



# Milestones in improving animal welfare

## ► **The application of animal welfare is a priority for the European Union**

The European Union is justifiably proud of its level of achievement and its widely-recognised status as a global leader in the field of animal welfare. Over the past 30 years, EU animal welfare legislation has evolved on the basis of sound scientific knowledge. EU standards have been able to improve the quality of animals' lives matching with citizens' expectations and market needs.

The EU Lisbon Treaty recognised animals as "*sentient beings*" and as a result the welfare of farm animals became valued in the European Union. In recognition of this, the European Commission has adopted a new strategy for the Protection and Welfare of animals 2012-2015 which aims to ensure that farm animals are kept and transported under conditions that do not subject them to maltreatment, abuse, pain or suffering.

To ensure that animal welfare legislation is enforced in a uniform way across the EU, the European Commission has since 2006 funded several training initiatives and workshops both within the EU and outside the EU.

**CLOSE TO 2000 VETERINARIANS RECEIVED TRAINING ON ANIMAL WELFARE FROM A EUROPEAN COMMISSION PROGRAMME.**

## ► **Laying hens are no longer kept in barren cages**

Since 2012 an EU ban on conventional cages entered into force. There is substantial evidence that banning the use of conventional battery cages for laying hens considerably improved the health and welfare of hens. Hens are now kept with more space and they must be provided with a nest, perches and litter, all of which are necessary to satisfy their behavioural needs. Furthermore, the ban on conventional cages ensures that food produced in the EU is of high quality, so benefiting consumer's health while meeting animal welfare needs. In addition, 10% of European hens are today kept in free range systems.

## ► **More respect in the EU for behavioural needs of pigs**

Respect of animal welfare leads to better quality pig meat, an area where the EU is a major producer and exporter. Until 1 January 2013 sows were spending their life in barren individual cages where minimum behavioural needs were not respected. To improve their life, the EU adopted in 2001 specific legislation which phases out the use of individual cages.

Sows are now kept in groups during pregnancy. The requirement for group housing of sows represents a milestone for the welfare of these very social animals. They are now able to move around freely and are provided with suitable nesting material which makes for happier sows. The new farming system clearly increases the survival rate of new-born piglets and improves the health of these animals.

**320 MILLION LAYING HENS AND 12 MILLION SOWS BENEFIT FROM A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE.**



## ► Ban on animal testing for cosmetics

**SINCE 2009 NO TESTING FOR COSMETIC PURPOSES HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT IN THE EU.**

Since 2004 animal testing for finished cosmetic products has been banned.

Animal testing for cosmetic ingredients has been banned since 11 March 2009 ('testing ban').

The number of animals used for cosmetic purposes, like rats, mice, guinea-pigs and rabbits, decreased in the EU from 9000 in 2004 to 350 animals by 2008.

Since March 2009 it is also prohibited to market in the EU cosmetic products containing ingredients which have been tested on animals in order to meet the requirements of the Cosmetics Directive ('marketing ban').

Since 11 March 2013 products marketed in the EU cannot rely on any animal tests to prove their safety.

## ► Transport conditions of animals continuously improve

**THE OVERALL QUALITY OF ANIMAL TRANSPORT HAS IMPROVED, NOTABLY DUE TO BETTER VEHICLES AND MORE SKILFUL HANDLING OF THE ANIMALS. THE PERCENTAGE OF TRANSPORTED ANIMALS WITH LAMENESS, INJURIES, DEHYDRATION AND EXHAUSTION DECREASED SIGNIFICANTLY.**

Around 4 million cattle, 28 million pigs, 4 million sheep, around 1 billion poultry and 150 thousand horses are transported within the EU every year. Animal transportation between Member States consists of around 65-70 % short journeys, around 25 – 30 % long journeys, around 5% very long journeys. Rules for improving animal welfare during transport in Europe had first been implemented in 1977.

## ► Animal welfare policies exported to non-EU countries to respond to consumers' demand of quality for imported products

**IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE BETTER TRAINING FOR SAFER FOOD PROGRAMME (BTFS), 3 REGIONAL WORKSHOPS WERE ORGANISED IN CANADA, CHILE AND SOUTH KOREA, SPECIFICALLY DEDICATED TO NON-EU COUNTRIES TO IMPROVE THE APPLICATION OF EU STANDARDS, INVOLVING 237 PARTICIPANTS FROM MORE THAN 30 COUNTRIES.**

Improvement of animal welfare standards constitutes an added value to trade as well as an opportunity to improve livestock production and sustainable farming.

The Commission is continuously strengthening bilateral technical cooperation on animal welfare with its main trading partners, like Chile, Australia, Canada, New-Zealand, South Korea.

Recently a Memorandum of Understanding for technical cooperation on animal welfare was agreed between the European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Consumers and the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture.

The European Commission is actively involved in the work of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). The EU works closely with Member States to coordinate positions and has consistently supported the work performed by the OIE on developing guidelines on animal welfare issues.