Revision of EU animal welfare legislation (EN)

Introduction

Why are we consulting?

This initiative will explore several options for addressing the shortcomings identified in the recent evaluation of the EU legislation on animal welfare. The aim is to revise this legislation.

We would like to hear your views and experience on the fitness of the current rules and on how they could be improved.

Target audience

• any group directly affected by the legislation, such as farmers and other food business operators
• members of the public
• (possibly) animal welfare NGO’s and consumer organisations.

About you

Background information

• First name
  Nikolai

• Surname
  Pushkarev

• Email (this won't be published)
  nikolai.pushkarev@epha.org

You are welcome to answer the questionnaire in one of the 24 official languages of the EU. Please let us know in which language you are replying.
* Language of my contribution
  - Bulgarian
  - Croatian
  - Czech
  - Danish
  - Dutch
  - English
  - Estonian
  - Finnish
  - French
  - German
  - Greek
  - Hungarian
  - Irish
  - Italian
  - Latvian
  - Lithuanian
  - Maltese
  - Polish
  - Portuguese
  - Romanian
  - Slovak
  - Slovenian
  - Spanish
  - Swedish

* I am giving my contribution as
  - Academic/research institution
  - Business association
  - Company/business organisation
  - Consumer organisation
  - EU citizen
  - Environmental organisation
  - Non-EU citizen
  - Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
Public authority
Trade union
Other

Organisation size
- Micro (1 to 9 employees)
- Small (10 to 49 employees)
- Medium (50 to 249 employees)
- Large (250 or more)

Country of origin
Please add your country of origin, or that of your organisation.
- Afghanistan
- Åland Islands
- Albania
- Algeria
- American Samoa
- Andorra
- Angola
- Anguilla
- Antarctica
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Aruba
- Australia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Bahamas
- Bahrain
- Djibouti
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- Egypt
- El Salvador
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Estonia
- Eswatini
- Ethiopia
- Falkland Islands
- Faroe Islands
- Fiji
- Finland
- France
- French Guiana
- French Polynesia
- Libya
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Macau
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Mali
- Malta
- Marshall Islands
- Martinique
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mayotte
- Mexico
- Micronesia
- Saint Martin
- Saint Pierre and Miquelon
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Samoa
- San Marino
- São Tomé and Príncipe
- Saudi Arabia
- Senegal
- Serbia
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- Singapore
- Sint Maarten
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Solomon Islands
- Somalia
- South Africa
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<td>Cook Islands</td>
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<td>Romania</td>
<td>Wallis and Futuna</td>
<td>Côte d'Ivoire</td>
<td>Kosovo</td>
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<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Western Sahara</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Kuwait</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curaçao</td>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>Saint Barthélemy</td>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>Curaçao</td>
<td>Laos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Saint Helena</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechia</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Ascension and Tristan da Cunha</td>
<td></td>
<td>Czechia</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
European Public Health Alliance

Transparency register number

255 character(s) maximum
Check if your organisation is on the transparency register. It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making.

18941013532-08

The Commission will publish all contributions to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would prefer to have your details published or to remain anonymous when your contribution is published. For the purpose of transparency, the type of respondent (for example, ‘business association’, ‘consumer association’, ‘EU citizen’) country of origin, organisation name and size, and its transparency register number, are always published. Your e-mail address will never be published.

Opt in to select the privacy option that best suits you. Privacy options default based on the type of respondent selected

**Contribution publication privacy settings**

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would like your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

- **Anonymous**
  
  Only organisation details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published as received. Your name will not be published. Please do not include any personal data in the contribution itself if you want to remain anonymous.

- **Public**
  
  Organisation details and respondent details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published. Your name will also be published.

- I agree with the personal data protection provisions

**Fitness check and revision of current legislation:**
In 2020, the European Commission adopted its Farm to Fork Strategy (F2F), to promote a shift towards a sustainable food system.

Because animal welfare is a cornerstone of sustainable food production, Farm to Fork committed the Commission to revising the current EU animal welfare legislation by 2023, and to consider options for animal welfare labelling.

The purpose is to improve animal welfare and broaden the scope of the legislation, by aligning it with the latest scientific evidence, current political priorities and public expectations – all while making the legislation easier to enforce.

The EU legislation under review is:

- a Directive concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes
- 4 Directives laying down minimum standards for protecting:
  - laying hens
  - broilers
  - pigs
  - calves
- a Regulation on animal transport
- a Regulation on the protection of animals at the time of killing.

These EU acts regulate animal welfare at farm level, during transport and at slaughter, and cover animals – including fish – that are bred and kept for farming purposes, as well as cats and dogs that are transported for commercial purposes.

The acts do not cover wild animals (except when they are killed for the purpose of depopulation), experimental or laboratory animals (except when they are being transported) or any invertebrate animals.

