

# „ FARM“ANIMAL WELFARE IN MOROCCO

Legislation for the protection of “farm” animals urgently needed!



“A good deed done to an animal is as meritorious as a good deed done to a human being, while an act of cruelty to an animal is as bad as an act of cruelty to a human being.” **The Prophet Muhammad: Hadith**

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We are There With the Animals



ANIMALS' ANGELS

# Abstract

The present document looks into « farm » animal welfare in Morocco. It includes a wide range of empiric examples illustrating the situation of “farm” animals at markets and during transport and slaughter in Morocco. It reveals that animal welfare problems are severe and widespread and that the OIE animal welfare standards are not

met outlining that Morocco has not yet adopted any legislation on the protection of animals.

The paper makes clear that in Morocco there is an urgent need for legislation on the welfare and protection of animals – including farm animals.

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# I. Introduction

Farming is one of the pillars of the Moroccan economy<sup>1</sup> and special significance attaches to livestock production. Mainly sheep, goats, cattle and poultry are raised in Morocco. According to figures provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 2012, more than three million cattle, 190 million chickens and turkeys, nearly six million goats and more than 19 million sheep were produced in Morocco<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, for example in 2010, 16 thousand cattle for breeding were imported from Germany, as well as 150 thousand units of bovine semen. In 2011, it was said that 60% of all “dairy” cows in Morocco were of German origin<sup>3</sup>. In 2012, Morocco imported 19.608 cattle from the European Union (EU), the majority of them again from Germany and from France<sup>4</sup>.

Small scale farmers<sup>5</sup> dominate in Morocco and many rural families live from and with their livestock. They invest in “farm” animals as a form of savings which is not a secure investment since it depends very much on the climate. De facto, many small holders suffer severely the periods of droughts during which the prices for feeding-stuff increase significantly. Many of them seem to own very limited or no land and therefore, in many

regions, animals can be seen grazing in public space including besides national roads and motorways.

However, the Moroccan agriculture and livestock production are on the upswing. The agriculture sector is growing constantly. The government program “Plan Maroc Vert” is an extensive reform plan with the aim to render Morocco into the most modern agriculture region in North Africa. The „Plan Maroc Vert“ concentrates financial support and structural advancement and new organizations are created or existing ones reformed. One important part of the plan is the professionalization of the sector, as for example the installation of modern slaughterhouses in different parts of the country.

Morocco is Member of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), since 1968 the country is Member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, in 1987 Morocco accessed to General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and in 1995, Morocco became member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The EU is Morocco’s first trading partner and agriculture goods are one of the most important sectors in this trade. Currently, two major trade agreements exist between Morocco and the EU: the Association Agreement between the EU and Morocco which entered into force 1<sup>st</sup> March 2000 and the EU-Morocco Agreement on agricultural, processed agricultural and fisheries products that entered into force 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012. Additionally, negotiations for a “Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area” (DCFTA) between the EU and Morocco were launched on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.maroc.ma/en/content/agriculture>

<sup>2</sup> FAOSTAT

<sup>3</sup> „Marokkos Milchkühe muhen Deutsch“ German Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Morocco, 02.09.2011, <http://marokko.ahk.de/informationen/detail-view/artikel/marokkos-milchkuehe-muhen-deutsch/?cHash=029a79a5c1a6917bee17cbf4f63987af>

<sup>4</sup> Eurostat

<sup>5</sup> Global Agenda for Livestock Research; Proceedings of a Consultation on Setting Livestock Research Priorities in West Asia and North Africa (WANA) Region; 12–16 November 1997, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas, Aleppo, Syria

At the same time, it is evident that there are severe animal welfare problems in Morocco. Certainly among others, this concerns animal transport, markets, slaughter as well as holdings and working animals. E.g. holdings are often very dirty, dark and with a low ceiling height; frequently cattle, sheep and goats are permanently hobbled; equines that are used for transport are all too often exhausted, dehydrated and suffering from unfitting snaffle bites and harnesses. However, this report only deals with

the animal welfare problems observed during transport, at markets and at the time of slaughter.

