

[en](#) | [fr](#)

| 08.04.2019

## **Animal welfare**

### **SLOGAN**

Suggestion: **Speaking up for animals !**

**We care for animals !**

### **THE STORY IN SHORT**

Animals of all shapes and sizes play an important role in the maintenance of the balance in the ecosystems and life for humans on earth. Animals such as pets are also wonderful companions that provide psychological and physiological benefits to owners and help create social bridges in our communities.

Many animals, however, like wildlife animals, fishes, insects and birds are on the verge of extinction because of human activities, be it by loss of biodiversity and habitats or poaching and illegal trading.

On the other hand, animals raised as livestock in farms and aquaculture pens are on the increase in the world. Most of them are still bred in terrible conditions and live miserable lives. Their industrialised production is highly problematic not only for the welfare of the animals themselves but also for the balance of the ecosystem, the environment and public health. Industrialised farming and animal protein based food systems is one of the largest contributor to climate change, pollution and the rise of antibiotic resistance.

Greens/EFA work tirelessly to protect animals and fight for their welfare and health. We fight against the terrible negative impacts of industrialised factory farming, to reduce farm animal suffering and enable them to live better lives, by demanding higher standards, their right to live according to their natural needs and the banning of cruel and unethical practices. We also fight to stop bullfighting, phase out animal testing, ban fur farming and end trafficking of wildlife and endangered species, and better welfare across the EU for our companion animals and pets.

## KEY MESSAGES

- **We want to reduce animal suffering and stop cruelty to animals:** animals are sentient beings, not spare parts in a factory production chain. For farming animals, this has been recognised since 1976 through the signing of a European Convention; however legislation on animal welfare is not sufficient for reducing animal suffering and stopping cruelty to animals, or not yet fully put into practice. We want new rules to end long distance live animal transport, cage farming practices and fur farming, cruel practices such as routine tail-docking of pigs. The EU is also lagging behind the reduction of the use of animals for scientific experiments and the development of suitable alternatives.
- **We want to enable animals to live a good life – meeting the animals’ natural behavioural needs:** Better living conditions on the farm, in the aquaculture pen and the right for animals to meet their natural behavioural needs. Today animals are still bred and transported in terrible conditions. They need to have access to the outside, be able to graze, forage and /or have access to a water area if this is their natural needs.
- **We want to increase animal health:** Improving animal health is a matter that not only concerns the wellbeing of animals themselves but also is essential for the protection of public health. Treating animals with massive amounts of medicines and feeding them antibiotics is not making them healthier, is a threat to public health and destroy soil ecosystems.
- **Animal trafficking and trading:** we want to reduce trade and end trafficking of animals and animal products that causes animal suffering and fuels organised crime, such as the ivory trade and trafficking of wildlife and exotic animals as pets.
- **Companion animals :** combating their illegal breeding and trade often in terrible conditions raising concerns not only for their welfare but also public health and consumer protection.

### Opponents or barriers:

- Factory farming and meat industry sectors that are based on large scale industrial production, relying on high quantity and high density farming, and low quality production;
- EU’s import/export orientated trade policy for agricultural goods; retailers and supermarkets that pressure farmers into low quality/low standard production processes;
- An industrialised food production system that does not acquaint citizens with understanding where their food come from and that the meat/animal product they consume was/comes from a living sentient being;
- Large farm lobby (COPA COGECA) that advocates the status quo in the food production system while the current system neither implements basic animal welfare nor adequately remunerates farmers;
- Pharma lobby interested in selling ever more drugs
- Conservative political forces in the European Parliament that have mainly been defending the interests of industrial and export orientated agriculture, rather than interests of animal welfare.

## FACTS/EUROPEAN COMPETENCE

### *Why is it important?*

Through its agriculture, transport, fisheries, research and chemicals policies, the European Union is responsible for a large body of legislation that directly or indirectly affect the welfare of animals.

Although all animals are recognised in the Lisbon Treaty (art. 13 TFEU) as sentient beings whose welfare has to be ensured, more work is needed to improve their rights to live according to their natural needs and ensure better implementation of existing animal welfare rules for farmed animals.

Improving animal welfare in Europe means setting the best possible standards at EU level in the interest of the animals and European citizens.

