

Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri



Food animal production and animal welfare

28th of September 2012

Abstract

The document addresses one of the best known, customary and oldest forms of animal use, that is, for the production of meat and in general of products of animal origin intended for man. This topic deserves renewed attention as currently it is characterised by an accentuation of the tendency to extend forms of industrial production, which significantly reduce the *quality of life* of animals.

The NBC, within the context of the recognition of the primacy of human life and health, is in favor of biocultural ethics which prevails over a conception of animals as exclusively a *means* to satisfy human needs and interests, recognising them as sentient beings worthy of forms of protection. This position has its foundation in the advanced indicators of animal welfare that allow a scientifically satisfactory definition of farming conditions that are physiologically and ethologically appropriate.

On these bases the Committee recommends the promotion of a culture of enterprise and supply chain with a substantial enhancement of human responsibility towards animal welfare, and suggests the adoption of a system of labelling which allows consumers to identify these products. The tangible and effective respect of the consumer's right to know, through the promotion and implementation of information and awareness campaigns on behalf of the supervisory authorities, is hoped for. The NBC, acting on the recommendations of the European Union, calls for the timely activation of public policies that promote the creation of a European Network of Reference Centres for animal protection and welfare and emphasises the importance of promoting scientific research in the field of animal welfare, especially livestock. Lastly, the Committee recommends enhancing the crucial role of the veterinarian in the assessment of the living conditions of animals and identification of the parameters of their well-being. In this regard, it highlights the need to activate specific bioethical training for veterinary personnel, focused on the theoretical paradigm of the ethics of care and directed to highlighting the moral importance of the interests of animals and to work effectively for their protection. Similarly, paying due attention to the training of the personnel involved in the care and management of animals.