



Slow Food®

# POLICY BRIEF ON ANIMAL WELFARE



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### **About Slow Food**

Slow Food is a global movement acting together to ensure good, clean and fair food for all. We cultivate a global network of local communities who defend cultural and biological diversity, promote food education and advocate for more just and equitable food policy.

Slow Food has grown to involve millions of people in more than 160 countries.

[www.slowfood.com](http://www.slowfood.com)

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Animal welfare is an integral part of the European Union's [Farm to Fork \(F2F\) strategy](#), which aims to accelerate the transition to sustainable food systems in Europe through an integrated food policy that covers the whole food system. A clear example of the growing public concern around this topic is the European Citizens' Initiative [End the Cage Age](#). Calling for an end to the use of cages, it was signed by more than 1.5 million citizens and supported by around 170 organisations, including Slow Food.

The European Commission has shown commitment to improving farmed animals' welfare by announcing an evaluation and revision of existing legislation, including animal transport and slaughter, and considering options for animal welfare labelling, currently voluntary and largely unregulated. Likewise, the upcoming Sustainable Food Systems Framework Law could represent an opportunity for the European Commission to explicitly recognize that the health and well-being of animals, people, plants and the environment are deeply interconnected.

This document aims to provide information about the most recent political developments around animal welfare in the European Union, outlining future options and setting out Slow Food's political demands. It is also intended to serve as a guiding document for discussions that may arise in the future.



## 2. THE CHALLENGES

Animal welfare is first and foremost a matter of respect: animals are sentient beings, as recognised by the Treaty of Lisbon. The behavioural needs of farmed animals must be taken into account; [“welfare” should not just be seen as an absence of disease or infirmity](#). This does not only concern land-based animal farming. [Aquaculture](#) is a growing industry, and farmed fish and some invertebrate aquatic animals are also [recognised as sentient beings](#) that deserve respect and a pain-free life appropriate to their nature. The welfare of farmed animals depends largely on how they are managed by humans. A range of factors can impact their welfare, from feed to housing and bedding, space and crowding, the farmer’s attitude to their animals, transport conditions, stunning and slaughter methods and castration and other mutilations.

The spread of [industrial animal farming as the dominant production model](#), focused on selective breeding for fast growth and high yields, has been the main [threat to domesticated animal biodiversity](#) and has led to millions of mistreated farmed animals in the EU. Productivism has encouraged the selection of a few livestock breeds designed for maximum yield of meat or animal derivatives and their suitability for intensive farming, but [it has also posed serious concerns](#) about the welfare of these hyper-productive species and how farmers will be able to adapt to climate change. Moreover, [the European Food Safety Authority \(EFSA\) states](#) that transmissible diseases among animals (which can lead to food-borne illnesses) can spread more easily when animals are suffering and stressed.

The factors that affect an animal’s welfare include the physical environment and the resources available to the animal, such as space allocation and bedding material. This means that in order to achieve better animal welfare, [larger spaces must be made available](#) to each animal, to allow them to move freely and behave as they would in nature. Considering the current production figures in the European Union that show [millions of animals still living on industrial farms](#) and the widespread use of cages, it is clear that **a transition to more respectful farming must include a significant reduction in the number of animals reared per area and time unit**. Likewise, it is essential to give **appropriate technical and economic support to farmers** as part of this systemic transformation, through a bottom-up approach, and that **clear information is provided to consumers**, who guide the choices of farmers through their daily selection of food. In addition, decreasing the number of animals being produced can contribute to reducing the [impact on the climate crisis](#), given that industrial animal farming is the [main contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the agricultural sector](#).

### **Agroecology: the tool to tackle these challenges**

Slow Food strongly supports a [transition of our food system towards agroecological farming](#), where farmed animals are included as part of [extensive, circular and mixed farming models](#). This approach integrates the safeguarding of biodiversity, nutrient recycling, regeneration and preservation of local resources and knowledge, and, overall, a [holistic interaction between nature, animals and humans](#). In accordance with the principles of agroecology, recognising the behavioural needs of animals is key; their nutrition must be based on balanced feed with a low environmental footprint and not containing genetically modified organisms; pasture-based systems, integrating both grazing and browsing behaviours, must be preferred; and native breeds, which are generally the hardiest, must be protected and valued. Likewise, agroecological farming promotes limiting the use of chemicals in treatments and veterinary drugs to a bare minimum and never using medicines preventatively. This reduces antimicrobial resistance and boosts the resilience of animals raised with low inputs.