Animal welfare problems are closely related to animal health, public health and food safety deficiencies. These problems are of paramount importance but are also not dealt with in this report since it concentrates on the welfare and protection of the animals.

## II. Overview over the current situation concerning “farm” animal transport, animal markets and slaughter

### 1. Transport

In Morocco, “farm” animals are transported in all types of vehicles. Except in the case of poultry, the means of transports are barely comparable with the vehicles commonly used in Europe. Depending on their seize, “farm” animals, including sheep, goats, cattle, equidae and camels, are transported in medium sized double deck trucks (second deck open), small vans converted into animal transport vehicles, multiuse vans and trucks, open pick-ups, passenger cars and sheep are even transported in the saddlebags of donkeys.

All too often, the vehicles are not designed and operated as to avoid injuries to the animals and

are not escape proof. Usually they are not equipped with loading ramps or only with totally inadequate ones. Furthermore, the vehicles often have no top cover and the animals are exposed to rain or blazing sun in summer. Other vehicles are totally closed and do not permit any air flow.

The lack of (adequate) ramps renders loading and unloading operations very difficult and animals are often brutally forced to enter the vehicles. Lifting and dragging animals by their fleece, tails, horns and legs is regularly observed as well as hitting, kicking, tail twisting and excessive use of electric prods. Bovines are often blindfolded, including during loading and tied by their horns inside the vehicle. Sheep and goats are frequently transported with their four legs shackled.



Often transports are overloaded in such a way that the animals are pressed together without any possibility to move. On many occasions, separations are missing, for example, large animals such as adult cattle are loaded together with sheep creating the risk for the sheep to be trampled by the larger animals.

Commonly, animals are not supplied with water before, during or after transport.

## **2. Markets**

Throughout the country, many towns and villages have weekly markets, the so- called “souks” where “farm” animals are sold besides food stuff and daily consumer staples. The main species sold are sheep, goats, cattle, poultry and rabbits. It is said that 95% of the animals are traded at the “souks”, nevertheless, usually these markets do not have any special facilities for receiving, accommodating and selling live animals. The lack of appropriate facilities is a major factor for the severe animal suffering at the souks. The lack of loading and unloading facilities lead to chaotic and often dangerous loading operations which are often carried out with brutality causing pain, fear and stress to the animals.

All too often, sheep and goats are kept at the markets lying down on the floor with their four legs tied together inhaling dust and sand and unable to move for many hours. The shackles hinder the blood supply in the legs which leads to the fact that the animals are usually unable to stand up when the shackles are removed. Additionally, it is common practice to tie several sheep together in a way that they cannot move at all. Other sheep and goats are tied by their horns

and kept on leashes. In order to transport sheep and goats from the market to surrounding parking lots, the animals are piled up in hand carts with their legs tied together.

Cattle are often tied by their horns to vehicles, walls or whatever is available. Or they are held on leashes which are tied around their horns. Often they have their front legs tied together very tight in a way that they are not even able to make small steps. Especially, young bulls often remain blindfolded throughout their stay at the market. In case cows are accompanied by their calves, the calves are frequently muzzled while milk is dripping from the mothers’ udder.

Broiler chicken are commonly kept in provisional pens but other poultry also lie on the floor with their legs tied together or are kept in overcrowded boxes and cages with insufficient height. Rabbits are kept in cages or boxes or on the floor with their back legs shackled.

Usually, there is no shade for the animals which means that on hot days they are exposed to the blazing sun. At the markets, there are no watering facilities for the animals. It could only be observed that poultry sometimes have access to water. The other animals are not provided with water. De facto, many of them are dehydrated and seem apathetic. Injured animals are not treated and do not receive any special attention. Unfit (i.e. severely ill or injured) animals are regularly hidden away and abandoned to their fate. No emergency measures whatsoever are taken for them.

