## Basic information

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|---|---|
| **2005/0099(CNS)**<br><br>CNS - Consultation procedure<br>Directive | Procedure completed |
| Protection of chickens kept for meat production<br><br>Amended by 2013/0140(COD)<br><br>**Subject**<br><br>3.10.04.02 Animal protection<br>3.10.05.01 Meat<br>4.60.02 Consumer information, advertising, labelling | |

## Key players

### European Parliament

| Committee responsible | Rapporteur | Appointed |
|---|---|---|
| AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development | BERMAN Thijs (PSE) | 15/06/2005 |

| Committee for opinion | Rapporteur for opinion | Appointed |
|---|---|---|
| ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety | JØRGENSEN Dan (PSE) | 12/07/2005 |

### Council of the European Union

| Council configuration | Meetings | Date |
|---|---|---|
| Agriculture and Fisheries | 2739 | 2006-06-19 |
| Agriculture and Fisheries | 2676 | 2005-07-18 |
| Agriculture and Fisheries | 2797 | 2007-05-07 |
| Environment | 2812 | 2007-06-28 |

### European Commission

| Commission DG | Commissioner |
|---|---|
| Health and Food Safety | KYPRIANOU Markos |

## Key events

| Date | Event | Reference | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|
| 30/05/2005 | Legislative proposal published | COM(2005)0221 | Summary |
| 22/06/2005 | Committee referral announced in Parliament | | |
| 18/07/2005 | Debate in Council | | Summary |

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|---|---|---|---|
| 26/01/2006 | Vote in committee | | Summary |
| 01/02/2006 | Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading | A6-0017/2006 | |
| 13/02/2006 | Debate in Parliament | | |
| 14/02/2006 | Decision by Parliament | T6-0053/2006 | Summary |
| 14/02/2006 | Results of vote in Parliament | | |
| 19/06/2006 | Debate in Council | | Summary |
| 28/06/2007 | Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament | | |
| 28/06/2007 | End of procedure in Parliament | | |
| 12/07/2007 | Final act published in Official Journal | | |

## Technical information

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|---|---|
| **Procedure reference** | 2005/0099(CNS) |
| **Procedure type** | CNS - Consultation procedure |
| **Procedure subtype** | Legislation |
| **Legislative instrument** | Directive |
| **Amendments and repeals** | Amended by 2013/0140(COD) |
| **Legal basis** | EC Treaty (after Amsterdam) EC 037 |
| **Stage reached in procedure** | Procedure completed |
| **Committee dossier** | AGRI/6/28586 |

## Documentation gateway

**European Parliament**

| Document type | Committee | Reference | Date | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Committee opinion | ENVI | PE362.612 | 06/12/2005 | |
| Amendments tabled in committee | | PE365.101 | 15/12/2005 | |
| Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading | | A6-0017/2006 | 01/02/2006 | |
| Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading | | T6-0053/2006 | 14/02/2006 | Summary |

**European Commission**

| Document type | Reference | Date | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|
| Legislative proposal | COM(2005)0221 | 30/05/2005 | Summary |
| Document attached to the procedure | SEC(2005)0801 | 10/06/2005 | Summary |
| Commission response to text adopted in plenary | SP(2006)1012 | 09/03/2006 | |

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|---|---|---|---|
| Follow-up document | COM(2016)0182 | 07/04/2016 | Summary |
| Follow-up document | COM(2018)0181 | 13/04/2018 | Summary |

**Other institutions and bodies**

| Institution/body | Document type | Reference | Date | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| EESC | Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report | CES1246/2005<br>OJ C 028 03.02.2006, p. 0025-0028 | 26/10/2005 | |

**Additional information**

| Source | Document | Date |
|---|---|---|
| European Commission | EUR-Lex | |

**Final act**

Directive 2007/0043
OJ L 182 12.07.2007, p. 0019 Summary

# Protection of chickens kept for meat production

2005/0099(CNS) - 07/04/2016 - Follow-up document

In accordance with Council Directive (EC) 2007/43/EC, the Commission presented a report on the impact of genetic selection on the welfare of chickens kept for meat production (broilers).