### 3. OPPORTUNITIES: SAFEGUARDING ANIMAL RIGHTS

European citizens' ethical and environmental concerns about the exploitation of animals in industrialised food systems have shed light on the need to regulate the ways animals are farmed. Today, legislation on the protection of farmed animals covers all the different steps of production, from farming to transport and slaughter. However, [many areas are not yet being addressed](#), such as long-distance animal transport, labelling, the well-being of dairy cows, farmed fish and the use of antibiotics.

Through the European Commission's proposal for a European Green Deal (EGD), published in 2019, animal welfare has found a more central space in EU commitments and is finally considered one of the core elements in the necessary transition towards sustainable food systems. The EU Farm to Fork Strategy, the agrifood component of the EGD, states that "there is an urgent need to reduce dependency on pesticides and antimicrobials, reduce excess fertilisation, increase organic farming, improve animal welfare, and reverse biodiversity loss." With these words, the European Commission is making a clear pledge to improve animal welfare in the EU.

The European Commission's proposal for revised animal welfare legislation is expected to be launched in autumn 2023, following a consultation process to gather views and experiences from citizens and stakeholders on the fitness of current animal welfare rules and how they could be improved. Likewise, in parallel, it is expected that the Commission will make a legislative proposal on a Sustainable Food Systems Framework Law by the end of 2023, aiming to accelerate and make the transition to sustainable food systems easier while promoting policy coherence at the EU and national level. This represents another opportunity to highlight the importance and role of animal welfare in a sustainable food future and to support **a transition towards a more plant-based diet to keep the food system within planetary boundaries and promote health.**

Slow Food strongly believes that the European Commission must be more ambitious in its approach to animal welfare, with a focus on the following areas: on-farm welfare, transport, slaughter and animal welfare labelling, as well as aquaculture. Moreover, these EU strategies should be followed, in general directions and practical implications, by actions at the Member State level and, above all, at a local level.



### 3.1. ANIMAL WELFARE ON FARMS: LET ANIMALS BEHAVE AS ANIMALS

#### **Changing the paradigm: towards animal-based parameters**

In order to better assess animal welfare, it is key to develop a new system where “animal-based” parameters become the cornerstone of an on-farm welfare assessment. With different scientific approaches, this system must be applicable in different farming contexts, from large-scale intensive operations to small-scale extensive farms, and in all kinds of geographical areas.

Currently, animal welfare assessment schemes are based on structural, managerial, biosecurity or risk management standards, which end up penalising extensive or small-scale farms. This is because check-list questions are often inapplicable. For instance, a small barn in a mountain area may not have technologically advanced facilities that guarantee the animals’ comfort, but the animals are living in a more natural environment, moving and grazing every day. Meanwhile, in larger, lowland facilities, the animals may have larger spaces in the sheds but often cannot go outdoors and move around sufficiently.

Paradoxically, an extensive, small-scale farm that keeps local breeds in valuable natural environments and makes high-quality products might score lower than a conventional intensive farm with a large number of livestock, just because many questions on the check-list – in some cases as many as 90% – are not applicable. Slow Food is instead advocating for the inclusion of “animal-based” parameters. These rely on direct observation of the animal and reflect the animal’s response to farming conditions, recording signs of either discomfort and agitation or calm and well-being. For example, a high percentage of animals in the barn showing lameness or excessive fear when a person approaches are obvious signs of discomfort or physical suffering.

Biodiversity levels in farming cannot be increased by standardising and unifying the different livestock systems that characterise the whole EU. Different scientific approaches are needed in order to increase the welfare of farmed animals, which is the ultimate goal of an on-farm animal welfare evaluation supported by CAP subsidies. Additionally, these regulatory tools for evaluation and control must be flexible and there must be different tools for different species and types of farms. Inadequate regulatory tools risk contributing to the closure of many small-scale farms, which lack the resources needed to adapt production facilities.