Equidae are usually used to transport goods and people to and from the market. Often they are “parked” for many hours at the market with their front legs tied closely together, not released from snaffle bites and harnesses and not provided with water and shade.

As a result, while markets seem a festive event for humans, the animal suffering at the markets is immense.

Besides the missing animal welfare provisions, the “souks” also lack health measures to prevent disease transmission, including facilities for cleaning and disinfection or any other biosecurity measures. Furthermore, except for very few bovines, the animals are not identified.

### 3. Slaughter

In 2008, the production of red meat was approx. 390,000 tons. However, it is difficult to determine exact numbers due to patchy registration and huge number of unregistered slaughtering<sup>6</sup>. The number of industrial red meat slaughterhouses is very limited; many animals are slaughtered at souks, small butcheries and at private homes. It is estimated that 50 % of the slaughter is not done under professional conditions<sup>7</sup>.

However, the red meat production in Morocco is increasing and the government attaches great importance to it encouraging production through genetic improvement as well as private investments in the industry. The development of the sector constitutes a major axis of the country's agricultural strategy for the forthcoming years. Among others the objectives for the red meat industry for 2020 set up by the government are to establish eight private slaughterhouses and 21 livestock markets<sup>8</sup>.

Compared with the red meat production, the poultry production is organized in a more modern way. In 2008, Morocco produced 490,000 tons of

poultry meat from which only approx. 12% came from traditional slaughter<sup>9</sup>.

Since the predominant religion in Morocco is the Islam, slaughter is performed without pre-slaughter stunning. Leaving aside the question if slaughter without stunning can be acceptable under the point of view of animal protection, nearly all acts of slaughter observed were not performed respecting the religious requirements.

According to the Islamic guidelines - among others - the animal must be treated kindly and humanely, both before and during the slaughter. This includes using humane methods of restraint. In addition, measures should be taken to prevent the animal from seeing the knife which will be used, or the bodies of other animals that have already been slaughtered. A single, quick incision has to be made to cut the animal's throat. Only after the blood has thoroughly drained, the animal can be hoisted for skinning and slaughtering.

However, these religious requirements seem routinely disregarded: Brutal slaughter methods have to be observed in many places, this includes the way the animals are kept before slaughter: with shackled legs, without any possibility to rest for many hours, in state of dehydration etc.. It also concerns the way the animals are driven to the place of slaughter which all too often is performed with hitting, kicking, tail twisting, and the use of electric goads. Finally, in order to restrain the animals they are smashed brutally to the floor and often horns break when the heads of cattle crush against the ground. To fix them, usually the animals' four legs are shackled. Additionally, people sit on the animals, sometimes even sticking their fingers in the animals' eyes in order to immobilize them. Instead of one quick incision, too frequently, it is observed that slaughter men saw on the animals'

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<sup>6</sup> German Chamber of Commerce

<sup>7</sup> German Chamber of Commerce

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.s-ge.com/svizzera/export/it/filefield-private/files/58831/field\\_event\\_public\\_files/20442](http://www.s-ge.com/svizzera/export/it/filefield-private/files/58831/field_event_public_files/20442)

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<sup>9</sup> German Chamber of Commerce

throat like on a piece of wood. Often it takes long until the animals lose consciousness and they are moved, further manipulated and even further processed before losing consciousness.

In most of the slaughter places, no ante – mortem and no post – mortem inspections are carried out nor are there any sanitary measures performed.

## III. Empiric examples

Between 2004 and 2014, Animals' Angels carried out several field investigations in Morocco. All examples listed on the following pages refer to observations made during these investigations<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> More detailed information and reports about the investigations can be requested at [julia@animals-angels.de](mailto:julia@animals-angels.de)



# 1. Transport

**Picture no. 1: Loading of a Bull at Mers El Kheir Souk, 29.03.2014**



The quality of the means of transport is crucial for upholding the welfare and the physical integrity of the animals during transport. Especially loading and unloading facilities must be safe and in order to reduce stress during loading, they should be built in a way that makes loading easier and prevents the animals from moving backwards out of fear.

