

Recommendation 641 (1971)¹

Animal welfare in industrial stock-breeding

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Recalling its [Recommendation 620 \(1971\)](#) and its Order No. 311 (1971) ;
2. Gratified by the positive reply received from the Committee of Ministers to [Recommendation 620](#) as transmitted in the Statutory Report of 26 April 1971 ([Doc. 2934](#), Addendum) ;
3. Anxious to assure progress of work in the field of animal welfare on an international level,
4. Recommends the Committee of Ministers to transmit, as a working basis, to the expert committee set up to prepare an international convention on animal welfare in intensive rearing, the appended draft Convention.

DRAFT CONVENTION ON ANIMAL WELFARE IN INTENSIVE REARING

The member States of the Council of Europe, signatories hereto,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its Members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage ;

Convinced that the demand for intensive and rationalised livestock husbandry need not run counter to the welfare of the animals concerned ;

Desirous of preserving such animals during rearing, fattening, laying and other uses from pain, suffering, damage and maltreatment ;

Considering that in this field progress can be achieved by the adoption of common provisions for the housing, care and feeding of animals in intensive rearing,

Have agreed as follows :

CHAPTER I

Article 1

5. Each Contracting Party shall apply the provisions contained in this Convention for the housing, care and feeding of animals, irrespective of their number.
6. Each Contracting Party shall take the necessary steps :
 - a. to ensure that all domestic stock live in conditions that respect their physiological needs, and are as close as possible to natural conditions ;
 - b. to ensure that no foreign substances are introduced into animals' food and drink, unless warranted by cogent reasons ;

1. See [Doc 2976](#) Doc 2976, report on the Committee on Agriculture. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 8 July 1971.



- c. to ensure that minimum animal welfare requirements are respected, as laid down in the following articles.

Article 2

This Convention shall apply to the intensive rearing of animals which means any creature kept for the production of food, wool, skin or fur.

CHAPTER II

General provisions

Article 3

7. When animals have to be tethered or restricted, the tethering system shall not be such that they are immobilised ; they must have a certain freedom of movement.
8. When animals have to be folded in en closed housing, the system shall be such that they can have a minimum of physical activity, as suitable for their species.
9. Housing shall include an isolation unit for sick animals which can accommodate at least 2 % of the total number.

Article 4

10. The admixture of chemical or medicinal additives to feeding-stuffs shall be prohibited. The extent and type of any exceptions shall be dealt with under separate provisions, applicable in all signatory States, and drawn up by a Permanent Committee.
11. Medical treatment for animals and any surgical operations shall be performed only by veterinary surgeons or under their responsibility.
12. Hormones or other products may be injected only for therapeutic purposes.

Article 5

13. Temperature, humidity, ventilation and lighting in premises used for housing animals shall be as close as possible to natural conditions.
14. If animals have to be transported, arrangements shall comply with the provisions of the European Convention for the Protection of Animals during International Transport.
15. Slaughter shall be carried out by the most painless methods possible and take into account hygienic rules.

CHAPTER III

Special provisions

Article 6

(Laying hens, fattening cockerels, geese, ducks and other domestic fowl)

16. The area allocated to a laying hen in loose housing shall be at least 1,750 cm², or shall be calculated on a weight basis ; in loose housing with runs or under free-range conditions, the basic allowance per laying hen shall be 1,500 cm².
17. The circulation of air in the hen-house shall not exceed a velocity of 0.3m/sec.
18. The air shall be changed 20 times daily, partial vacuum airing being most appropriate.
19. The optimal air humidity in hen-houses is between 65 % and 75 %.
20. The optimal temperature in hen-houses is between 15° and 18°C.
21. Lighting conditions : daylight and sunlight are always preferable to artificial light. The indispensable minimum window space and floor space ratio shall be between 1 : 10 and 1 : 15.
22. The provisions of paragraphs 1-6 of this article shall apply mutatis mutandis to fattening cockerels.

23. The provisions of paragraphs 1-6 of this article shall apply mutatis mutandis to fattening geese, ducks and other domestic fowl.

Article 7

(Breeding sows and fattening pigs)

24. Pregnant sows may be housed in groups, provided the floor space available per animal is not less than 5m².

25. Individual sties shall measure more than 2m x 1 m.

26. When fattening pigs are folded on litter they must have a sleeping area separated from the dunging area.

27. When they are housed over slats, the same rules shall apply, and the space between the slats shall not exceed 1.5 cm in the case of piglets and 2.0 cm in the case of animals in the final stage of fattening.

28. The battery rearing of piglets shall be prohibited.

29. Temperature :

30. Air humidity :

31. Lighting conditions :

32. Ventilation and air extraction : circulation of air :

Article 8

(Fattening calves)

33. Fattening calves shall be so kept as to allow them adequate freedom of movement, and to ensure that they can lie down and get up without difficulty.

34. Pens with bedding or pens with slatted floors or individual pens shall be permitted, subject to the application of the provisions in paragraph 1 of this article.

35. The feeding of fattening calves shall be based on natural or reconstituted milk, and any other feeds may be introduced only as warranted by the development of the calf's digestive system.

36. Temperature :

37. Air humidity :

38. Lighting conditions :

39. Ventilation and air extraction :

Article 9

(Fattening beef cattle and milk cows, mutatis mutandis)

40. These animals shall be so kept as to allow them adequate freedom of movement, and to ensure that they can lie down and get up without difficulty.

41. Wherever possible, free-range rearing shall be the rule.

42. The open stall system shall be permitted and considered a reasonable arrangement.

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44. The regular use of rigid frame halters shall be prohibited.

45. Drainage gulleys shall be covered by a grating.

46. Temperature :

47. Air humidity :

48. Lighting conditions :

49. Ventilation and air extraction :

Article 10

(Sheep, rabbits and other warm-blooded animals)

50. Sheep, rabbits and other warm-blooded animals shall be so kept that they have sufficient freedom of movement and can lie down and get up without difficulty.

51. Sheep should not be continuously confined in sheds.

52. The provisions in the previous articles shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

Article 11

(Fish)

53. Fish and other cold-blooded animals which are bred and kept in tanks shall be ensured freedom of movement appropriate to their species, to wit : Tank dimensions :

54. The provision of water, oxygen, temperature and lighting shall be appropriate to the species in question :

a. Temperature of water :

b. Oxygen supply :

c. Change of water :

CHAPTER IV

Article 12

(Permanent Committee)

55. A Permanent Committee shall be set up, with the following responsibilities :

55.1. Authorisation of possible exceptions,

55.2. Settlement of disputes between the Contracting Parties,

55.3. Controlling and supervising the implementation of this Convention.

56. The Permanent Committee shall include two members of the Committee on Agriculture of the Consultative Assembly.