

## “Live Animal Transport in 2007: Still a source of animal suffering and disease”

### Dil Peeling — Eurogroup for Animals: introduction



Eurogroup for Animals represents a united voice for animal welfare organisations in Europe. For more than 25 years, we have been working to improve the way animals are treated and kept throughout the European Union. The long-standing relationship we have established with the EU institutions allows us to be recognised as a credible partner for all the policy issues that affect animals. Our objective is a Europe that cares for all animals.

**Dil Peeling**, BVSc MSc MRCVS, Senior Policy Officer for Farm Animal Welfare is a veterinarian who has worked for the last 15 years on the policy and institutional aspects of livestock service delivery, animal health and welfare. He has worked with ministries of agriculture and state veterinary services in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America and prior to joining Eurogroup, he was seconded to the UK's Department for International Development. He also has 9 years experience as a farm animal veterinarian in the UK.

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### Peter Stevenson — Compassion in World Farming: “Transport of Farm Animals in Europe”

Over 6 million farm animals are transported each year on very long journeys across Europe. EU legislation designed to safeguard the welfare of animals during transport is routinely ignored by many transporters and many Member States fail to enforce this legislation. The following breaches of the legislation are common:

- *deficient checks by the authorities in the Member State of departure*: In some cases the authorities accept journey plans that show unrealistically short journey times with the result that the rest stops that are obligatory for long journeys are neither planned nor carried out;
- *permitted loading density is exceeded*: Overcrowding leads to heat stress and makes it impossible for animals to reach the water points on the truck;
- *insufficient headroom*;
- *failure to provide water on the vehicle*;
- *failure to unload and provide rest, water and food mid-journey*: Regulation 1/2005 (and previously Directive 91/628) provides that after 24 hours travel, pigs and horses must be unloaded and given 24 hours rest, food and water; the same applies to sheep and cattle after 29 hours travel. These requirements are frequently ignored.
- *trucks failing to meet the vehicle standards laid down by the legislation for journeys exceeding 8 hours*;
- *transport of injured and ill animals*.



Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) is the world's leading organisation specialising in campaigning for the welfare of farmed animals. CIWF has offices in the UK, France and the Netherlands as well as representatives in Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Ireland. Together with GAIA in Belgium and LAV in Italy, CIWF coordinates the work of the European Coalition for Farm Animals which comprises 29 animal protection organisations in 23 Member States.

**Peter Stevenson** is an English lawyer and the Chief Policy Advisor for CIWF. He has lobbied the EU political institutions for many years and has specialised in the field of animal transport for 16 years.

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### Lesley Moffat – Animals' Angels: "A European-Wide Crime: the Routine Transport of Downer Animals"

After observing serious violations to the EU animal transport legislation at a Dutch livestock market in 2005 (dragging of animals which were too sick, weak or injured to stand or walk on their own onto trucks and further transporting them to slaughter), Animals' Angels investigated if such violations were also occurring in other Member States. We were

shocked to observe not only the loading and unloading of “downer” animals via cranes, chains and ropes at markets and slaughterhouses in each Member State we investigated: Spain, Italy, Poland, France, Germany, but also at the frequency of such violations. For example, in Italy all 10 slaughterhouses observed were regularly accepting downer animals, and 5 of the 10 even dragged them off with tractors and chains. In the largest pig slaughterhouse in France, downer pigs were dragged by chains and their ears to the end of a dock and pushed over the edge to drop 1 metre down into a tractor bucket to be transported to the kill floor. Animals’ Angels currently is or already has held meetings with each plant where violations were observed. Some have already made improvements and the pertinent Ministries have taken some action...but what is occurring in those plants where Animals’ Angels investigators were not present? And why has this been tolerated by official veterinarians working at these plants all this time? And as long as EU’s sanctioning system remains weak and ineffective, farmers and transporters will find it more profitable to violate the law than to respect it.



Animals’ Angels was founded 11 years ago by Christa Blanke. Animals’ Angels focuses solely on the welfare of animals during transport with employees spending over 50% of their time in the field, trailing livestock trucks from start to finish on European, North American and Australian highways and to countries to which animals are exported such as the Lebanon and Morocco. Reports of the investigations are sent to local and EU authorities, as well as directly to the violators of the legislation in the hope of improvements. Four years ago, Animals’ Angels started a police training program (together with PMAF in France, LAV in Italy and on its own in Germany). This was seen as a necessity as legislation was routinely being ignored and there was no proper enforcement. Enforcement is slowly improving but sanctions remain weak or difficult to carry out. Animals’ Angels is a charitable private organisation with its headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany.

**Lesley Moffat**, Msc Ethology, has been working as a full-time investigator for 6 years for Animals’ Angels.

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### **Dr. Alexander Rabitsch – Federation of Veterinarians of Europe: "Live Animal Transport: an Issue of Welfare - an Issue of Health"**

Health is an important part of welfare and any increase in disease means poorer welfare. Transport of live animals can lead to serious animal and public health problems, such as the rapid spread of diseases (many zoonotic with an important public health impact) over a large territory. One of the reasons given for the rapid spread of Foot and Mouth Disease in the UK was the large scale of animal movements.

Some pathogens which do not result in a disease condition in farm animals kept in good conditions become activated during transport, often because of the immunosuppression resulting from stress during transport. Transport may also cause reactivation and excretion of viruses in carrier animals and augment the severity of disease signs leading to a higher excretion and higher mortality.

Transmission from infected transported animals is even more likely if other animals are brought into contact with them or their products at markets or at staging points.



The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) was founded in 1975. Today, FVE represents 41 national veterinary organizations across 36 European countries and 4 vibrant Sections, each of which represents key groups within our profession: Practitioners (UEVP), Hygienists (UEVH), Veterinary State Officers (EASVO) and Veterinarians in Education, Research and Industry (EVERI). Together we speak for approximately 200.000 European veterinarians. FVE’s mission is to unite the veterinary profession for the benefit of animal health, animal welfare and public health.

**Dr. Alexander Rabitsch** from Ferlach, Germany is an official veterinarian doing controls of animal transports. He is a member of the FVE ad hoc Working Group on the protection of animals during transport.

For more info and/or the position papers published by this Working Group: [www.fve.org](http://www.fve.org) or [info@fve.org](mailto:info@fve.org).

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### **Michel Vandebosch – Global Action in the Interest of Animals (GAIA): Conclusions and call for action**

The chairman of GAIA, Michel Vandebosch will conclude the press conference and launch the joint call for action.



GAIA or Global Action in the Interest of Animals is Eurogroup for Animals’ member for Belgium. It unites human defenders of animal welfare and advocates for animal rights in Belgium. Since its foundation in 1992, GAIA has been taking action against long distance transports of farm animals.

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