## **Problems observed:**

- Vehicle not fitted with a proper loading ramp. The ramp is nearly vertical and there is gap between the ground and the ramp
- Entrance of the truck nearly in the height of the animals' head
- Bull tied and pulled by his horns
- Tail twisting
- Loading operation causes stress to the animal and entails the danger of getting injured
- Pain is caused to the bull by pulling him by his horns and by twisting his tail
- Second deck has no top cover
- Vehicle is not equipped with a ramp to access to the second deck
- Undue stress and suffering caused to the animals due to brutal and unskilled handling and inadequate facilities.
- (additionally: truck not cleaned and disinfected before loading a new consignment of animals)

**→ OIE standards not complied with<sup>11</sup>**

<sup>11</sup> See Article 7.1.2 (5) and (6), Article 7.1.4. (9) and (10), Article 7.3.2., Article 7.3.5. point 4. a), Article 7.3.8 point 1. a) and b), point 2. a), point 3 d) and e), Article 7.3.10. point 4 a) of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code

**Picture no. 2: Loading of Sheep onto the Second Deck of a Double Deck Truck,**  
**Tiflet Souk, 26.03.2014**



*“(...) grasping or lifting animals only by their wool, hair, feathers, feet, neck, ears, tails, head, horns, limbs causing pain or suffering should not be permitted (...)”*

(Article 7.3.8. point 3 g) of the OIE Animal Health Code)

**Problems observed:**

- Truck is not fitted with a ramp to access the second deck
- Animals lifted by one leg and pulled by the fleece causing them stress and pain
- Second deck has no top cover
- Undue stress and suffering caused to the animals due to brutal and unskilled handling and inadequate facilities

**→ OIE standards not complied with<sup>12</sup>**

<sup>12</sup> See Article 7.1.2 (5) and (6), Article 7.1.4. (9) and (10), Article 7.3.2, Article 7.3.5. point 4. a), Article 7.3.8 point 1. a) and b), point 2. a), point 3 g) ) of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code

**Picture no. 3: Sheep transported together with Calves and Adult Cattle in a Small Truck, Tiflet souk, 26.03.2014**



*"Compatible groups should be selected before transport to avoid adverse animal welfare consequences. The following recommendations should be applied when assembling groups of animals: (...) young or small animals may need to be separated from older or larger animals (...)"*

(Article 7.2.7. of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code)

**Problems observed:**

- No separation
- Overcrowding
- Risk that the cows trample on the significantly smaller sheep and the calves
- Due to the lack of space one calf is forced to lie under standing adult cattle
- Muzzled calf
- Undue suffering caused to the animals due to the overloading and animals exposed to the risk of getting injured

**→ OIE standards not complied with<sup>13</sup>**

<sup>13</sup> See e.g. Article 7.1.2 (5) and (6), Article 7.1.4. (9) and (10), Article 7.3.5.point 6, Article 7.3.7.point 2 c) and e) of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code

**Picture no. 4: Transport of Sheep and Lambs in a Closed Van**  
**Highway A3 Casablanca – Rabat, 25.03.2014**



The space every animal has at its disposal during transport is a decisive factor regarding how much its welfare will be prejudiced during the journey. When the loading density is too high, the animals suffer more bruising, which not only means animal suffering but also leads to lower carcass quality.

