



RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAMME FOR  
MAINLAND FINLAND  
2007–2013

# Animal welfare payments

– Added benefit for investing in animal welfare

Finnish cattle and pig farmers are eligible for compensation for improving the welfare of their farm animals. Animal welfare payments are part of the Rural Development Programme for Mainland Finland 2007–2013, which is partially sponsored by the European Union. Finland remains one of most pathogen-free countries in Europe in every production animal sector. Animal welfare payments will do their part to advance the situation even further.

Although the payment is relatively small, its ramifications can be significant. Not only will animal diseases remain in check, but product quality and output will also improve. The improved health of the animals will cut down on health care costs and reduce drug residues. Healthier animals also positively affect the occupational wellbeing of the farmer.

Payment is allocated according to livestock unit (LU) and is granted by the local authorities. Fixed investment costs are eligible for separate investment compensation, which can also be applied towards improving animal welfare.

## Five year commitment

Animal welfare payments require a commitment of five years. In cases where livestock production on the farm ceases before the five years period has expired, the payments are either terminated or transferred to the subsequent farmer.

Farms committing to animal welfare payment measures should have a minimum of 10 livestock units of either cattle or pigs for the entire five year period. The farmer is then bound to meet all of the joint basic conditions applying to farms committed to animal welfare payment measures, with an option to select a maximum of two additional conditions.

The goal of the basic objectives is to promote the health and general safety of the animals. The additional conditions directly affect the production environment, in effect improving the welfare of the animals.

## Basic conditions guarantee animal health and safety

Basic conditions require collaboration between the veterinarian responsible for health care and the farmer. The veterinarian assists the farm in its efforts to fulfil the health care requirements incorporated in the basic conditions.

On the first veterinarian visit, a health care agreement is written up between the veterinarian and the farmer. The partners agree on the health care arrangements of the farm, e.g. how often the veterinarian will make preventive health care visits.

The health care agreement is drawn up only once, but a more detailed health care plan is updated annually throughout the five



year commitment period. Health care requirements include protection against pathogens and the safe import of animals and feed from outside the country's borders, among other things.

Basic conditions also require proper preparation for power failures. A power failure could be fatal for production animals and it always affects their welfare detrimentally. A supplementary power source, i.e. an engine-generator or the equivalent, give farmers a back-up system in case of power shortages. Basic conditions also include measures against beef cattle being held in stalls and measures that see that cattle receives a suitable amount of roughage for ruminants.

Payment for meeting the basic animal welfare conditions is EUR 5.00/LU for pigs and EUR 17.50/LU for cattle.

## Additional conditions provide more improvements

Farmers may select up to two additional animal welfare conditions from a list of twelve. Farms can choose additional conditions that affect both cattle and pig welfare.

Fire prevention and rescue plans, along with fire alarm installation, improve the safety of the animals and the ability of the farm to maintain operation in the event of an accident or other extraordinary situation.

Improvement of the area in which calves are kept means that calves must be kept in a spacious group stall, the size of which is set in national legislation, with a comfortable, warm and well bedded lying area. Other additional conditions include feeding calves with an artificial teat or destroying horn buds only with appropriate anaesthetic as applied by a veterinarian.

Additional condition options for mature bovine include adjusting tethering to permit freedom of movement, providing bedded lying areas or grazing during the growing period and exercise in the winter. Providing separate stalls for sick, nursing and calving bovine to promote recovery is an additional condition that also provides the livestock caregivers with suitable and safe working conditions during periods when the bovine require extra care.

Six different additional condition options for pigs are available, some connected to the production process and others to certain situations. The options of sow and gilt insemination when they are either roaming free or in a group pen, or more space for pregnant sows or gilts, or more comfortable lying areas for the pigs mean better species-specific behaviour, as do the options of providing free farrowing for the sows and grazing opportunities.

Sick or injured pigs can be provided with a dedicated pen that will promote their recovery. Growing conditions for pigs can be improved by separating them into different pens according to age, providing heating when necessary, keeping the pens dry with enough litter and by offering enough space for the all of the pigs in the pen to comfortably lie down together. The additional condition requirements for pen dryness and floor area apply to all of the farm's pigs, if the farm has chosen that particular additional condition.

### FURTHER INFORMATION:

[www.rural.fi](http://www.rural.fi)  
[www.mavi.fi](http://www.mavi.fi)  
[www.mmm.fi](http://www.mmm.fi)  
[www.te-keskus.fi](http://www.te-keskus.fi)



Photo: Archive of the Ministry

Conditions to be met	Payment level EUR/LU
<b>Basic conditions</b>	
• Cattle farms	17.50
• Pig farms	5.00
<b>Additional conditions</b>	
• Fire prevention and rescue plan	
- Cattle	3.58
- Pigs	1.53
• Improvement of the conditions where calves are kept	
Alternative a (added space condition)	12.17
Alternative b	9.92
• Improvement of the opportunities of tethered bovines to move	8.73
• Improvement of the conditions where bovines over 6 months are kept	21.06
• Grazing during the growing period and exercise during the winter (cattle)	21.29
• Stalls for sick animals and nursing and calving stalls (cattle)	12.35
• Grazing or exercise of dry sows and gilts	11.03
• Insemination of sows and gilts	6.69
• Meeting the requirements for space and lying areas of pregnant sows and gilts	3.07
• Free farrowing for sows	13.29
• Pens for sick animals (pigs)	8.84
• Improvement of the pen conditions (pigs)	9.40



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