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STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF ANIMALS KEPT FOR FARMING PURPOSES (T-AP)

RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING FUR ANIMALS

adopted by the Standing Committee on 22 June 1999 *

This Recommendation replaces the Recommendation concerning fur animals adopted on 19 October 1990

PREAMBLE

The Standing Committee of the European Convention on the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes,

Having regard to its responsibility under Article 9 of the Convention for the elaboration and adoption of Recommendations to the Parties containing detailed provisions for the implementation of the principles set out in Chapter I of the Convention based on scientific knowledge concerning the various species of animals;

Aware that in contrast to the animals which over thousands of generations have been kept for farming purposes, animals kept for the production of fur belong to species which have only been farmed more recently and which have had less opportunity to adapt to farm conditions;

Concerned about the application of the principles of animal welfare set out in Articles 3 - 7 of the Convention;

Concerned that developments in breeding and biotechnology shall not adversely affect the health and welfare of fur animals;

Considering that in the light of established experience and scientific knowledge about the biological needs of each of the various species of fur animals, including those satisfied by showing certain behaviours, systems of husbandry at present in commercial use often fail to meet all the needs the fulfilment of which is essential for the animals' welfare;

Bearing in mind that the environment and management have to fulfil the animal's biological needs rather than trying to "adapt" the animals to the environment;

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* In accordance with Article 9, paragraph 3 of the Convention, this Recommendation will enter into force on 22 December 1999.

Considering therefore that strong and continuous efforts have to be made to adapt existing systems and develop satisfactory new systems so that these needs can be met for any species kept for farming purposes;

Aware that the basic requirements for the health and welfare of farmed fur animals consist of:

a. good husbandry and stockmanship;

b. a suitably stimulating environment appropriate to meet the species-specific needs as deduced from studies of the animals in nature and in farm conditions, including adequate freedom of movement, physical comfort and adequate opportunity for grooming, eating, drinking, territorial marking, social contact or solitude, climbing and swimming;

c. protection against adverse climatic conditions, injury, infestation and disease or behavioural disorders;

and other requirements as may be subsequently identified by experience or scientific knowledge.

Aware, however, that scientific evidence available on the welfare requirements of fur animals is not sufficient for the elaboration of detailed provisions for the implementation of all principles set out in Chapter I of the Convention;

Resolved therefore

a. to encourage further research on the welfare of fur animals, and

b. to review the relevant provisions in the Recommendation in the light of new scientific evidence;

Has adopted the following Recommendation concerning fur animals:

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1

1. This Recommendation shall apply to all animals kept primarily for their furs, in intensive as well as extensive farming systems.

2. Nothing in this Recommendation shall affect the implementation of other instruments for the protection of animals or for the conservation of threatened wild species.

3. Animals born in the wild shall not be kept in fur farm conditions.

4. No animal shall be kept for its fur if:

a. the conditions of this Recommendation cannot be met, or if

b. the animal belongs to a species whose members, despite these conditions being met, cannot adapt to captivity without welfare problems.

5. Special provisions contained in the Appendices to this Recommendation constitute an integral part thereof.

BIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF FUR ANIMALS

Article 2

When considering husbandry practices, the following biological characteristics of the species should be borne in mind since fur animals kept on farms retain characteristics of wild animals.

1. Mink (Mustela vison)

a. The mink which is farmed for its fur is a North American species which is not very closely related to the European mink. However, feral populations of American mink, escaped from or descended from animals on fur farms, exist in many European countries. Mink were first kept on fur farms in Europe about 70 years ago but the first fur farms in Northern America existed about 30 years before that.

b. Under natural conditions the mink live close to streams and rivers, or sometimes near lakes or coasts, but otherwise they are generalists as regard habitat. In the typical river environment, mink have a range of about 2 km along the river and a few hundred metres either side of it. When the water is frozen and when food is not plentiful they may range over greater distances. Most periods of activity occur during the night, the morning or the evening. Suitable natural refuges are used for up to 85 % of the time when food is readily available.

c. Mink survive well in cold conditions. They spend part of their time in water when hunting and part on the land, walking, bounding, rearing on their hind legs and climbing on rocks or trees. They are anatomically adapted for this life style. The dense fur provides very good insulation on land and in water. The feet are partially webbed and are used when swimming and diving.

d. Mink are carnivores with a high protein requirement. They are opportunistic feeders. They live on aquatic or terrestrial prey, depending on the availability of the food items. The diet of mink in Europe is 50-80 % aquatic animals with fish making up the largest part and invertebrates and amphibians comprising the remainder. Common terrestrial prey species include rabbits, rats, mice and voles. In frozen conditions the aquatic food is inaccessible and in North America, the principal diet of many mink is the musk-rat.

e. Adult mink are solitary, coming together briefly only at mating time. They are highly territorial: home ranges are regularly patrolled and maintained by scent-marking and aggression. When territory overlap does occur, it is never between animals of the same sex. Adult males leave their territories in spring and cover great distances searching for females. In autumn, young mink disperse in search of vacant territories.

