



Animal welfare and Climate Change

Annick Hus

Freelance journalist and researcher

Climate Arena Conference - Bologna, 19 October 2024

Environmental impact of EU farming

Contributes 10.3% of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions, with 70% coming from livestock (1)

Responsible for 93% of ammonia emissions in the EU (2)

Accounts for 59% of total freshwater use (3)

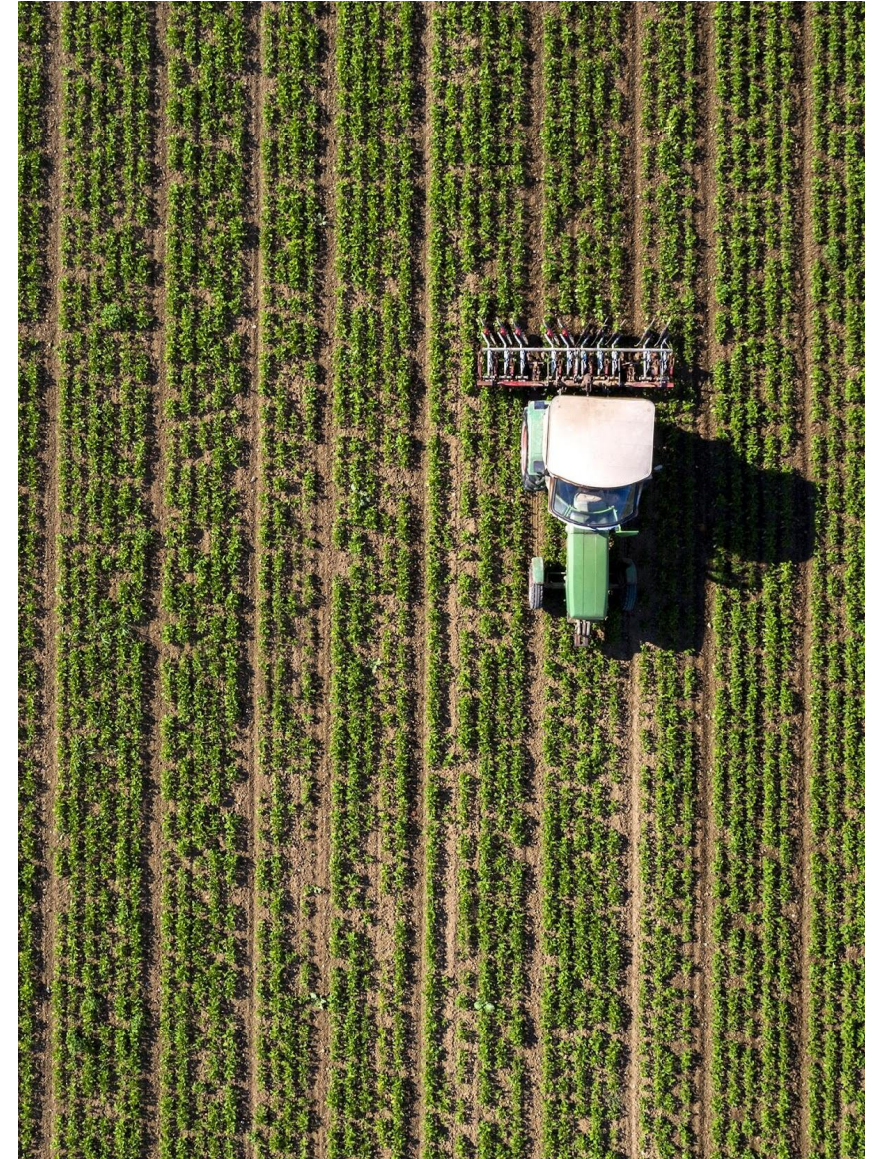
The sector pollutes 22% of surface water and 28% of groundwater. (3)

Ocean acidity has increased by 30% since the 1980s, partially due to agricultural impacts (3)

60% of EU soils are classified as unhealthy (4)

Agricultural activities are the primary driver of biodiversity loss (5)

...