### *Some facts and figures*

- According to the Special Eurobarometer 442 survey of March 2016, 89% of EU citizens agree that the EU should do more to promote a greater awareness of the importance of animal welfare internationally, and 90% of EU citizens agree that it is important to establish high animal welfare standards that are recognized across the world.
- Across the EU in 2016 there were about 336 million livestock animals for meat production including 90m bovines, 147m pigs, 87m sheep and 13m goats (source Eurostat[1])
- One fifth of the EU-28's total fishery production in 2015 came from aquaculture[2]; global aquaculture production is forecast to provide two thirds of food fish supply[3]
- Across the EU in 2014, more than double the amount of antimicrobials was used for animals as compared to humans (8927 tons vs. 3821 tons) [4]
- Today, the EU is transporting over a billion live terrestrial animals annually. Around 4 million cattle, 28 million pigs, 4 million sheep, around 243 million poultry and 150 thousand horses are transported for more than 8 hours within the EU every year. A growing percentage travel far beyond the borders of our Union.
- In 2017, a Commission audit report concluded that animal protection during live transport failed across about 90% of Member States inspected, both during the EU part and in the later journey outside the EU.
- The European Commission in 2017 also produced a report on the practices of farmed fish transport and slaughter, showing that depending on the country not all international standards are met[5].
- European citizens are against animal cloning for food production: 2/3 think that food from clones are not good for themselves or their family, 70% say cloning should not be encouraged.
- It is estimated that **80 million households in Europe have at least one pet** and **we care for some 7 million horses and donkeys**. Nevertheless, the welfare of our companion animals is not protected at

European level.

### **What impact does EP work have on the topic?**

In 1976 the European Union and its Member States signed and ratified the “European Convention for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes” of the Council of Europe. The Convention include “five freedoms”:

- Freedom from hunger and thirst
- Freedom from discomfort
- Freedom from pain, injury and disease
- Freedom to express normal behaviour
- Freedom from fear and distress

Since the 80’s and 90’s, legislation has been adopted at European Community level on the conditions of live of farm animals, including standards for the conditions of laying hens, and on the condition of calves and pigs.

In 1998, a Directive on the “general rules for the protection of animals of all species kept for the production of food, wool, skin or fur or other farming purposes” integrated the principles of the “European Convention for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes”.

Since 2009, the European Union treaties recognise that animals are sentient beings (Article 13 of Title II) and require that in agriculture, fisheries, transport, the internal market and research policy the EU and Member States pay full regard to animal welfare requirements.

As a general principle, the EU sets minimum standards while national governments may adopt rules that are more stringent. Thanks to the pressure of animal welfare campaigns, the European Union has banned veal crates across the EU from 2007, barren battery cages for laying hens from 2012 and barren individual cages for pregnant sows in 2013.

Legislation on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes was revised in 2010 while a full EU ban on animal testing for cosmetic entered into force in 2013. In 2018, legislation on veterinary medicinal products was revised to address the problem of antimicrobial resistance.

The European Parliament, as a co-legislator, has a role to play in the setting those standards. It also has a role in bringing the voice of the citizens and animal welfare organisation to the forefront of the political agenda, through petitions to its Petitions Committee, through the European Citizens’ initiatives, and the activities of the Intergroup on Animal Welfare in which the Greens/EFA are very active.

***Where do we make the difference (compared to other political groups/parties)?***

We work hand in hand with relevant animal welfare groups to replace animal tests with alternative non-animal tests. We are the most active and the most credible group working for a paradigm shift to achieve sustainable agricultural production.

## **GREENS/EFA ACHIEVEMENTS AND BATTLES**

### **u REDUCE SUFFERING OF FARM ANIMALS**

#### ***Animal Transport***

The transportation of live animals has caused societal outrage for decades. Many citizens are baffled by the fact why in the 21st century we are still barbarically transporting live animals over extremely long distances. Within the European Union, pigs and cows are often transported in confined spaces far beyond the permitted times, the water supply is inadequate and rules on temperatures and rest periods are not observed.

The Greens/EFA group has been calling for a Committee of Inquiry to investigate the numerous infringements of the EU Regulation on the transport of live animals that was adopted in 1991.

Despite the fact that 223 MEPs had called for the creation of this Committee of Inquiry (more than the 183 required), the Conference of Presidents of the political groups, to which the EP President also belongs, prevented the request from being put to a vote in the plenary session of the European Parliament.

