

A photograph of a brown deer standing in a green field. In the background, several black and white cows are grazing. The text is overlaid on the image.

COUNCIL ON ANIMAL AFFAIRS  
2011-2013

PART 2  
EFFECTS, ACTIVITIES AND  
PEOPLE



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# COUNCIL ON ANIMAL AFFAIRS

## 2011-2013

### PART 2

### EFFECTS, ACTIVITIES AND PEOPLE



RAAD VOOR DIERENAANGELEGENHEDEN

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# 1. The effect of earlier Opinions

The societal impact of an Opinion of the Council for Animal Affairs (*Raad voor Dierenaangelegenheden*, RDA) generally takes a little time to materialise. In the present reporting period the Council was therefore able to observe the effects on public debate of Opinions that had been published during the previous reporting period. The following sections provide a summary of these effects.

## 1.1 Animal health and welfare in megabusineses (*Diergezondheid en dierenwelzijn op megabedrijven, 2008*)

“In principle, animal welfare and health will be no better or worse in a megabusiness than in one of today’s ‘family firms’,” stated this Opinion, rejecting the idea that scale increases and animal welfare cannot go together. At the same time the Council observed that a relatively large distance between individual megabusineses entails fewer serious animal health risks than when such businesses agglomerate. In family firms there is a high likelihood of a relatively small disaster, and in megabusineses there is a small chance of a large disaster. Where numerous large businesses are located close together, there is therefore a relatively high likelihood of a serious animal health disaster.

This Opinion was mentioned on several occasions in the Dutch House of Representatives. This occurred, for instance, during the round table discussions on ‘Scale increases in intensive livestock farming’ (*Schaalgrootte intensieve veehouderij*), held on 16 May 2012 and organised by the then Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation (*Vaste Kamercommissie Economische Zaken, Landbouw en Innovatie*). The Council



Photo: Nationale Beeldbank

delivered a position paper stating that new insights had been obtained since the publication of its Opinion, and that the Council had published new Opinions relevant to the problem. These point out, for instance, that a cost-price-driven livestock market obstructs innovation, and that giving animal welfare a prominent position in innovation policy might well deliver more benefit than directing policy towards a level playing field.

The attention given to this subject has led, in part thanks to the RDA Opinion, to a number of initiatives to make intensive livestock farming more sustainable, and to a more balanced way of handling scale increases, such as the ‘Brabant model’ which makes use of the ‘Brabant Livestock Farming Care Score’ (*Brabantse Zorgvuldigheidsscore Veehouderij*).

## 1.2 Visibly better: the role of the veterinarian in the general interest (*Zichtbaar beter: de rol van de dierenarts voor het algemeen belang, 2009*)

In this Opinion the Council took as a basic principle that a veterinarian works not only to heal sick animals but also to perform certain societal tasks, such as the monitoring of animal welfare, food safety, and public health.

The Council emphasised that veterinarians must be independent in order to fulfil this authority role, and advised on how to strengthen the independence and professionalism of veterinarians.

This Opinion was also included as an appendix to the *Tijdschrift voor Diergeneeskunde*, the journal of the Royal Dutch Society for Veterinary Medicine (KNMvD)<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Tijdschrift voor Diergeneeskunde*, 1 October 2009



Together with two reports from the Berenschot bureau<sup>2</sup> the Opinion also contributed towards the decision by the KNMvD and livestock farming organisations to establish a Veterinary Medicine Authority (*Stichting Diergeneesmiddelenautoriteit*, Sda), to promote transparency in the prescription and use of drugs in the livestock industry.

The Dutch government has introduced laws and regulations to strengthen the role of veterinarians as independent gatekeepers of the use of pharmaceuticals on livestock, such as the ‘Exclusively By Veterinarian’ (*Uitsluitend Door Dierenarts*, UDD) regulations passed in April 2014. The attempt to decouple the prescription and selling of veterinarian pharmaceuticals has thereby been

<sup>2</sup> *Naar een Nederlands Model: de positie van de dierenarts bij het verminderen van het gebruik van antibiotica in de veehouderij* (Towards a Dutch Model: the position of the veterinarian in reducing the use of antibiotics in the livestock industry); Berenschot, November 2011 and *Wat zijn de effecten van het ontkoppelen van voorschrijven en verhandelen van diergeneesmiddelen door de dierenarts* (What are the effects of decoupling the veterinarian prescription and trade of veterinary pharmaceuticals?); Berenschot, February 2010.

abandoned, in line with the Council’s findings. Finally, the Opinion contributed towards the setting up of a quality control system for veterinarians: ‘Quality Assurance of Veterinarians’ (*De Geborgde Dierenarts*).

### 1.3 Responsible Animal Keeping (*Verantwoord Houden*, 2009)

An animal’s keeper is primarily responsible for its welfare, including its health, concluded the Council in this Opinion. The government is ultimately responsible for the quality of life of animals in the Netherlands, and to this end should take an organisational, protective, and promotional role. The report effectively forms a guide clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in keeping animals in the Netherlands. It also describes how animal welfare in 2009 should be defined and how a ‘satisfactory level of animal welfare’ can be achieved.