2. Polecat, ferret, fitch (Mustela putorius)

a. The polecat is a widespread Eurasian species which lives in open woodland and hilly areas. The polecat's territory may be anything between 100 ha to 2500 ha where food is sparse. The animal is nocturnal and spends the day in a den. In the summer it may spend all its time in the open air but still be inactive for extended periods. The domesticated form is the ferret which has been used for hundreds of years to catch or chase rabbits, etc. It is changed a little anatomically from the wild polecat in that the head is a little smaller. Many ferrets are albino.

b. Polecats are terrestrial animals, which walk, bound, rear on their hind legs and climb on rocks and trees. They produce a foetid secretion from the anal gland, which is used for marking territory and which makes the animal strong smelling to man. Ferrets produce fewer odours.

c. Polecats are carnivores requiring a high-protein diet. They eat birds, mammals and insects so foraging behaviour involves searching, chasing and manipulation of materials in the environment with extensive use of the senses of smell, vision and hearing.

d. The polecat is a solitary species, defending a territory vigorously against intruders.

e. The cross between the wild polecat and the ferret is sometimes called a fitch or fitchet.

3. Red fox (Vulpes vulpes)

The red fox can have a variety of colours from red to silver. However, the silver colour variant is rare in the wild.

a. The red fox is found in most parts of Eurasia, North America and North Africa and in Australia in habitats as diverse as boreal forest, open agricultural land, mixed woodland and urban areas. Apart from certain islands, the species is absent only from very dry areas, some very cold areas, and tropical regions. Large scale farming has occurred for more than fifty years.

b. Under natural conditions, red foxes are active for long periods during the night, morning and evening, but spend the day concealed in a thicket or hole in the ground (earth). They may travel great distances. The daily mean is 6 km. Foxes dig their own earth or take over a hole dug by another animal. They can run fast, jump well and swim strongly. Their olfactory, visual and auditory senses are good.

c. The diet of the red foxes consists mainly of rodents and lagomorphs. In some areas the major component of the diet is earthworms and some carrion, insects and birds are eaten. Fruit, berries and other vegetable material may be eaten by foxes but the vast majority of the diet is animal in origin.

d. The red fox has a variable social organisation since they may be solitary or live in a group. Individual or groups defend a territory or have a home range which overlaps little with the home ranges of others. Territories are scent marked using one or more of the glandular or waste product based sources of individually recognisable odour.

e. In the wild, vixens will sometimes give birth to and rear their cubs in close proximity to one another but more often they give birth in isolation from other animals and drive other foxes away from their cubs. Subordinate vixens may fail to breed when close to other females. Sexually mature female foxes without cubs may assist in caring for cubs of dominant females.

4. Arctic fox (Alopex lagopus)

Blue fox is the name commonly used for farmed arctic fox.

a. The arctic fox is distributed throughout the northern polar regions and is adapted specifically to living in cold climates. Typical habitats are tundra and the inter-tidal zone of the sea shore. Large scale farming has occurred for more than fifty years.

b. Under natural conditions, arctic foxes are active mainly during the night. They may use an excavated den dug by them, but arctic foxes sometimes do not have a fixed home site, even when rearing the young. Arctic foxes can travel very long distances, often 10-20 km in a day. They can run fast and swim strongly. Their olfactory, visual and auditory senses are good and they are very tolerant of low temperatures.

c. The food of arctic foxes is principally animal in origin although fruits may be taken. They hunt singly for rodents, birds, invertebrates, seal pups, fish and carrion. They often follow polar bears, wolves and humans in order to scavenge from their leftover.

d. The arctic foxes may be monogamous, sometimes mating for life. But the arctic foxes have a flexible social system. Some males will mate with more than one female, and a family group may contain young of the previous year. Young are cared for by both parents. In tundra habitats family groups are more widely distributed than in coastal regions. Territories are scent marked.

e. Breeding occurs once per year and large litters are often produced if food is plentiful. The vixen usually gives birth in a burrow but may leave it soon after. The sites for giving birth are usually well separated from one another. Young foxes leave their parents' home range in the autumn, and if food is short, may disperse over long distances.

5. Coypu, nutria (Myocastor coypus)

a. This is a South American rodent but populations originating from fur farm escapes are established in several countries. They live in marshes and on the edges of lakes and sluggish streams. In general they prefer fresh water but a few occur in brackish water. All coypu are largely aquatic, spending much of their waking time in water. They commonly make platforms of vegetation where they sit and groom or feed during non-swimming intervals. They also construct burrows close to water which may be complex systems, 15 m or more in length with chambers that hold nests of vegetation. They make runways on land and utilise an area within about 180 m of the den. The population density ranges from 2.7 - 16.0 per hectare. Juvenile coypus are largely absent from the late winter population. Synchronisation of litters in the spring results in a peak of juveniles in early summer. Population densities peak in November with a significant female bias (1M : 1.6 F). Females are resident longer than males. Coypu are often seen by day but are most active at night.

b. Coypu are well adapted to an aquatic life having webbed feet, nostrils positioned high on the head to facilitate breathing when resting in water, vibrissae around the nose to facilitate location of food and other objects in water. They have dense fur on belly and teats situated high up on the sides. They move clumsily on land.

c. The diet of the coypu is mainly vegetable material of which roots make up a major part. They dig for food as well as to construct burrows in which to hide. They also graze along shores.

d. Coypus may mature sexually at four months of age, but the reaching of maturity depends on size rather than on age. Due to lower food supply coypus born in the winter take longer to grow and reach sexual maturity. Coypus have a polygamous mating system. Females usually come into heat every 24 to 26 days and stay in heat for 1 to 4 days; Social groups are dominated by an alpha male and alpha female with the male subordinate to the female except at mating. Female offspring occupy ranges that partially overlap the maternal range, and exclude postpubertal males from the clan. Female coypus breed throughout the year and sometimes conceive during a postpartum oestrus. Gestation is about 130 days, mean litter size at birth is 5-6. Precocial young are able to survive after only 5 days of nursing despite an average lactation of about 6 weeks. On the average only 60 % of the embryos survive to be born. Young females may abort small litters of predominantly female embryos, when expectations of larger litters are high.