*Gascony Chichen, Slow Food Presidia, France*

## Supporting animal biodiversity and local breeds

There are fundamental economic, environmental, social and cultural reasons for saving local breeds. Over the millennia, animal breeds have adapted to different climates and environments, to hostile conditions and marginal areas. These genetically diverse animal populations not only facilitate producers' chances of adapting to climate change but are also less susceptible to large-scale epidemics.

Slow Food advocates for legislation that ensures a greater respect for animals' relationship with the surrounding ecosystem and their natural needs as sentient beings. In order to achieve this, a consistent reduction of industrial farmed animals is needed, brought about by a protein transition towards more plant-based diets, while ensuring that remaining meat and dairy products come from agroecological farms with high animal welfare standards. Besides this, Slow Food calls on the EU to stop funding [large-scale industrialised livestock farming](#), instead increasing its support for small-scale livestock farmers who practise agroecology and preserve local, hardy breeds better suited to extensive livestock farming.

## Toward changing the routine use of mutilation

The adoption of standardised mutilation practices is another characteristic of intensive animal farms. Keeping large numbers of animals in confined spaces can lead to frustration, often provoking aggression in bored animals who are not stimulated by their surrounding environment. These factors lead to behaviours like feather pecking in chickens, pigs biting each other's tails and ears and cattle and other ruminants causing injuries with their horns to assert dominance during feeding or milking. The solution by industrial farming has been for example to mutilate these animals, trimming the beaks of poultry and docking the tails and grinding the teeth of piglets.

Slow Food supports extensive farming as an agricultural model where mutilations are not needed. These actions should be avoided as much as possible in intensive systems. Animal-friendly livestock farming should ensure that mutilations, if carried out, are gradually replaced by a type of management that eliminates their need. To bring this about, Slow Food is calling for a profound alteration of animal farming systems, with changes to animal density, feeding trough width, the internal structure of enclosures and the homogeneity of groups. Furthermore, if mutilations are carried out, anaesthetics and analgesics must be used to avoid pain for the animals.



## Abolishing the use of cages and ensuring access to pasture

Cages have been demonstrated to seriously impede farmed animals' well-being and natural behaviour. Slow Food believes that cages are incompatible with sustainable food systems and with respect for animals. The EU needs to take bold action to phase out the use of cages in animal farming across Europe by 2027, heeding [scientific opinion](#) and European citizens, who made their concerns clear in the European Citizens Initiative "End the Cage Age" which collected 1.5 million signatures. In response to this initiative, supported by Slow Food and other civil society organisations, two years ago [the European Commission announced its intention](#) to put forward a legislative proposal on animal welfare. In its response, it included a plan "to phase out and finally prohibit the use of cages for all the animal species and categories referred to in the initiative", including imported products. Now is the time to follow through on that promise.



In this regard, Slow Food wants animals to have the opportunity to express not only their species-specific but also their breed-specific behaviour, thanks to an enriched environment. Cage-free farming is the minimum. Animals need more than space: they also need to spend time outdoors. Access to pasture should be ensured for cows, horses, sheep, goats, pigs, rabbits and any other animal that needs to graze. [Research has shown](#) that extensive grazing of livestock has a positive impact on their welfare and on the biodiversity of grassland ecosystems, which can also, in some cases, store carbon. Moreover, [pasture-fed meat and dairy products are also good for human health](#), being full of phytonutrients, key for our health and our microbiota. However, intensive farming systems do not follow this path. Slow Food is working to defend extensive farming systems with local breeds as models where animals can freely express their natural behaviours and also demanding the protection of pastoral farming systems and support for producers who favour these systems.

### **3.2. ANIMAL WELFARE LABELLING: INFLUENCING FOOD ENVIRONMENTS**

The revised animal welfare legislation should adopt measures targeted at improving consumer information on animal welfare. One clear option could be a harmonised labelling framework applicable to both EU and imported products. This would empower EU citizens to make sustainable choices and incentivise producers to transition towards more respectful methods of animal farming. Currently, a flawed animal welfare assessment system and the lack of a robust and transparent animal welfare labelling system fails to properly reward farmers who respect animals' welfare or to help consumers make informed decisions.