The Council itself handled the publication of this Opinion. ‘Responsible Animal Keeping’ laid the foundations for

future Opinions by the Council on such related topics as:

- ‘Animal Breeding and Reproduction Techniques’ (*Fokkerij en Voortplantingstechnieken*, 2010)
- ‘Profitable Welfare’ (*Winstgevend welzijn*, 2012)
- ‘Duty of Care, Naturally’ (*Zorgplicht natuurlijk gewogen*, 2012)
- ‘Setting Conditions on Animal Ownership’ (*Onder voorwaarden houden van dieren*, 2013)

There was considerable Dutch media interest in this Opinion, including in the *Algemeen Dagblad* (‘Permanent ban for anyone ill-treating an animal’), *De Telegraaf* (‘Keeping animals is not a human right’), and *Trouw* (‘Animal welfare should be in the Constitution’); on the animal welfare websites *Dierenwelzijnsweb* (‘Optimum level of animal welfare the new starting point’) and *Dierennieuws* (‘Final responsibility for animal welfare should be in the Constitution’); in VARA radio broadcasts and on specialist websites such as that of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Utrecht University.

### 1.4 Animal Breeding and Reproduction Techniques (*Fokkerij en Voortplantingstechnieken*, 2010)

In this Opinion the Council made a number of recommendations for managing animal breeding in a socially responsible and transparent way. It included a recommendation to use the Council’s own Assessment Model for Animal Breeding and Reproduction Techniques, and advised government to set frameworks and conditions. The Council also proposed four frameworks as starting points for animal breeders:

- the preservation of vitality and physical health;
- the preservation of the behaviour and mental health typical of the species;
- the preservation of integrity;

- the preservation of genetic diversity.

In December 2010 the Minister for Agriculture presented the Opinion to the Dutch House of Representatives. He also gave his initial responses to the Opinion, by reference to current policy dossiers, and agreed to respond later to other parts of the Opinion. In September 2011 the Minister presented the Dutch House of Representatives with his vision of animal breeding policy in relation to animal health and welfare, as he had announced. He had adopted almost every one of the Opinion's standpoints, including the principle that breeding should take place within the frameworks advised by the Council. He also endorsed the idea of the Council's proposed 'test polders' in which different stakeholders could work together towards responsible animal breeding.

The Opinion stirred up the ethics debate on animal breeding and reproduction technologies and laid the foundations for the Ministerial policy line on such breeding. For instance, the draft decision on companion animals took its framework from the RDA Opinion. The opinion also led to a wide variety of initiatives from businesses, associations and joint ventures. For example, in 2011 three large animal breeding companies came up with an initiative to apply the Council's assessment framework in the above-mentioned 'test polders'. They were very pleased with the results and intend to apply the framework more widely in their daily activities. The Raad van Beheer Dutch Kennel Club also initiated an action plan for dog breeding.

### 1.5 Moral issues and public policy on animals (*Agenda voor het Dierbeleid, 2010*)

In this Opinion the Council identified seven government tasks for the coming years:

- use a transparent, integrated 'Assessment Model for Policy on Animals' (*Afwegingsmodel voor Dierbeleid*) to formulate and fulfil policy;

Photo: Marcel van den Bergh | EZ



- take regular stock of animal keeping knowledge and moral views in a 'Thinking about Animals Trend Analysis' (*Trendanalyse Denken over Dieren*);
- use the Assessment Model for Policy on Animals to obtain up-to-date answers to the following questions:
  - a. justification for the fact that we keep animals;
  - b. justification of the objectives for which we keep animals. This consideration should lead to a 'Positive and Negative Objectives List for Keeping Animals' (*Positief- en Negatieflijst Doelstellingen Dierhouderij*);
- interpret the RDA Opinion 'Responsible Animal Keeping' on the way we keep animals;
- include basic information on keeping and handling animals in primary school lessons;
- promote transparency in all forms of animal keeping;
- inventorise roles and responsibilities having regard to non-captive and semi-captive animals in nature areas and in the wild.

The Council also urged that answers be found to three ethical questions, namely: are we allowed to keep animals?

If so, for what purposes? In what way should we do so?

In a Motion of June 2011 the Dutch House of Representatives asked the government to develop an assessment model comparable to the one recommended in the Opinion. Following the Opinion, the (then) Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation (EL&I) drew up 'Thinking about Animals Trend Analysis: an animal and a thing, a blessing and a care' (*Trendanalyse Denken over Dieren: dier en ding, zegen en zorg*) and sent it to the House of Representatives in June 2012. The analysis was used in formulating the memorandum on Animal Health and Welfare (*Dierenwelzijn en Diergezondheid*) from the Minister of EL&I.