The Greens/EFA group is therefore taking the European Parliament to the European Court of Justice for having blocked the setting up of the Committee of Inquiry into the conditions around animal transport.

In the meantime, the European Parliament instead adopted a report looking into how to deal with the abuses in animal transport, led by the conservative-dominated Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI). In the adoption of the report Greens/EFA are pushing for:

- drastically improving transport conditions such as banning on all journeys over eight hours;
- journeys to slaughter to be limited to four hours and an ethical transport system that gives priority to the transport of meat rather than animals transiting to slaughter;
- better standards for space, temperature, ventilation, access to water and stricter controls on those standards;
- develop alternatives such as mobile slaughterhouses to limit transports;
- banning exports outside of Europe, where EU animal welfare laws cannot be enforced.

#### ***End the Cage Age***

The EU recognizes that animals are sentient beings. However, up to 700 million farm animals, including hens, quail, rabbits, sows and ducks, are still being confined in cages on EU farms each year.

The use of cages in farming deprives the animals of their autonomy, rendering them solely dependent on

their keepers for essential needs such as food or water. It severely limits their ability to meet essential behavioural, physical and psychological needs. Many farm animals are kept in cages for all or much of their lives.

The Greens/EFA group MEPs supported the launch in September 2018 of a European Citizen's Initiative "End the cage age" calling for EU legislation to end the inhumane treatment of farm animals. Should the initiative receive one million signatures from citizens within one year (September 2019), from at least seven different Member States, the Commission will have to react within three months. The NGOs are expecting to collect more than 2 million signatures.

### **Broiler chickens**

Factory farming of chickens relies on a breed developed in the 50's that grows so fast, the bones break and the animals suffer, crowded together in unnaturally high densities, smeared in their own excrement. Disease and suffering kill a high percentage of individuals even before they reach the slaughter stage.

In October 2018, the Greens/EFA pushed for the adoption of a resolution of the European Parliament denouncing that the animal welfare directive, the so-called Broiler directive from 2007, is not being respected at all in the Member States. Greens/EFA have called for resolute action by the European Commission to remedy the situation and enforce the law. We have proposed a list of preventative measures to resort to before the use of antibiotics, such as lower densities of population, smaller groups, isolation of sick animals, and the use of breeds that grow more slowly and healthily.

It is necessary to redirect the CAP subsidies to discourage battery caging. Europe has started to make the payment of subsidies conditional on the respect of animal welfare standards. This conditionality consists of linking most of the payments made to farmers within the framework of the CAP to the respect of minimum requirements. Regrettably, the Directive for laying hens and broilers is still not included in those requirements. We need to change that.

### **Rabbits**

Rabbits are the second most farmed species in the EU, after broiler chickens, with over 320 million being slaughtered annually. The vast majority of them are kept in barren wire cages where their natural behaviour is severely restricted. They live brutally short miserable lives, suffering from diseases associated with the high population densities, unable to express their own specific species behaviours.

Though some Member States have legal requirements for rabbit farming, there is no EU legislation on minimum standards for their protection. Harmonized minimum standards for rabbit welfare would help to combat animal suffering and would help farmers offer better quality products. Greens/EFA led the adoption in February 2017 of a European Parliament report calling for minimum standards of welfare and health for the protection of farmed rabbits.

In addition, thanks to the Greens/EFA group leading the revision of the Organic Farming legislation, standards for farmed rabbits in organic production were improved. The law now requires that rabbits be kept in group pens with access to a small area of pasture which allows the rabbits more space, increased social interaction and more opportunities for natural behaviour.

### **Avoiding pain and unnecessary suffering in slaughtering**

Despite the overall goal of reducing meat consumption and ensuring that the breeding to meet such reduced demand is essentially done through organic farming instead of factory farming, we need to ensure

that slaughtering of animals to be introduced into the food chain is done in a humane manner, namely minimizing the pain suffered by the animal. *EU* legislation requires the mandatory stunning of animals before slaughter, but there is evidence of increasing failures in slaughterhouses to observe the basic requirements of *EU* Slaughter Regulation. This lack of enforcement needs to be better monitored and controlled so as to ensure more humane slaughter conditions. For existing derogations for religious slaughtering we need to strengthen the dialogue with religious authorities, to make the stunning effective also in religious rituals for slaughtering.