Animal Welfare's role in sustainability

Animal welfare = investment in long-term sustainability

Good welfare practices contribute to more resource efficient, lower emission farming

Benefits of healthier animals

- Higher product quality and growth rate
- Lower mortality
- Reduced use of antibiotics

= More efficient and environmentally friendly farming



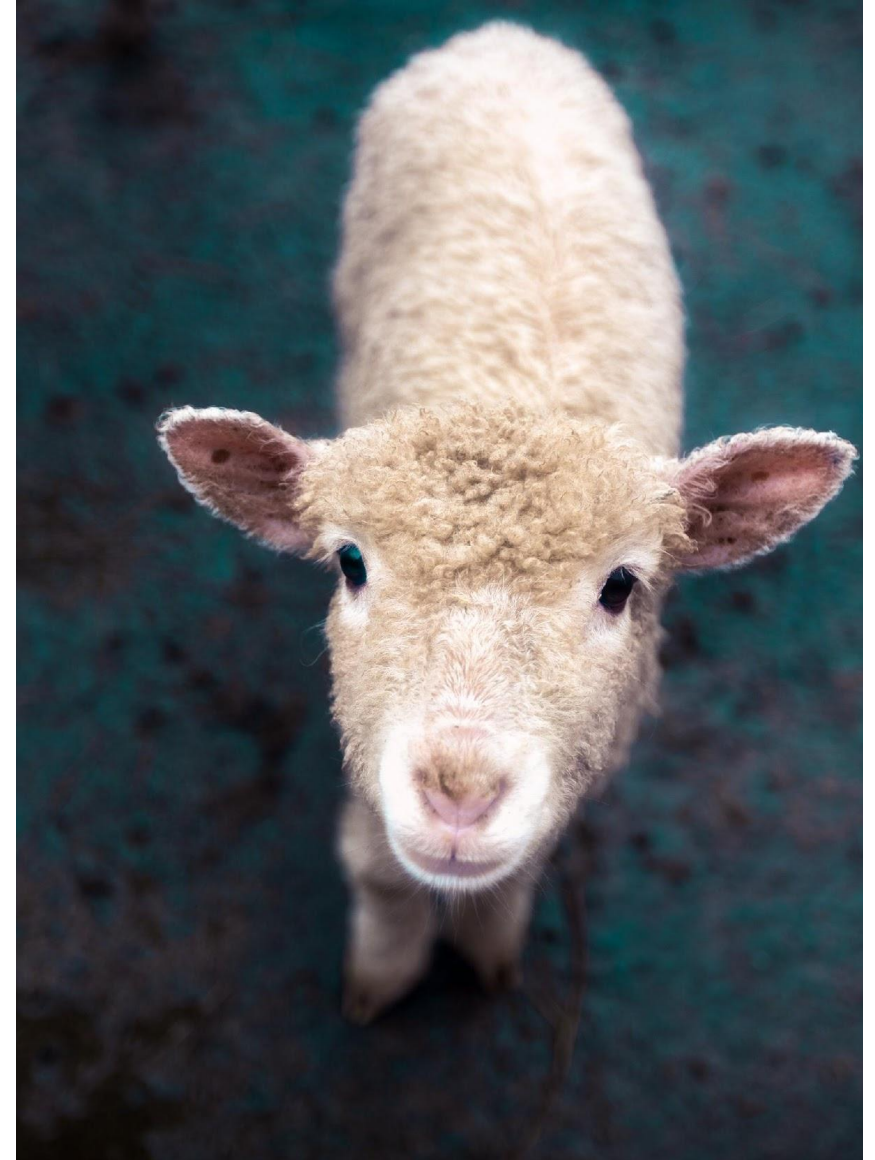
Animal welfare: cost or investment?

