



Animal Protection Index (API) 2020

Republic of Belarus: ranking F

Executive summary

There is a lack of an overall animal welfare legislation in Belarus. The country's legislation does not recognise animal sentience, and animals lack basic animal protection. For instance, animal cruelty is not prohibited, and there is no duty of care onto animal owners. With regards to farm animals, secondary legislation mandates the humane slaughter of poultry; however, the definition of 'humane' does not include mandatory stunning prior to slaughter. Furthermore, there is a lack of legislation surrounding the conditions for rearing and transport of farm animals. Belarus also authorises the culling of stray animals. Furthermore, the country allows for the use of animals for fur farming and entertainment purposes, such as circuses.

The Department of Veterinary and Food Control within the Ministry of Agriculture and Food is responsible for animal health in Belarus. However, there is no Ministry responsible for animal welfare. There is a lack of government bodies dedicated to animal welfare in general, as well as specific animal welfare issues, such as the use of animals in scientific research.

The Government of Belarus is urged to enact a comprehensive animal welfare legislative act that would enshrine animal sentience, define animal welfare in line with the OIE standards, and prohibit animal cruelty. Further animal welfare provisions will stem from this recognition of sentience. In particular, the Government of Belarus is urged to ban the worst forms of confinement for animals reared in farming, and to mandate humane slaughter for all livestock animal species. In addition, the Government of Belarus is strongly encouraged to fully ban fur farming, which is inherently cruel and causes pain, distress and suffering to animals. The Government of Belarus is urged to outlaw the culling of stray animal populations, and to implement spay-and-neuter campaigns as a tool to control stray animal populations. The Government of Belarus is also strongly encouraged to ban the use of all animals for entertainment, in circuses for instance. Overall, the Government of Belarus is strongly encouraged to align its current legislation with OIE standards. Responsibility for animal welfare should be allocated to a Ministry, and a specific government body should enact and assess the implementation of animal protection legislation. Such a government body should include representatives from animal welfare organisations. Further legal and policy recommendations are associated with each Animal Protection Index (API) indicator and contained in the relevant sections of this report.



Animal Protection Index Indicators

Goal 1: Recognition of animal sentience and prohibition of animal suffering

1. Animal sentience is formally recognised in legislation

Analysis of the legislation	
Ranking	G
<p>The Government has not developed any policy or legislation by which sentience is acknowledged or recognised.</p> <p>Analysis</p> <p><i>As it stands today, there is no formal evidence or signal from the Government to recognise sentience as an independent issue that will inform discussions of animal issues in the country. As such, sentience is not included and does not inform public policies that could be potentially linked to animals, such as environmental or sustainable production policies.</i></p> <p><i>The Government has not yet incorporated current practical experience and scientific knowledge regarding animal sentience into the country's legislation. The government does not appear to consider animal welfare as an important issue, which is concerning because Belarus is a member of the OIE, which has guiding principles on animal welfare that are based on the premise that animals are sentient beings.</i></p>	
Enforcement mechanisms	
<p>There is no policy or legislation relevant to this indicator.</p>	
Key recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the extensive body of scientific evidence proving that animals are sentient, the Government of Belarus is urged to recognise that all animals for whom there is scientific evidence – at a minimum, all vertebrates, cephalopods and decapods crustaceans – are sentient beings and to enshrine this principle into legislation. Recognising animals as sentient will underpin further animal welfare considerations. 	

2. There are animal protection laws that prohibit causing animal suffering either by a deliberate act of cruelty or by a failure to act