### [Tail-docking and routine castration of pigs](#)

Routine tail-docking and routine castration of pigs and is one more clear example of factory farming that aims to maximise the economic profit over any kind of respect of animal welfare and dignity. Tail-docking causes behavioural disruption and diseases. Surgical castration is very painful when practised without anaesthesia and prolonged analgesia, as still allowed in the *EU*. Furthermore, this practice generates a competitive disadvantage in the internal market towards pig farming that respects the welfare conditions. Greens/EFA advocate that these practices should therefore be banned across the *EU*.

### [Phasing out of fur farms](#)

Worldwide each year more than 100 million animals are killed on fur farms after short and miserable lives in small battery cages. Keeping wild predators in small cages results in numerous serious stress-related health problems (infected wounds, missing limbs, cannibalism and stereotypical behaviour). The pelts animals on fur farms are often killed by cruel methods as gassing, neck-breaking, anal electrocution and sometimes skinning alive. Greens call for the end of fur farming within the *EU* and a ban of imports of furs into the common market.

## **u MEET THE NEEDS OF FARM ANIMAL NATURAL BEHAVIOUR**

### [Organic farming](#)

*Greens/EFA have fought for improved animal welfare standards to be mandatory in the legislation defining organic farming standards. Thanks to the Greens/EFA that were leading the revision of the organic farming legislation, organic farming will ensure better living conditions for rabbits, chickens and poultry as of 2021 and set strict rules on the way in which animals are housed. The number of animals kept in one space must be appropriate to guarantee their comfort. Moreover, they must have access to natural air and light, and must be able to go outdoors to appropriate pastures.*

*The new *EU* rules require the use of breeds that are robust, able to adapt to local conditions and disease-resistant, therefore preferring indigenous breeds and strains suited to specific environments. The feed given to livestock should enhance their health and wellbeing. Organic farmers must use organic fodder that is good not only for animal growth but also for their health and welfare. Feed must not contain any substances that artificially promote growth, synthetic amino acids or genetically modified organisms (GMOs).*

### [Animal welfare as a condition for accessing funds from the Common Agricultural Policy](#)

*Greens/EFA believe that we must move away from intensive industrial agriculture, especially factory farming that is reliant on rainforest-destroying soya imports for feeding the animals, and on the overuse of antibiotics. Currently, many millions of farm animals suffer from poor housing conditions and the way they*

*are reared accelerates the development of antimicrobial resistance, a threat to public health.*

*A substantial shift of how the EU funds for agriculture are spent is needed to ensure that a higher percentage of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) budget is devoted to improving animal housing systems, and for management practices that improve the welfare of farmed animals. Unfortunately, the CAP today still rewards the farmers according to the size of the farms and not enough according to their practices.*

The Greens/EFA are constantly demanding that receiving subsidies from the EU CAP be conditional on improving animal welfare standards. Funds should be provided only when farms move towards lower density factory farming practices, and provide animals with access to pasture, natural light, access to non-slated floorings, etc. EU funding must support sustainable and pasture based meat and milk production.

In addition, a minimum spending on animal welfare should be set under the Rural Development programme of the CAP, and an EU-wide programme established to support and improve the *implementation* of improved animal welfare standards in the Member States.

Finally, in order to combat climate change, demand for meat must decrease, along with livestock densities in *animal* production. Greens/EFA have called for an end to EU-funded promotion schemes intended to maintain or increase the EU's current level of unsustainable animal production, both for exported animal products and for consumption within the EU.

## **u IMPROVE ANIMAL WELFARE FOR BETTER PUBLIC HEALTH PROTECTION**

### ***Drastically reduce the use of antibiotics in animal farming***

Tacking the abuse and over-use of antibiotics in animal farming has been a long battle of the Greens/EFA Group. Routine use of antibiotics on entire animal herds is detrimental to animal welfare, the quality of food and is a public health threat. Treating animals with drugs may lead to some of those drugs remaining in the animal when it is slaughtered or milked and thus in the food, as well as killing soil microorganisms when brought on agricultural land.

Routine use of *antibiotics* also contributes massively to antibiotic resistance, which is a major risk to humans, to animal health and threatens us all. Antibiotics resistance presents already a serious social and economic threat. It is responsible for 25,000 deaths per year in the EU alone and 700,000 deaths per year globally. Inaction will cause millions of deaths globally: it is estimated that antibiotic resistance might cause more deaths than cancer by 2050.

