

IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION AND SLAUGHTER PRACTICES

Existing checks on farmed animals, including equids, during long-haul transportation and at the time of slaughter on farmed animals are under threat. At the same time, equids are being slaughtered in unsafe and inhumane conditions around the globe for consumption on the European market.

Background

Checks on farmed animals during long-haul transport and at the time of slaughter within the EU are governed by Council Regulations (EC) No 1/2005 and (EC) No 1099/2009 respectively. Whilst they fall short of prevailing scientific evidence, and the levels of enforcement are variable across the EU, they afford the animals better levels of protection than they would have in many other territories.

However, a legislative proposal from the European Commission threatens to remove the need for randomised checks from these laws after a period of three years. The Commission has said it would replace these checks within the three year timeframe, although a risk remains that these existing checks simply fall out of the existing law, without new checks being introduced. The same proposal would also remove the need for an official veterinarian to be present at slaughterhouses. Whilst this could have grave consequences for food safety and animal health, ante-mortem checks are also crucial indicators of on-farm welfare.

At the same time, concern has also risen over the poor animal health and welfare conditions of equids during transport and at the time of slaughter in third countries, where the trade is primarily driven by the demand of European consumers. Whilst European standards for slaughter should apply to slaughterhouses sending horsemeat to the EU, there are grave concerns about the implementation and enforcement of these requirements.

Our Objectives

Eurogroup is working to ensure that the current randomised checks during transport and slaughter do not fall out of the existing legislation without being replaced, and wants to see official veterinarians retained for ante-mortem checks at a minimum.

Following the ban of exports from Mexico to the EU last year, Eurogroup wishes to see further such bans for other countries where questions remain over the production standards of horsemeat.

Eurogroup is also pushing for an extension to current rules on the country of origin labelling of fresh and frozen meats to meat from equines, so that consumers can clearly see where their meat has been born, reared and slaughtered.