



PRESS INFORMATION

Brussels, 19 January 2009

International conference to explore trade opportunities of animal welfare

A Brussels conference will this week show what trade opportunities higher standards for animal welfare have to offer. On 20 and 21 January the Conference on Global Trade and Farm Animal Welfare will bring together anyone from farmers, retailers, politicians, academics, international institutions and animal welfare organisations to present positive experiences of inclusion of animal welfare in the trade environment. This event, which follows a successful forum held in Brussels last April, is being organised by the Directorate-General for External Trade and the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers of the European Commission, together with Eurogroup for Animals, Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Compassion in World Farming, and World Society for the Protection of Animals.

Scientists have linked higher standards for animal welfare to improved food safety and better food. World-wide there is also a growing demand for high welfare products which farmers and retailers can sell at an increased profit margin. The link between animal welfare and development is increasingly being recognised by institutions such as the World Bank's International Finance Corporation and the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation. In other words, improving animal welfare has a positive impact on human welfare too.

Adolfo Sansolini, trade policy advisor for RSPCA, Compassion in World Farming, Eurogroup for Animals and WSPA, commented: "Farmers, retailers and governments have got a lot to gain by working together on animal welfare. Ethical considerations and business opportunities don't stop at the border.

"Higher standards for animal welfare are a chance to tap into a continuously growing market. Consumers are becoming increasingly interested in how their food is being produced. Animal welfare is no longer only a just cause, but also a trade opportunity that should not be missed."

For more information visit www.animalwelfareandtrade.com/

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Notes:

- The European Union explicitly states in its Community Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2006-2010 that the Commission wants to promote high animal welfare standards in the EU and at the international level. This involves co-operating with developing countries on creating production systems with higher standards for animal welfare, which would help them to export to the union.