To prepare this report, in 2010 the Commission requested a scientific opinion from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) which was updated in 20123 and mandated an economic study, completed in 2013.

**Production, trade and consumption in the EU**: in 2014, EU chicken meat production (chickens for meat production are also called "broilers") reached **10.5 million tonnes**, representing about 6.5 billion birds and around **12% of world production**. In 2010 there were more than 2.2 million broiler farms in the EU-27. However, there were only 20.000 farms with more than 5.000 broilers.

With an average consumption of **26.8 kg per capita per year in 2014**, chicken meat constitutes the second largest consumed meat in the EU. The main buyers of chicken meat are the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Germany and France.

**Breeding selection**: genetic selection identifies the most appropriate birds to become the parents of the next generation. It determines the traits for which a specific line is selected in order to meet the market demands.

In the last decades, a wide range of metabolic and behavioural traits in broilers have been modified by genetic selection, leading to various welfare issues, such as **legs and locomotion, ascites** and sudden death syndrome (SDS) as well as skin diseases such as **contact dermatitis**.

Regarding the main welfare impacts, scientific studies quoted by EFSA have shown that:

- the genetic correlations between traits such as specific skeletal problems and growth should permit a genetic improvement in leg health along with a continued, though more modest, improvement in growth rate;
- it is possible to develop a resistant line to ascites since it appears that there are only a few genes responsible for ascites susceptibility and they have a high heritability. Sudden Death Syndrome has a correlation with ascites;
- there is a low genetic correlation between contact dermatitis (food pad and hock burn) with body weight suggesting that selection against susceptibility to footpad dermatitis should be possible without adverse effect on weight.

Against this background, the report noted that **positive signals of a better integration of welfare issues** into the selection process of breeding programmes can already be found. For instance recent surveys in commercial flocks report a decrease in the incidence of leg problems and ascites during the last 10 years.

**The current situation**: the report stated that new technologies based on genetic markers can assist in the genetic selection to identify birds that carry desirable genes. The genetic selection in breeding programmes has contributed to ensuring a competitive broiler production in the EU, however, the **level of genetic improvements or of individual traits cannot be quantified** in this report due to the lack of access to confidential breeder data.

Furthermore, in general, **market pressure** does not currently provide breeding companies with sufficient incentive to give welfare traits greater weighting in their breeding programmes.

Selection programmes are a useful tool for the improvement of certain production traits in commercial lines. However, they have also led to a **loss of genetic diversity.** This is the reason why the EU Community programme on the conservation, characterisation, collection and utilisation of genetic resources in agriculture promotes genetic diversity.

**Main conclusions**: the Commission considered that the current legislation provides a **monitoring system for animal welfare indicators** in commercial conditions which could be further exploited in a context of genetic selection.

Moreover, consumers expressed increasingly interest for broilers selected for welfare traits which are produced under increased costs. **The presence of animal welfare information** at different levels and tailored specifically for each type of audience (school, media…) could help to increase the demand for animal welfare friendly products.

The Commission stated that **no legislative proposal is deemed necessary at this stage**. In line with its mandate on animal welfare and through the existing tools, the European Commission is willing to facilitate improvements in this area.

# Protection of chickens kept for meat production

2005/0099(CNS) - 28/06/2007 - Final act

PURPOSE: to lay down minimum rules to protect chickens kept for meat production.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Directive 2007/43/EC laying down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production.

CONTENT: the Council adopted this Directive by qualified majority (the Austrian delegation voting against) with the objective of introducing animal welfare improvements in the intensive farming of chickens.

The main points are as follows:

**Scope:** the Directive applies to chickens kept for meat production. However, it does not apply to: holdings with fewer than 500 chickens; holdings with only breeding stocks of chickens; hatcheries; extensive indoor and free range chickens; and organically reared birds.