Synthesising animal welfare into a label is difficult, as this means categorising, and therefore simplifying, the complexity of farming systems. As previously mentioned, we must first develop a system for assessing animal welfare, taking into account the many interconnected contributing factors. This system must be applicable in different farming contexts, from large-scale intensive operations to small-scale extensive farms, and in all kinds of geographical areas.

Labelling could be developed to include information concerning the welfare of animals during all the stages of their life, such as living conditions during farming and the type and origin of their feed. At the moment this kind of labelling of production methods is only mandatory in the EU for eggs, and it has yielded interesting results: marketing standards for egg production set at EU level have [positively influenced consumer demand and production choices](#).

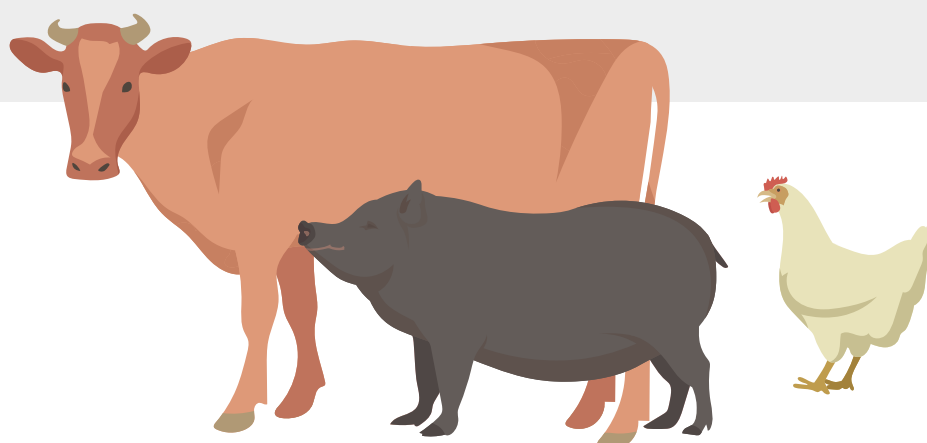
In parallel, a broader debate on the creation of a sustainability labelling framework is taking place as part of the process leading to a Sustainable Food Systems Law. Indeed, such a sustainability labelling framework should include the animal welfare considerations mentioned above and must be developed in a transparent way, independently from commercial interests, and based on updated scientific knowledge. However, it must be acknowledged that a labelling system alone is insufficient to achieve a real food system transformation. This Framework law should tackle the multiple physical, economic, political and socio-cultural barriers (mostly beyond an individual's control) that citizens face when making food choices and take into account that they depend on the choices available within their food environment.

## Animal Welfare for Sustainable Food Systems

We currently lack a holistic approach to food systems. A radical shift towards sustainable food and farming systems is needed, where farmed animals are included as part of the extensive, circular and mixed farming models that should be developed more broadly across the EU. [The Sustainable Food Systems Legislative Framework proposal](#) must contribute to ensuring coherence and consistency between EU environmental, health, economic and agricultural policies. It must adopt a truly holistic approach that recognises that animal welfare is connected to all the dimensions of sustainability and has a positive impact on the profitability of small- and medium-scale farms, on social aspects of rural communities, on the biodiversity of our ecosystems, on reducing antimicrobial resistance and on preventing non-communicable diseases and pandemics.

For this to happen, Slow Food believes the Sustainable Food Systems Law and all food-related policies should follow a One Health principles, integrated within a broader One Welfare approach which not only recognizes that the health and well-being of animals, people, plants and the environment are deeply interconnected, but considers human and environmental well-being as crucial for the promotion of animal welfare. According to this approach, better farming practices have a positive impact on the well-being of farmers, the environment and the local communities, as well as on human health. Likewise, improving the living conditions of animal farmers, and their awareness of wider welfare issues, helps to establish alternative approaches to their work. In this line, this Framework law should promote and support the transition from the current industrial food system based on intensive animal agriculture to agroecological farming. This alternative approach is key to ensuring high levels of animal welfare while tackling the climate, biodiversity and social crises the world is facing.

