



Health & Consumer Protection Directorate General

Animal Welfare: an opportunity for the veterinarians in an “enlarged Europe”

Bernard Van Goethem

Acting Director

Directorate

Animal Health and Welfare

European Commission



The EC Treaty's Protocol on Protection and Welfare of Animals

It recognises animals as sentient beings and requires that full regard is paid to this in formulating and implementing the Community's policies, while respecting the legislative or administrative provisions and customs of the Member States relating in particular to religious rites, cultural traditions and regional heritage.



Main legislative initiatives

- 1974/1993 - Stunning and Killing
- 1977/1995 Transport protection Transport time limit and densities
- 1988 Laying Hens
- 1991 Calves – Pigs protection
- 1998 General Farm animal protection (Dir 98/58/EC)
- 1999 Amsterdam Treaty Protocol on protection and welfare of animals
- 1999 Ban on conventional cages for laying hens
- 2001 Grouping of pregnant sows
- 2003 Proposal for a Council Regulation on animal transport
- 2004 EU Constitution article on protection and welfare of animals
- 2005 Council Regulation 1/2005 on animal transport
- 2006 Proposal on broiler chickens
- 2006 Community Action Plan
- 2006 Proposal to ban the trade in cat and dog fur



Why promoting animal welfare internationally?

- **Globalisation** is revolutionising international trade in live animals and animal products
- **Animal production** is subject of global debate because of several reasons that include impact on biodiversity and the life of rural populations





Growing concerns on the intensification of animal production

- Animals are at the centre of ethical concerns modulated by cultural and traditional values;
- Global stakeholders (from producers to retailers and NGOs) are today confronted by “local” demands for animal welfare
- **International leadership and guidance demanded!**

