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Norway

Livestock and Products

Animal Welfare Legislation in Norway

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Report Highlights:

Animal welfare is an important issue for the Norwegian government. Norway does already apply relatively strict regulations on animal welfare but as a response to increased public interest in this issue, the Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture has published a white paper regarding animal welfare, "The Norwegian Action Plan on Animal Welfare." The Action Plan is a thorough review of animal care in Norway and includes proposals for long-term goals and actions for animal care in Norway.

Includes PSD Changes: No
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SUMMARY

Norway has a long tradition of animal protection regulations. In 1935, Norway imposed its first Animal Protection Act being one of the first countries in the world to regulate animal protection. Norway's current legislation on animal protection is regulated in the Animal Welfare Act from 1974 (LOV 1974-12-20: Lov om dyrevern). Like in many other European countries, public interest in animal welfare issues in Norway has increased the past fifteen years. As a response to this increased interest, the Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture published a white paper regarding animal welfare, "The Norwegian Action Plan on Animal Welfare," in 2002. The Action Plan is a thorough review of animal care in Norway and includes proposals for long-term goals and actions for animal care in Norway.

Norway is not a member of the European Union (EU), but is linked to the EU through the European Economic Area (EEA) agreement. Although agriculture is not included in the EEA agreement, EU's framework legislation on animal welfare for farm animals (Council Directive 98/58/EC) was included in the EEA agreement in 2006 and has been fully implemented in Norway (FOR 2006-07-03 nr 885). Most of the provisions laid down in this directive did already apply in Norway. While this EU directive offers general, basic protection to all farm animals, Norway applies its own national legislation when it comes to specific regulations for farm animals.

GENERAL ANIMAL WELFARE REGULATIONS

Norwegian Antibiotic Regulations

Norwegian regulations allow for the use of the antibiotic bacitracin zinc in animal feed. The use of all other types of antibiotic is banned. A total ban for non-medical use has been discussed, and even proposed by the Norwegian government, but never realized. However, farmed animals in Norway, including farmed fish, are in general treated with antibiotics only when it is required for health reasons. Since 1999, Norwegian feed producers have voluntarily excluded antibiotics from their feed products. Imported feed may still contain bacitracin zinc.

Animal Transport

The new EU regulation on animal welfare in transport (1/2005/EC) that entered into force on January 5, 2007, has been included in the EEA agreement and has been fully implemented in Norwegian legislation. It introduces higher standards for vehicles and equipment and stricter requirements for people dealing with animals in transport. New measures on traveling times and stocking densities are not included in the new regulation but the Commission plans to propose new measures for these two issues before the end of 2009.

Slaughtering of Farm Animals

According to Norwegian regulations, the slaughter of un-stunned animals is prohibited. All animals must be stunned when the blood is drawn. Other measures may not be taken during slaughtering until the animal is dead. Hence, Norwegian regulations do not allow traditional slaughtering methods such as halal and kosher. A verified method of halal slaughter- where the animal is stunned before the blood is drawn but otherwise conducted

according to halal requirements- is taking place in Norway. The domestic halal slaughter is, however, limited and there is demand for imported halal and kosher meat.

SPECIFIC REGULATIONS FOR FISH

Norwegian animal welfare legislation lay down rules on how to handle fish at slaughter. Fish must be stunned before or simultaneously to slaughter. Stunning by gas (CO₂ or any substance that blocks the admission of oxygen), salt, ammonium chloride or other chemicals with similar affects is not allowed. Norwegian regulations also require that the stocking density for farmed fish shall be justifiable and adapted to water quality, the behavioral needs of the fish, operating structure and feed technology. In addition, Norwegian regulations do not allow the placing of live fish or crustacean in shop windows.

SPECIFIC REGULATIONS FOR CATTLE

Norwegian legislation requires pasture husbandry during at least 8 week in summer time. This requirement does not apply to un-castrated bulls over 6 months. Cattle in loose housing systems are excluded from this requirement until January 1, 2013. Since 2004, it is not allowed to build cattle barns with pens. The Norwegian government's goal is free-range husbandry for all cattle in 2022, according to the Action Plan on Animal Welfare.

SPECIFIC REGULATIONS FOR PIGS

According to Norwegian legislation, piglets must be at least 28 days at weaning. Earlier weaning is only allowed if medical reasons exist.

Norway was the first country in the world to regulate against castration of pigs. A total ban on castration of pigs will become effective in 2009. Until then, castration is only permitted on pre-stunned pigs and must be conducted by a veterinarian.

Norwegian legislation does not allow confinement of pigs, except at feeding and veterinary treatment/insemination. If necessary, individual pigs that are unusually difficult at heat/rut may be confined. Similarly, sows may be confined from the point of farrowing up to seven days after, if needed. Tethering is not allowed as method of confinement.

Weaned piglets, slaughter pigs and breeding pigs in a group must be kept on an area big enough for all pigs to lie down at the same time. Norwegian legislation also sets minimum areas for pigs and piglets held in groups:

Live Weight	Area (m²)
Under 10 kg	0.15
10-20 kg	0.20
20-30 kg	0.35
30-50 kg	0.50
50-85 kg	0.65
85-110 kg	0.80
Over 110 kg	1.00

The Norwegian government's goal is free-range husbandry for all pigs in 2012, according to the Action Plan on Animal Welfare.

SPECIFIC REGULATIONS FOR POULTRY

Norwegian legislation currently allows the use of non-enriched cages with at least 700 cm² of cage area per hen. This type of rearing system will, however, become prohibited effective January 1, 2012 when the use of non-enriched cages will be banned in Norway. From that date, all cages must be equipped (enriched) with a nest, a roost and litter and hens must have at least 850 cm² of cage area per animal. The maximum stocking density for loose-housing systems is 9 hens/m². When it comes to broilers, Norwegian legislation allows a maximum stocking density of 34 kg/m² for live birds.