



Plenary sitting

B8-0484/2018

17.10.2018

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Question for Oral Answer B8-0410/2018

pursuant to Rule 128(5) of the Rules of Procedure

on animal welfare, antimicrobial use and the environmental impact of industrial broiler farming
(2018/2858(RSP))

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on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

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on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Karin Kadenbach, Pavel Poc, Jytte Guteland, Maria Noichl, Miriam Dalli, Jeppe Kofod, David Martin, Julie Ward, Kathleen Van Brempt, Miltiadis Kyrkos

on behalf of the S&D Group

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on behalf of the EFDD Group

European Parliament resolution on animal welfare, antimicrobial use and the environmental impact of industrial broiler farming (2018/2858(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes¹,
- having regard to Council Directive 2007/43/EC of 28 June 2007 laying down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production ('Broiler Directive')²,
- having regard to Commission Regulation (EC) No 543/2008 of 16 June 2008 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 as regards the marketing standards for poultry meat³,
- having regard to the report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of 7 April 2016 on the impact of genetic selection on the welfare of chickens kept for meat production (COM(2016)0182),
- having regard to the study by the Commission of 21 November 2017 on the application of Council Directive 2007/43/EC and development of welfare indicators,
- having regard to the report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of 13 April 2018 on the application of Directive 2007/43/EC and its influence on the welfare of chickens kept for meat production, as well as the development of welfare indicators (COM(2018)0181),
- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 of 24 September 2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 September 2018 on a European One Health Action Plan against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)⁵,
- having regard to the report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of 19 December 2013 on the various stunning methods for poultry (COM(2013)0915),
- having regard to the Commission study of 9 November 2017 on the preparation of best practices on the protection of animals at the time of killing,
- having regard to the Commission feasibility study of 26 January 2009 on animal welfare

¹ OJ L 221, 8.8.1998, p. 23.

² OJ L 182, 12.7.2007, p. 19.

³ OJ L 157, 17.6.2008, p. 46.

⁴ OJ L 303, 18.11.2009, p. 1.

⁵ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0354.

labelling and establishing a Community Reference Centre for Animal Protection and Welfare (Part 1: Animal Welfare Labelling),

- having regard to the report of the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 28 October 2009 on options for animal welfare labelling and the establishment of a European Network of Reference Centres for the protection and welfare of animals (COM(2009)0584),
- having regard to the Commission staff working document of 28 October 2009 entitled ‘Impact assessment report accompanying the report to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on options for animal welfare labelling and the establishment of a European Network of Reference Centres for the protection and welfare of animals’ (SEC(2009)1432),
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health (‘Animal Health Law’)¹,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products (‘Official Controls Regulation’)²,
- having regard to Special Eurobarometers 270 and 450 on the attitudes of EU citizens towards animal welfare and EU consumers’ attitudes towards labelling of animal products according to method of production,
- having regard to the scientific opinions and reports on the health and welfare implications of genetic selection, husbandry, housing of broilers and broiler breeders, as well as animal-based indicators of welfare and stress resilience of broiler chickens published by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in response to questions EFSA-Q-2012-01002³, EFSA-Q-2012-00670⁴, EFSA-Q-2011-00915⁵, EFSA-Q-2009-00798⁶, EFSA-Q-2009-00504⁷, EFSA-Q-2009-00505⁸, EFSA-Q-2009-00796⁹, EFSA-Q-2009-00797¹⁰,
- having regard to the scientific opinions and reports on the public health risks linked to

¹ OJ L 84, 31.3.2016, p. 1.

² OJ L 95, 7.4.2017, p. 1.

³ EFSA Journal 2013;11(7):3299.

⁴ EFSA Supporting Publications 2012:EN-341.

⁵ EFSA Supporting Publications 2012:EN-295.

⁶ EFSA Journal 2010; 8(7):1670.

⁷ EFSA Journal 2010; 8 (7):1666.

⁸ EFSA Journal 2010; 8(7):1667.

⁹ Technical report submitted to EFSA by the *Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique*, the Animal Sciences Group of Wageningen UR and the *Agence Française de Sécurité Sanitaire des Aliments*, ‘Toward an Information System on Broiler Welfare: Genetic selection Aspects’, 11 May 2010.

¹⁰ EFSA Journal 2009; 7(12):1439.

