

Formal Complaint to Commission about continued breaches of animal transport law

Ireland exports large numbers of young unweaned calves to the Netherlands for veal production; others go to Belgium. Calves and young adult cattle are also transported to Spain and Italy. So far this year, 143,499 calves and 72,805 cattle have been exported from the Republic of Ireland to Continental Europe for slaughter or further fattening.

These animals mostly travel to the Continent by roll-on, roll-off ferry from Rosslare to Cherbourg in France, a sea crossing of about 18 hours. They then continue their journey across the Continent by road.

The EU animal transport legislation [Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005] requires that, after this ferry journey from Ireland to France, all unweaned calves must be unloaded and rested for 12 hours at, or near, the port of arrival before their journey can continue. Adult cattle must be unloaded, fed, watered and rested for 24 hours after travelling for 28 hours.

Rest periods are essential for the welfare of animals being transported on long journeys. In particular, travel is very stressful for young unweaned calves, which are transported when they are only a few weeks old.

Long history of problems

Sadly, there is a long documented history (going back at least 10 years) of Irish transporters failing to give animals their legally-required rest periods. This history is based on reports by the European Commission's Food and Veterinary Office, investigations by animal welfare organisations and media reports.

Over many years, Compassion in World Farming - Ireland has made every effort to ensure that the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF) fully enforces the EU animal transport legislation regarding rest periods for animals.

Problems continue

We are appalled that recent investigations by the German animal welfare organisation, Animals' Angels, show that drivers from Ireland are *still* failing to give animals their legally-required rest periods.

In February and March 2010, Animals' Angels investigators observed vehicles carrying young calves from Ireland disembarking from the ferry at Cherbourg. A number of drivers unloaded and rested the calves at a control post near the port for only about 3 or 4 hours instead of the required 12 hours.



Photo © PMAF

Young Irish calves in a transport vehicle that was trailed by our French sister organisation, Protection Mondiale des Animaux de Ferme (PMAF) in 2008. The driver did not stop to unload and rest the calves after arrival in France and was subsequently fined by the French police.

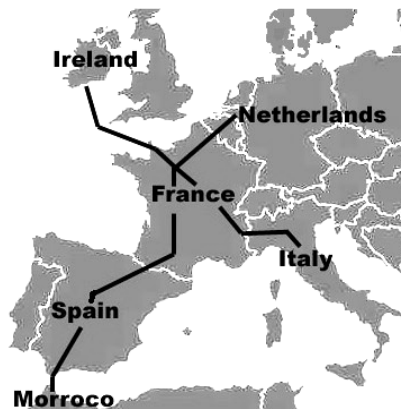
In a further investigation in June 2010, Animals' Angels observed one case where young calves were transported from Ireland to Spain, travelling for more than 36 hours without being unloaded and rested during this journey.

The French Ministry of Agriculture, in a letter to Animals' Angels, has now confirmed the accuracy of Animals' Angels' findings in February and March: inspections of the control post near Cherbourg by the French authorities found that vehicles carrying calves from Ireland did not all stop for 12 hours, contrary to the requirements of the EU animal transport Regulation.

Formal Complaint to the European Commission

In light of the latest findings by Animals' Angels, and the long history of transporters from Ireland failing to rest animals, Compassion in World Farming - Ireland and Animals' Angels decided to make a joint Formal Complaint to the European Commission. This was submitted in August 2010 and details our concerns about the failure of the DAFF to ensure that Irish transporters comply with the EU animal transport legislation regarding rest periods for animals.

The Commission is now in the process of examining our Formal Complaint.



You can read the Complaint at www.ciwf.ie

Inside: ❖ Irish cattle exported to Morocco ❖ The Green Party's determination to phase out fur farming
❖ The outcome of Compassion in World Farming - Ireland's Formal Complaint to the European Commission about the welfare of Irish pigs

Concerns about live exports to Morocco

Compassion in World Farming - Ireland has written to Agriculture Minister Smith to express serious concerns about a new trade in live cattle exports to Morocco in North Africa, which started in August this year.