Analysis of the legislation



Ranking	D
<p>There is no evidence of policy or legislation in the country preventing animal suffering by deliberate acts or negligence. Some legislation produced to regulate veterinary activities and the veterinary service in general (Law of the Republic of Belarus 3423-XII of 2nd December 1994¹) mentions in its preamble that the law is aimed at protecting animals in respect of their health, but does not appear to contain any provisions on welfare or anti-cruelty measures. There is no evidence of any further legislative protection for animals in the country.</p> <p>Analysis</p> <p><i>There is no evidence of existing policy or legislation relevant to this indicator; this does not appear to have priority within government work, and it may be that by tradition and custom there is little awareness and concern for animal welfare issues, presenting significant barriers to progress in this area.</i></p> <p><i>In March 2018, several Belarussian media reported the shocking treatment of homeless animals in the city of Babruysk, who had been euthanised at a shelter without prior sedation.² This example reflects how the lack of even basic anti-cruelty laws leads to intense animal suffering.</i></p> <p><i>Following international trends, developing national legislation and policies to promote animal protection by prohibiting acts and omissions which cause animal suffering are the first steps to reach comprehensive animal protection. Countries with similar economies and some neighbouring countries in the region have taken this step, and the Belarussian Government is encouraged to follow this trend.</i></p>	
Enforcement mechanisms	
<p>Since no legislation has been found prohibiting animal cruelty, there are no enforcement mechanisms associated to this category of animals.</p>	
Key recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Government of Belarus is urged to enact a legislative act dedicated to protecting animals. At a minimum, such legislation should prohibit animal cruelty and suffering by deliberate acts, as well as negligence. Penalties should be included in the law for breaches of anti-cruelty provisions.• The Government of Belarus is furthermore encouraged to include a definition of animal welfare in legislation, which should be in line with the OIE definition and explicitly promoting the Five Freedoms.	

¹ http://www.opbw.org/nat_imp/leg_reg/belarus/veterinary.pdf

² <https://belarusdigest.com/story/animal-cruelty-in-belarus/>



Goal 2: Presence of animal welfare legislation

3. There are laws that apply to animals used in farming including rearing, transport and slaughter

Analysis of legislation	
Ranking	G
<u>Rearing</u>	
No legislation has been found specifically relating to the rearing of farm animals.	
<u>Rearing – pigs</u>	
No legislation has been found specifically relating to the rearing of pigs.	
<u>Rearing – broiler chickens</u>	
No legislation has been found specifically relating to the rearing of broiler chickens.	
<u>Rearing – egg-laying hens</u>	
No legislation has been found specifically relating to the rearing of egg-laying hens.	
<u>Rearing – dairy cattle and calves</u>	
No legislation has been found specifically relating to the rearing of dairy cattle and calves.	
<u>Transport</u>	
Law 3423-XII of 1994, on regulation of the veterinary service, includes a single provision in Article 16 according to which animal transport should be done under the supervision of veterinary services, but does not include a mandate to monitor welfare as part of this supervision.	
<u>Slaughter</u>	
There is some secondary legislation on slaughter of animals for human consumption. Decree No. 44 of 2008 ³ by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food includes provisions on veterinary inspections taking place at the point of slaughter. Article 8 provides that transportation, stunning and exsanguination must be performed in compliance with the principles of humane treatment; however, 'humane treatment' is defined as the care and use of animals that does not cause abnormalities or pathological body changes or changes to the quality of products derived from them, and therefore does not appear to contain welfare considerations. Article 17.2 prohibits the slaughter of an animal which is established by a veterinary technician to be in a state of agony, although accompanying provisions (such as	

³ <http://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC110044>

Article 3.5, prohibiting the use of meat from such animals) demonstrate that this arises out of concern over meat quality rather than animal welfare. Moreover, this Decree is solely applicable to poultry.

Analysis

The Government of Belarus has passed some legislation focusing on the health and productivity of animals. Health is an important part of welfare, but health protection in itself without welfare considerations could potentially undermine the conditions of certain species or activities in relation to farming. The Government is encouraged to work on specific animal welfare legislation, which should in turn have a positive impact on animal health.

The fact that no animal protection legislation has been passed for the protection of animals used in farming makes it very difficult for other sources or even categories of animals to be considered in decision-making debates in the country. The only laws found on animals in farming focus on human health and productivity, reinforcing the perception of animals as mere commodities.

Reports by the Food and Veterinary Office of the European Commission in 2012 (on poultry production) and 2010 (on bovines dedicated to milk production) acknowledge the existence of some veterinary controls for both industries but highlight shortcomings in welfare, partly explained by weak or inexistent legislative standards. In 2013, the Belarusian Prime Minister called for tougher sanitary controls at the country's animal farms, however, this decision was not motivated by animal welfare concerns but to instead ensure that animal-based products are safe to human consumption.⁴

The lack of recognition of the importance of animal welfare as an issue separate to those of animal health and disease control is a considerable barrier to progress. Information from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food appears to indicate that there are responsibilities associated with farm animals, which suggests that some improvement could be possible, but no evidence of legislative or policy background for this responsibility was found.

The country's state veterinary service is said to have a budget for health promotion from the veterinary management bodies and resources received from citizens and legal entities in the country, as specified in Chapter 5 of Law 3423-XII of 1994.

