Meat Consumption and Animal Welfare: A Survey of European Slow Food Members

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Animal Welfare: A Great Oversight?

The concept of “animal welfare” belongs to the category of sets that are classified as “fuzzy”. The theory of fuzzy logic was developed in the 1970s by Lotfi Zadeh, a mathematical genius born in Baku and educated in Iran. He later moved to the United States. According to him—and please excuse the over-simplification—some classes of concepts are not well defined (beautiful, friend, young, etc.), while others have sharply delineated boundaries (spouse, male, brother, etc.). Generally, concepts that are fuzzy are more complex than those that are not; for example “friend” is more complex than “brother,” and yet we use them both regularly. Our mind is predisposed to handle concepts that are foggy and complex, sacrificing precision in favor of meaning.

This premise helps us understand how the concept of animal welfare, despite being imprecise and undefined, has involved a significant slice of the population in discussions around the idea of sustainability, food ethicality and biodiversity. Wide swathes of people, particularly in the global north, feel the urgency to follow virtuous practices with regard to animal welfare. The number of people with pets is also increasing, as is the number of people who are giving up eating meat. And yet, because everyone sets their own boundaries on this issue, it is still not possible to establish an unambiguous, practicable definition of the concept.

Personal beliefs on what is best for an animal can vary greatly. For example a farmer who ties his dog to a meter-long chain and keeps it on the edge of hunger because he believes these conditions are better than being a stray, and that because the animal is unproductive, it has already a luxury to keep it alive; or a dog owner who buys designer coats for a pet poodle and feeds it salmon and fillet steak. Or the farmer whose cows, perhaps with their horns cut, are let out into a small enclosure for just a few hours once a day, then kept tied to the feeding trough the rest of the time. These people are all completely convinced they are doing the right thing.

Then think about those who keep their animals outdoors all day, perhaps without mutilations, and with no constraints in the cowshed. With even closer boundaries, the same goes for the organic pig farmer who makes sure the pigshed does not have a cement floor, changes the abundant straw frequently and lets females in labor move around freely (very commendably), and for the breeder who raises Iberian pigs in the Andalusian dehesa, the last strip of the primitive European forest, where every pig has a hectare of forest to itself, an acorn tree for the final fattening and no other type of shelter.

Obviously, we are not talking about factory farms or about poisoning animals with hormones: These practices cannot be included within any concept of welfare. Unfortunately when the consumer buys a cutlet in the supermarket, he or she does not know, or pretends to be ignorant of, the horrors of the concentration camp-like farms where chickens, pigs and cattle are raised: The great repression is activated. By now, many consumers are aware that we are going through an age in which it will become practically obligatory to respect animals and be responsible in our food choices, yet it is still much easier to just ignore the problem. It is also true that we are seeing a set of values that changes with the years, influenced by socio-economic changes, mainstream culture, education and evolving trends. However, it is clear that the path towards a full acceptance of animal rights has been laid out.

What’s important here is demanding that greater attention is paid to animal welfare. The starting point is no longer anti-speciesism and the conviction that the planet belongs equally to all sentient beings. If you remember the spiritualism of a few decades ago, hippie culture or the first New Age undercurrents, you will remember that this was at the heart of reasoning of these movements. Not so much sustainability, or the unfair distribution of resources, but the concept of equal dignity for all living beings. Clearly such a vision of the world was, and is, very noble, but it demands an unconditional adherence to vegetarianism, if not veganism. This is perhaps too high a threshold.
The hedonism of recent decades warped this approach: Meat consumption exploded, animal welfare became an argument for fundamentalist fanatics, sustainability wasn’t yet an issue. The excessive consumption of meat, as it has taken shape in the last few decades in the global north, radically transformed the use of animals and led to the diversion of the majority of agricultural resources towards meat or milk production. Today, luckily, we are seeing a possible turning point. To ensure we follow the right path, we need a clear definition of animal welfare. What is the current situation? Initially we might say that little has changed: A few elites are addressing the problem and defining limits, but they are entirely personal limits or for small groups. A universally accepted threshold still does not exist. We are still in complete relativism, in the middle of fuzzy logic.

To give concreteness to these feelings, and to start a process of reflection that will involve the members of our association and the farmers from our Presidia, we produced a survey and sent it to Slow Food members and farmers with an email account. In the following pages, you can find the results of this survey. Of course, everyone says that they are sensitive to the issue (how many, when questioned directly, would admit that they could not care less about the living conditions of animals?), but when we move on to the specifics, the fog descends and indeterminacy triumphs. With one exception: Many members appreciate the new focus on animal welfare as it guarantees better meat and better products. So the issue of quality of the final product is often used as an argument against the horror of industrial farms. I would go so far as to say the horror is “disguised” by the focus on quality. It is certainly true that happy animals produce better meat, but it is not really enough to condemn criminal behavior just by appealing to taste.