On the other hand, demand-side changes are equally important. The SFS Law should ensure that sustainable healthy diets are the most available, accessible, affordable, pleasurable and widely promoted. By improving the seven dimensions of food environments, this law could enable citizens to have access to better, more plant-based diets. There are several dimensions to tackle this from the animal welfare perspective. One of them is food provision through public procurement. The inclusion of specific animal welfare criteria, as well as greater emphasis on pulses and legumes, could lead to more sustainable menus in public canteens. Another key aspect for Slow Food is the retail side: short food supply chains, community-supported agriculture and farmers' markets can be key tools to improving farmed animals' welfare by bringing farmers and consumers into direct contact and shortening animals' travel time. The SFS Law must create a framework that later should be developed and funded by the Common Agricultural Policy.





*[Bazna Pig, Slow Food Presidia, Romania](#)*

### **3.3. ANIMAL TRANSPORT AND SLAUGHTER: SHORT CHAINS FOR EVERYONE'S WELFARE**

Approximately 3.5 million sheep and goats, 4.3 million head of cattle, 33.4 million pigs, and 1,000 million poultry were traded alive between EU countries in 2018, [according to the European Parliamentary Research Service](#). Inevitably, every journey causes suffering. The main concerns are stress (animals are sentient beings and are not used to being transported in vehicles, especially after being reared in extensive systems), dehydration (particularly on hot days, mainly in the summer months), and lack of rest and exhaustion (as most of the journeys are well over the [EFSA-recommended time limits](#)). Likewise, unexpected situations can cause a prolongation of the trip, and incidents can occur where animals lose their lives. Live animal transport also favours the spread of illnesses and diseases across different regions.

For all of these reasons, Slow Food calls on the EU to commit to following the most recent [EFSA recommendations](#) on species-specific temperature and space conditions and to ensure that they are enforced. The EU must also keep these journeys to a minimum, drastically limiting live-animal transport to distant slaughterhouses and keeping long journeys to a maximum of 8 hours (4 hours for poultry and rabbits). This reduction can be achieved by supporting the availability of facilities close to farms, strengthening staff skills and competencies and simplifying paper-based procedures and structural requirements. Well-managed mobile slaughterhouses and on-farm slaughter should be developed and small local slaughterhouses should be reopened as they considerably improve EU animal welfare standards and avoid long journeys to slaughterhouses without adversely affecting food safety or the quality of animal products. An immediate result would be the strengthening of local food systems to make them more resilient: rural economies would be boosted, farmers would be more connected to their local areas and consumers would be more aware of where their meat comes from.

Animals should also be stunned before killing, and slaughtering should be carried out using appropriate means and by trained workers, able to use tools and procedures that do not cause unnecessary suffering, stress or fear.