On the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's website, it appears clear that economic interests win over any concern for animal welfare. This is shown by the Ministry's plan from 2016-2020 to increase export volumes of animal-based products. As such, milk production should increase to 9.2 million tons, cattle meat to 720 million tons and pigs and poultry, respectively, to 540 and 615 thousand tons.⁵

Enforcement mechanisms

There are some enforcement mechanisms associated with Decree No. 44 of 2008, however, since there is no legislation associated with the rearing of farm animals, there is a lack of enforcement mechanisms for this indicator.

⁴ http://law.by/news/news/2013/july/17609/?sphrase_id=726851

⁵ <https://www.mshp.gov.by/en/>

Key recommendations

- The Government of Belarus is urged to enact legislation detailing specific welfare requirements for farm animals during the phases of rearing, transport and slaughter. Such requirements should be legally binding and species-specific. Regular inspections onto farms and slaughter establishments should be carried out with a special focus on animal welfare.
- In addition, the Government of Belarus is urged to ban the worst forms of confinement for farm animals. In particular, the use of farrowing crates, sow stalls, and cages should be banned. The stocking density of broiler chickens should also be reduced to a maximum of 30 kg/m² or lower. Surgical operations, such as piglet mutilations and beak trimming for egg-laying hens, should not be performed except under anaesthesia and with analgesics.
- The Government of Belarus is urged to mandate the humane slaughter of all farm animals. Animals should be instantaneously rendered unconscious and insensible to pain and distress prior to slaughter. Today, there is growing consensus amongst religious authorities worldwide that pre-slaughter stunning is compatible with religious principles.⁶ Humane halal slaughter allows for the animal to be temporarily rendered unconscious via stunning prior to slaughter, as long as the animal's skull remains intact and the animal would regain consciousness in time should slaughter not occur. Therefore, animals should be unconscious before being bled, and no further processing should occur until irreversible loss of consciousness is confirmed. No animal should be forced to witness other animals being slaughtered as this is inherently distressing.
- Legislation regarding the transport of animals should protect their Five Freedoms. Due to the significant animal welfare concerns associated with long distance transport, the Government of Belarus is strongly urged to ban the export of live animals for long distances (i.e. over than eight hours) and replace it with a meat only trade. Long distance transport is inherently cruel as it involves chronic stress for all animals and for some species and modes of transport it may involve overpopulation, exhaustion, excess heat or cold, inadequate ventilation and/or access to food and water, leading to disease, pain, injury or death.

4. There are laws that apply to animals in captivity

Analysis of the legislation	
Ranking	F

⁶ [http://www.fao.org/3/x6909e/x6909e09.htm#b5-Religious%20or%20ritual%20slaughter%20\(Halal%20and%20Kosher\)](http://www.fao.org/3/x6909e/x6909e09.htm#b5-Religious%20or%20ritual%20slaughter%20(Halal%20and%20Kosher))

Zoos

Law 3423-XII of 1994, which regulates aspects of the veterinary profession and tangentially animal health, includes zoo and circus animals, as well as fur animals and 'other representatives of the animal world' (Article 1). Article 2 specifies that veterinary services shall ensure the 'protection of animals against extreme natural and man-made factors'. Apart from this very general welfare provision, however, no other animal welfare measure is laid out in legislation.

Private keeping of wild animals

No legislation has been found specifically relating to the private keeping of wild animals.

Fur farming

No legislation has been found specifically relating to fur farming.

Analysis

Animals are defined in Belarussian legislation only in relation to their use, therefore not providing a framework for the discussion of welfare conditions taking into account animals individually and outside the framework of human use of animals. There are no provisions in this law or evidence of existing additional legislation for the promotion of welfare of animals in this category. Moreover, there is a clear lack of legislation with regards to the private keeping of wild animals.

Fur farming is legal in Belarus, with more than 150,000 animals killed annually for fur.⁷ The organisation Ecoetika conducted a survey showing that only 5,7% of Belarussian citizens consider fur inhumane.⁸ Ecoetika launched a public awareness campaign entitled 'Animals Are Not Clothes' aiming to change people's opinion, especially young generations, towards fur.

There is no evidence of financial or human resource dedicated to the promotion of animal welfare in relation to this category of animals. This does not appear to be an area of priority work and spending for the Government.

Enforcement mechanisms

There are no enforcement mechanisms relevant to this indicator, since Law 3423-XII of Belarus does not contain any enforcement mechanisms.

