

Europe for Animal Welfare



JOINT COE-EU-OIE WORKSHOP
“ANIMAL WELFARE IN EUROPE: ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS”

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SUMMARY OF REPLIES TO QUESTIONNAIRE
WORKING GROUP IV

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SUMMARY OF REPLIES TO QUESTIONNAIRE FROM GROUP IV COUNTRIES ¹

OVERVIEW

Degree of interest in animal welfare was high in Government, consumer, agriculture and NGOs sectors in almost all countries. Interest by local Authorities and food processor was lower (see Table 1 and Figures 1 and 2). Interest by retailers was generally lowest.

MAJOR ANIMAL WELFARE PROBLEMS

A wide variety of welfare problems were reported tending to focus on both welfare needs and animal health issues. Both adequate provision of care of treatment of animals for disease related to low investment due to poor economic returns. This reflected in part lack of consumer awareness of welfare and actually considering welfare when purchasing animal products and in part commercial interest of retailers.

Countries reported the following problems:

- Promoting of scientific research in animal welfare sector; developing and adopting animal based welfare assessment systems;
- Improvement of minimum standards for animal welfare;
- Education and training of animal keepers, stakeholders and society on animal welfare issues;
- Peoples low knowledge of animal welfare problems;
- Some problems in field of keeping of farm animals and transport of animals. Those problems are economical because animal handlers need additional capital investments;
- To get the consumers to respect animal welfare when buying food (as they tell when asked if they think animal welfare is important) and following that to get retailers better involved; Consumers are fickle in that they say they are concerned about animal welfare but act differently – they tend to buy on price;
- Economics of food animal production means that poor returns to producers remove incentives and efforts to achieve good/high welfare standards;
- For Accession countries the harmonisation of national legislation with EU legislation;
- Absence of legislation concerning the wild animals in captivity;
- Animals on pasture in remote areas are exposed to many welfare risks. In some areas, suffering is substantial and losses can be high, not least due to attacks from predators;
- Another problem is how often the controls are conducted especially prioritisation. Rarely cases of non-compliance coordination and action by authorities police, courts etc can sometimes take a long time which can lead to prolonged animal welfare problems;
- Specific welfare problems reported were –
 - *Poultry* - skeletal health/broken bones in laying hens; aggressive pecking and cannibalism in hens; the killing of spent laying hens; leg weakness in broilers

¹ Contributions were submitted by Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and United Kingdom.

- *Cattle* - leg and claw disorders in cattle; lameness in cattle (mainly dairy cows); dairy cows not “fit for purpose” i.e. high yielding genotypes selected and used in all types of systems regardless of ability to deliver adequate nutrient dry matter intake for high yielding cow; longevity of the dairy cow
- *Pigs* - environmental enrichment for pigs in slatted floor systems
- *Sheep* - pain associated with tail docking and castration of sheep; Foot rot in sheep
- *Reindeer*- extensive systems for Reindeer result in large, semi wild herds on pasture year round with risks to their welfare. Semi wild animals are in general subjected to harsher treatment, both from nature and from man. Handling, transport and risk of starvation are examples of potential welfare problems
- Farming of fish is a relatively new science with a high number of individuals, thus encounters potential animal welfare problems such as parasites, diseases, vaccination effects, transport, stunning.
- Pets - No regulated treatment of pet animals
- Farm animal transport

Formal structures such as Animal Welfare Councils existed in most countries which vary from independent bodies to Committees of Food Authorities. Some countries these were not permanent but assembled as ad hoc committees from non governmental organisations and governmental institutions.

LEGISLATION

In law animals were regarded as sentient beings in accordance with EU Treaty of Amsterdam but also considered as goods by a third of countries. No countries regarded animals as moral agents. (See Table 2). Some countries had recently or were in the process of introducing new extensive Animal welfare laws. Table 3 summarises the presence of specific legislation. All countries have legislation on abuse and cruelty and also on the welfare farmed animals, wild animals, zoos, circuses, during transport and at slaughter and killing. As well as general rules to protect farmed animals many countries have detailed rules to protect the welfare of cattle, horses, poultry, pigs, sheep, goats, ratites, fur animals and the transport of all vertebrate animals. One country had welfare rules related to farmed game birds. Some countries had legislation for farmed deer and rabbits, dogs, cats, traditional pets and exotic pets, regarding housing and management. Some countries had rules relating to stray dogs and cats and other are considering requests for compulsory identification and central registers of these animals to assist in resolution of stray problems.

