

Text

Description automatically generatedFOR INFO

13 February 2023

EU Platform on Animal Welfare sub-group meeting on animal welfare labelling of 15 November – Update on the future proposal on EU animal welfare labelling

(updates in red)

Dear all,

On 15th November 2022 took place the **6th meeting of the European Commission’s** [**sub-group on animal welfare labelling**](https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-welfare/eu-platform-animal-welfare/thematic-sub-groups/animal-welfare-labelling_en) which was established in March 2022 within the EU Platform on Animal Welfare. The sub-group is a consultative group that has the task of exploring the options for a legislative proposal on animal welfare labelling and its key components.

**Possible elements of the future EU label on animal welfare**

From the [presentation](https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-11/aw_platform_20221115_sub-awl_pres.pdf) made by the European Commission and the [minutes](https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-11/aw_platform_20221115_sub-awl_min.pdf) of the 6th meeting, the following elements can be drawn:

* The European Commission is considering proposing a multi-tier label (either based solely on upgraded standards or an evaluative label covering all products, voluntarily or not).
* The European Commission will propose a framework legislation for an EU animal welfare label that will include provisions on governance and controls.
* Specific standards would be defined through delegated acts. According to the European Commission, the specific standards should include the criteria for each level of the label and other technical elements like the algorithm (in case of multi-criteria system), possible specific rules for traceability, documentation for checking compliance as well as specific official controls.

**Development of the standards**

At the meeting DG SANTE proposed to entrust an organisation or group of stakeholders (e.g. an EU animal welfare label board constituted by business organisations, civil society organisations and competent authorities, in a similar way as the EU animal welfare platform) to start the draft of the specific standards. It would be an advisory body to express its opinion on the draft. The Commission will then take into account this opinion before adopting the standards via delegated acts.

On the 5th and 6th December took place the EU Platform on Animal Welfare 12th meeting (agenda and recordings are available [here](https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-welfare/eu-platform-animal-welfare/platform-meetings_en)) during which the Chair of the sub-group on animal welfare labelling, Denis Simonin (DG Santé, Senior Expert, Head of Animal Welfare Sector, Unit G3 “Animal Welfare”) gave an overview of the sub-group’s work during its past two meetings.

The main elements underlined were:

* The next meeting of the sub-group will focus on the definition of key standards criteria across species for the framework legislation, to ensure consistency. The challenge remains on the approach to adopt: to focus on a marketing approach which takes into account the added value of the label for operators, or a scientific approach which focuses on information to consumers.
* Another issue that will be discussed is whether the label should rather be evaluative (grading system) or descriptive (meaning of the label).
* When establishing specific criteria, the European Commission will consider not only animal welfare, but also scientific robustness and simplicity to implement as the new labelling system should be dynamic enough to adapt to evolving technologies and innovation.
* There should be a convergence among existing labels to avoid labels that might overlap or contradict each other.

On 12th December took place the 7th meeting of the sub-group. The presentation and minutes of the meeting are available [here](https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-01/aw_platform_20221212_sub-awl_pres.pdf) and [here](https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-01/aw_platform_20221212_sub-awl_min.pdf).

On 25th January 2023, the 8th and last meeting of the sub-group took place. During the meeting, EuroCommerce made three presentations: the first gave an overall view of the retail and wholesale sector on animal welfare labelling ([link](https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-01/aw_platform_20230125_sub-awl_pres-02.pdf)), the second focused on the German retailers’ experience on animal welfare labelling ([link](https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-01/aw_platform_20230125_sub-awl_pres-03.pdf)); and the third presentation focused on good practices developed in Portugal ([link](https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-01/aw_platform_20230125_sub-awl_pres-04.pdf)). The Commission’s presentation summarizing the work of the sub-group and the minutes of the meeting are available [here](https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-01/aw_platform_20230125_sub-awl_pres-01.pdf) and [here](https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-02/aw_platform_20230125_sub-awl_min.pdf).

**FoodDrinkEurope position**

As a reminder, the European Commission is considering a legislative initiative on animal welfare labelling as part of the revision of the EU Animal Welfare legislation covering different aspects of animal welfare (from farming, to transport, to slaughtering and stunning methods, etc). The legislative proposal is expected to be presented in Q3 2023.

For animal welfare labelling, the European Commission is considering three policy options:

1. Option 1: Regulating animal welfare claims by introducing common minimum requirements for all animal welfare claims.
2. Option 2: Creating an EU animal welfare label limited to cage/non-cage systems.
3. Option 3: Introducing an EU animal welfare label with key welfare criteria that could be voluntary or compulsory and focused on fresh products.

The European Commission did not define yet the exact scope of the policy options (i.e. whether they would apply to (all) processed foods or only to “fresh products”). FoodDrinkEurope has adopted its messages on animal welfare in October 2022 (**FCP/INCO/042/22E**).

Kind regards.

The Secretariat