

Press Release ref 23816

## Animal Welfare Conference – UECBV stands for responsible and sustainable efforts

### Brussels (Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021)

The European Commission held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021 a hybrid Stakeholders' Conference “*EU Animal Welfare today and tomorrow*”. About 50 people in person took part, remotely nearly 1,000. In the key speeches, SANTE and AGRI Commissioners Stella Kyriakides and Janusz Wojciechowski, and Joze Podgorsek, Slovenian Minister of Agriculture recalled that guaranteeing Animal Welfare was a moral duty; as such, the EU must protect animals, but it must also exercise caution to preserve the competitiveness of European producers and food security.

The UECBV therefore urges the Commission to continue fair discussions between stakeholders to find this balance.

Afterwards, five one-hour panels tackled topics of Animal Welfare where UECBV Representatives took part in the panels for transport and slaughter and supporting labelling.

**Laurens Hoedemaker**, chairman of the Dutch Meat Association – COV – and representing the European Livestock and Meat Trades Union – UECBV –, made statements in the panel on slaughter and answered technical questions esp. about stunning:

- In particular, meat producers serve the two societal values of good food and Animal Welfare and strive to handle our animals in such a way that any unnecessary suffering is avoided.
- One cannot see the method of stunning apart from the handling of the animals up to the point of stunning. Electric stunning and CO<sub>2</sub> stunning have both advantages and inconveniences. It is important that the operator has the choice of the best tool for his/her own operations.
- In the end, the UECBV Representative, being a veterinarian, stated on cooperation that Europe has high legal standards for Animal Welfare, animal health and food safety. However, the European meat producers continue to strive to improve ways where possible and invite the animal welfare NGOs to help fulfill these ambitions. The legislation revision must be based on new scientific data, innovation, and on the feedback from those in the field who are responsible for implementing the Animal Welfare rules. In the absence of scientific data, we must not rush and we must give ourselves time to obtain them.

**Heinz Osterloh**, chairman of the German Livestock Traders Association – BVVF – and Vice-President of UECBV, made the following clear in the panel on transport:

- The constant concentration of slaughterhouses in the EU is due to the highest level required in slaughterhouses for hygiene, Animal Welfare and environment requirements. It means less slaughterhouses but of higher standards.

- Emphasis was placed on the fact that training, education and supporting education structures are key elements, as these are crucial for responsible transports in existing legal framework. In that sense, he welcomed the remarks of other panelists who highlighted significant improvements, common policy elaborations, as well as guidelines and technical achievements.
- Therefore, the UECBV Representative concluded that priority should be given to the continued consistent implementation and enforcement of the European legal framework that has been in place since 2005, rather than a new legislation, where UECBV maintains its availability unchanged for joint efforts.

In addition, the statement of **Tamás Eder** on behalf of CLITRAVI, being a Board member of UECBV as well, highlighting in the panel for labelling efforts for joint consumer-oriented but science-based development is supported.

UECBV is expressing its willingness as a responsible and sustainable actor like a signatory of the Code of Conduct. The offer of a constructive development for Animal Welfare as a partner for actions in the sense of the Green Deal and Farm-to-Fork strategy is welcome. Due to some remarkable messages of the Commissioner and handling the conference, UECBV urges to have fair discussions between stakeholders for finding the balance and exercising caution to preserve a future of European livestock and meat producers.

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Note to the Editors:

The **European Livestock and Meat Trades Union (UECBV)**, founded in 1952, is the EU voice of national federations representing livestock markets, livestock traders (cattle, horses, sheep, pigs), meat traders (beef, horsemeat, sheep meat, pig meat), and meat industry (slaughterhouses, cutting plants and meat preparation plants).

**Brought together within the UECBV are:**

- an international association i.e. the **European Association of Livestock Markets (AEMB)**;
- a **Young European Meat Committee (YEMCo)**;
- the **European Natural Sausage Casings Association (ENSCA)**;
- the **Organisation of European Ship Suppliers (OCEAN)**;
- fifty-two national or regional federations in twenty-four of the twenty-seven Member States of the European Union, as well as Japan, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom.

In total, some 20,000 firms of all sizes and 230,000 jobs are represented within the UECBV through its national member federations.

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