According to Bord Bia, 2,250 cattle have been exported from the Republic of Ireland to Morocco so far this year. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF) has informed us that the initial consignment of animals travelled overland via Spain. The cattle are weanlings, which are young adults for further fattening.

We are very concerned about the length of the journey from Ireland to Morocco. Travelling overland via Spain requires animals to make a ferry crossing of about 18 hours from Ireland to France, then a road journey through France and Spain of about 2000 km, followed by a short sea crossing from Spain to Morocco and then presumably a further road journey to their destinations in Morocco.

We are also concerned about the slaughter of Irish cattle in Morocco (which will mostly be without stunning). Morocco is not in the EU and therefore EU slaughter legislation does not apply. We have asked Minister Smith to guarantee that, whilst this trade continues, no Irish animals will be slaughtered at the weekly markets in Morocco, where conditions are inhumane and totally unacceptable.

Compassion in World Farming - Ireland is opposed to Irish animals being transported on very long journeys to non-EU countries, where EU animal welfare protection laws do not apply. We believe that this trade should be in meat, not live animals.

ACTION

Please write to Minister Smith and urge him to do all he can to encourage Morocco to accept exports in the form of meat instead of live animals.

Minister Smith, Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Agriculture House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2.

Email: minister@agriculture.gov.ie

European Commission takes seriously pig welfare concerns raised in our Formal Complaint

The EU pig welfare law (Council Directive 2008/120/EC) requires that all pigs have effective enrichment material, such as straw, to allow them to carry out proper investigation and manipulation activities. Without this material there is a high risk that pigs will resort to biting the tails of their pen-mates.

Farmers usually address tail biting problems by docking off part of the pigs' tails. However, EU law prohibits routine tail docking, and non-routine tail docking can only be carried out after inadequacies in environmental conditions or management systems have been addressed.

In the Republic of Ireland, most pigs do not have access to effective enrichment material. A 2007 report by the European Food Safety Authority indicates that 95% of pigs in Ireland are tail docked. This figure is unlikely to have changed significantly since then.

Therefore, in our view, the EU pig welfare law is not being adhered to in the Republic of Ireland. Our efforts to address this problem with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF) did not seem to be resulting in changes on the ground. So, in July 2009, we made a Formal Complaint to the European Commission regarding lack of enforcement of the EU pig welfare Directive's requirements on enrichment material and tail docking.

The DAFF, in its response to the Commission, said that they had reviewed guidelines and inspection checklists with regard to enrichment materials for pigs and are

providing appropriate training for inspectors. They said animal welfare inspections were carried out on pig farms and appropriate action taken when enrichment materials

are absent. They drew attention to a new 'Code of Practice for the Welfare of Pigs', drawn up by the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council, and training courses for pig farmers that are available through Teagasc.

We welcome DAFF's actions but pointed out to the Commission that we have not been assured that anything has changed in practical terms on Irish pig farms. To our knowledge, most pigs still do not have effective enrichment material and the vast majority are tail-docked.

The Commission has now finished its consideration of our Complaint, and we welcome that they have taken our concerns seriously.

In their concluding letter, the Commission says: "My services are well aware of the fact that the outcome of certain measures taken by Ireland is still uncertain and needs further assessment. Please rest assured that the Commission will probe further into the actions planned by the competent authorities, notably by means of the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) audits. In this regard, I am happy to inform you that a new audit has been planned in Ireland in the course of 2011."

Compassion in World Farming - Ireland (as part of an EU-wide Compassion in World Farming campaign) will continue to do all it can to ensure that all pigs in the Republic of Ireland are provided with effective enrichment materials and are not routinely tail-docked.