Many countries had extensive legislation and licensing for laboratory animals. Legislation laid down details of accommodation use (requires permission from central authorities), authorisation of research institution and of persons responsible, inspections by central authorities. Some countries required each project to be reviewed by an ethical review committee. Some countries had special rules or banned use of primates for research and also banned species covered by CITES except if necessary to preserve the species.

Some countries banned docking of dogs and ear cropping and prevented such animals competing in shows/public events. In some countries welfare legislation for farmed animals was limited to provisions for feed and water. Legislation in some countries limited the species which could be used for circuses.

Some countries had legislation on how to perform hunting and trapping of animals Others have bans on cruel trapping methods and requirements for training of hunters, details on different types of weapons to be used when hunting, and so on. One country had conservation rules which protected badgers from baiting, digging, killing, relocating etc and banned hunting with dogs and taking animals from the wild, One country reported new

legislation which protected all vertebrate wild animals when are captive, even for a short time.

Some countries require veterinary supervision of horse racing (trotting, flat racing, hurdles etcetera) and dog racing as well as banning the doping of horses. Zoos were often included within the scope animal welfare Acts. Some legislation on animal training was common and frequently was limited to particular or to some categories of people dealing with animals professionally.

Legislation for marketing standards such as EU rules on free range eggs or organic were common but not for other welfare standards. Typically the label provides some information on how a specific producer keeps their animal rather than reflecting the welfare standards. Only one county reported a voluntary scheme to identify products from animals kept at welfare standards deemed higher than provided by law. Food retailers (supermarkets) use assurance scheme logos but purchasers do not always know what this means. Consumers are fickle in that they say they are concerned about animal welfare but act differently – they tend to buy on price.

CODES OF PRACTICE

Only half of the countries responded to questions on codes and they used them extensively across wide range of sectors. Some were in process of preparing welfare codes for the farmed *sector* and revising them for transport. Some Kennel clubs have issued ethical guidelines for the breeding of dogs.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Legislation to protect the public from captive wild animals, dangerous dogs including banning certain breeds, strays and animal exhibitions were in place in many countries. Some laws had specific details of fencing and husbandry methods etc which went some way to ensuring the welfare of such captive wild animals. One country has extensive rules with a ban on keeping animals caught in the wild as pets, and a ban on keeping predator species (with the exception of dogs, cats and ferrets) as pets. They also banned the keeping of venomous snakes in private homes, to protect public safety and had legislation regarding species protection to prevent many exotic species being let out in the wild. One country reported extensive rules to control stray animals making abandonment, worrying livestock, and trespass onto public highway and had powers to take action in specific circumstances e.g. notifiable disease control.

KILLING OF ANIMALS

Regulations of most countries did not required a specific reason for the killing of an animal but did lay down specific conditions for killing the animal humanely. All countries imposed conditions to ensure that slaughter killing or euthanasia were all done humanely. Some country restricted the right to kill animal to its owner.

Several countries restricted killing to specific circumstance which included:

- slaughter of farm animals for food;
- killing of surplus chicks and embryos in hatchery waste;
- emergency slaughter of farm animals;
- killing of animals in a helpless state;
- slaughter of animals for religious purposes;
- animal euthanasia; killing of caught fish;
- hunting of game and extermination of noxious insects and rodents.

Some countries laid down stringent rules for killing animals but exceptions can be made when killing is carried out for disease control.

Some countries rules provided a right to kill an abandoned cat under certain circumstances.

Some countries reported specific rules for slaughter by religious methods.

