



**Ministry of Environment  
and Food of Denmark**  
Danish Veterinary and  
Food Administration

# An introduction to Danish animal welfare legislation and current animal welfare issues

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# Overview of the presentation

**Attitudes towards animal welfare change over time**

**This is illustrated by the developments in legislation from the first piece of legislation to the current legislation**

**On this background the presentation will cover:**

- ❖ **Legislation on the protection of animals**
- ❖ **Legislation on animal experiments**
- ❖ **Legislation on cloning and genetic modification of animals**
- ❖ **Legislation on other biotechnologies**
- ❖ **Consumer concern**



# Animal welfare legislation – two ”pillars”

## Legislation on the protection of animals

- ❖ This part of the legislation, which is aimed at protecting animals against pain, suffering , distress etc., consists of:
  - The animal welfare Act
  - Acts and orders, which supplement the animal welfare Act:
    - On different animal species
    - On different topics, e.g. castration, tail docking, dehorning and disbudding, slaughter, transport etc.

## Legislation on animals experiments and on a ban on certain techniques

- ❖ This part of the legislation, which covers the use of animals for scientific purposes, which is expected to be associated with pain, suffering, anxiety etc., and a ban on certain techniques consist of:
  - The Act on animal experiments
  - The Act on cloning and genetic modification of animals



# Legislation on the protection of animals

## Denmark has a long history of legislation on animal welfare

- 1857 – a provision, which made severe cruelty, especially to farm animals, incl. horses an offence
- 1916 – the first real animal welfare Act
  - General principle: cruelty and treating animals in a reckless way by overstraining or neglect is an offence
- 1950 – the second animal welfare Act
  - General principle: Animals shall be treated properly and shall not by neglect, overstraining or in other ways be exposed to unnecessary suffering
- 1991 – the current animal welfare Act
  - General principle: Animals shall be treated properly and protected against pain, suffering, fear, permanent injury and distress in the best possible manner.

Furthermore animals shall be kept and handled with regard to their physiological, behavioural and health-related needs in accordance with established experience and scientific knowledge



# Legislation on the protection of animals

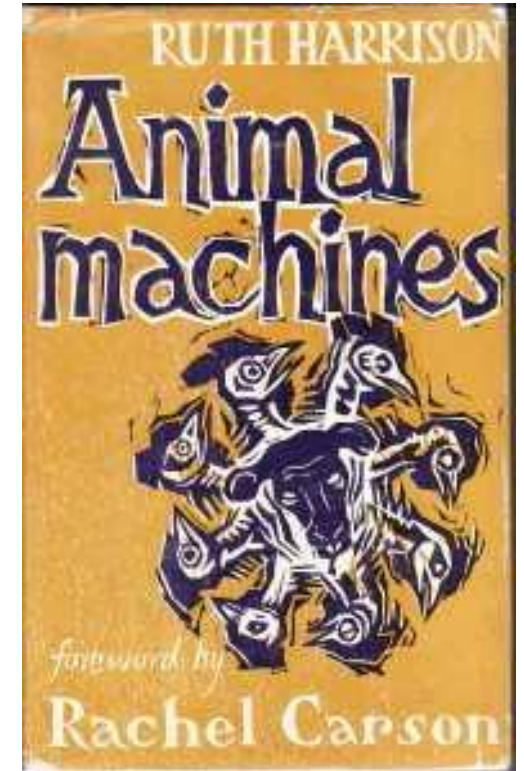
The way animal welfare legislation has developed over time is influenced by society's current attitude towards the way animals, especially farm animals, are kept.

A trend towards intensive livestock farming systems started in the 1950s, and gradually more and more such systems were brought into use – hens in small barren cages, sows in tie-stalls, veal-calves in narrow crates.

A public debate, which grew louder and more intense over the years, questioned whether these systems were justifiable from an animal welfare point of view

Over the years more and more scientific evidence showed that some of the systems gave rise to severe problems in relation to the animal's behavioural needs. Problems which were inherent to the systems, and which couldn't be solved by proper management.

This caused over time certain production systems to be banned



1964

# Legislation on cloning and genetic modification of animals

## 2005 - The Act on cloning and genetic modification of animals

### ❖ Background:

- ✓ Public and political concern partly induced by “Dolly”, due to evidence of animal welfare hazards, and due to a negative perception in the public on the use of these techniques for production of animals for farming purposes

### ❖ Aim:

- ✓ To adopt specific legislation for cloning and genetic modification of vertebrate animals, which supplement legislation from 1986 on environment and genetic engineering

### ❖ Main provisions:

- ✓ Prohibits cloning and genetic modification of all vertebrate animals, except for certain research and educational purposes, and then only after permit from the Animal Experiments Inspectorate
- ✓ A permit may be denied if no substantial benefit
- ✓ Applies to both cloning by somatic cell nucleus transfer and to cloning by embryo splitting
- ✓ Genetic modification, which is only carried out on somatic cells are outside the scope of the Act.