In October 2018, the European Parliament adopted a new legislative framework for veterinary medicinal products and medicated feed. Thanks to a long battle by the Greens/EFA, the *systematic* preventative (prophylactic) use of antibiotics in animal feed will be prohibited as of 2022. Furthermore, critical antibiotics will be reserved for human use. This will also apply to imported foodstuffs – no imports of animals or produce thereof if they have been treated with reserve antibiotic. The use of antibiotics on an entire group of animals will only be allowed if disease is diagnosed by a vet, only when there is a high risk of the infection spreading and only for a limited period.

Without the routine use of antibiotics, factory farming will no longer be viable, and farmers will need to *adopt* better farming practices that will improve the life of farm animals across the EU. This *is* a major victory for public health and for animal welfare.

## [Animal cloning](#)

In 2015, the Greens/EFA led the call from the European Parliament to demand EU legislation to ban the cloning of animals and the placing on the market of any food derived from cloned animals or their descendants. For decades, Greens/EFA have been fighting for a ban on *cloning* as it has strong negative impacts on animal welfare and biodiversity. It does not offer any advantage to citizens, nor does it have any beneficial effect on food security, food safety or breeding improvement.

Companies that engage in cloning promote the selection of animals for very high yields and growth rates. *Most* cloned fetuses die during pregnancy or birth, only 6 to 15% of cattle and 6% of pigs are born alive! Cloning also compromises food security as it makes farmers dependent on patented technologies.

In 2013, the Commission presented two proposals related to cloning: one provisionally prohibiting the cloning of animals and the placing on the market of animal clones and embryo clones, and another provisionally prohibiting the placing on the market of food from animal clones. The *EP*, in its 2015 report, made clear that this is not enough and that we need a *comprehensive* ban on cloning, and on the placing on the market of food from clones and their descendants. However, since then the proposal has been stuck in Council, and urgently needs to be reactivated.

## **u PHASE-OUT ANIMAL TESTING**

EU-wide rules for the “**protection of animals used for scientific purposes**” were adopted in 2010. The law sets the principles of replacement (avoid the use of animals), reduction (reduce the number of animal used) and refinement (reduce the suffering) in the use of animals (so-called 3R).

We Greens/EFA have stood behind those principles, especially the principle of replacement, where the use of animals is clearly unjustified, such as for testing of cosmetics and of those pesticides and chemicals which have proven to be of high concern and that we believe should simply be banned. Greens/EFA also push for moving beyond the 3R, towards the principle that animals should only be used as a very last resort, calling for speeding up of the development of new non-animal innovative integrated approaches and methodologies to provide information on human toxicity, and for an update of relevant test method legislation whenever non-animal alternatives have become available.

The sale of all animal-tested cosmetics has been banned in the EU since 2013. However, around 80% of countries worldwide still allow animal testing and the marketing of cosmetics tested on animals. In addition, companies are able to place on the EU market products tested on animals outside the EU that are being re-tested in the EU using alternative methods, against the spirit of the regulation. Actively supported by the Greens/EFA group, the European Parliament adopted a resolution in June 2018, calling for an end to animal testing cosmetics worldwide and urged the EU to launch a ‘diplomatic drive’ for a worldwide ban before 2023

## **u STOP ANIMAL CRUELTY**

### [Put an end to bullfighting and other spectacles of animal cruelty](#)

While the EU treaties leave some room for exceptions related to national traditions and culture, we need to set some clear limits, so that there is no place to animal cruelty and *torture* in Europe. Particularly, it must

be ensured that no direct or indirect funding goes to finance the bullfighting sector. The Greens/EFA sought to prevent any further EU funds being channelled into bullfighting, and succeeded in getting the EP to adopt this position in its annual budget showing the increasing consensus around the fact that those types of activities need to be brought to an end. However as CAP financing is only linked to the farming conditions and not purpose of production, in effect the amendment was not operational.

### **Penalise cruelty and violence against animals**

Whereas criminal codification falls in the domain of national competences, efforts should be put at the *European* level to foster the criminalisation, with severe sanctions including jail if necessary, of animal mistreatment and arbitrary violence, linking them, for instance, to the logic of ecological crimes.