The goal is to improve the welfare of animals while ensuring sustainable production and fair competition for EU businesses in the single market.

In 2020 the Commission performed an evaluation (‘fitness check’) of the existing legislation, to assess what needed to be changed, followed in 2021 by the start of an impact assessment for the possible changes.

This consultation would like to know your views on the existing animal welfare rules, as well the changes we are suggesting.

1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

| Compared to 25 years ago, there is more uniform protection of farmed animals across EU countries |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Do not know |
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
- Compared to 25 years ago, more comprehensive protection of farmed animals (in terms of species protected) has been reached across the EU
- Requirements set by EU rules on animal welfare are easy to apply and it is clear how they should be applied
- Increased animal welfare has contributed to a more sustainable food system, for instance by allowing for healthier animals to enter the food chain
- Having common rules on animal welfare has facilitated trade and improved competition in Europe – for instance by removing obstacles to trading animals and products of animal origin in the single market

### 2. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Tend to agree</th>
<th>Tend to disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abiding by (certain) animal welfare requirements set in EU rules is not (too) burdensome and/or costly for producers (e.g. farmers)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Abiding by (certain) animal welfare requirements set in EU rules is not (too) burdensome and/or costly for processors (e.g. slaughterhouses)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abiding by (certain) animal welfare requirements set in EU rules is not (too) burdensome and/or costly for retailers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Abiding by (certain) animal welfare requirements set in EU rules is not disproportionally burdensome and/or costly for small/medium businesses (e.g. slaughterhouses, transport companies, retailers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rules and requirements on animal welfare are not (too) complex for consumers to understand</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU rules and requirements on animal welfare impose extra costs on consumers when buying animal welfare-compliant products</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3. Level of information on animal welfare standards in the EU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Tend to agree</th>
<th>Tend to disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• I feel sufficiently informed about the conditions under which animals are farmed in the EU (i.e. how they are treated during the breeding period)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• I feel sufficiently informed about the conditions under which farmed animals are transported in the EU</td>
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<tr>
<td>• I feel sufficiently informed about the conditions under which farmed animals are transported beyond EU borders</td>
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<tr>
<td>• I feel sufficiently informed about the conditions under which farmed animals are slaughtered in the EU</td>
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</table>

Possible changes to EU animal welfare legislation:

4. Is the current level of animal welfare in the EU sufficient to:

• - Ensure adequate and uniform protection of all animal species in need?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Do not know

• - Ensure that businesses can compete fairly across the EU?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Do not know

• - Meet future challenges in relation to sustainable food production, such as climate change and biodiversity loss?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Do not know

If you have replied NO to any of the questions above, which of the actions listed below could help improve animal welfare in the EU?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More inspections and controls by national authorities to improve compliance with existing rules</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve existing rules on welfare requirements for pigs, calves, laying hens and broilers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cover additional animal species, alongside the ones that are already protected by specific legislation (pigs, calves, laying hens and broilers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase the use of modern technology to better monitor the welfare of animals during transport (e.g. cameras, satellite navigation systems, artificial intelligence)?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the use of scientific indicators, to better assess the welfare of animals (e.g. injury rates other than foot-pad dermatitis)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve training for people handling animals, so they are able to adopt practices that improve welfare (e.g. for farmers, slaughterhouse staff and drivers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide better information to consumers on animal welfare conditions</td>
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</table>

**Animal welfare during transport:**

Current EU legislation in this field regulates the transport of live animals between EU countries and requires checks on animals entering or leaving the EU.

To prevent injury and/or unnecessary suffering, all animals transported must be fit to travel, sufficient height and floor space must be available, and water, feed and rest must be provided when needed and within certain intervals.

For long journeys (i.e. over 8 hours) between EU countries and to destinations outside the EU, transporters must have the necessary authorisation(s), documentation, satellite navigation system and contingency plans for emergencies. National authorities must carry out checks at the point of departure and on a random basis thereafter.

### 5. To (better) protect animals during long journeys (over 8 hours):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Maximum journey times should be introduced</td>
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<tr>
<td>* More specific requirements for different animal species are needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Technical requirements are needed for the different means of transport used for long journeys (e.g. satellite monitoring, ventilation and water supply)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
6. Given the difficulties ensuring compliance with the rules beyond EU borders:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Exports of live animals to non-EU countries for breeding should be prohibited (after a transition period)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>* Export of live animals to non-EU countries for slaughter should be prohibited (after a transition period)</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Exports of live animals should be limited only to non-EU countries whose requirements on animal welfare are at least equivalent to those in the EU</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Exports of live animals to non-EU countries should be allowed only under stricter control conditions (e.g. at departure, at any stage of a long journey and at EU exit points)</td>
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7. To improve welfare for unweaned calves and other vulnerable animals, such as pregnant cows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* The transport of unweaned calves and other vulnerable animals should be prohibited (after a transition period)</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Transport of unweaned calves and other vulnerable animals should be allowed only if the welfare and the control requirements are stricter</td>
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<tr>
<td>* The transport of unweaned calves and other vulnerable animals should be limited to 8 hours</td>
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Animal welfare at farm level:

Directive 98/58/EC provides general rules to protect animals and fish of all species that are kept for the production of food, wool, skin or fur, or for other farming purposes.

