

FARM ANIMAL WELFARE - GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Barren battery cage (laying hens): a cage used to house several laying hens, usually providing space equivalent to less than an A4 sheet of paper per hen. Barren battery cages are prohibited by EU legislation although they are common in other parts of the world.

Beak-trimming: removal of part of the beak (laying hens, parent broilers and turkeys) using a hot blade, secateurs or an infra-red beam. In the EU no more than a third of the beak may be removed. Infra-red method is encouraged when beak trimming cannot be avoided.

Broiler chickens: chickens reared for meat production.

Chilling (piglets): common cause of young piglet mortality, both indoors and outdoors. Chilled piglets can die of hypothermia and are also more vulnerable to crushing and infection in the first few weeks of life.

Close confinement: provision of very limited space, severely restricting the animal's movement and expression of natural behaviours. Example: cages and crates.

Colostrum: first milk rich in immune factors, secreted by the mammary gland of female mammals a few days before and after the birth of their young.

Crushing (piglets): during farrowing, piglets are at risk of being crushed by the sow, especially when she changes position or is restless. Crushing is a major cause of piglet mortality prior to weaning.

Culling: culling refers to the removal of animals from the group by euthanasia, sale for slaughter or disposal of animals that died on farm. Recording culling and reasons for culling is important to improve animal health and welfare on farm.

Dehorning: removal of the horns of adult animals by cutting or sawing. Disbudding is a particular dehorning method where horn buds are removed in young animals (calves, kids) using a hot iron or chemical cauterisation.

Doe: reproducing female rabbit

Enriched cages (laying hens): a cage used to house several laying hens, usually providing 750 cm² per hen (which is just over an A4 sheet of paper per hen) and with some form of enrichment (perch, nest box, scratching area). Enriched cages are still allowed and widely used in the EU.

Environmental enrichment: material that is provided to an animal to encourage natural behaviours such as foraging, pecking, scratching and perching.

- > For pigs this includes manipulable materials such as straw, hay, wood, sawdust, mushroom compost, peat or a mixture of such, to enable proper investigatory behaviour (rooting)
- > For laying hens and broilers this includes perches, straw bales, pecking substrates and friable litter

Farrowing crate: a metal cage used to confine a single sow during farrowing (period around parturition) and lactation. The crate is designed to obstruct transition between lying and standing to avoid the risk of the sow crushing her piglets. It severely restricts the movement of the sow which is unable to turn around or engage properly with her piglets.

Failure to thrive: A suckling pig with no obvious clinical diseases, but which, within seven days of weaning, is not eating, is depressed, may display abnormal behaviours such as chewing or chomping behaviour, and which becomes progressively debilitated within 2-3 weeks of weaning.

Gestation crate (also called sow stall): a narrow metal crate used to individually confine sows for their 16 week pregnancy, without sufficient room for them to turn around. In the EU and in some US states, sow stalls are now partially banned; sows can only be housed in stalls during the first 4 weeks of their pregnancy and during the week prior to giving birth.

Higher welfare assurance scheme: a certification scheme with a specific focus on farm animal welfare standards, including requirements for, for example: environmental enrichment, bedding, more generous space allowance, humane slaughter and restrictions on mutilations and transport times.

Higher welfare indoor system: an indoor production system providing the animals with environmental enrichment, natural light, comfortable resting places (bedding / perches) and increased space allowance.

Injurious pecking: harmful pecking behaviour in poultry, which includes feather pecking, vent pecking (pecking damages to the cloaca) and cannibalism.

Leg culls: birds which are picked up by stockmen on farm and culled before they reach the severe lameness category (gait scores 4 or 5).

Long distance transport: any transport of a live animal that exceeds 8 hours, from loading to unloading; welfare has been shown to decrease significantly across species in journeys lasting more than 8 hours.

Manipulable materials (pigs): substrates which encourage natural behaviours such as chewing, rooting and exploration, which pigs have an inherent motivation to carry out.

Mastitis: Painful inflammation of the breast or udder tissue in mammals, commonly affecting dairy animals.

Mulesing (sheep): removal of skin from the hind-quarters, in sheep breeds with excess folds of skin on their rumps in order to prevent flystrike, often without adequate pain relief.

Mutilation: a painful procedure that interferes with the bone structure or sensitive tissues of an animal. These procedures, often carried without adequate pain relief, may be done to prevent abnormal or unwanted behaviours (e.g. tail biting in pigs, injurious pecking in laying hens), to improve meat quality (e.g. castration), or to ease handling (e.g. dehorning).

National farm assurance scheme: a certification scheme that ensures certain standards of safety and quality are met, often including some animal welfare standards similar to the legislative requirements of the market(s) in which they operate.

Replacement rate: annual percentage of breeding animals which leave the herd and are replaced.

Routine mutilations: The mutilation of all animals done at herd/flock level rather than individual level. Procedures carried in a preventive manner before a problem occurs and without trying to identify the underlying issues (such as inappropriate housing, feeding, handling) making the mutilation necessary.

Spaying (sows): neutering of non breeding gilts (female pigs destined to meat consumption) by surgical extraction of the ovaries and oviduct, generally without anaesthesia or analgesia. This practice is still carried out on free-range herds in places such as Sicily, Tuscany or parts of Spain, especially where there are wild boars.

Tail docking: removal of part of the tail (usually up to two-thirds) using a hot docking iron, sharp cutter (pigs) or tight rubber ring (lambs, cattle). Tail docking is usually done to reduce the risk of tail biting (pigs) or to ease handling and hygiene and health management (cattle, lambs). Routine tail docking is prohibited in the EU (but carried out on most farms).

Teeth reduction (pigs) - teeth clipping and teeth grinding: removal of the sharp ends of the needle teeth of the piglets to reduce damage to the sows' teats during suckling and to other piglets. Teeth clipping is the reduction (cutting) of a piglet's 8 sharp needle teeth shortly after birth using sharp clippers or pliers. Teeth grinding is another common form of teeth reduction where the piglet's teeth are reduced using a grinder. Routine teeth reduction (clipping or grinding) is prohibited in the EU (but carried out on most farms).

Tethering: tying of an animal (usually grazing animals such as cattle and goats, but also sows) to a fixed point; tethering prevents an animal from carrying out its normal behaviour. Tethering is no longer permitted in the EU for calves and sows.

Thinning (broilers): removal of part of a poultry flock for slaughter prior to the slaughter of the entire flock. This cause stress in the flock and is often used to facilitate stocking at higher densities.

Veal crate: a pen or box to confine a single dairy calf; calves are often tethered in these systems and do not have adequate space to turn around. Veal crates are now prohibited in the EU and in some US states.