

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

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New Animal Welfare Strategy 2011-2015

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Report Highlights:

The EU has begun work on a new Animal Welfare Strategy for 2011-2015. This five-year plan is expected to build-on the achievements of the Animal Welfare Action plan for 2006-2010. Paramount among the goals of this plan are evaluating the implementation and enforcement of existing legislation in EU Member States and working to enhance animal welfare standards internationally so as to level the playing field for European producers.

General Information:

Introduction

Over the past decade, animal welfare has gained high political priority as a key societal concern in the European Union. Animal welfare was a component of Article 226 in the Treaty establishing the European Community and has been updated in [The Treaty of Lisbon](#) which entered into force on December 1, 2009.

In 1986, [Council Directive 98/58/EC](#) on the protection of animals kept for farming purposes gave general rules for the protection of animals of all species, including fish, reptiles and amphibians, kept for the production of food, wool, fur or other farming purposes. These rules are based on the European Convention for the Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes and reflect the following 'Five Freedoms' espoused by the Farm Animal Welfare Council:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst - access to fresh water and a diet for full health and vigor.
2. Freedom from discomfort - an appropriate environment with shelter and comfortable rest areas.
3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease - prevention or rapid treatment.
4. Freedom to express normal behavior - adequate space and facilities, company of the animal's own kind.
5. Freedom from fear and distress - conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

A new Animal Welfare Strategy, 2011-2015

Work on a [Roadmap](#) for a new Animal Welfare Strategy for 2011-2015 has started. This new animal welfare strategy will succeed the [Community Action Plan on the protection and welfare of animals \(2006-2010\)](#). An evaluation of the Action Plan for 2006-2010 is underway and conclusions are expected in early 2011, after which the European Commission is expected to draft its ideas for the Animal Welfare Strategy for 2011-2015. In the meantime, the [animal welfare initiatives](#) have included several preparatory events.

Scientific conference in Uppsala – October 8-9, 2009

The Swedish EU presidency organized a scientific conference on animal welfare entitled “Delivering Animal Welfare Quality: Transparency in the Food Production Chain” in October 2009, which was a follow-up to a conference in Uppsala in January 2009 entitled, “[Conference on Trade and Animal Welfare.](#)” The main goal of the conference was to address the results of a Community funded research project, [Welfare Quality](#),[®] and discuss ways to implement animal welfare as a societal concern. Presentations on the first day focused on how to increase consumer awareness and animal welfare education. The second day focused on promoting animal welfare as a societal concern at the international level and included speakers from around the world. The program is available at

http://www.se2009.eu/polopoly_fs/1.17372!menu/standard/file/Def_Programme%20aw%20conference%202009

Follow-up conference in the European Parliament

On February 10, 2010, an evaluation conference on the Animal Welfare Action plan, 2006-2010 was held in the European Parliament under the auspices of the [Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe](#) (ALDE). While final conclusions on the first action plan will not be drawn before the end of 2010, it was concluded that unequal implementation of animal welfare legislation in EU Member States (MS) was likely to induce competitive distortion. The European Commission was urged to step up controls on MS progress in animal welfare implementation. At the same time, EU producers that imports also meant competitive distortion as they were bound by EU animal welfare legislation and therefore were made to have animal welfare standards be part of the WTO SPS agreement. The EU animal welfare umbrella

Eurogroup for Animals, announced the creation of the [Transatlantic Animal Welfare Council](#), which is working animal welfare organizations towards this end.

Online survey to measure public sentiment

An online survey was launched in June-July 2010, with the help of outsider consultants, as part of an evaluation Policy on Animal Welfare (EUPAW) being conducted by the European Commission, Directorate General Health and Consumers (DG SANCO). This study will be followed by an impact assessment, expected to start in January 2011.

Launch of animal welfare newsletter

In June of 2010, DG SANCO announced the publication of the 1st issue of a new electronic [Animal Welfare Newsletter](#). The aim is to publish this new communication tool twice a year. The first issue focused on the Conference on animal welfare education.

Conference on animal welfare education

The first [International Conference on Animal Welfare Education](#) was held in Brussels on October 1-2, 2010. The conference highlighted how animal welfare could be promoted through education and had a [program](#) featuring experts from academia around the world.

Forum on “Improving the welfare of horses during transport: the importance of enforcement”

On November 29, 2010, the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) and the Federation of Veterinarians in Europe (FVE) organized a [Forum](#) in Brussels on “Improving the welfare of horses during transport: the importance of enforcement.” The focus was on implementation of the [Transport Regulation](#) and the scope for potential improvements.

Animal Welfare NGOs in Europe

NGOs are important stakeholders in the EU animal welfare debate and they have been effective lobbyists. One such organization is [Eurogroup for Animals](#), an umbrella organization for animal welfare organizations in Member States. For a broad range of useful information on EU agricultural policies and easy access to USEU reports, trade information and other practical information please visit our website: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/posthome/useu/> or contact our email: aguseubrussels@fas.usda.gov

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