

DOWN TO EARTH

CHARTER FOR A CARING FOOD POLICY

THAT NOURISHES OUR HEALTH, THE ENVIRONMENT
AND ANIMAL WELFARE

Compassion in World Farming
2014



SECTION 1

Food policy is a key issue. The way we feed ourselves has an important bearing on our health, the environment and the ability of future generations to feed themselves.

Industrial livestock production – factory farming – dominates much of EU agriculture and is spreading to the developing world. Industrially-produced meat undermines our health. It overuses and pollutes water, diminishes soil quality and erodes biodiversity. Yet our ability to feed the growing world population is dependent on the continuing availability of healthy and plentiful land, water and biodiversity.

A new food and agriculture model is needed to replace the industrial livestock paradigm. The new model should support food production that puts animals back on the farm instead of in factories; extensive farming connected to the land, providing more nutritious food in ways that are better for the countryside and animal welfare while also safeguarding future food supplies.

Compassion in World Farming calls on the EU institutions and the Member States to adopt the following core objective and the seven pledges aimed at achieving that objective:

CORE OBJECTIVE: PUT ANIMALS BACK ON THE FARM

Replace factory farming with pasture and land-based farming of animals to high standards of animal welfare.

SEVEN PLEDGES:

- **REDUCE GRAIN-RELIANT LIVESTOCK FEEDING**

A 33% reduction by 2025 – and a 50% reduction by 2035 – in use of human-edible crops to feed farm animals as this is an inefficient, environmentally damaging way of feeding people

- **FISCAL POLICIES FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD**

Ensure subsidies and tax measures support a move to pasture and land-based animal farming

- **BETTER PUBLIC PROCUREMENT**

Public procurement will only use meat, milk and eggs that have been produced humanely and sustainably

- **REDUCE ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE**

End the routine preventive use of antibiotics to suppress the diseases that are inevitable when animals are kept in crowded, stressful conditions

- **HONEST LABELLING**

Introduce mandatory labelling of meat and dairy products as to farming method

- **END OF MEAT WASTE**

The meat of almost two billion animals is thrown away each year in the EU; this practice must be ended

- **STRONGER REGULATION**

Phase out cruel factory farming systems including cages and crates

The next part of this Charter details our proposed policies and the instruments needed to support them.



SECTION 2: OUR PROPOSED POLICIES

Industrial livestock production is resource-inefficient, damages the environment and harms our health. And leads to animal suffering.

COMPASSION IN WORLD FARMING CALLS ON THE EU TO:

1. Production: Adopt policies to facilitate a transition from industrial grain-based livestock production towards sustainable, humane forms of animal husbandry.

60% of EU cereals are used as animal feed. For every 100 calories that we feed to animals in the form of human-edible crops, we receive on average just 17-30 calories in the form of meat and milk. Using cereals as animal feed is a wasteful use not just of these crops but of the land, water and energy used to grow them. **A substantial reduction in the use of grain to feed animals would enhance resource-efficiency and food security** as more people are fed when scarce arable land is used to grow grain for people rather than for animal feed. The EU should avoid the excessive use of cereals in animal feed and instead put more emphasis on:

- **raising animals on extensive pastures:** pasture is far more abundant than arable land. Extensively reared cattle and sheep convert grass into food that we can eat and are able to use land that is generally not suitable for other forms of food production;
- **integrated crop/livestock production:** the link between animals and the land should be restored through mixed rotational farming where animals are fed on crop residues and their manure fertilises the land rather than being a pollutant;
- **pigs and poultry are nature's great foragers and recyclers:** most EU pigs and poultry are factory farmed. They should instead be kept outdoors where some of their diet can come from foraging, pasture, cull vegetables from local farms and unavoidable food waste. This could replace part of the cereal- and soy-based feed currently used.

2. Consumption: Encourage the adoption of balanced diets with a lower proportion of meat.

This would deliver health benefits by reducing the incidence of heart disease, obesity and certain cancers; it would also lower greenhouse gas emissions. Although more crops would be needed for direct human consumption this would be outweighed by reduced demand for feed crops.