**Requirements:** general requirements for houses (including e.g. requirements for drinkers, litter, noise, light, cleaning and record keeping as well as monitoring and reporting of post mortem inspection, with a special care for lesions correlated to poor welfare) are set out in Annex I of the Directive. The required inspections and the monitoring and follow-up, including those provided for in Annex III, must be carried out by the competent authority or the official veterinarian. The maximum stocking density in a holding or a house must not at any time exceed 33 kg/m2, subject to a derogation under certain circumstances when the maximum stocking density in a holding or a house of a holding does not at any time exceed 39 kg/m2. The owner must comply with additional requirements.

**Reward system:** when the criteria set out in Annex V(Criteria for the use of increased stocking density) are fulfilled, Member States may allow that the maximum stocking density be increased by a maximum of 3 kg/m2.

**Guides:** Member States must encourage the development of guides to good management practice which shall include guidance on compliance with the Directive. The dissemination and use of such guides will be encouraged.

**Training:** keepers who are natural persons must have received sufficient training in their tasks and appropriate training courses should be available. These training courses must focus on welfare aspects and cover in particular the matters listed in Annex IV of the directive. Furthermore, a system must be established for the control and approval of training courses. The keeper of the chickens shall hold a certificate which is recognised by the competent authority of the Member State concerned, attesting to the completion of such a training course or to having acquired experience equivalent to such training. Member States may recognise experience acquired before 30 June 2010 as being equivalent to participation in such training courses and shall issue certificates attesting to such equivalence.

**Report:** based on a scientific opinion of the European Food Safety Authority, the Commission shall no later than 31 December 2010 submit to the European Parliament and to the Council a report concerning the influence of genetic parameters on identified deficiencies resulting in poor welfare of chickens. That report may be accompanied by appropriate legislative proposals, if necessary.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 01/07/2007.

TRANSPOSITION: 30/06/2010.

# Protection of chickens kept for meat production

2005/0099(CNS) - 18/07/2005

The Council took note of a presentation by Commissioner Kyprianou of a proposal for a Council Directive laying down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production ("broilers").

The Council also took note of the Commission's intended strategy in the area of Mr Kyprianou's responsibilities as well as the intention of the Presidency to make progress on this file in order to come back on these strategic issues before the end of the year.

The German, Swedish and Danish delegations expressed their broad support for the proposal tabled by the Commission, warning against the risk of excessive stocking density of broilers. The Danish and Swedish delegations also indicated that they currently applied national rules as regards requirements for slaughter and maximum stocking densities.

The Slovak, Czech and French delegations expressed their concerns as regards the possible loss of competitiveness of the EU poultry industry on the world market and the possible loss of market shares in the EU, the need to take due account of the economic aspects and the geographical positions of the Member States, as well as the schedule of implementation of the proposed Directive. The French delegation suggested submitting the impact assessment study of the Commission on the proposal to the examination of the Special Committee on Agriculture.

The Greek delegation underlined the need for sufficient protection for broilers as well as a secure framework in this area and stressed the importance of a cost/benefit balance.

Commissioner Kyprianou underlined his awareness as regards the importance of competitiveness for the EU broiler's industry with regard to third countries' production. He also indicated that his Institution would report to the European Parliament and to the Council on a voluntary labelling scheme.

# Protection of chickens kept for meat production

2005/0099(CNS) - 30/05/2005 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to lay down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production.

PROPOSED ACT : Council Directive.

CONTEXT : a report of the Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare of March 2000, "The Welfare of Chickens Kept for Meat Production (Broilers)", identified a number of welfare problems, such as metabolic disorders resulting in leg problems, ascites, sudden death syndrome and other health concerns.

The farming of chickens for meat production represents an important farming sector within the EU. This is illustrated by the fact that more than 4 billion chickens are slaughtered for meat production in the EU-15 each year, a higher number of animals than from any other farming system.

With the accession of the ten New Member States on 1 May 2004 this number increased by approximately 18 %. This sector is not covered by specific Community legislation; only the general requirements of Directive 98/58/EC concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes apply. Therefore the Commission has decided to propose a specific Council Directive laying down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production.

