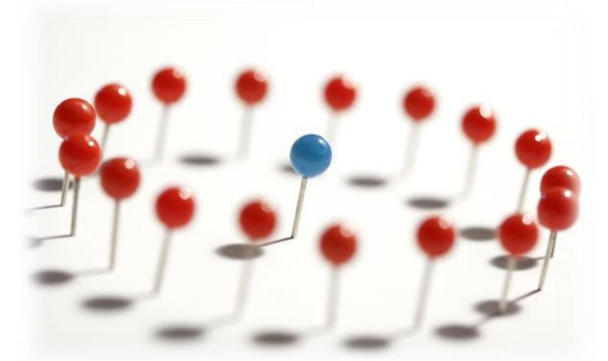
Overview of the work done



**Ester ALÁEZ PONS, policy officer, Animal Welfare, DG SANTE/G3**

# The subgroup

- 10 membres + Commission + guest
  - **1 Independent expert**
  - **Experts EURCAW ruminants and equines**
  - **3 Civil society organisations**
  - **2 Business and professional organisations**
  - **4 Member States**
- 4 meetings since July
- 2 external experts invited to present on specific topics



Francesca Fusi

Slow food/Eurogroup for animals /EDA

Farm & Animal Health/Copa Cogeca

Denmark /Netherlands / Sweden / Ireland

# Topics for Meetings

- **Feeding** requirements for dairy and fattening calves (**July**)
- **Mutilations (September)**
- **Housing systems** of dairy cows (**October**)
- Standard operation procedures (**SOPs**) on dairy farms (**November**)

# Feeding calves

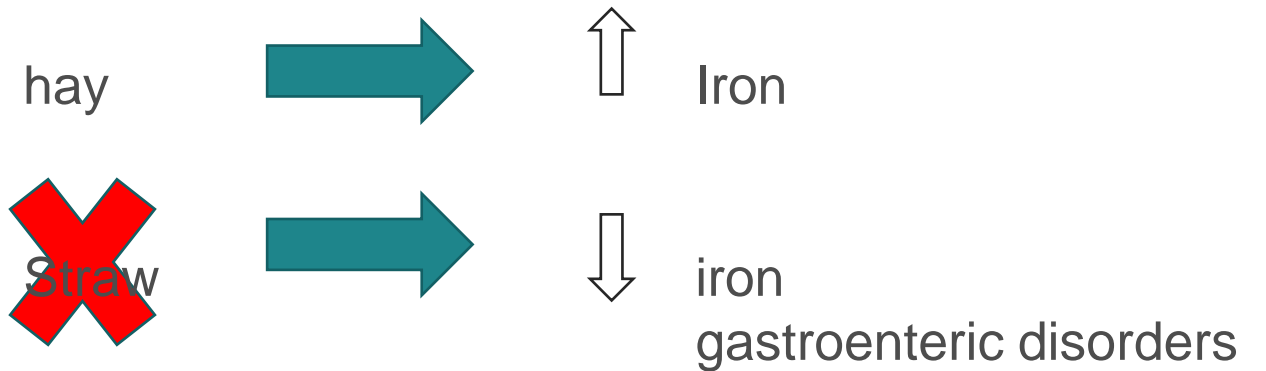
Welfare of male dairy calves raised for producing “white” veal meat and the risks associated with **feed restriction**

- **Fibre & iron restriction** → white/rose veal
- **Consequences**
  - Inability to chew and **ruminates** (30% of normal rumination)
    - suckling, licking equipment, tongue flicking
  - **Anemia**



# Feeding calves

**Roughage** (high in non-detergent fibre/iron)  
early in life



# Feeding calves

- **Hunger** in calves
- **Quantities** and **frequencies** of milk/milk replacers feeding
  - ad libitum (automatised equipment)
  - 1, 2 or 3 times a day



# Mutilations

- Discussions focused on **disbudding, dehorning** and **castration**
- **Painful** operations, causing **long-term pain**
- Need reflection on their **necessity**



# Mutilations

- Performed **as early as possible**
- **Avoid animals suffering**
  - Best available method
  - Anaesthesia and analgesia
  - (Sedation?)
- **Who** can perform mutilations
- **Training**
- Explore **alternatives**







# Housing of dairy cows

- **Freedom of movement**
- **Space allowance**
  - Stock density -  $\text{m}^2/\text{cow}$
  - Ratio cubicles/cows
  - Hospital/calving pens
- **Bedding**
- **Tethering**
- **Tie-stalls** in mountain areas
- **Change of housing systems**
  - Thresholds
  - Transition periods

# Access to pasture



- **Advantages**

- Natural behaviour
- Less **health** problems

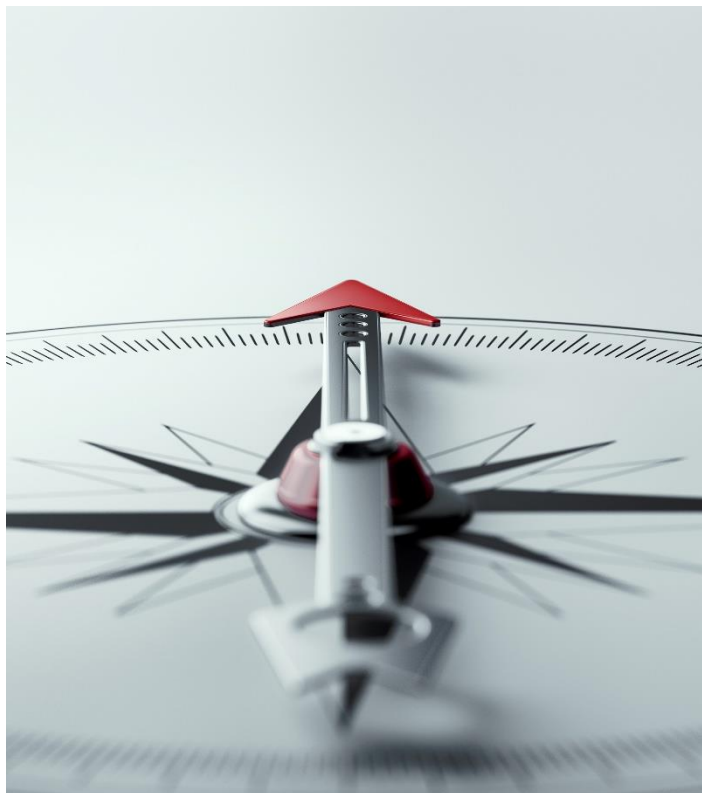
- **Disadvantages**

- Availability of **land** or long distances
- **Feed efficiency** – less production
- Difficulty to manage **ammonia** emissions

# SOPs vs Welfare plan

## Standard operating procedures (SOPs)

- Clear description of **tasks**
- Mainly for farms with several **employees**



## Health and welfare plans

- **Assessment** of the farm situation (vet + farmer)
- **Prevention** measures
- Monitor of **indicators**
- **Corrective actions** if issue

# Remaining topics

- **Animal based indicators** to monitor and measure animal welfare on dairy and calf fattening farms (**December**)
- Dairy cows' health management (**January 2023**)



Thank you



European  
Commission