

TURKEY
SEABASS
SOW
CHICKEN
SHEEP
RABBIT

NO [ANIMAL] LEFT BEHIND

COW
TROUT
QUAIL
DUCK
PIGLET
GOOSE
GOAT
SALMON
CALF

REPORT
2021

EUROGROUP
FOR ANIMALS

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[INTRODUCTION]



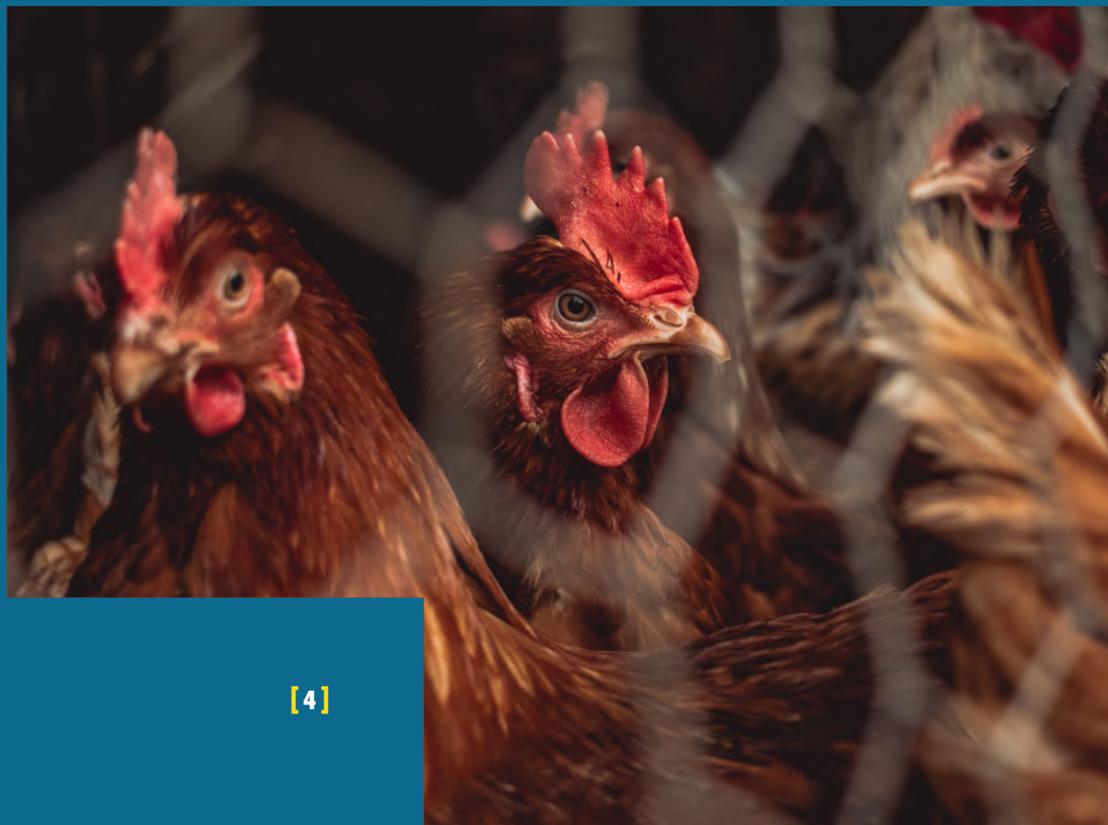
Many animals across the European Union are suffering due to inadequacies and omissions in the current EU Directives, and a failure to enforce them. This report seeks to highlight key examples of where the current EU Directives (General Farming; 2007/43/EC, Broilers; 2008/120/EC, Pigs; 2008/119/EC and Layers; 1999/74/EC) are failing farmed animals in the EU.

The EU's farmed animals deserve a good life, yet many are suffering from significant and avoidable welfare issues.

Many animals across the EU are still being kept in cages for their entire lives. Restricting animals in this way significantly impedes their behaviours, causes numerous health issues, and results in a negative mental state. We are urging the European Commission to keep to its promise to End the Cage Age, and to rear farmed animals in environments where they have the opportunity to feel good.

A GOOD LIFE FOR FARMED ANIMALS

With the knowledge that the animals we farm are sentient beings, comes the responsibility to provide them with a good level of welfare. This means providing them with a 'good life'. A good life for animals is one where the experience of positive feelings and states, outweigh the negative ones such as pain and fear¹. The EU's animals deserve to have a good life, and EU citizens agree on this².



THE FIVE DOMAINS

We can measure whether an animal has a good life by using the Five Domains model developed by Professor Mellor and colleagues in 1994³⁻⁵. This framework is used around the world in numerous contexts as an assessment tool for welfare, and more recently as a framework for legislative welfare codes. The Five Domains model provides the overarching themes required for ensuring that all aspects of welfare are considered in legislation, and it offers the perfect framework for a revised EU Directive.

According to the Five Domains model, an animal's welfare is the balance between positive and negative experiences and feelings³. This mental state is the direct result of the animal's health, environment, nutrition, and behavioural interactions, and whether the animal is given appropriate opportunities to fulfil their wants and needs.



Each of the Five Domains offers a way of assessing how well an animal is coping with their environment.

The domain **Health** refers to the presence or absence of health conditions and the animal's overall fitness levels. An animal's health may be directly influenced by many factors, such as how overpopulated their environment is, or the robustness of their breeding.

Nutrition, refers to the opportunities and restrictions within an animal's diet, including the quality and access to food and water, and the method of feeding.

The domain **Environment** refers to the quality of an animal's environment and the opportunities that it provides. For example, whether a pregnant sow has access to a nest-building substrate, or whether a calf is housed alone.

Behavioural Interactions is concerned with the choices and opportunities the animal has to engage in relevant and desirable behaviours, and their interactions with others (human or animal). Factors influencing a broiler's behaviour may include the space they have to move, or whether they are given well-designed perches.

These first four domains all form the animal's 'Mental State'. The fifth domain is concerned with the balance of positive and negative emotional states an animal may experience. For example, a sow kept in a sow stall has limited space, cannot perform highly motivated behaviours, is more susceptible to disease, and has periods of chronic hunger. These factors cause her to feel stress, pain, and frustration, resulting in a poor mental state and poor welfare.

THE FIVE DOMAINS AS A FRAMEWORK FOR LEGISLATION

The Five Domains model offers the ideal framework for legislation, as it puts in place a framework that can provide adequately and positively the foundation for all aspects of an animal's welfare, from which indicators and thresholds can be developed from. **Animal welfare science is now moving away from the traditional use of the Five Freedoms and towards more holistic approaches such as the Five Domains**¹. Whilst the Five Freedoms have made huge improvements for animals, animal welfare science now recognises the importance of considering the mental states of animals, and whether an animal has the opportunity to engage in positive experiences. The Five Domains model considers animals positive and negative experiences in all five areas, and its premise that welfare is reliant on an animal's overall mental state, is in line with scientific understanding today.

In this report, we have used the Five Domains framework to explore where the current EU Directives for the main farmed animals are failing the EU's animals. The examples given in this report are not exhaustive, as there are unfortunately many concerning welfare issues affecting farmed animals, but they do represent some of the most pressing issues today.

A photograph of a dairy farm stall. In the foreground, a black and white cow is looking towards the camera. The stall is made of dark wood with metal bars. A yellow tag is visible on the left. In the background, other cows are visible in similar stalls, and a bright doorway is on the right. The floor is covered in straw bedding.

**THE [ANIMAL]
WELFARE
ACQUIS VERSUS
THE REALITY**

Article 3 and 4 of the Council Directive 98/58/EC provide the basis for the protection of farmed animals. We will explore for broiler chickens, laying hens, dairy cows and calves, sows and their piglets, grower pigs and fish, how these articles, respective annexes and other species-specific directives are failing to provide the minimum conditions for animals to have what they want, need and deserve: a good life.

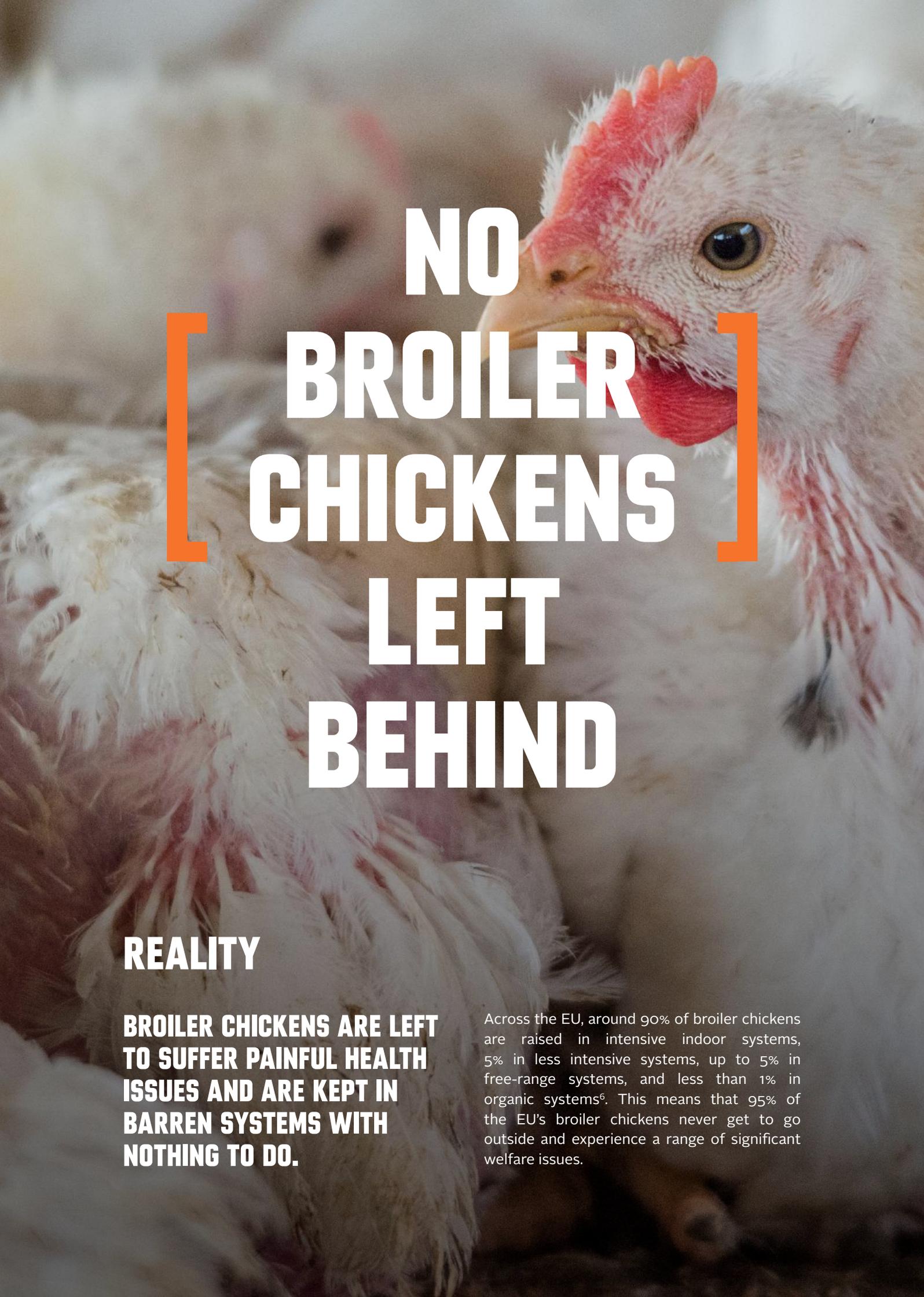


WHAT THE DIRECTIVE SAYS

Article 3: *“The Member States shall make provision to ensure that the owners or keepers take all reasonable steps to ensure the welfare of animals under their care and to ensure that those animals are not caused any unnecessary pain, suffering or injury.”*

Article 4: *“Members States shall ensure that the conditions under which animals (other than fish, reptiles or amphibians) are bred or kept, having regard to their species and to their degree of development, adaptation and domestication, and to their physiological and ethological needs in accordance with established experience and scientific knowledge, comply with the provisions set out in the Annex.”*

In this report, through scientific evidence and our Member Organisations' work we will demonstrate how the reality is far detached from the Directives' text.



NO [BROILER CHICKENS] LEFT BEHIND

REALITY

BROILER CHICKENS ARE LEFT TO SUFFER PAINFUL HEALTH ISSUES AND ARE KEPT IN BARREN SYSTEMS WITH NOTHING TO DO.

Across the EU, around 90% of broiler chickens are raised in intensive indoor systems, 5% in less intensive systems, up to 5% in free-range systems, and less than 1% in organic systems⁶. This means that 95% of the EU's broiler chickens never get to go outside and experience a range of significant welfare issues.

HEALTH: BROILER CHICKENS SUFFER A RANGE OF UNTREATED HEALTH PROBLEMS.

Broiler chickens are bred to grow very fast, reaching slaughter weight at just 5-6 weeks. This fast growth brings numerous health problems, including lameness, heart failure, metabolic disorder, heat stress and mortality⁷. These issues are known to be significantly reduced in slow-growing breeds, yet 95% of the EU's broilers are fast-growing breeds⁶.

Broilers suffer from painful lameness

Gait score is the measurement used to score the level of the lameness of a broiler. The greater the score, the more serious is the abnormality when the animal is walking. Abnormal gait scores are commonplace in intensively reared broiler flocks, and 75-90% have a gait score greater than 0^{8,9}. Moderate to severe gait impairment, which is associated with considerable pain and difficulty, can range between 5.5% to 58.8% across flocks, farms and countries¹⁰⁻¹³. These figures are conservative, however, as they do not include mortalities and culls⁸. The high levels of lameness in broilers are due to their rapid weight gain, as their skeletal systems and leg muscles cannot develop at the same rate, resulting in fragile bones and inadequate muscle strength¹⁴.

Broilers suffer from painful lesions

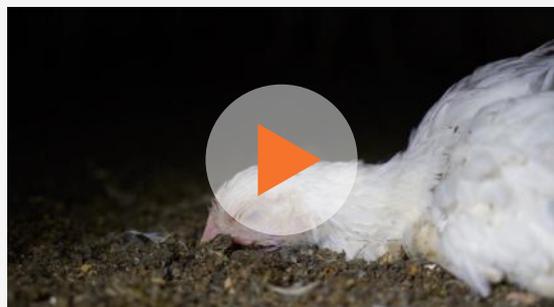
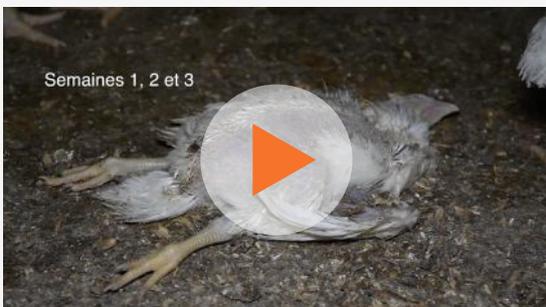
Contact dermatitis is also commonly seen in intensively reared broilers, with moderate to severe lesions ranging from 9.7% to 58% across farms^{10,11,15,16,17}. This painful condition causes lesions on the birds' footpads, hocks and breasts⁸. Fast-growing genotypes of broilers have higher levels of lesions compared with slower-growing birds, as they spend more time sitting, rather than walking and perching^{18,19}. High stocking densities further exacerbate the issue, as this raises the temperature and ammonia levels in the house¹⁸.



NO ANIMAL SHOULD BE LEFT TO SUFFER...

The Council Directive 2007/43/EC requires all chickens to be inspected at least twice a day, and for any chickens showing signs of health disorders, or difficulty in walking, to be treated or culled immediately.

This is not being enforced. Across the EU, broilers are left to suffer long and painful deaths with no veterinary treatment. The scale of intensive broiler houses and the number of birds they house means that staff cannot properly inspect all the individuals in there.



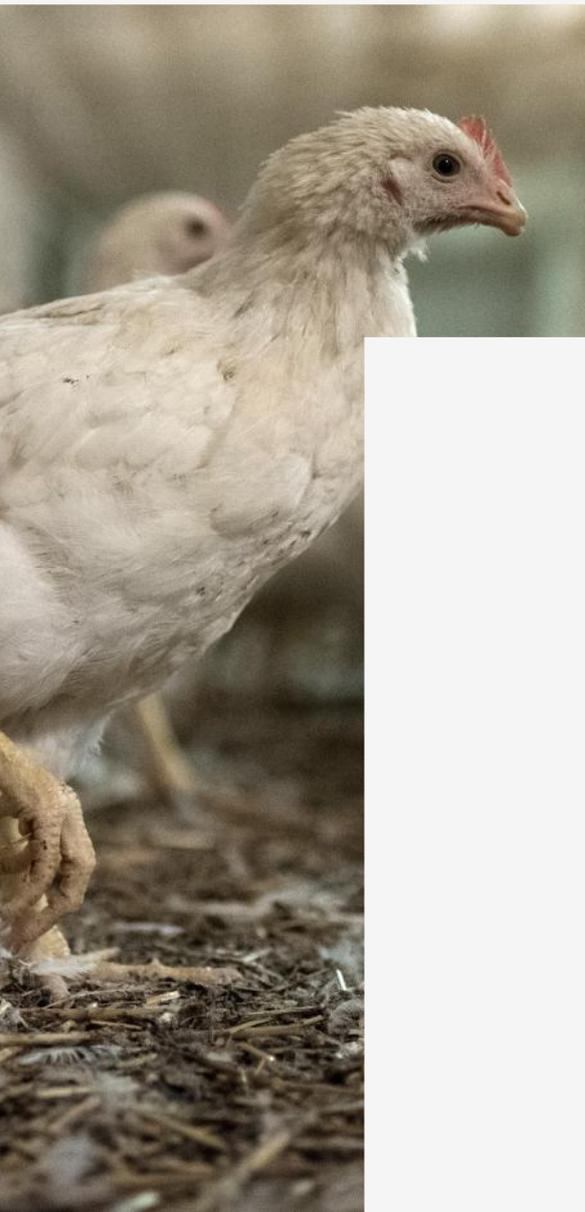
These birds were left to suffer, whether they died from their injuries, disease, or starvation, their suffering went unnoticed by those who were meant to care for them.

ENVIRONMENT: BROILER CHICKENS ARE KEPT INDOORS IN BARREN SYSTEMS FOR THEIR ENTIRE LIVES.

Broiler farms are one of the most intensive systems in the EU⁶. In 2013, farms with more than 5,000 broilers represented only 1% of the EU's broiler farms but accounted for 93.5% of broilers, and farms with more than 100,000 birds, accounted for 38% of birds⁶. There is considerable variation across the Member States, but overall, the trend for fewer farms with larger flock sizes is increasing⁶. The environment for intensively reared broilers is exceptionally unnatural, and high stocking densities, barren environments, and the selection for fast growth, results in numerous health and mental issues.

Broilers are forced to lie in filthy litter

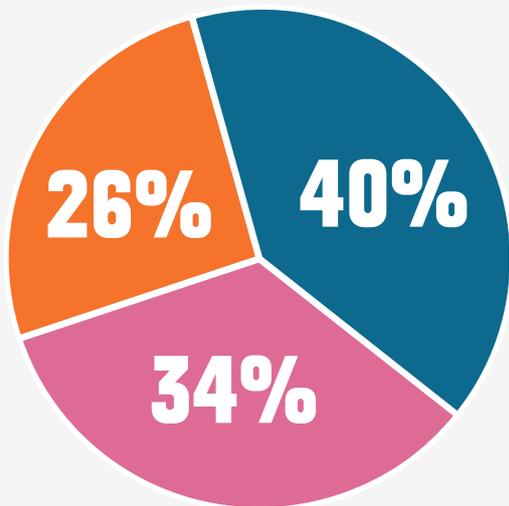
As birds grow, the quality of the litter decreases. In broiler houses, the litter is not changed until the birds have been harvested for slaughter. Moist litter leads to numerous health issues, such as hock burns (skin burns), lesions and abnormalities in the eyes and respiratory tract^{6,17}. Furthermore, as the levels of moistness increase, so does microbial activity, which in turn leads to increased temperatures and ammonia levels¹⁸. High levels of ammonia in the air can irritate the mucous membranes of the eyes and the respiratory system, increase broilers' susceptibility to respiratory diseases, and reduce their food intake²⁰. High temperatures can cause heat stress and mortality if not addressed¹⁸. Poor litter quality, and high levels of ammonia and temperature are all directly attributable to high stocking densities and are therefore an issue for the majority of the EU's broilers¹⁸.



BROILER DIRECTIVE: NO CHICKEN SHOULD BE DEPRIVED OF THE SPACE TO MOVE.

The Council Directive 2007/43/EC allows broilers to be stocked up to 42 kg/m² providing that the producer meets certain conditions.

The Member States vary widely in how they interpret this guidance. Some specify stocking densities below 33kg/m², whereas others allow stocking densities of up to 42kg/m²²¹. For example, the Netherlands stocks the majority of broilers at the highest limit of 42/m², and France at an average of 39-42 kg/m²⁶.



Densities

- Between 34 and 39 kg/m²
- Up to 33 kg/m²
- Between 39 and 42 kg/m²

Figure 1: Stocking densities used for broiler meat production in the EU-28 Member States. The proportion of national broiler chicken flocks, data from 2017 from competent authorities²².

Stocking densities over 28kg/m² cause greater welfare issues for broiler chickens, compared with lower stocking densities. Common issues include; footpad dermatitis, thermal discomfort, reduced locomotion, poor litter quality and increased ammonia levels^{23,24}. In a review of 62 studies, lower stocking densities were associated with improved leg health and mobility²⁵. When low stocking densities are combined with enrichment, such as straw bales, and with appropriate dark/light schedules, the positive effects on leg health are even greater²⁵. The standard commercial broiler house in the EU fails to provide an appropriate and healthy environment for broiler chickens, causing millions of the EU's birds to suffer unnecessarily.

