

Animal welfare matters for the Common Agricultural Policy

EU Member States' [Common Agricultural Policy \(CAP\) regulations](#) now strengthen the focus on animal welfare by including it under specific objective 9: [Responding to societal demands on food and health](#). The new CAP introduces four main elements to support animal welfare: conditionality; farm advisory services; rural development interventions under Pillar 2; and eco-schemes. CAP's [greener and fairer funding](#) is designed to promote animal welfare benefits and the [performance review indicator](#) set for CAP Strategic Plans (CSPs) also prioritises animal welfare results.

Farm animals in the EU are protected by some of world's highest [welfare standards](#). These standards are based on the [European Convention for Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes](#) and concern welfare of [livestock on the farm](#), during [transport](#), and at [slaughter](#). EU animal welfare rules are being [modernised](#) to reflect the importance that [EU citizens](#) place on the well-being of livestock and the role of animal welfare in sustainable food systems. For instance, more than 80% of respondents to a special [Eurobarometer](#) survey in 2021 on this matter said the welfare of farmed animals should be better protected than it is now.

A [roadmap](#) of rule revisions by the [European Food Safety Authority \(EFSA\)](#) sets a workplan between 2023 and 2028 for keeping welfare updated and in line with the [Farm to Fork strategy's](#) developments.

These [ongoing policy reforms](#) will influence the considerations taken by CAP Managing Authorities and other stakeholders during CSP implementation.

CSP support for animal welfare will go beyond compliance, with statutory management requirements and the EU's future welfare standards, likely to continue to be closely aligned with a fundamental set of the [internationally-recognised 'five freedoms'](#). These help guide and govern the CAP's approach to safeguarding [EU animal welfare](#) through CSP implementation.



Five freedoms of animal welfare



Freedom from hunger
and thirst



Freedom from
discomfort



Freedom from pain,
injury, and disease



Freedom to express
normal behaviour



Freedom from fear
and distress

Numerous opportunities exist for CSP co-funding to support and safeguard these five freedoms. Possibilities include animal-friendly housing conditions, such as increased space allowances, suitable floor surfaces, natural light, and microclimate controls. Further animal welfare improvements that CSPs can assist relate to sanitary measures, practices to avoid mutilation or castration of animals, free farrowing or group housing, outdoor access and grazing, as well as other animal care activities in accordance with the natural needs of animals.

CSP intervention options for combating [antimicrobial use and resistance](#) may be associated with improving animal welfare. CSP funding of good animal husbandry and feeding regimes can protect animal health and welfare, thereby contributing to a reduction in antimicrobial consumption.