

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Directorate G - Veterinary and International Affairs
Animal Welfare

Brussels,
SANTE G3/LP/rb D(2015) 569419

Dear [REDACTED],

Subject: Your e-mail titled "Enforce the law-protect the pigs"

Thank you for your email of 28 January in which you are concerned about the welfare of pigs.

It is essential that EU animal welfare rules are respected by the Member States and properly enforced because the rules have been introduced to protect animals as sentient beings.

I would like to remind you that Member States have the primary responsibility to enforce Union law within their jurisdiction. Competent authorities in the Member States are required to perform official controls to verify compliance and when instances of non-compliance are discovered, they have tools at their disposal, notably under Regulation (EC) No 882/2004¹, to take all the necessary enforcement measures and/or impose sanctions to correct the situation. Although enforcement of existing animal welfare legislation is important for the Commission, the latter can only intervene when there is sufficient evidence that a Member State systematically fails to enforce such legislation.

Since lack of enforcement of existing legislation as regards group housing of sows was identified, the Commission launched infringement proceedings against 11 Member States. All Member States still not fully compliant are on a regular basis requested to provide updates on the situation in their country. The Commission is thus monitoring the progress they are making and will not hesitate to take further steps if the progress made towards compliance is not satisfactory.

Concerning the requirement to provide pigs with enrichment material, the Commission has in close collaboration with the Member States and stakeholders been drafting guidelines as a means to prevent routine tail-docking. This work is continuing.

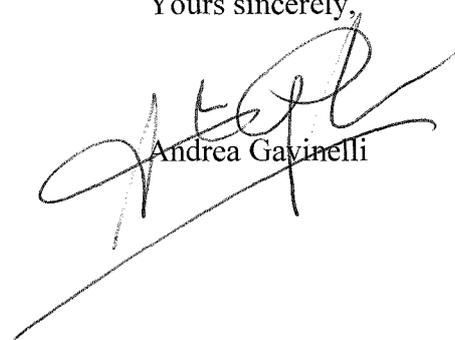
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¹ Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules (OJ L 165, 30.4.2004, p. 1)

It should be also pointed out that the Commission provides national officials with training programmes² to build a common understanding of the legislative requirements that will increase knowledge on this subject and also be of help to the competent authorities in their work directed at ensuring that farmers adjust their practices to compliance.

Therefore, the Commission will continue to monitor the progress made by Member States to achieve full compliance with the requirements of the Directive on the protection of pigs.

Yours sincerely,



Andrea Gayinelli

² <http://ec.europa.eu/cahc/food/calendar.html>