Even within Slow Food, we clearly still have much to discuss, study and learn before we can reach the definition of a threshold below which we must no longer descend. It will not be an easy discussion—think of issues like foie gras, game, ritual slaughtering and so on—but it is one that can no longer be put off.

Piero Sardo
Slow Food Fondation for the Biodiversity
President

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Pramenka Sheep, Bosnia-Herzegovina
Results of the Survey on Meat Consumption and Animal Welfare for European Slow Food Members

The survey was undertaken by Slow Food in July and August 2013. Using Google Drive, it was sent to 40,839 Slow Food members from 27 countries in the European Union who provided an email address when they registered with the association. This sample is a good representation of the wider Slow Food and Terra Madre network which is made up not only of members, but also of communities of producers, activists and supporters that do not have membership.

4,321 associates responded, which corresponds to 10.6% of the people contacted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of members contacted</th>
<th>Number of responses received</th>
<th>% response rate per country</th>
<th>% of the total number of replies</th>
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The pie chart shows the volume of responses from individual countries as a percentage of the total number of responses received (from all countries). 60% of the responses came from Italian members; however it is worth noting that Italy has the highest number of associates in Europe. The other countries with a high number of respondents are Germany (19% of the total), Austria (5% of the total), France (4% of the total) and Spain (3% of the total). All of the other countries combined make up the remaining 9%.

The chart on the page opposite highlights the response rate per country. The percentages from Latvia (67%) and Malta (65%) particularly stand out, but it must be kept in mind that there are few associates in these two countries, so fewer surveys were sent out. A high percentage in this case is therefore not as significant as it first seems.

The response rate was good in many countries: between 20% and 30% in Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia, while in Germany it was 11.5%, and Italy it was 11.3%. The countries in which the association is fairly large but the response rate was low are the Netherlands (2.4%) and France (6%).
The sample was composed of 56% men and 44% women. The total number of respondents was 2,404 men and 1,917 women. This ratio is inverted in countries such as France, Ireland, the Netherlands and the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Latvia and Sweden), where women make up over 60% of respondents.

European average 10.6%

The sample was composed of 56% men and 44% women. The total number of respondents was 2,404 men and 1,917 women. This ratio is inverted in countries such as France, Ireland, the Netherlands and the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Latvia and Sweden), where women make up over 60% of respondents.
The most represented age group is that between 40 and 55 years old: 40% of the sample is in this category, while 30% of respondents are over 55 years old. Consequently, 70% of those who participated in the survey are over 40 years old, and only five percent are under 25. The countries in which younger people are best represented are the Netherlands, with seven percent of respondents (the Slow Food Youth Movement is very active there) and Ireland, with eight percent. The country with the most respondents over 55 is France (39%).

61% of those interviewed have either a university degree or a post-graduate degree (90% in the Netherlands and 87% in France, while only 54% of the Italian respondents hold a degree).

51% of the sample lives in a city of at least 30,000 people, while 28% live in smaller towns and 20% live in villages. Austria is the country with the highest percentage of respondents from villages (34%), as opposed to the Nordic countries, the Netherlands and Ireland where over 60% of the associates who responded live in cities.
The most represented professions are office workers (26%), entrepreneurs/freelancers (25%) and business managers (around 9%). Over 10% of those interviewed are retired.

Of the European sample, 23% are members of environmental associations or those defending animal rights: 19% of Italians and more than 30% from the Nordic countries take part in these groups. Almost half of the associates who participated in the survey (47%) have pets. More than half of those interviewed (52%) claim to be against hunting, while 30% are in favor of it. The others either did not give a precise position on the matter, or were indifferent. The survey revealed some additional important differences between European countries. In Germany, 63% of respondents view hunting favorably, as do 50% from Austria, while only 19% of Italian and Spanish members approve of it. The country with the highest number of members against hunting (66% of the respondents) is Italy.

Are you in favour of hunting?

- No (53%)
- Yes (30%)
- I don’t know (10%)
- I’m not interested (7%)
1• Meat Consumption

The first part of the survey focused on the consumption of meat and other animal products.

