

GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN EUROPE: THE CASE FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

I. Introduction

In June 2006 the European Council adopted a renewed sustainable development strategy (EU SDS) which stresses on the need to “*get the price right*”, in promoting measures that reflect the real environmental, social and economic costs of products and services and thus reconcile sustainability and economic growth.

The review recognises that to bring together environmental protection and smart economic growth, win-win opportunities will have to be exploited¹. Animal protection and the role it plays in the sustainable management of natural resources and in safeguarding public health, represents such an opportunity.

As an established, well developed and science based discipline, which is supported by a mature market for welfare friendly goods and by institutions within government, private and non-governmental sectors, animal welfare provides a practical vehicle for realising many of the objectives of the EU SDS.

Considering the growing efforts by the EU institutions and Member States to endorse animal protection and welfare in different policy areas, Eurogroup for Animals is convinced that Green Public Procurement could be a very efficient means to promote animal welfare. Public bodies like civic administrations, municipalities, schools, hospitals, armed forces etc. can play a decisive role in fostering animal welfare friendly consumption and production.

As specified in the Commission's handbook on environmental procurement "*green purchasing is also about setting an example and influencing the market place*". By promoting green procurement, public authorities can provide industry with real incentives to produce in a more sustainable and animal welfare friendly way. In some product sectors the impact can be particularly significant, as public purchasers command a large share of the market. The public sector uses for example a substantial amount of meat, eggs and dairy products.

The European Commission is currently mandated to increase the level of Green Public Procurement (GPP) in all Member States. As the first stage, two reports have been produced to measure GPP in the EU-25 and provide examples of technical specifications for products that are suitable for greening². These will feed into the Commission's Sustainable Consumption and Production plan as well as in a Communication on Green Public Procurement. Both are expected to be published as a package at the beginning of next year.

So far, the European Commission has not considered animal welfare as part of their terms of reference for Green Public Procurement. This briefing fills in the gap. It defines the relevant product groups for animal welfare friendly procurement; it identifies audiences and instances and specifies the measures of promotion.

II. The public business case for animal welfare

The product groups concerned

The following product groups have been selected to highlight how animal welfare considerations can be integrated in procurement policies:

¹ EU SDS – Renewed strategy. Para 22

² GPP in Europe 2006 European Commission

Briefing on: Green Public Procurement: the Case for Animal Welfare

- Food for human consumption
- Products containing chemicals, in particular cleaning products and toiletries,
- Pest control programmes

Food for human consumption

Main stakeholder audiences

- Public sector bodies such as canteens of administrations, schools, hospitals, prisons, armed forces etc.
- Contract caterers for public sector bodies. The growth in contract catering has been driven by the practice of outsourcing non-core activities – such as the provision of meals - thereby allowing organizations to concentrate on their core competencies.
- Food manufacturers who supply the public food service.

Concrete example:

In 2005, the City Council of Rome, Italy, has introduced a procurement policy for all public schools to use eggs from free range production.

Main issues and measures

There are many concerns related to the sustainability of modern industrial livestock production. The very intensive rearing conditions generally mean low levels of animal welfare and threaten human and animal health as well as the environment. The public sector is an important player in the food market, purchasing a substantial amount of meat, eggs and dairy products. As such, high standards of animal welfare in public procurement policies can have a significant impact on the way primary producers treat and house their livestock. In addition to the animal welfare concerns there is evidence that livestock farming contributes greatly to global warming. A general reduction of meat consumption could help to reduce the production of greenhouse gases³.

Many EU Member States have already established national guidelines on Green Public Procurement⁴ or have adopted national action plans as recommended by the European Commission. For example, the United Kingdom has launched a *Food Procurement Action Plan*⁵ in which it sets clear goals for food and catering services to help deliver the aims of other government strategies such as the ones for food and farming and on health and obesity.

The UK *Food Procurement Action Plan* also includes the promotion of high animal welfare standards and raising production standards.⁶ The Initiative – which is coordinated by Defra – is designed to ensure that public sector food and catering contracts specify appropriate standards for the food being purchased, including production standards related to animal welfare and overall environmental impacts.⁷

Measurement is already possible with standards existing in higher welfare farm assurance schemes (e.g. Freedom Food, Label Rouge) and those compiled by Eurogroup for Animals⁸.

³ <http://www.ciwf.org.uk/publications/index.html>

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/national_gpp_strategies_en.pdf

⁵ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/policy/sustain/procurement/pdf/unlocking-opps.pdf>

⁶ Defra publication. Integrating sustainable development into public procurement of food and catering: guidance and action sheet for buyers and their internal customers

⁷ Defra News Release *Make millions of daily meals more sustainable: Lord Whitty*. 26 August 2003

⁸ <http://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/consumers/consumers.htm>

Proposed procurement policies for food

Product group	Animal welfare concerns	Procurement policy	Available criteria
Food for human consumption	Intensive animal rearing and live animal transport cause suffering and distress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purchase only animal products produced according to EU rules. This applies also for imported animal products from third countries - Use of products produced under high welfare standards such as free range eggs and organic produce - Use of products from local farms to avoid long distance transport of live animals - Availability of vegetarian options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Various EU Directives on housing transport and slaughter and organic farming - Various higher welfare schemes e. g. Freedom Food, Label Rouge - Eurogroup's supply chain standards

Products containing chemicals and in particular cleaning products and toiletries

Main stakeholder audiences

All public sector bodies

Concrete example:

In 2005 the City Council of The Hague, Netherlands has introduced a procurement policy which foresees that only toiletries that have not been tested on animals are used in municipality bodies.