6. Chinchilla (Chinchilla chinchilla, Chinchilla brevicaudata and Chinchilla lanigera)

a. The chinchilla belongs to the order of the rodents (*Rodentiae*) and to the suborder, which includes porcupines (*Hystricomorphae*). The family of the chinchillas (*Chinchillidae*) consists of two species: the short-tailed chinchilla (*Chinchilla chinchilla*) and the long-tailed chinchilla (*Chinchilla lanigera*). The smaller, short-tailed chinchilla (*C. chinchilla brevicaudata*) and larger short-tailed chinchilla or king chinchilla (*C. chinchilla chinchilla*) are considered subspecies.

The two species differ in size, weight, length and gestation duration. Both species are kept commercially in the Northern Hemisphere but most are *C. lanigera*.

The chinchilla lives in South American Andes in a climate characterised by great changes in temperature between day and night, and low humidity. The natural habitat is in dry areas with rocky slopes and sparse overgrowth.

b. Chinchillas are active at dusk and at night. During the day the animal retreats into rocky crevices and hollows. Although chinchillas are generally considered to be herbivores, they are known on occasion to eat insect larvae. Like all rodents chinchillas eat their own soft droppings.

This coprophagy sustains their need for vitamins B and D. They have the ability to extract moisture from dewdrops and plant juices, e.g. of cacti. The animals clean their fur by bathing in the dry sand of the mountain slopes and plains.

c. Chinchilla eyes are large and well adapted to nocturnal life. Their sense of hearing is very well developed. Their large mobile external ears also serve as a temperature regulator. High humidity is detrimental to them. The olfactory and tactile senses are of great importance to these animals.

Chinchillas have well-developed hind-legs which enable them to move with great speed and to perform standing jumps of more than one metre in height covering a distance over two metres. The front-legs are shorter and weaker and have mainly a supporting and grabbing function.

The long incisors grow continuously. Therefore they have to gnaw a great deal to keep them short.

The pelt hair grows in tufts from one hair root with up to 60 hairs per root. If a chinchilla is suddenly handled, part of the fur may come away. This remarkable phenomenon enables the animals to escape their natural predators such as birds of prey. It takes several months for the fur to grow back. Chinchillas do not have sweat-glands.

d. Chinchillas used to live in colonies consisting of 100 animals or more but the species are now so rare that such large colonies are not seen. Little is known about the social structure of these colonies. In the remaining groups the animals live mainly in a family unit consisting of couples with their mature offspring. It is likely that after they reach sexual maturity the young female remains in the colony while the young male is driven away.

e. The cycle of the female varies from 22-90 days depending on the season, the presence of a male or other females in heat. Heat lasts for 3-5 days in which the female is receptive for 10-15 hours. The female produces 1-3 young per litter. One to three days after dropping a litter the female is in heat again and can successfully be served. Chinchillas do not build proper nests for giving birth. The young are precocial, i.e. they are born with a pelt and open eyes and are able to leave the birth location unaided within hours of birth.

Although the mother has three pairs of teats, only two pairs are functional. After approximately seven weeks the young are weaned. They reach sexual maturity at the age of 4-6 months. At 12-18 months they are physically full-grown. In captivity they can reach an age of 18-22 years.

f. They threaten opponents by rearing and growling often accompanied by shaking of the head. Barking is a warning signal. Their initial reaction to such a signal is to freeze. If the impending danger continues they will flee. Warning, barking and fleeing are accompanied by the release of a strong smelling odour from the anal pouch. Manifestation of aggressive behaviour are jumping and spraying urine, usually a female reaction, kicking with the hind-legs and biting.

7. Raccoon dog (Nyctereutes procyonoides)

a. The raccoon dog, a native of eastern Asia was introduced to North-Western Russia between 1927 and 1953: from these initial 9100 animals, it has spread throughout Eastern and Northern Europe. The population in Finland is relatively stable. Mortality is highest amongst juveniles and the maximum life span appears to be 8 years. Farm rearing of the species started in 1972 from individuals captured from the wild.

b. The raccoon dog is fox-like in size and general shape, with smaller ears, and a shorter tail and legs. It has a head and body length of 55 to 65 cm and a tail length of 15 to 17.5 cm. Its body weight fluctuates seasonally from a minimum of 3 to 5 kg in June to a maximum of 8 to 12 kg in November in nature and on farms, even with ad libitum feeding. There is no sexual dimorphism in body size. The raccoon dog has long and dense fur on the back, but its ventral surfaces are less well insulated. Its chest and throat are black enabling heat gain from the sun even at sub-zero temperatures.

