

## LTO Nederland's View on Animal Welfare

The Dutch livestock industry produces food for the national and international market within the applicable social preconditions. The market and social environment change continuously and the various sectors have to adapt to these changing production conditions. Animal welfare has received a lot of social attention in the Netherlands lately. This puts great pressure on the livestock industry to adapt its production systems in particular with regard to this theme. In this memorandum LTO Nederland will give its view on and approach to animal welfare.

### 1. LTO Nederland's Policy View on Animal Welfare

LTO Nederland stands for a good existence for man and animal. Animal welfare is one of the central policy themes for the future of livestock industry. A good existence for man and animal will be given substance in three core elements:

- a. Deal with animals with care and be accountable for this;
- b. Have a leading position in animal welfare internationally and desire to maintain this position;
- c. Establish a balance between social care and the reality from entrepreneurship.

#### *Sub a) Deal with animals with care and be accountable for this*

A livestock industry dealing with its animals with care wants to work with production systems in which the animals are able to express their natural behaviour and interventions in the animals are not necessary. Due to international competitive position in the market today's reality is different. The current production systems mainly respond to the animals' good health; a prerequisite for animal welfare. The current systems however still offer insufficiently possibilities to respond to the natural needs of the animal which necessitate routine interventions. Through changes in housing and business operations improvements are being made continually, taking other aspects of sustainability and international competitive position into account.

#### *Ad b) Have a leading position in animal welfare internationally and desire to maintain this position*

A livestock industry that intends to have a leading position in animal welfare will also have to prove itself at European level. By considering transmission periods of European legislation not as deadlines but applying these as early implementation dates for new developments, the Dutch livestock industry will maintain its leading position. The Netherlands also has a unique incentive policy (financially and for tax purposes) for *inter alia* animal welfare, enabling entrepreneurs at times of business developments to invest in measures exceeding the statutory minimum. Finally, it is widely acknowledged in Europe that compliance with and enforcement of any rules and regulations is guaranteed in an excellent way in the Netherlands by private systems (IKB) and by government systems.

#### *Ad c) Establish a balance between social care and the reality from entrepreneurship*

New marketing concepts should be detailed further energetically to ensure that animal welfare is included in the considerations as part of their purchasing behaviour. LTO Nederland needs consumers who show in their purchasing behaviour that animal welfare is also their concern to be able to realise LTO Nederland's ambition in due course: Keeping animals in new production systems that meet the natural needs of the animal and make interventions in the animals unnecessary.

### 2. Details of LTO Nederland's View on Animal Welfare

The details of the above-mentioned policy elements are included in three core elements: dialogue, activity and market. These three core elements can be found in initiatives such as 'Varkens in ComfortClass'<sup>1</sup>, 'Volwaard kip'<sup>2</sup> and 'Koe en Wij'<sup>3</sup>. These are well-known examples of an approach

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<sup>1</sup> 'Pigs in ComfortClass'

<sup>2</sup> Translator's note: *Volwaard kip* is a quality mark awarded to chickens living in satisfactory conditions

<sup>3</sup> *Koe & Wij* is a communication project aimed at dairy farmers to help them make a conscious choice with regard to grazing their dairy cattle.

which will be copied with regard to new themes and for all animal sectors (see details in the enclosure).

LTO Nederland is convinced that only a concerted approach with parties playing a leading role in the market and in society offer the livestock industry the chance of responding effectively to the changing requirements of society.

### **3. Topical Subjects**

In addition to developing new market segments and corresponding new production systems LTO Nederland also assumes its responsibility in improving animal welfare in existing production systems. We will also appeal to other links in the chain to assume their responsibilities for this. In this connection LTO Nederland also gives priority to three topical subjects: a) neutering boar piglets; b) killing unsexed chickens; and c) animal transport.

#### *Sub a) Neutering boar piglets*

LTO Nederland seeks to establish a pig industry in which neutering boar piglets is no longer necessary because there will be sufficient demand for pork of unneutered boar piglets from the markets.

To reach this goal LTO Nederland will devote itself to the following points:

- As of 1 January 2009 only sell pork on the Dutch market from farms where neutering is carried out under an anaesthetic (on a voluntary basis). LTO Nederland has taken the initiative to reach a memorandum of understanding with the super markets, chain parties, and the Dutch Protection of Animals;
- Cease neutering in the short to medium term through changes in breeding, management and detection of boar smell at the slaughter line. For this purpose LTO Nederland has taken the initiative together with other parties to conduct a (European) investigation.
- To promote that market parties buy pork from unneutered piglets (both in the Netherlands and internationally). The discussion will be lead through international chain parties and COPA COGECA. In this context LTO Nederland has sponsored the international PIGCAS congress (Nov. 2007).

