

Ethical husbandry/animal protection

Up to today, meat and meat products play an important role in the everyday diet of consumers and the global demand for meat is still growing. Per capita consumption of meat is expected to increase in the EU overall to 65.75 kilograms by 2020*. At the same time consumers eat more consciously and mindful; demanding to know more about origin, production and processing of their food. Additionally, more and more consumers consciously eat less or no meat at all due to health, ethical or environmental reasons. These changes in consumer consciousness and behavior result in an increasing value on ethical husbandry and choosing higher-welfare animal products over intensive livestock production. In accordance to the Eurobarometer report 2016 "Attitude of Europeans towards Animal Welfare", 94% of the Europeans believe it is important to protect the welfare of farmed animals and 59% are willing to pay more for products sourced from animal welfare-friendly production systems

Meat and meat products as well as eggs rank among the most important and sensible product groups in our METRO wholesale stores. Alongside absolute freshness and high quality, animal health & welfare is extremely important to us when selecting suppliers. Our customers are also placing increasing value on ethical husbandry. They want to know where the food we sell to them comes from and what conditions it was produced under.

At METRO we strive to achieve good animal welfare by increasing physical and mental well-being of animals as well as their ability to express natural behaviour. In close cooperation with our suppliers we continuously work to improve animal welfare standards for products of animal origin to respond to customer demand for higher ethical and ecological husbandry.

We respect the “Five Freedoms” of the Farm Animal Welfare Committee as a reference to define the state of welfare:

- § Freedom from Hunger and Thirst - by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
- § Freedom from Discomfort - by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- § Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
- § Freedom to Express (most) Normal Behaviour - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
- § Freedom from Fear and Distress - by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

The METRO Sustainability Committee is in the process of discussing and consulting on the steps needed to further concretise the concept of animal welfare, among other things. Corresponding measures will then be developed and implemented by an interdisciplinary working group.

Overarching measures:

- § Agreements with suppliers: We work with our suppliers to develop measures for ethical husbandry along the entire value chain.
- § Consumer education: We educate our customers on the origin of animal products and deploy methods such as the targeted advertising of a sustainable lifestyle to promote the purchase of sustainably produced food.
- § Regional focus: Working with regional producers enables us to have greater influence on animal welfare and to optimise the use of natural

resources, for example by short supply routes. For instance, METRO Germany already has 9,000 regional products in its product range.

- § Innovative meat alternatives: The demand for meat is increasing as the world population grows. For that reason, our food tech and innovation experts and external partners are working together to offer an increasing range of innovative foods made from alternative proteins – for example from insects.
- § Consultancy by experts: To be updated on the diverse animal health and welfare issues and recent developments on global level as well as the practical implementation of solutions along the entire value chain we collaborate with experts such as [Compassion in World Farming](#) or [QS Scheme](#)

Antibiotics and growth promoters

In recent years the potential link between the use of antibiotics in farm animals and the increasing resistance of humans to active substances has been the subject of lively discussion by all relevant expert on all levels – national, European and global. Ethical husbandry is known for improving animal health, reducing the risk of infection and preventing many diseases. Consequently, this can as well reduce the need for antibiotics. Nevertheless, we also are aware that there are situations where the use of prescribed, wisely selected and appropriately dosed antibiotics is important for maintaining animal health.

METRO is advocating the responsible and prudent use of antibiotics in the livestock supply chain and demands that suppliers reduce the use of antibiotics for the production of METRO own brand products, in particular poultry and pork, without compromising animal health by addressing the following instructions:

- § Implementation of a antibiotics tracking and reporting system to create transparency in our livestock supply chains in order to optimize and reduce the use
- § Treatment of animals with antibiotics only under supervision of a food animal veterinarian on farm level as the key expert
- § No preventive use of antibiotics, but only as a last resort when deemed necessary to ensure animal health on the basis of a farm veterinary plan
- § Use of antibiotics as growth promoters is prohibited for livestock in our own brand meat supply chain.

To continuously improve and reduce antibiotic use we take into account the views of the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and The European Medicines Authority (EMA).

Cloning

Animal cloning is a process that replicates animals from the best gene pool to obtain meat, milk, fish and egg products from the best livestock.

Foods derived from cloned animals are regulated within the EU and have been classified as safe for human consumption since the Novel Food Regulation came into force. Nevertheless, there are now also scientific reports from the European Food Safety Agency, among others, which show that cloning causes serious health and welfare problems for the animals themselves.

In addition, we understand that our customers generally do not accept meat from cloned animals because they reject these on ethical grounds.

This is why METRO does not allow meat, milk, fish and egg products from cloned animals to be offered under its own brands.

Genetically modified - organism (GMO)

Green genetic engineering, i.e. the use of genetically modified organism in food, is a complex and controversial topic. For some, it is an important step into the future, while others regard it as a threat to nature and biological diversity as well as to the health and welfare of farm animals.

The general purpose of using genetic engineering in farm animals is to increase yield through better growth rates or disease resistance, which is at odds with the welfare and health of farm animals. We believe that the first priority in managing diseases, for example, should be less intensive farming systems. For this reason, METRO does not allow genetically modified animals for the production of meat, milk, fish and egg products for our own brand supply chain.

Laying hens and poultry farming

Eggs

METRO stores in Germany and Austria have not been stocking battery hen eggs in their own assortments for several years.

In addition, METRO wants to ensure that all shell eggs and liquid egg products of its own brand are 100% cage-free in Western and Southern Europe by the end of 2022 and cage-free in Eastern Europe by the end of 2025. The in-store promotion of alternative and sustainable farming

methods such as stable and free-range management for laying hens is an important factor for enabling customers to make a conscious purchasing decision and thus promote sustainable consumption ([METRO Commitment on cage eggs](#) for Own Brand Assortment).

Geese and ducks

By means of supplementary agreements, METRO Germany obliges its suppliers to guarantee ethical husbandry in the production of goose and duck meat that goes beyond the statutory minimum requirements. This includes that the animals are not force-fed or plucked alive, that the husbandry conditions comply with the legal requirements for room size and animal density in stable or free-range husbandry and that only feed certified according to the criteria of the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) is used. In addition, the husbandry conditions and the origin of the feed must be monitored and regularly documented.

Pig farming

Most pigs slaughtered in Europe are neutered shortly after birth without anaesthesia in order to reduce the aggressive territorial mating behaviour of males and prevent an unpleasant smell in the meat during later cooking. To meet the needs of customers and animal welfare activists, METRO Wholesale is working with NGOs, government officials and other supply chain partners to put an end to unanaesthetised castration.

For this reason, the pork that we sell internationally under our own brand labels comes from pigs that have been surgically castrated after inhalation anaesthesia or injected (immunocastration) or from uncastrated male pigs.

Rabbit farming

By entering into additional agreements, METRO Deutschland obliges its suppliers to ensure an ethical attitude in rabbit breeding that goes beyond the legal minimum requirements. This includes keeping rabbits in groups and observing a certain maximum livestock density, securing a natural day-night rhythm with a dark phase of at least 8 hours and providing materials for activity and retreat, ensuring sufficient ventilation of the cages to remove gases, dust and germs as well as the exclusive use of GFSI-certified feed. In addition, the husbandry conditions and the origin of the feed must be monitored and regularly documented.