Key recommendations

- **The Government of Belarus is highly encouraged to produce detailed legislation specifying the conditions under which wild animals may be kept in captivity. Such regulations shall include requirements with regards to housing, feeding, handling and husbandry and should promote the Five Freedoms of all individual animals. The Government of Belarus should mandate regular**

⁷ <https://www.furfreealliance.com/educational-campaign-animals-are-not-clothes-tours-belarus/>

⁸ <https://www.furfreealliance.com/educational-campaign-animals-are-not-clothes-tours-belarus/>

inspections to be carried out at zoos. Results of such inspections should be made publicly available.

- The Government of Belarus is encouraged to develop a Positive List of species, specifying which animals can be kept as companion animals, based on clear criteria including animal welfare and other relevant concerns.
- The Government of Belarus is urged to fully ban fur farming. Fur farming is inherently cruel and causes pain, distress and suffering to animals.

5. There are laws that apply to companion animals

Analysis of the legislation	
Ranking	G
<p><u>Care of companion animals</u></p> <p>There is no evidence of existing provisions in legislation dedicated to the care and protection of companion animals. Law 3423-XII of 1994 includes in the definition of animal the sub-category 'home animals,' but does not develop further provisions for their protection.</p> <p><u>Stray animals</u></p> <p>There are a number of laws and ministerial orders in relation to animals whom can be killed or destroyed for rabies control, including dogs. The Veterinary Law (Law 3423-XII of 1994) makes provision for regulations to be made on the destruction of animals carrying contagious diseases. A number of Decrees and Orders from the Ministry reinforce this position and describe in detail methods by which the culls should take place. No evidence was found on relevant legislation of disease control methods other than culling, and the existing provisions on culling do not appear to mandate humane methods of killing.</p> <p>Belarus mandates the capture and killing animals: about 80,000 homeless cats and dogs are killed each year.⁹ If animals arrive at a shelter, the shelter's staff immediately puts down the ill individuals. Healthy animals remain at the shelter for about a week and, if no one has adopted them then, will be euthanised too.</p> <p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p><i>The Government has not introduced any legislation aimed at protecting the welfare of companion animals. The country has problems with stray dog population control that gives rise to the killing of animals, including dogs, in a way that negatively affects the country's reputation with respect to animal</i></p>	

⁹ <https://belarusdigest.com/story/animal-cruelty-in-belarus/>

protection both nationally and internationally.¹⁰ In this particular regard, one of the greatest barriers to progress in improving animal welfare in Belarus is the failure to address this issue via the effective means of population management via neutering and spaying.

In December 2018, Belarus was questioned about animal welfare in the country by the French animal welfare organisation Brigitte Bardot.¹¹ Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko promised to respond to the letter and seemed to realise the welfare crisis that the culling of stray animals in Minsk poses, as he described the situation as ‘terrible’. He evoked his will to ‘change attitudes and become more responsible’, however he did not lay out any legislative measure to ensure a better treatment of animals.

Belarussian animal welfare organisations such as Egida and Zoochance have put forth legislative proposals to improve the treatment of animals. They ask for no-kill shelters, a prohibition of cruel animal treatment and that the Belarussian government promotes compassion towards homeless animals. In addition, animal welfare NGOs ask for a ban on the reproduction of mongrels, claiming that only pure-bred animals should reproduce, provided that their owners pay a special reproduction tax.

However, it appears that the efforts by animal protection organisations meet a lot of resistance in Belarus. For instance, in March 2017 a woman was fined for having live-streamed her visit to an animal shelter in Orsha. The Orsha court classified Ms Hrenkava’s live-streaming as a ‘foreign media production’ and fined the volunteer for ‘illegal media production and distribution’. This legal case illustrates that shelters are wary of visitors and that the Government does not seem to encourage the adoption of pets.

Enforcement mechanisms

There is no policy or legislation relevant to this indicator, hence no relevant enforcement mechanism.