Because feeding crops to animals is so inefficient, more arable land, water and energy have to be used to produce a unit of nutrition from industrially reared

livestock (with their grain-based diet) than from animals reared on pasture or on mixed farms. **A move away from grain-based animal production coupled with a reduction in meat consumption would deliver environmental benefits. It would allow land to be farmed less intensively** with less use of artificial fertilisers, reduced degradation of water, soil and air and lower use of water, land and energy as well as biodiversity gains. It would also enable animals to be kept to higher welfare standards.

3. End the routine preventive use of antibiotics.

The World Health Organization (WHO) warns that we are on the brink of losing the miracle cure of antibiotics. The WHO estimates that worldwide around half of antibiotic production is used in agriculture. The use of antibiotics in farming is a major factor leading to the emergence of bacteria that are resistant to some of the antibiotics used to treat serious human diseases. Antibiotics are used regularly in industrial pig and poultry farms to forestall the diseases that would otherwise be inevitable in the crowded conditions. High health status for animals should be attained through good hygiene, husbandry and housing without recourse to regular preventive use of antibiotics.

4. End meat waste.

The EU wastes 90 million tonnes of food a year; this includes the meat equivalent of almost two billion animals. This is morally repugnant as most of these animals will have been put through the suffering of factory farming only for their meat to be thrown away.

5. Support smallholders in the developing world.

Small-scale farmers must be helped to become more productive in ways that are compatible with their circumstances. This should not entail the introduction of industrial livestock systems as small farmers living in poverty tend to be out-competed by industrial production. Such farmers should be helped to improve the health and nutrition of their animals which will lead to increased productivity and longevity. This will boost their income, enabling them to buy the food that they do not produce themselves and to have money available for other essentials such as education and medicine.

6. Introduce high standards of animal welfare:

- Cages and crates should be phased out as they thwart many of animals' basic instincts: to roam, to forage, to explore;
- Animals should be kept in outdoor systems or, if they are housed, they should be kept in large barns with ample space, plenty of straw, natural light and effective ventilation;
- Husbandry systems must enable animals to express their natural behaviours;
- Genetic selection for fast growth or high yields should be avoided where this results in compromised welfare such as ill-health, pain or limits on behavioural expression;
- Systems should not be used if they require routine mutilations.

INSTRUMENTS NEEDED TO SUPPORT THESE POLICIES INCLUDE:

Public information and education

The EU should develop programmes to increase public awareness of the implications of different livestock farming methods and consumption levels for human health, the environment, food security and animal welfare.

Honest labelling

Consumers should be empowered to play a greater part in driving improvements in animal welfare. Mandatory labelling of meat and dairy products as to method of production would enable consumers to make informed choices when buying food.

Better public procurement

Public sector bodies should, when buying meat, dairy products and eggs, use their buying power to augment the market for food produced to high nutritional, environmental and animal welfare standards.

Improved legislation and enforcement

The EU should phase out factory farming systems including 'enriched' cages for hens, rabbit battery cages, farrowing crates for sows and zero-grazing of dairy cows. Much improved enforcement of welfare legislation is crucial.

Getting prices right - internalising negative externalities

Livestock production, in particular industrial production, produces a range of costly 'negative externalities' including damage to the environment and health. These negative externalities represent a market failure as the costs associated with them are borne by third parties or society as a whole and

are not included in the prices paid by consumers. Market-based instruments are needed to enable the negative externalities of livestock production (including poor animal welfare) to be included in prices thereby reflecting the true cost of using resources and their environmental impacts.

Tax measures and subsidies to reduce the cost of sustainable forms of animal farming:

- to farmers e.g. (i) by using existing Common Agricultural Policy funds to provide support for positive externalities and (ii) reducing tax liabilities by offering generous capital allowances for investments in sustainable farming with high standards of animal welfare;
- to consumers by placing, in those countries that charge VAT on food, a lower or nil rate of VAT on sustainable, high welfare food.

Develop policies that provide access to affordable, nutritious food for all

In addition, the information programmes referred to earlier should make people aware of the options for healthy eating on a low income.

Creation of a new food culture

The current food culture gives great weight to factors such as low prices and convenience. There is no part of this culture that invites consumers to think about how low-cost meat, eggs and milk are produced. A new food culture must be created which values the nutritional quality of food and farming methods that protect the environment and animals.

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