



Action and Understanding: The Animal Welfare Newsletter

Why a newsletter?

Within the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO), the Animal Welfare Unit D5, headed by Andrea Gavinelli, is at the centre of the Commission's work in this area. It is launching this twice-a-year newsletter to raise awareness among the general public, stakeholders, professionals and NGOs about animal welfare. Send your views to SANCO-animal-welfare@ec.europa.eu



THE COMMISSION IS WORKING – FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

...a new start...

This year marks a new start for the European Commission's work on animal welfare. There is a stronger foundation for our work than ever before. The Treaty of Lisbon, which came into force last December, has created an explicit duty regarding animal welfare under EU law. Article 13 of the Treaty speaks of animals as "sentient beings" that must be respected in the EU decision-making process. This means that the EU has to take animal



welfare fully into account in policies relating to agriculture, fisheries, transport, internal market, research and technological development, and even space.

...a long track record...

It's a new start – but European Union interest in animal welfare is not new. The EU has been developing animal welfare legislation for 30 years. The legislative scope is already extensive – covering, among others, farm animals, animals used for scientific purposes, zoo animals and animals in the wild. Animal welfare is already integrated into other EU policies, including animal health, environment, sustainable development, and trade. What the EU has been doing within its own borders is mirrored by its engagement at international level too, where it has been a frequent leader in championing animal welfare initiatives.



Foreword from the Director General

I am pleased to welcome you to the first edition of the Animal Welfare Unit of EU Commission Newsletter in this crucial moment when the Treaty of Lisbon recognizes animals as "sentient beings" in its Article 13 as well as when the Commission has recently initiated a process to evaluate the effects of its policy on animal welfare, which will be the starting point for a new five-year Community Action Plan on the protection and welfare of animals 2011–2015.

In this regard, I believe the content of this newsletter is as much about the future as it is about the present. Some of the initiatives that the Animal Welfare Unit is currently carrying out will be covered within the articles in this newsletter and I hope that everything in here will affect you somehow since everything we do is aimed at meeting your needs.

I hope the launch of this newsletter will mark the start or improvement of a constructive and productive relationship to stand us in good stead for the years ahead and will facilitate the dialogue between us in order to continuously improve the quality of our commitment towards animal welfare.

We are already looking at the next edition, so enjoy your first reading and don't forget to show and share your concerns with us.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Paola Testori
Director General for Health and Consumers

THE COMMISSION IS WORKING – FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

... new impetus ...

The new beginning is giving new impetus to the EU's engagement in animal welfare. The Commission has begun an evaluation of the effects of its policy on animal welfare. The results will feed into a new five-year **Strategy on Welfare 2011–2015**.

The overall aims are to stop animals enduring avoidable pain or suffering and to oblige their owners and keepers to respect welfare requirements.

At the same time, common standards will ensure that society's expectations in relation to animal welfare are met. They will also prevent distortions of competition arising from divergent standards in animal welfare across the EU.



... current work-plan ...

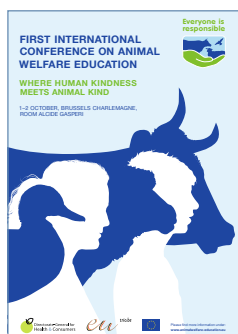
Currently, the Commission is focusing on:

- Developing animal welfare labelling which will make it easier for consumers to identify and choose welfare-friendly products.
- Setting the basis for the elaboration of animal-based scientific indicators, ensuring they are easy to understand and usable by farmers.
- Ensuring that animal welfare legislation is properly implemented and enforced in the Member States and beyond, through inspections by the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) which in 2009 carried out 20 inspections and audits.
- Building on the opinions from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) over the last four years that have assisted the Commission to prepare animal welfare initiatives.

First International Conference on Education and Animal Welfare

Education is a vital factor in raising awareness about the importance of animal welfare. That's why the European Commission is organising the First International Conference on Education and Animal Welfare in Brussels on 1–2 October 2010.

Current educational approaches will be presented and discussed by leading international experts in animal welfare education. Possibilities for harmonising criteria and methodologies will be further explored and, at the same time, the conference will help to consolidate a growing network of educational institutions active in the field.



Around 400 participants – including academics, EU officials, teachers, veterinarians and NGO representatives – are expected to attend.