The Ministry also organised the project 'Justification for keeping animals' (*Rechtvaardiging voor het houden van dieren*) in order to think more deeply about the fundamental question: For which purposes do we have a right to keep animals? The final report of this project, which received enthusiastic responses of its participants, was presented to the House of Representatives. However, due in part to a change of cabinet, the report was never given substantive attention.

The Opinion 'Moral issues and public policy on animals', and its assessment model in particular, were also used in preparations for the conference 'Minding Animals 2012' held in Utrecht, which brought together academics (working in animal welfare, ethics and experiments), politicians, and interest groups.

Council chairperson Frauke Ohl also took part in this conference, as well as in the round table discussions on scale increases in intensive livestock farming organised by the Ministry of EL&I in May 2012. A Council paper based on 'Moral issues and public policy on animals' was used in preparations for these discussions.

Others, including the animal breeding sector, continue to make use of the RDA's assessment framework.

## 2 Other expressions and activities

Besides preparing and publishing its Opinions, the Council for Animal Affairs drew attention to its ideas in other ways during this reporting period. This section will briefly describe the most important of these activities.

### 2.1 Essay bundle: Are people paramount? Ethical dilemmas in health policy with adequate care for animals and nature (*De mens centraal? Ethische dilemma's bij gezondheidsbeleid met goede zorg voor dier en natuur, 2012*)

In 2012, in cooperation with the Netherlands Centre for Ethics and Health (CeG) and the Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (Rli) the Council created an essay bundle on the question: 'To what extent should future human health care policies take greater account of nature in general and animals in particular?' Several RDA members contributed an essay to this bundle:

- 'Animals are the plaything of selective empathy and selective policy' (*Dieren zijn de speelbal van selectieve empathie en selectief beleid*, M. de Jong-Timmerman)
- 'The effects of public health policy on nature and biodiversity: the need to raise consciousness' (*Effecten van volksgezondheidsbeleid op natuur en biodiversiteit: bewustwording noodzakelijk*, Prof. A.A. Freriks)
- 'Towards an assessment model for health policy: designing a tool to identify moral issues in Dutch health policy' (*Naar een afwegingsmodel voor gezondheidsbeleid: ontwerp van een instrument voor de identificatie van morele vraagstukken in het Nederlandse gezondheidsbeleid*, Prof. F. Ohl & Dr F.J.M. Meijboom)

On 5 April 2012 the bundle was presented to Prof. Louise Fresco, then professor specialising in the foundations of



Photo: De Beeldkuil

sustainable development in international at the University of Amsterdam. It was simultaneously sent to the Dutch Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport and to the Minister of EL&I.

There have been a number of citations from these essays in the media, and the bundle also helped to inspire the One Health movement in the Netherlands, an approach which considers that a close relationship exists between human and animal health.

### 2.2 Round table discussion: The mink industry (*Pelsdierhouderij, 2012*)

On 7 June 2012 the RDA chairperson took part in round table discussions on the Dutch mink industry that had been organised by the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation (EL&I). She did so on the basis of a position paper by the Council, which argued that the problem should be approached by answering the same three questions that had been addressed in 'Moral issues and public policy on animals' (see p.5). 1. Are we allowed to keep animals? 2. If so, for which purposes

may we do so? 3. In what way should we do so? A bill to ban mink farming altogether<sup>3</sup>, put forward by House members Van Velzen and Waalkens, bases its claims on animal welfare aspects (i.e. question 3), and its principal argument appears to be the undesirability of animal production for the purpose of luxury goods (i.e. question 2).

The bill was published on 14 January 2013 in the Government Gazette as the Fur Farming Prohibition Act (*Wet verbod pelsdierhouderij*).

### 2.3 Round table discussion: Scale increases in intensive livestock farming (*Schaalgrootte intensieve veehouderij, 2012*)

On 16 May 2012, Council chairperson Frauke Ohl took part, with an RDA position paper, in round table discussions on scale increases in intensive livestock farming that had been organised by the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation (EL&I). The position paper drew links between three RDA Opinions:

- ‘Animal health and welfare in megabusinesses’ (*Diergezondheid en dierenwelzijn op megabedrijven, 2008*)
- ‘Moral issues and public policy on animals’ (*Agenda voor het Dierbeleid, 2010*)
- ‘Profitable Welfare’ (*Winstgevend Welzijn, 2012*)

The RDA chairperson’s contribution emphasised the current level of societal unease about how production animals are treated in the Netherlands. If one confines one’s actions to limiting the scale of an enterprise, Ohl pointed out, then one mistakenly avoids the question of how we ought to treat production animals. The Committee did not adopt this line of reasoning.

<sup>3</sup> 2008: voorstel van wet van de houdende een verbod op de pelsdierhouderij (*Wet verbod pelsdierhouderij*) (kst-30826-1 et seq.); 2012: Voorstel van wet van de leden Van Gerven en Dijsselbloem tot nadere wijziging van de Wet verbod pelsdierhouderij (kst-33076-1 et seq.).