c. The raccoon dog is an omnivore. Plant material, including grain, berries and fruits are consumed in all seasons, as are small mammals, particularly voles and shrews, birds, carrion and other waste. Other foods include insects, especially beetles, reptiles, amphibians and fish. These omnivorous habits mean that population density is unaffected by fluctuations in vole cycles.

d. The raccoon dog is mainly nocturnal or crepuscular. During the day it may lie in a den or under some other form of cover, such as reeds, hollow trees or scrub. When using dens, either during breeding season or winter inactivity, it may either take abandoned fox or badger earths, or excavate its own. Foraging and exploratory behaviour involves manipulating objects, entering tunnels.

e. The raccoon dog may not truly hibernate but it does become inactive and spends much time in the den during harsh winters. It may leave the den during mild winters. Its omnivorous diet, ability to accumulate large fat reserves, and inactivity during winter helps the female to be in good condition for the breeding season. In studies in Southern Finland and Russia, raccoon dogs produced about 50 % more cubs than red foxes. Most females breed but sexual maturation, growth of young, proportion of reproducing females and cub mortality are strongly affected by food availability in relation to population density, and climatic conditions. The male plays a role in parental care, minding the cubs while the mother forages, and the family may sleep together in the den. Weaning is accomplished at 45 to 60 days of age, although cubs do not necessarily leaver their natal territory and may spend the winter with their mother.

f. The home range discovered by radio-tracking in Finland was 9.5 km^2, with a core area (85 % utilisation) of 3.4 km^2. This did not vary seasonally or annually. The core areas of adjacent pairs do not usually overlap during cub-rearing but in autumn there is overlap. The raccoon dog is reported to be monogamous, the long-term pair bond or the family being the basic social unit, but is a social species with a weak dominance hierarchy amongst the members of a family. All group members typically move together along certain paths, eat together, rest together with close body contact, and have a common latrine. Polygamous mating is successfully practised in captivity.

STOCKMANSHIP AND INSPECTION OF FUR ANIMALS

Article 3

1. Any person who owns fur animals, or for the time being has fur animals under his or her control, and every person engaged in the keeping, breeding or killing of fur animals shall, according to their responsibilities, ensure that every reasonable step is taken to safeguard the health and welfare of the species of fur animals concerned.

2. The fur animals shall be cared for by a sufficient number of personnel with adequate knowledge of the species of fur animals concerned, the husbandry system and the killing facilities used. In particular the stockman shall be able to:

(a) recognise whether or not the animals are in good health;
(b) understand the significance of behavioural changes;
(c) appreciate the suitability of the total environment for the fur animals health and welfare.

The stockman must be aware of the role of animal welfare in the daily work with the species of fur animals concerned and he must be able to recognise whether the total environment is adequate to keep them healthy and provides for the fulfilment of their biological needs, including those to show certain behaviours. The issuing of a certificate of competence for the stockman by the competent authorities should be considered.

3. In order to develop positive relationship between man and animal, there should be appropriate careful handling and other contact from an early age.

Article 4

1. All animals shall be thoroughly inspected at least once a day in the least disturbing manner for the particular species, and in so far as this would not unnecessarily disturb nests. When necessary a source of light shall be available for this purpose. Such inspections shall be made independently of any automatic surveillance equipment.

2. For thorough inspection of the animals, special attention shall be paid to bodily condition, condition of hair, skin, eyes, ears, tail, legs and feet. Healthy animals have sounds, activity, movements and posture appropriate to their species, age, sex, breed or physiological condition. Signs of good health include: clear bright eyes, good posture, clean and, depending on species and season, shiny coat, sound feet and legs, normal feeding, drinking, sucking or suckling behaviour if appropriate, normal getting up, lying down, and resting behaviour and otherwise normal movements, posture and behaviour.

3. Thorough inspection does not mean that each animal has to be examined individually. Individual examination is to be made only of those animals for which the overall inspection indicates this as being necessary.

Article 5

1. At the inspection it must be borne in mind that signs of ill health include listlessness, loss of appetite, discharge from the nostrils or eyes, excessive salivation, persistent coughing, swollen joints, lameness, scouring and behavioural aberrations. Attention shall also be paid to the presence of external parasites, to the condition of droppings and to feed and water consumption.

2. If animals are apparently not in good health, or if they are showing obvious signs of behavioural aberrations, the person responsible for them shall take steps without delay to establish the cause and shall take appropriate remedial action. If the immediate action taken by the person responsible is not effective either a veterinarian must be consulted or, if necessary, other expert advice must be sought.

If the cause is traced to a factor which it is not essential or possible to remedy immediately, this should be corrected when the accommodation is emptied or in any case within 12 months.

3. Injured, sick or distressed fur animals shall be treated without delay and, if necessary, be separated in suitable accommodation for this purpose or killed in accordance with Article 22.

Article 6

Fur animals bred for farming purposes shall not be used to achieve any other goal, including public spectacles or demonstrations, if such use is likely to be detrimental to their health and welfare.

ENCLOSURES, HOUSING AND EQUIPMENT

Article 7

1. Professional advice on health and welfare aspects should be sought when new enclosures, housing or equipment are to be constructed or existing enclosures, housing or equipment are to be modified.

