

ANIMAL WELFARE IN THE FRAME OF FUR PRODUCTION



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Animal welfare

“The physical and mental state of an animal in relation to the conditions in which it lives and dies.”

WOAH*, Terrestrial Animal Health Code, chapter 7.1

*founded as OIE

i.e. from the individual animal's perspective



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European farm animal welfare legislation requires:

”Where an animal is continuously or regularly confined, it **must be given space appropriate to its physiological and ethological needs** in accordance with established experience and scientific knowledge”

European Commission, 1998. Council Directive 98/58/EC on the protection of animals kept for farming purposes

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31998L0058&from=en>



Ethological needs

- A behaviour which is in the animal's nature to perform
- Strongly motivated
- Motivated by stimuli in the external environment and/or for internal needs
- It has a function relevant to the survival of the animal
- Natural behaviour is still present in most captive animals, irrespective if they are domesticated or innately wild animals
- If prevented → stress, abnormal behaviour, sometimes injuries



Farmed fur animals

- **Active** predators (mink, fox, raccoon dogs) whose natural behavior includes **roaming over large areas** (several kms per day), chinchillas: **agility**
- **Social structures** (solitary and/or complex group structures)
- **Species-specific behaviour** in different environments



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Mink

- Carnivore whose natural behavior includes roaming over large areas, hunting, climbing and swimming
- Highly motivated to seek for food in streams and lakesides, thus significant part of their hunting occurs in or close to water (high use of different water habitats*)
- Territorial and typically solitary in the wild



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* Schwarzer et al. 2016. Behavioral studies on the use of open water basins by American mink (*Neovison vison*). Journal of Veterinary Behavior, 13, 19-26. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1558787816300028>

Foxes (Red foxes & Arctic foxes)

- Carnivore/opportunistic omnivore whose natural behavior includes roaming over large areas, large home ranges (several km²)
- Flexible social behaviour
- Dig dens, resting sites, to forage (motivated to work for digging possibilities*)



<https://www.flickr.com>

* Koistinen et al. 2007. Blue foxes' motivation for access to an earth floor measured by operant conditioning. Applied Animal Behaviour Science, 107(3-4), 328-341. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/248336055_Blue_foxes'_motivation_to_gain_access_to_solid_floors_and_the_effect_of_the_floor_material_on_their_behaviour

- Small, barren cages, which do not meet social needs
= living conditions definitely not suited for the life these animals are adapted for
- Supported by scientific data, it can be concluded that the welfare of animals farmed for fur is severely compromised and that this practice is not consistent with the EU farming Directive 98/58/EC



<https://www.svt.se/nyheter>. Mads Claus Rasmussen/AP/TT

Ethics

1. Harm vs. benefit analysis
2. Legislation should protect animals from suffering
3. Sentient beings (Article 13, Treaty of the functioning of the European Union, as amended by the Lisbon Treaty 2009), intrinsic value, right to respectful treatment
4. What kind of citizens/nations do we want to be?

1-4 represent different ethical aspects – do not back up fur farming

Scientific knowledge + Ethical values → Decisions

This should be seriously considered during the ongoing revision of the EU animal welfare legislation



Thank you for the attention!

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