(English version)

Question for written answer E-002884/25
to the Commission
Beatrice Timgren (ECR), Charlie Weimers (ECR), Dick Erixon (ECR)
(15 July 2025)

Subject: An end to discrimination against Swedish dairy farmers?

At the moment, Swedish dairy farmers are not eligible for EU agricultural aid for their grazing cows. This is because support for animal welfare payments cannot be paid for something that is a national law or practice. The unfortunate consequence of this is that Swedish farmers are placed at a disadvantage in comparison with other farmers in the Union owing to the stricter rules on animal welfare.

The Commission is now suggesting a change to the rules governing animal welfare payments ([1]). The legal requirements under the new rules will no longer exclude farmers who comply with the level of animal welfare required under EU legislation.

In view of the above:

1. Can Swedish farmers expect a future CAP under which they can both maintain their high level of animal welfare and receive animal welfare payments?

2. How does the Commission intend to ensure that Member States with stricter rules on animal welfare do not remain at a competitive disadvantage within the internal market when the CAP is implemented?

3. What is behind the Commission's U-turn on stepping up animal welfare payments?

Submitted: 15.7.2025

Answer given by Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission
(1 September 2025)

The legislative proposal for a regulation establishing the conditions for the implementation of the Union support to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for the period 2028-2034, adopted by the Commission on 16 July 2025 ([1]), recognises animal welfare as a key element of the EU's broader sustainability and agricultural goals.

It is explicitly identified as one of the priority areas that Member States are required to support through incentives, placing it on equal footing with other priorities such as climate adaptation, soil health, and biodiversity.

The Commission considers that to avoid placing an unfair burden on farmers when Member States apply national laws that go beyond EU minimum standards, especially in areas like the environment, climate, animal welfare, and antimicrobial resistance, Member States should be able to offer financial support to help farmers meet these higher standards that go beyond the EU baseline, whether these standards are newly introduced or already in force.

If the Commission proposal is supported by the co-legislators, and where the Member States decide to apply this measure, farmers would be eligible for EU agricultural aid to promote better animal welfare practises for grazing cows.

This possibility is proposed for the period 2028-2034 and has also been proposed in the CAP simplification package for the current programming period, adopted by the Commission on 14 May 2025 ([2]), which is currently being negotiated by co-legislators.

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[1] [1]See Recital 25 and pp. 37-38 of COM(2025)0236, https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/circabc-ewpp/d/d/workspace/SpacesStore/b595fc96-2988-44fb-86a5-4383cb070119/file.bin.

([1]) https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/media/news/next-chapter-cap-2025-07-17_en.

([2]) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52025PC0236&qid=1753874272972.