

# Recommendations to the formulation of EU regulation 2092/91 on organic livestock production

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Sustaining Animal Health and Food Safety in Organic Farming

A European Commission funded Concerted Action Project

# Outline

- SAFO and work on standard development
- Sections in CR 2092/91 relevant to animal health
- The main problem areas
- Three categories of challenges
- Key recommendations for the EU Regulation



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- Network of animal health & welfare and food safety in organic livestock production
- Supporting the process of development and implementation of EU-standards on organic livestock production
- Approx. 30 Members in EU and candidate countries
- 4 workshop on different themes  
Final workshop on 1/06/06

[www.safonetwork.org](http://www.safonetwork.org)

## WP 3: Standard development

- Standard development reports after workshops
  - Socio-economic aspects (WS 1)
  - Problems on the farm level (WS 2)
  - Food quality and safety (WS 3 and 4)
- Identify problem areas through survey of implementation of standards
- Final report with recommendations (to be completed)

# Background for the survey

- Organic herds have similar but not better health status than conventional farms
- Substantial variation between farms
- Diversity across Europe in terms of climate, implementation of livestock standards, market development

Qualitative survey of problems with implementation of standards to SAFO members in 19 countries



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# What is animal health?

Health is a state of unrestricted physical, physiological and psychological well-being, more than just the absence of disease and infirmity.

