



Dear Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development,

On April 2, the AGRI Committee will vote a report on the CAP regulation on Strategic Plans. This regulation has tremendous impacts on the number of farm animals raised in the EU, and the ways in which they are treated on farms. We are calling on your support to ensure animal welfare is efficiently included in the regulation.

Since 2009, the European Union recognizes animals as sentient beings in its treaties. But the EU does much more than simply admitting the obvious: it imposed an **obligation on the EU's institutions to fully take into account the welfare of animals in the design and implementation of EU policies**. The CAP is the first and biggest pieces of legislation decided at the EU level, accounting for 36% of the EU's entire budget – around €58 billion yearly. In providing funding to European farmers in exchange for producing food in a certain way, the CAP determines which type of farming practices are likely to thrive in the EU. **Yet the one piece of legislation that most affects the lives of the 7.5 billion of farm animals raised and slaughtered each year in the EU only contains a few provisions on animal welfare.**

The Court of Auditors, in its special report published in November, called for a better integration of animal welfare in the CAP and noted that only 1.5% of Pillar II funds was dedicated to animal welfare measures. With as many as 17 Member States already earmarking funds to animal welfare measures under Pillar II, **animal welfare is gradually becoming a fully-fledged objective of the CAP**. And it should be: nine in ten EU citizens believe it is important to protect the welfare of farmed animals and 82% of them believe the welfare should be better protected than it currently is.

However, to better respond to societal demand for higher farm animal welfare, the CAP should include more ambitious measures to improve compliance with existing legislation and incentivize farmers to undertake best practices. **Including animal welfare in the “eco-schemes” in a way that is meaningful and effective for farmers and animals alike would be instrumental in making the CAP more coherent with animal welfare objective.**

Animal welfare is a public good in the sense that it benefits all, humans and animals alike. Farming practices that are respectful of animal sentience contributes to environmental protection, preserve public health, protect workers' rights, and drive rural development. **We therefore encourage you to offer animal welfare the attention it deserves in the new CAP, through the creation of a new entry-level program for animal welfare good practices under the “eco-schemes” (article 28).**

We thank you for your support and consideration,

Respectfully,

Eurogroup for Animals
Compassion in World Farming
Four Paws