In addition, more specific requirements have been laid down in the 4 Directives on pigs, calves, laying hens and broilers.

Since the EU legislation on the welfare of farm animals lays down minimum standards, national authorities are free to adopt more stringent rules (provided they are compatible with EU law).

8. Should specific requirements for extra animal species be introduced?

✅ Yes
No
☐ Do not know

If YES, for which species/categories of animals:

☐ Dairy cows
☑ Beef cattle
☑ Sheep
☑ Goats
☑ Horses
☐ Minks
☐ Racoon dogs
☐ Foxes
☑ Cats
☑ Dogs
☑ Rabbits
☑ Chicken pullets
☑ Chicken breeders
☑ Turkeys
☑ Ducks
☑ Geese
☑ Quail
☐ Farmed salmon
☐ Farmed trout
☐ Farmed carp
☐ Farmed sea bass
☐ Farmed sea bream
☐ Farmed European eel
☐ Invertebrate aquatic animals such as lobsters, crustaceans

9. Currently, certain procedures are only allowed in the EU under specific circumstances and/or if not performed routinely.

How do you think the following mutilation practices should be addressed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prohibition</th>
<th>Additional restrictions</th>
<th>No action needed</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
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</table>
10. On 30 June 2021, the Commission announced that it will propose to phase out and finally prohibit the use of cages for the species listed below, in response to the European Citizens’ Initiative “End the cage-age”.

What should be the maximum time allowed for this phasing out?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Maximum 5 years</th>
<th>Maximum 10 years</th>
<th>Maximum 15 years</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sows (farrowing crates and sow stalls)</td>
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<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laying hens</td>
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<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calves (individual pens)</td>
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<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rabbits</td>
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<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pullets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broiler breeders</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Layer breeders</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quail</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ducks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geese</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

11. Should imported products be subject to particular welfare requirements, such as “cage-free”?  

- [x] Yes  
- [ ] No  
- [ ] Do not know

If YES, should these requirements be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
The same as those that apply to EU production? 

Equivalent to those applied to EU production? 

Specific labelling rules to allow consumers to identify products produced under EU welfare conditions? 

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**Animal welfare at the time of killing:**

**12. Current EU legislation does not contain specific requirements for killing of farmed fish.**

For other species, it provides a list of authorised methods, some of which have been scientifically challenged on animal welfare grounds – like the use of carbon dioxide at high concentration for pigs, and electrical water baths for poultry.

The use of electric prods to move animals in slaughterhouses is still allowed under certain conditions.

**To what extent would you agree to the following statements?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Electrical water bath stunning for poultry should be prohibited (after a transition period)</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Carbon dioxide (CO2) at high concentration, as a stunning method for pigs, should be prohibited (after a transition period)</td>
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<tr>
<td>* The use of electric prods in slaughterhouses should be prohibited (after a transition period)</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Specific rules for killing farmed fish should be adopted, to protect their welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>* The systematic killing of one-day old male chicks should be prohibited (after a transition period)</td>
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</tbody>
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**Animal welfare labelling:**

**13. Would an EU animal welfare label be a useful tool for informing consumers on the conditions in which animals are treated?**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Do not know
If YES, should an EU label apply:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Tend to agree</th>
<th>Tend to disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To all products of animal origin on the market?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Only to products of animal origin for which welfare standards going beyond the minimum EU legal requirements are applied?</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If YES, should such an EU animal welfare label:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Tend to agree</th>
<th>Tend to disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be limited to indicating farming methods that use cage systems or not?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Be based on broader animal welfare criteria, including requirements on animal transport and slaughter?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

14. Is there any other comment you would like to add?

Enhancing health and welfare standards for animals used in food production is key for ensuring compliance with new EU legislation on farm antibiotics use (especially the Veterinary Medicines and Medical Feed Regulations) and reaping the co-benefits of the One Health approach, which recognises that the health of people is closely connected to the health of animals and our shared environment.

The overuse of antibiotics in intensively farmed animals is contributing to antimicrobial resistance (AMR), a major threat to public health. Improving animal husbandry and eliminating certain practices associated with poor animal health and higher levels of antibiotic use, can be expected to make an important contribution to reducing the risk of AMR and enabling a transition to sustainable food systems with healthy, plant-rich diets with higher quality animal foods in lower quantities.

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