Livestock sector sees welfare as a cost

- Better living conditions, veterinary costs and more space seen as burdens
- Cost efficiency and productivity take precedence over welfare

Future-proofing farming = investing in animal welfare

- Fewer animals
- Higher welfare standards



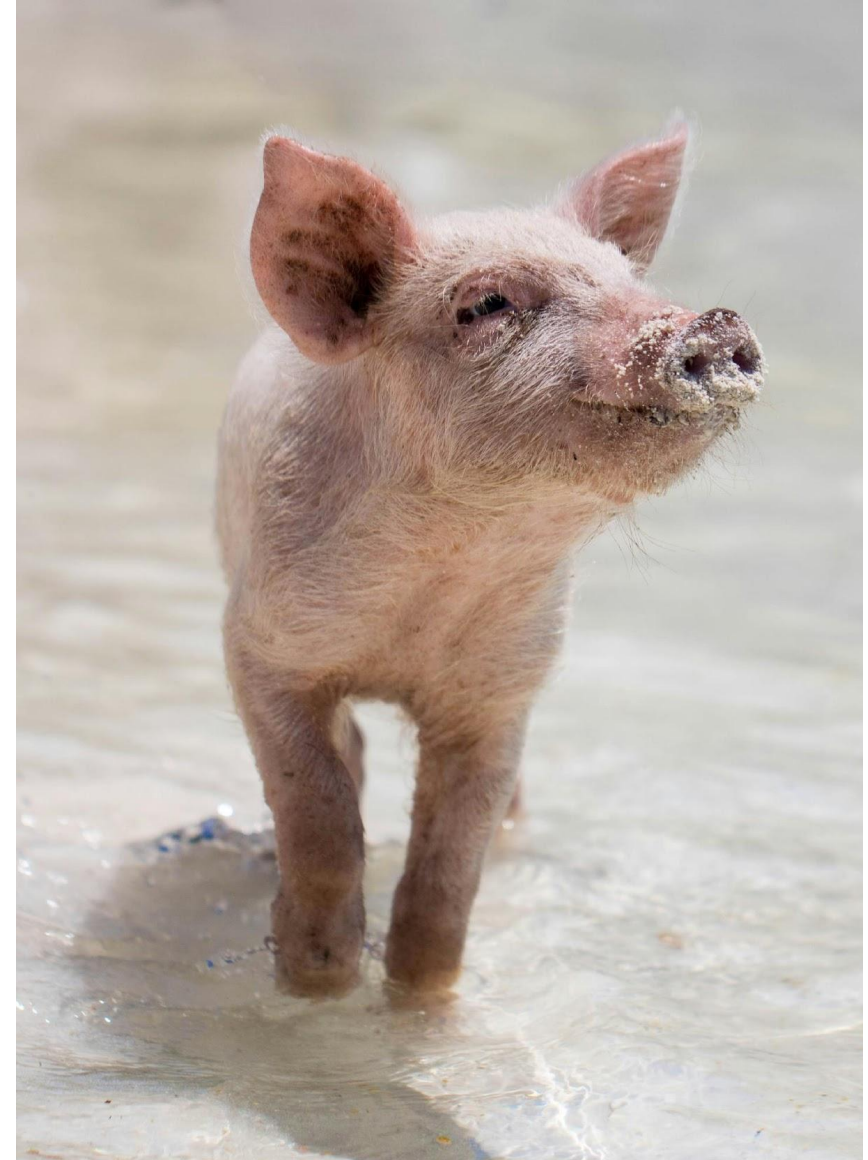
Consequences of ignoring animal welfare

Poor animal welfare is associated with:

- Increased stress and health problems
- Increased risk of zoonotic diseases
- Reduced productivity
- Greater use of resources
- Higher emissions

Resulting in:

- Increased costs





Investigating animal welfare
on a local level

De Belgiëëroute: hoe de Nederlandse vee-industrie gewonde en zieke dieren in onze slachthuizen dumpst

By Annick Hus · 2 March 2024 · #dierenwelzijn, #Landbouw, #veehouderij, #veesector



Hoewel Nederland al jaren pogingen vinden gewonde en zieke dieren via c wanpraktijken blijven vaak ongestraf

Vlaanderen als afvoerputje van Nederlandse vrak vee

De Belgiëë-route

Europese wetgeving verbiedt lidstaten om ziek of gewond vee te vervoeren, ook over de landsgrenzen heen. Toch dumpst de Nederlandse vee-industrie trouweloze dieren nog steeds in Vlaamse slachthuizen.