# **Annex IIB CR 2092/91**

## **Important sections for animal health**

***5.1-5.3 Disease prevention***

***3 Origin of animals and choice of breeds***

***4 Feeding***

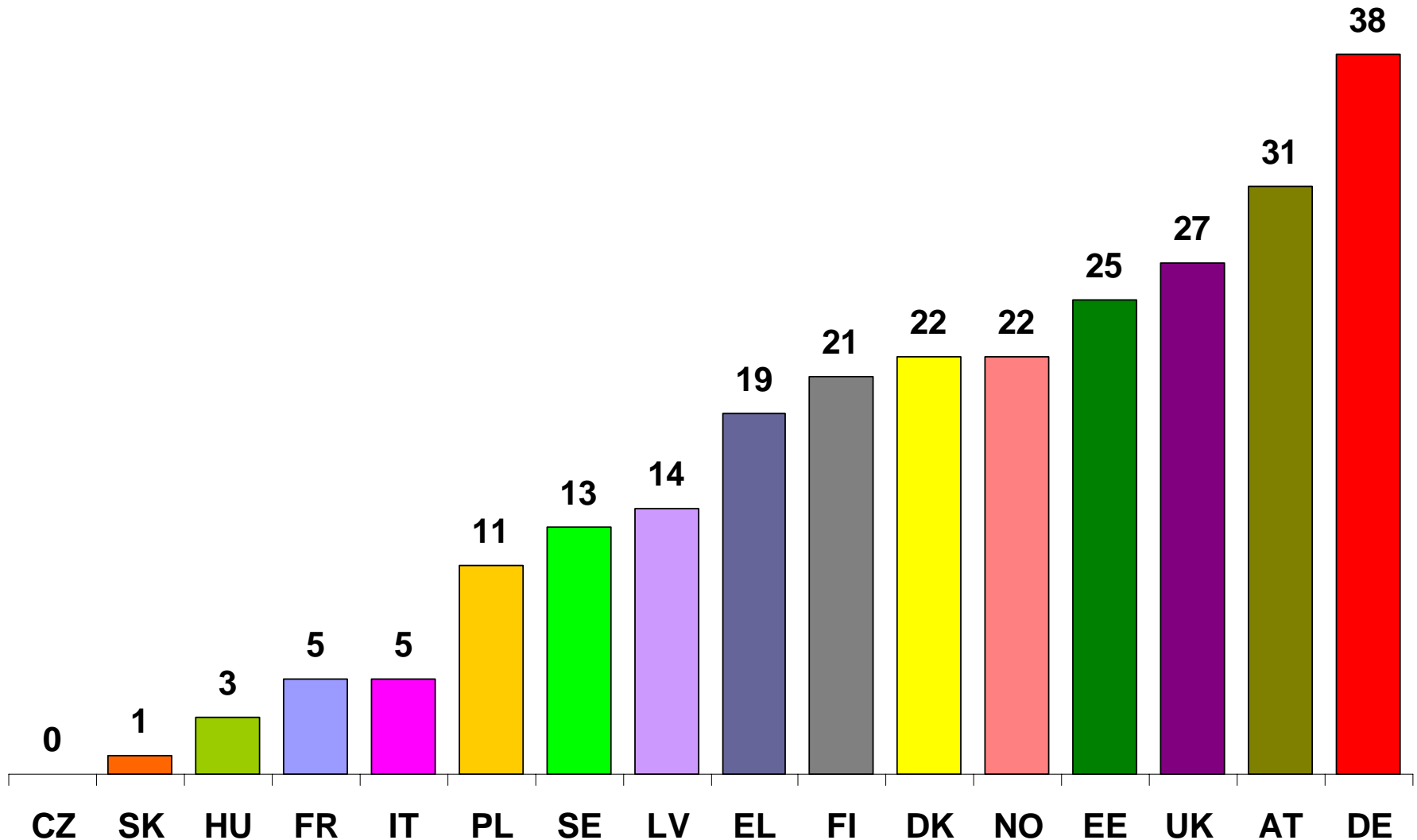
***6 Husbandry practise***

***1.4; 8 Access to pasturage and livestock housing***

***5.4 -5.8 Veterinay treatment***

# Is there a problem at the farm level with the implementation of specific paragraphs in your country?

No of "YES" Answers



# Problems with disease prevention

- Substantial differences in problem perception
- Lack of awareness
  - Need for disease prevention
  - Suitable practises
- Lack of knowledge about the details of the organic regulation in various areas

# Reported problems: Breeding and feeding

- Origin of animals
  - Limited information about health performance of breeds and in breeding programmes
  - Lack of awareness of bio-security issues
- Feeding
  - Problems with growing cereals, availability of feed
  - Failure to provide sufficient forage (to little for herbivores, no for pigs and poultry)

# Reported problems: Housing and outdoor access

- Housing
  - Housing conditions don't comply with “*meeting biological and ethological needs*”
  - Lack of knowledge about good housing systems
    - “*Experts say individual housing of calves is better for health*”
- Outdoor access
  - Required outdoor area not provided
    - space, tradition, costs
  - Failure to manage can increase parasite risk

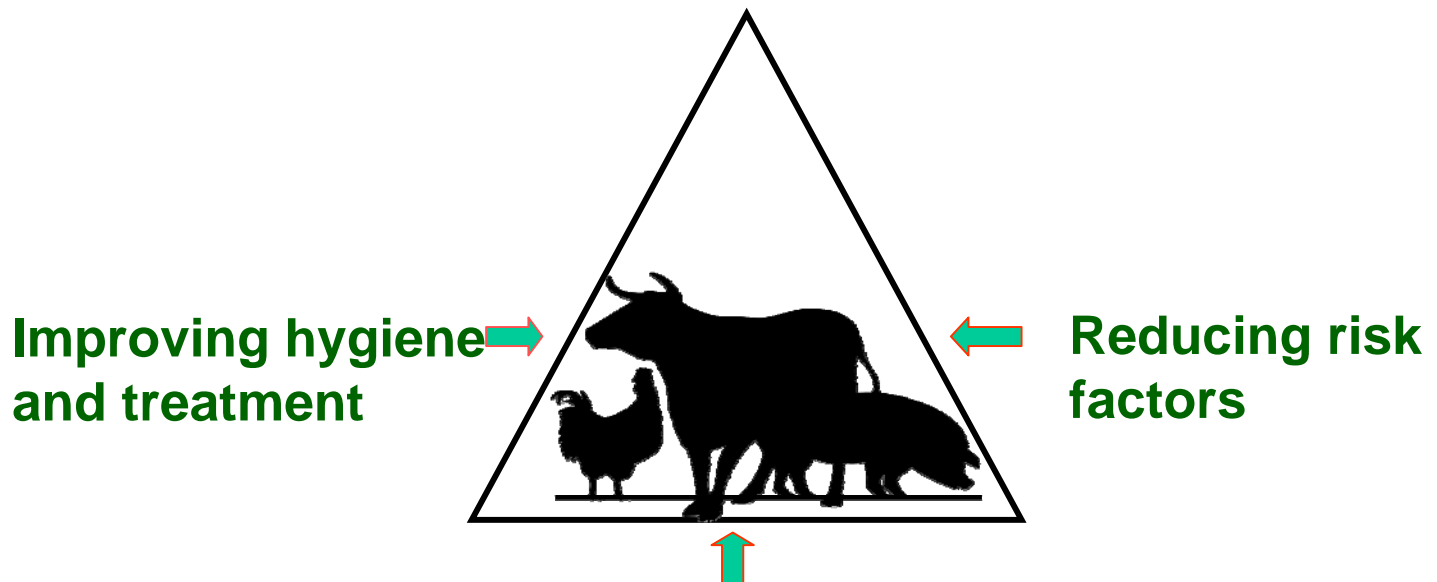
# Reported problems: Disease treatment

- Preference for alternative treatments, but
  - Lack of knowledge among veterinarians
  - Legal problems in some countries
- No proper record keeping of incidences and treatments

