

Stella KYRIAKIDES  
Commissioner  
Directorate-General for Health  
and Food Safety  
Rue Froissart 101,  
1000 Brussels, Belgium

Brussels, 14 January 2022

Cc: Sandra Gallina, Andrea Gavinelli,  
Bernard van Goethem

**Subject: Livestock value chain's concern over process for reviewing the EU Animal Welfare legislation**

Dear Commissioner Kyriakides,

Representing several European associations along the livestock value chain, we would like to draw your attention to some concerns we have over the process of the review of EU animal welfare legislation. We would like to request an exchange with you and related colleagues from DG SANTE to clarify certain issues on this very important topic.

Our request in this instance stems partly from our consternation over the opening session of the *EU Animal Welfare Today and Tomorrow* conference, held on 9 December.

Whilst we were pleased to be invited to take part in the public conference, and whilst we have every respect for Dr. Jane Goodall, we felt there was a stark lack of framing for the EU context during this session.

Although the need to find a balance between animal welfare improvements and economic impact for farmers was recognised, this choice to invite somebody to make a highly emotive speech, mixing opinion on animal welfare practices around the world, culminating in a plea for the population to go plant-based, leads the livestock value chain in Europe to wonder what role it has to play in feeding both Europe's population and global populations in a sustainable manner in the future. We believe this highly misplaced at a conference whose aim was to review the ongoing fitness check on the current rules and discuss options for reviewing EU legislation on Animal Welfare. This Conference should have been an opportunity for the Commission to highlight the high standards of EU livestock production in terms of animal welfare and the high commitment of the EU food value chain to provide safe, high-quality and nutritious products to consumers.

The EU is recognised as having some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world. This is a fact that deserves better recognition from all interested parties. We understand that animal welfare is a priority for many of European citizens, and it is a priority for us as well. Through our livestock value chain, we are prepared to make further efforts to improve standards and practices even more and we are all happy to take an active role in the review of the EU legislation on animal welfare and on the transport of animals. There should however be balanced consideration of what citizens say they want and how they behave when it comes to purchasing animal-sourced foods. High-standard products from European farms should not have to face unfair competition from dissimilar standard imported products to ensure affordability for all consumers.

As you may be aware we have had correspondence with your colleague Andrea Gavinelli previously to outline some of our concerns over the process of the review of EU animal welfare legislation. We take the liberty therefore of copying Mr. Gavinelli again, as well as Ms. Gallina and Mr. Van Goethem to avoid duplication of requests for a meeting.

Ahead of our eventual exchange we would like to stress that before any changes are made, current legislation needs to be fully implemented and controlled in a harmonised way across Member States. Any updates to rules should be based on science and the latest available data. We believe that public consultations, whilst important, should serve only as an indicator of opinion as to what citizens expect, and not as the roadmap for change without due consideration of viability, enforceability and the reality of European livestock farming today.

Many thanks in advance for taking our concerns into consideration and we look forward to receiving a proposal for dates to exchange on this topic with you and your team in the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely,



Cc:

Sandra Gallina, Director General for Health and Food Safety (SANTE)

Andrea Gavinelli, Head of Unit G5 in DG SANTE (Animal Welfare, Antimicrobial Resistance)

Bernard van Goethem, Director for food sustainability responsible for Directorate G