**Problems observed:**

- Overcrowding
- Missing separation of animals of different sizes
- Insufficient height
- Insufficient airflow (second deck)
- Many animals with nasal discharge
- Undue suffering caused to the animals
- Animals exposed to the risk of getting injured

**→ OIE standards not complied with<sup>14</sup>**

<sup>14</sup> See e.g. Article 7.1.2 (5) and (6), Article 7.1.4. (9) and (10), Article 7.3.5. point 6, Article 7.3.7. point 2 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code



**Picture no. 5: Sheep transported in the Boot of a Passenger Car with its Four Legs Shackled, Tangier Souk, 31.01.2004**



**Picture no. 6: Sheep transported in the Boot of a Passenger Car, Farkhana, 15.10.2013**



***“DO NOT:***

- *Drag sheep by the horn*
- *Pick up sheep by their wool.*
- *Transport sheep in a car boot, sealed container or anything that restricts airflow*
- *Tie the legs of the sheep in order to restrain it”*

(Department of Environment and Primary Industries, State Government Victoria, Australia, Transport and Care of Sheep)<sup>15</sup>

**Problems observed:**

- Legs shackled
- Insufficient airflow
- No light
- No possibility to balance bumps of the road
- Pain, fear and stress caused to the animals

**→ OIE standards not complied with<sup>16</sup>**

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/agriculture-and-food/livestock/sheep/victorias-sheep-meat-and-wool-industry/handling-and-management/transport-and-care-of-sheep>

<sup>16</sup> See e.g. Article 7.1.2 (5) and (6), Article 7.1.4. (9) and (10), Article 7.3.5. point 4. a) and e), point 6), Article 7.3.9. point 2 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code

## 2. Markets

**Picture no. 7: Severely injured Bird Aisha, Mers El Kheir Souk, 29.03.2014**



The OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code places particular emphasis on fitness for transport. According to Article 7.3.3., the welfare of the animals during their journey is a paramount consideration and the joint responsibility of all people involved in transport. Among others, the owners and managers of the animals are responsible for the general health, overall welfare and fitness of the animals for the journey.

### **Problems observed:**

- Severely injured animal put aside and abandoned to its fate instead of being killed in a humane way
- No assistance granted to the animal
- Suffering of the animal unnecessarily prolonged

**→ OIE standards not complied with<sup>17</sup>**

<sup>17</sup> See e.g. Article 7.1.2 (5) and (6), Article 7.1.4. (9) and (10), Article 7.3.10. point 2, Article 7.5.2. point 1 b) of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code



**Picture 8: Severely Injured Sheep Angelique (the right claw is cut off),  
Bouskoura Souk, 25.03.2014**



*“An animal that has become sick, injured or disabled during a journey should be appropriately treated or humanely killed (...). If necessary, veterinary advice should be sought for the care and treatment of these animals. In some cases, where animals are non-ambulatory due to fatigue, injury or sickness, it may be in the best welfare interests of the animal to be treated or killed aboard the vehicle. Assistance should be sought from a veterinarian or other person(s) competent in humane killing procedures. (...)”*

(Article 7.3.10 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code)

**Problems observed:**

- Severely injured animal put aside and abandoned to its fate instead of being killed in a humane way
- No assistance granted to the animal
- Suffering of the animal unnecessarily prolonged

**→ OIE standards not complied with<sup>18</sup>**

<sup>18</sup> See e.g. Article 7.1.2 (5) and (6), Article 7.1.4. (9) and (10), Article 7.3.10. point 2 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code

**Picture 9: Sheep lying down on the Ground with its Legs Shackled**  
**Mers El Kheir Souk, 29.03.2014**



**Picture 10: Goats lying on the Ground with their Legs Shackled**  
**Mers el Kheir Souk, 24.04.2006**



**Tethering sheep and goats is unacceptable. Conscious animals must not be shackled!**

*"The physical environment should allow comfortable resting, safe and comfortable movement including normal postural changes and the opportunity to perform types of natural behaviors that animals are motivated to perform."*

(Article 7.1.4 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code)

**Problems observed:**

- Sheep and goats not accommodated properly at the market
- Sheep and goats lying on the ground with their legs shackled
- Shackles hindering proper blood circulation in the animals' legs
- Pain caused to the animals through the shackles
- Sheep and goats forced to inhale sand and dust
- Sand and dust entering in the animals' eyes, mouths, ears and noses
- Undue suffering caused to the animals