CONTENT : this proposal aims to introduce animal welfare improvements in the intensive farming of chickens by means of technical and management requirements for the establishments, including enhanced monitoring on the farms and an increased flow of information between the producer, competent authorities and the slaughterhouse based on a welfare-specific monitoring of the chicken carcasses after slaughter. This proposal will be a key element in the context of the European Action Plan on Animal Welfare to be prepared by the Commission during 2005. It clearly demonstrates the Commission’s commitment to bringing forward policy proposals with the aim of improving animal welfare standards, taking account of the welfare problems with current production systems identified by scientific experts. It also responds to the growing demands of EU civil society to move towards higher standards of animal protection.

# Protection of chickens kept for meat production

2005/0099(CNS) - 19/06/2006

The Council took note of the report presented by the Presidency on a draft Directive (see 9606/05+ADD1) laying down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production (broilers) and of the comments made at that stage by several delegations mainly concerning the implementing period, the issue of collecting data before the establishment of an upper compulsory limit, the need for a report on the socio-economic impact on the sector of the measures envisaged, and the issue of sanctions. The Council noted that the suggested work plan had the support of a majority of the delegations and gave the Committee of Permanent Representatives a mandate to continue work on that basis, at the appropriate level, with a view to reaching a conclusion during the Finnish Presidency.

The main suggestions drawn up by the Presidency broadly consist of extending the scope of the proposal to cover organic and free-range chickens and envisaging the possible setting up of an upper compulsory limit -to be defined- for stocking density to be presented by the Commission, after a

period during which data would be collected at national level on harmonised standards of welfare (mortality rate, stocking density, footpad lesions, etc.). That upper limit would apply with enhanced welfare requirements. The initial minimum threshold of 30 kg live per square metre for stocking density remains.

# Protection of chickens kept for meat production

2005/0099(CNS) - 07/05/2007

The Council reached political agreement by qualified majority on a Directive on the protection of chickens kept for meat production. The Austrian delegation indicated it would vote against.

Most of the substance of the amendments adopted by the European Parliament and accepted by the Commission has been inserted into the Directive.

The changes made during the meeting are as follows: the stocking density should read respectively 33 and 39 kg/m2, with a possibility of "bonus" of 3 kg/m2 respectively. The Directive will introduce the following provisions:

- **general requirements for all holdings - maximum 33kg/m²** (Annex I): (i) requirements for drinkers, litter, noise, light cleaning and record keeping; (ii) monitoring and reporting of post mortem inspection, with a special care for lesions correlated to poor welfare;
- **possible derogation for a maximum of 39 kg/m² under additional provisions** (Annex II): communication to the competent authority, documentation kept available, controlled ventilation and/or heating system, controlled concentration in ammonia, 20 parts per million (ppm) and carbon dioxide 3000 ppm respectively, monitoring and reporting of daily mortality rate recorded at the slaughterhouse;
- **"reward system":** possibility to grant a bonus of 3 kg/m2 if high welfare management is achieved (Annex V) : (i) mortality below a given rate (around 3%) on 7 consecutive flocks; (ii) no welfare deficiencies observed during the past 2 years; (iii) monitoring carried out using good management practice guides (Article 8);
- **good Practices Guides** to be developed at national/European level;
- **training of farmers** dealing with chickens kept for meat production.