### 2.4 Minister for Agriculture participated in RDA meeting

To become acquainted with the Council, Dutch Minister for Agriculture Sharon Dijksma took part in the RDA meeting of 8 April 2013. There was discussion on the role of the RDA, on solicited and unsolicited Opinions, on the topics for which recommendations are issued, and on cooperation between the Council and the Ministry. It was an animated conversation, and the Minister expressed her pleasure in having her own panel of experts. She

emphasised the independence and autonomy of the Council in forming its Opinions, both in regard to content and the choice of topic. It would be up to the Council and the Ministry to safeguard that independence.

Agreements were also reached on the consideration of strategic agendas, so that Council Opinions would be available on appropriate subjects and at the right moment. It was agreed that in subsequent talks attention would be given to using the Council’s Opinions in formulating government policy.



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## 3 The Council at work

### 3.1 History

The Council for Animal Affairs (*Raad voor Dieren-aangelegenheden*, RDA) was established in 1993, on the basis of Article 2 of the Animal Health and Welfare Act (*Gezondheids- en welzijnswet voor dieren*), as an advisory council of the Dutch Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV). Its original remit was animal welfare, animal health, and biotechnology. All Dutch governmental 'General Administrative Orders' (*Algemene Maatregelen van Bestuur*, AMvB) relating to these issues were to be presented to the Council for its advice. The Council was also at liberty to advise the Minister on its own initiative.

The current composition and function of the Council is the result of a number of modifications made since its inception in 1993. In 1997 the introduction of the Dutch 'Adjustment Act on the Revision of the Advisory System' (*Aanpassingswet Herziening Adviesstelsel*) removed the obligation to place AMvBs before the Council. The presiding Minister also decided to shift the Council's focus towards providing a discussion platform for animal keepers. As before, the results of the discussions on this platform were generally presented to the Minister of LNV as solicited or unsolicited advisory reports.

The years that followed saw numerous developments in animal welfare, animal health and biotechnology, and in 2001 the cabinet decided to bring the area of biotechnology within the remit of the Animal Biotechnology Committee (*Commissie Biotechnologie bij Dieren*, CBD), under the joint responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS).

In 2008 the Council was formally evaluated, with a number of changes being instituted as a result. In 2009 its composition was altered. Modelled on the Health Council of the Netherlands, the RDA is now a body of independent

scientific and professional experts. 'Professional experts' in this regard are persons with specific practical knowledge of, or who have access to a special network in, a certain animal-related sector. The Council is thereby enabled to formulate well-balanced Opinions informed by a great many perspectives, both practical and scientific.

In the present reporting period the Council's expertise was broadened to include knowledge on semi-captive and non-captive animals, so that the Council would also be able to advise on these areas. The Council generally seeks to include members having a broad expertise that allows them to think outside the domain of their own particular working lives and backgrounds.

### 3.2 Current objectives and composition

Today the RDA is a council of experts advising the Minister for Agriculture on issues with regard to national and international policy on animal health and welfare. A Council Opinion is either explicitly solicited by the Minister, or is provided unsolicited, that is, on the Council's own initiative. The issues it considers are frequently complex and multidisciplinary, and the Council strives to base its findings on the most recent scientific, social and ethical developments. The RDA formally comprises 'a chairperson and no more than 49 other members', all of whom serve on the Council in a personal capacity, without obligation or compulsion. The professional experts are therefore not fulfilling any representative roles in the Council. In the present reporting period the Council had about 40 members. The members are appointed by the Minister for Agriculture. The Ministries of Economic Affairs and of Health, Welfare and Sport nominate members in consultation with the Council. The Council attaches great importance to the independence of its opinion-forming process, and for this reason its meetings are no longer attended by representatives of either Ministry.

#### In memoriam: Prof. Henk Vaarkamp



On Thursday evening, 13 October 2011, Prof. Henk Vaarkamp passed away unexpectedly at the age of 61. The news of his death was received with dismay in Dutch veterinarian and animal-keeping circles.

Since 2006 Henk Vaarkamp had been the conspicuous chairman of the Council for Animal Affairs. In late 2010 Minister Bleker also appointed him as chairman of the Management Advisory Committee of the Oostvaardersplassen nature reserve. Henk Vaarkamp was also Vice-Dean of the faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Utrecht University, professor of its pharmacy, a member of the Management Board of the European Medicines Agency, a commissioner of the Rabobank in his city of residence, and was involved in countless other initiatives in the area of veterinary medicine and animal keeping.

Henk was above all party politics and interests, and he had an extraordinary talent for telling people the unvarnished truth in the friendliest imaginable way, after which the thorniest problems seemed to just melt away. He was a people person, always seeking to understand what motivated others. He was an easy conversationalist with a huge repertoire of incredible anecdotes, and a hard worker, who lived his life by the motto of the Royal Dutch Society for Veterinary Medicine: 'For the well-being of man and animal'.