# Possible EU-legislation on cloning

The EU-Commission published in December 2013 two proposals on cloning:

1. On the cloning of animals of the bovine, porcine, ovine, caprine and equine species kept and reproduced for farming purposes
2. On the placing on the market of food from animal clones

## The future

- ✓ The proposals e.g. has provisions, which ban the placing on the market (incl. import) of animal clones, embryo clones and food from clones
- ✓ The European Parliament has proposed amendments, which also ban the placing on the market of descendants of clones, and food and feed from descendants of clones.
- ✓ A number of Member states can't support the Parliaments amendments, which means that the future of the two Commission proposals is uncertain



# Possible EU-legislation on cloning

## The two EU proposals on cloning:

### Background:

- ✓ The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA):
  - Low efficiency and animal welfare problems both for the surrogate dams and the clones
  - Cloning has no effect on the safety of milk and meat from clones
- ✓ The European group on ethics in Science and New Technologies:
  - Doubt that animal cloning for food production can be justified considering the current level of suffering and health problems of surrogate dams and animal clones
- ✓ Eurobarometer Surveys:
  - A majority of EU citizens said that it was unlikely that they would buy milk or meat from cloned animals, even if a trusted source stated that such products were safe to eat





# Legislation on other biotechnologies

**For biotechnologies – other than cloning and genetic modification – only general legislation applies**

**This legislation is applicable only to animals kept for farming purposes, and it states:**

- ❖ Animals shall not be used for natural and artificial breeding or breeding procedures, which cause or are likely to cause pain, suffering, fear, permanent injury and distress

Animals shall not be kept for farming purposes, unless it can be reasonably expected, on the basis of its genotype or phenotype, that it can be kept without detrimental effects on its health and welfare

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## Genomic selection:

- ❖ The recently adopted EU legislation on zootechnical matters indicate that genomic selection is an accepted technique in the EU:
  - ✓ Breeding values of breeding animals shall be estimated ... on the basis of:
    - ✓ (a) ...
    - ✓ (b) genomic information collected on breeding animals;



# Consumer / citizen concern

## Consumer perception on biotechnology, incl. cloning has been addressed in two Eurobarometer surveys:

- ❖ A survey from 2008 on Europeans attitude towards animal cloning had e.g. the following main findings on the attitude of EU citizen:
  - ✓ Faced with statements on ethics of animal cloning
    - 84 % agreed that the long-term effects of animal cloning on nature were unknown
    - 77% agreed that animal cloning might lead to human cloning
    - 61% agreed that cloning was morally wrong
    - 63 % agreed that cloning might decrease the genetic diversity within livestock populations
  - ✓ 58 % said that cloning for food production should never be justified
  - ✓ 43 % said that it was not at all unlikely, and 20 % said it was somewhat unlikely that they would buy meat or milk from cloned animals
  - ✓ 83 % said that special labelling should be required if food products from offspring of cloned animals became available in shops



Flash Eurobarometer

Europeans' attitudes  
towards animal cloning

Analytical Report

Fieldwork: July 2008

Publication: October 2008

Flash Eurobarometer 238 – The Gallup Organization

This survey was requested by Directorate General Health and Consumer Policy, coordinated by Directorate General Communication

This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission. The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.



# Consumer / citizen concern

- ❖ In a survey from 2010 on biotechnology the following main findings on the attitude of EU citizens were e.g.
  - ✓ They do not see benefits of genetically modified food, consider genetically modified food to be probably unsafe or even harmful, and are not in favour of development of genetically modified food
  - ✓ They have strong reservations about animal cloning in food production and do not see the benefits, and feel that it should not be encouraged
  - ✓ They do not see the benefits of horizontal gene transfer, have strong reservations about safety, feel that special labelling of food is necessary, and do not feel that it should be encouraged
  - ✓ They accept the potential benefits from vertical gene transfer, have some reservations about safety and the potential impact on the environment, feel marginally that it should be encouraged, but that special labelling of food is necessary
  - ✓ They approve of stem cell research, transgenic animal research and human gene therapy although strict laws are needed to alleviate concern about ethical issues



Special EU

## Biotechnology

### Report

Fieldwork : January 2010 – February 2010

Publication: October 2010

Special Eurobarometer 341 / Wave 73.1 – TNS Opinion & Social

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**Thank you for listening**



**Questions?**