2. New methods of husbandry and new design of equipment or accommodation for fur animals should be comprehensively tested from the point of view of health and welfare and, when tests are undertaken, shall not be put into commercial use unless found to be satisfactory in accordance with a procedure laid down by the competent authorities.

Article 8

When new accommodation for fur animals is planned, a suitable site shall be selected, taking into consideration the risk of outside environmental factors such as noise, vibration and atmospheric pollution, as well as the facilities to fulfil species-specific needs for certain environmental facilities such as water for swimming for certain species.

Full advantage shall be taken of natural features to provide shelter from adverse climatic conditions.

Article 9

1. The animals shall be provided with an environment which takes into consideration their biological characteristics as established on the basis of knowledge and experience from nature and from the farm situation.

2. The design, construction and maintenance of enclosures, buildings and equipment for fur animals must be such that they provide shelter from adverse climatic conditions, fulfil the animal's biological needs, including those to carry out certain behaviours, maintain good conditions of hygiene and that they limit the risk of disease, disorders manifested by behavioural changes, traumatic injuries to the animals, or injuries caused by the animals to each other, and respect the security conditions which are necessary for fire prevention and protection. Sharp corners and projections must be avoided. If cages are used, their openings must be such that the fur animals can be removed without difficulty.

3. Enclosures and buildings shall be designed and constructed so as to minimise the entry of rats, mice and birds.

4. The design, construction and maintenance of enclosures, buildings and equipment for fur animals shall be such as to allow without difficulty a thorough inspection of all animals.

5. The design, construction and maintenance of enclosures and accommodation for fur animals shall at all times allow them, in accordance with their species-specific needs, sufficient room to carry out normal locomotor behaviour, to groom themselves without difficulty and to lie down, to rest, to adopt sleeping postures, to stretch their limbs freely and to rise.

Those species which jump during normal locomotion or when alarmed, and those species which rear up on their hind legs during normal investigatory behaviour shall be provided with room to do so at all times except when within an area provided especially for sleeping.

Whenever this is part of the normal behaviour pattern of the species and improves the welfare of the individuals, animals shall be able to see conspecifics and be able to show social investigation and behaviour associated with the maintenance of social structure.

6. Floors shall be well drained in order to evacuate droppings and spills of water and such as to avoid discomfort, distress or traumatic injury to the animals. Materials used for floors shall be appropriate for the particular species. Where perforated floors are used they shall be suitable for the species concerned as well as for the size, age and weight of the animals housed and form a rigid, even and stable surface.

7. Equipment should be available for the proper handling of animals under examination, treatment or test.

8. Suitable accommodation should be available for separation and, where necessary for isolation so that sick or injured animals can be carefully examined and treated.

9. Every animal shall have available to it an area where it can hide itself appropriately from people or from animals in other cages or pens.

10. The premises on which pelting takes place shall be situated sufficiently far from the enclosures used for other animals so that these animals are not disturbed.

Article 10

Appropriate equipment shall be available and in good working order to kill the animals by methods listed in Appendix F for the species concerned.

MANAGEMENT

Article 11

1. The space allowance for fur animals should be calculated in relation to the species-specific demands on the whole environment, the age, sex, live weight and biological needs of the animals, taking account of the size of the group. Lack of space or overstocking leading to behavioural or other disorders shall be avoided.

2. Suitable material shall be available for the species-specific use and comfort of the animals.

Barren environments shall be avoided. The environment shall be equipped with suitable stimuli such as occupational material, for instance straw.

Article 12

1. Animals shall be maintained in a clean condition.

2. Those parts of the accommodation with which the animals come into contact shall be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected when appropriate, and at least annually. While the accommodation is occupied by the animals, the interior surfaces and all equipment therein shall be kept satisfactorily clean.

3. Enclosures and houses shall be kept in such a manner as to control or eliminate parasites, flies, rats or mice.

Article 13

1. All animals shall have appropriate access to adequate, nutritious, hygienic and balanced feed each day, at regular times if possible, and continuous access to an ad lib supply of water of suitable quality, so as to maintain their full health and vigour and to meet their species-specific biological needs.

2. Routine or systematic use of drugs to compensate for poor hygienic conditions or management practices shall not be allowed. The use of growth-promoting and fur-maturation substances shall not be allowed.

No animal shall be provided with food or liquid in a manner, nor shall food or liquid contain any substance, which may cause unnecessary suffering or injury.

No other substance with the exception of those given for therapeutic or prophylactic purposes shall be administered to an animal unless it has been demonstrated by scientific evidence or practical experience that the effect of the substance is not detrimental to the health or welfare of the animal.

Article 14

1. The accommodation for fur animals shall be kept so that the ambient temperature, the air velocity, the relative humidity, the levels of toxic gases and dust as well as other atmospheric conditions do not adversely affect the health and welfare of the animals.

2. The facilities for storing and handling manure in or outside the accommodation shall be designed, maintained and managed to prevent the exposure of the animals to gases in concentrations detrimental to their health. Faeces shall be removed frequently enough to prevent adverse effects on the animals.

3. Where the health of the animals depends on an artificial ventilation system, a supply of fresh air shall also be guaranteed in case of failures in the system.