Wester den Boer en Annick Hus
23 februari 2024 · verschenen in nr. 8



Verrezenen van een slachthuis in België, december 2022

Transport of sick animals

- EU law prohibits transport of sick animals and those over 90% pregnant
- Focus mainly on long-distance transport, but short journeys also pose problems
- Sick and pregnant Dutch dairy cows and pigs often dumped at Belgian slaughterhouses
- Authorities ignore problems of lax controls on transport and slaughter
- Authorities in both countries fail to respond to complaints

→ Most information gathered through government reports and FOI requests

Sustainable livestock farming in densely populated areas

- Definitions of sustainable farming?
 - Land sharing VS. land sparing
- Data
 - Percentage of land allocated to sustainable livestock farming?
 - Number of animals reared intensively vs. sustainably?

→ Check government documents, industry reports, academic papers

- Legislation and infrastructure
 - Which farming practices are government-supported?

→ Check government documents, subsidy schemes, industry reports

Interviews with industry professionals:

- Livestock farmers, farmers' unions, abattoirs, transport companies

→ Very challenging and time consuming

ECONOMY CLIMATE

Is sustainable livestock farming possible in densely populated Flanders and Netherlands?

23 December 2023



apache /

NIEUWS

Brandveiligheid stallen ondermaats, aantal stalbranden onbekend

2 september 2019 Annick Hus



Een luchtfoto van een stal aan de Pannehoeven in Heusden waar bij een brand ongeveer 4000 varkens om het leven kwamen in 2018 (Foto: Rob Engelaar, ANP)

Animal welfare vs. environmental friendly technology

Barn fires

- No figures available
 - Number of barn fires unknown
 - Unknown number of animals killed

→ Local media coverage gave an idea of the number of dead animals and the frequency of barn fires.

Poor / non-existent legislation

- Who is responsible for following up? Not clear

Green technology exacerbates barn fires

- Air washers accelerate fires
- Closed stalls don't allow animals to escape

Lobby / subsidy / misinformation

How does national lobbying work?

→ Check who is talking to whom, industry and government documents, FOI requests

How much state money goes to the livestock industry?

→ Check annual reports, subsidy schemes

Industry communication strategies

→ Check tools like leaflets and videos, identify misinformation and framing techniques

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ONDERZOEK

kenssector zwemt in subsidies Vlaamse overheid

4 juli 2022 Annick Hus



Vlaanderen blijft geld pompen in promotie van vlees

27 juli 2022 Annick Hus



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ONDERZOEK

Indbouwsector misbruikt oorlog in Oekraïne om afbouw veestapel te blokkeren


30 mei 2022 Annick Hus



Wolby wil alle beschikbare gronden voor voedselproductie benutten en ligt divers om de dierstofuitstoot naar

Dierenwelzijn steeds meer een thema bij verkiezingen

Het voorbije decennium kreeg het welzijn van dieren in België en ook Nederland een prominentere plaats in nationale verkiezingsprogramma's. Dat blijkt uit een studie van onderzoekster Annick Hus die recent gepubliceerd werd in het wetenschappelijke tijdschrift 'Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics'. Voor het onderzoek werden 2.600 verklaringen van politieke partijen geanalyseerd.

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The Political Salience of Animal Protection in the Netherlands (2012–2021) and Belgium (2010–2019): What do Dutch and Belgian Political Parties Pledge on Animal Welfare and Wildlife Conservation?

[Articles](#) | [Open access](#) | Published: 06 February 2023

Volume 36, article number 4, (2023) [Cite this article](#)



[Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics](#)

National and local political focus on animal welfare

Analysis of party manifestos over the years

- Apparent focus on EU legislation
- Increased attention to livestock farming
- Left-wing parties = sustainable farming and animal welfare (land sharing)
- Right-wing parties = technology as solution (land sparing)



Get in touch: hus.annick@gmail.com

Join the Animal Welfare Network (Signal Group): scan QR code

