

Welfare of farmed animals in European Union law

Abstract:

The dissertation deals with the protection of farmed animals and their welfare in the European Union law. This is a topic of growing social importance, primarily due to the ethical and environmental concerns associated with intensive animal farming and the increasing societal pressure to strengthen the legal protection of these animals.

In addition to providing a general overview of the role of the European Union in the protection of farmed animals, the aim of this thesis is to analyse the current animal welfare legislation in the EU, both in terms of its content (i.e. specific requirements set by the legislation), which is put into comparison with scientific findings in the field of animal welfare, and in terms of its application in practice. On the basis of this analysis and comparison, recommendations are then formulated which address the identified shortcomings and could improve the current state of farmed animal protection in the EU.

The thesis is divided into an introduction, five chapters and a conclusion. The introduction provides an outline of the issue and highlights the links between the protection of farmed animals and the environment, lays down the research questions, outlines the structure of the thesis, summarises the methods used and defines the terms essential for this thesis. The first two chapters focus on the concept of animal welfare, the development of legal protection of farmed animals in primary and secondary law, a brief outline of the role of animal welfare in EU international trade policy, institutions responsible for creating relevant law and policy and the conceptual, administrative and economic instruments used to protect and promote animal welfare in EU law. Chapter three focuses on the on-farm animal welfare legislation, specifically the four species-specific directives on the protection of laying hens, chickens kept for meat production, pigs and calves. However, it also offers a brief excursus into current trends in the farming of other population-rich species, highlighting the urgent need to provide these animals with strong species-specific protection. Chapters four and five deal with requirements for the transport and killing of animals in EU law, with a particular focus on problematic aspects of the legislation. The conclusion offers a summary of the most relevant findings and provides answers to the research questions set out in the conclusion.

Keywords: farmed animals, European Union law, animal welfare