# Protection of chickens kept for meat production

2005/0099(CNS) - 14/02/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Thijs **BERMAN** (PES, NL) and made some amendments to the proposal. The principal amendments are as follows:

- in assessing compliance with requirements set out in Annex I by both low-density and high-density establishments, account shall be taken of the various stages of production, on the one hand, and the various climatic conditions and the methods of keeping chickens, on the other;

- Parliament approved the general rule established by the Commission to limit stocking densities to 30 kg/m2 per unit, and added that the maximum stocking density shall be measured as an average of the last three flocks. A margin of two days shall be permitted in the event of an emergency. However, the stocking density for any single flock shall not exceed 32 kilogrammes per liveweight;

- whilst agreeing with the derogation of stocking density not exceeding 38 kilogrammes liveweight Parliament added that the maximum stocking density shall be measured as an average of the last three flocks. A margin of two days shall be permitted in the event of an emergency. However, the stocking density for any single flock shall not exceed 40 kilogrammes per liveweight;

- from 1 January 2013, the stocking density may not exceed 34 kilogrammes liveweight. This maximum stocking density shall be measured as an average of the last three flocks. A margin of two days shall be permitted in the event of an emergency. However, the stocking density for any single flock shall not exceed 36 kilogrammes per liveweight;

- a new sentence states that monitoring shall be extended to all establishments falling within the scope of this Directive. The welfare of chickens shall be monitored even in establishments where lower stocking densities are maintained, because animal welfare is not guaranteed by stocking density alonebut is affected by other factors;

- the Commission should report within 6 months, rather than 2 years as proposed, on the possible introduction of a harmonised EU system of labelling chicken meat for consumers, including clear information concerning production standards and the origin of the product . Labels shall, in particular, indicate the chicken stocking density at the holding concerned. Labels shall also specify the animal's age and other parameters which consumers wish to be taken into account;

- a new article states that the Commission shall carry out activities to persuade EU chicken-meat importers to demand the same level of animal welfare standards from their suppliers;

- no later than four years from the date of the adoption of the Directive, the Commission should submit a report on all aspects of health resulting in poor welfare of chicken in broiler and breeding keepings, concerning the loss of genetic diversity in chicken breeding and including a cost-benefit analysis of the use of various breeding strains with regard to animal health, resistance to diseases, necessary use of biocides and veterinary medical products. That report shall be submitted not later than 30 months after the adoption of the directive and shall be accompanied by appropriate legislative proposals, if necessary. Such proposals shall be in keeping with the principle that genetic selection must not restrict, diminish or threaten animal welfare potential. The adverse effects of earlier genetic selection must also be eliminated;

- the report and legislative proposals shall consider both the genetics of broilers and the welfare conditions under which parent stock is raised, and shall consider options such as farming birds of recognised slow-growing strains, restrictions on weight gain of birds per day, a minimum age for slaughter and the prohibition of the use of broilers from parent stock that have to be restrictively fed;

- two years after the date of adoption of the Directive, the Commission shall conduct an assessment of the impact of its provisions on the welfare of chickens kept for meat production and of its economic impact in each Member State;

-five years after the date of adoption of the Directive, the Commission shall submit an assessment report covering the optimisation of the choice of the welfare parameters for chickens kept for meat production and appropriate welfare measurement techniques, with particular reference to parameters concerning behavioural, metabolic, and skeletal disorders. The implementing method and the cost of welfare measurement techniques shall be covered by this assessment, in the interests of farmers and consumers;

- no more than six months after the publication of the Commission's assessment, it shall, where appropriate, be followed by proposals for amendments to the annexes of the Directive;

- with regard to penalties, a new sentence is added stating that except in clear cases of abandonment or maltreatment, which require immediate action, the penalties shall be progressive;

- various amendments are made to the Annexes, for example, regarding ventilation ,heating and cooling systems, and light. Some of the additional welfare criteria should be extended to all holdings, regardless of whether they are operating under the derogation. Thus, all establishments should have to conform to certain rules: non-flickering light of at least 50 lux intensity on a 24-hour rhythm, relative humidity of maximum 70% (when the outside temperature is below 10 degrees), temperature of maximum 3 degrees more than the outside temperature (when this exceeds 30 degrees) and sufficient ventilation. The concentration of NH3 should not exceed 20 ppm and the concentration of CO2 should not exceed 3000 ppm measured at the level of the chickens' heads;

- beak-trimming and the castration of male chickens should not be allowed under any circumstances;