- the presence of *Campylobacter spp.* and *Salmonella spp.* in broiler meat production published by EFSA in response to questions EFSA-Q-2008-293¹, EFSA-Q-2009-00233², EFSA-Q-2010-00687³, EFSA-Q-2008-416A⁴, EFSA-Q-2008-416B⁵, EFSA-Q-2008-469⁶, EFSA-Q-2006-040⁷, EFSA-Q-2006-046⁸,
- having regard to the European Union summary report on antimicrobial resistance in zoonotic and indicator bacteria from humans, animals and food in 2014 and 2016 published by EFSA and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) in response to questions EFSA-Q-2015-00088⁹, EFSA-Q-2016-00622¹⁰,
 - having regard to the question to the Commission on animal welfare, antimicrobial use and the environmental impact of industrial broiler farming (O-000095/2018 – B8-0410/2018),
 - having regard to Rules 128(5) and 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas approximately seven billion broiler chickens are slaughtered for food purposes in the European Union each year¹¹;
- B. whereas the vast majority of broiler chickens are reared in conventional industrial rearing systems, housing tens of thousands¹² of birds in cramped conditions, without access to enrichments, outdoor space or natural light, and with high concentrations of noxious gases; whereas such conditions are detrimental to animal and human health and pollute the environment;
- C. whereas the genetic selection of broiler chickens for fast growth has been identified by EFSA as being a major factor in compromising the health and welfare of these animals and being responsible for lameness, cardiovascular failure and high mortality;
- D. whereas less than 5 % of all broilers in the EU belong to slower growing breeds, which are associated with better quality of life and better health; whereas 40 % of broiler chickens are kept at stocking densities of 34-39 kg/m², and a further 26 % are kept at stocking densities of up to 42 kg/m², while the density should be below 33 kg/m²

¹ EFSA Journal 2011; 9(7):2106.

² EFSA Journal 2011; 9(4):2105.

³ EFSA Journal 2011; 9(2):2017.

⁴ EFSA Journal 2010; 8(03):1503.

⁵ EFSA Journal 2010; 8(8):1522.

⁶ EFSA Journal 2010; 8(1):1437.

⁷ Report of the Task Force on Zoonoses Data Collection on the Analysis of the baseline survey on the prevalence of *Salmonella* in broiler flocks of *Gallus gallus*, Part A, *The EFSA Journal* (2007) 98, 1-85.

⁸ Report including a proposal for a harmonized monitoring scheme of antimicrobial resistance in *Salmonella* in fowl (*Gallus gallus*), turkeys, and pigs and *Campylobacter jejuni* and *C. coli* in broilers, *The EFSA Journal* (2007) 96, 1-46.

⁹ EFSA Journal 2016; 14(2):4380.

¹⁰ EFSA Journal 2018;16(2):5182.

¹¹ Eurostat, statistics on slaughtering, all species, by country, 2014.

¹² Germán Giner Santonja, Konstantinos Georgitzikis, Bianca Maria Scalet, Paolo Montobbio, Serge Roudier, Luis Delgado Sancho, *Best Available Techniques (BAT) Reference Document for the Intensive Rearing of Poultry or Pigs*, 2017.

according to Directive 2007/43/EC;

- E. whereas the animal welfare indicators at the time of slaughter provided for by the Broiler Directive are often insufficiently and inconsistently used across Member States;
- F. whereas robust animal-based measures for broiler chicken welfare identified by EFSA¹ can contribute to improving broiler welfare on the farm, during transport and at the time of slaughter;
- G. whereas water-bath stunning with live shackling and inversion of chickens poses serious and avoidable risks for animal welfare, as well as health risks for workers; whereas the currently allowed electrical parameters may cause a significant number of animals to be incorrectly stunned²;
- H. whereas stable fires have become increasingly common in the European Union;
- I. whereas the use of farming systems and broiler breeds that allow for higher welfare can improve animal health and welfare outcomes, thus contributing to a reduction in the need for antimicrobials, while continuing to deliver high product quality;
- J. whereas poor welfare caused by high stocking densities³ and heat stress⁴ can induce hormonal, physiological, and immunological deficits and make broiler chickens more susceptible to disease;
- K. whereas the relationship between poor animal welfare conditions, food safety and the effects on human and animal health is a significant motivation for concerns about animal welfare;
- L. whereas the presence of multi-drug resistant zoonotic strains of *Campylobacter spp.* and *Salmonella spp.* in broiler farms and on broiler meat poses an increasing threat to public health, as reported by EFSA and the ECDC⁵;
- M. whereas the practice of thinning, consisting of removing a part of the flock before the end of the rearing period in order to increase the weight of the remaining chickens, is associated with a 25 % higher risk of contamination of broiler meat with *Campylobacter spp.*, as reported by EFSA⁶;
- N. whereas hatcheries and parent stock are not included in the Broiler Directive and are therefore not monitored for animal health and welfare, although conditions in hatcheries and of the parent stock influence health and mortality rates in broiler farms;

¹ EFSA Journal 2012; 10(6):2767.

² European Commission, Overview report of FVO audits to evaluate the official controls of animal welfare at slaughter, carried out in Member States in 2016-2015.

³ Özcan Cengiz, Bekir Hakan Köksal, Onur Tatlı, Eren Kuter, Umair Ahsan, Gülşen Güven, Ömer Sevim, Sacit F Bilgili, Ahmet Gökhan Önel, 'Supplemental boric acid does not prevent the development of footpad dermatitis in broilers subjected to high stocking density', *Poultry Science*, pey337, 14 August 2018.