# Three main challenge areas

- 1. Implementation of rules and practices at the farm level**
- 2. Diversity between countries and regions**
- 3. Lack of clarity of the regulation**

# Animal health & welfare and food safety on organic farms is multi-factorial



**Strengthen the livestock's ability to fight disease through breeding, feeding, housing and outdoor access**

**Breeding**

**Feeding**

**Housing**

**Access to range**



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# Farm level implementation

- Support the development of robust systems through various means
  - Research, advice, standards
- Training for farmers, veterinarians, consultants and inspectors in preventive health management as a principle of organic livestock production

# Accommodating diversity

- Climatic diversity (climates and soils)
    - Animal species farmed
    - Availability of feedstuffs, bedding, outdoor area
  - Traditional farming and housing
  - Access to markets and premiums
- ⇒ Greater flexibility for some regional adaptation, whilst maintaining common principles is envisaged in proposal for new EU regulation

# Unclear terms in the rules

Interpretation of sections in Annex IIB (No.)

- ‘Natural milk’ (4.5, Annex IIC)
- ‘Regular exercise’ in (5.1 and 6.1.5)
- ‘Small holder derogation’ for tethering (6.1.6)
- Treatment or prevention (5.4 and 5.8)
  - sub-clinical conditions, anti-parasitic drugs and vaccines.
- ‘One course of a treatment’ (5.8)

# Key recommendations for the Organic Regulation

- Include a strong principle of animal health highlighting the need for prevention
- Mandatory animal health plan for each farm with regular updates
  - Evidence based, current status and risks factors
  - Health promotion strategies
- Guidelines for interpretation of rules
  - Examples of best practise
  - Improve clarity of some terms

# Key recommendations continued

- Stronger emphasis on animal health output and animal based assessment
- More regular monitoring of animal health data in the inspection/certification process
  - Recording of disease incidences and treatment
  - Mortality and morbidity rates
  - Somatic cell counts
  - Slaughterhouse data of fattening animals
- Establish non-compliance thresholds and catalogue of consequences ?

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## 5 SAFO workshops

**WS1:** Socio-economic aspects of animal health and food safety in organic farming systems (9/03, IT)

**WS2:** Organic livestock farming: potential and limitations of husbandry practice to secure animal health and welfare and food quality (3/04, DE)

**WS3:** Enhancing animal health security and food safety in organic livestock production (9/04, PL)

**WS4:** Systems development: quality and safety of organic livestock products (3/05, CH)

**WS5:** Final conclusions and recommendations (here)

# Reported problems: Origin of animals

- Lack of knowledge about breed performance under organic conditions
- Limited information about health parameters in breeding programmes
- Use of indigenous breeds
  - Use under commercial conditions
  - Very small animal numbers
- Lack of awareness of bio-security issues

## Reported problems: Feeding

- Growing cereals in certain areas
- Using home grown feed in appropriate diets
  - Lack of analysis for ration calculation
- Definition of 'natural milk'
  - Best practise maternal milk or milk of same species
  - Permitted ingredients defined in Annex II
- Failure to provide sufficient forage for herbivores
- No forage in the diet of pigs and poultry

# Reported problems: Housing

- Failure to provide housing conditions that comply with the standard of *meeting biological and ethological needs*
  - Lack of knowledge about good housing systems
  - Old buildings, lack of investment
  - Traditional housing
- “Experts say individual housing of calves is better for health”
- Current flock size of poultry too high?

# Reported problems: Outdoor access

- Failure to provide required access
  - Lack of space, fences (outdoor tethering)
  - Traditions and understanding the need
- Failure to manage outdoor areas
  - Increase risk of parasitic infections
  - Lack of knowledge about grazing and outdoor run management
- Special problems with poultry runs

# Reported problems: Disease treatment

- Preference for alternative treatments
  - Lack of knowledge among veterinarians
  - Legal problems in some countries
- Some confusion between the rules related to “prevention” and “treatment” for sub-clinical conditions
- Unclear definition of “one treatment course”
- No proper record keeping

# Other problems reported

- Limited awareness of food safety issues
- Prohibition of systematic mutilations
  - Dehorning of cattle and castrations are widespread
  - Possible breaches in relation to beak trimming