



Ministry of Agriculture,
Nature and Food Quality

Advancing sustainable animal products in Northwest Europe

Date 9 October 2020
Subject Summary country-based workshops ASAP
conference

Between June and October of 2020, the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature, and Food Quality hosted a series of country-based workshops on the topic of developing the market for sustainable animal products in Northwest Europe. These workshops took place within the context of the conference 'Advancing Sustainable Animal Products (ASAP)' of 2 December 2020.

The workshops were organized for Germany, Denmark, France, and Belgium. To promote the exchange of ideas, some Dutch parties also participated in the workshops with Germany and Denmark. The participants of the workshops were NGOs, market actors, and governments involved in the chain of production of (sustainable) animal products. In order to make the conclusions of these interesting workshops available to a wider audience, this document provides a concise summary of the main takeaways of the workshops. This summary is based on contributions from the participants and not necessarily conclusions that were shared by all participants.

Germany – 24 June 2020

Participants: Schwarz Dienstleistung KG (Lidl & Kaufland), METRO AG, the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals, Verband der Fleischwirtschaft, Initiative Tierwohl, Kipster, Verbraucherzentrale Niedersachsen, Tierschutzbund Germany, True Food Projects, and Bundesministerium für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft

- When asked, people indicate that they prefer, buy, and consume only (or mainly) products of the highest animal welfare standards. However, reality shows that consumers are price-sensitive and this leads to purchases of products with lower animal welfare standards.
- In Germany, all major retail companies use the Haltungsform in order to categorize animal products according to the level of animal welfare.
- State- or European-owned labels should carefully take into consideration existing programs and focus on what is missing in the market.
- For retailers it is very important that a level playing field exists. Regulation should be international and it should be applied throughout Europe.
- There is a need for collaboration in the full supply chain and with NGOs.
- There is no legal definition of animal-friendly production, except for organic. It is a problem that consumers do not know how to recognize animal-friendly products.

France – 16 September 2020

Participants: CGAAR, Idele, APCA, FNSEA, ALPRO (Danone), Ministère de l'agriculture et de l'alimentation, and COOPERL.

- The expectations of consumers, supermarkets, and processing companies are changing very quickly.
- The expectations of citizens and consumers are not always the same, even though the people are.
- The investments that farmers make on their farms need to be profitable for a long time but it is difficult to imagine what the future holds.
- Consumers need to be willing to pay a fair price (e.g. incorporating the cost of production).
- We need an international standard in trade rules. This is very important if you want high quality and high sustainability in Europe, without the import of products with a lower standard.
- Three main focus areas: fair pricing model for farmers, animal welfare, and regenerative agriculture.
- Fair pricing is also the responsibility of companies.
- Look at your geography, look at the footprint you leave behind, and make sure you are not exceeding these boundaries.
- Taxation is penalization, we don't like it and producers don't like it. Positive motivators are important.
- Farmers and breeders are not only producers, but also responsible for the maintenance of territories and a sentinel for diseases, like with Covid. The farmer has to be recognized for these functions and social activities.
- Increase the amount of products with Label Rouge, introducing specification of animal welfare and farming methods and set up something about labelling about farming methods. Not only a label on products, but also using new technologies, develop a QR code on the packaging to have all the information about the farming methods.

Denmark – 17 September 2020

Participants: Stichting Milieukeur (SMK), Arla Foods, Danish Agriculture & Food Council, Animal Protection Denmark, Danish Veterinary and Food Administration, and Coop Denmark.

- Internationalization and harmonization of criteria sets for animal welfare and sustainability is very important. At the moment there are so many different ways to calculate things and it's very important that Europe and participating countries invest in having ways to monitor and calculate environmental and animal welfare levels in a harmonized way.
- When we are discussing the climate, animal welfare, biodiversity, air, water, antibiotics, and people, we must have validated data. It is really a big challenge to get data from farmer but if we can't measure something, we can't set a goal.
- Initiatives that we are looking into, should fit at least the European level but also a bigger global level. There is a strong focus on the European Union, the Green Deal, and the Farm to Fork strategy.
- Different sectors have set ambitious goals for 2025, 2030, and 2050.
- NGOs, retailers, food industry, producers, producer organizations, and the authorities have a common goal to secure sustainability in the food system to help consumers choose the better product.
- It is a good thing that the European commission will study options for European animal welfare labelling.

Belgium – 8 October 2020

Participants: Bioforum, CRA-W, Groene Kring, Innovatiesteunpunt, ILVO, KU Leuven, NV Crelan, Pluimveeloket ILVO, Rundveeloket ILVO, Soil Capital Consulting, 't Kakelhof, Those Vegan Cowboys, Varkensloket ILVO, and Vlaams Departement Landbouw en Visserij.

- If consumers are willing to pay a little bit extra, it isn't too complicated to have farmers deliver accordingly.
- There has been an enormous increase in organic production through the use of teams of advisors who inform the farmers that are willing to change.
- Cultured meat or cultured biomass in general can be a way to meet the growing request for proteins in a more sustainable way. This can also be a way to have close cooperation between plant based meat industries and conventional meat industries.
- The more you work with nature, the less costs you have as nature is providing a lot of services.
- All participants in the chain from farm to fork have a shared responsibility to make the sustainable production of animal proteins work.
- Consumers should be made aware which part of the sustainability they are promoting with their purchase. We should not just focus on one aspect of sustainability.