IMPLEMENTATION BY VETERINARY SERVICES

As for the provision of veterinary service countries had firm legal base and effective organisation but needed more finance and training to be fully effective. Many countries reported that they use veterinarians for welfare work but also use scientific/technical staff. In some countries staff who do not have veterinary qualifications work under veterinary direction but in others they did not. Some countries had specific rules to ensure that veterinarians have an obligation to safeguard the welfare of animals.

Some reported problems due to high turnover of staff. In some countries sufficient financial resources are not allocated for enforcement of all welfare regulations to provide sufficient number of inspectors and technical provisions. Other problems included a lack of practical experience regarding enforcement of European Community legislation and a lack of unified approach to the interpretation of welfare requirements at European Community level.

Some countries noted recent transition of Veterinary services to agency status.

Some countries had extensive licensing and approval systems for all buildings where farm animals are kept, all vehicles used for transport and all slaughterhouses and had requirements for inspection by the local official veterinarian to control compliance with animal welfare legislation.

Some countries had extensive operating instructions and computerisation of results of checks and targeting systems for welfare checks. Some reported planning for new checking arrangements required under new EU rules on cross compliance.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Although almost all countries reported some provision for animal welfare training at veterinary undergraduate level some with as much as 40-50 hours whereas others it was available as an elective subject. Others provided an additional week to cover welfare and welfare laws. Some countries had Bachelor level course in Ethology and animal welfare. Post graduate courses were less frequent but some countries had extensive provisions at Masters and PhD level. Some countries provided specific welfare training for veterinary officials.

Many countries had courses for animal keepers in animal care and welfare and some were planning course focussing on transport and slaughter. One country plans to require keepers to document their education. One country has licensing system for slaughtermen. All countries had training course for drivers but they varied in scope. One country reported special training package of video and course material for killing for disease control.

BARRIERS/OBSTACLES TO IMPLEMENTATION

<p>Human Resources</p> <p>Official veterinarians supervising their clients; Could be more motivated; Courts not very well informed about animal welfare legislation; Legal procedures make amendments to law protracted; Attitudes within the industry such as lack of understanding (not perceiving animal welfare as important and no respect for legislation) in some industries; Limited number of inspections that can be done in any one year.</p>	<p>Financial</p> <p>Could be more, depends how well you want to perform; Too little money in the budget; Other needs go easily before animal welfare; Animal welfare not respected in all stages; Not sufficient funding from the government to enhance level of animal welfare checks and education of staff; Limited funds for animal welfare research.</p>
<p>Education and training</p> <p>Sometimes low interest in duties, not well paid for; Sometimes too low respect for animal welfare; Lack of qualified lecturers; High staff turnover; Surgical procedures; Older veterinarians might need some more theoretical education on animal welfare; No specific animal welfare education for official veterinarians; Lack of competence on animal welfare among farmers and keeps of animals; Require keepers to document their education; No ready mechanism for knowledge transfer to all farmers; Limits on stock keepers ability to attend training/education events.</p>	<p>Practical ability and skills</p> <p>More practical training would be necessary; Too little knowledge and skills in administrative work; Lack of practical experience regarding enforcement of Community legislation; Lack of unified approach to interpretation of welfare requirements at Community level; Difficult to assess competence when not certified by recognised training body; Ageing population of stock keepers who have no obvious successors; No national demonstration farms available.</p>
<p>Effective welfare checks on farm</p> <p>Veterinarian inspecting his/her own clients; Tackling others' shortcomings and misconduct always painful; Lack of centrally coordinated training of staff; Not sufficient funding from the government to enhance level of animal welfare checks and education of staff; Varying educational background for animal welfare inspectors - The animal welfare inspectors at the local level are usually not veterinarians, but specifically trained inspectors, often with a background in animal science or biology; Large numbers of small holdings; Current system biased towards resource based checks; Not having up to date knowledge of what stock is on the farm.</p>	<p>Motivation of keepers to improve welfare</p> <p>The alleged conflict between efficient animal production and animal welfare, i.e. the difficulties related to showing the financial benefits of good animal husbandry practices; Low knowledge how to use animal welfare as marketing tool; Lack of consumer demands and lack of knowledge and/or interest; Lack of interest at retailer level; Other personal problems besides animal welfare; High number of small sized animal holdings; For small self-supplying farms investments for improvement of welfare conditions are not profitable; No material incentives; Ageing population of stock keepers who have no obvious successors; Poor rural infrastructure.</p>