[BROILER CHICKENS] NUTRITION

Council Directive 98/58/EC (Annex 10) states that:

“Air circulation, dust levels, temperature, relative air humidity and gas concentrations must be kept within limits which are not harmful to the animals.”

The reality

Broilers are bred to grow incredibly fast, but this means that they create a lot of body heat. A broiler house with thousands of birds soon becomes overheated and concentrated with ammonia and other noxious gases. Chickens are not meant to grow this fast, and they cannot withstand the heat.



These broilers are panting to cool themselves down. If they cannot cool down, they will suffer from heart failure, seizures, and a premature death.

NUTRITION: PRODUCERS RAISE DRINKERS OUT OF THE REACH OF SMALLER BIRDS TO SAVE MONEY.

Eurogroup for Animals and its members have evidence that producers are deliberately raising the height of drinkers in their systems so that smaller birds cannot reach them. The birds die from dehydration just so that the producers do not have to spend money on feeding these smaller, unprofitable birds. This is a breach of the Directive, and it reflects a lack of enforcement and inspection of producers and their flocks.

Reaching food and water can be a real struggle for broilers

In the final weeks of a broiler's life, accessing feeders and drinkers may also be challenged by the increasing lack of space, and reduced mobility the birds experience¹⁵.



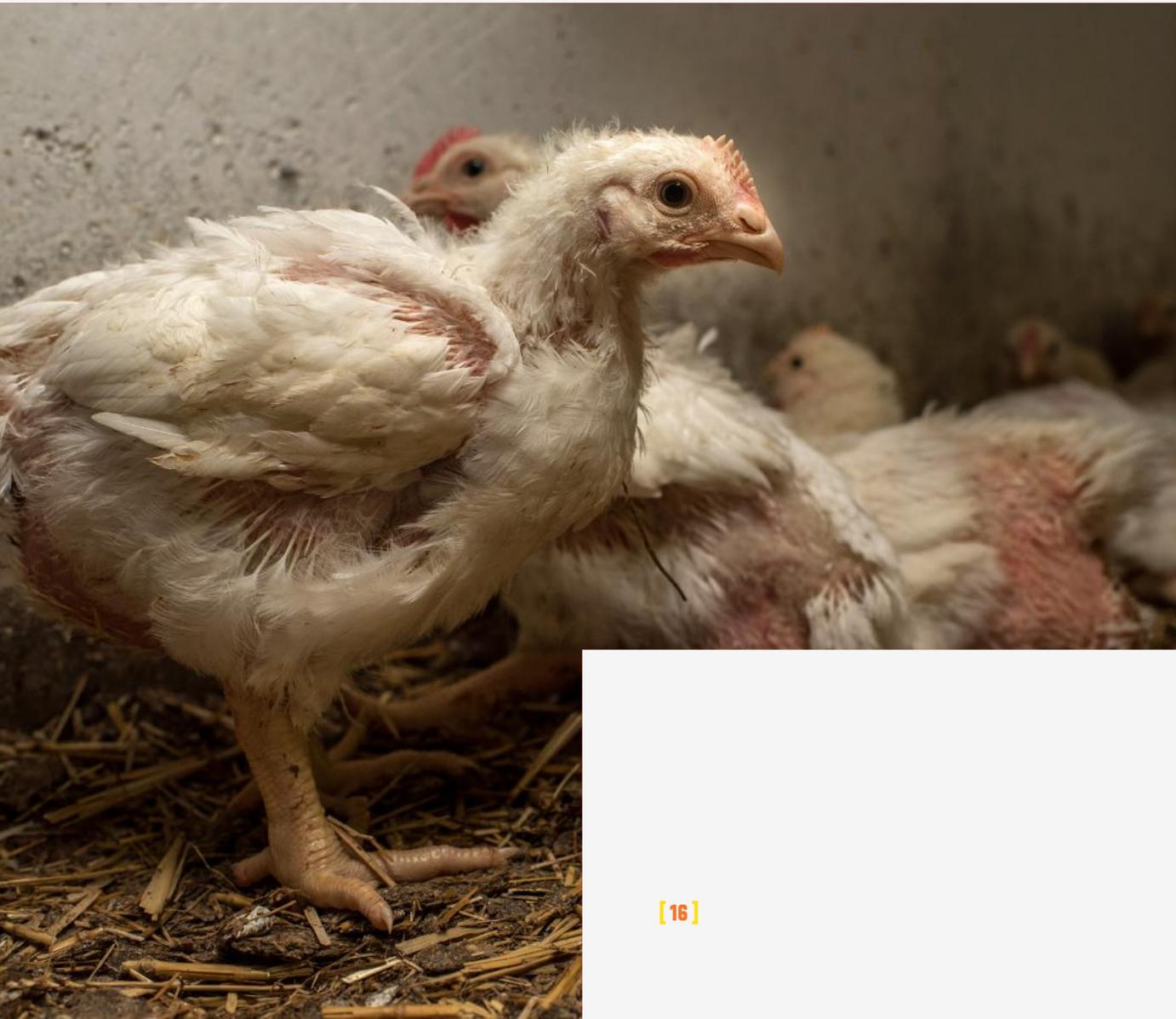
The resulting distress and frustration from not being able to fulfil these important needs result in a poor mental and health state for these sentient beings, ultimately resulting in their death.

Council Directive 98/58/EC (Annex 15) states that:

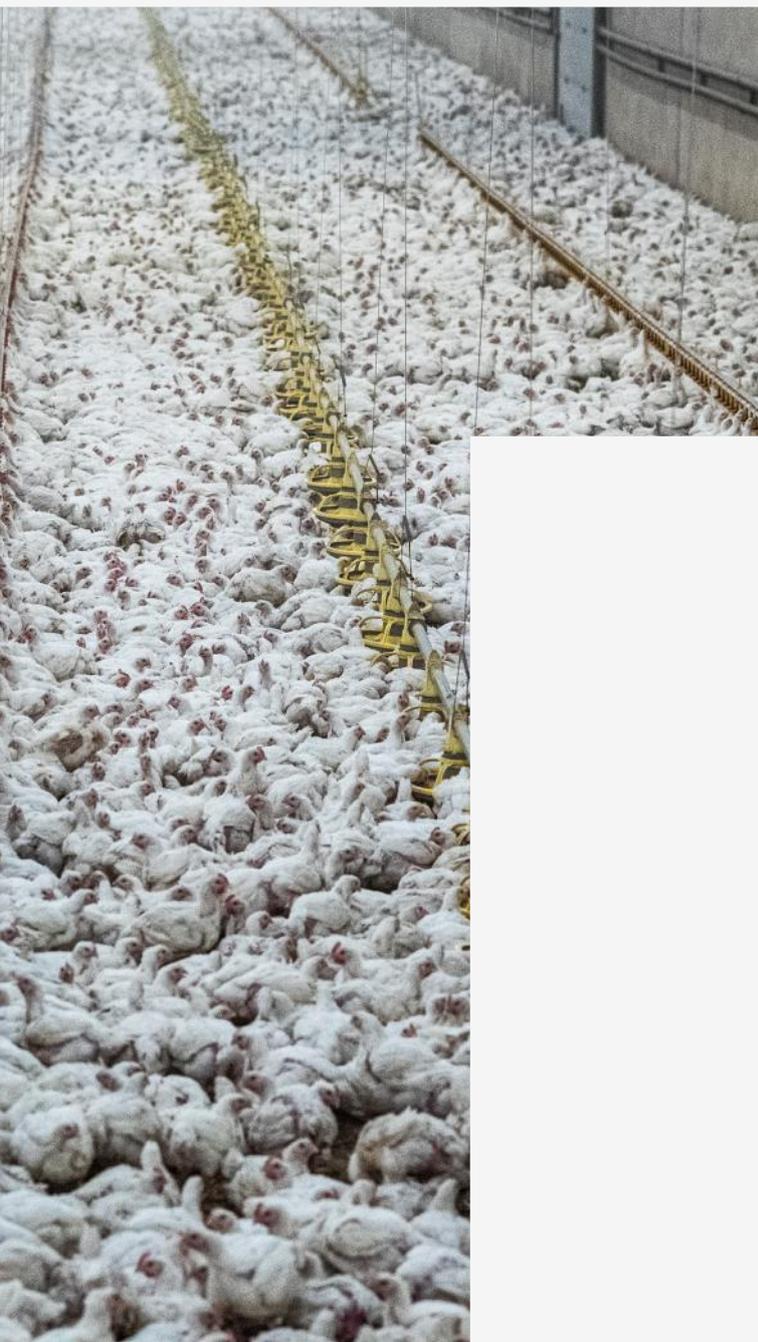
“All animals must have access to feed at intervals appropriate to their physiological needs.”

The reality

Broiler breeders are bred to grow at the same rate as broilers, but because they are not slaughtered at 42 days, they are starved to slow their growth rate⁷. Broiler breeders must live to be sexually mature (around 20 weeks) and are generally kept to 60+ weeks. To slow the rapid weight gain that these birds are bred for, producers reduce their feed by up to one third. This level of feed restriction slows down broiler breeders weight gain, and reduces health issues like lameness, but results in chronically hungry birds who perform abnormal behaviours due to the stress and frustration they experience⁷. No animal should be starved.



BEHAVIOURAL INTERACTIONS: BROILERS ARE KEPT IN BARREN HOUSES WITH NO ENRICHMENT.



The European Food Safety Authority states that enrichment strategies may improve the behavioural repertoire of broilers¹⁵, yet there is no legislative requirement for their provision. Broilers are kept in barren systems for their entire lives, with decreasing levels of mobility and space as they mature⁶. An enriched environment can help to reduce welfare problems, by allowing the birds to perform more appropriate behaviours and have the opportunity to experience positive feelings²⁶. Without it, broilers spend much of their time inactive, and very little time engaging in natural behaviours. For example, commercial broilers only spend 3% of their time ground pecking, compared with 60% in their genetic ancestors the Red Jungle fowl²⁷. Lame birds only spend 1.5% of their time walking, which is the bare minimum required to access feed and water²⁷.

Straw bales and well designed perches can offer broilers the chance to perch and explore

Simple enrichment, such as straw bales, can positively enhance the welfare of broiler birds by stimulating locomotion, perching, pecking and exploratory behaviour, by providing perceived protection, and by improving litter quality^{28,29}. Well-designed perches can reduce aggression in the flock and help birds to thermoregulate. The use of vertical space also helps to regulate the stocking density, resulting in fewer injuries and improved thermoregulation³⁰.

Broilers are highly motivated to perform certain behaviours, such as dustbathing and sheltering from predators. A barren environment cannot meet these needs, and the lack of environmental complexity and choices causes long-term stress and frustration. Consequently, broilers spend up to 86% of their time lying down, increasing their risk of footpad dermatitis, hock burns and lameness⁶.

MENTAL STATES: INTENSIVELY REARED BROILER CHICKENS HAVE NO OPPORTUNITIES FOR POSITIVE EXPERIENCES AND NO CHANCE OF A GOOD LIFE.

The EU legislation is failing broiler chickens. The EU's broilers are suffering from painful injuries and diseases, dehydration, and hunger. They live a life of fear, pain, and distress, with no opportunities for positive experiences.

Broilers want to play

Play behaviour is a sign of a positive mental state and is particularly important for juvenile animals. Broiler chickens are still juveniles, yet broilers in barren, commercial systems are less playful and more inactive than those in enriched environments³¹. When broilers have space and enrichment, they engage in more social play and spend less time inactive. This has a positive effect on their mental state, as they are also less fearful than those in barren, commercial systems³¹.

Is this a good life for broiler chickens?

Broilers need to grow at a healthy rate, they want to explore their surroundings, be able to move freely, and engage in natural behaviours. Broilers want to dustbathe, perch and forage for food, none of this is possible in intensive indoor systems. Broilers need the current standards to change so that they can experience a good life.



[BROILER CHICKENS] MENTAL STATES

Council Directive 98/58/EC (Annex 21) states that:

“No animal shall be kept for farming purposes unless it can reasonably be expected, on the basis of its genotype or phenotype, that it can be kept without detrimental effect on its health or welfare.”

The reality

The exceptionally fast growth of broilers puts immense pressure on their bodies, and their cardiovascular and musculoskeletal systems cannot keep up. Heart failure and severe lameness are common occurrences in broilers.



These birds only live for up to 42 days before being slaughtered. They are still babies, yet they would not survive another 2 weeks growing at that rate. Many do not make it to the 42 days before their bodies give up.



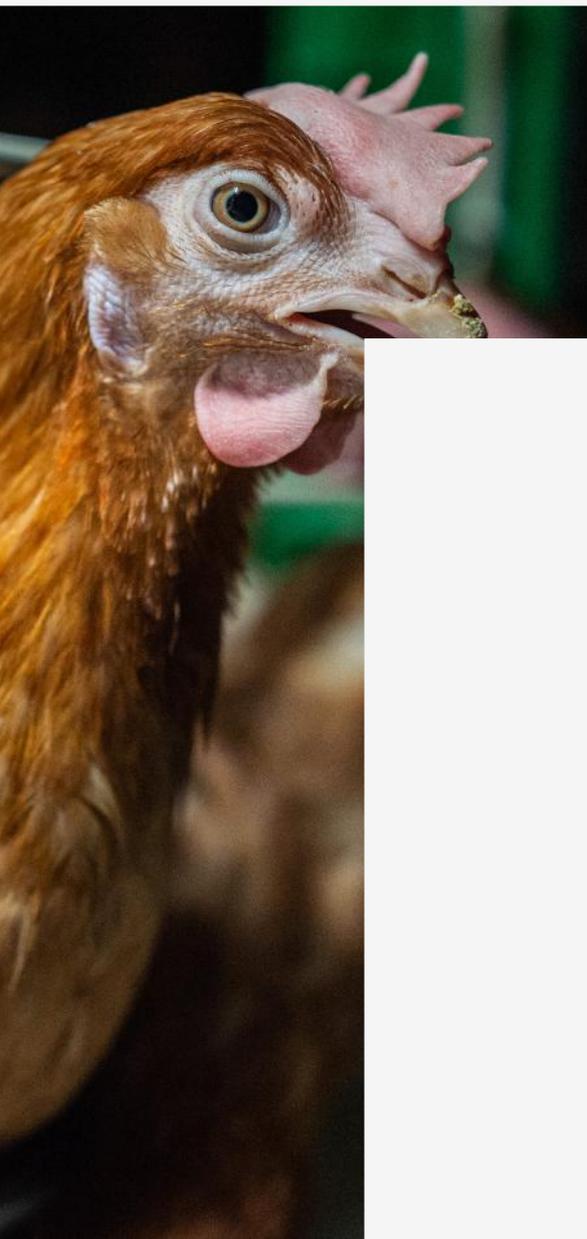
NO [LAYING HENS] LEFT BEHIND

REALITY

**LAYING HENS ARE KEPT
IN CRAMPED CAGES AND
OVERCROWDED BARNES.**

There are over 400 million laying hens in the EU, producing over 7.5 million tonnes of eggs each year⁶. In 2020, 48% of the EU's laying hens were kept in enriched cages, 34% in barns, 12% were free-range, and 6% were in organic systems²⁴. This means that in 2020, 328 million birds never got to go outside, and 192 million were confined to cages for their entire lives.

HEALTH: LAYING HENS HAVE THEIR BEAKS TRIMMED, CAUSING PAIN AND LONG-TERM SUFFERING.



Beak trimming is widely performed across the EU¹²⁵. This painful mutilation is performed to prevent outbreaks of injurious feather pecking and cannibalism, and sometimes to reduce food wastage in adult birds¹²⁶. The origin of injurious feather pecking is multi-faceted, but it can be triggered by frustration caused by poor housing conditions¹²⁷. The painful beak-trimming procedure is performed without anaesthetic and causes tissue damage, nerve injury, open wounds and bleeding^{126,128,129}. No analgesics are given to alleviate the long-term pain following the procedure¹²⁷.

The importance of a bird's beak

Birds use their beak in the same way that humans use their hands. The beak is their tool for exploring their environment, for touching and picking up things, manipulating items, and for eating. Beak trimmed birds have to adapt to their trimmed beak, and this can take time¹²⁵. Chicks have difficulty grasping and swallowing feed after the procedure, resulting in impaired feeding ability and lower body weights¹³⁰. Beak-trimming removes many of the receptors that hens use for touch, taste, pain and temperature perception, and has long-term negative impacts on their welfare¹²⁹.

The chronic pain of beak trimming

There is considerable physiological and behavioural evidence that beak-trimmed birds experience chronic pain from the procedure^{125,126,131}. Beak-trimmed hens perform guarding behaviour to avoid further injury for at least 6 weeks after beak trimming¹³¹, and they will feed and drink less for the weeks following the procedure, compared with non-beak trimmed birds¹²⁸.

Injurious feather pecking and cannibalism is a considerable welfare concern in laying hens, but beak-trimming should not be used as a preventative measure¹²⁵. Instead, steps need to be made to improve laying hen systems, reduce stress levels in the birds, and address the root cause¹²⁵.

NO BIRD SHOULD HAVE PART OF THEIR BEAK AMPUTATED...

Council Directive 1999/74/EC permits beak-trimming in laying hens under the age of 10 days old to prevent feather pecking and cannibalism. The Directive fails to set any further conditions on the procedure or to state that it should be a last resort.

As a result, producers are under no obligation to address the root cause of the issue and may use beak-trimming as a routine procedure. Painful mutilations that are performed as the result of inadequate housing systems should not be permitted.

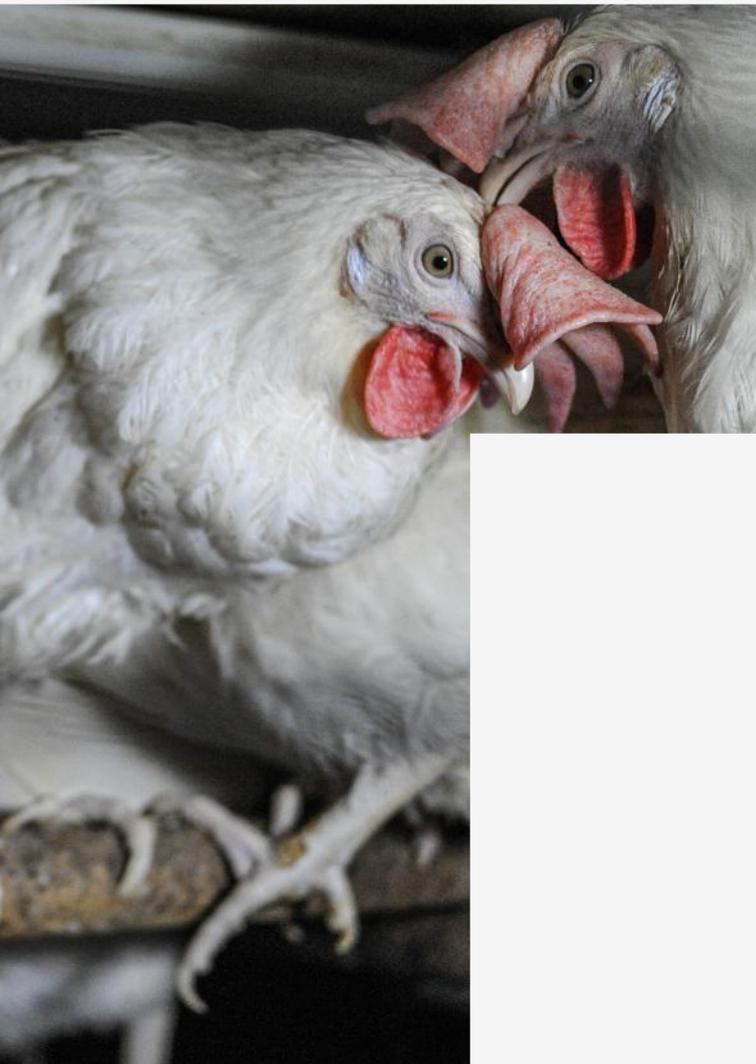


Laying hens deserve to keep their beaks intact, and to not suffer chronic pain.

**ENVIRONMENT:
LAYING HENS ARE
KEPT IN CRAMPED
CAGES OR IN
OVERCROWDED
BARNs WITH NO
SPACE TO MOVE.**

The so-called 'enriched cage'

Caged layer hens are severely restricted in space and are unable to stretch out or flap their wings. The allowance of 750cm² per hen (of which only 600cm² may be usable) is grossly inadequate for the needs of laying hens. One hen requires between 978 – 1,626cm² of space to turn around, between 800 – 1,977cm² to preen her feathers, and between 1,085 – 2,606cm² to flap her wings¹³². An enriched cage provides barely enough room for a hen to move around and cannot adequately meet her needs. As a result, hens develop abnormal behaviours, and levels of aggression quickly escalate. Due to the lack of space, birds are unable to move away from more dominant hens and are forced to suffer considerable distress and pain from bullying and injurious feather pecking. Furthermore, caged birds have reduced bone strength, and suffer a greater prevalence of fractures and bone deformities because of their reduced ability to exercise and flap their wings¹³³.



