

ISSUES RELATING TO STOCKBREEDING, TRANSPORT AND SLAUGHTERING CONDITIONS WITH REGARD TO ANIMAL WELFARE

Questions relating to livestock welfare give rise to heated societal debate. They bear on the link between human and animal, the relationship with death and the environment, modes of production and, more generally, agricultural and agrifood systems as a whole.

The CESE does not only approach the subject from the angle of animals and their awareness, but also extends it to the question of work, employees and stockbreeders. This is one of animal welfare's fundamental prerequisites, a constituent of the "One welfare" concept because it also includes environmental and climatic issues, as impacts in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and effluent discharges can vary considerably depending on practices implemented. The most virtuous among them have positive impacts, including in terms of territorial dynamism.

It is therefore on this basis that the ESEC has come up with its own definition of animal welfare.

Various "industrialised" methods of stockbreeding and slaughter, and the modes of transport resulting from them, have become the subject of widely publicised and extremely virulent criticism that has had a significant impact

on public opinion. Much of it comes from associations, some of which employ radical methods. In this context, increasing numbers of consumers are aware of the issues, and some even go as far as cutting down on or even cutting out meat consumption, although only 2% of the population is vegetarian. It is also what motivates food product processors and distributors, who appropriate the subject in order to try and promote products more respectful of animal welfare.

Certain that it is essential to act without waiting for any far-reaching changes to come about, our Assembly proposes a series of measures aimed at improving animals' living conditions as well as those of the women and men who work in contact with them. These recommendations, which will need changes to be made in the legal framework and public policies, require the mobilisation of all sectoral and territorial actors, with consumers' choices taken into full consideration.



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"There can be no farm animal welfare without satisfactory living and working conditions for the humans responsible for breeding, transporting and slaughtering them. They are fundamental prerequisites, constituents of the "One Welfare" concept, which also includes preservation of the environment. »

👉 Drawing on cooperation from territories and sectors in order to improve production systems

- Implement a national plan ensuring balanced territorial coverage as regards local abattoirs, public abattoirs in particular, by incorporating alternative solutions such as mobile abattoirs and slaughter trailers
- Integrate questions of animal welfare systematically into sectors' plans in order to foster and support transitions (redirect the suckling cattle breeding sector to the domestic market; avoid destruction of young animals with no current economic value)

👉 Prioritising stockbreeding methods that respect animal welfare and the environment, by means of regulation and public policies

- Further develop European regulations on animal welfare: extension to all sectors, reinforcement of standards (reduction of densities, prohibition of certain practices, etc.), and harmonisation and improvement of controls
- Ensure strict application of regulations in France and the European Union as a whole through creation of public posts and reinforcement of public and/or independent controls
- Take account of animal welfare and work conditions in compliance with this goal in procedures for authorisation of classified facilities
- In the Common Agricultural Policy's short- and medium term provisions and orientations, provide for financial and incentive measures designed to foster and support transitions to more respectful practices with regard to animals, humans, natural environments and the climate

👉 Improving animal transport conditions

- Reinforce regulations (reduce durations of road transport of animals, with eventual limitation to 8 hours in the EU), and increase numbers of controls

👉 Guaranteeing good slaughtering conditions

- Enable employees to practice their profession under good conditions (reduction of work pace, decrease in work time, account taking of arduousness via collective conventions and sectoral agreements, etc.)
- Make stunning mandatory (reversible or carried out immediately after the "ritual act") in order to reconcile ritual and reduction of suffering when animals are put to death
- Devote extra financial resources to veterinary services and inspections, ante-mortem in particular, via an increase in health inspection fees.
- Issue major reserves on installation of cameras in abattoirs, as they are no substitute for live inspection (respect of employees' labour rights)

👉 Reorientating research

- Increase fundamental research on more virtuous stockbreeding methods (animal welfare, environmental and climatic impacts, livestock housing and slaughtering techniques)
- Redirect research and its funding to genetic selection that respects animal welfare (hardiness of animals, mix of breeds, etc.)

👉 Making lifelong learning available and accessible

- Incorporate animal welfare aspects in reference frameworks for training in and certification of animal sector professions, including human/animal relations and the issues involved therein

👉 Prohibit importation of meat that does not respect animal welfare

- Include animal welfare systematically in free-trade agreements in order to prohibit importation of meat that does not comply with the standards currently in force in Europe. Ratification of such agreements as they stand is therefore not possible.

👉 Empowering consumers and meeting their expectations

- At French level, institute a labelling system monitored by the public authorities and designed to provide clear information on animal breeding, transport and slaughter conditions
- Make use of mass catering to encourage adaptation of proportions of meat products, by promoting knowledge of (animal and vegetable) origins, quality and diversity with regard to protein content
- Systematise inclusion of an animal welfare component in specifications for products with official labels of quality and origin