**→ OIE standards not complied with<sup>19</sup>**

<sup>19</sup> See e.g. Article 7.1.2 (5) and (6), Article 7.1.4. (3),(9) and (10) of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code

**Picture 11: Sheep transported in a Handcart with their Legs Shackled**  
**Bouskoura Souk, 25.03.2014**



**Tethering sheep and goats is unacceptable. Conscious animals must not be shackled!**

*"The physical environment should allow comfortable resting, safe and comfortable movement including normal postural changes and the opportunity to perform types of natural behaviors that animals are motivated to perform."*

(Article 7.1.4 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code)

**Problems observed:**

- Sheep have their legs shackled
- Shackles hindering proper blood circulation in the animals' legs
- Pain caused to the animals through the shackles
- Sheep are piled up one upon the other
- Overcrowding
- Undue suffering caused to the animals

**→ OIE standards not complied with<sup>20</sup>**

<sup>20</sup> See e.g. Article 7.1.2 (5) and (6), Article 7.1.4. (3),(9) and (10), Article 7.3.5. point 6. C) of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code



**Picture no. 12: Poultry exposed for Selling with their Legs Shackled**  
**Tiflet Souk, 26.03.2014**



***"DO NOT:***

- *carry poultry by their head, neck, wings or tail.*
- *keep or transport birds in bags.*
- *keep or transport birds with their legs tied."*

(Department of Environment and Primary Industries, State Government Victoria, Australia, Transport and Care of Poultry)<sup>21</sup>

**Problems observed:**

- Poultry not accommodated properly at the market
- Poultry lying on the ground with their legs shackled
- Shackles hindering proper blood circulation in the animals legs
- Pain caused to the animals through the shackles
- Undue suffering caused to the animals

**→ OIE standards not complied with<sup>22</sup>**

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/agriculture-and-food/livestock/poultry-and-eggs/management-for-poultry-owners/transport-and-care-of-poultry>

<sup>22</sup> See e.g. Article 7.1.2 (5) and (6), Article 7.1.4. (3),(9) and (10), Article 7.3.5. point 6. C) of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code

### 3. Slaughter

**Picture no. 13: Broiler Chicken destined for Slaughter being Unloaded at Mers El Kheir Souk, 29.03.2014**



*“Care is especially necessary during loading and unloading to avoid body parts being caught on crates, leading to dislocated or broken bones in conscious birds. Such injuries will adversely affect animal welfare, carcass and meat quality.”*

(Article 7.5.2. point 2 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code)

**Problems observed:**

- Insufficient cage height
- Cages are not secured in a way to prevent displacement during the motion of the vehicle (safety not guaranteed)
- Rough handling suspending the chickens by their wings

**→ OIE standards not complied with<sup>23</sup>**

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<sup>23</sup> See e.g. Article 7.1.2 (5) and (6), Article 7.1.4. (9) and (10), Article 7.5.1. point 1 and 2, Article 7.5.2. point 1 ), f) (vi), point 2 and point 3 b).

**Picture no. 14: Driving Cattle inside Slaughter Facilities**  
**at Mers El Kheir Souk, 29.03.2014**



*“Each slaughterhouse should have a dedicated plan for animal welfare. The purpose of such plan should be to maintain good level of animal welfare at all stages of the handling of animals until they are killed. The plan should contain standard operating procedures for each step of animal handling as to ensure that animal welfare is properly implemented based on relevant indicators. It also should include specific corrective actions in case of specific risks, like power failures or other circumstances that could negatively affect the welfare of animals.”*

(Article 7.5.2. point 1 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code)

**Problems observed:**

- Tail twisting
- Hitting the animal in the face with a wooden prod
- Blindfolding
- Slippery and uneven underground
- Animal forced to walk into a crowd of people
- Many people shouting, spectators inside the slaughterhouse
- Strong smell of intestines and blood
- Natural behavior patterns of the animal not taken into account
- Pain and severe stress and suffering caused to the animal