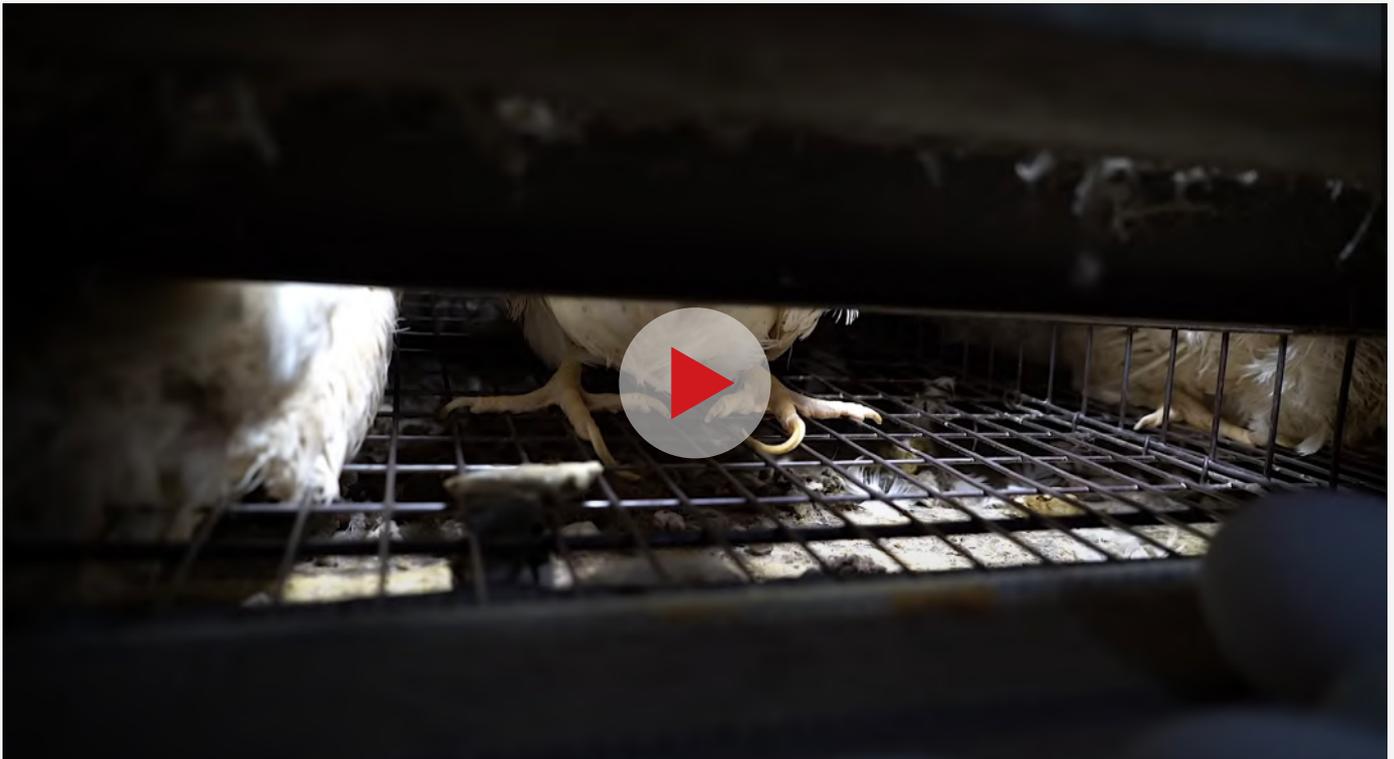
[LAYING HENS] ENVIRONMENT

Council Directive 98/58/EC (Annex 8) states that:

“Materials to be used for the construction of accommodation, and in particular for the construction of pens and equipment with which the animals may come into contact, must not be harmful to the animals and must be capable of being thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.”

The reality

These wire floors are not only very uncomfortable for hens, and likely to cause injuries, but this video clearly shows that they are not being “thoroughly cleaned and disinfected”.



Laying hens spend their entire lives in these filthy, badly designed cages. These cages are a clear breach of the Directive, and these thinking and feeling beings deserve better.

HENS SHOULD BE GIVEN SPACE TO MOVE...

Council Directive 1999/74/EC requires all enriched cages to include at least 15cm of perch space per hen

Perching is a highly motivated behaviour for hens, and they will even push weighted doors to gain access to a perch¹³⁴. Perches in cages offer little welfare improvement, and may even restrict movement further¹³⁵. In fact, due to the lack of space, hens may perch for longer than they would normally, and this can result in health problems such as deformed keel bones¹³⁶. Perches in well-managed free-range systems allow hens to perch freely, whilst still being able to fully use the floor space¹³⁷.

Over-crowded barns where hens do not experience the feeling of daylight

Well-managed barn systems are a considerable improvement to cages, but there are still significant welfare issues associated with barns. Barn systems do not provide access to an outside area like in free-range systems, and so the birds spend their entire lives indoors. Providing hens with outdoor space increases the complexity of their environment, offers them choices and control, enables them to perform natural behaviours, and gives them the chance to move away from others¹³⁸.

Injurious pecking can be commonplace in barn systems, causing significant suffering. It is the most common form of abnormal behaviour in laying hens, and one of the top reasons for mortality in cage-free systems¹²⁵. The bird's environment can trigger this behaviour if, for example, they are not given adequate foraging opportunities^{126,127}. Wet litter not only reduces foraging opportunities but can also cause several foot disorders from prolonged contact. Proper management of the litter, along with the provision of appropriate perches, can significantly reduce the prevalence of foot disorders¹³⁸.



Council Directive 98/58/EC (Annex 7) states that:

“The freedom of movement of an animal, having regard to its species and in accordance with established experience and scientific knowledge, must not be restricted in such a way as to cause it unnecessary suffering or injury. Where an animal is continuously or regularly tethered or confined, it must be given the space appropriate to its physiological and ethological needs in accordance with established experience and scientific knowledge.”

The Reality

These so-called ‘enriched cages’ are no home for laying hens. These cages are too small for hens to even flap their wings, and even though nest sites are provided, hens struggle to reach them and then fight with other hens who want them too.

The Laying Hens Directive requires these cages to be fitted with claw-shortening devices. Naturally, hens wear their claws down by scratching at the ground, an important behaviour for hens. The fact that the cages must provide artificial shortening devices is evidence that they are failing to meet the hens “physiological and ethological needs”.



Hens should be able to move freely, be able to scratch the ground, and be able to flap their wings. Enriched cages prevent them from ever doing these behaviours. Hens deserve better than this.

NUTRITION: CAGED LAYING HENS CANNOT FORAGE, DEPRIVING THEM OF THEIR NATURAL FEEDING BEHAVIOUR.

Hens have evolved to forage and scratch at the ground for their food, and in natural conditions, they will spend 50% of their active time engaged in this behaviour¹³⁹. The natural urge for hens to forage remains strong, and they will even choose to forage for food on the ground in the loose substrate when identical food is available in a feeder¹⁴⁰.

Lack of foraging opportunities in enriched cages

In enriched cages, hens are fed a concentrated diet ad-libitum from a feeder, with limited foraging opportunities. Although litter must be provided in enriched cages, it is quickly depleted by foraging and dust-bathing activities, and any beneficial effects are short-lived¹³⁸. Furthermore, access to the litter area may not be possible for subordinate hens, as dominant hens guard this valued resource¹³⁸.

Barns also fail to meet the foraging needs of hens

The same issues may also apply to some barn systems, particularly those which use slatted flooring, as any litter provided is rapidly depleted¹³⁸. Therefore, although producers may be adhering to the legislation, how they do so, can render their actions ineffective in improving welfare. When hens are prevented from foraging, they may redirect their pecking behaviour and develop abnormal behaviours such as injurious feather pecking as a coping mechanism¹²⁷.



BEHAVIOURAL INTERACTIONS: LAYING HENS CANNOT FULFIL NATURAL BEHAVIOURS SUCH AS DUSTBATHING AND NESTING.

The importance of dustbathing

Laying hens are highly motivated to dustbathe and doing so provides both physiological and psychological benefits¹²⁵. The restricted space and limited substrate available in enriched cages and some barn systems prevent many birds from engaging in this important behaviour¹³⁸. Dustbathing enables birds to preen themselves and re-condition their feathers and provides thermoregulatory benefits¹³⁸.

Denying birds the opportunity to dustbathe causes frustration, and significantly impacts their physical and mental wellbeing¹²⁵. Furthermore, a bird's motivation to dustbathe increases the longer they are denied access to appropriate substrate¹⁴¹. Hens who have been deprived of litter will spend much more time dustbathing when they are given litter, compared with those who had constant access¹⁴¹. Therefore, the drive to dustbathe does not diminish over time, it increases, resulting in long-term frustration for birds who are denied access to dustbathing opportunities.

Vacuum or sham dustbathing

Hens who are denied the opportunity to dustbathe will develop abnormal behaviours known as vacuum or sham dustbathing¹³⁸. Sham dustbathing involves the birds initiating the dustbathing sequence, despite the lack of substrate, but then aborting it before the end of the process. Birds deprived permanently of a substrate may repeat this numerous times a day¹³⁸. Given that there is no stated minimum amount of litter required in the Laying Hens Directive or any stipulation regarding the materials suitable for dustbathing, hens in enriched cages are often denied the important ethological need to dustbathe and will suffer poor welfare as a result.

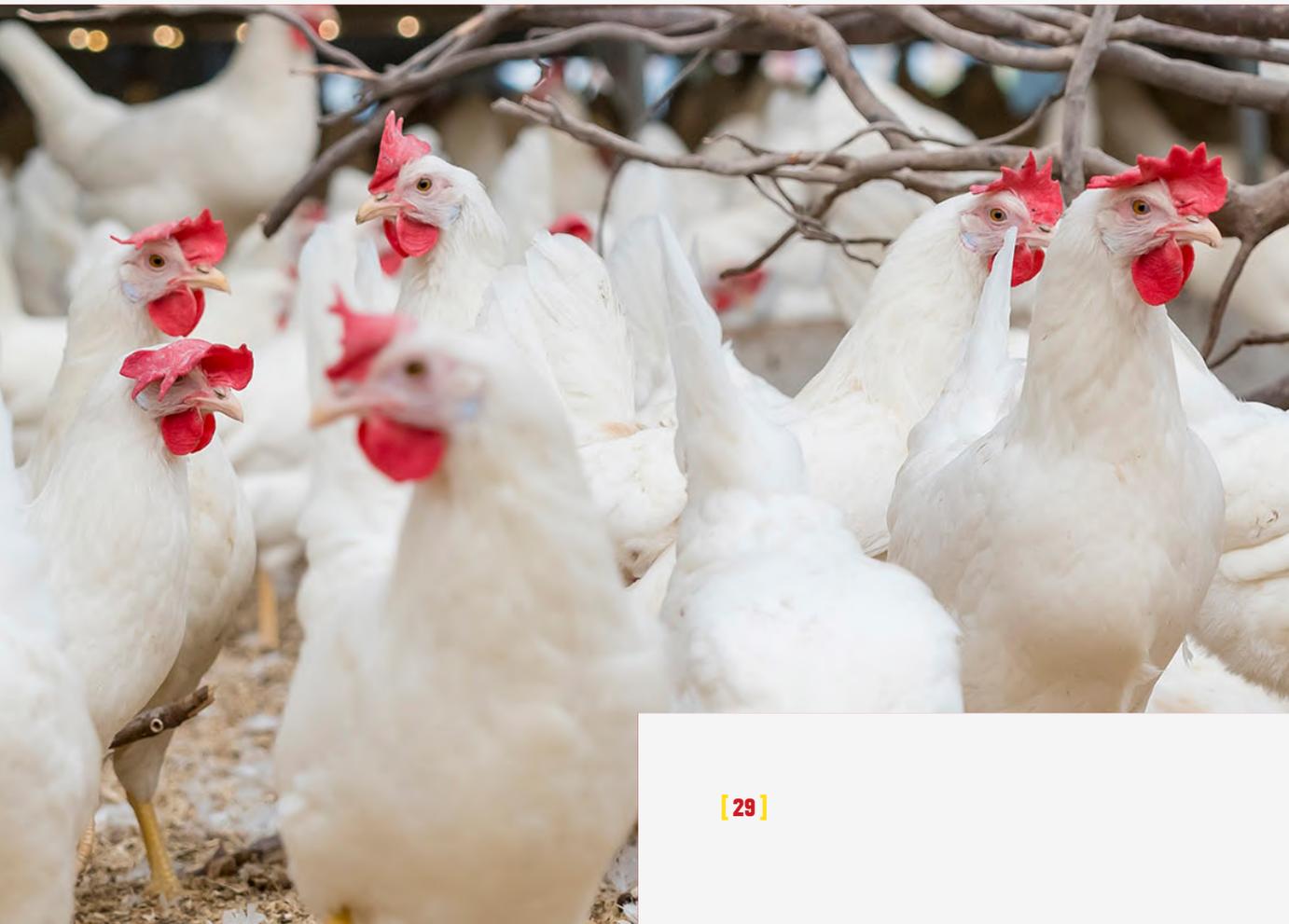
ALL HENS SHOULD BE GIVEN NEST SPACE...

Council Directive 1999/74/EC states that:

“Producers need to only provide one nest per seven birds. Hens are extremely motivated to access appropriate nesting sites, and they perform complex behaviours before laying¹⁴².”

Hens also tend to synchronise laying times, and so there is likely to be considerable competition and aggressive behaviour as birds compete to access the nesting space. Consequently, some birds may be forced to lay their eggs on the wire floor.

When hens are prevented from accessing a nesting area, they vocalise more, specifically the ‘gakel-call’ which is considered to be a measure of frustration¹⁴³. Frustrated hens are also more restless, and will pace in a stereotypic manner¹⁴⁴. Hens may perform this abnormal behaviour before egg-laying which suggests they may be attempting to delay laying until they can gain access to a site¹⁴⁴.



MENTAL STATES: LAYING HENS ARE STRESSED, FRUSTRATED, BORED, AND IN CHRONIC PAIN.

Hens are inquisitive, explorative animals, and they quickly become bored and stressed when they are kept in under-stimulating environments¹²⁵. Hens naturally spend their waking hours' foraging, dustbathing, perching and exploring but near-barren cages and barns prevent them from engaging in these pleasurable activities¹³⁸. As a result, the commercial hen is bored and frustrated, and performs abnormal and damaging behaviour, such as injurious pecking¹⁴².

Hens, like other animals, experience fear and distress, and the ongoing fear of dominant birds whom they cannot escape from, has a significant impact on their mental wellbeing¹³⁸. Laying hens also suffer chronic pain from beak-trimming, and painful conditions caused by their housing system¹²⁶.

Is this a good life for laying hens?

The frustration of being unable to perform positive activities and experiences, the high prevalence of injuries and diseases, and the distress caused by overcrowded housing, all result in a poor mental state for the millions of hens kept in enriched cages and overcrowded barns across the EU. Laying hens deserve a good life, yet their current conditions mean that their welfare is grossly inadequate.



NO [SOWS AND THEIR PIGLETS] LEFT BEHIND

REALITY

SOWS ARE FORCED TO GIVE BIRTH AND REAR THEIR PIGLETS IN CRATES TOO SMALL TO TURN AROUND IN.

In 2020, there were over 11 million breeding sows across the EU, and the majority were kept in intensive systems³². Sows generally have two litters of 10–12 piglets a year, although larger litters are becoming increasingly common³³. The mortality rate for pre-weaned piglets can go up to 35% in some farms³⁴.

HEALTH: SOWS SUFFER INJURIES FROM BEING KEPT IN SMALL CRATES, AND PIGLETS ARE MUTILATED WITHOUT PAIN RELIEF.

Confined to a crate

Confining sows in farrowing crates causes extensive suffering. The stress from the confinement can cause numerous health issues, including; urinary tract infections, mouth sores from stereotypic bar biting, reduced muscular and bone strength, poor cardiovascular fitness, shoulder lesions, lameness, poor body condition and abscesses^{35,36}. The stress that sows experience in stalls during their late gestation period results in immune dysfunction making them more receptive to disease³⁷.

The majority of the EU's sows are confined to a stall in their last week before farrowing when they are most susceptible to lameness³⁷. Confinement increases the risk further, as cull rates for lameness are higher for stall-housed sows than group-housed sows³⁷. Lameness in sows also affects offspring development. Piglets born to mothers who were lame during the pregnancy, have poorer weight gain and more skin lesions, suggesting that they are less able to cope in social situations, compared with those born to non-lame sows³⁸.

Unnaturally large litters of piglets mean many are born sick

In commercial systems, sows are producing larger litter sizes than ever before, and litters of more than 16 piglets are not uncommon³³. Large litter sizes can, however, cause higher cortisol levels in the sow during farrowing³³. Large litters often have reduced and varied birth weights and the first piglets to be born are usually larger and more able to compete for milk³³. Whereas smaller individuals have difficulties in accessing colostrum and are more likely to be laid on by the sow³³.

Piglets in large litters are also more likely to have physical and metabolic abnormalities, such as immature intestinal development and abnormal head shapes. This is due to embryo crowding in the sow's uterus and usually results in pre-weaning mortality³³.

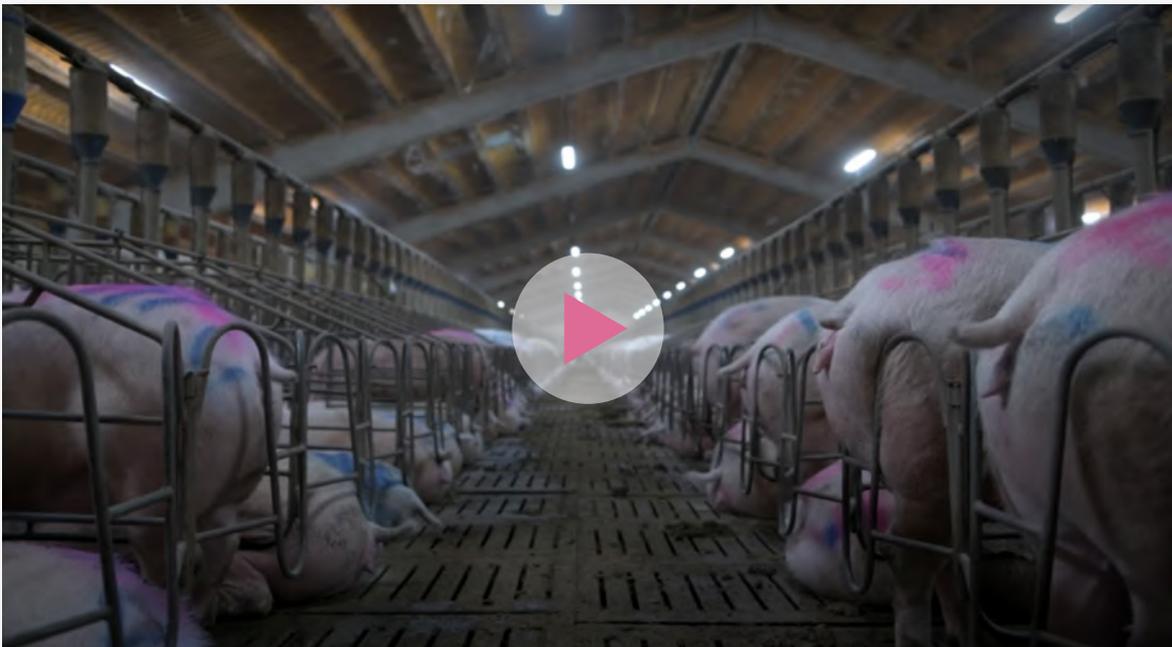
NO PIGLET SHOULD HAVE THEIR TAIL CUT OFF...

Council Directive 2008/120/EC states that:

“Tail-docking causes immediate and prolonged pain and should not be performed routinely. Measures to address the causes of tail-biting should be taken instead.”

Despite this, most pigs are still being tail docked in the EU. An online survey of 24 EU countries performed by the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe, the European Association of Porcine Health Management and the European Commission, found that there has been little change since 2007 in the numbers of pigs being tail-docked³⁹, despite the ban being in force since 1994.

Furthermore, the European Commission audits found 95-100% of pigs had docked tails in Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain and Denmark, between 2016 - 2019^{34,40}. In Hungary, the European Commission reported that the Hungarian authorities and the pig sector have taken no tangible action to reduce tail biting and to avoid routine tail docking⁴⁰. They also found no justifiable reason for 95% of the pigs being tail docked, as there were very low levels of tail lesions and tail biting present⁴⁰.



NO PIGLET SHOULD SUFFER THE PAIN OF SURGICAL CASTRATION...

Council Directive 2008/120/EC states that:

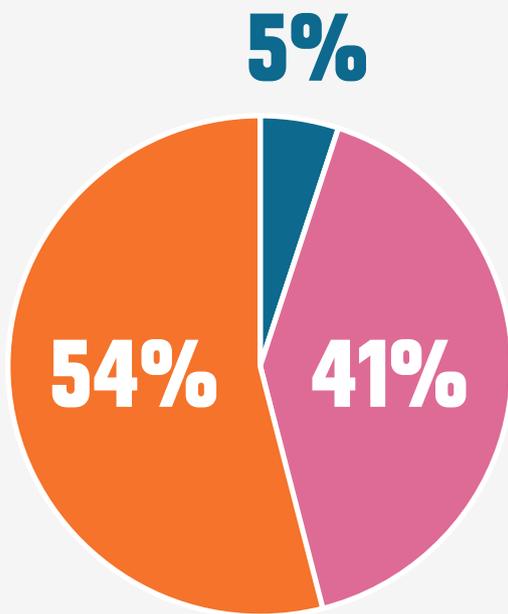
“Castration is likely to cause prolonged pain... and [is] therefore detrimental to the welfare of pigs... As a consequence, rules should be laid down to ensure better practices”.