⁴ Lara, L.J., Rostagno, M.H., Impact of Heat Stress on Poultry Production, *Animals*, 2013, 3, 356-369.

⁵ EFSA Journal 2018;16(2):5182. [\\tradstudioproj\PPROJ_WF\\$WF_VE\Unit Projects\@REs\Project 5\en-GB\EFSA Journal 2018;16\(2\):5182.](#)

⁶ EFSA Journal 2010; 8(03):1503.

- O. whereas the latest special Eurobarometer on animal welfare shows that more than 50 % of European citizens look for information on the method of production when buying animal products and would be willing to pay more for higher animal welfare; whereas more than 80 % of European citizens want the welfare of farmed animals to be enhanced in the EU;
- P. whereas, according to the Commission report of 28 October 2009 (COM(2009)0584), providing consumers with more information on how farm animals are reared would increase transparency and could promote higher welfare in farming practices;
- Q. whereas the terminology for the labelling of poultry meat allowed by the current poultry marketing standards is voluntary and does not offer full transparency to consumers on the method of production;
- R. whereas EU farmers, as well as NGOs, have expressed concerns over the social and environmental impacts of imports of cheaply produced chicken meat and misleading labelling of chicken meat processed in the European Union, but originating from third countries such as Ukraine;
1. Is concerned with the increase in multi-drug resistant zoonotic agents typically encountered in broiler farming, such as *Campylobacter spp.*, *Salmonella spp.* and *E. coli*¹;
 2. Calls on the Commission to develop policies to encourage the uptake of alternative rearing systems for broiler chickens, with particular reference to those using traditional and/or broiler breeds that allow for higher welfare;
 3. Is concerned that the Commission report on the impact on animal welfare of the Broiler Directive showed the predominance of high stocking densities, higher than the general rule of 33 kg/m², and revealed no improvement with regard to monitored parameters, including welfare indicators that are often insufficiently and inconsistently applied across Member States;
 4. Calls on the Member States to better implement and enforce existing broiler chicken welfare rules;
 5. Urges the Commission to develop robust, validated indicators for the welfare of broiler chickens and parent stock, including guidance for best available practices for hatcheries, based on EFSA opinions and associated scientific and technical evidence;
 6. Calls on the Commission to phase out rearing of fast-growing chicken breeds at extreme growth rates, which compromise the welfare of broiler chickens;
 7. Calls on the Commission and Member States to examine possibilities to enlarge the proportion of free-range poultry with the aim of giving every animal at least regular access to daylight and allowing them to exhibit species-specific behaviour;
 8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to tackle the problem of stable fires by

¹ EFSA Journal 2018;16(2):5182.

promoting best practices and by introducing fire safety requirements which guarantee that animals can escape from their stables in the event of fire;

9. Calls on the Commission to establish rules to phase out live shackling and inversion of broiler chickens and electric water-bath stunning, and instead promote the uptake of effective humane and sanitary stunning methods;
10. Calls for EFSA to produce an opinion on the prevalence and risk factors for antimicrobial-resistant *Campylobacter spp.*, *Salmonella spp.* and *E. coli* with zoonotic potential;
11. Calls on the Commission to draw up a roadmap towards alternative and small-scale broiler chicken rearing systems that guarantee higher welfare and/or use traditional broiler breeds, giving particular attention to reducing the prevalence and spread of antimicrobial-resistant infectious zoonotic agents and reducing use of antimicrobials that are important for human health, in line with the One Health Action Plan against antimicrobial resistance and the regulation on veterinary medicinal products;
12. Calls on the Commission to revise poultry marketing standards and, in order to ensure transparency for consumers, to introduce, within an appropriate time-frame, mandatory labelling of chicken meat, meat products and preparations according to method of production (similar to the egg labelling system), country of origin, animal welfare, health effects and ecological footprint;
13. Stresses that imports of chicken meat from countries with lower environmental, social, food safety and animal welfare standards have increased; calls on the Commission to ensure that imported chicken meat, meat products and preparations have been produced in line with the environmental, social, food safety and animal welfare standards of the Union;
14. Calls on the Commission to revise Council Directive 2007/43/EC within an appropriate time-frame, to introduce specific animal welfare indicators applicable to hatcheries and for the protection of broiler breeders, to specify a complete range of mandatory and validated welfare indicators for the monitoring of the welfare of individual chickens on farm (including parent stock) and at slaughter, in accordance with Article 21(8)(e) and Article 96(b) of Regulation (EU) 2017/625, and to adopt improved environmental and husbandry standards (including the use of breeds that allow for higher welfare, lower stocking densities without derogations, a ban on thinning beyond one instance per flock, provision of adequate enrichments, sufficient natural light and perch space, and stricter air quality parameters);
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.