

WE WANT TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE NEED TO IMPROVE THE CLARITY, DEVELOPMENT AND ENFORCEMENT OF HIGHER ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS IN ORGANIC FARMING AT EU LEVEL

About the issue

As an integrated objective of organic farming, Eurogroup for Animals and its members expect organic farming in the EU to meet higher standards of animal welfare. Unfortunately, the assumption that animal welfare is adequately protected across the EU even in organic farming is a false one today. Although some farmers, member states and organic farming schemes may respect high animal welfare standards, this is not always the case, since EU farming legislation currently allows for several exceptions to higher standards, such as the use of inappropriate breeds, the tethering of livestock, unnecessary and painful mutilations, such as piglet castration, and ill-defined provisions for transport and slaughter. Whilst Eurogroup for Animals is very supportive of organic farming as a system that can benefit the welfare of animals, we also want to ensure that several exceptions to animal welfare rules that are possible in the current EU regulation on organic farming will be removed.

The on-going revision of EU organic legislation, which is currently being negotiated between the EU institutions, offers an opportunity to improve and harmonize higher welfare rules, which is urgently needed to support a fair and functional internal market and to ensure consumer confidence in organic animal products across the EU.

What we are calling for

- Ensure use of adapted breeds on organic farms
- Ensure appropriate outdoor access for all livestock and ban inappropriate exemptions that allow tethering of livestock
- End keeping methods that confine young calves and pregnant sows
- Stop mutilations, including pig 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.

- Minimize duration of transport and optimize conditions of transport. Animals must always be slaughtered as close as possible to their point of production.
- Require appropriate pre-stunning of animals before slaughter without exemption, and phase out certain methods of stunning, e.g. use of water-bath stunners for poultry. Detailed standards for humane slaughter should be provided for.
- Include specific rules to protect rabbits and aquaculture species, and revise certain housing rules for other species in line with their behavioral needs

How you can help

Take action now by sending a letter ([copy-paste this letter template!](#)) to your Ministers.

Stay tuned to our website and social media channels (especially [Twitter](#) and the hashtag [#Act4AnimalsEU](#)) for updates on EU legislation and to see how you can take action on animal welfare!

Downloads

- [Briefing on organic farming](#)
- [Eurogroup comment on organic farming](#)