In 2010, the European Commission committed to banning surgical castration of pigs by January 1st 2018. It did not happen. In many of the Member States, pigs are still being routinely castrated, causing immense pain and suffering to millions of pigs a year. Surgical castration causes severe pain in piglets, and piglets will make vocalisations that are indicative of acute pain, show increased levels of the stress hormone cortisol, and have reduced activity levels for at least 5 days following the procedure.



Castrated piglets will also huddle, scratch at their rumps, tremble and spasm more, compared with piglets who were just handled without being castrated ^{41,42,43}.

Castration is performed to avoid boar taint, which can result in an unpleasant taste and smell in the resulting pork⁴⁴, and to avoid aggressive behaviour from entire males⁴¹. The prevalence of boar taint is generally very low, ranging from 0-3% across farms^{43,44}. A prevalence of 2.5% boar taint and under is considered acceptable from an economic perspective, as entire males score better in terms of feed efficiency⁴². To address aggression, appropriate management measures, such as keeping litter siblings together in a stable group, and providing adequate enrichment can be effective⁴¹.



Surgically castrated pigs given:

- Anaesthesia and Analgesia
- Analgesia
- Nothing

Despite this, a 2016 survey of 24 EU countries found that 18 countries were surgically castrating more than 80% of pigs⁴². Only 5% of them were given anaesthesia and analgesia to manage the pain, 41% of them were just given analgesia, and 54% were not given anything. This means that around 80 million piglets are being castrated in the EU every year without adequate pain relief. Immunocastration offers a pain-free alternative to surgical castration⁴¹, yet in 2016 only 2.7% of EU's pigs were immunocastrated⁴¹

ENVIRONMENT: SOWS GIVE BIRTH IN CRATES TOO SMALL TO ALLOW THEM TO INTERACT WITH THEIR PIGLETS.

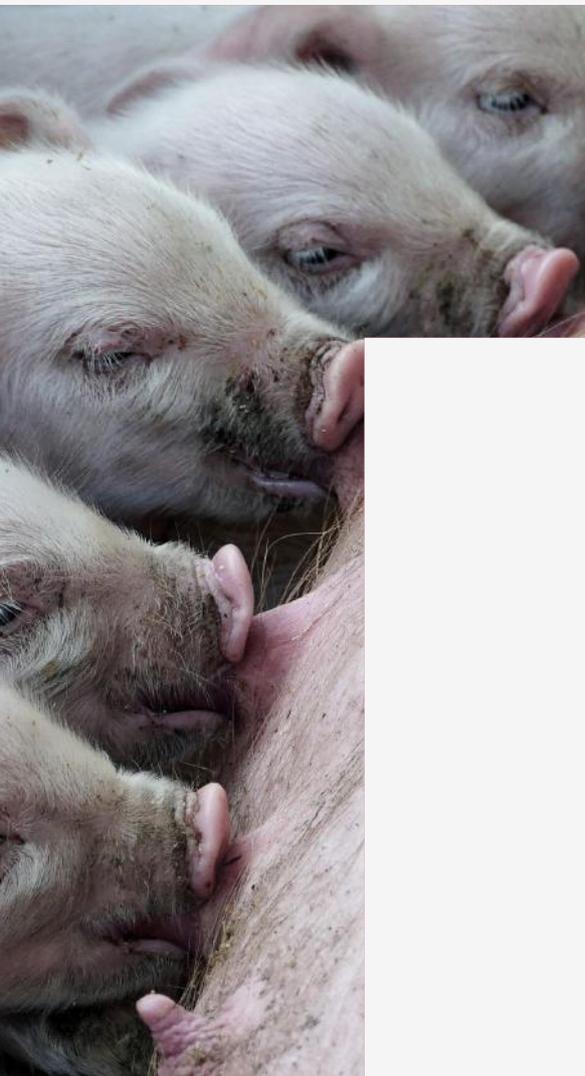
The environment in which a sow gives birth is very important to her. In natural conditions, sows leave the social group and seek privacy before farrowing, and will walk between 2.5 to 6.5km to achieve this⁴⁵. The sow may visit many nest sites before making her decision, and multiple factors are involved in her choice⁴⁵. She will then travel up to 50 metres at a time for suitable nest materials, spending considerable time and energy to build a nest^{45,46}. In farrowing crates, sows cannot fulfil any of these highly motivated behaviours, and this leads to stress and frustration⁴⁵. Standing up and lying down can even be difficult, and sows often suffer injuries from repeatedly banging into the bars⁴⁷.

The effect of confinement on maternal behaviour

The restriction of these important prepartum behaviours can negatively impact maternal behaviour in sows. Sows in farrowing crates are less responsive to their young's vocalisations, compared with sows in cage-free pens who are more responsive and interact more with their young⁴⁷. Sows in an enriched cage-free pen also establish and maintain better nursing behaviour, contributing to improved weight gain and survivability in piglets^{47,48}.

Farrowing crates cause significant suffering

Farrowing crates are grossly inadequate for sows and do not provide them with the comfort, freedom of movement, and control that they need. Furthermore, the justification for their use is highly contested as many studies show that they do not reduce piglet mortality^{36,49,50,51}.



Council Directive 98/58/EC (Annex 7) states that:

“The freedom of movement of an animal, having regard to its species and in accordance with established experience and scientific knowledge, must not be restricted in such a way as to cause it unnecessary suffering or injury. Where an animal is continuously or regularly tethered or confined, it must be given the space appropriate to its physiological and ethological needs in accordance with established experience and scientific knowledge.”

The reality

There is overwhelming scientific evidence to show that sows suffer considerably from being confined and forced to give birth in crates too small for them to turn around.



These farrowing crates do not provide sows with space to “fulfil their physiological and ethological needs”, the scientific evidence is clear, this is a breach of the Directive.

NUTRITION: PREGNANT SOWS ARE CHRONICALLY HUNGRY.

Pregnant sows are chronically hungry

Pregnant (dry) sows are only given half the amount of food they would eat normally⁵². Chronic hunger results in stereotypies, such as bar biting and sham chewing. Sham chewing is thought to have developed from bar-biting and is considered to be evidence of significant environmental restriction and a very poor mental state⁵². A high fibre diet can help to reduce chronic hunger in sows, and if provided appropriately, foraging materials can reduce the prevalence of feed-related stereotypic behaviours⁵³.

How sows are fed matters to them

The method of feed delivery can also have a positive effect on the performance of stereotypic behaviours. For example, sows fed a restricted diet via trickle feeders, are more likely to perform stereotypic behaviours, compared with those who are given their feed ration in one go⁵². Providing foraging materials not only provide sows with another form of feed but help them to fulfil the natural behaviours of rooting and foraging⁵³.

A sow's diet affects the piglets too

Piglets are also affected by their mothers' diet, and piglets born from sows on a high fibre diet during pregnancy, are less aggressive before weaning⁵⁴. Consequently, these piglets suffer fewer skin lesions, compared with piglets whose mothers are fed a low fibre diet. These differences are attributable to the level of prenatal stress they are exposed to in gestational development⁵⁴.

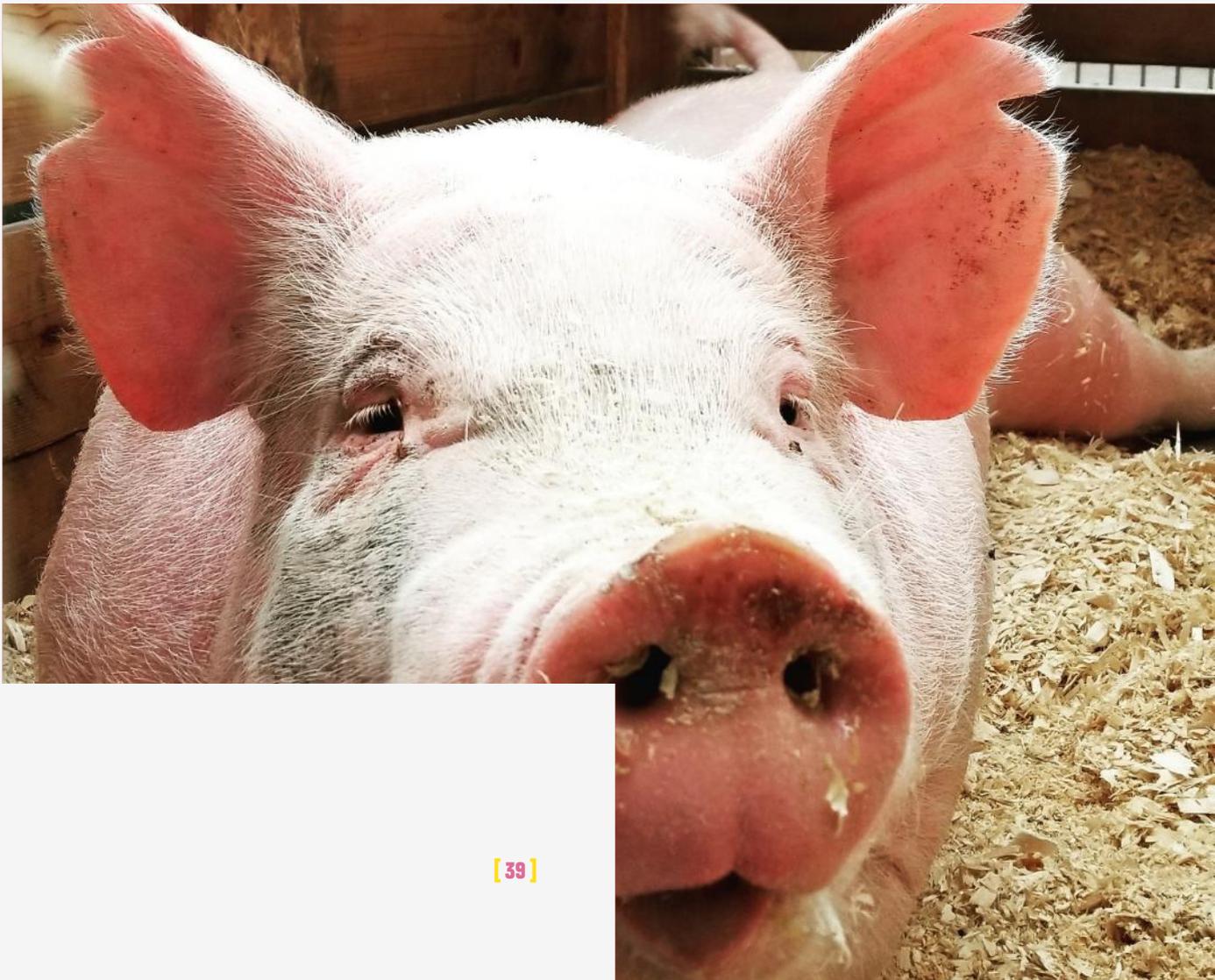


NO SOW SHOULD STARVE...

Council Directive 2008/120/EC states that sows should receive:

“a sufficient quantity of bulky or high-fibre food as well as high-energy food”, but the vague nature of the wording is open to interpretation, and many sows experience chronic hunger throughout their lives⁵³.

Furthermore, the provision of high fibre food does not resolve the problem, as when sows are given diets with either 18% or 35% fibre, they still show strong feeding motivation indicative of hunger⁵⁵. Further work into the effects of different fibre types and quantities is needed so that the Council Directive can provide clear wording on this matter and tackle this significant welfare issue.



BEHAVIOURAL INTERACTIONS: SOWS CANNOT BUILD NESTS FOR THEIR PIGLETS.

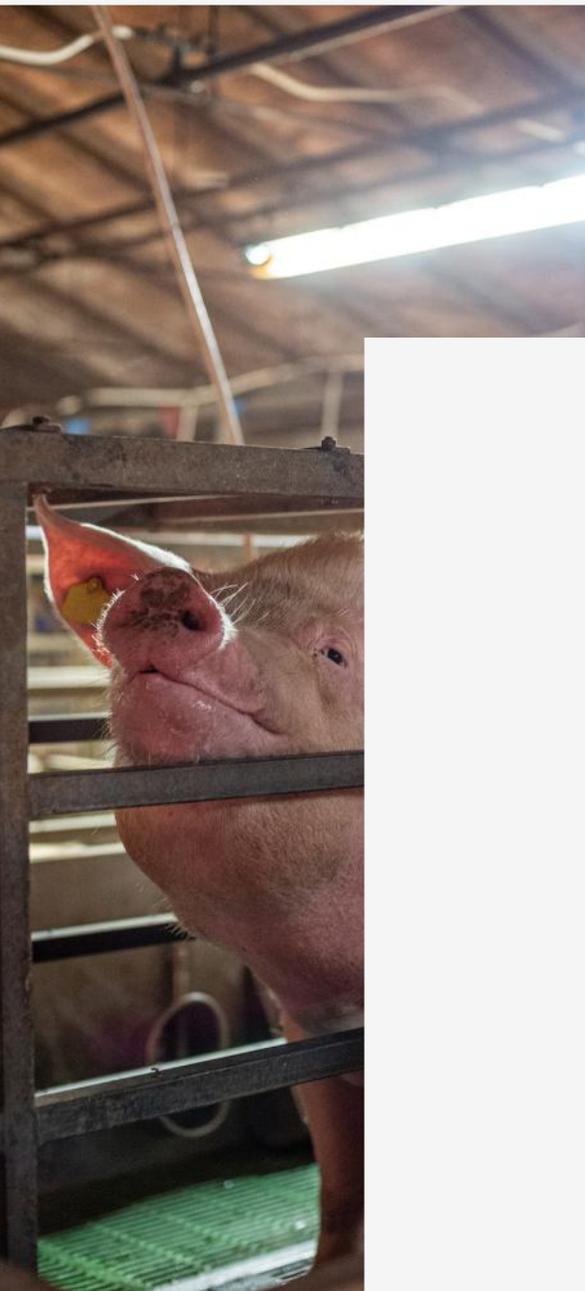
The drive to nest-build before farrowing is still exceptionally strong in sows. Providing sows with the opportunity to nest-build decreases the duration of farrowing, and the associated risk of stillbirths and post-parturient disorders⁵⁶. Sows are strongly motivated to collate nest materials, and they will push panels up to 300 times to access straw⁵⁷. The act of collecting nesting material is also very important, as when sows have nests provided, they will still seek out materials to build their own⁵⁸.

Accessing nesting materials

The delivery method and quantity of nesting materials are also important to sows. The presentation of straw triggers nest-building behaviour in sows, and the delivery of one large amount, as opposed to small daily amounts, triggers nest-building behaviour earlier⁵⁶. This allows sows to spend more time nest-building pre-partum, and less time post-partum. This has a positive effect on farrowing time, as a 1-hour increase in time spent nest-building reduces the farrowing duration by 12%⁵⁶.

The negative impact of preventing nest-building

When sows cannot fulfil these natural and highly motivated behaviours, they become stressed, restless and frustrated, and perform injurious stereotypic behaviours⁵⁹. Restlessness before farrowing is also associated with poorer maternal behaviour after farrowing, including an increased tendency to crush piglets⁶⁰⁻⁶². Whereas, allowing a sow to nest build, improves colostrum intake, which has a positive effect on piglet survival and growth⁴⁹.



SOWS NEED TO MAKE NESTS FOR THEIR YOUNG...

Council Directive 2008/120/EC states that nest-building substrate can be omitted if it is not compatible with the producer's slurry system. This means that many sows (the majority in the EU) are not given the chance to build nests for their young.

Given the importance of fulfilling nest-building behaviour for sows and their demonstrated strong willingness to do so, this is unacceptable and results in a significant detriment to sow welfare. The Directive also fails to specify what is considered to be suitable nesting material. Peat, for example, is a poor alternative to straw for nesting material and fails to elicit the full nest-building behavioural repertoire in sows⁶³, although it serves other purposes on the sow's behaviour repertoire.



Sows need straw to nest build, and the emphasis should now be on supporting producers to adapt their slurry systems to support this rather than not providing sows of what they need^{56,63}.

MENTAL STATES: SOWS EXPERIENCE HIGHER STRESS LEVELS WHEN KEPT IN FARROWING CRATES, AND PIGLETS BECOME DEPRESSED FROM MUTILATIONS.

Sows are depressed, stressed, and fearful

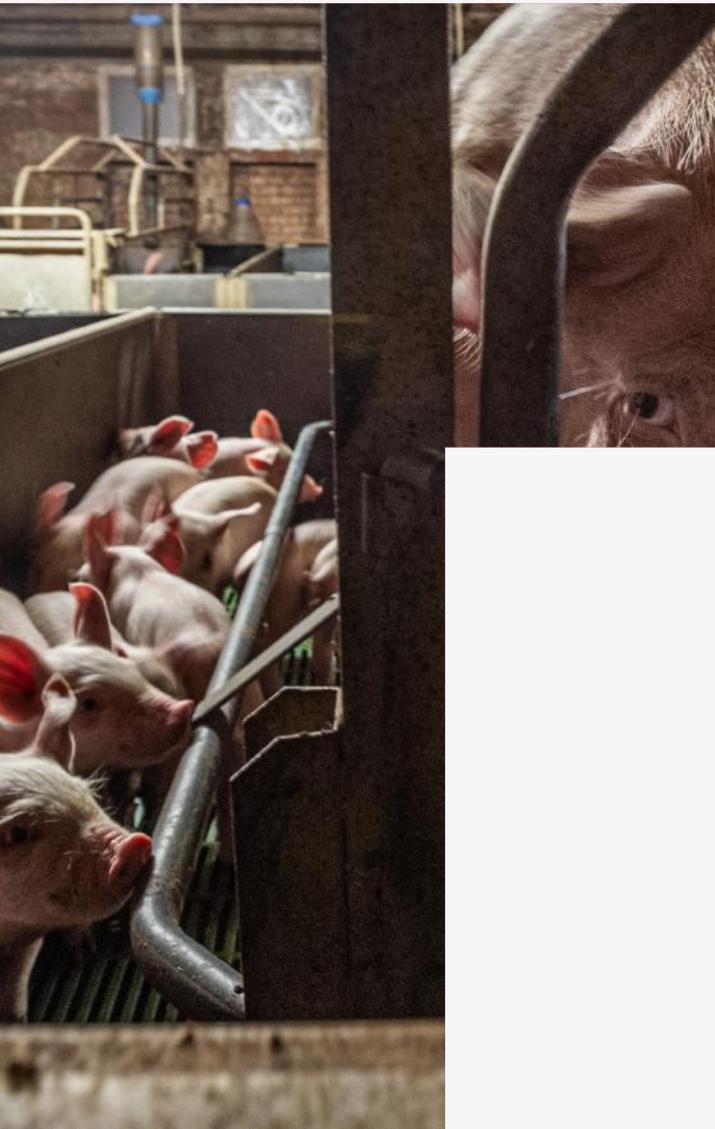
Farrowing crates offer sows no chance to explore, perform natural behaviours, or engage in positive activities. Instead, sows confined to crates have higher cortisol levels and heart rates, compared with those in pens, which is likely to be caused by their negative mental states⁶⁰. Furthermore, confined sows also show inactivity and unresponsiveness, suggesting a degree of depression³⁶.

Sows kept in cages are more fearful of humans, compared with sows kept in large groups on deep litter³⁷. In response to an approaching human, confined sows perform a greater withdrawal response, take longer to return to feed, and spend less time near their feed, than groups on deep litter³⁷. This may result in chronically stressed pigs, as they routinely have contact with humans³⁷.

Long-term pain and suffering in piglets

Mutilations in piglets, such as castration and teeth clipping, cause considerable pain and stress during the procedure, but the long-term pain can also have negative impacts on the piglets' mental health. Castrated piglets show less social cohesion, compared with intact piglets, and isolate themselves to avoid causing further pain⁶⁴.

Clipped teeth are thought to be painful until the adult teeth grow in (50-120 days)⁶⁵. This long-term experience of pain negatively impacts the piglets' mental experience, causes suffering, and fearful behaviour towards humans⁶⁶.



Piglets play when they have space

Piglets reared in cage-free pens, as opposed to farrowing crates (caged systems), engage in more play behaviour⁴⁷. Play is considered to be an expression of positive mental states, and so cage-free pens not only give piglets the chance to engage in the positive experience of play, but they may also elicit a more positive mental state in the piglets⁴⁷.

Is this a good life for sows and their piglets?

The pain, suffering and fear that sows and piglets experience in intensive systems is unacceptable. They have no opportunities for experiencing positive feelings, and no chance of a good life.

**NO PIGLETS
SHOULD BE
WEANED TOO
EARLY...**

Council Directive 2008/120/EC sets a minimum weaning age of 28 days for EU piglets unless producers operate an all-in all-out system, where they can be weaned at 21 days. Naturally, piglets would wean at around 17 weeks of age (around 120 days) over a gradual period, spending increasing amounts of time away from the sow⁶⁷.

The earlier piglets are weaned, the more stressful the experience is likely to be. Piglets vocalise more when weaned earlier, and this is likely to be an indicator of a more difficult transition and reflective of a poorer mental state⁶⁸. Weaning at 7 weeks has a more positive effect on stress levels in piglets, and improves post-weaning feed intake⁶⁹. The abrupt nature of weaning in commercial settings is also highly stressful for piglets⁷⁰. Whereas, allowing piglets and the sow to gradually decrease nursing bouts and contact time, results in reduced cortisol levels and fewer maladaptive behaviours⁷⁰.



NO [GROWER] PIGS LEFT BEHIND

REALITY

**GROWER PIGS ARE KEPT
IN BARREN, OVERCROWDED
PENS, AND SUFFER
INJURIES FROM AGGRESSIVE
INTERACTIONS.**

There were approximately 133 million grower pigs in the EU in 2020³². Most of the pigs (75%) were in large commercial holdings, and small systems only produced around 3% of the EU's pig herd³⁴. Denmark, for example, had an average of 4,700 pigs per holding³⁴. The majority of extensively reared pigs are from organic systems, which represents less than 1% of the EU's pig herd³⁴. This means that most of the EU's pigs (~130 million pigs) are raised indoors for their entire lives, and the majority are subject to intensive conditions that fail to meet their welfare needs³⁴.