Article 15

The animals shall not be unnecessarily exposed to constant or sudden noise. Ventilation fans, feeding machinery or other equipment shall be constructed, placed, operated and maintained in such a way that it causes the least possible noise, both directly inside the accommodation and indirectly through the structure of the accommodation itself.

Article 16

The animals must be shielded from direct sunlight and must not be kept permanently in strong light nor in total darkness. Where artificial light is necessary the sources must be mounted so as not to cause discomfort to the animals and the level of lighting whether natural or artificial must be sufficient to permit normal behaviour of the species.

Article 17

All automatic or other mechanical equipment upon which the animals depend for their health and welfare must be inspected at least once daily. Provisions shall be made enabling any failure of the ventilation system which could endanger the health or welfare of the animals to be discovered and rectified immediately. If immediate rectification appears impossible, appropriate steps shall be taken to safeguard the health and welfare of the animals until the defect is rectified.

Article 18

Weaning of cubs shall take place at an age which is most beneficial to the welfare of the mother and the cubs.

Article 19

1. When the animals have to be caught or moved, this shall be done as far as possible without causing agitation or other forms of distress to them or to other animals.

All reasonable measures shall be taken to prevent the animals from escaping.

2. Escaped animals should be caught painlessly. If traps are used they shall be inspected at least twice a day.

Article 20

Electro-ejaculation shall not be used other than for veterinary diagnosis when there is no other method available. In such exceptional circumstances, it shall be carried out under strict veterinary control.

CHANGES OF PHENOTYPE AND/OR GENOTYPE

Article 21

1. Breeding or breeding programmes which cause or are likely to cause suffering or harm to any of the animals involved shall not be practised. In particular, animals whose genotype has been modified for production purposes shall not be kept under commercial farm conditions unless it has been demonstrated by scientific studies of animal welfare that the animals can be kept under such conditions without detriment to their health or welfare. Strongly fearful animals should not be included in the breeding stock.

2. In breeding programmes, particular attention shall be paid to criteria conducive to the improvement of animals' health and welfare, as well as to production criteria. Therefore, the conservation or development of breeds or strains of animals which would limit or reduce animal welfare problems shall be encouraged.

KILLING

Article 22

1. Killing shall be done by a competent person without causing undue agitation, pain or other forms of distress.

The method chosen shall either

a. cause immediate loss of consciousness and death, or
b. rapidly induce deep general anaesthesia culminating in death, or
c. cause the death of an animal which is anaesthetised or effectively stunned without any aversive influence on the animal.

Appendix F lists the principal methods which can, when used correctly, meet these requirements and which should be applied when permitted under domestic law and in accordance with domestic law.

2. The person responsible for the killing shall ensure that for each animal the requirements under paragraph 1. above are fulfilled, and that the animal is dead before further procedures are carried out.

3. Killing shall be done so as to cause the least possible disturbance to the other animals.

RESEARCH

Article 23

1. Where Parties seek to encourage or promote fur farming on their territory in accordance with the provisions in this Recommendation, they shall undertake to carry out, in respect of each species of fur animals kept on their territory, research on:

a. the biology and welfare of these animals, including health;

b. the development of husbandry systems, including group housing, in order to improve the welfare of these animals, including health;

c. humane methods of killing these animals.

Such studies shall include the need for adequate freedom of movement and the opportunity for observation of other animals and surroundings, climbing, access to water for thermo-regulation and for swimming, hiding, ground-digging, jumping, walking on a solid ground and other territorial, social and exploratory behaviour and other methods for environmental enrichment.

2. Endeavours shall be made to develop and apply systems which are, in the light of available scientific knowledge, appropriate to their biological needs, including needs to carry out certain behaviour, into the design, construction or reconstruction of accommodation for the animals.

3. Such systems shall minimise the risk of diseases and injuries and provide a stimulating environment to enable the animal to fulfil the biological needs as deduced from studies of the animals in nature and in farm conditions.

Article 24

The Standing Committee shall be informed annually of the program and results of research, and measures taken to improve breeding conditions and control production.

SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS

Article 25

This Recommendation shall be reviewed within 5 years after coming into force. It shall be completed with Appendices on special provisions for other species when scientific knowledge is available.

APPENDIX A

SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR MINK (*Mustela vison*)

1. A nest box of thermoinsulating material, which is not hazardous to the health of the animals, with a sufficient floor area shall be available. The design of the opening of the nest box shall allow new born animals to be retained while providing easy access for other animals. Suitable bedding and occupational material such as straw shall be regularly provided, and its adequacy must be checked, especially during the period of giving birth and in the cold season.

2. Immature animals shall not be kept isolated. Stable relationship are most easily obtained in groups of animals reared together. Group sizes and stocking densities of these animals shall be such that they allow for peaceful cohabitation. Weaning of young shall take place at an age which is most beneficial to the welfare of the mother and the young, and shall take place not earlier than eight weeks of age. Only in exceptional circumstances where the welfare of the mother or the young is endangered, can the weaning take place at a younger age. Weaned young should not be left in the vicinity of their mother.

3. Where there is a significant level of stereotypy or self-mutilation in mink on a farm, the system of housing or management shall be changed appropriately so that the welfare of the animals is improved. If these measures are not sufficient production should be suspended.

4. When breeding animals are paired together or, in exceptional circumstances, when adult animals are placed in the same accommodation, there shall be adequate supervision.