## **u ANIMAL TRADING AND TRAFFICKING**

### **Making the EU seal products ban watertight**

*In 2009, the Greens pushed for the EU to introduce a ban on seal products, following on from the successful Dutch and Belgian bans, with a view to ensuring the EU played a proactive role in reducing the scale of cruel commercial seal killing across the world. Canada and Norway contested this ban at the WTO but lost the case. In 2015 the European Parliament approved a new law that makes the ban watertight and fully compliant with World Trade Organization rules.*

### ***Stopping ivory trade and EU action plan against wildlife trafficking***

*Wildlife trafficking is worth an estimated €20 billion annually. It has grown to become the fourth biggest, and one of the most profitable, forms of organised cross-border crime. Poaching is furthermore linked to corruption, the financing of armed groups and murders of park rangers.*

*The EU banned ivory imports from, and exports to, Asia in 1975 and Africa in 1990, and regulated domestic trade strictly. However the EU is still the largest domestic market of ivory in the world. Illicit ivory trading has doubled since 2007 and poachers still kill an estimated 55 elephants every day, as the illegally poached ivory easily gets into the legal market.*

*Greens/EFA supported the 2016 EP call for a full and immediate ban at EU level on trade, export or re-export of ivory and rhinoceros horns. The resolution also called for common sanctions at EU level against wildlife trafficking, appropriate levels of penalties for wildlife crime offences and a review of existing legislation to ban any making available and placing on the market, transport, acquisition and possession of wildlife that has been illegally harvested or traded in third countries.*

*In May 2017, the Commission banned the export of raw ivory. Yet, unlike in the United States, China, Hong, it did not ban intra EU trade. In 2018, Greens/EFA pushed for the adoption of an EP resolution asking for a complete ban on domestic ivory trade within the EU to protect wildlife.*

### ***Tackle illegal trade in pets***

*Identifying and registering cats and dogs is a crucial and necessary step in combating their illegal breeding and trade, often in terrible conditions. Greens/EFA advocated measures to help EU countries tackle illegal trade in pets, often by cross-border criminal networks.*

## **OTHER ANIMAL WELFARE ISSUES**

### **Stray dogs and cats conditions**

Many places within the Union fall short of proper management of the stray animal population, which results in suffering of the animals due to poor living conditions or being locked up, as well as posing some public health problems. EU standards and policies need to be developed in this field to ensure the welfare of these animals. Over-reproduction of animals is one of the biggest causes of abandonment and large numbers of stray animals. The offspring of a cat couple can amount to 12,680 individuals in 5 years. Europe must call on Member States to take further steps to promote the sterilization of stray cats and dogs.

## **GREEN PROPOSALS FOR THE NEXT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND EU COMMISSION**

- The article 13 TFEU gives far more room for a proactive policy of the Union towards guaranteeing animal welfare than we have seen so far (particularly given that there is a concrete mention of internal market policies, which can be interpreted very comprehensively). We need a Commission that is committed to setting the highest standards throughout the Union, when necessary by developing ad hoc legislation.
- We want to see the European Commission fulfil its duty to start infringement procedures, without further delay, against systemically non-compliant Member States in the implementation and enforcement of animal welfare legislation, whether standards for animal transport or for factory farming.
- We want the future Common Agricultural Policy to make financing conditional on improved animal welfare and to devote a substantial part of the budget to finance organic farming.
- We want the future Common Agricultural Policy to overhaul the animal products supply chains, privileging local food chains, including local slaughtering, which is proven to benefit the environment, the resilience of our economy, food safety and animal welfare.
- We ask the Commission to come forward with a new proposal on food from cloned animals and their descendants, which incorporates the European Parliament's 2015 demands. Currently, there is not even a ban on cloning on EU level, let alone a ban on food products derived from cloned animals and their descendants.

## Q&A

### *Do we have to all become vegan or vegetarian?*

No, however there is no doubt that for the health of the planet and our own health we cannot and need not keep eating as much meat and animal based proteins as we do now. The average EU citizen consumes 38kg of protein foods per year - 22kg animal based. This equals to 103g per day but most adults need 46-58g. This over-consumption has a devastating effect on animal welfare: modern intensive farms can produce large quantities of meat, eggs and dairy foods quick and cheaply but at the expense of terrible animal suffering. Factory farms animals are kept in large crowded, dirty and cruel industrial facilities. Reducing intake of animal proteins would mean raising fewer animals in higher welfare systems, such as organic farming, improving their quality of life and quality of food. Cutting consumption, say by 50%, would not only bring health benefits but we could reduce our greenhouses by 25-40%.