He is greatly missed.

### 3.3 RDA members and their backgrounds (members appointed per 1/9/2012\*)

**Name**  
*Expertise*  
Area (Professional, Science, and/or Policy)

**Prof. J.A.M. van Arendonk**

*Animal breeding and genetics*  
Science

**Dr H.M.G. van Beers**

*Pig breeding; veterinary pharmacology*  
Science, Professional

**Dr F.W.A. Brom**

*Ethics*  
Science, Policy

**Mr A.G. Dijkhuis**

*Fauna management; spatial planning*  
Professional, Policy

**W. van Eijk**

*Aquaculture*  
Professional, Policy

**Prof. A.A. Freriks**

*Animals & Rights; environmental rights*  
Science, Professional

**Prof. L.J. Hellebrekers**

*Veterinary medicine; companion animals*  
Policy, Science

**Prof. W.H. Hendriks**

*Animal nutrition*  
Science

**Dr S.A. Hertzberger**

*Retail*  
Professional, Policy

**J. Hesterman**

*Smallholder animal keeping*  
Professional

**A.J.M. van Hoof**

*Dairy farming; animal health*  
Professional, Policy

**Dr H. Hopster**

*Animal welfare*  
Science, Policy

**Prof. R.B.M. Huirne**

*Animal production and economics*  
Science, Professional, Policy

**M.J.B. Jansen**

*Retail*  
Policy

**Prof. M.C.M. de Jong**

*Veterinary epidemiology*  
Science

**J.Th. de Jongh**

*Companion animals (professional)*  
Policy

**M. de Jong**

*Animal protection*  
Policy

**J. Kaandorp**

*Zoo animals*  
Science, Professional, Policy

**Prof. F. van Knapen**

*Veterinary public health*  
Science, Policy

**Prof. P.A. Koolmees**

*History of veterinary medicine*  
Science

**J. Lokhorst**

*Horse keeping*  
Professional, Policy

**Dr C. van Maanen**

*Virology*  
Science

**Dr F.L.B. Meijboom**

*(Animal) Ethics*  
Science

**Prof. D.J. Mevius**

*Infectious diseases; immunology*  
Science

**Prof. F. Ohl, chairperson**

*Behavioural biology; animal welfare*  
Science

**Dr A. Ploeg †**

*Companion animals*  
Professional, Policy

**P.I. Polman**

*Smallholder animal keeping*  
Professional, Policy

**P. Poortinga**

*Poultry keeping*  
Professional, Policy

**F. van der Schans**

*Agriculture and environment*  
Science, Policy

**Prof. M.M. Sloet van Oldruitenborg-**

**Oosterbaan**  
*Horse breeding; equine medicine*  
Science, Policy, Professional

**Prof. F.J. van Sluijs**

*Companion animals*  
Science

**Prof. J.A. Stegeman**

*Farm animal health*  
Science

**M.H.A. Steverink**

*Organic cattle farming; intermediate sectors; chain management*  
Professional, Policy

**H.W.A. Swinkels**

*Veal farming*  
Professional, Policy

**H.M. van Veen**

*Animal protection; hallmarks*  
Policy, Professional

**P.J. Vingerling**

*Intermediate sectors; chain management*  
Professional

**Prof. C.M.J. van Woerkum**

*Communications*  
Science

**W. Zwanenburg**

*Pig farming*  
Professional, Policy

\* Except Dr F.J.M. Meijboom, who was appointed on 1/7/2013.

### Honourably discharged Council members

**Dr F.W.A. Brom**, as of 1/9/2012

**J. Lokhorst**, as of 1/11/2013

**Dr C. van Maanen**, as of 1/9/2012

**Prof. D.J. Mevius**, as of 1/9/2012

**P. Poortinga**, as of 1/9/2012

**Prof. F.J. van Sluijs**, as of 1/9/2012

**Prof. C.M.J. van Woerkum**, as of 1/9/2012

\* Alex Ploeg – together with his wife, their son, and a friend – died when Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 crashed on 17 July 2014. We will miss his strong commitment to the Council's work.

### 3.4 Working method

Most of the substantive work that goes into the preparation of a Council Opinion is done by 'forums'. These each generally comprise five to ten Council members, sometimes supplemented by external experts. For each topic the chairperson of the Council sets up such a forum from those members having relevant expertise. The forum is chaired by a Council member.

The forum meets as often as is required. It first draws up a draft Opinion, which is then given comment by all Council members in a 'horizontal check'. With due regard for the resulting comments, and in consultation with the chairperson of the Council, the forum then draws up its definitive Opinion. The Opinion is therefore shared by the entire Council for Animal Affairs.