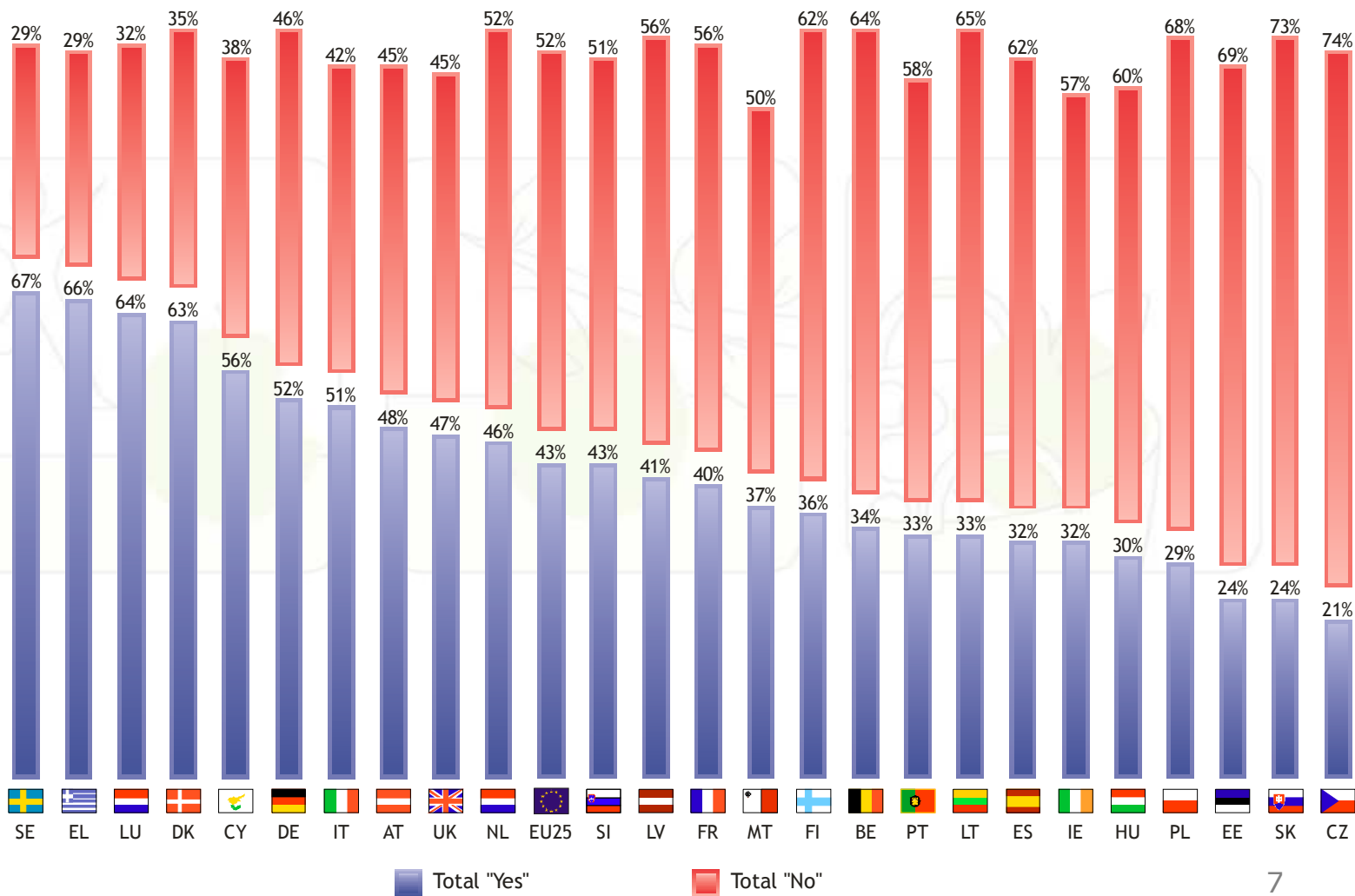


EUROBAROMETER surveys - 2005

- 82% believe we have a duty to protect animals whatever the cost
- But 31% have never visited a farm
- Yet production methods (organic, free-range etc.) more important for food choice than country of origin, brand name or convenience-availability



Thinking about animal welfare when purchasing



Consumer concerns

- 43% consider AW when purchasing meat
- 51% cannot identify AW friendly products
- 74% believe that buying AW friendly products could benefit the animals
- 57% would pay extra for AW friendly products





Why the OIE is so important to secure animal welfare standards globally ?

- OIE is the sole organisation today providing standards and advice on AW on world bases (167 Countries).
- OIE traditionally well positioned to represent the global [veterinary](#) expertise

Why the Council of Europe is so important to secure animal welfare standards at European level ?

- First international legal instruments laying down ethical principles on animal welfare
- Used as a basis for and continue to influence the legislation in Europe.



CoE internationally recognised standards

All of these conventions are based on the principle that “for his own well-being, man may, and sometimes must, make use of animals, but that he has a moral obligation to ensure, within reasonable limits, that the animal’s health and welfare is in each case not unnecessarily put at risk.”



Looking to the future

Community Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2006-2010

- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council that proposes five main areas of action
- Outlines a range of actions for the period 2006-2010 covering not only farm animals, also laboratory and wild animals



The five main areas of action

- Upgrading existing minimum standards for animal protection and welfare
- Giving a high priority to promoting policy-orientated future research on animal protection and welfare and application of the 3Rs principle
- Introducing standardised animal welfare indicators



The five main areas of action

- Ensuring that animal keepers/ handlers as well as the general public are more involved and informed on current standards of animal protection and welfare
- Continue to support and initiate further international initiatives to raise awareness and create a greater consensus on animal welfare



Working towards international awareness on animal welfare

- **WTO** – A sustainable approach
- **Multilateral animal welfare standards – OIE**
- **Bilateral agreements (eg. Chile-EU)**
- **Teaching** animal welfare on common scientific bases to profit of synergies
- **Supporting further research** on the links between animal health and animal welfare
- **Translating science for everyday use**



Major international developments

- Organisation of **OIE Global Conference** on AW and adoption of OIE AW standards (2004)
- Inclusion of animal welfare in the EU-Chile cooperation agreement
- Adoption of **OIE guidelines** on animal welfare (2005).
- Incorporation of AW into agreements with EC trading partners: **Chile and Canada** (2004 – 2005)
- AW training – **Better training for safer food** (Bristol September 2006). Annual activity open to vets from EU and several Third Countries
- Institution of an Animal Welfare Cooperation Forum **EU-New Zealand** (2006)
- Joint **EU-TAIEX-OIE-CoE Workshop** on AW “*Achievements, and future prospects*” for the OIE European Region
- *Organisation of an animal welfare conference in Montevideo (Uruguay) – April 2007*

An opportunity that requires competence and determination





An informed keeper and general public: the best advocates for Animal Welfare

Establishment of a specific information platform on animal welfare European wide



The challenges for the veterinarians

- The “romantic” idea of the veterinarian that we all have cultivated in our childhood is not the reason of the success of the OIE in the area of animal welfare
- Implementation of welfare standards requires for producers and farmers a high level of management skills, technical knowledge but at the same time the capacity to appreciate and understand the ethical value of animal welfare



The challenges for the veterinarians

- Veterinarians are seen as responsible for important technical decisions that have a **huge impact on public opinion** such as the culling of animals in case of disease eradications. This was the case with the **culling of million of birds** to prevent or eradicate avian flu or during the last Foot and Mouth disease outbreak in Europe.



Main goals

- **Define** more clearly the direction of Community **policies** for the coming years;
- Continue to **promote high animal welfare** standards in the EU and at the international level;
- Provide greater **coordination of** existing **resources** while identifying future needs;
- **Support future trends** in animal welfare **research** and continue to support the 3Rs principle: Replacement, Reduction and Refinement alternative approaches to animal testing;
- Ensure a more **consistent and coordinated approach** to animal protection and welfare across Commission policy areas, also taking into account aspects such as the socio-economic impact of any new measures



Thanks for your attention.