- Parliament amended the provisions in the Annex requiring that the stocking density be reduced where deficiencies are detected. It proposed that incidences of deficiencies in a flock should be classified into three groups, depending on the scale of the deficiencies, and that the penalty reduction in stocking density should be one kg/m2. Severe deficiencies would lead to repeated reductions;

- the competent authority shall carry out an inspection at least once a year. The cost of these inspections should be borne by the competent authority itself;

- a new recital states that the Commission should vigorously defend the importance of animal welfare during negotiations within the World Trade Organisation (WTO), with a view to securing a world-wide consensus on the matter. A high standard of animal welfare is essential for sustainable farming, and respect for animal welfare should be an established criterion in negotiations on non-trade concerns (NTCs).

# Protection of chickens kept for meat production

2005/0099(CNS) - 10/06/2005 - Document attached to the procedure

**COMMISSION'S IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

*For further information concerning the background to this issue, please refer to the summary of the Commission's initial proposal COM(2005)0221 of 30 May 2005 concerning a proposal to lay down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production.*

**1- POLICY OPTIONS AND IMPACTS** : The Commission's impact assessment looked at the three policy options that follow:

**1.1- Option 1 - Take no action:** To maintain the *status quo* and take no action would not respond to the serious animal welfare problems identified in the rearing of chickens for meat production. It would also not meet the expectations of Member States and stakeholders including industry, NGOs and consumers to improve the welfare of these animals. At the same time the industry would prefer a better harmonisation at European level to avoid market disturbances due to diverging national legislation and voluntary quality assurance schemes at national level imposed by retailers and consumer demand.

**1.2- Option 2 -Establish minimum animal welfare requirements for the production of chickens prescribing a detailed description of equipment and housing to be used in chicken farming:** This option could fulfil the public expectations with regard to the welfare of chickens. However, a very strict regulation of technical details of the farming methods applied could lack the necessary flexibility with regard to the variety of farming systems applied. The development of more efficient and welfare friendly farming practices requires a legislative framework that offers sufficient flexibility. Legislation that regulates too many technical details risks hindering the ongoing technical evolution of the sector.

**1.3- Option 3 - Integrated approach: Harmonisation of technical requirements concerning key factors for the welfare of chickens in combination with an indicator-based monitoring of the flocks after slaughter integrated in the post-mortem inspection for the most intensive production**.

In an industry as competitive as the chicken meat industry, even small price differentials can have important competitive implications. On the other hand, in most Member States animal welfare is an issue of increasing public importance leading to an effect on the product demand. On the basis of various socio-economic considerations, the Commission concluded that adopting a step-by-step approach to implement the main aspects of the recommendations represents the best means to achieve real improvements of the welfare of the animals over the short to medium term.

*CONCLUSION*: **The output-oriented approach chosen by the Commission, Option 3, which defines maximum levels for mortality and pathologies, enables farmers to choose the most cost-efficient solutions to reach the welfare targets, tailor-made for their situation.**

**IMPACT:** While many sectors of the industry would accept the labelling of chicken meat products as being of EU origin and complying with EU animal welfare rules, some NGOs have expressed their concern that products should not be differentiated solely on the basis of their origin but rather on their compliance with higher animal welfare standards. Further clarification and investigations are needed on the possible socio/economic and trade/legal implications of such mandatory labelling schemes, notably with regard to compatibility with WTO rules, Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) etc. NGOs are concerned that standardised labelling could disadvantage niche products presently marketed which are complying with animal welfare standards above the standards proposed by the Commission. Difficulties also exist associated with the specific labelling of chicken meat used in processed /cooked products.

**2- FOLLOW-UP:**Due to the very different housing and husbandry systems involved in broiler breeding flocks compared to those for chickens kept for meat production it is not feasible to address these two systems in the context of a single proposal. The intention is to address the issue of broiler breeders in a second step based on future scientific advice and experience gained in implementing the current proposal once adopted, including the collection of specific data by the Member States. It should be noted that a Community-funded DG RTD project on this issue is currently being finalised and will provide an important input to future actions. It is also intended to request the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to issue a future scientific opinion on the specific issue of broiler breeders.