**→ OIE standards not complied with<sup>24</sup>**

<sup>24</sup> See e.g. Article 7.1.2 (5) and (6), Article 7.1.4. (9) and (10), Article 7.5.1. point 1, 2,3,4 (f), Article 7.5.2. point 1 e), f) (iv) and (v) of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code



**Picture no. 15: Restraining Cattle for Slaughter, Mers El Kheir Souk, 29.03.2014**



*"Animals should be handled in such a way as to avoid harm, distress or injury. Under no circumstances should animal handlers resort to violent acts to move animals, such as crushing or breaking tails of animals, grasping their eyes or pulling them by the ears. Animal handlers should never apply an injurious object or irritant substance to animals and especially not to sensitive areas such as eyes, mouth, ears, anogenital region or belly. The throwing or dropping of animals, or their lifting or dragging by body parts such as their tail, head, horns, ears, limbs, wool, hair or feathers, should not be permitted. The manual lifting of small animals is permissible."*

(Article 7.5.2. point 1 e of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code)

**Problems observed:**

- Animal thrown onto the floor with its legs tied together
- Slippery floor
- Animal pulled by its tail
- Man kneeling on the animal's head sticking two fingers into the animal's eye in order to restrain it
- Severe pain, stress and suffering caused to the animal

**→ OIE standards not complied with<sup>25</sup>**

<sup>25</sup> See Article 7.1.2 (5) and (6), Article 7.1.4. (9) and (10), Article 7.5.1. point 1 and 2, Article 7.5.2. point 4 a) i) and point 4 b) iii) and iv)

**Picture 16: Injured Cow Nadia waiting for more than 10 Hours tied in front of the Slaughter Facilities, Bouskoura Souk, 24.03.2014**



*"Animals in lairages should be cared for in accordance with the following recommendations: (...) 2) Where tethers, ties or individual stalls are used, they should allow animals to stand up and lie down without causing injury or distress. (...) 5) Suitable drinking water should be available to the animals on their arrival and at all times to animals in lairages (...)"*

(Article 7.5.4. of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code)

**Problems observed:**

- Injury not treated
- No access to water
- Uneven and stony floor not suitable for cattle to lie down

**→ OIE standards not complied with<sup>26</sup>**

<sup>26</sup> See Article 7.1.2 (5) and (6), Article 7.1.4. (9) and (10), Article 7.5.4. (2), (5), (9) of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code

## IV. Current legal situation

Morocco has not yet adopted any animal welfare legislation. That means that there are no specific rules concerning the welfare and protection of animals kept for production, during transport, in trade or slaughter.

As mentioned above, Morocco is member of the OIE and has thus committed itself to comply with the animal welfare standards established by the OIE. Since the OIE is not an enforcement body every Member Country has to ensure itself that the standards are complied with by introducing the corresponding legislation and enforcement tools. However, this commitment is not reflected in any field of livestock production in Morocco. The OIE animal welfare standards are not met (see point III).

However, in line with the EU-Morocco Association Agreement from 1996, ratified in 2000, a draft proposal intending to lay down a framework law in reference to animal health and

welfare, food safety, and official controls<sup>27</sup> has been published on the website of the General Secretariat of the Moroccan Government on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2013. The objective of this law is to achieve harmonization with the existing EU rules and with international standards.

The text acknowledges the link between animal health and welfare and the third chapter is dedicated to animal welfare introducing criminal anti-maltreatment provisions for domestic animals and basic principles in terms of “farm” animal welfare. But the draft does not include any specific rules for transport, handling and slaughter but requires that further implementing legal acts are put in place to regulate these issues.

The draft has been open for public consultation and is currently further examined. If and when the legislative process continues is unclear.