93% of the total sample (4,030 people out of 4,321) eats meat. This figure fluctuates from a minimum of 84% in Nordic countries Europe to 98% in Ireland and France.

The most consumed meats are, in order: poultry, beef and pork.

It was possible for respondents to give more than one response to the question: “Why don’t you eat meat?”

60% of respondents said they do not consume meat for health reasons. 59% said the consumption of meat is unsustainable from an environmental point of view. 34% refuse to eat meat on ethical grounds with regard to the treatment of animals. Only 1% attributed their vegetarianism to religious beliefs.

The environmental motivation is fairly consistent across the various European states, with the exception of Spain, where 80% of the members selected this reason. Ethical reasons on the other hand fluctuate, from the lowest percentage (28%) in Italy to the highest (71%) in the Nordic countries. The Netherlands also strongly signaled ethical reasons at 62%.

Health reasons are the biggest concern for people in Italy (63%), Austria (57%), the Netherlands (56%) and Germany (54%). It is much less important in France and Spain, where 18% and 20% of the associates chose it respectively.
Among those who said they do not eat meat, roughly half (46%) do eat fish. The most relaxed members as concerns the difference between fish and meat are Italians, with 50% of the vegetarians declaring that they consume fish. 19% eat milk and eggs (lacto-ovo vegetarians), with the highest number of these types of vegetarians in the Netherlands, where 35% of respondents selected this option. Seven percent are vegans, choosing to eat no animal products at all (with the highest number of vegans in Austria, at 19%). Combining the percentages of vegans and frutarians (a tiny percentage) with those who eat eggs and milk (lacto-ovo vegetarians), we see that the members who are the most determined not to eat meat – even fish – are the Austrians (42%), followed by Germans and Spaniards (37% and 38% respectively), while 23% of Italians are in this category.

Considering the entirety of the responses received (4,321 associates), we see that roughly four percent of our European members who took part in the survey are vegetarian, while just over one percent is vegan.
The majority of respondents said that they eat less than six meals a week that include: meat (56%), fish (77%) or eggs (75%), while the consumption of cheeses and dairy products is more frequent: 34% said they eat them between six and ten times per week, and 21% do so between 11 and 15 times per week.

According to INRAN – the Italian National Research Institute for Food and Nutrition – weekly meat consumption should not exceed 500 grams.

Only 12% of respondents said that they consume more meat than the maximum amount advised by nutritionists, while 49% said they do not think that they eat more than advised. 20% said they eat less. 13% said they did not know the maximum weekly intake advised by doctors.

The most balanced consumption of meat is found in Italy, Germany and Austria, where 52% of the participants in the survey said that they do not consume too much meat. The Irish consume less than the maximum amount advised by doctors (32%). The highest percentage of those who said they eat more meat than advised (19%) was the Nordic countries.

The members who are least informed as per the maximum weekly intake of meat advised by nutritionists are the French, at 25%.

Alternatives to meat consumption

- I don’t eat meat but I do eat fish (46%)
- Other (27%)
- Ovo-lacto-vegetarian (19%)
- Vegan (I don’t eat any product of animal origin) (7%)

Weekly consumption of products with animal origins
Another question investigated from where European Slow Food members purchase meat. For this question, multiple responses were possible. The collected data show two answers that are diametrically opposed: 57% buy meat in a trusted butcher’s shop, while 42% do so in supermarkets. 27% of respondents buy meat directly from farmers, 23% from shops that sell only organic products, and 21% from farmers’ markets. Only six percent buy their animal products from ethical purchasing groups (or GAS, the Italian acronym for Gruppi di Acquisto Solidali). Evaluating the data based on the different countries, interesting differences come to light. Trusted butchers’ shops are the preferred place for French people to buy their meat (66%), supermarkets are preferred by the Irish (97%), while Austrians prefer to buy directly from farmers. 54% of Germans buy from organic food shops, while farmers’ markets are most frequented by Austrian and Nordic members, even though a larger percentage (48%) of members from Nordic countries choose specialized shops. Ethical purchasing groups are chosen mainly by the French and Italians (7%) while any butcher’s shop (that is, a shop not usually frequented) is chosen most often by the Irish (27%).

We also asked our members if they had ever killed an animal for food themselves. 81% said no, 10% said they had done so rarely, and 9% said yes.
We also asked about the “special” consumption of some animal products: special either due to the rarity of the product in question or because the consumption of these animals can be “difficult” from an emotional point of view. Shellfish (63%), lamb and baby goat (62%) and game (49%) are amongst the most consumed products on a European level.

