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AVEC Position on the Proposed Policy: "Lowering the Maximum Temperature for Animal Transport"

Introduction

The European Poultry Meat Association (AVEC) is deeply concerned about the proposed policy to prohibit animal transport at temperatures of 30°C or higher, as recently proposed in the Netherlands. While the intention to safeguard animal welfare is commendable, this policy exceeds current European regulations and risks creating significant disruptions across the EU poultry sector. Moreover, it may inadvertently compromise animal welfare and undermine the level playing field within the European Union.

Importance of Performance Standards and Sector Protocols

AVEC emphasizes that businesses across the EU should have the opportunity to meet performance standards, particularly in ensuring animal welfare during transport in warm temperatures. Many companies have already invested in measures such as mechanical ventilation, water sprayer, improved transport protocols and trainings, and other innovations to safeguard welfare even at temperatures above 30°C. These producers should be rewarded with flexibility, rather than being subjected to restrictions.

National policies that go beyond European standards risk fragmenting the EU internal market and creating unnecessary barriers for compliant businesses. The poultry sector has already demonstrated its ability to ensure animal welfare through self-regulation and sector-specific protocols, such as those implemented in the Netherlands and other Member States.

Key Concerns and Impacts at EU Level

1. Disruption of Cross-Border Transport

The poultry sector is highly integrated across the EU, with animals and products frequently transported across borders. A national policy prohibiting transport at 30°C would force transporters to reroute shipments, leading to longer journey times, increased costs, and potential welfare issues. This would disproportionately affect Member States with warmer climates, where temperatures regularly exceed 30°C during summer months.

2. Uneven Playing Field

The proposed policy creates an uneven playing field within the EU. While the Netherlands imposes stricter rules, neighbouring countries may continue to operate under the current European regulations. This could lead to competitive disadvantages for Dutch producers and processors, as well as potential welfare issues for animals transported to alternative destinations outside the Netherlands.

3. Conflict with Ongoing EU Revisions

The European Commission is currently revising the Transport Regulation, which includes discussions on transport during extreme temperatures. AVEC strongly advises against implementing national

policies that pre-empt this ongoing EU-level process. Such unilateral actions risk creating a patchwork of conflicting regulations across Member States, undermining the harmonization of animal welfare standards within the EU.

CONCLUSION

AVEC recognises the importance of safeguarding animal welfare during transport, particularly in warm temperatures. However, the proposed policy to prohibit transport at 30°C is not the solution. The poultry sector has already taken significant steps to ensure welfare through investments in technology, protocols, trainings and self-regulation. These efforts should be supported and harmonised at the EU level, rather than through unilateral national policies that create fragmentation and disruption.

AVEC urges policymakers to consider the broader EU-level impacts of such proposals and to await the outcome of the ongoing revision of the Transport Regulation before implementing national measures. A coordinated, EU-wide approach is essential to ensure a level playing field and consistent animal welfare standards across the Union.

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