5. If the animals are kept in cages, the cages should be placed at a sufficient height and the areas under the cages should be covered with sand, gravel, cinders or other suitable material, to allow the easy removal of faeces.

Cages shall not be placed one above the other.

6. If the animals are kept in cages, the height of the cages shall allow animals to rear on their hind legs.

7. **Minimum space for mink**

	Free area (cm^2)[1] (excluding nest boxes)
Single adult animal	2550
Single adult with cubs	2550
Juveniles after weaning, up to 2 animals	2550[2]

The minimum height of any accommodation shall be 45 cm.

The figures above shall apply for new systems or when existing systems are replaced.

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[1] No accommodation shall be less than 30 cm wide excluding nest box.
No accommodation shall be less than 70 cm long excluding nest box.

[2] For each additional animal more than 2, an additional 850 cm^2 shall be provided.

All systems with cages with a free area of less than 1600 cm^2 or a height of less than 35 cm must be replaced by 31st December 2001.

Systems with cages with a free area of more than 1600 cm^2 and a height greater than 35 cm must be replaced with systems complying with at least the above dimensions by 31st December 2010.

8. When designing new accommodation consideration shall be given to the possibility for adaptations which would allow for environmental enrichment.

9. In the design, construction or reconstruction of accommodation for the animals, endeavours shall be made to develop and apply systems which are, in the light of available scientific knowledge, appropriate to their biological needs.

Research shall be carried out which will establish standards and develop housing systems that minimise the risk of diseases and injuries and provide a stimulating environment to enable animals to fulfil their biological needs, as deduced from studies of the animals in nature and in farm conditions. Such systems shall include the need for adequate freedom of movement and the opportunity for observation of other animals and surroundings, climbing, access to water for thermo-regulation and for swimming and other social and exploratory behaviour. Shared space systems involving tunnels and removable walls between cages shall be considered. Research shall also be carried out which will help to reduce fear of humans, abnormal behaviour and stress in the animals.

APPENDIX B

SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR POLECAT, FERRET, FITCH (*Mustela putorius*)

1. A nest box of thermoinsulating material, which is not hazardous to the health of the animals, with a sufficient floor area shall be available. The design of the opening of the nest box shall allow new born animals to be retained while providing easy access for other animals. Suitable bedding and occupational material such as straw shall be regularly provided, and its adequacy must be checked especially during the period of giving birth and in the cold season.

2. Immature animals shall not be kept isolated. Stable relationship are most easily obtained in groups of animals reared together. Group sizes and stocking densities of these animals shall be such as they allow for peaceful cohabitation. Weaned young should not be left in the vicinity of their mother.

3. When breeding animals are paired together or, in exceptional circumstances, when adult animals are placed in the same accommodation, there shall be adequate supervision.

4. If the animals are kept in cages, the cages should be placed at a sufficient height and the areas under the cages should be covered with sand, gravel, cinders or other suitable material, to allow the easy removal of faeces.

Cages shall not be placed one above the other.

5. If the animals are kept in cages, the height of the cages shall allow animals to rear on their hind legs.

6. **Minimum space for fitch**

	Free area (cm^2)[1] (excluding nest boxes)
Single adult animal	2550
Single adult with cubs	2550
Juveniles after weaning, up to 2 animals	2550[2]

The minimum height of any accommodation shall be 45 cm.

The figures above shall apply for new systems or when existing systems are replaced.

All systems with cages with a free area of less than 1600 cm^2 or a height of less than 35 cm must be replaced by 31st December 2001.

Systems with cages with a free area of more than 1600 cm^2 and a height greater than 35 cm must be replaced with systems complying with at least the above dimensions before 31st December 2010.

7. When designing new accommodation consideration shall be given to the possibility for adaptations which would allow for environmental enrichment.

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[1] No accommodation shall be less than 30 cm wide excluding nest box.
No accommodation shall be less than 70 cm long excluding nest box.

[2] For each additional animal more than 2, an additional 850 cm^2 shall be provided.

8. In the design, construction or reconstruction of accommodation for the animals, endeavours shall be made to develop and apply systems which are, in the light of available scientific knowledge, appropriate to their biological needs.

Research shall be carried out which will establish standards and develop housing systems that minimise the risk of diseases and injuries and provide a stimulating environment to enable animals to fulfil their biological needs, as deduced from studies of the animals in nature and in farm conditions. Such systems shall include the need for adequate freedom of movement and the opportunity for observation of other animals and surroundings, climbing, access to water for thermo-regulation and other social and exploratory behaviour. Shared space systems involving tunnels and removable walls between cages shall be considered. Research shall also be carried out which will help to reduce fear of humans, abnormal behaviour and stress in the animals.

APPENDIX C

SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR FOXES (*Vulpes vulpes* and *Alopex lagopus*)

1. Since all biological needs of foxes are not met in the systems of husbandry at present in commercial use, such systems shall be replaced as soon as possible by new systems which are better adapted to the biological characteristics. Until husbandry methods are available which meet the conditions in paragraph 14 hereafter existing systems shall be improved to comply with the requirements in paragraphs 2-13 hereafter.

2. The environment shall be enriched with objects that provide suitable stimuli to gnaw and any other occupational material.