Very few are conditioned by their religion in terms of consuming meat, with only two percent of respondents making this statement, but almost all said they thought about not eating meat during Lent.

Foie gras has been consumed by 27% of Europeans and 23% of Italians. 88% of French respondents indicate that they have consumed foie gras, demonstrating that it is still a strong tradition in the country.
2. Animal Welfare

The second part of the questionnaire dealt with knowledge of breeding practices and the subjective sensitivity with regard to animal welfare.

Among the members who responded to the survey, 63% claim to know either “very well” or “well enough” the conditions in which animals are raised in their home countries. The majority of Austrians (97%) said they were “very well” informed, while 93% of Dutch and 85% of Irish respondents said they knew the conditions “well enough”. Those who admitted having little or no knowledge on the subject were Spaniards and Italians: 40% said they had little knowledge of farm conditions, while 6% said they “did not know them at all”. 87% of respondents said they had seen a farm, while 35% had visited a slaughterhouse. Despite this, 76% said that they know, at least roughly, the methods of slaughtering used in their own countries.

Another question investigated Slow Food associates’ level of interest in animal welfare, and the life of animals in general. The aggregate shows that 65% are “interested” and 29% are “interested enough”. Only one percent did not know what to say and five percent had never posed the question to themselves. The highest level of interest was found in the Netherlands and Ireland (99% and 95% respectively), while the lowest levels are seen in Italy and Spain (58%). However, if these levels are added to those who are “interested enough”, these countries also see a high level of interest (91% and 87%).

Among Slow Food members there is greater interest in the subject in Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland and Nordic countries in comparison to Italy and Spain. The difference between the north and south of Europe is not that big: roughly ten percent. The country with the largest number of people who said they had never thought about animal welfare was Spain, with 12% of respondents.

Those who claim to be interested in animal welfare inform themselves on the subject by reading magazines and newspapers (57%), or via the internet (50%). 34% do not actively seek information, however if they see an article on the subject they read it with interest. A further 32% get their information from the TV and 25% from books. Only 18% visit farms in order to get direct information on animal welfare.
Roughly one in every two members said they thought about the conditions of livestock “most of the time” when they buy meat products. This number goes up to 85% if we also consider those who reflect on the issue “at least some of the time”. Eight percent never think about it.

Italy represents the country in which the fewest number of people think about this problem when buying meat (39%) as opposed to Germany (78%), Austria and Ireland (76% each). Italians are the most likely to think about it “sometimes” (43%).

Which meat do the Slow Food associates determined to make informed decisions choose? 47% from “trusted” resellers and 32% from “trusted” farmers, 29% choose locally bred meats.
In terms of experiments that hope to produce meat from animal cells in laboratories, and thus eliminate the need to breed (and kill) animals in the future, Slow Food members show a certain amount of reticence, with only six percent saying they would consume meat grown in a lab, as opposed to the 63% who are decidedly opposed. A further 31% said they had not yet formed an opinion on the topic.

All respondents gave a lot of importance to the role that consumers can have in influencing breeders: 90% believe that choosing to buy meat from places that take animal welfare into consideration can help influence an improvement in breeding practices in general. Spain is the country where people believe most fervently (95%) that consumer choices can condition the market.

One particularly noteworthy statistic is that regarding people’s willingness to pay more to breeders who take animal welfare into consideration. 91% of respondents said they would be willing to pay a higher price to buy animal products that respect animal welfare: 32% would pay as much as 20% more than the current market price for animal-friendly products.

The countries with the most people willing to pay more for their meat are Germany (98%), Austria and Ireland (95% each). Italy is in last place, but still high at 88%. We can therefore say that all members, regardless of their country, are willing to recognize the efforts of breeders. This is good news for breeders who would like to work harder in this area.

Would you be willing to pay more for products that respect animal welfare?

- Up to 10% more (19%)
- From 10 to 20% more (40%)
- Over 20% more (32%)
- I am not willing to spend more (4%)
- I don't know (5%)
But that’s not all: Slow Food members also show that they are willing to play an important role as informed consumers. 87% said they would be willing to change the place where they usually buy meat in order to frequent shops that are mindful of animal welfare. However, for this to be the case, labeling, transparency and the certainty of finding products with clear and full information all play a crucial role.

Only nine percent of the members who participated in the survey believe that the current laws for labeling allow them to identify products that are made with respect for animal welfare. 74% of European members do not think that the laws allow them to know this information. A further 17% do not have a clear idea on the matter. In general, the countries where members are most satisfied with food labeling practices are the Netherlands and the Nordic countries (26% and 25% respectively), while the most unsatisfied are the French (86%).