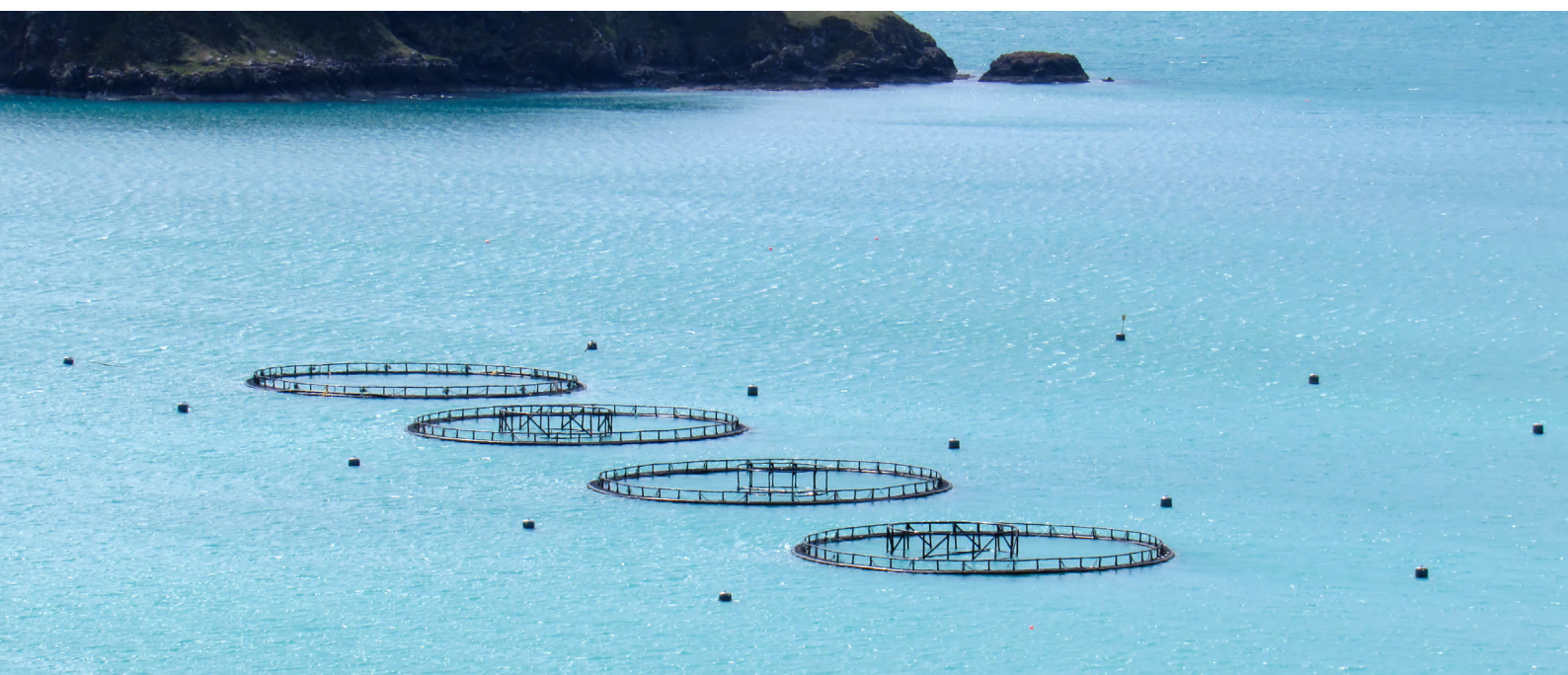
All of this can be a complex operation, particularly for extensive farms with hardy local breeds that have different behavioural needs from intensively-reared animals. Due to their genetics, and a life spent outdoors, local breeds are not accustomed to the use of mechanised restraints and transport systems. Therefore, loading, unloading and slaughtering should follow specific procedures.

Lastly, in 2019, over 1.6 billion cattle, sheep, poultry and pigs were transported alive from the EU to non-European countries. However, the European Court of Justice ruling C-424/13, which establishes that the provisions of the Regulation 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport also apply to those stages of the journey taking place outside the EU, remains to all effects and purposes disregarded. For this reason, out of respect for our farmers who comply with these measures but also out of respect for the animals, Slow Food believes that live animal exports should be banned. Similarly, equivalent requirements at import should be established in order to avoid undermining the welfare impacts of EU legislation. These measures could lead to a reterritorialization of food production, boosting rural economies, and increasing the food culture of consumers.

### **3.4. AQUACULTURE: FISH DESERVE RESPECT TOO**

Under the framework of the F2F Strategy, there was also a commitment to new EU Strategic Guidelines on Aquaculture. They were adopted by the Commission in May 2021, and Member States were invited to consider these new guidelines in their Multiannual National Strategic Plans for the development of the aquaculture sector, as well as their support for the sector under the future European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and other EU funds.

Current animal welfare legislation provides species-specific standards for laying hens, chickens kept for meat, calves and pigs. The remaining species, including farmed fish, lack any tangible protection due to the very ambiguous and weak language of the General Farming Directive (98/58/EC). The EU Regulation on Organic Production sets out more specific requirements, such as maximum stocking-density levels or restrictions on the use of artificial light and oxygen, but it focuses on a small part of the farmed fish market. However, along with other missing species, we consider it essential that farmed fish be covered in the revised animal welfare legislation.



## 4. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the analysis of the political developments in the field of animal welfare, and in line with the philosophy and technical supervision that encompasses all Slow Food projects with the farmers, producers, activists, experts and cooks who are part of the Slow Food international movement, below are the main political demands for which we are advocating. They can be divided into four groups: food systems, production, consumption and transport and trade.