HEALTH: GROWER PIGS COMMONLY SUFFER FROM RESPIRATORY AND ENTERIC DISEASES DUE TO THE DENSELY POPULATED SYSTEMS THEY ARE KEPT IN.

In the wild, diseases and parasites are almost unheard of in pigs, due to their roving nature¹⁴⁸. Yet, in intensive systems, all pigs are expected to have contracted a respiratory lesion by the time of slaughter¹⁴². The inherent health issues associated with intensive systems should not be an accepted part of production, as they are a significant indicator of the issues of farming pigs in this way.

Respiratory disorders are commonly the result of poor air quality in pig systems. Noxious gases such as ammonia, hydrogen sulphide and methane can build up as a result of the number of animals confined in the area, and the associated decomposing waste¹⁴⁹. Prolonged ammonia exposure can cause a physiological immune response in pigs, and juvenile pigs will detect and avoid atmospheres containing even low levels of ammonia, preferring to choose fresh air instead¹⁵⁰.

The dangers of dust

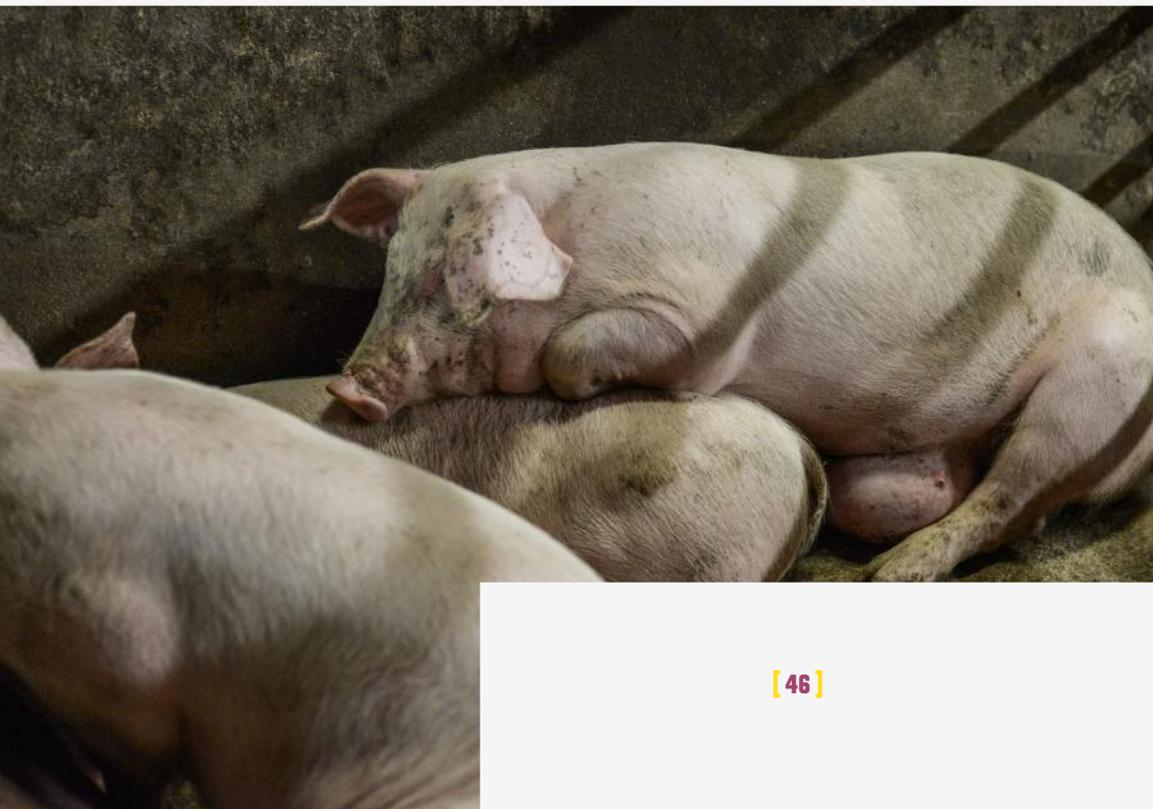
Dust in pig production systems is biologically active and contains hazardous agents such as fungi, endotoxins and bacteria¹⁴². Dust, along with noxious gases like ammonia, can have serious health consequences for the pigs, including; enzootic pneumonia, pleuritis, swine influenza, and porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome¹⁵¹. Furthermore, poor air quality can lower the pigs' immune systems, lowering their ability to resist bacterial infections¹⁵⁰. Some infections like atrophic rhinitis cause considerable suffering to pigs, including severe and chronic inflammation of the nose, which results in the nasal bones distorting, and potentially even facial deformity¹⁵⁰.

ENVIRONMENT: GROWER PIGS ARE KEPT IN OVERCROWDED, BARREN PENS WITH UNCOMFORTABLE SLATTED FLOORS.

Group housed pigs are commonly kept on slatted floors in the EU. This type of flooring has production benefits, as it allows for drainage, but has significant negative impacts on the pigs' welfare. Slatted flooring is known to increase the risk of tail biting, compared with pigs housed on deep straw¹⁵². Rearing pigs with bedding has numerous health and behavioural benefits, yet most intensive systems still keep pigs on uncomfortable, barren slatted floors¹⁵³.

Housing pigs on deep straw is better for their health

Housing systems with deep straw, have lower levels of injuries, stomach ulcers, adventitious bursitis of the hock, limb lesions, lung damage, morbidity and mortality, compared with systems with fully-slatted floors¹⁵⁴. For example, limb lesions can be 23% higher in barren-housed pigs, compared with those on sawdust¹⁵⁵. The stress that pigs experience from being kept on barren floors can also cause health problems. For example, pigs housed on slatted floors have a significantly higher mean stomach ulcer severity score, compared with pigs kept on straw bedding¹⁵⁶. Preference tests have repeatedly shown that pigs strongly prefer straw or earthen floors over concrete¹⁵⁴.



NO PIG SHOULD BE RAISED IN A BARREN PEN...

Council Directive 2008/120/EC states that:

“[pigs] must have permanent access to a sufficient quantity of material to enable proper investigation and manipulation activities”.

The term “sufficient quantity” is open for interpretation and permits producers to provide the bare minimum of materials, which have no positive effect on the pig’s welfare. The provision of a chain, for example, would technically meet the Directive, yet it holds little interest for pigs and is a poor substitution for the dynamic, ingestible, and complex nature of rooting materials like straw. Even in barren conditions, pigs will only spend 2% of their time engaging with hanging chew toys¹⁵⁷. Whereas, when given the chance, they will spend around 21% of their time manipulating straw bedding¹⁵⁷.

The EU Scientific Panel on Animal Health concluded that indestructible objects like chains, are ineffective at meeting the manipulatory needs of pigs, and should not be used as a substitute for rooting and destructible materials¹⁵⁸.



Unfortunately, the current Pigs Directive permits producers to simply provide a hanging chain or chew toy, which may meet the requirements of the Directive but fails to meet the needs of the pigs.

Council Directive 98/58/EC (Annex 8) states that:

“Materials to be used for the construction of accommodation, and in particular for the construction of pens and equipment with which the animals may come into contact, must not be harmful to the animals and must be capable of being thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.”

The Reality

Scientific research clearly shows that pigs suffer on slatted floors. They are subject to higher levels of lameness and leg disorders, and find barren, slatted floors to be inherently stressful.



These pigs in the EU are suffering due to the construction of their pens, which according to the Directive “must not be harmful to the animals”.

NUTRITION: GROWER PIGS HAVE NO CHANCE TO ROOT FOR FOOD AND ARE FED UNNATURAL DIETS.



Pigs have evolved to eat little and often, consuming small amounts of high fibre food. In intensive systems with no rooting materials, pigs are denied access to roughage and are instead fed low fibre diets of ground or pelleted food¹⁵⁴. This often causes gastrointestinal acidity and mucosal damage, leading to a high prevalence of gastric ulcers¹⁵⁶. Levels of gastric ulcers can range from 0 – 60% across systems, and in severe cases, this can cause gastric haemorrhage and sudden death^{156,159,160}.

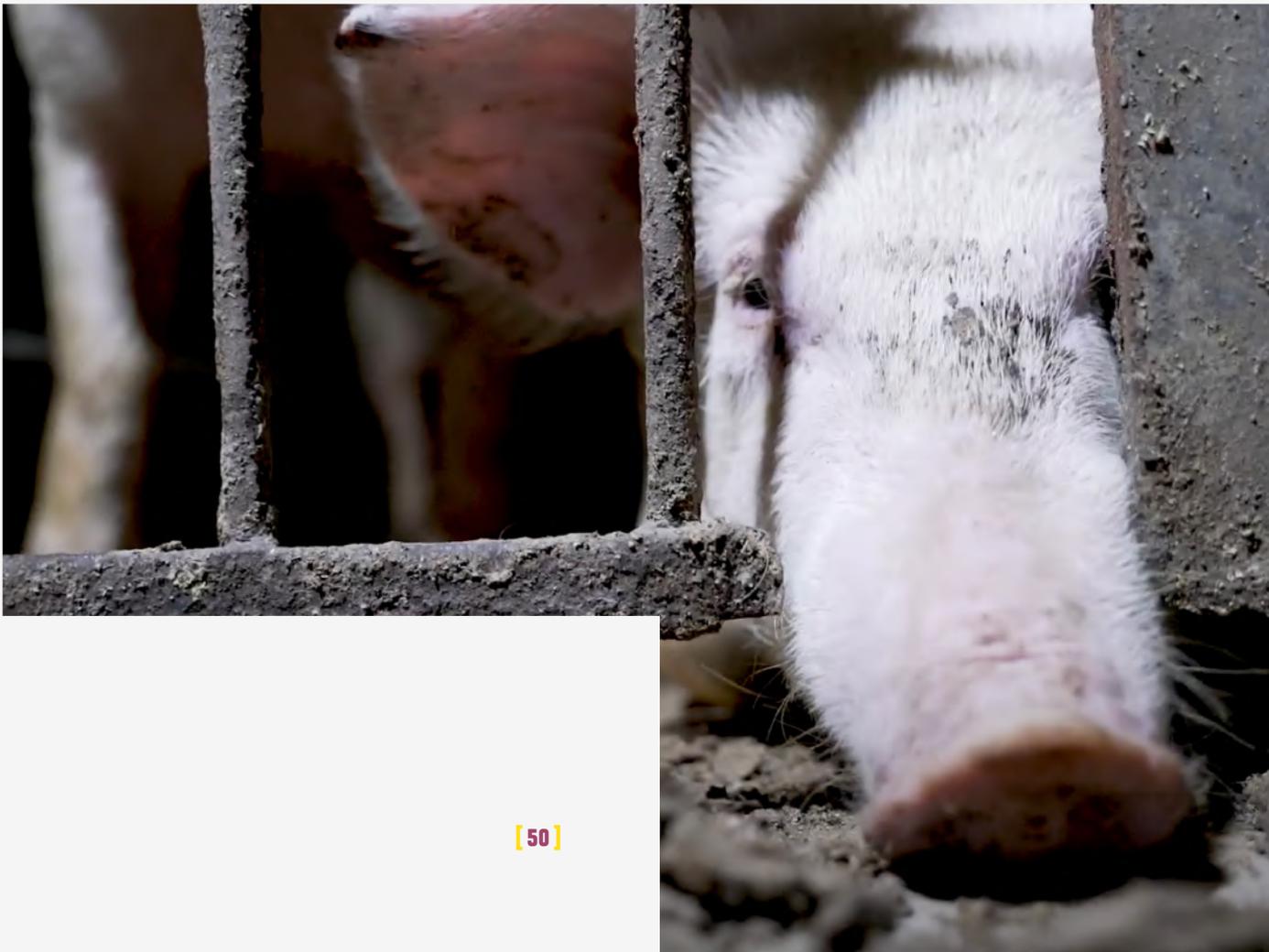
Pigs want to root and forage

When given the opportunity, pigs will spend the majority of their time rooting and foraging for food¹⁵⁸. For these intelligent and curious animals, the method of feed delivery is highly important, as they are driven to spend a large proportion of their waking day performing feed-seeking behaviours³⁹. When unable to do this, they redirect their oral related behaviours to injurious behaviours, such as tail-biting and ear-chewing¹⁵³.

When offered, the presentation of forage is also important for ensuring that it has a positive effect on pig welfare. For example, forage provided in racks is used less than forage on the ground, and wall-mounted feeders elicit an abnormal posture in pigs¹⁶¹. A lot of straw manipulation occurs when pigs are lying down, which is not possible when it is provided in a rack¹⁶².

BEHAVIOURAL INTERACTIONS: GROWER PIGS HAVE NO SUBSTRATE TO ROOT IN AND ARE LEFT FEELING FRUSTRATED AND STRESSED.

Pigs are playful, intelligent animals, and when they are kept in barren conditions they are unable to fulfil natural behaviours that are important to them. The modern pig still maintains their ancestral instincts, and feral or extensively reared pigs, will still perform the same behavioural repertoire as their wild ancestors⁴⁶. In intensive systems, however, stereotypies and abnormal behaviours are common in grower pigs, including abnormal postures such as the dog-sitting posture, abnormal feeding behaviours such as bar biting, vacuum chewing, excessive aggressiveness and cannibalism⁶³. Pigs are highly motivated to engage in activities like foraging, wallowing, and rooting, and their welfare suffers when they are prevented from doing so. Intensive systems fail to meet the needs of pigs, and to give them the chance to engage in positive, natural behaviours.



[GROWER PIGS] BEHAVIOURAL INTERACTIONS

Council Directive 98/58/EC (Annex 15) states that:

“All animals must have access to feed at intervals appropriate to their physiological needs.”

The Reality

Pigs have evolved to eat little and often, and to source their food from foraging and rooting. Scientific research shows that pigs suffer when they are deprived of foraging opportunities. Providing pigs with concentrated food is no substitute for their natural feeding behaviour, and they suffer greatly as a result.



**MENTAL STATES:
THE CONSTANT
FIGHTING,
BOREDOM, AND
PAIN THAT
GROWER PIGS
SUFFER RESULTS
IN STRESSED
ANIMALS WITH
NO CHANCE
FOR POSITIVE
EXPERIENCES.**

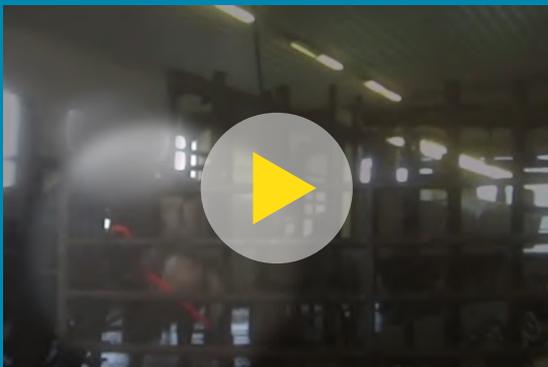
Grower pigs in intensive systems are subjected to numerous negative experiences, such as chronic pain from tail docking and teeth clipping, social stress from regrouping with unfamiliar conspecifics, boredom, frustration from being unable to engage in highly motivated behaviours, pain from respiratory and gastric conditions, fear from inappropriate handling by humans and interactions with aggressive individuals, and pain from tail-biting and ear chewing. These negative experiences result in prolonged negative mental states in pigs and considerable suffering.

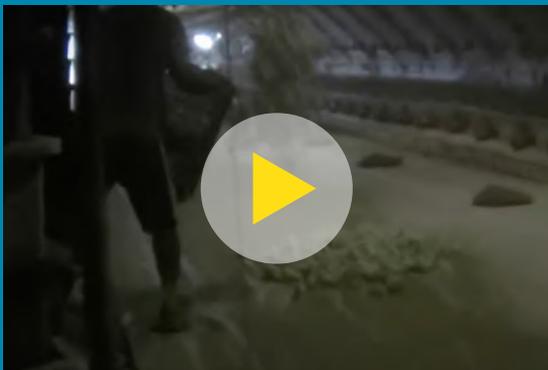
Is this a good life for pigs?

The high prevalence of abnormal behaviours is evidence that intensive systems cannot meet the needs of pigs. Pigs reared on deep-straw systems, or in extensive conditions have many opportunities for exercising control and for engaging in pleasurable activities, they have better health, and a good life. Most of the EU's pigs, however, are experiencing prolonged pain and suffering, with no chance of a good life.

COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 98/58/EC [ANNEX 1] STATES THAT:

“Animals shall be cared for by a sufficient number of staff who possess the appropriate ability, knowledge and professional competence.”





THE REALITY

Across the EU, animals are being violently mistreated and abused in intensive systems. These animals are scared, in pain, and suffering long-term injuries and early deaths at the hands of those who are meant to care for them. These are acts of deliberate cruelty, they show incompetence, poor training and most importantly a lack of monitoring and enforcement of the legislation. The European Union's farmed animals deserve better.



NO [DAIRY] COWS LEFT BEHIND

REALITY

DAIRY COWS EXPERIENCE CHRONIC PAIN AND HEALTH ISSUES, ARE KEPT INDOORS FOR THEIR ENTIRE LIVES, AND THEIR CALVES ARE HOUSED ALONE.

There were 20.5 million dairy cows in the EU in 2020⁷¹. Most EU dairy farms are large in scale, and the larger farms also have the highest milk yields⁷². The average milk yield in 2019 was 7,346 kg per cow, although some countries, like Denmark, have higher yields (9,973 kg per cow)⁷³. Organic systems have 30% lower yields, but only constituted 3% of the EU milk production in 2016⁷².

HEALTH: DAIRY COWS SUFFER PAINFUL CONDITIONS SUCH AS MASTITIS AND LAMENESS DUE TO THE HIGH MILK YIELDS THEY ARE FORCED TO PRODUCE.

Lameness is a significant issue for dairy cows

The poor welfare of dairy cows, due to lameness, mastitis and reproductive problems, is considered to be the second-worst animal welfare problem in Europe (the first is broiler leg disorders)⁷². Both the European Commission⁷⁴ and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)⁷⁵ recognise that lameness is one of the biggest welfare issues for dairy cows, yet there has been no reduction in its prevalence of 14–31% over the past 20 years⁷⁶.

Lameness is a painful condition that causes difficulty with locomotion and consequently increases susceptibility to mastitis and metabolic disorders⁷⁷. The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) argue that a prevalence level of below 5% is achievable on commercial farms, but that appropriate action and procedures must be in place to achieve this⁷⁷.

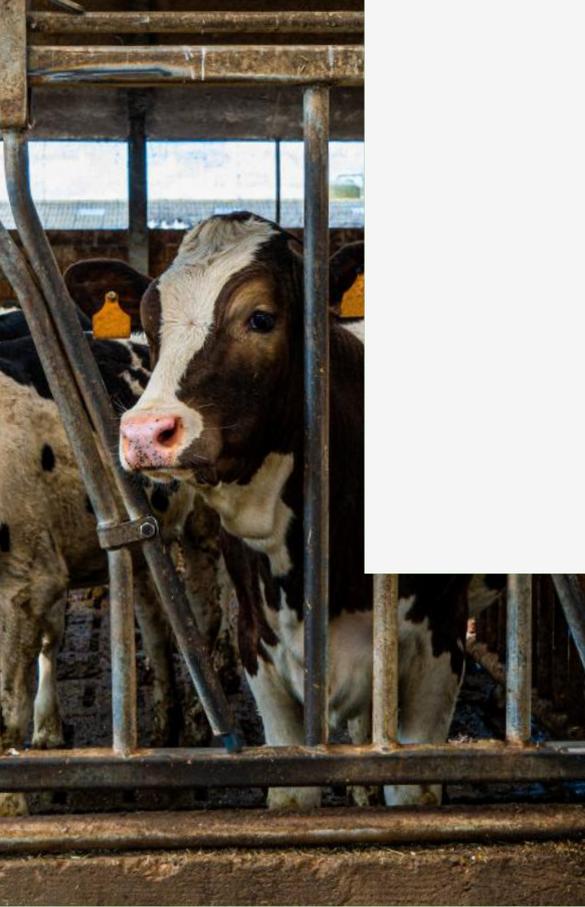
Mastitis is endemic in dairy cows

Mastitis is an extremely painful disease in dairy cows, yet it is still very common across the EU, and affects between 20%–35% of cows per herd⁷⁸. The pain associated with mastitis has significant effects on the welfare of dairy cows, yet the pain and inflammation is rarely treated⁷⁹. Susceptibility to mastitis is linked to high milk yields, lameness, poor hygiene and inadequate housing^{76,78,80}. Improved preventative measures and early detection of mastitis is needed across the EU, along with pain relief for individuals suffering from the condition^{76,79}.

The pressure for high yields is too much

Currently, dairy cows across the EU are needlessly suffering from painful conditions like lameness and mastitis as a result of zero-grazing systems, inadequate housing, improper monitoring and treatment, and the pressure to produce higher milk yields^{74,81}. Dairy cows are being bred to suffer.

[DAIRY COWS] HEALTH



Council Directive 98/58/EC (Annex 21) states that:

“No animal shall be kept for farming purposes unless it can reasonably be expected, on the basis of its genotype or phenotype, that it can be kept without detrimental effect on its health or welfare.”

The Reality

Dairy cows are bred to produce exceptionally high milk yields, and this comes at a cost to their welfare. High-yielding dairy cows suffer more injuries and lameness, more illnesses like mastitis, and are chronically hungry as they cannot keep up with their milk production⁸⁰.