Within the Council there does not need to be a consensus on a given Opinion under all circumstances; an Opinion can also contain minority viewpoints. An Opinion generally contains an inventory of the relevant scientific knowledge, the societal forces at play, and the consequent policy alternatives. Where possible, the ethical aspects of an issue are elaborated. An Opinion may, if desired, indicate a policy preference, but actual policy decisions remain a political choice.

After having published its Opinion, the forum concerned is dissolved.

### 3.5 Participation

In the present reporting period the Council had four plenary sessions:

- 17 November 2011 in the NH hotel in The Hague,
- 17 February 2012 in Kasteel Groeneveld in Baarn,
- 14 December 2012 in Kasteel Groeneveld in Baarn,
- 8 April 2013 at the KiVi Niria in The Hague.

Participation levels in Council meetings have clearly shown a rising trend in the present reporting period. 56% of the members took part in the 2011 meeting; 66% were present at the first 2012 meeting; 72% came to the second meeting that year; and 82% attended the meeting in 2013. The average meeting participation level over this reporting period was therefore 69%.

As was mentioned, four forums were active during this reporting period. On the basis of their individual expertise 18 members took part in these forums, four of whom were on two of these forums.

### 3.6 The approach to Opinions in this reporting period

#### *Guidelines on Geese Culling (Richtsnoer Ganzendoden, 2012)*

The RDA office drew up a discussion paper on the basis of the scientific literature and expert knowledge. The Ministry of Economic Affairs then presented the paper for consultation to a number of stakeholders: the participants in the *Gezen-7* Geese Agreement, the Dutch animal protection society *Dierenbescherming*, and the Royal Dutch Hunting Association (*Koninklijke Nederlandse Jagersvereniging*). On the basis of all this the RDA office drew up a draft Opinion. After two rounds of 'horizontal checks' a definitive version was created.



Photo: Provincie Noord-Holland

#### *Animal health and welfare in megabusineses (Diergezondheid en dierenwelzijn op megabedrijven, 2008)*

This was set up in accordance with the RDA's pre-2009 working method. The RDA office drew up a draft Opinion, and this was discussed on two occasions during plenary Council meetings.



Photo: Nationale Beeldbank

#### *Profitable Welfare: improving farm animal welfare by facilitating innovation processes and using market forces (Winstgevend Welzijn, over het creëren van kansen, 2012)*

**Forum members:** Dr S.A. Hertzberger, Dr H. Hopster, P. Poortinga, M.H.A. Steverink, MFM (chairperson), H.W.A. Swinkels, H.M. van Veen, P.J. Vingerling, W. Zwanenburg.

**Forum meetings:** 1 February 2012, 4 April 2012, 3 May 2012 and 7 June 2012.



Photo: Buiten-Beeid/Marcel vandenBergh

#### *Visibly better: the role of the veterinarian in the general interest (Zichtbaar beter: de rol van de dierenarts voor het algemeen belang, 2009)*

**Forum members:** Prof. L.J. Hellebrekers, Prof. F. van Knapen (chairperson), Prof. P.A. Koolmees, P. Poortinga, F.C. van der Schans, Prof. J.A. Stegeman, H.W.A. Swinkels, W. Zwanenburg.

**External expert:** W. Koster.



Photo: Buiten-Beeid/Marcel vandenBergh

#### *Duty of Care, Naturally (Zorgplicht Natuurlijk Gewogen, 2012)*

As this was a new theme for the RDA, and one which demanded considerable expertise from outside the Council, the RDA office first drew up a discussion paper on the basis of a brainstorm session with a number of external experts. This discussion paper was checked by the Council and then presented for comment to a number of external organisations possessing expertise in drawing up and implementing nature conservation policy. The RDA office then turned the discussion paper and the external input into a draft Opinion. After two rounds of 'horizontal checks' a definitive version was created.

**External expert:** Prof. R.J. Putman (University of Glasgow, UK).



Photo: Thinkstock/Geertjan Hooijer

#### *Responsible Dog Ownership: setting limits to unacceptable behaviour from dogs and their owners (Verantwoord honden houden: paal en perk aan onaanvaardbaar gedrag van honden en hun houders, 2013)*

**Forum members:** Prof. J.A.M. van Arendonk, Prof. A.A. Freriks, Dr H. Hopster, J.Th. de Jong, P.I. Polman, MPH, H.M. van Veen (chairperson).

**Forum meetings:** 1 May 2013, 27 May 2013, 9 July 2013, 13 August 2013.



Photo: Thinkstock/Jingram Publishing

### 3.7 The approach to earlier Opinions, relevant to this reporting period

#### Getting a Grip on Intervention (Grip op ingrepen, 2013)

**Forum members:** Prof. L.J. Hellebrekers (chairperson), M. de Jong-Timmerman, J. Kaandorp, F.C. van der Schans.

**External expert:** Dr F.L.B. Meijboom (Ethics Institute, Utrecht University).

**Forum meetings:** 20 March 2013, 24 April 2013 and 22 May 2013.



Photo: Nationaal beeldbank

#### Protocol on Stranded Large Marine Mammals (Protocol gestrande grote zeezoogdieren, 2013)

Given the short time that was available for drawing up this Opinion, a shortened procedure was adopted. After consultation with RDA members Van der Schans and Kaandorp, the RDA office drew up a shortened Opinion. After two rounds of 'horizontal checks' a definitive version was created.