Key recommendations

- **The Government of Belarus is urged to enact a comprehensive animal welfare act, which should include a duty of care of animal owners onto their companion animals. The Government should also promote responsible pet ownership, with encouraging adoption over the purchase of pets.**
- **The Government of Belarus is strongly encouraged to promote humane dog population management, which relies on promoting responsible ownership, mass dog vaccinations and reproduction control programmes. Culling is unnecessary, cruel and has been proven to be ineffective.**
- **The Government of Belarus is encouraged to engage with the International Companion Animal Management (ICAM) coalition to learn about and implement their dog population**

¹⁰ For example: http://en.belapan.com/archive/2013/11/21/en_media_zhyvely_v1/ and <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/stray-cats-dying-cruel-death-in-belarus-activists-charge-1.1394443>

¹¹ <https://eng.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-promises-to-respond-to-brigitte-bardots-letter-117357-2018/>

management methodology. This methodology consists of a full cycle of action, addressing the root causes of conflict between roaming dog and communities. The document is helpful to governments to manage dogs humanely as well as to help communities to live in harmony with dogs.

6. There are laws that apply to animals used for draught or recreational purposes

Analysis of the legislation	
Ranking	G
<p><u>Animals used for entertainment</u></p> <p>The definition of 'animal' in Law 3423-XII of 1994 includes animals in circuses, but no provisions or restrictions to said activity were found in this law. In 2012, the Government produced Decree No. 6 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food validating Veterinary and Sanitary Regulation on keeping of live animals in circuses, but this does not include any welfare related considerations.</p> <p><u>Draught animals</u></p> <p>No legislation has been found specifically relating to the welfare of draught animals.</p> <p><u>Analysis</u></p> <p><i>The lack of policy and legislative developments on the issue of animals used for work and in entertainment leaves many animals outside the sphere of legal protection and therefore further policy development is encouraged in the country. It is noted that legislative production to regulate the conditions in which animals in circuses are kept (Decree No. 6 of 2012) does not include any welfare-related provisions. Not only does Belarus allow the use of animals in circuses, but promotion of such a practice is easily available online, since a news agency promotes Belarus as a tourist destination by showing a lion in a circus.¹² This shows that the use of wild animals for recreational purposes is commonly accepted and that there is no government efforts to prevent it.</i></p> <p><i>There is no evidence of policy or legislation indicating human or financial resource allocated to the promotion of animal welfare for animals in this category. However, the introduction of measures concerning the welfare of animals in circuses (Decree No. 6 of 2012) indicates a certain level of government interest in this issue that may provide a foundation for further progress on animal welfare.</i></p>	
Enforcement mechanisms	

¹² <https://www.belarus.by/en/aboutbelarus/culture/circus>



Decree No. 6 of 2012 on circuses includes inspection powers for veterinarians, but does not include any animal welfare considerations.

Key recommendations

- The Government of Belarus is highly encouraged to enact an animal welfare act, which would prohibit the use of animals for entertainment purposes. Such a prohibition should cover circuses, rodeos, animal fights, animal races, rides on wild animals and all other forms of entertainment. Notably, the Government is strongly encouraged to ban the use of all animals in circuses. Phasing out of animals for entertainment purposes could start with a ban on the use of wild animals for such performances.
- Furthermore, the Government of Belarus is strongly encouraged to adopt specific legislation to address the welfare of working animals, including working equids, following the requirements of the OIE's animal welfare standards. Working animals must be treated with consideration and must be given adequate shelter, exercise, care, food and water appropriate to their physiological and behavioural needs. Any condition which may impair their welfare must be treated promptly and, if necessary, they must not be worked again until they are fit. They must not be overworked or overloaded, nor must they be forced to work through ill-treatment.

7. There are laws that apply to animals used for scientific research

Analysis of the legislation	
Ranking	G
<p>There is no evidence of policy or legislation relevant to this indicator.</p> <p><i>Analysis</i> Belarus has not developed any legislative protection of animals used in scientific research. It is noteworthy that this category of animals does not even appear in the definition of animals in Law 3423-XII of 1994 (on the regulation of veterinary activities), suggesting that this is not an issue that the Government has considered independently.</p>	
Enforcement mechanisms	
<p>There is no policy or legislation relevant to this indicator, hence no relevant enforcement mechanism.</p>	
Key recommendations	



- The Government of Belarus is urged to enact legislation which would protect all animals used in scientific research from unnecessary pain and suffering. The Three Rs principles – Replacement, Reduction, Refinement – should be enshrined in legislation.
- The Government of Belarus is encouraged to create ethics committees, in charge of scrutinising applications for animal research. Such ethics committees should be able to suspend the activities or revoke the registration of establishments which do not respect animal welfare criteria. Animals used for research should be provided with shelter, care, food and water in a manner appropriate to their physiological and behavioural needs. A nominated member of the laboratory staff, preferably a veterinarian, must have full responsibility for animal welfare at all times.
- Furthermore, the Government of Belarus is urged to ban the testing of cosmetic products and their ingredients on animals.

