

THE NEED TO INTEGRATE ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS AS CORE CRITERIA IN GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

BACKGROUND

Public authorities are important players in the food market. They procure food and meals in hospitals, schools and public canteens. Therefore public authorities have a high impact on the food and catering services sector and should take responsibility for their procurement actions to provide food and other products that respect higher animal welfare standards. There is a rising public interest in animal welfare. Animal welfare is intrinsically connected to our own wellbeing, protection of the environment and a sustainable economy. Scientific references show the negative impacts that most industrial farming methods have not only on animal welfare but also on climate change, biodiversity, and public health. Thus ensuring higher animal welfare is not only an ethical and consumer concern, it also leads to several other benefits.

Through improved Green Public Procurement (GPP) criteria, public authorities can serve as a good example and support improved animal welfare together with associated benefits. Improved criteria can provide public authorities with a concrete tool to foster the consumption and production of meat, eggs, and dairy products that respect higher animal welfare standards as well as improved uptake of plant-based alternatives.

They can also help to avoid products which may have been tested on animals such as cleaning chemicals. Eurogroup for Animals, as the primary advocacy organisation representing animal welfare organisations in the EU, wants to contribute to the development of higher welfare standards in GPP. But improved EU policy support is needed to ensure that animal welfare gets anchored into public procurement, which in turn should also increase the demand for more sustainable and animal welfare friendly goods.

CURRENT SITUATION

So far, the EU GPP core criteria do not include animal welfare requirements. Rather, animal welfare criteria for food products such as dairy, meat and eggs, are covered only by the other technical criteria, which are left to Member States to include or not in their own criteria. As a consequence, the majority of EU national and local authorities have not made clear animal welfare criteria a precondition for purchasing animal

products. Additionally, EU GPP criteria do not incorporate the use of products that have not been tested on animals, and comprehensive information on animal welfare is not provided in the Commission's training toolkit for purchasers. The EU is not working closely enough with citizens, consumers and animal welfare organisations to clarify and provide support for higher animal welfare farming systems, even though voluntary farm assurance schemes that deliver higher animal welfare outcomes for livestock species have been developed in several countries, including the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, and Austria. Relevant schemes and higher welfare standards should be supported through Green Public Procurement criteria.

ACTION URGENTLY NEEDED

- Animal Welfare should be included as a compulsory requirement in the core criteria of public procurement policy. In recognition that animal products account for a very significant share of all food products, higher animal welfare standards should be recognised as core award criteria.
- GPP criteria should only support animal test-free detergents and toiletries Version: 9/9/2015
- Higher animal welfare standards should apply to all animal products that fall under the scope of GPP, including food coming from both terrestrial and aquatic animals.
- Organic and non-organic animal products that are procured must respect higher animal welfare standards across the EU. Currently this is not the case.
- Consumers should be informed about methods of animal production and be assured that good husbandry, transport and humane slaughter practices have been carried out.
- Public procurement contracts that include animal products should include the following points1:
 1. Need to ensure use of adapted breeds by specifying certain detailed breeding requirements where appropriate.
 2. Need to ensure appropriate outdoor access for all livestock and ban painful practices like tethering of livestock.
 3. Need to end sourcing from caged systems as well as from keeping methods that confine animals like young calves and pregnant sows.
 4. Need to exclude foie gras produced by force-feeding from public procurement. Forcefeeding is associated with serious animal welfare concerns.
 5. Need to stop mutilations, including pig and capon castration. Mutilations must only be carried out if truly needed for individual animals for health reasons and conducted with appropriate general anaesthesia and prolonged pain relief.
 6. Need to ensure that duration of transport is minimised and that conditions of transport are optimised. Animals must always be slaughtered as close as possible to their point of production. Priority should be given to food produce that avoids the long distance transport of live animals.

7. Need to require appropriate pre-stunning of animals before slaughter without exemption, and need to phase out certain methods of stunning, e.g. use of waterbath stunners for poultry, and to provide for the adoption of detailed standards for humane slaughter.

8. Need to develop and improve species-specific rules for all animals that can be ethically farmed. Need to develop rules to protect dairy cows, rabbits and aquaculture species, among others, and to revise certain housing rules for other species in line with their behavioural needs.

- It is essential public procurement gives more attention to supporting alternative protein sources that include ethical and humane alternatives to meat and dairy production (e.g. plantbased foods), given the relatively high environmental inefficiencies and ethical concerns linked to conventional animal farming systems.
- Improved focus on animal welfare and plant-based diets will also contribute to the minimisation of food waste derived from animals when considering the full life cycle of food products. Livestock production already accounts for 70 percent of all agricultural land (and 30 percent of the earth's land surface). The only sustainable way forward for the farming sector is to produce “less and better” animal products.

Better welfare will lead to better animal and human health and higher quality food, contributing to less waste and disease.