#### *Sub b) Killing unsexed chickens*

Together with the *Nederlandse Organisatie van Pluimveehouders (NOP)* [Dutch Poultry Farmers Organization] LTO Nederland is trying to find production systems in the poultry industry where killing large numbers of unsexed chickens (young cocks) is not necessary. To reach this goal LTO Nederland/NOP will dedicate themselves to the following points:

- An international investigation has been conducted for alternatives at hatcheries (e.g. sexing eggs). In 2007 Wageningen UR draw attention on various alternatives on the instruction of Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV). LTO Nederland/NOP and the Dutch Protection of Animals participated in the counselling group.
- At the end of 2007 or early in 2008 a survey will be conducted of citizens into social acceptance of the alternative methods which have been investigated earlier. The object is to establish for which alternative methods there is social basis.
- LTO/Nederland subsequently wants to arrive at a concerted action programme for preparing these alternative methods for use in practice. The programme will be drawn up before 1 January 2009.

#### *Sub c) Animal transport*

LTO Nederland is of the opinion that the care with which entrepreneurs deal with their animals on their farms also applies to animal transport. Animal transport remains the primary responsibility of exporters and carriers. LTO Nederland will initiate a broad discussion in 2008 about animal transport with all parties involved with the goal to arrive at socially accepted self-regulation (including requirements) for transport of all animal sectors. Cattle breeders are to assume their responsibilities and have their animals transported only by carriers that can prove that they meet these high transport requirements. With regard to animal transport LTO Nederland distinguishes three categories:

- *Breeders and animals used for sports.* The quality for transport of breeders and sporting horses meets the highest requirements and is also guaranteed by high economic value of these animals.
- *Animals for production (e.g. piglets, calves).* LTO Nederland wants to dedicate itself actively to improving the quality of transport and encourage import of calves, or export of piglets to 'nearby markets'. The goal of this is to limit any adverse effects on animal welfare and the risk of introduction of animal diseases to a minimum while maintaining market mechanism.
- *Animals for slaughter (immediately from production location or via collection station to slaughterhouse).* LTO Nederland is an advocate of limiting the transport time of animals for slaughter (e.g. to 8 hours). A condition is, however, that market mechanism for animals for slaughter remains intact. For a number of sectors (e.g. goats, sheep, and rabbits) investments will have to be made in slaughter capacity.

## Enclosure: Examples of details of three core elements in policy view on animal welfare

### Varkens in ComfortClass

#### *Dialogue*

- In consultation with the Dutch Protection of Animals innovative pig stocks have been invented in theoretical sense and will be put into practice;
- With the Dutch Protection of Animals, the Animal Sciences Group of Wageningen UR, ForFarmers, and Privoon the 'Varkens in Comfortclass' project has been set up.

#### *Pro-activity*

- LTO Nederland has initiated the 'Varkens in ComfortClass' project, which has run for a year. In the context of this project an innovative trial pig stock has been built in Raalte, which starts from the 10 essential *needs of the pig* and is also *economic profitable* for the pig farmer. Additionally, it is being investigated whether this trial can be expanded to (maternity) sows.

#### *Market*

- After the start of the trial pig stock in Raalte the concept will be put into practice: five practical farms spread over the Netherlands will implement the concept. The object is that this concept will spread from these practical farms to the surrounding regions. The five practical farms will get assistance from employees of the regional organizations of LTO Nederland;
- Consultations are being conducted with Vion about developing a market concept based on the 'Varkens in ComfortClass' project.

### Volwaard Kip

#### *Dialogue*

- The market concept of Volwaard Kip, which is now being put in practice (marketing, promotion and such like) has partly been based on recommendations from Cie Alders (Reorientation poultry industry);
- LTO Nederland is investigating and describing the technical possibilities of the concept in collaboration with the Dutch Protection of Animals, Wageningen UR among others.

#### *Pro-activity*

- In 2004 LTO Nederland, together with the Dutch Protection of Animals, agribusiness and the super markets, took the initiative to specify the concept in further detail (Financial calculations, concept choices, positioning, product development, agreements with retailers) and market introduction.

#### *Market*

- In January 2007 Volwaard was introduced as a new mark of fresh chicken as "tasty and sound" with its own matching packaging in super market chains Coöp codis, Jumbo, Jan Linders and Albert Heijn;
- Dutch Protection of Animals supports Volwaard with a new "*Beter leven*" logo on the packaging;
- LTO Nederland, Coppens Diervoeders and Flandrex are holding discussion on professionalizing the Volwaard sales further with the object to increase the market segment.

### Koe en Wij

#### *Dialogue*

- LTO Nederland is one of the initiators of the *Werkgroep Weidegang* [Grazing Working Group]. Other participants are LNV, NZO, *Stichting Natuur en Milieu*, Dutch Protection of Animals, CBL;
- *Werkgroep Weidegang* was initiated to specify an initial declaration *Weidegang* in further detail together with the sector and social organizations. The parties agreed on a package of initiatives to support grazing of dairy cows.

#### *Pro-activity*

- From *Werkgroep Weidegang* LTO Nederland was one of the initiators to set up the *Koe en Wij* project, aimed at making cattle breeders conscious about the alternatives they have with regard to grazing;
- In April 2007 the *Weidegang* association was established. Participants: *Friesland Foods, Rouveen, Natuurmonumenten, AH, CBL, Rabobank, NAIK, NMV, and LTO Nederland.*

#### *Market*

- The *Weidemelk* dairy farmer logo has been introduced by the Weidegang association;
- The market is controlled in collaboration with NZO.