### *Can we totally avoid animal testing?*

If we seriously invest in new approach methods combining alternative tests<sup>[6]</sup>, genetics and computer power, we should be able not only to avoid all animal testing in a foreseeable future, but also to get better results that are potentially more relevant to people in the real world than animal tests.

In the meantime strong reduction is needed, at least 50% in the next 5 years, especially eliminating those activities that are most painful for animals. Funding should be provided to boost research in the area of alternatives for animal testing that are more relevant for humans. Looking at the implementation of the Directive from 2010<sup>[7]</sup>, some countries are finally setting targets and timelines for the reduction, facilitating the development, validation and promotion of alternative approaches and sharing their best practices<sup>[8]</sup>.

### *Is laboratory grown meat a viable alternative to factory farming?*

Although it could appear like a silver bullet, the impacts of artificially grown meat need to be fully assessed. Making lab meat involves complex and expensive manufacturing and processing. The resource inputs for genetically engineered animal replacement products and lab meat have not been thoroughly evaluated. These resources include the energy, water, fossil fuels, chemicals, plastics and feedstock used such as foetal calf serum needed to grow mammal cells. One study in 2015 suggested that while lab meat might end up using fewer agricultural inputs and land than livestock, the overall energy consumption to produce lab-grown meat might be equivalent to or more than that used to produce animal-derived meats.<sup>[9]</sup>

### *Are religious traditions for slaughtering disrespectful of animal welfare?*

EU legislation requires mandatory stunning but allows exemption for religious practices. We support mandatory stunning and are in favour of strengthening the dialogue with religious authorities, to also bring into effect stunning in religious rituals for slaughtering.

## [How can agro-ecology improve animal welfare?](#)

Agro-ecology aims to create stable, sustainable, resilient and productive farms. By integrating ecological principles into agricultural systems, with novel approaches and techniques, it benefits both agriculture and animal welfare. A proper agro-ecological system will develop good animal health without need for regular medication, and equally, good animal welfare will ensure quality products.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

## [Possible allies among Civil Society Organisations](#)

- Compassion in World Farming - [link](#) : achieve better standards of animal welfare in the food chain, put an end to factory farming, make food systems kind to animals, care for the environment and consumer health (fairer model of humane sustainable farming), honest labelling
- Friends of the Earth Europe: strong case to be made for mixed-farms using agro-ecological methods, the more livestock farming is reintegrated into landscapes, the more sustainable it becomes; focus on changing animal production instead of reducing emissions within an industrial model
- Greenpeace study: more is less: reducing meat and dairy for a healthier life and planet - [link](#)
- Humane Society International: [link](#) want better standards of animal welfare in the food chain, put an end to factory farming, a food system that is kind to animals, caring for the environment and consumer health (fairer model of humane sustainable farming), replacing animal tests
- IFOAM International umbrella organization for organic agriculture - [link](#)
- Via Campesina - [link](#)

## [Thematic Video for sharing on-line \(Greens/EFA\)](#)

· [End the cage age - link](#)

· Food video: [Meat consumption](#)

### **Studies done within the Greens/EFA (Executive summaries)**

· [Eating well for a fuller future](#) – impact of our diet on climate change (EN, ES) - [link](#)

· Fund farms not factories: ([report](#) + [infographic](#)) as outcome of the conference held on 7/10)

### **Greens/EFA 2014 - 2019 Position Papers / Briefings**

. TRAN Committee opinion on Animal Transport Greens/EFA Draftsperson - [link EN](#)

. ITRE AMs on InvestEU to ensure funding for alternatives to animal testing [link](#) (AM 433 and final voting result after next week's plenary adoption)

. Leaflet Sustainable eating- [link](#)

## **[Public actions such as conferences, petitions, infographic, etc. \(links\),](#)**

. EP intergroup on animal welfare - [link](#)

. End the Cage Age Citizen Initiative - [link](#)

. Infographic Animal Cloning - Dolly for dinner - [link EN, DE, FR, NL](#)1 on renewables - [link](#)

## **[Additional resources for facts and figures](#)**

. Agricultural production - animal statistics Eurostat - [link](#)

. One health action plan on antibiotic resistance: - [link](#)

. Meat Atlas: [link](#)

. Animals used for scientific purposes: Development, validation and promotion of alternative approaches by Member States: [link](#)

. HSI Advancing Safety Science and Health Research with innovative non-animal tools - [link](#)

## **[The EU animal welfare platform](#)**

The platform was established to promote an enhanced dialogue on animal welfare issues that are relevant at EU level among competent authorities, businesses, civil society and scientists. To achieve these priorities the Platform will assist the Commission with the development and exchange of coordinated actions on animal welfare with a particular focus on:

. better application of EU rules on animal welfare, through exchanges of information and best practices and the direct involvement of stakeholders,

. the development and use of voluntary commitments by businesses to further improve animal welfare,

. the promotion of EU animal welfare standards to maximise the market value of the Union's products at the global level.