Lameness can be excruciating, yet these cows are forced to keep moving, to keep eating and to keep producing milk. These cows deserve better, they deserve to not be bred to the point of exhaustion, they deserve a good life.

ENVIRONMENT: DAIRY COWS ARE KEPT INDOORS INSTEAD OF ON PASTURE, AND CALVES ARE KEPT ALONE IN TINY CUBICLES.

Specific grazing data is not recorded in the EU⁷⁴, but surveys show a decline in grazing dairy cows across the EU over the past decade⁸². Preventing cattle from accessing pasture has been described as one of the top hazards to dairy cow welfare⁷⁸. Despite this, there is no EU requirement for the Member States to provide dairy cows with access to pasture at any point in their lives, and some keep all of their cows on zero-grazing systems (e.g. Bulgaria)⁷⁴. In Austria, tether systems are required to give cattle access to pasture for at least 90 days a year, but most farms do not comply⁷⁴.

Cows need access to pasture

A lack of pasture can lead to numerous health issues, including; lameness, mastitis, metritis, teat trampling, dystocia, retained placenta and ketosis^{78,83}. Access to pasture allows cows to express more normal behaviours⁸⁴, have improved lying and ruminating time⁸⁵, and have fewer aggressive social interactions⁸⁶.

Inadequate indoor environments

The indoor environment, whether temporary or permanent, also has considerable impacts on the wellbeing of dairy cows and the EU Directive does not require farms to fully meet their cows' needs. Requirements regarding suitable flooring are needed, as lameness, lesions, swellings and dirty hindquarters are lower in systems with soft mats or deep bedding, compared with systems with concrete and hard mats⁸⁷.

Tie-stall systems (tether systems) have considerable welfare implications, particularly as they severely limit the behavioural repertoire of dairy cows⁸⁸. Cows take significantly longer to lie down when tethered, are more likely to collide with housing equipment, which can result in injuries, and are more susceptible to illnesses, compared with loose-housed cows^{84,88}. Consequently, mortality rates are higher in tie-stall systems compared with pasture and loose-housing systems⁸⁸. The EU Directive still permits tie-stall systems, despite the overwhelming evidence that cows suffer when tethered.

NO DAIRY CALF SHOULD BE HOUSED ALONE...



Council Directive 2008/119/EC states that calves must not be kept in individual housing after the age of eight weeks and that calves should ideally be reared in groups.

Despite this, 60% of Europe's dairy calves are housed individually for at least the first eight weeks of life⁸⁹. The prevalence is higher in some countries, such as the Czech Republic (96.7% of farms)⁹⁰. Eurogroup for Animals and its members have evidence of some farms keeping calves in single hutches for far longer than the Directive permits.

Individual housing of calves significantly restricts their behaviours, gives them less space to move⁹¹, prevents social interaction and play⁹², impedes social learning⁹³, negatively impacts coping mechanisms for stressful situations⁹⁴, reduces feed intake⁹⁴, and slows growth⁹⁴, compared with group-housed calves. Calves are social animals, and they need to be housed together.



These calves are much older than 8 weeks, this farm is breaking the law, and causing unnecessary suffering to these animals.

NUTRITION: DAIRY COWS ARE CHRONICALLY HUNGRY AND EMACIATED.

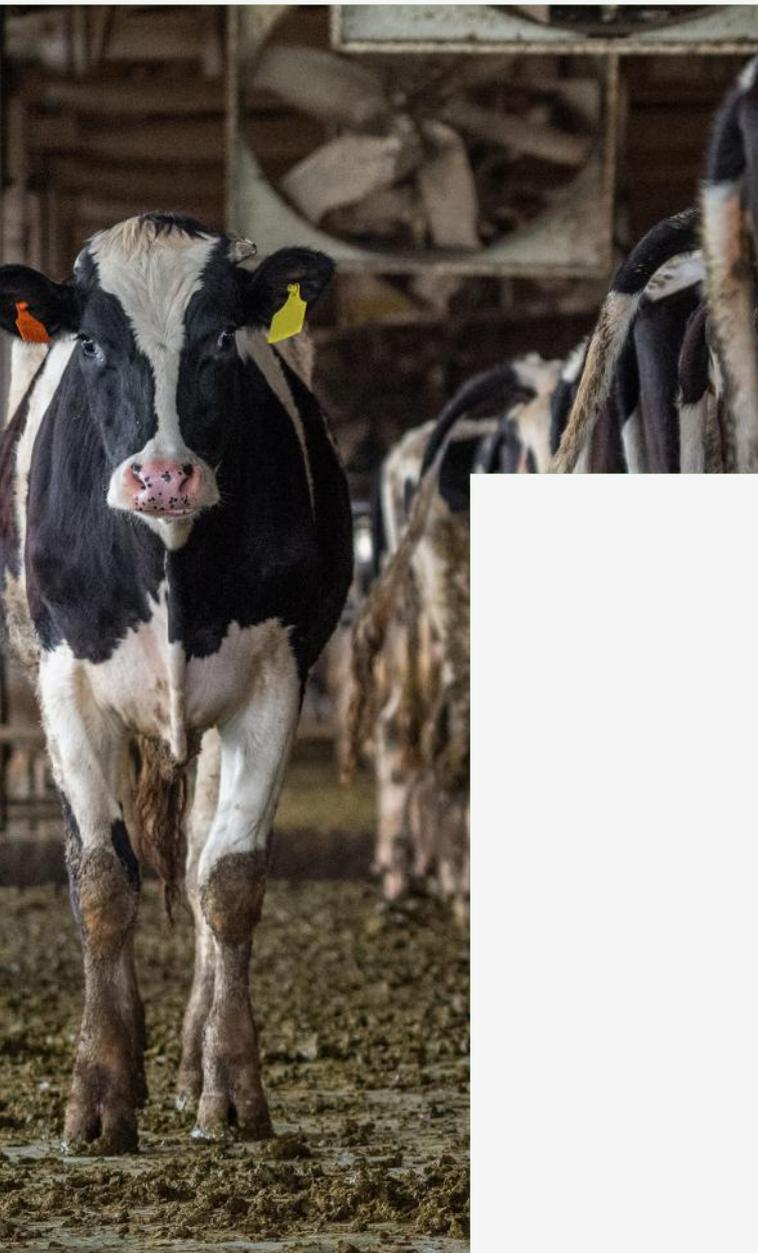
The high-yielding breeds of dairy cows used across the EU have inherent welfare issues. Due to the pressures placed on the cows to produce over 10,000 kg of milk, they cannot consume enough food to prevent a negative energy balance⁷⁸. This means that dairy cows across the EU are chronically hungry and often emaciated. The cows simply cannot eat enough to sustain their high milk yields.

The pressures of high-yields

Despite being highly motivated to access pasture, grass can no longer provide high-yielding cows with enough energy, and so many systems choose to house their cows indoors instead⁷⁸. Pasture is cattle's natural food source, and the fact that it can no longer sustain them demonstrates how intensive and obscured the breeding of the modern dairy cow has become.

Routine periods of starvation

Feed-restriction is commonly used as a dry-off management procedure, to stop the cow from producing milk and allow her udders to recover prior to calving. Feed restriction reduces milk yield, but the process can have negative implications for dairy welfare such as increased cortisol levels, and behavioural signs of distress, such as vocalisations⁹⁵. Even when cows have ad libitum access to low energy feed, they still remain chronically hungry⁹⁶.



NO DAIRY CALF SHOULD BE STARVED...

Council Directive 2008/119/EC sets a minimum requirement for fibrous feed provision for veal calves, but countless studies have found this to be insufficient for meeting the behavioural needs of calves throughout the fattening period⁹⁷.

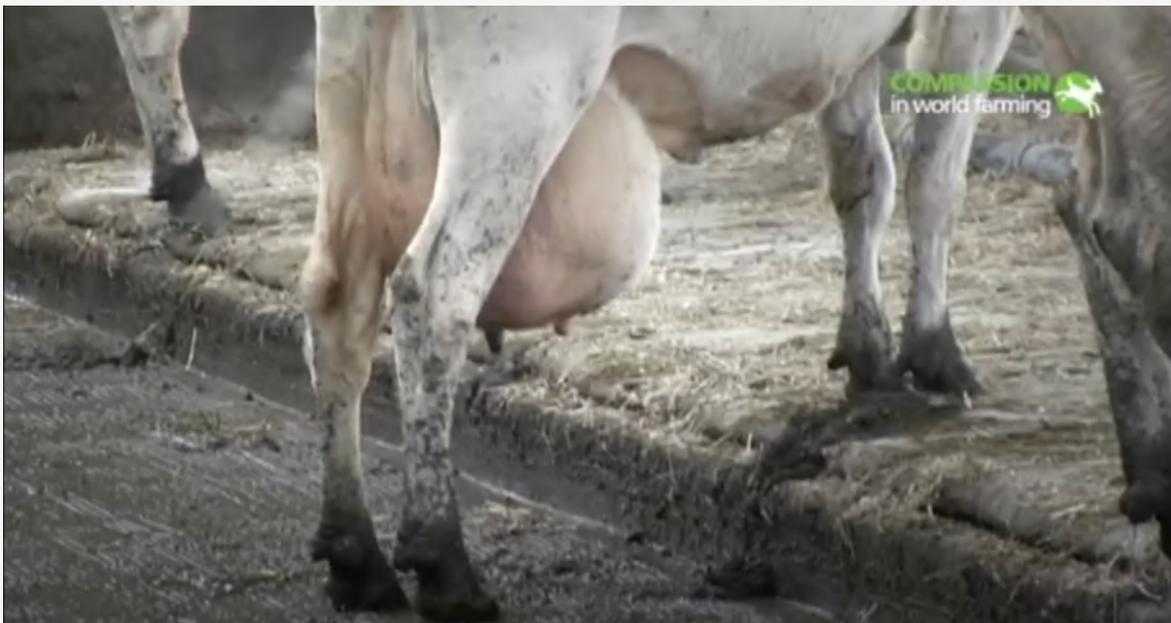
Feeding calves milk or milk replacer only once or twice a day causes considerable welfare issues, and calves are left hungry for long periods of time⁹⁸. Furthermore, overfeeding in one bout can result in the calf being unable to properly digest the meal⁹⁸. The Calves Directive states that all calves should be fed at least twice a day, or ad libitum but not all systems adhere to this and some only provide one feed a day, under the pretence that it is ad libitum⁹⁸. Bucket feeding in calves is also a welfare concern, as it fails to fulfil the need for calves to suckle⁹⁹. As a result of an inadequate diet, and improper feeding strategies, calves often perform abnormal behaviours due to the frustration and lack of control that they feel⁹⁷.

Council Directive 98/58/EC (Annex 14) states that:

“Animals must be fed a wholesome diet which is appropriate to their age and species, and which is fed to them in sufficient quantity to maintain them in good health and satisfy their nutritional needs. No animal shall be provided with food or liquid in a manner, nor shall such food or liquid contain any substance, which may cause unnecessary suffering or injury.”

The Reality

Dairy cows are bred to produce such high yields they simply cannot eat enough to cope. As a result, many dairy cows across the EU are chronically hungry and emaciated. Their diets cannot provide them with “sufficient quantity to maintain them in good health and satisfy their nutritional needs” and as a result, these dairy cows are experiencing poor welfare. No farmed animal should be bred to be chronically hungry.



BEHAVIOURAL INTERACTIONS: DAIRY COWS ARE KEPT INDOORS AND CANNOT PERFORM NATURAL GRAZING BEHAVIOURS.

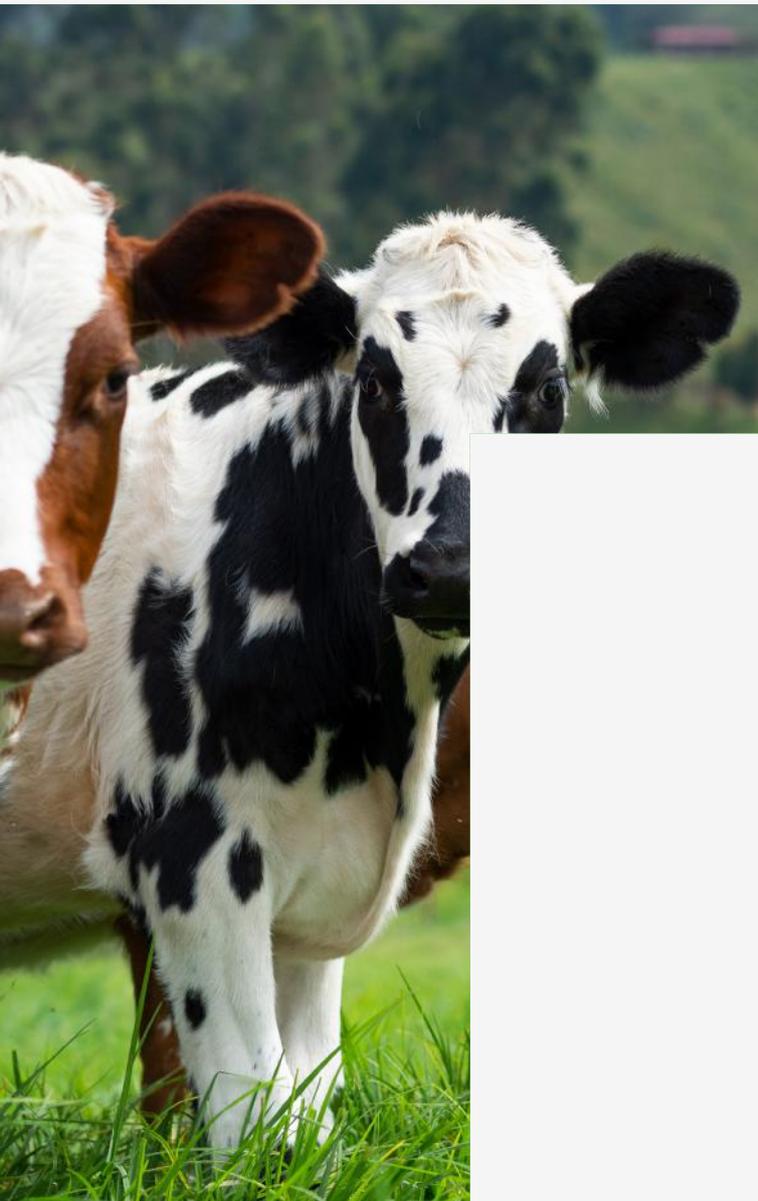
Cows want to graze on pasture. It is what they have evolved to do, and they show strong motivation for accessing pasture, even when they are producing high yields¹⁰⁰. Dairy cows will even push weighted gates to access pasture and will do so regardless of whether they are hungry or not¹⁰¹. Pasture allows cows to fulfil important natural behaviours, such as grazing and exercise, appropriate social interactions, and exploration of their environment⁷⁶. Pasture access is enriching, it enables cows to exercise control over their environment, and spend up to 80% of their time foraging⁷⁸.

Environmental enrichment for dairy cows

Most dairy cows will have to be housed indoors at some point, even in pasture-based systems, and environmental enrichment can improve their wellbeing when housed indoors⁹⁹. Dairy cows are motivated to use mechanical brushes and will use them for grooming hard-to-reach places. The addition of brushes may also reduce boredom, stress and frustration for indoor-housed cows, help to satisfy natural behaviour, improve hygiene, and induce a positive emotional state¹⁰².

Calves want to play and need the space to do so

Calves benefit greatly from being housed socially, as it allows them to engage in the positive experience of play⁹⁹. Singly housed calves are prevented from this important behaviour, but the amount of space group calves are given is also important to allow for play, exploration and locomotion⁹⁹.



Council Directive 98/58/EC (Annex 7) states that:

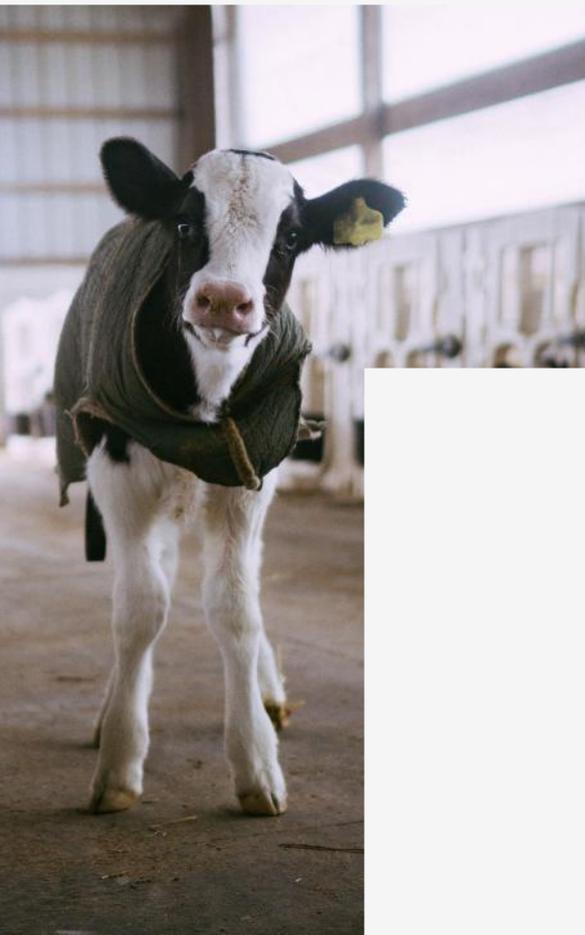
“The freedom of movement of an animal, having regard to its species and in accordance with established experience and scientific knowledge, must not be restricted in such a way as to cause it unnecessary suffering or injury. Where an animal is continuously or regularly tethered or confined, it must be given the space appropriate to its physiological and ethological needs in accordance with established experience and scientific knowledge.”



The Reality

Decades of scientific research tells us that cows want to be on pasture. Their health, behaviour, and mental state are vastly improved when they are on pasture, and they are highly motivated to access it. Across the EU, many dairy cows are still being tethered, unable to turn around or move freely, and kept indoors for their entire lives. This degree of confinement causes considerable suffering and fails to meet the cows “physiological and ethological needs”. It is, therefore, a breach of the Directive.

MENTAL STATES: DAIRY CALVES EXPERIENCE LONG- TERM PAIN, AND MATURE TO BE FRUSTRATED, SICK, AND BORED, AS THEY ARE KEPT FROM ACCESSING PASTURE.



Routine mutilations

Calves are routinely subjected to painful procedures such as disbudding, which can have long-term effects on their mental state. The anaesthesia given to calves for disbudding does not fully mitigate the pain caused, nor does it relieve the long-term pain it originates¹⁰¹. As a result, calves are left in considerable pain for days following the procedure and show pessimistic biases indicative of a negative emotional state¹⁰³.

Calves suffer distress when separated from their mothers

Separating calves from their mothers is the commercial norm for dairy, and calf at foot systems, although increasing, are still very small in scale and number. Calves exhibit pessimistic biases when they are separated from their dam, indicating a negative mental state following separation¹⁰⁴. The mental wellbeing of calves can be significantly improved by housing them in groups or pairs following separation⁹⁴. Social isolation is a significant stressor for calves, whereas social housing has a range of health and production benefits, and challenges can easily be addressed with management techniques⁹⁴. Calves are better able to cope with stressors when in the company of a familiar calf, are less fearful, have better social skills, and a better mental state, compared with singly housed calves⁹⁴.

Is this a good life for dairy cows?

The accumulation of health issues, chronic hunger, the restriction of natural behaviours, and the distress that dairy cows and their calves experience when they are separated, all result in a negative mental state. Providing dairy cows with access to pasture gives opportunities for positive experiences, a chance to exercise control, and allows them to fulfil their highly motivated need to graze^{76,101}. Across the EU, an increasing number of dairy cows are being kept indoors for their entire lives. These animals are stressed, have more aggressive interactions, and are less healthy than cows who are able to graze on pasture^{78,86}. This is not a good life for dairy cows.



NO [FISH] LEFT BEHIND

REALITY

FISH ARE FARMED IN THEIR BILLIONS ACROSS THE EU, YET THEY ARE EXCLUDED FROM SPECIFIC PROVISIONS IN THE GENERAL FARMING DIRECTIVE.

Fish are included in the general provisions made in Article 3. They are expressly excluded from the specific provisions made in Article 4, which are relevant to fish and serve to demonstrate the failure to achieve the principles established in Article 3. Fish are produced in such high numbers, they are formally measured in tonnes, rather than the number of individual fish being produced and slaughtered. This can make it harder to visualise the sheer number of individuals involved in aquaculture, yet remembering that these are each sentient, feeling beings is important.

In 2017, 172,275 tonnes of Rainbow trout, 95,390 tonnes of Gilthead seabream, 79,390 tonnes of European seabass, 73,911 tonnes of Common carp, 19,473 tonnes of Atlantic salmon, 11,571 tonnes of Turbot, and 8,821 tonnes of North African catfish were farmed in the EU¹⁹⁵.

HEALTH: FARMED FISH SUFFER UNTREATED INJURIES AND DISEASES, DEFORMITIES AND CONGENITAL DEFECTS.

EFSA states that disease in farmed fish is “generally an indicator of an underlying husbandry or environmental deficiency”¹⁰⁶. In intensive farming conditions, fish experience considerable stress, which negatively impacts their immune systems, and reduces their ability to fight off disease^{106,107}. The overcrowded conditions also facilitate the transmission of diseases more readily¹⁰⁸.

Seabream and Seabass

Seabream and seabass are subject to several diseases in aquaculture. Winter disease in seabream, for example, can cause high mortality in winter, and also when the temperature rises¹⁰⁹. The syndrome is attributed to keeping seabream in temperatures that are too low, which negatively affects their immune system and causes cortisol levels to increase¹⁰⁹.