8. There are laws that apply to wild animals

Analysis of the legislation	
Ranking	E
<p>Belarus has some legislation regulating hunting and fishing, including Decree 580 of 2005 on hunting and fishing,¹³ Decree 702 of 2006 on game management and Decree 700 of 2006 on wild fauna management. In addition, Belarus has a series of Decrees and other policy literature on conservation, which include a list of endangered animal and plant species that citizens are not permitted to hunt (compiled in a 'Red Book') in Decree 14 of 2004.</p> <p>The country has some legislation on the destruction (by shooting) of wild animals considered harmful in Decree 4 of 2003.</p> <p>In 2016, Belarus announced it would develop a legislative framework during the period 2016-2019 to lay out the country's adaptation to climate change. As part of this law, Belarus is set to take measures to ensure the conservation of 'the main habitats of rare and endangered species or wild animals and wild plants that live and grow in wetlands, on the area of not less than 30,000 hectares of open lowlands, 40,000 hectares of floodplain grassland, 160,000 hectares of peat bogs and transitional bogs'.¹⁴ However, the Government's focus is much more on restoring natural ecosystems rather than protecting individuals, and no mention is made of animal welfare of wild animal species.</p> <p>Decree 108 was adopted in March 2018 and extends Belarus' national ecological network, to a</p>	

¹³ <http://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEXFAOC107301>

¹⁴ http://law.by/news/news/2016/july/16627/?sphrase_id=726853

total of 93 sites covering an area of 3.37 million hectares.¹⁵ The national ecological network represents a system of natural and territorial complexes where the management of natural resources is governed by special rules in order to ensure the natural movement of living organisms. The Government highlights that this plan is beneficial for wild animals since it will allow them to ‘spread and migrate’ along ecological corridors; nevertheless, no mention is made to ensure stronger legislative provisions with regards to the welfare of these animals.

Analysis

Overall, the legislation relating to wild animals is focused on conservation rather than on the welfare of individual animals. The existing legislation does not cover animal welfare provisions for wild animals and legitimises activities such as hunting, trapping and shooting, which all have a detrimental effect on animal welfare. The legislation addresses issues such as the size of the country’s animal populations for hunting purposes. There is no evidence of any explicit concern for animal welfare.

The Ministry of Forestry runs its own commercial hunting lodges and there is legislation indicating that hunting is part of the country’s traditional background, which introduces an additional barrier for the improvement of animal welfare in the country. As an example, a Regulation of the Ministry of Natural Resources from 25th March 1997 includes cultural and aesthetic purposes as valid purposes for hunting. In addition, several travel websites promote hunting in Belarus.¹⁶

Enforcement mechanisms

The existing legislation includes a series of administrative mechanisms, including licences for hunting and further police powers and criminal procedures for the protection of endangered species. There is no evidence of existing policy and additional literature on the welfare of wild animals that can provide further guidance to citizens in the country of the protection measures available in legislation. The illegal killing/trapping of birds, including pest species, is only punished with a ‘monetary compensation’, which is not a strong measure to discourage illegal practices and improve wild animal protection.¹⁷

Key recommendations

- **The Government of Belarus is encouraged to ban any form of hunting that does not directly support subsistence i.e. for feeding oneself and one’s family and not for commercial gain. Subsistence hunting operations must employ the least cruel methods of hunting and slaughter, and that all possible efforts should be made to reduce the time to death of animals killed in these hunts. At a minimum, the Government is strongly encouraged to forbid the use of the cruellest hunting methods.**

¹⁵ <http://www.minpriroda.gov.by/en/news-en/view/scheme-of-national-ecological-network-adopted-2373/>

¹⁶ <https://belhunservice.com/en/index.php>

¹⁷ http://datazone.birdlife.org/userfiles/file/hunting/HuntingRegulations_Belarus.pdf



Goal 3: Establishment of supportive government bodies

9. The Government has assigned responsibility and accountability for improving animal protection at a high government level and has provided resources