[https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare/eu-platform-animal-welfare\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare/eu-platform-animal-welfare_en)

Contact : Camilla Bursi

Greens/EFA team leader - ecological transition

[camilla.bursi@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:camilla.bursi@europarl.europa.eu)

Tel: +32 2832482

---

---

[1] [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Agricultural\\_production\\_-\\_animals#Livestock\\_population](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Agricultural_production_-_animals#Livestock_population)

[2] [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Fishery\\_statistics#Aquaculture](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Fishery_statistics#Aquaculture)

[3] <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/458631468152376668/Fish-to-2030-prospects-for-fisheries-and-aquaculture>

[4] [https://www.ema.europa.eu/documents/report/ecdc/efsa/ema-second-joint-report-integrated-analysis-consumption-antimicrobial-agents-occurrence\\_en.pdf](https://www.ema.europa.eu/documents/report/ecdc/efsa/ema-second-joint-report-integrated-analysis-consumption-antimicrobial-agents-occurrence_en.pdf)

[5] [https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/aw\\_platform\\_20180621\\_pres05.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/aw_platform_20180621_pres05.pdf)

[6] such as Organs-on-chip, Adverse Outcome Pathways, 3D bioprinting, High throughput techniques, New Approach Methodologies, Bioimaging, computational biology.

[7] <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:276:0033:0079:en:PDF>

[8] [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab\\_animals/3r/advance\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/3r/advance_en.htm)

[9] Mattick, C. (2015). Anticipatory Life Cycle Analysis of In Vitro Biomass Cultivation for Cultured Meat Production in the United States. *Environmental, Science and Technology*, 49 (19), 11941–11949. Retrieved May 22, 2018, from <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.est.5b01614>

## **Recommended**

Press release

Yingko from Getty Images

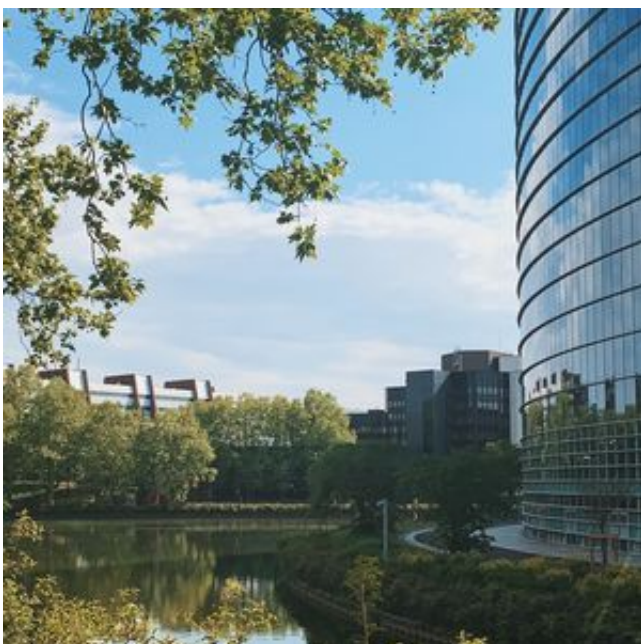


## [EU-US Turnberry Deal](#)

26.03.2026

News

©zsofia-vera



[PLENARY FLASH: Greens/EFA Priorities 9 to 12 March](#)

09.03.2026

Press release

Melissa Walker Horn



[CMO/Veggie burger: Quote from MEP Anna Strolenberg](#)

05.03.2026

Press release

Bert Christiaens



[CMO/Veggie burger trilogue outcome: Quote from MEP Ann...](#)

05.03.2026

**Contact person**



Camilla Bursi

Interim Team leader - Ecological Transition

**Attached documents**

[Animal welfare](#)

**Please share**

[E-Mail](#)