Vibriosis is one of the most common bacterial problems in seabass and seabream and can also affect other farmed fish species too¹¹⁰. Vibriosis can cause septicaemia, skin haemorrhages and ulcers in seabream and seabass¹¹⁰. Vibriosis can be vaccinated against, but more research is needed to improve its effectiveness¹¹⁰. Vibriosis can cause significant welfare issues for these fish, including death if the fish are not robust enough.

Carp

In farmed carp, most of the pathogens are present in the environment, and will only result in disease under certain conditions¹¹¹. Poor management of farmed fish, environmental stress and poor hygiene during procedures can lead to disease outbreaks¹¹⁰. White spot disease, for example, is highly contagious and can lead to high mortality in all ages of carp. This parasitic disease causes blister-like lesions on the fish's skin and gills, which are painful and cause considerable suffering to carp. Even before the lesions appear, carp will show signs of irritation and weakness¹¹⁰.



Rainbow trout

Fin damage can cause considerable health issues for farmed fish and can be caused by handling, predatory attacks, UV lights, and bacterial or parasitic infections¹⁰⁶. In Rainbow trout, fin damage may be the result of aggressive interactions, or inadvertent contact due to high stocking densities. Fin damage may also result in severe secondary infections, reduced feed intake, slow growth, chronic stress, reduced immunity and chronic pain, causing significantly impaired welfare for farmed Rainbow trout¹⁰⁶.

Salmon

Salmon have been subject to the largest scale and most intensive aquaculture production systems. Fin damage is commonly visible even on supermarket counters. Communicable diseases and especially parasite infestations are the main causes of mortality rates between 15 and 20%¹⁶⁵. Intensive breeding programmes focused on flesh growth mean that all farmed salmon are now deaf¹⁶⁶. They also face the challenge of being transferred from freshwater to saltwater, and common mortalities reflect the difficulties of managing this process¹⁶⁷.

Vaccinating fish against the diseases that intensive farming creates

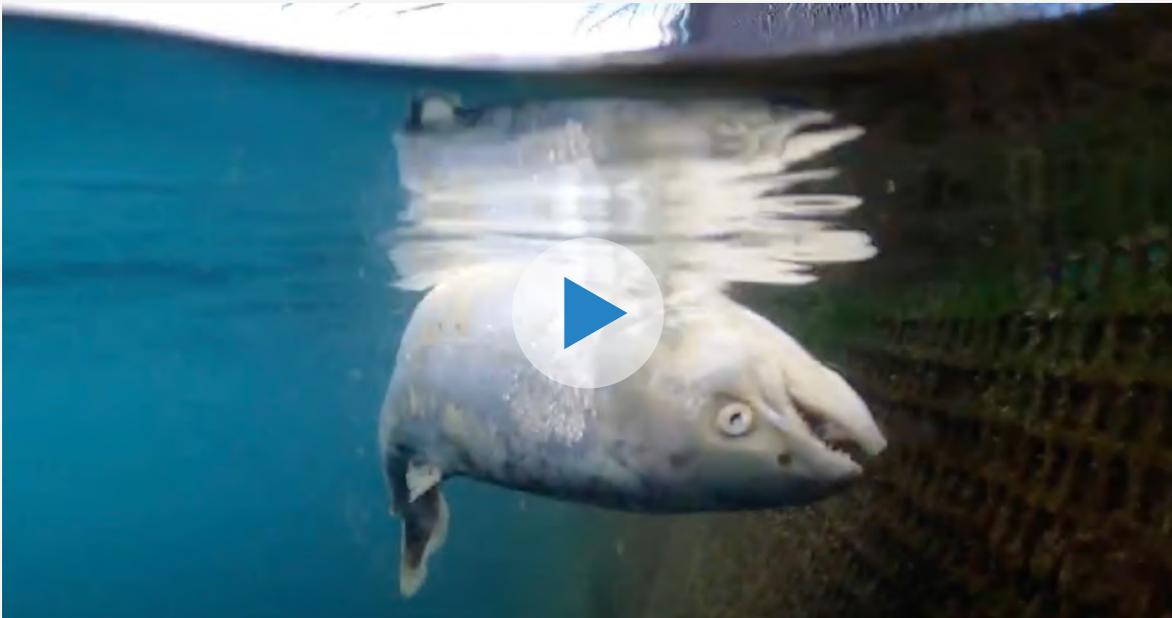
Vaccinations can be effective at reducing the prevalence of some diseases, but they can also be used to mask the underlying issues of poor husbandry¹⁰⁷. EFSA also reports the following adverse effects from routine vaccinations: stress and injuries from handling, growth retardation, peritoneal adhesions, and deformities in the vertebral column¹⁰⁶.

Council Directive 98/58/EC (Annex 4) makes concrete the principles in Article 3 by stating that:

“Any animal which appears to be ill or injured must be cared for appropriately without delay and, where an animal does not respond to such care, veterinary advice must be obtained as soon as possible.”

The Reality

Intensively farmed fish suffer from infectious diseases, injuries, and deformities because of the system they are kept in. These fish are suffering from painful conditions and injuries, yet they are ignored by the producers, and they are ignored by the EU Directive.



ENVIRONMENT: FARMED FISH ARE KEPT IN OVERCROWDED PENS WITH NO SPACE AND POOR WATER QUALITY.

The importance of water quality

Water quality has a significant impact on the welfare of farmed fish. When the levels of dissolved oxygen are too low, asphyxia and mortality occur¹¹³. Insufficient dissolved oxygen levels can cause chronic stress in fish and have long-lasting effects¹⁰⁷. Elevated levels of carbon dioxide over time can also lead to chronic pathologies, and un-ionized ammonia is highly toxic¹¹⁴. Poor water quality can cause acute and chronic welfare issues, such as gill damage, increased susceptibility to disease, reduced regulation of homeostasis, acute or chronic stress, and increased mortality¹¹³.

The issues with high stocking densities

Overcrowding is one of the key contributors to poor water quality, along with the flow rate of incoming water. High stocking densities not only cause poor water quality, but they can also result in numerous welfare issues. For example, cod and halibut have higher stress levels, reduced feed intake and growth, and perform stereotypic behaviour when kept in overcrowded conditions^{115,116}. Whereas, Atlantic salmon suffer increased susceptibility to disease, injuries, stress and poor body condition from being kept in crowded pens^{106,117}. Furthermore, overcrowding often leads to increased aggression, which also results in more injuries and stress¹¹³.



Council Directive 98/58/EC (Annex 10) makes concrete the principles in Article 3 by stating that:

“Air circulation, dust levels, temperature, relative air humidity and gas concentrations must be kept within limits which are not harmful to the animals.”

The Reality

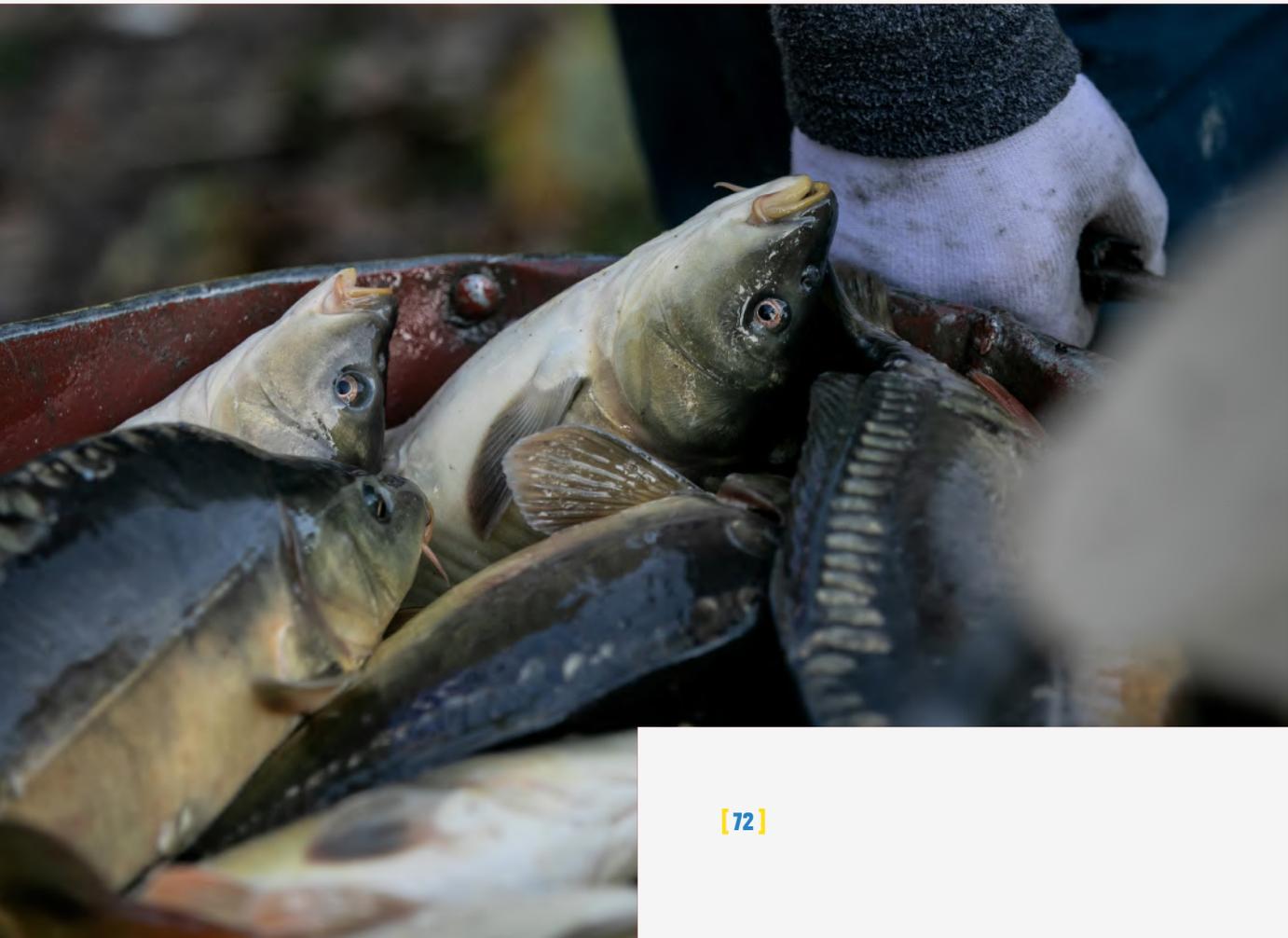
Fish rely on dissolved oxygen in the water to breathe. When their water quality is poor, due to inadequate husbandry, fish come to the surface to gasp for air. The fish in these images are suffering from a lack of oxygen and poor water quality, all of which could have been avoided if they were reared in better conditions. These fish deserve better.



NUTRITION: FISH MAY BE STARVED FOR DAYS AT A TIME.

To empty their guts, before handling, transport or slaughter fish that have been used to regular feeding are starved for days. Reduced feeding or starvation can cause more competition and aggression in fish, resulting in greater stress levels and injuries. For example, reduced feeding is associated with greater fin damage in several species of farmed fish, as individual fish are continuously excluded from feeders by faster or larger conspecifics¹²⁰.

In addition, some producers may reduce feeding or starve their fish to slow down growth if the market price is low¹²¹. The idea is to stall the sale of the fish until the prices improve. Withholding feed is detrimental to fish welfare and needs to be addressed within the EU legislation.



BEHAVIOURAL INTERACTIONS: FARMED FISH ARE ROUTINELY HANDLED IN WAYS THAT CAUSE STRESS, INJURY, PAIN, AND SUFFERING.

The impact of restricted space

Farmed fish have severely restricted space compared with their natural environments, and these restrictions significantly constrain their normal behaviour. Rearing salmon and trout in cages, for example, prevents them from fulfilling their natural instincts to swim long distances to spawn^{106,122}. Atlantic salmon will swim in schools when kept in overcrowded systems, which is not a natural behaviour for this species¹²². This new behaviour may be a coping mechanism in response to overcrowding and has been likened to the stereotypic pacing seen in captive wild animals¹¹⁷. Restricted space is also a cause of aggressive behaviours and associated issues such as fin erosion¹¹³.

Stressful handling

Farmed fish are handled at various points, and this interaction with humans or equipment can be one of the most stressful experiences for fish including during the common practices of crowding, grading, netting and anaesthesia¹¹⁷. Most farmed fish are subject to invasive techniques to remove their eggs and sperm, with or without anaesthesia or sedation. Prolonged handling like this, can result in significant stress in fish, particularly when they are removed from the water, as well as physical injuries from the handling itself¹¹⁷. For example, handling can cause scale loss, skin, fin and eye injuries, and muscle bruising, increased disease incidence, increased mortality, reduced appetite, impaired development, and deformities, all of which can have short- and long-term, negative effects for fish^{114,117}.

A lack of enrichment

Fish farms offer fish little opportunity to engage in natural behaviours, particularly those which would create positive experiences. Despite the consensus that enrichment could improve the welfare of farmed fish, little research or action has been performed in this field²¹. A better understanding of what could be done to facilitate important behaviours, and to create positive experiences for farmed fish is urgently required.

Council Directive 98/58/EC (Annex 1) makes concrete the principles in Article 3 by stating that:

“Animals shall be cared for by a sufficient number of staff who possess the appropriate ability, knowledge and professional competence.”

The Reality

Fish are routinely handled for various procedures, such as grading, egg harvesting, and inspection. Being handled is a stressful experience for fish, and it is made significantly worse when they are removed from the water. This process seen in the images, shows a fish having her eggs removed by hand. This can cause significant injuries and stress in fish. Fish are sentient beings who feel pain, and they deserve better than this.



Council Directive 98/58/EC (Annex 1) makes concrete the principles in Article 3 by stating that:

“Animals shall be cared for by a sufficient number of staff who possess the appropriate ability, knowledge and professional competence.”

The Reality

The fish in these images are mis-handled by the operators and endure a lot of stress and possibly injury by falling on the floor and being held out of water. These fish deserve to be protected by the EU.

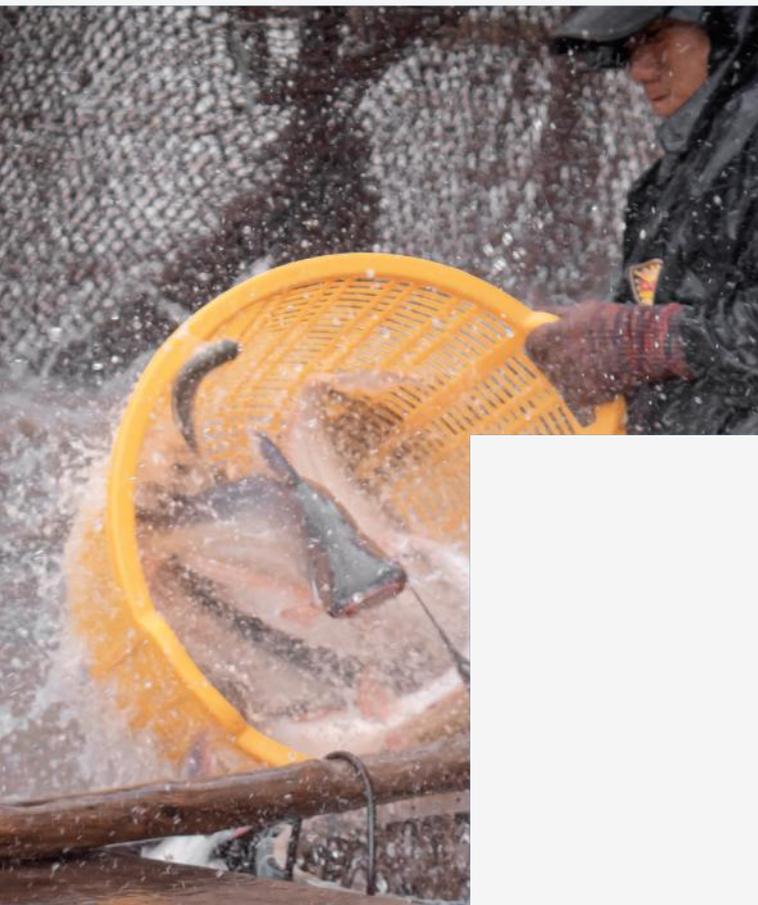


MENTAL STATES: FARMED FISH SUFFER STRESS FROM INADEQUATE, OVERCROWDED, AND DIRTY CONDITIONS.

Many farmed fish across the EU are experiencing chronic stress and pain due to poor husbandry practices. The intensification of the aquaculture sector has focussed entirely on the growth of productivity, with no concern for the welfare of the individuals involved. Furthermore, as fish are excluded from specific provisions in the General Farming Directive, previous Commissions have missed the importance of recognising fish welfare, and fish are suffering as a result. The emphasis on production has meant that many species are suffering in overcrowded systems. In species that form social hierarchies, such as salmonids, overcrowding can cause chronic social stress¹¹⁷. Farmed fish are also subject to injuries and disease, which are likely to cause long-term pain and suffering.

Is this a good life for farmed fish?

Fish are capable of experiencing pain, and they are sentient beings¹²³, their suffering is therefore of great importance. The continued intensification of fish farming offers fish no opportunities for a good life, and drastic measures are needed to improve the welfare of the billions of fish who are farmed in the EU.





THE [FORGOTTEN] SPECIES

REALITY

**SEVERAL ANIMALS REARED
IN THE EU ARE NOT
PROTECTED BY SPECIES-
SPECIFIC LEGISLATION.**

An overarching general legislation is not enough to protect all farmed animals as different species have specific needs and are produced in different production systems.

Here are some examples of species that lack a species-specific legislation: turkeys, rabbits, quails, ducks, geese, dairy and beef cows, fish species amongst others. Although some of these species have been covered throughout this report, we could not develop all of them extensively.

IN THIS PART, WE HIGHLIGHT SOME OF THE MAJOR (AND NON-EXHAUSTIVE) WELFARE ISSUES FACED BY OTHER SPECIES.

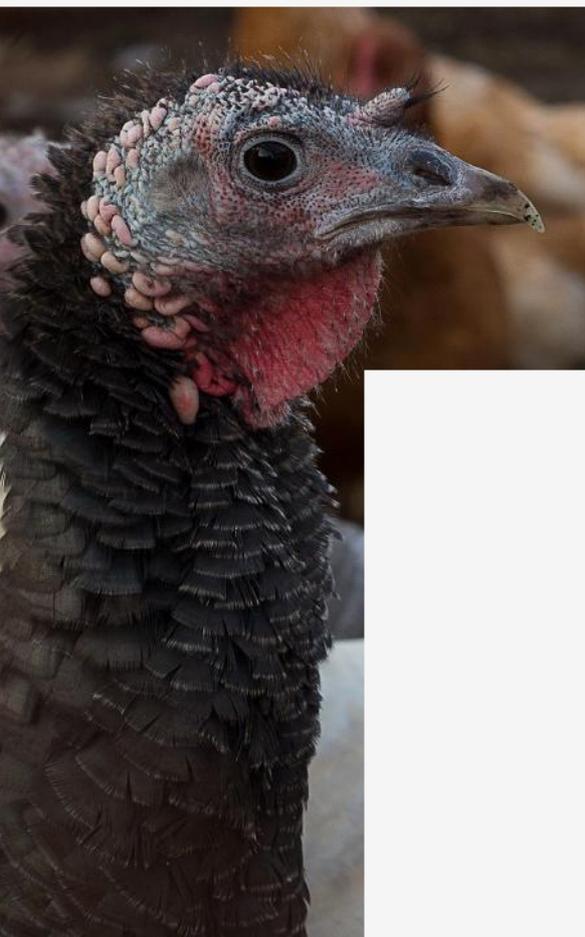
Turkeys

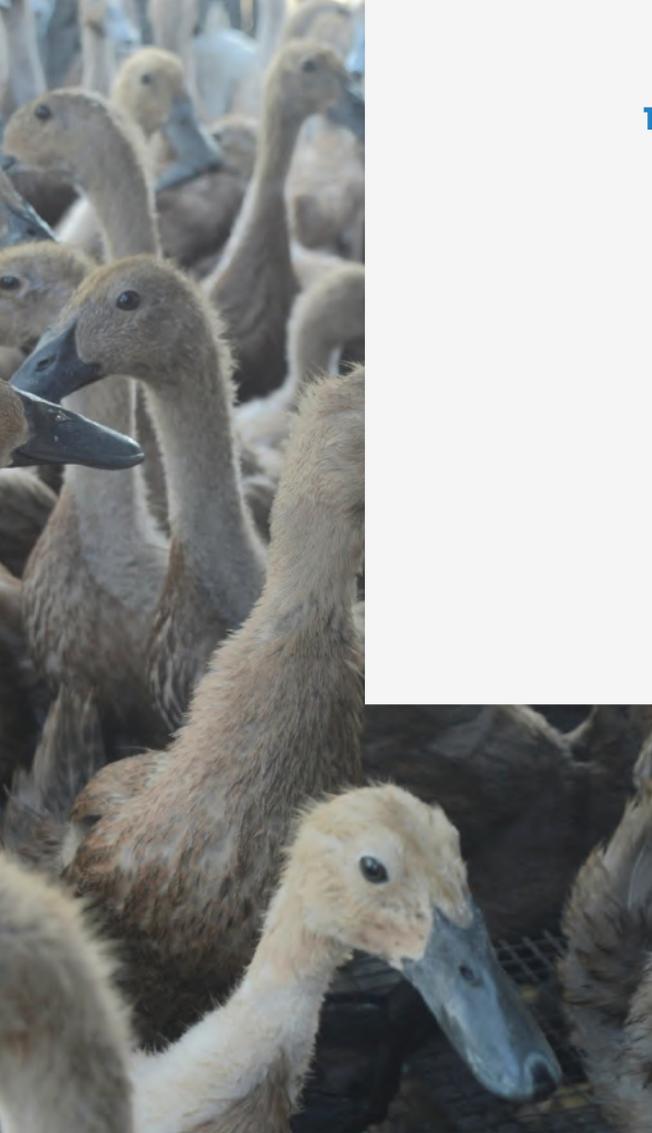
Turkeys are gregarious animals and highly curious individuals. They need space to move, rest and interact properly with other turkeys. Over 240 million turkeys are produced in the EU where very high stocking densities are allowed. Also, due to a lack of space and a barren environment with no enrichment or natural light, turkeys end up having more agonistic interactions with one another. To avoid injuries during these interactions, their toes and beaks are cut when they are only poults. Like broilers, turkeys have also been selected to grow at very fast rates, leading to health problems such as poor legs and weaker hearts.