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<sup>27</sup> Les mesures relatives à la santé animale, au bien-être des animaux et à l'inspection sanitaire vétérinaire des produits alimentaires d'origine animale, des aliments pour animaux et des sous animaux

## V. Why is animal welfare legislation urgently needed in Morocco?

### 1. Immense animal suffering in Morocco

There are severe and widespread animal welfare problems in Morocco in the various fields of livestock production. The present report only shows a small part of the immense animal suffering in Morocco. A comprehensive animal welfare law and its efficient enforcement would be the first step to cope with these severe deficiencies.

### 2. Humanitarianism

Animals are sentient beings, capable of feeling physically and psychologically. They have an intrinsic value which is irrespective of the usable value they may have for humans. Therefore animals shall be treated well and be protected from danger of unnecessary stress and strains.

### 3. Ethical obligation

The use of animals in agriculture and science, and for companionship, recreation and entertainment, makes a major contribution to the well-being of people<sup>28</sup> and using them for our interests entails our duty to strive for their welfare in the best way possible<sup>29</sup>. Rules on the welfare and protection of animals constitute the basis for improving the animal welfare situation in a country.

### 4. Islam

According to Islamic learning, Allah loves all animals. Animals exist for the benefit of humans

and at the same time they must be treated with kindness and compassion. Therefore Muslims are – among others - instructed to avoid: treating animals cruelly, over-working or over-loading animals and neglecting animals.

### 5. Compliance with international standards/treaties

Morocco has signed international agreements that involve obligations to meet animal welfare standards as for example the OIE recommendations. Only by creating enforceable animal welfare legislation these obligations can be fulfilled.

### 6. Link between animal health and animal welfare

The current Moroccan legislation concentrates on public health and food safety which are issues of paramount importance. However, neglecting animal welfare does not help to improve animal health, food safety and public health, rather, it constitutes a further hazard. Many studies have demonstrated that animals that are treated with regards to their welfare (e.g. appropriately handled and living in good conditions) are more likely to be healthy, since stress has a detrimental impact on both their health and their productivity. There is no doubt that animal health and animal welfare are directly linked to each other and that food is healthier when it comes from healthy animals kept in accordance with best practices and in the absence of stress.

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<sup>28</sup> OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code Article 3.7.1.1. point 5

<sup>29</sup> OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code Article 3.7.1.1. point 6

## 7. Economic interests

As mentioned above, animals treated with regards to their welfare are more likely to be healthy and accordingly also more productive. Furthermore, high animal welfare standards make it easier to adapt to trade requirements, retailer labels and consumer trends.

## 8. Consumer interests

The demand for biological products is increasing in Morocco. This development should be matched by offering animal welfare friendly products. The consumers' demand for higher animal welfare standards can be partly reached by setting private standards, i.e. labelling products that are produced in a welfare friendly way. But, with

animal welfare labelling no basic uniform standards can be ensured. However, if the country where the product comes from has enforceable rules laying down high animal protection standards it is more likely that the consumer will trust the products of this country.

## 9. International reputation

In line with the famous sentence by Mahatma Gandhi, *"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated"*, countries with low animal welfare standards suffer poor international reputation. An enforceable animal welfare law is the first step to improve the welfare situation in a country.

# VI. Conclusion/ Claim

Severe animal protection and animal welfare problems prevail in Morocco's livestock production. Especially the conditions during transport, at markets and at the time of slaughter are unbearable and do not at all meet the OIE and other international standards. The first and urgently necessary step in order to protect the animals in Morocco - including the ones imported to Morocco - from cruel treatment is the introduction of an animal welfare and protection law.

In this regards, it is essential to establish by legislation the highest standards possible. This is because international standards are developing

continuously and on international level major investments are done to improve animal welfare standards, in a way that low standard legislation would require improvement very soon which - among others - could be very costly for the industry. Furthermore, the corresponding enforcement tools must be introduced because without them the legislation would be redundant.

**We call upon the Moroccan government to enact a comprehensive legislation for the welfare and protection of animals including provisions for the protection of "farm" animals at holdings, during transport, in all forms of trade and at the time of slaughter.**