Tail docked Irish pigs in barren conditions

Photo © Compassion in World Farming

Green Party committed to banning fur farming

In October, Compassion in World Farming - Ireland's Director, Mary-Anne Bartlett, attended the Green Party's *Animal Welfare Dinner* in Dublin. The very successful event sold out quickly and brought together people from all over Ireland who want to see improved animal protection laws.

The Green Party has already showed its commitment to animal welfare by bringing in legislation to ban stag hunting and to regulate dog breeding.

At the Animal Welfare Dinner, Minister John Gormley, Senator Dan Boyle and Agriculture Spokesperson Trevor Sargent, TD, spoke of their determination to finalise the proposed new Animal Health & Welfare Bill (which would update and improve animal cruelty legislation) and put in place legislation to end fur farming.

Animal welfare in the Programme for Government

The current Programme for Government, agreed in 2009, includes the Animal Health and Welfare Bill and a phase out of fur farming over 3 years (i.e. by 2012).

Ear to the Ground looks at fur farming

In November 2010, this popular RTE TV farming programme included a piece on fur farming. Film of inside a fur farm in Ireland showed mink confined in rows of small wire mesh cages. Even the cage floors are wire mesh, to allow waste to fall through.

Mink in the wild always live beside water where they spend a lot of time swimming and diving. On fur farms, they are caged throughout their short lives and have no access to water for swimming.

Banning fur farming will enhance 'brand Ireland'

Senator Boyle pointed out on the *Ear to the Ground* programme that banning fur farming will be good for Ireland's agricultural image, saying: "I think it will help the brand of Irish agriculture that we can be shown to be raising animals in a more humane way for the right reasons and we'll be responding to national and international consumer sentiment in a way that the existence of this industry now doesn't allow us to do."



Photo © Compassion in World Farming and Respect for Animals

Mink on an Irish fur farm

Only 5 fur farms left

There are now only 5 fur farms in the Republic of Ireland. Central Statistics Office figures show that, in 2009, a total of 141,301 mink pelts and 106 fox pelts were exported, valued at €2.764 million.

Fur farming illegal in Northern Ireland

Fur farming is already illegal in Northern Ireland. A ban in the Republic of Ireland will make the whole island of Ireland free of fur farming.

We congratulate the Green Party on its determination to phase out fur farming by 2012. We believe that this will give out a strong message that Ireland takes animal welfare seriously, which will be good for our agricultural image.

ACTION

Please write or email the Green Party, congratulating them on their commitment to banning fur farming.

Minister John Gormley, Leinster House, Dublin 2
Email: john.gormley@oireachtas.ie

Senator Dan Boyle, Seanad Éireann, Leinster House, Dublin 2.
Email: dboyle@oireachtas.ie

Trevor Sargent, TD (Green Party Spokesperson on Agriculture, Fisheries and Food), Leinster House, Dublin 2
Email: tsargent@greenparty.ie

Dear Supporter,

Together, we CAN bring about improved welfare for farm animals in Ireland. Already we have seen significant successes, such as the forthcoming ban on battery cages for laying hens (EU-wide, from 2012), the ban on sow stalls for pregnant sows after the first month of pregnancy (EU-wide from 2013), and the Irish ban on the use of electro-immobilisation to 'freeze' cattle into a stationary position for procedures such as de-horning. Banning fur farming would be a tremendous step forward for Ireland.

We are right to feel encouraged by these successes. But we still have much more work to do. The issue of animal transport is a very important one as Ireland exports thousands of live cattle, calves and sheep each year. Compassion in World Farming argues that this trade should be in meat. We also have to ensure that the 2012 battery cage ban is enforced in Ireland, and we must continue our efforts to get better conditions for pigs and chickens reared for meat.

Thank you for your continued support.



Mary-Anne Bartlett,
Director, Compassion in World Farming - Ireland

Subscriptions
There are no longer annual subscriptions. Instead, we ask supporters to give an occasional donation of any amount - large or small, everything helps!