This will be another step in what the Commission sees as a longer process that will not only promote education but will also provide easier access to learning programmes on animal welfare.

In addition, the conference will feature an exhibition of educational initiatives and the awards ceremony of the Children's Drawing Contest organised by the Commission. This competition is aimed at children aged 6–13, under the theme "making animals happy". The winners will be invited to the awards ceremony, which will be attended by Prince Laurent of Belgium. Further information can be found on www.animalwelfare-education.eu.

Better Training for Safer Food

The legislation relating to food continues to become increasingly complex. The officials who have to implement it face an ever-growing range of duties and responsibilities in everything from food and feed, to animal health and welfare and plant health. To help meet the evident need for information, the European Commission has created the Better Training for Safer Food initiative, which provides customised training workshops on EU requirements. Animal welfare is part of the concept of food safety and the EU is providing training opportunities to understand the basic legislation and to ensure proper enforcement. Several events have been organised in the past years. The next one that will be organized will deal with the issue of religious slaughter and will take place in Turkey on 5–8 October where the issue has a particular cultural dimension.



Talking today to tomorrow's citizens

The Commission addresses a wide target audience with its animal welfare message, from farmers and producers to the general public. But because the future of animal welfare

is in the hands of today's children, special efforts are made to alert them, at an early age, and to inform them that animals are "sentient beings".



One initiative is Farmland, a website targeted to children. Farmland (<http://www.farmland-thegame.eu/>) is an interactive tool for children aged 9–12, aimed at teaching them how to make informed choices that include animal welfare considerations. Farmland is given a prominent place in the "One Health" road show that has been travelling around Europe to be present in agricultural fairs and exhibitions for the last three years.

LATEST NEWS

Making animal welfare sustainable

Animal welfare has taken its place within an overall concept of “quality” that extends from animal health through food safety and quality, and on to protecting the environment, sustainability, and enhancing the quality of life in rural areas. Science is contributing new thinking on how relations between humans and animals can promote improved animal welfare and sustainable forms of production. In this regard, the European Commission has been cooperating closely with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) on multilateral standards for animal welfare and with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to promote sustainable farming practices in developing countries. This year, the Commission also collaborate with the International Wool Textile Organisation to organise a conference on “Environment and Animal Welfare” in Paris last May.



The Spanish Presidency and animal welfare

The Spanish Presidency of the European Council also focused on animal welfare issues while it held the Presidency of the Council in the first half of 2010. The report on “Options for labelling the animal welfare and establishment of a European Network of Reference for the Protection and Welfare of Animals” was discussed at the February Agriculture Council. EU ministers agreed on the need for better consumer information to respond to their concerns.



New legislation on the use of animals for scientific purposes was also among the Spanish priorities. The Council worked towards agreement with the European Parliament and Council on a draft directive to update the EU’s 1986 rules with a focus on improved animal welfare and implementation of the “3Rs” principles – Refinement, Reduction and Replacement.

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INTERVIEW

A Norwegian in the Animal Welfare Unit

Jostein Dragset is a Norwegian expert who has been working in the Commission’s Animal Welfare Unit for the last three years. Here he reflects on life in the unit.

How can Norwegians work in the Commission when Norway is not a Member State of the EU?

The answer is simple: The EEA agreement. It brings together the 27 EU Members and the three EFTA countries – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway – in an Internal Market governed by the same basic rules for goods, services, capital and persons to move freely about in the 30 EEA States. This agreement also applies to animal health and animal welfare. EU legislation is applicable to Norway just as it is for the EU Member States.

What do you think about the EU’s engagement in animal welfare?

I have been surprised by the high political engagement, especially when I see that the report on animal welfare labelling to which I have actively contributed. I think it is crucial to inform Europeans that animals are sentient beings, and I assume the EU’s efforts are highly appreciated.

How did you find working in the unit?

As a “foreigner” here, I have enjoyed what is an excellent environment for the exchange of views. Animal welfare is an exciting policy area, and innovation, networking and communication with citizens and stakeholders are of major importance. And I feel my contribution is respected. Here in the Commission, everything is done as a team, so even relatively simple statements need to be scrutinized by a number of people first. When I was working as an official in Norway, I was empowered to sign off on such statements myself – but here the Commission is acting on behalf of 27 Member States.