

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001843/24  
to the Commission  
Pascal Arimont (PPE)  
(26 September 2024)**

*Subject:* Banning chick culling in the EU

Each year, 330 million day-old male chicks are killed in the EU directly after hatching because they can neither lay eggs nor provide enough meat. This widespread practice not only causes considerable suffering, but also contravenes Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which recognises animals as sentient beings. Some Member States, such as France and Germany, have prohibited this practice. In-ovo sexing technologies are available on the market to determine the sex of the embryo at limited cost. They work before day 13 of incubation, in line with the latest scientific evidence on pain perception, which shows that embryonic pain sensitivity starts from day 13 of incubation.

1. Will the new Commission's proposals for new regulations on the welfare of farmed animals include a ban on chick culling, with the implementation of in-ovo sexing before day 13 of incubation, in the egg sector, thus harmonising EU legislation and avoiding a distortion of competition?
2. If so, when does the Commission plan to publish the draft of this new legislation?

Submitted: 26.9.2024

**Answer given by Ms Kyriakides on behalf of the European Commission  
(13 November 2024)**

The killing of male chicks in the laying hens' production sector has been discussed twice at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, in July 2021 <sup>(1)</sup> and October 2022 <sup>(2)</sup>. On these occasions, the Commission expressed its intention to investigate this issue and assess various options.

Between 2019 and 2024, the Commission sought scientific opinions from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on the welfare at the time of killing for different species <sup>(3)</sup>.

In its opinion related to killing poultry for purposes other than slaughter adopted in September 2019, amongst others, EFSA recommended encouraging the development and use of technology to prevent killing surplus/unproductive animals such as male day-old chicks from layers' genotypes <sup>(4)</sup>.

The Commission is currently considering EFSA's recommendations while assessing the potential economic, social, and environmental impacts. This analysis is a key component of the Commission's work to modernise the existing legislation on animal welfare.

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<sup>(1)</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/agrifish/2021/07/19/>

<sup>(2)</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/agrifish/2022/10/17/>

<sup>(3)</sup> <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/topics/topic/animal-welfare-slaughter#:~:text=EFSA%20publishes%20four%20scientific%20opinions%20on%20the%20welfare,of%20consciousness%20or%20sensitivity%20in%20animals%20at%20slaughter>

<sup>(4)</sup> <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.2903/j.efsa.2019.5850>