Photo: Geert Aunis, IMARES

#### Setting Conditions on Animal Ownership (Onder voorwaarden houden van dieren, 2013)

**Forum members:** W.H.B.J. van Eijk, Prof. L.J. Hellebrekers (chairperson), Prof. M.C.M. de Jong, J. Kaandorp.

**External expert:** Dr Claudia M. Vinke (faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht University).

**Forum meetings:** 16 September 2013, 1 October 2013, 9 October 2013 and 26 November 2013.



Photo: BuitenBeeld/ Marcel van den Bergh

#### Responsible Animal Keeping (Verantwoord Houden, 2009)

**Forum members:** Dr F.W.A. Brom, Prof. A.A. Freriks (chairperson), Prof. L.J. Hellebrekers, Dr H. Hopster, Prof. R.B.M. Huirne, Prof. F. Ohl, H.M. van Veen, Prof. C.M.J. van Woerkum.



Photo: BuitenBeeld/ Marcel van den Bergh

#### Breeding & Reproductive Technologies (Fokkerij en Voortplantingstechnieken, 2010)

**Forum members:** Prof. J.A.M. van Arendonk (chairperson), J.E. Hesterman, Dr H. Hopster, J.Th. de Jongh, J. Lokhorst, H.M. van Veen.

**External expert:** Prof. E. Schroten (chairperson of the Animal Biotechnology Committee).



Photo: Thimstock / p/ytroz1

#### Moral issues and public policy on animals (Agenda voor het Dierbeleid, 2010)

**Forum members:** Dr H.M.G. van Beers-Schreurs, Prof. L.J. Hellebrekers, A.J.M. van Hoof, Dr H. Hopster, M. de Jong-Timmerman, J.Th. de Jongh, Prof. P.A. Koolmees, Prof. F. Ohl (chairperson), P. Poortinga, F.C. van der Schans, Prof. F.J. van Sluijs, H.W.A. Swinkels, W. Zwanenburg.

**External expert:** Dr F.L.B. Meijboom (Ethics Institute, Utrecht University).



Photo: Ellen Bourma



# Appendix

## Summary of RDA activities relevant for the 2011-2013 reporting period

*Animal health and welfare in megabusineses (Diergezondheid en dierenwelzijn op megabedrijven, 2008)*

At the request of the Dutch House of Representatives the Council published a constituent report on the consequences of scale increases in megabusineses in the pig and poultry farming industries, with animal health and welfare as its subject. The PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, the Council for the Environment and Infrastructure, and the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment published other constituent reports on the environmental, public health, and planning aspects.

*Visibly Better: the role of the veterinarian in the general interest (Zichtbaar beter: de rol van de dierenarts voor het algemeen belang, 2009)*

The Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) asked the Council to examine the independent position of veterinarians and their role in the general interest. The Council's Opinion took the view that veterinarians work not only to heal sick animals, but also have an important role in safeguarding animal welfare, food safety, and public health. These are public interest tasks, concerned with upholding the safety, standards and values that society considers to be important.

*Responsible Animal Keeping (Verantwoord Houden, 2009)*

What are the roles and responsibilities of animal keepers, the government, and other parties in regard to the health and welfare of production animals, companion animals, and smallholding animals? In answering this question from the Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the Council concluded that the keeper of an animal is primarily responsible for its welfare, including its health. The government is ultimately

responsible for the quality of life of animals in the Netherlands, and to this end should take an organisational, protective, and promotional role.

This report forms a guide clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in keeping animals in the Netherlands.

*Breeding & Reproductive Technologies (Fokkerij en Voortplantingstechnieken, 2010)*

In response to Dutch societal concern about developments in the breeding industry that might influence the health or welfare of agricultural and companion animals, the Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality asked the RDA these questions: What developments are taking place in the breeding of agricultural and companion animals? What influence do these developments have on the health and welfare of agricultural and companion animals, and are these developments in accordance with the societal expectation of, and ambition for, a sustainable livestock farming industry in 2023? This was later expanded to include the request for an inventory of the ethical aspects of using reproductive technologies in animals.

*Moral Issues and Public Policy on Animals (Agenda voor het Dierbeleid, 2010)*

In 'Moral Issues and Public Policy on Animals' the Council put forward seven animal issues for consideration during the coming cabinet period, on the basis of changes in societal thinking about animals. The Council also observed that these animal issues could be reduced to three fundamental ethical questions: are we allowed to keep animals? If so, for what purposes may we do so? In what way should we do so?