### EU AGRIFOOD POLICIES MUST TAKE A FOOD SYSTEMS APPROACH, WHICH ENTAILS...

#### In relation to the revision of the animal welfare legislation:

- ① Legally binding animal welfare legislation to other European policies such as the Common Agricultural Policy, the Common Fisheries Policy, the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies, trade agreements, the Fit for 55 Climate Package and the Europe Beating Cancer Plan.
- ① Following the One Welfare approach which recognises that animal welfare, biodiversity and the environment are connected to human well-being, and considers human and environmental well-being as crucial for the promotion of animal welfare.
- ① Including farmed fish in the animal welfare legislation and setting common, species-specific and auditable fish-welfare indicators throughout the production chain (including in transport and slaughtering).

#### In relation to other agrifood policies:

- ① Ensuring that the upcoming Sustainable Food Systems law brings coherence between all European policies that shape our food systems, including those that affect the welfare of animals, in order to tackle the interrelated issues of climate change, biodiversity loss, soil health, rural development and social and economic justice.
- ① Explicitly acknowledging that the overproduction and overconsumption of animal products and intensive animal farming are at the root of poor animal welfare and developing a dedicated action plan to move towards less and better consumption and production of meat, dairy and eggs in the EU and shifting away from industrial livestock and fish farming.
- ① Driving the transition to agroecological farming through clear targets and deadlines to reach a healthy, positive or low negative environmental impact and an animal-friendly food system Adopting these policies can create healthy food environments and promote healthy diets.



## ON-FARM WELFARE MUST BE ENSURED THROUGH DIVERSE ACTIONS, SUCH AS...

### In relation to the revision of the animal welfare legislation:

- ④ Promoting the implementation of an animal welfare assessment system in livestock farming that can also be effective in extensive systems, i.e. based on animal-based parameters and with threshold values adapted to different contexts.
- ④ Gradually replacing mutilations through a profound overhaul of animal farming conditions and ensuring that, if carried out, anaesthetics and analgesics are used.
- ④ Guaranteeing a swift phasing out of the use of cages in animal farming across Europe by 2027, as demanded by the ECI End the Cage Age.

### In relation to other agrifood policies:

- ④ Acknowledging that the biodiversity of domesticated animals plays an essential role in guaranteeing animal welfare and supporting the farming of locally adapted and biodiverse animal breeds, following the commitments made in the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030.
- ④ Stopping the funding of large-scale industrialised livestock farming and supporting farmers in the transition to agroecology and animal-friendly practices through economic incentives, training and advisory services, particularly in the most marginal and remote rural areas. Similarly, providing knowledge and skills on fish welfare to aquaculture producers and other operators that handle live farmed fish.
- ④ Avoiding the pursuit of “techno-fixes” as the key to improving animal welfare and sustainability: the development of cell-based animal products does not represent a valid alternative to extensive agroecological farming.

## TO DRIVE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION, THE EU MUST IMPROVE FOOD ENVIRONMENTS BY...

### In relation to the revision of the animal welfare legislation:

- ④ Providing better information to consumers as proposed in the Farm to Fork Strategy and going further by developing EU-wide animal welfare labelling that includes information concerning the different stages of the animals’ lives, such as the welfare and farming conditions and the type and origin of feed used.

### In relation to other agrifood policies:

- ④ Promoting a transition towards more plant-based diets, rich in local varieties of whole grains, legumes, vegetables, fresh and dried fruits and nuts, and reducing animal protein intake, limiting it to products from local and agroecological sources.
- ④ Raising awareness among consumers and favouring the accessibility of plant-based proteins, like pulses and legumes, which are fundamental for a healthy diet and whose cultivation is central to agroecology.
- ④ Raising awareness among public authorities about the positive impact of sustainable food procurement with specific criteria for animal welfare and with a greater emphasis on the consumption of pulses and legumes.

## TRANSPORT, TRADE AND SLAUGHTER POLICIES MUST CONTRIBUTE TO THE TRANSITION, BY...

### In relation to the revision of the animal welfare legislation:

- ① Ending live animal exports outside the EU and imposing stricter rules for intra-EU transport, limiting live-animal journeys to only essential and local travel. Additionally, adequate space allowances should be guaranteed, and the transport of unweaned animals should be prohibited.
- ① Establishing a specific procedure for loading, unloading, stunning and slaughtering, through appropriate means and trained workers.