The Commission intends to submit a detailed report to the Council on this issue having undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the considerations in question. This report on the possibility of a possible specific mandatory labelling regime at Community level for chicken meat based on compliance with animal welfare standards will be prepared taking into account, but without prejudice to, existing voluntary schemes for the labelling of chicken meat. The report will take into account possible socio-economic implications, effects on the Community's economic partners and compliance of such a labelling regime with World Trade Organization rules.

# Protection of chickens kept for meat production

2005/0099(CNS) - 13/04/2018 - Follow-up document

The Commission presented a report on the application of Directive 2007/43/EC and its influence on the welfare of chickens kept for meat production and on the development of welfare indicators.

The report takes into account production conditions which influence broiler welfare as well as the socioeconomic and administrative implications of the Directive including regional aspects. It is based on a **study completed in 2017** and on audits carried out by the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety and the opinions of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

The main conclusions of the report are as follows:

**Economic data of the sector**: the EU is, behind Brazil, the United States of America and China, **one of the main global producers of broilers** (11.3% of global production), with a total poultry meat production of 14.1 million tonnes in 2014. Three quarters of the EU production is concentrated in seven Member States: Poland, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands which also have the largest farms.

The 2017 study reported that broiler production in the EU has increased by 18.6% from 2009 to 2014, now representing about **6.5 billion birds a year**. Production and consumption have been increasing steadily and chicken is second after pig-meat as the largest consumed meat in the EU. Just over a quarter of a million people are employed in the EU poultry sector.

**Application of the Directive**: the 2017 study reported that the Directive has been fully transposed into national legislation.

The Directive introduced specific **training** requirements for keepers with derogations on the basis of prior experience. The training emphasises the responsibility of the keeper and the need to balance management and provision of resources as well as practical aspects of catching and transport.

Moreover, the Directive provides three stocking density ranges and keepers must meet a different set of requirements for each range: (i) the general rule is that the stocking density does not exceed 33 kg/m2; (ii) a derogation to allow an increase above 33kg/m2 up to 39kg/m2; (iii) a further increase above 39kg/m2 up to 42kg/m2 is allowed under certain conditions.

The report noted that **different maximum stocking densities** are applied in different Member States. **Farm inspections** generally provide assurance that legislative requirements are met, but Member States have not always provided clear compliance criteria so that their inspectors can make a practical assessment whether farms comply with the law, although there are some good practices such as well-defined maximum gas concentrations and available equipment to measure these.

A **good practice** in some Member States is automatic sharing of data on mortality rates which facilitates investigation of cases, in accordance with the Directive, when excessive deaths may have occurred.

**Welfare indicators**: the report indicates that controls based on monitoring of footpad dermatitis are the most likely to demonstrate that animal welfare has improved. These controls are the most effective way of setting priorities for farm surveys. Authorities and farmers have also been able to measure progress and meet standards on the basis of actual animal welfare results, thanks to the footpad dermatitis scoring.

According to the report, the Directive has provided an **adequate framework to ensure the welfare of broilers** and, although the scoring of footpad dermatitis is not defined at EU level, the use of this indicator has led to the most systematic improvements in animal welfare.

**Conditions at hatcheries and/or parent flocks** are often suspected of giving rise to high mortality rates during the early stages of rearing, but such establishments are not investigated by authorities as they have not defined specific animal welfare rules applicable at these other sites.

The proper assessment of the more technical requirements, such as **ventilation**, which influence chickens' welfare, is also a challenge for authorities.

**Costs of the Directive**: the 2017 study indicated that overall, Member States and industry do not consider the implementation of the Directive as having significant financial implications. Exports and imports largely balance each other and there has been no major cost from implementing the Directive. The competitiveness of the sector in different Member States has not been negatively affected by operating at lower stocking densities.

In conclusion, the Commission will continue to work with Member States to **disseminate examples of good practice** for controls and with Member States and industry on guidance on farm management.