Advice to Governments	Other
<p>Scientific justification for policies; Provided scientific justification often is not a sound argument because of possibility to interpret results differently; Unitary will; Need for socio-economic justification; Economy, tradition - When experiencing a conflict of interest between one/both of these fields and animal welfare, animal welfare is often the weaker one.</p>	

BEST PRACTICE

Education	Practical ability and skills
<p>Animal Welfare officer training; National body for training in technical skills and national vocational qualifications systems; Additional training for specialist on animal welfare; Continuous education for animal welfare inspectors; Course on administrative procedures for veterinarians; Education free of charge for veterinarians; Information to public; Publications in mass media; Booklets, technical booklets for keepers e.g. avoiding heat stress; Planning of training.</p>	<p>Lecture help for farmers' organisations; On the spot help on farms; Training of veterinary official veterinarians; Slaughtermen training, competency assessment and licensing; Animal Welfare officers employed in slaughterhouses; Welfare codes and legal obligation for keepers to possess and have knowledge of the code.</p>
Effective welfare checks on farm	Objective welfare indicators
<p>System of special checking lists; Report system; Co-operation with private veterinary practitioners; Unified data base of holdings register with inspection results; Updating of check lists to improve the quality of checks on farm; Implementation of quality program; Hopefully, developing cross-compliance checks will lead to improvement as connecting animal welfare provisions and outcomes to other on-farm controls and the possibilities of receiving agricultural subsidies can be expected to improve compliance and minimize the number of different official controls at each farm; Legal improvement notices and offence to ignore requirements of a notice; Auditable system for resolution of cases of poor welfare;</p>	<p>Scheme for classifying the foot-health of each broiler flock according to a standardized procedure at slaughter, the rearing conditions in general and the litter quality in particular can be evaluated at the abattoir has lead to considerable improved the standard of broiler production over a 10 year period; Voluntary schemes by the industry; Implementation of measurable parameters via Twinning project; A comprehensive animal based Welfare Assessment Programme is in use by voluntary sector; Novel Qualitative assessment methods of assessing welfare have been developed; Feedback data from slaughterhouses to vets and primary producers.</p>

Standing instructions for inspectors ensure uniform application of standards.	
Motivation of keepers	Advice to Government
<p>Training courses and campaign meetings; Premiums and support for investments for farmers when going above the legal Requirements; Interest for animal welfare in the media; National and Community support payments; Support of keepers for implementation of good farming practice; State Food and Veterinary Service has established a Badge of Merit "Follow the example of St. Francis" which is annually awarded to people for their activities in the field of protection of animals; Discussing animal welfare issues in the media and stakeholder discussion groups; Farm assurance schemes e.g. Freedom Food; Business analysis of practices which offer best welfare outcomes for hill sheep.</p>	<p>Creation of animal welfare Council and similar bodies has facilitated advice to governments; Discussion groups with stakeholders when updating legislation; Good evidential base for policy making, including commissioning research; Long (12 weeks) public consultation period for policy, legislation and codes.</p>

TABLE 1 Summary of reported degrees of public interest or concern related to animal welfare in each country in Group IV ²

Group IV	Question		A*	B	E	F	G	H	I	H
Overview	1.10	Government	4**	4	2	4	3	4	4	4
	1.20	Local Authorities	4	3	3	4	2	3	4	3
	1.30	Agriculture sector	4	2	3	4	2	4	4	4
	1.40	food processor	3	3	2	4	2	3	4	3
	1.50	Retailer	2	3	2	3	2	3	4	2
	1.60	Consumer	3	4	2	4	3	4	4	4
	1.70	NGO	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4

* Countries randomly coded

** code as 0= no reply, 1= no interest, 2=low interest, 3= medium interest, 4 = high interest

² Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and United Kingdom

TABLE 2 Summary of reported legal status of animals in Group IV countries³ expressed as proportion of countries which responded to that question