Main issues and measures

The market offer for non-toxic household products that are not tested on animals has been steadily growing over the last years, as a result of the increased consumer demand for such products. In the context of sustainable procurement strategies public bodies should consequently buy and use such products wherever possible.

Proposed procurement policies for chemicals and toiletries

Product group	Animal welfare concerns	Procurement policy	Available criteria
Products containing chemicals e.g. cleaning products & toiletries	Chemical ingredients are tested on animals to assess their safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purchase of non-toxic detergents that have not been tested on animals - neither as ingredients nor as final product. - Purchase of non-toxic toiletries that have not been tested on animals - neither as ingredients nor as final product. 	Product lines that are labelled and marketed as not tested on animals

Pest control programmes

Main stakeholder audiences

- o Purchase and supply of pest control programmes by public sector bodies such as municipalities, hospitals, schools, prisons, local authorities for public parks, sewage and litter control
- o Pest control operators

Concrete example:

The Commune of Pompeii, Italy, uses falcons to scare away pigeons from the archaeological sites.

Main issues and measures

Many of the current products and methods for pest control fall short of animal welfare considerations. Even though acknowledging the sanitary and economic necessity of pest control, the products or tools used have to avoid or limit animal suffering to the strictest minimum.

Current legislation is already very strict on the use of pesticides. It foresees a focused, selective and cautious use of these products in order to avoid hazards for humans, animals and the environment.

In order to control pests, public bodies have to envisage first all alternative options to poison baits like natural predators, repellents, deterrents or fencing methods. If these alternatives cannot achieve the needed results and the killing of invasive animals is the only possible solution the products and tools used should limit suffering and lead to a quick death. The market already offers efficient pesticides that cause less suffering to animals. However more efforts have still to be made to develop less cruel pest control products and tools. The European Commission should encourage research in this field.

Proposed procurement policies for pest control

Product group	Animal welfare concerns	Procurement policy	Available criteria
Pest control programmes	Pest control products and tools can lead to unnecessary suffering for target and non-target animals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of natural predators. Attention has to be made not to use exotic animals which could create additional problems for the local ecosystems. - Give a preference to repellents, deterrents or fencing methods wherever possible. - If no efficient alternative solution is possible than to eliminate the animals purchase of acute pest control products or efficient tools that avoid or limit suffering to the strictest minimum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of natural predators of pests - Repellents, deterrents, fencing - Product lines that are marketed as more humane

III. Training and guidelines for animal welfare friendly procurement

Public purchasers are required to buy best value for money and be fair in procurement procedures. This means buying according to a range of parameters which refer to economic factors, to the respect of related national and EU legislation but also to values cherished by the public society. These can include societal, environmental and animal welfare considerations, which are esteemed important by a majority of consumers.

The last two EU Barometers on Animal Welfare carried out by the Commission have shown that European citizens are willing to pay more for animal welfare friendly produce. Given the fact that public purchasers buy with tax payers' money they have to provide consumers with animal welfare friendly products.

Public purchasers have to receive regular training and information about animal welfare friendly production and consumption so that they can buy accordingly. In this context they should not only be informed about products which respect minimum standards laid down in related legislation but also about produce from quality assurance schemes which goes far beyond the requests foreseen by the legislators.

Smaller public entities with no full time purchasers should be provided with a regularly updated practice guide for animal welfare friendly purchase and consumption.

IV. Consumer information and communication

Consumer information plays an outstanding role for the successful enforcement of a green and animal welfare friendly public procurement policy. Even though the public awareness for animal welfare concerns is already high as shown by the Commission's Eurobarometers, it is an issue which should become a common value for all through smart information campaigns by the public bodies.

Consumers have to be informed that the meals they eat in public catering services are made of animal welfare friendly produce or ideally stem from quality assurance schemes that go beyond requested minimum standards. They have also to be informed that the detergents used in public bodies have not been tested on animals.

V. Animal welfare considerations as part of a voluntary public, single issue label

The respect of animal welfare concerns could become part of a voluntary public single issue label scheme which implies "we purchase and consume animal welfare friendly". Such a label could be used as promotion tool and should be easily visible to consumers.

VI. Selecting suppliers and tenders

The rules for choosing suppliers and tenders for public procurement should foresee clear instructions to ensure animal welfare friendly procurement wherever it is of relevance. Preference should be always given to products and services that are certified to be animal welfare friendly and that go beyond the minimum standards foreseen in EU and national legislation.