Analysis of the legislation	
Ranking	F
<p>The Department of Veterinary and Food Control within the Ministry of Agriculture and Food is responsible for animal health in Belarus. Health improvements would have a beneficial effect on animal welfare, but further provisions are needed to ensure that the physiological and ethological needs of animals are met in order to satisfy their welfare needs. There is no evidence that specifically improving animal protection and animal welfare is a concern of the Ministry. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection states that it has the objective of protecting fauna and flora; however, the existing remit of protection relates to conservation of biodiversity.</p> <p>Analysis</p> <p><i>There is no evidence that the country's Ministries working on issues in relation to animals have direct responsibilities associated with the promotion of animal welfare in the country. There is no indication that the existing legislation takes account of animal welfare and as such, making the concept important to the general public is difficult. The government is encouraged to assign specific responsibilities regarding the development of animal protection policy and legislation.</i></p> <p><i>The lack of recognition of the importance of animal welfare as an issue separate to those of animal health and disease control is a considerable barrier to progress. There was no evidence found of legislation allocating responsibility for animal welfare outside the remit of conservation and animal health; this does not appear to be an area of priority work and spending for government. This presents an obstacle to developing animal protection measures in the country.</i></p>	
Enforcement mechanisms	
<p>The responsibilities of relevant government bodies are set out in legislation. However, no Ministry has direct responsibility for animal welfare.</p>	
Key recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government of Belarus is urged to assign responsibility for animal welfare, in addition to animal health, to a Ministry. This Ministry should be responsible for enacting animal welfare legislation and for monitoring the implementation of animal welfare standards. • The Government of Belarus is strongly encouraged to create a multi-stakeholder committee in order to effectively engage all actors involved in maintaining animals' well-being to find solutions for welfare concerns. This committee would guide the country's policies and strategies 	



on animal welfare, in line with international standards. This committee should include representatives of animal welfare organisations.

Goal 4: Support for international animal welfare standards

10. The Government has incorporated the OIE’s guiding principles for animal welfare and its animal welfare standards into policy and legislation

Analysis of the legislation	
Ranking	G
<p>The OIE Animal Welfare Standards focus on transport, slaughter, production systems (beef cattle, broiler chickens, dairy cattle, pigs), stray dog population control, the use of animals in research and education, and working equids.¹⁸</p> <p>There is no evidence according to which implementation of the OIE’s standards and guiding principles can be found in legislation in the country. Although there are mandates according to which veterinarians should oversee certain activities in relation to animals in the country, there is no legal indication that this supervision includes animal welfare concerns.</p> <p>Analysis</p> <p><i>The OIE’s standards on animal welfare not only represent a consensual position achieved internationally by countries represented in the organisation, but also provide the necessary scientific background to produce sound policy and legislation on animal welfare. Belarus has participated in the OIE discussions of the standards, and therefore, the Government should be familiar with them. By developing policy and legislation focusing on the standards, the country could improve its overall system of animal protection.</i></p> <p><i>The Government of Belarus is in contact with the OIE with regards to its veterinary services. The OIE has assessed the veterinary services of Belarus and judged that there were ‘one of the most advanced in the region in the field of veterinary medicine’.¹⁹ This positive evaluation is unfortunately not based on welfare criteria but rather on food and animal safety.</i></p> <p><i>The country has severe limitations in its progress towards transposition and implementation of the OIE’s standards. This does not appear to be an area of priority work and spending for the Government. The lack of recognition of the importance of animal welfare as an issue separate to those of animal health and disease control is a considerable barrier to progress.</i></p>	
Enforcement mechanisms	

¹⁸ <http://www.oie.int/infographic/StandardsAW/index.html>

¹⁹ <https://eng.belta.by/society/view/belarus-veterinary-service-commended-by-oie-86986-2015/>



There is no legislation relevant to this indicator, hence no relevant enforcement mechanisms.

Key recommendations

- The Government of Belarus is strongly encouraged to implement the OIE animal welfare standards and principles within policy and legislation.

11. The Government has pledged in principle support for the Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (UDAW)

Analysis of the legislation

The Government of Belarus has not pledged in principle support for the Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (UDAW).

Note: The UDAW is a proposed formal international acknowledgement of a set of principles giving animal welfare due recognition among governments and the international community. An expression of support for the UDAW demonstrates a government's commitment to working with the international community to improve animal welfare.

Analysis

Support for the UDAW would be a first step into integrating animal protection considerations into different discussion tables, becoming a source of inspiration for decision makers interested in improving animal protection in the country.

Enforcement mechanisms

There are no enforcement mechanisms relevant to this indicator.

Key recommendations

- The Government of Belarus is encouraged to pledge in principle support for the UDAW. Support for the UDAW will likely underpin further animal protection measures.

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