

Measure fiche

Animal welfare

Measure XXX

Article 33 of Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) N° [...]

Article XX of Commission Regulation [...]

1. RATIONALE OF THE MEASURE

Animal welfare commitments shall provide upgraded standards or production methods and support farmers to prepare for higher future standards.

The support under the "animal welfare" measure aims at going beyond the compulsory standards by improving the quality of life of the livestock in clearly measurable and controllable manner. Such support should help the farmer to combine higher costs with more resilient rearing methods. However, the support should not replace proper care of livestock or keeping the livestock in good health. Consumers are increasingly concerned on the welfare of livestock and the origin of food. Higher animal welfare methods can be also a diversifying element in traditional agriculture.¹

3. WHAT'S NEW IN COMPARISON TO THE PERIOD 2007-2013

Now, in the period of 2014-2020, animal welfare payment may compensate partially or totally the additional cost or income foregone, whereas in the previous period only a total compensation was possible.

Instead of the general rule of committing funds for a period between five and seven years, as during the period 2007-2013, the commitments can be now undertaken for a period of a minimum of one year, which is renewable up to seven years.

Finally, farmer must be identified as active farmer, as detailed in Article 9 of Regulation (EU) No...2013 [DP].

2. CONTRIBUTION TO FOCUS AREAS AND CROSS-CUTTING OBJECTIVES

In terms of intervention logic² foreseen for the period 2014-2020 of the Rural Development, animal welfare measure contributes to the Priority 3 and the Focus Area 3

¹ These products can be also distinguished with specific labelling informing the consumer about the specific, animal friendlier farming method.

² See Annex III of the Commission Working Paper "Elements of strategic programming for the period 2014-2020".

A “*Better integrating primary producers into the food chain through quality schemes, promotion in local markets and short supply circuits, producer groups and inter-branch*”.

3. SCOPE, TYPE AND LEVEL OF SUPPORT

3.1. Type of operation

The eligible types of operations may be:

- Compensation for a water and feed according to the natural needs of livestock.
- Compensation for upgraded housing conditions³, such as space allowances, bedding and natural light.
- Compensation for providing outdoor access.
- Compensation for the use of anaesthetics and anti-inflammatory medication in cases when mutilation or castration is necessary.

3.2. Beneficiaries

The eligible beneficiaries may be:

- Farmers who comply with the definition of active farmers in Article 9 of Regulation (EU) No .../2013 [DP].⁴

3.3. Eligible costs and conditions

According to the Article 34 of the Rural Development Regulation the eligible costs may be:

3.3.1. Eligible costs

- Compensation covering totally or partially the additional cost and income foregone.
- Where necessary, they may also cover transaction costs to the value of up to 20% of the premium paid for the animal welfare commitments. The commitments shall be undertaken for a period of a minimum of one year, which is renewable up to seven years. The commitments can be taken directly up to seven years from the beginning.

3.3.2. Further conditions

- Drugs and vaccinations are not eligible under this measure.

³ Including material for stimulating natural and specific behaviour of the animals concerned, if not compulsory by the mandatory requirements.

⁴ The active farmer concept will not be in place in 2014. Further legal clarification will be provided.

- The animal welfare measure compensates only for additional costs and income foregone. Investments are eligible only under the article 18 of the Rural Development Regulation.

3.4. Principles with regard to the setting of selection criteria

See a reference should be made to the European Commission document "*Guidelines on eligibility and Selection Criteria*".

3.5. Links to other legislation (e.g. "baseline" for measures that compensate for costs incurred / income foregone)

Chapter I of Title VI of Regulation (EU) No HR/2012 and other relevant mandatory requirements to be defined in the Programme, such as:

Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes

Council Directive 1999/74/EC of 19 July 1999 laying down minimum standards for the protection of laying hens

Council Directive 2008/119/EC of 18 December 2008 laying down minimum standards for the protection of calves

Council Directive 2001/88/EC of 23 October 2001 amending Directive 91/630/EEC laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs

Council Directive 2007/43/EC of 28 June 2007 laying down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production

Any other upcoming EU Regulation on concerning animal welfare

Relevant national legislation

3.6. Aid intensity/amount of support

According to the Rural Development Regulation the maximum support rate is 500 Euros per livestock unit.

The basis for payment calculations should be established according to the article 69(2).

3.7. Co-financing rate(s)

The co-financing rates are established in the article 65 of the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural development (EAFRD).

4. INDICATORS

In planning the indicators it should be taken into consideration the principles detailed in the Annex IV of Working Paper "Elements of strategic programming for the period 2014-2020".

5. VERIFIABILITY AND CONTROLLABILITY

Reference should be made to the "Guidelines on verifiability and prevention of errors".

This section will be completed according to the provisions of the new Regulation on the implementation of control procedures as well as cross-compliance in respect of rural development support measures.

6. TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Commitments from the current period 2007-2013 can be extended until the end of the period to which the 2014 payment claim refers.

In 2014 and 2015, new commitments can be undertaken and payments can be made under the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 from the budget 2007-2013 until it is exhausted.

For on-going contracts from the period 2007-2013, payments from the new budget 2014-2020 can be made until the end of these contracts if the funds from the period 2007-2013 are used up.

In 2014 only, new commitments can also be undertaken under the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 until the adoption of new programmes by using the funds from the 2014-2020 envelope.

The cross-compliance rules and baseline of the 2007-2013 programming period will apply in 2014. However, a revision to new baseline shall be carried out in 2015.

All 5 to 7 years contracts concluded after 31 December 2011 under the rules of the Regulation 1698/2005, will have to be adjusted to the new legal framework, according to Article 46 (last paragraph) of Regulation (EC) No 1974/2006.

7. BEST PRACTISES

In planning a measure at farm level it must be ensured, first of all, that the mandatory EU and national standards are well respected.

The Managing Authority should ensure, prior to the moment of commitment, that the beneficiary is aware of the contents of the animal welfare commitments in the moment of committing to them, their practical consequences and has means and knowledge in order to implement them. The Rural Development Regulation includes support possibilities for knowledge transfer and training in order to inform and train farmers of such issues appropriately.

Good examples of what could be done under this measure based on past experience can be taken from the website of the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/>, brochures and on the website of the European Commission – DG Agriculture and Rural development.