Quail

Quail are gregarious species that enjoy living in harmony with their peers, but also like their space and a secluded place to rest, nest and lay their eggs. They are known in nature to use rapid, upward flight to escape when they are frightened.

Nevertheless, within the EU, over 140 millions of quail are farmed and a great percentage is farmed in caged systems. These cages severely limit natural behaviours. For instance, the lack of cover means that quail are often fearful and fly into the top of the cages, hitting their heads and wings every time they get scared. Also, the lack of a comfortable floor, means these individuals spend most of their lives on a mashed wire floor.





Ducks and Geese

Ducks evolved to live in water, from eating, to swimming, cleaning, playing and resting. Ducks are generally sociable and gregarious, living in large flocks and foraging together. They use both their voice and body language to continuously communicate. Geese mate for life and in the breeding season will move off to establish a territory and a nest. Outside the breeding season, geese live in large flocks.

Around 40 million ducks and geese are farmed for foie gras in the EU every year. Over ninety percent of these are ducks. Most of them are imprisoned in cages for the last two weeks of their lives so that they can be force-fed. Both practices, cages and force-feeding, lead to poor animal welfare and even to death and/or serious health problems.

Rabbits

Rabbits are gregarious animals that enjoy living in stable and organised groups, mainly composed of females and their kittens. They are more active at dusk and dawn when they feel safer. They also enjoy a good network of burrows to live and hide whenever they feel threatened and they are always looking for something to gnaw so they can wear off their continuously growing incisors (front teeth).

Nearly 120 million rabbits are farmed in the EU, being the majority crammed inside cages with less space than a A4 sheet per rabbit. They also do not have access to enrichment and fiber to gnaw, places to hide or comfortable floors to rest peacefully and comfortably. This leads to a life in constant stress with major welfare and health challenges that frequently lead to a continuous misuse of antimicrobials.



[CONCLUSION]

THE EU LEGISLATION FOR FARMED ANIMALS IS FAILING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE ANIMALS.

Broiler chickens are being reared in overcrowded houses, suffer multiple illnesses and disorders, and are growing so fast their bodies cannot cope.

Laying hens are still being kept in cages, with the requirement of enriched cages providing little improvement to their lives. Layers still undergo routine beak trimming, despite there being alternatives to this painful mutilation.

Sows are being kept in crates that are too small for them to turn around, prevented from fulfilling important maternal behaviours like nest-building, and their piglets are still suffering from unnecessary, routine mutilations. When they grow, pigs are subjected to poor unhygienic conditions, with uncomfortable floorings, barely enough space to just lay down and with acute boredom due to the lack of things to keep them occupied, leading them to quickly become aggressive and frustrated.

Dairy cows are being pushed to produce milk in such high quantities they are left emaciated and exhausted, with painful conditions like mastitis and lameness being commonplace. Calves are still being housed alone, in cubicles that are too small for them to move around in, and starved of fibre, leaving them frustrated and stressed.

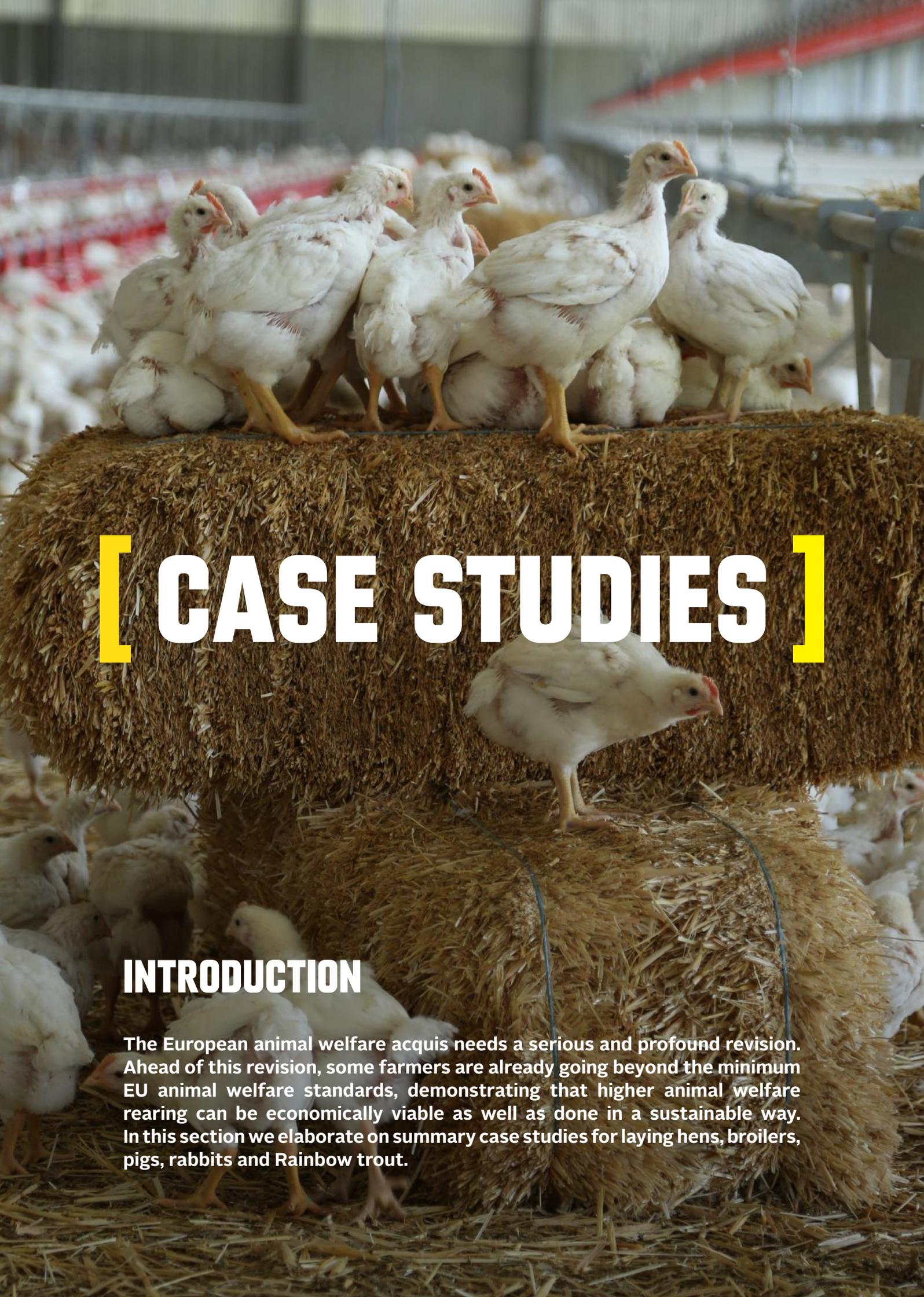
Fish are currently denied protection by the majority of the EU Legislation, despite being farmed in their billions across the EU. These sentient beings are being kept in overcrowded, filthy water, covered with parasites, and routinely exposed to painful and stressful handling procedures.

The European Union's animals deserve more than this: a good life, whether they are farmed animals or pets, they deserve the opportunity to engage in positive experiences that make them feel good. Whether it is providing calves with the opportunity and space to play with their peers, or providing hens with a substrate to forage in, these animals are motivated to feel good, and their welfare suffers if they do not have these opportunities.

The EU's citizens also want animals to have a good life, and there is increasing concern over animal welfare in all areas of society². Good animal welfare practices also have wider benefits for the environment, public health, the economy, and contribute to sustainability goals^{2,6,34,72,164}.

The current EU animal welfare legislation is not fit for purpose. It is failing to meet the needs of animals kept or used for commercial purposes, and is no longer in line with scientific research. The EU legislation urgently needs to be reformed to ensure it considers all farmed species and all aspects of their welfare: health, nutrition, environment, behaviour, and mental states.

NO ANIMAL SHOULD BE LEFT BEHIND, ALL FARMED SPECIES DESERVE TO LIVE A GOOD LIFE.

A group of white chickens, including several adults and many chicks, are perched on a large, cylindrical bale of straw. The background shows a farm environment with other chickens and structures. The text "[CASE STUDIES]" is overlaid in large, bold, white letters with yellow brackets.

[CASE STUDIES]

INTRODUCTION

The European animal welfare acquis needs a serious and profound revision. Ahead of this revision, some farmers are already going beyond the minimum EU animal welfare standards, demonstrating that higher animal welfare rearing can be economically viable as well as done in a sustainable way. In this section we elaborate on summary case studies for laying hens, broilers, pigs, rabbits and Rainbow trout.

SYSTEM NAME:
KIPSTER

ANIMAL PRODUCTION TYPE:
**CHICKEN FARMING FOR EGG
AND MEAT PRODUCTION**

LOCATION:
THE NETHERLANDS

RELEVANCE:

Designed with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) established by the United Nations in mind; the farm produces eggs and meat in an economically viable way, with as low an environmental impact as possible, ensuring that the instincts and needs of the birds are catered for.

ANIMAL WELFARE KEY ASPECTS:

No cages, good space, great environmental enrichment which provides choices, natural light.

INNOVATIONS:

- This system features different functional areas which imitate a natural wooded environment for the chickens, as they are forest animals by nature.
- The space per chicken is higher than in most free-range farms, with 6.7 hens per square meter.
- The system has a courtyard garden with fresh air and plenty of daylight. There is also a large outdoor area around the farm. A hen generally needs at least 13 hours of light to lay eggs. The large glass facades provide as much daylight as possible.
- Hens are kept in living quarters allowing them to fully express their natural behaviour: space to move and flap their wings, soil to scratch, perches and branches to perch on and the chance to take a quiet nap.
- When catching the chickens, they are picked up around the breast and wing area, which gives them the least amount of stress and pain. They are never held upside down by their feet.
- The system rears an adapted breed - Dekalb White hens - as they produce more eggs, show better livability and they require less feed to produce the same amount of eggs, and thus they are more sustainable than brown layers. Dekalb White hens are docile in behavior and not prone to feather pecking, thus eliminating the practice of beak trimming, which is standard in conventional farming systems.
- Male chicks are not killed, but raised for meat. They are raised on an organic farm, and they are slaughtered between 15 to 17 weeks of age.
- The risk of spreading zoonoses is also lower compared to conventional farms, thanks to the fact that the whole indoor area can be cleaned and the outdoor area is properly fenced and netted to avoid interaction with birds that could be infected with diseases such as the bird flu.
- Agricultural land is not used in this system. The chickens are fed with a new, specially developed feed made from residual flows of, for example, large bakeries. The chicken feed is composed of 95% leftovers and 5% vitamins and minerals. The CO₂ footprint of Kipster feed is 50% smaller compared with standard chicken feed.
- The fine particle emission is reduced to an absolute minimum, by using techniques also applied in hospitals and garages. This gives an excellent air quality, good for the farmer and for the chickens.
- Kipster is the first farm in the world to produce CO₂-neutral eggs. Additionally, chickens that lay white eggs have a lower carbon footprint of about 5% than the ones that lay brown eggs.
- The Kipster farm is a sustainable alternative to conventional agriculture. The concept can be made suitable for urban agriculture as well.
- Kipster sells its products exclusively at Lidl. The farmer receives a fair price from Lidl for the eggs, and the consumer pays Lidl a fair price. The eggs are packed on the farm and delivered directly to the stores.

SYSTEM NAME:
WINDSTREEK

ANIMAL PRODUCTION TYPE:
**BROILER FARMING FOR
MEAT PRODUCTION**

LOCATION:
THE NETHERLANDS

RELEVANCE:

The Windstreek design takes into consideration energy use, environmental pollution, animal health and welfare, and economics in an attempt to mitigate future challenges to humane, sustainable farming.

ANIMAL WELFARE KEY ASPECTS:

No cages, good space, great environmental enrichment which provides choices, natural light and ventilation.

INNOVATIONS:

- Broilers can perform a full behavioural repertoire and can move well during their whole life. The lower stocking density provides the birds with choices. The house contains multiple raised platforms, straw bales and perches, so that the birds can explore and perch at different levels within the shed. Straw is provided on the raised platforms once the birds start to explore them.
- The system uses motherhoods: covered areas providing refuge and warmth for the chicks, simulating the safety and warmth of being under a mother hen.
- The house accommodates 26,000 broilers at a maximum stocking density of 25kg/m².
- A slower growing breed - the Hubbard JA 757 - is used, with an average growth rate of 43g/d over the production cycle. Compared to a fast growing breed used in conventional production, such as the Ross 308 with an average of 55g/d. The birds are kept until 8 weeks of age.
- There have not been any significant health issues with the flocks reared in the house. Regarding the occurrence of foot pad dermatitis and breast blisters, the FPD-score is < 40 (Berg 1998 scoring system 5). More than 98% of the production is antibiotic free.
- Natural light gives broilers a source of enrichment via its variation in levels throughout and between days. An 11 meters tall window provides a gradient of light across the shed, allowing the birds to choose their preferred environment.
- The house is naturally ventilated, with the added advantage of being very quiet, without the usual noise from fan motors. The house also has roughly half the carbon dioxide levels found in a standard broiler house. The careful management of the ventilation is key to keeping the litter dry and friable.
- The Windstreek broiler house uses 20% of the energy of a comparable higher welfare indoor broiler house. Solar panels provide this minimal need, resulting in an overall neutral energy consumption. The motherhoods are the only artificially heated part of the house – contributing significantly to the 80% reduction in energy use, when compared to a conventional broiler house. The temperature and ventilation under the motherhoods is automatically controlled via sensors.
- In terms of air pollution, ammonia emissions from the house have been reduced by more than 60%, and air particulate matter emissions by 85%, compared to standard broiler houses.
- The final design of the Windstreek broiler house could be replicated for a comparable cost to other higher welfare indoor broiler houses and the cost of production is comparable to standard production, with the higher feed cost being offset by the energy savings.

SYSTEM NAME:
FUMAGALLI

ANIMAL PRODUCTION TYPE:
PIG FARMING FOR MEAT PRODUCTION

LOCATION:
ITALY

RELEVANCE:

Free-farrowing pens designed to incorporate the best practices for sows and piglets welfare: no farrowing and gestation crates, provision of straw and other materials to encourage sows to behave and nest as they would in nature.

ANIMAL WELFARE KEY ASPECTS:

No confinement, good enrichment which provides choices, no mutilation practises, stress-free farrowing.

INNOVATIONS:

- The spaces are larger than those required by EU regulations. The pigs can run around, lay down comfortably and move freely in adequate spaces; sows have open farrowing crates and insemination takes place in large pens with freedom of movement.
- There are no mutilation practises, as for example tail docking and teeth grinding/clipping. All sheds are enriched with straw. Ropes hang from the ceiling for the pigs to play with if they need something to bite on and destroy. The pens have a solid floor, rather than a slatted one, and pigs have space to root around, lowering their stress levels, preventing tail and ear biting and behaving as they would in nature.
- The good air quality at the breeding farm is currently guaranteed by a forced ventilation system.
- Sows aren't confined in stalls after insemination.
- The sows' body condition (BCS) is scored twice per cycle, at the end of farrowing and after insemination. To allow the sows to form homogenous groups and to minimise competition and stress, they are grouped according to their BCS with an average space allowance of 2.75m² per sow, during the dry period.
- Sows are moved into the farrowing pens a few days before farrowing. Straw racks on the wall and a thin layer of straw bedding is provided to allow the sows to perform their natural nesting behaviour before farrowing.
- Piglets are weaned at 28 days instead of 25 days as it often happens in conventional production. Extending the number of farrowing days improves piglet welfare, as it allows them to gain more weight, spend more time with the sows, and strengthen their immune system.
- Sows are provided with a quiet environment for a stress-free farrowing. They are left alone as much as possible, particularly during the first 4 or 5 days after farrowing. Only stockmen known by the sows enter in the farrowing rooms, and they do it only when required.
- The pens are managed in an open configuration, leaving the sows free to move around before, during, and after farrowing.
- Temperatures in the farrowing room are closely monitored. Sows are extremely sensitive to heat stress. If the temperature gets too hot, the sows are likely to get more agitated and continuously stand up and lie down, leading to a greater risk of crushing.
- Bigger nest boxes for the piglets to get higher and more comfortable temperatures, also allow for an adjustment of the room temperature, adequate to the sows' needs. This way, especially in the summer, the room temperature can be cooler and more comfortable for the sows.

SYSTEM NAME:
LAPIN & BIEN

ANIMAL PRODUCTION TYPE:
RABBIT FARMING FOR MEAT PRODUCTION

LOCATION:
FRANCE

RELEVANCE:

This new method of breeding takes up the challenge of the transition from a method of breeding in cages to a new method of breeding with high animal welfare standards.

ANIMAL WELFARE KEY ASPECTS:

No cages, good enrichment which provides choices.

INNOVATIONS:

- This system represents an alternative to the conventional cage system. The rabbits are raised on the ground in large pens which feature a burrow-style area, allowing them to hide and rest.
- The rabbits have at their disposal an area made of raised surfaces which represent between 25 and 40% of the total available surface. It offers a large space - a minimum surface area of 800 cm² per animal on integral slatted 100% recycled PVC - which guarantees freedom of movement. It favors the rabbits' natural behavior by allowing them to take shelter, rest or even stand aside on the mezzanine, as rabbits do in the natural environment by isolating themselves on hillocks. As a result, a strong reduction in aggressive behavior is observed. If necessary, the animal can escape and hide if facing a dominant rabbit.
- Producers are invited to equip their farm with windows so that the rabbits can benefit from natural light. When this is not possible, the use of LEDs is recommended. Lighting with LED tubes reproduces a normal day course: these tubes are programmed to light up and gradually turn off. LED tubes were chosen to avoid electromagnetic radiation emitted by neon tubes.
- A grating which is both robust to withstand the teeth of rabbits and easy to maintain ensures a healthy environment.
- The circular feeders are inspired by those used for lambs. Their circumference is designed to offer enough places to avoid any stampede. The rabbits spend more time at the feeder, which leads to a better digestion. The shape of the plates is specifically designed to obtain the right angle and height, giving the rabbits easy access to it, without being able to enter it.
- The food is GMO-free (<0.9%), based on alfalfa, cereals, flaxseed, rich in omega 3 fatty acids following the criteria of BleuBlanc-Coeur, a French label for responsible agriculture.
- A mobile rabbit scale is permanently installed in the first enclosure. Equipped with software, it records the weight of the rabbits who climb onto their set, giving a good picture of the growth curve of the group.
- Anticipating European legislation and any demand from distribution, this unprecedented approach aims to preserve the sector, by reinventing it through a feasible and sustainable model, capable of adapting to all types of rabbit farms.
- The farmers claim to experience real pleasure in working among the rabbits and enjoy even more their profession as breeders. Breeders and processors are proud and open to discussion and exchanges with citizens.
- Lapin & Bien products entered the market in 2020 and it is driven by the association Éleveurs et Bien, founded by three major players in the French rabbit industry representing several cooperatives. Its goal is to reach 25% cage free production by 2025 for each group of breeders.
- This system aims to offer better working conditions to breeders, allowing a fairer sharing of value and distributing margins between partners.

SYSTEM NAME:
PISCICULTURE MATHONET

ANIMAL PRODUCTION TYPE:
**RAINBOW TROUT FARMING
FOR MEAT PRODUCTION**

LOCATION:
BELGIUM

RELEVANCE:

An organic fish farm, which also carries out conventional production. The new farming system aims to achieve environmental sustainability, fish welfare, and fish farmer welfare.

ANIMAL WELFARE KEY ASPECTS:

Fresh water, natural features in ponds, lots of space for the fish, diet of certified organic origin, and slow growth regime for the best quality.

INNOVATIONS:

- Fish are bought at a wide range of sizes, typically from 100 - 200 grams, and they are grown from two months to over a year. Fish are mostly purchased from the north of France and from Belgium. Juveniles from intensive production systems are avoided so as to have fish that can swim well, have the best health, and produce the best product.
- Before purchasing the juveniles, comprehensive information is exchanged before a decision is made for the most suitable fish on the most suitable day for transport. Relevant information are the fish size and health condition, and environmental parameters including water quality at the site. The quantity of fish to be put in each tank is decided according to the size of the fish and the temperature.
- There is a permanent control of low stocking densities per pond and use of only organic food.
- The structure was created with concrete block walls and a natural earth bottom, and with naturally occurring aquatic plants which create complexity and the behavioural possibilities and mental stimulation that comes with that.
- All feeding is by hand, the farmer moving around the pond, feeding in different locations, and observing when the fish stop feeding and their nutritional needs have been met.
- Environmental and especially water quality parameters are checked at least three times per day, and more often during bad weather.



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