Members were asked what criteria would be more efficient to help identify products made with a high standard of animal welfare.

Which are the best criteria for the identification of high welfare products?

- Information labels on the packaging with further explanations on the topic: 50%
- A classification or points-based systems (e.g. five stars for the higher welfare products, one star for the lowest): 45%
- The use of honest images of the rearing system employed (e.g. free-range hens rather than caged hens): 35%
- A specific logo on the packaging: 30%
- Information posters displayed in shops: 20%
- A color scale classification system of the packaging: 15%
- Other: 10%
- I don't know: 5%
There are no significant differences between the various countries regarding the criteria required in order to identify products made with a high standard of animal welfare.

From a set of various statements on animal welfare, members were asked to choose which ones they most agreed with.

Which statements on animal welfare best represent your beliefs?

- It is necessary to reduce the consumption of meat, which is currently too high, as it is bad for health and the environment
- Animals are sentient beings with their own emotional lives. They are therefore entitled to a just treatment and a life that respects their natural behavior
- My individual food choices can have a strong impact on the welfare of farm animals
- Current legislation on animal welfare is not sufficient
- Farmers should be fined if they don't respect high welfare standards
- Animals raised in small-scale farms have a better quality of life than those raised in large farms
- The real problem is the environmental damage caused by intensive farming
- Farmers should be rewarded for respecting higher animal welfare standards
- Meat is an essential part of our diets, even for adults
- Meat is essential for raising healthy children
- Keeping meat prices low is more important to consumers than the welfare of animals
- Until we learn to significantly reduce human suffering, we should not worry about farm animal welfare
- I don't understand all of this interest in animal welfare; animals aren't humans, they can't feel like us, they don't have a psycho-emotional life like ours
Members from different countries preferred different options:

- “The consumption of meat should decline” was most popular among the French (76%).
- “Animals are sentient beings” was selected most often by Austrians.
- “Breeders who respect animal welfare should be rewarded” was supported by 74% of Dutch respondents.
- “My eating choices have a large impact” is thought to be the case by 65% of Austrians.
- “Animals have a better life in small farms” saw 63% of Irish members in agreement.
- “The laws on animal welfare are insufficient” is thought to be true by 62% of Germans members.
- “Breeders who do not respect the laws on animal welfare should be fined” was most strongly supported by Italians.
- “The problem is environmental harm from intensive breeding” was chosen by 44% of the French.
- “Meat is an essential part of a balanced diet” was chosen mainly by the Dutch.
- 20% of the Spanish think that “it is important to keep the price of meat low”, and even though it is not a commonly held belief, the idea that “meat is essential for children” was chosen most often by the Spanish (12%).

The survey then tried to determine the characteristics that Slow Food members use to identify animal breeding that respects animal welfare. Most respondents identified high quality feed, the possibility of keeping the young offspring close to their mothers and the freedom to move around as the main factors in good animal welfare practices.

What are the main characteristics that a high welfare farm should have?

- Animals are fed only healthy and natural feed, without chemical ingredients, additives or industrial waste
- The young can stay close to their mothers for as long as they need
- Animals are free to move in open spaces
- Animals aren't mutilated
- Animals are free to express their natural behavior
- Animals are free to move around, even in the stables
- Animals can socialize with other animals
- Animals aren't made to react aggressively or nervously
- Animals are protected from injuries caused by other animals
- Animals are kept in stables, far from stress, danger and in a comfortable environment
- Animals are fed and raised in order to guarantee a good return

When asked who should guarantee that the welfare of farm animals is respected, 53% of members answered that this should be up to certification bodies, 42% said veterinarians and public health authorities, and 40% said farmers and producers.
There are some differences among countries, for example veterinarians and public agencies are preferred by Italians (53%), but they are the least considered by the Dutch (15%). Certification agencies are preferred by the French (63%), whereas the Dutch prefer farmers and producers to be responsible (53%). Austrians are the least trusting of the government (14%), while associations for the protection of animals are favored most by the French (27%). The European Commission was chosen mainly by the Nordic countries (20%).

Regarding the perception of conditions for different livestock, the survey shows that the animals with the worst quality of life are chickens raised for meat, egg layers and animals raised for their skin. The animals with the highest quality of life are pets, goats and sheep.
The majority of members, over 80%, believes that animal-welfare friendly products are healthier, of higher quality, more environmentally sustainable and ethically important. Fewer agree that these products are more profitable for producers.
The impression is that the standard of welfare for livestock has improved in the last decade, as declared by 32% of the survey respondents, while 39% believe that the conditions have basically stayed the same. Only 16% think that animal welfare has worsened in the same period.

