

Milestones in improving animal welfare

► Animal Welfare is a priority for the European Union

The European Union is justifiably proud of its level of achievement and its widely recognised status as a global leader in the field of animal welfare. Over the past 40 years, EU animal welfare legislation has evolved on the basis of sound scientific knowledge, improving the quality of animals' lives in accordance with citizens' expectations and market demands. The EU Lisbon Treaty recognised animals as sentient beings and in recognition the European Commission adopted a strategy for the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2012-2015 which guarantees that farm animals are kept and transported under conditions that do not subject them to maltreatment, abuse, pain or suffering.

To ensure that animal welfare legislation is enforced in a uniform way across the EU, the European Commission has, since 2006, funded training initiatives and workshops for professionals both within and outside the EU.

It also means that food produced in the EU is of high quality, so benefiting consumer's health while meeting animal welfare needs.

MORE THAN 2000 VETERINARIANS RECEIVED TRAINING ON ANIMAL WELFARE FROM A EUROPEAN COMMISSION PROGRAMME.

► Laying hens are no longer kept in conventional cages

In 2012 an EU ban on conventional cages entered into force. There is substantial evidence that the health and welfare of hens has since considerably improved. They now have more space, with a nest, perches and litter, all of which are necessary to satisfy their behavioural needs.

► More respect in the EU for behavioural needs of pigs

Respect of animal welfare leads to better quality pig meat, an area where the EU is a major producer and exporter. Until the end of 2012, pregnant sows were spending their life in barren individual cages where behavioural needs were not respected. To improve their life, the EU adopted specific legislation which phased out, in January 2013, the use of individual stalls. Sows are now kept in groups during pregnancy. This is a milestone for the welfare of these very social animals. They are now able to move around freely and are provided with suitable nesting material which makes for happier sows.

360 MILLION LAYING HENS AND 12 MILLION SOWS BENEFIT FROM A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE.



► Ban on animal testing for cosmetics

SINCE 2009 NO TESTING FOR COSMETIC PURPOSES HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT IN THE EU.

Animal testing for finished cosmetic products was banned in 2004 and for cosmetic ingredients in March 2009. Since March 2013 no cosmetics tested on animals can be marketed in the EU.

► Animal transport conditions continuously improve

THE OVERALL QUALITY OF ANIMAL TRANSPORT HAS IMPROVED AND THE NUMBER OF ANIMALS TRANSPORTED WITH INJURY, OR EXHAUSTION SIGNIFICANTLY DECREASED.

Around 4 million cattle, 28 million pigs, 4 million sheep, around 243 million poultry and 150 thousand horses are transported for more than 8 hours within the EU every year. It is essential that this is done with the utmost care and attention. Rules for improving animal welfare during transport in Europe were first implemented in 1977 and have been subject to major revisions in 2005. Enforcement of the legal provisions remains an EU priority and since 2013 data on the application of the law by Member States are harmonised.

► Animal welfare policies exported to non-EU countries

IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE "BETTER TRAINING FOR SAFER FOOD PROGRAMME" (BTSF), REGIONAL WORKSHOPS FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS WERE ORGANISED IN CANADA, CHILE AND SOUTH KOREA DEDICATED TO IMPROVING APPLICATION OF EU STANDARDS – 237 PARTICIPANTS FROM MORE THAN 30 COUNTRIES.

Improvement of animal welfare standards constitutes an added value to trade as well as an opportunity to improve livestock production and sustainable farming.

The Commission is continuously strengthening bilateral technical cooperation on animal welfare with its main trading partners Chile, Australia, Canada, New-Zealand, South Korea and a Memorandum of Understanding for technical cooperation was recently agreed with Brazil.

The European Commission, in close co-operation with the Member States is actively involved in the work of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), consistently supporting the work of developing guidelines on animal welfare.