### In relation to other agrifood policies:

- ① Facilitating the establishment and uptake of small-scale, on-farm and/or mobile slaughterhouses to diminish the suffering of animals during transport and end-of-life stress. Discussions of the CAP post-2027 should include the creation of a funding instrument to achieve this.
- ① Banning live animal exports and imposing the same animal welfare standards on products entering the EU market from abroad, with the aim of protecting farmers from unfair competition, avoiding incoherencies with what is being done in the EU and contributing to improving animal welfare conditions and sustainable food systems globally. Crucially, trade deals must reflect these standards.

*[Jonica goat, Slow Food Presidia](#)*



## 5. WHAT IS SLOW FOOD DOING?

**Slow Food has been working for over 20 years to promote animal welfare through its grassroots programmes and campaigns (Slow Meat, Slow Fish, etc.).**

Since 2022, Slow Food has been developing a strategy aimed at promoting a collective and fair protein transition towards agroecology. Animal welfare is a crucial part in this, as to reshape our supply chains a systemic transformation is needed towards a more conscious and healthy diet, rich in local plant-based foods (like whole grains, vegetables, fruits, legumes and nuts) and with reduced animal proteins, which must come from agroecological sources. Only in this way can we achieve environmental sustainability and global food security and sovereignty.



**Slow Food Presidia** – Since 2000, Slow Food Presidia have helped producers and farmers who safeguard biodiversity with the aim of promoting their local areas, recovering traditional jobs and food processing techniques and saving native animal breeds, plant varieties, rural landscapes and ecosystems from extinction. A total of 70 Slow Food Presidia encourage the reintroduction of endangered breeds by promoting their products. This form of farming gives more room to the animals, compared to conventional farming, and avoids cages and mutilations (except castration, which is only performed by experts using a surgical procedure, under anaesthetic). Each Presidia has [strict production protocols](#) inspired by the principles of agroecology, including animal welfare as a pivotal concept with which farmers must comply. In addition, this farming system, which includes grazing and permanent pastures, lowers the overall footprint of Slow Food Presidia. In fact, with the scientific support of INDACO – an environmental consultancy firm – a [Life Cycle Assessment of Slow Food Presidia has been carried out](#), comparing their carbon dioxide emissions with similar products from intensive farming systems. The differences were significant, with emissions among Presidia between 30% and 83% lower than industrial farms.



**Narrative label** - Since 2011, Slow Food has been promoting and implementing the [narrative label](#). Along with the information required by law, the narrative label (a secondary, back label) provides precise information on the producers, their businesses, the plant varieties or animal breeds used, cultivation techniques, farming and processing methods, animal welfare and areas of origin, in order to provide consumers with a way to recognize good, clean and fair production. For example, the label of a cheese describes the animal breed the milk came from, how the animals were farmed and fed (and whether the fodder and feed were produced on the same farm or certified GM free), the grazing area, practices employed to guarantee the welfare of the animals, processing techniques and ageing time and location.





**Safeguarding of permanent meadows and pastures** - Slow Food runs a project to restore the value of permanent meadows and safeguard pastures and grasslands with abundant biodiversity that are still well-preserved and in use. This is crucial for animal welfare, as it allows livestock to live and feed in contexts where their needs are met and contributes to livelier and richer biodiversity on pastures and in soil ecosystems. With this project, which involves farmers in lower-lying areas, Slow Food encourages a return to the breeding of hardier local livestock breeds as well as goats and sheep.



**Earth Markets** with the [Earth Market project](#), started in 2004, Slow Food aims to boost short supply chains for local, seasonal products made with respect for animals, the environment and workers' rights, thereby creating opportunities for small-scale producers. The Earth Markets promote genuine dialogue between producers and consumers and can be the best places for the exchange of knowledge and the transmission of know-how, for taste and nutrition education and for training conscious citizens who are concerned about where their food comes from.

*Basque Pyrenees Mountain Cheeses, Slow Food Presidia, France*



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