*Guidelines on Geese Culling (Richtsnoer Ganzendoden, 2012)*

The Minister for Agriculture asked the Council: What would be – in a number of specific practical situations – a practicable and socially acceptable method of culling wild geese (migratory or otherwise) without causing unnecessary suffering, compared with the alternative methods? The Council compared the various methods available for killing wild geese, and evaluated which of

these methods was the most acceptable. The Council makes no statement here on the acceptability of killing geese *per se*, and this Opinion does not examine alternatives to culling.

*Profitable Welfare: improving farm animal welfare by facilitating innovation processes and using market forces (Winstgevend Welzijn, over het creëren van kansen, 2012)*

By reference to its starting point, 'The free market as a driving force for animal welfare in livestock farming' (*Marktwerking als Motor voor Meer Dierenwelzijn in de Veehouderij*), the RDA shows why and how the free market should be used as the most important stimulus for sustainable improvements in animal welfare in the livestock farming sector. This Opinion contains recommendations for chain partners in the agrifood sectors and also for the government, because 'regulating through the market' is not the same thing as 'leaving everything to the market'.

*Duty of Care, Naturally (Zorgplicht Natuurlijk Gewogen, 2012)*

Public interest in the welfare of animals living in the wild is growing, and at the same time, responsibility for nature policy is being shifted from national government to the provinces. To assist nature policy makers and implementers, the Council provides support for consistent and well-founded ways to fulfil our responsibilities towards animals in their natural environment.

*Are people paramount? Ethical dilemmas in health policy with adequate care for animals and nature (De mens centraal? Ethische dilemma's bij gezondheidsbeleid met goede zorg voor dier en natuur, 2012)*

This essay bundle came about in cooperation with the Netherlands Centre for Ethics and Health (CeG) and the Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (Rli). Its central question was: To what extent should human health care policies take account of nature in general and animals in particular? Ten essayists, including members of the Council for Animal Affairs, considered this question from the perspective of their own expertise.

*Paper for round table discussion: The mink industry (Ronde tafelgesprek Pelsdierhouderij, 2012)*

In this paper the RDA argues that the moral consideration of the use of animals should be made explicit and consistent across all possible uses. The pursuit of a ban on mink farming would appear, also in terms of public opinion, to be based on current practices within the mink farming industry. This approach assumes that structural infringements of welfare occur irrespective of the manner in which fur is produced on such farms. The question of how such production might be permitted to take place is not considered. The discussion therefore appears to do no justice to the fact that in the Netherlands the keeping and killing of other animals for the production of luxury foods is indeed permitted.

*Paper for round table discussion: Scale increases in intensive livestock farming (Schaalgrootte intensieve veehouderij, 2012)*

In this paper the RDA argues that the societal unease surrounding livestock megabusineses is actually about the way we treat production animals. Limiting the scope of this discussion to whether or not upper limits should be set to the scale of livestock businesses does not do justice to this societal unease.

*Getting a grip on intervention (Grip op ingrepen, 2013)*

In this Opinion the Council presents its assessment framework for animal interventions: modifications such as beak trimming, wing clipping and tail docking, but also tattooing, freeze branding, routine Caesarian sections and castrations. The Council has developed a model with which a decision can be made, in a consistent and transparent way, on whether or not a given intervention is permissible.

*Responsible Dog Ownership (Verantwoord honden houden, 2013)*

In this Opinion the Council answers the question of how we might prevent socially unacceptable behaviour from dogs – aggression, in particular – with the aim of having better

socialised dogs and as a result a substantial reduction in the number of biting incidents. The Council observes that a need exists for a consistent and transparent policy that is tailored to the different contexts in which biting incidents take place, and that account should be taken of the interests of all the parties involved.

The Council also concludes that while it is true that in the Netherlands it is the municipalities, police, and Public Prosecution Service who administer the execution of dogbite policy, the Ministry of Economic Affairs should provide adequate legal means for these duties to be performed effectively and consistently. The Council makes a number of specific recommendations to this end.

*Protocol on Stranded Large Marine Mammals (Protocol gestrande grote zeezoogdieren, 2013)*

In the summer of 2013 Minister for Agriculture Sharon Dijksma sent the first version of her protocol for large stranded marine mammals to the Dutch House of Representatives. At the same time she requested that the Council for Animal Affairs provide an Opinion on this protocol. This was given on 2 October 2013. The Council advised her to employ the assessment framework they had developed, and also made a number of practical suggestions.

*Setting Conditions on Animal Ownership (Onder voorwaarden houden van dieren, 2013)*

Minister for Agriculture Sharon Dijksma asked the Council to draw up an Opinion on setting conditions for animal keeping, the reason being the need to draw up ‘positive lists’ for kept mammals.

In November 2013 the Council sent the Minister the first part of its Opinion as an interim advisory. It placed emphasis on the context in which such conditions would have to apply, and made recommendations for their formulation and enactment. It also included, by way of example, conditions for four animal species: the ferret, the hamster, the chinchilla and the guinea pig.



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