



EFSA activities in Animal Welfare

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In 2009, the **European Union (EU)** adopted Council Regulation (EC) No **1099/2009** on the 'protection of animals at the time of killing', which was prepared based on two scientific opinions adopted by **EFSA** in 2004 and 2006. Successively (in 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2017), EFSA produced other scientific opinions related to this subject.



In parallel, since 2005, the World Organisation for Animal Health (**OIE**) has developed **two chapters** in its Terrestrial Animal Health Code: i) Slaughter of animals (Chapter 7.5), ii) Killing of animals for disease control purposes (Chapter 7.6), covering a **similar scope**. The OIE has created an ad hoc working group with the view to revise the two chapters.



Against this background, the European Commission (EC) requested EFSA to write scientific opinions on the context of **slaughter and killing for purposes other than slaughter** (on-farm killing), giving an independent view.



The findings will be used by the European Commission in discussions with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) aimed at **aligning approaches** to animal welfare in these scenarios.



These new scientific opinions represent also a series of updates by reviewing the most recent scientific publications and providing the EC with a sound scientific basis for future discussions at **international level** on animal welfare.

Therefore, in 2020 EFSA is developing 5 different **Scientific Opinions** to address EU's request:

1. Welfare of pigs at slaughter (**adopted**)



2. Welfare of pigs during killing for purposes other than slaughter (**planned adoption**: June 2020)



3. Welfare of cattle at slaughter (in-depth **discussion**: June 2020)



4. Welfare of cattle during killing for purposes other than slaughter (in-depth **discussion**: June 2020)



5. Welfare of minor species in the context of slaughter and on-farm killing.





These opinions are all based on the **latest available scientific knowledge** and are being developed in consultation with **animal welfare experts** from EU Member States.



These SOs concerns the killing of animals, for **human consumption** that could take place at **slaughterhouse** or during **on-farm slaughter** and killing of these animals for purposes other than slaughter. (e.g. disease control).



Related hazards to the **welfare consequences** (e.g. pain, fear, respiratory distress, thermal stress, prolonged thirst and hunger, restriction of movements, resting problem) were **identified**, from arrival of the animals at the slaughter plant until they were dead. Most of the **hazards** are the result of **staff failings**, (e.g. rough handling, restraint, use of wrong parameters for stunning methods)



The EC's mandate also requested a list of **unacceptable methods** that need to be analyzed in terms of welfare aspects. As risk assessors, Efsa cannot make a scientific judgement on acceptability, therefore a list of methods that will lead to **severe welfare consequences** were produced. EFSA also recommends that these practices should be **avoided, re-designed or replaced by other practices**, leading to better welfare outcomes.

November 2019



EFSA delivered **2** opinions on the welfare of **poultry** kept for food production:

1. 'Slaughter of animals: poultry'
2. 'Killing for purposes other than slaughter: poultry'

Efsa reported:

- several hazards that give rise to welfare issues – such as **pain, thirst, hunger or restricted movement**.
- importance of **staff being adequately trained** in the different phases of slaughter and for clear identification of roles and responsibilities



December 2019

EFSA delivered **3** opinions on the welfare of **rabbits** kept for meat production in Europe:

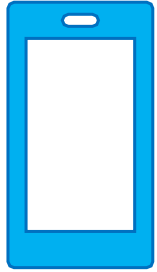
1. 'Health and welfare of rabbits farmed in different production systems'
2. 'Stunning methods and slaughter of rabbits for human consumption'
3. 'Scientific opinion concerning the killing of rabbits for purposes other than slaughter'

EFSA concluded:

- conventional **cages** for farmed rabbits were too small.
- **concern** about **slaughter methods**, e.g. **electrical stunning** of rabbits does not always render them fully unconscious causing pain, stress, suffering

- *EFSA is awaiting a request from the European Commission in the framework of the Farm to Fork strategy to carry out a major review of animal welfare legislation in relation to laying hens, broilers, calves, pigs and animal transport. EFSA would provide an update of the latest scientific knowledge to support the legislators.*

- *EFSA is awaiting an additional request from the European Commission to assess specific stress factors related to keeping animals in cages and to provide recommendations for future legislative decisions. The request would come in the context of a European Citizens' Initiative that called for an end to use of cages in animal farming, signed by over 1.5 million citizens and supported by over 170 organisations.*



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