Group IV	Question		Number of Reponses	Per Cent yes
Legal status	4.01	goods	8	38%
	4.02	sentient beings	8	88%
	4.03	moral agents	8	0%
	4.04	other	0	0

TABLE 3 Summary of reported legislation relating to protection of animals and codes of practice for welfare issues in Group IV countries⁴ expressed as proportion of countries which responded to that question

Group IV	Question		Number of Reponses	Per Cent yes
Legislation	5.01	sentient beings	8	88%
General	5.02	abuse cruelty	8	100%
	5.03	licensing	8	88%
	5.04	animal trainer	8	100%
	5.05	other	0	0
Specific	5.06	farm animals	8	100%
	5.07	transport	8	100%
	5.08	slaughter	8	100%
	5.09	emergency killing	8	100%
	5.10	killing for disease control	8	88%
	5.11	laboratory animals	8	100%
	5.12	pets	8	100%
	5.13	stray or free roaming animals	8	88%
	5.14	wild animals	8	88%
	5.15	zoo animals	8	88%
	5.16	circus animals	8	88%
	5.17	sporting animals	8	100%
	5.18	other	0	0
Legal Standards	5.19	Free Range organic	8	100%
	5.20	labelling	7	57%
	5.21	other	0	0
Codes General	5.22	sentient beings	3	67%
	5.23	abuse cruelty	3	67%
	5.24	licensing	3	67%
	5.25	animal trainer	3	100%
	5.26	other	1	100%

³ Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and United Kingdom

⁴ *Ibid.*

Codes Specific	5.27	farm animals	3	100%
	5.28	transport	3	100%
	5.29	slaughter	3	100%
	5.30	emergency killing	2	100%
	5.31	killing for disease control	2	50%
	5.32	laboratory animals	3	100%
	5.33	stray or free roaming animals	3	67%
	5.34	wild animals	3	0%
	5.35	zoo animals	3	67%
	5.36	circus animals	2	50%
	5.37	sporting animals	3	67%
	5.38	other	0	0
Code Standards	5.39	Free Range; organic	4	75%
	5.40	labelling	7	86%
	5.41	other	0	0
Legislation	6.01	captive wild	7	86%
Public safety	6.02	Dangerous dogs	8	75%
	6.03	stray animals	7	71%
	6.04	Exhibitions	8	88%
	6.05	Other	0	0
Killing	7.10	without reason	8	63%
	7.20	conditions to kill	8	100%

TABLE 4 Summary of information on Veterinary services and Education related to welfare issues reported by Group IV countries⁵ expressed as a proportion of countries which responded to that question

Group IV	Question		Number of Responses	Per Cent yes
Veterinary Services	8.10	technical qualifications	8	100%
	8.20	training & capacity	8	88%
	8.30	independence	7	86%
	8.40	practical experience	8	75%
	8.50	other	0	0
Organisation	9.10	law	8	100%
	9.20	finance	8	75%
	9.30	effective	8	100%
	9.40	international certification	6	50%
	9.50	other	0	0
Procedures	10.10	on farm	8	100%
	10.20	transport	8	100%
	10.30	slaughter	8	100%
	10.40	kill disease control	8	75%

⁵ Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and United Kingdom

	10.50	other	0	0
Training	11.01	on farm central	8	88%
	11.02	transport central	8	100%
	11.03	slaughter central	8	100%
	11.04	killing central	8	88%
	11.05	other central	0	0
	11.06	on farm OVS	8	100%
	11.07	transport OVS	8	100%
	11.08	slaughter OVS	8	100%
	11.09	kill disease OVS	8	75%
	11.10	other OVS	0	0
	11.11	on farm PVS	8	88%
	11.12	transport PVS	8	75%
	11.13	slaughter PVS	8	75%
	11.14	kill disease PVS	8	63%
	11.15	other PVS	0	0
	11.16	on farm farmers	7	100%
	11.17	transport farmers	8	100%
	11.18	slaughter farmers	7	86%
	11.19	kill disease farmers	5	40%
	11.20	other farmers	0	0
Veterinary	12.00	undergrad welfare course	7	100%
Education	13.00	post grad welfare course	8	75%