The most pessimistic countries from this point of view are Germany (23%) and France (24%), while the Netherlands and Austria are the most optimistic countries.
Concerning the role of the campaigns that have taken place on a national level for the improvement of animal welfare, only 34% believe that they have brought about positive change. According to 7% of respondents these campaigns are too extreme and have not contributed to the creation of constructive dialogue on the matter. 22% think that future generations will be able to deal with the topic much more knowledgably.
The high level of interest of Slow Food members for animal welfare is further demonstrated by the fact that 84% of them say that they would like more information on the topic, while 90% believe that the politics in their own countries do not give enough importance to the living conditions of livestock.

Finally, members were asked what the role of Slow Food should be concerning animal welfare. According to 48% of respondents, Slow Food should raise awareness amongst public authorities, 45% believed the association should help producers with similar experiences to create a network of support and 42% called for the promotion of animal-welfare friendly products.
What should Slow Food’s role be?

- It should raise awareness amongst public authorities to put in place policies that take the problems of farmers into account.
- Help producers with similar experiences to create a network of support for each other.
- Promote products produced according to high welfare standards.
- Organize training for farmers and put consumers and producers in contact.
- Help consumers understand that farmers who are committed to animal welfare should receive a fair pay.
- Slow Food should create a label for its products, as it has done for Slow Food Presidia, to certify high animal welfare standards.
- Organize a specific campaign on animal welfare to raise awareness amongst consumers.
- Organize educational initiatives for children as they are the consumers of the future.
- Slow Food should work to raise awareness on animal welfare amongst consumers (through booklets, meetings, workshops, etc.).
- Organize specific events for both consumers and farmers.
- Create a specific network to support a legislative reform of animal husbandry practices. Current legislation is just not good enough.
- Organize farm visits to allow people to get to know the point of view of the farmer and learn about how they raise animals.
- Avoid the topic because it has nothing to do with the quality of food.
Conclusions

Every year the welfare of millions of animals raised for their meat, milk and eggs is seriously compromised. Industrial livestock production also significantly jeopardizes environmental sustainability, human health and the livelihood of small-scale farmers and rural communities. Slow Food has been actively working to promote a holistic approach to food and agriculture for many years: Good animal welfare practices are a fundamental part of this. They are crucial, not only because they respect animals as sentient beings, but also because they benefit farmers, consumers and the planet we live on.

The results of the survey demonstrate that European Slow Food members care deeply about these issues. The impact of meat production and consumption on the environment and human health is a particular worry (with 80% of respondents selecting this as their main concern). Ethical reasons also play a significant role when it comes to individual choices concerning meat consumption and animal welfare, particularly in Nordic countries. Labels are rarely clear and consumers are not provided with the means to make conscious choices: this is a problem highlighted by 74% of European members. At the same time, 90% of members indicated that they would be willing to spend more for animal-friendly products, or change where they usually shop in order to buy them. This data should encourage producers to change their production methods, and retailers to sell their products. Similar opinions and attitudes were also found in surveys of Slow Food members in Brazil and the US.

Slow Food’s future work on animal welfare will reflect the issues raised by members in the survey. Slow Food will work alongside farmers and producers of the Presidia to improve the conditions in which animals are raised, and promote educational initiatives for children and adults on animal welfare and meat consumption.

Significant attention will also be dedicated to the narrative label project, which aims to provide consumers with clear and useful information to enable them to make better choices; learning where the meat they are buying comes from and how the animals were raised.

Alongside the survey of members, Slow Food also involved European Slow Food Presidia producers in a similar survey on animal welfare. The survey highlighted the close relationship between farmers and their animals, and the willingness of the former to provide high quality feed and pay attention to the natural behaviour of the animals. Just like the members, Presidia producers called for Slow Food to urge public authorities to put in place policies that take the problems of farmers into consideration and help them come together to support and learn from each other. They also called for Slow Food to promote products that respect the welfare of animals.

The position developed by Slow Food on animal welfare, which was informed by the surveys, was summarised in a document sent to the European Commission. The future work of the association will revolve around the principles expressed in the policy paper and the collaboration between producers and the European Slow Food network as a whole.

To read the results of the European Presidia producers survey and Slow Food’s policy paper on animal welfare, click here: www.slowfood.com/slowcheese/eng/20/animal-welfare