3. The animals shall be habituated to human contact from birth.

4. The animals shall be kept in such a way that their claws are in good condition.

5. When breeding animals are paired together or, in exceptional circumstances, when adult animals are placed in the same accommodation, there shall be adequate supervision. Subordinate vixens should not be placed in cages next to dominant females.

6. Where there is significant incidence of infanticide, a farm production system shall be changed appropriately, for example, by changing the housing conditions for breeding vixens or genetic strains. If these measures are not sufficient, the production should be suspended.

7. Foxes must be able to conceal themselves from people and from animals in other cages or enclosures. They must also be able to rest and to observe their surroundings. Each weaned animal shall have available:

a. a secluded area;

b. either an elevated platform or a nest box with a roof on which the animal can rest and observe the cage door or enclosure entrance.

8. For **Vulpes vulpes**, the secluded area shall have solid walls.

9. Pregnant vixens and vixens with cubs shall have a nest box which shall be divided into an anteroom, large enough to conceal the entrance to the main room, and a main room with adequate drainage and equipped with adequate thermoinsulating material.

10. Weaned cubs should not be left in the vicinity of their mother.

11. If the animals are kept in cages, the cages should be placed at a sufficient height to enable easy removal of manure and the areas under the cages should be covered with sand, gravel, cinders or other suitable material to allow the soaking up of effluent whilst permitting the easy removal of faeces.

Cages shall not be placed one above the other.

12. The routine use of neck tongs for catching foxes shall be avoided.

13. **Minimum space for foxes**

	Free area (m^2)[1]
Single adult animal	0,8
Single adult with cubs	2,0
Juveniles after weaning, up to 2 animals	1,2[2]

The minimum height of any accommodation shall be 70 cm.

The figures above shall apply for new accommodation or when existing accommodation is replaced. All accommodation shall comply with at least these figures before 31st December 2010.

Consideration shall be given to increasing the height of cages in order to improve the welfare of foxes.

14. In the design, construction or reconstruction of accommodation for the animals, endeavours shall be made to develop and apply systems which are, in the light of available scientific knowledge, appropriate to their biological needs.

Research shall be carried out which will establish standards and develop housing systems that minimise the risk of diseases and injuries and provide a stimulating environment to enable animals to fulfil their biological needs, as deduced from studies of the animals in nature and in farm conditions. Such systems shall include the need for adequate freedom of movement and the opportunity for observation of other animals and humans, thermo-regulation, climbing, hiding, digging, jumping, and other exploratory, territorial and social behaviour. Shared space systems involving tunnels and removable walls between cages and much taller cages or cage systems other than those used at present shall be considered. Research shall also be carried out which will help to reduce fear of humans, abnormal behaviour and stress in the animals.

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1 No accommodation shall be less than 75 cm wide.
No accommodation shall be less than 100 cm long.

2 For each additional animal more than 2, an additional 0.5 m^2 shall be provided.

APPENDIX D

SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR COYPU, NUTRIA (*Myocastor coypus*)

1. The environment shall be equipped with suitable stimuli such as possibilities for social contact, objects to gnaw, occupational material and objects such as tubes and boxes and appropriate facilities for swimming.

2. Coypu shall be kept in groups.

3. The construction of pens and runs shall allows animals to be within sight and smell of other animals. There shall be a solid area available for exercising.

4. A nest box provided with straw or other suitable thermoinsulating material, which is not hazardous to the health of the animals, shall be available. The dimensions of the nest box shall be such that all animals in one enclosure are able to lie down at the same time and that it can be kept warm by the body temperature. The nest box must have two chambers and two exits. Other animals in a group may need to be separated from a female and her litter soon after parturition to prevent the female from injuring these other animals.

5. **Minimum space for coypu**

	Free area (m^2) [1] (excluding water for swimming)
Single adult animal	1.0
Single adult with cubs	2.0
Juvenile after weaning	0.5

Minimum size of a pen must be 2.0 m^2.

The figures above shall apply for new pens or when existing pens are replaced. All pens shall comply with at least these figures by 31st December 2010.

6. In the design, construction or reconstruction of accommodation for the animals, endeavours shall be made to develop and apply systems which are, in the light of available scientific knowledge, appropriate to their biological needs.

Research shall be carried out which will establish standards and develop housing systems that minimise the risk of diseases and injuries and provide a stimulating environment to enable animals to fulfil their biological needs, as deduced from studies of the animals in nature and in farm conditions. Such systems shall include the need for adequate freedom of movement and the opportunity for observation of other animals and surroundings, thermo-regulation, digging, and other social and exploratory behaviour. Research shall also be carried out which will help to reduce fear of humans, abnormal behaviour and stress in the animals.

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[1] 70% of the floor shall be solid.

APPENDIX E

SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR CHINCHILLA (*Chinchilla chinchilla, Chinchilla brevicaudata and Chinchilla lanigera*)

1. The environment shall be equipped with suitable stimuli such as occupational material and objects such as tubes and boxes.

2. They shall have a suitable object to gnaw.

3. They shall have access to a sand bath at least once a day.

4. Suitable platforms to facilitate locomotor activity shall be provided after weaning of juveniles.

5. Animals shall have access to an appropriate secluded area where they can rest and hide.

6. Adequate bedding shall be provided.

7. At least 25% of the accommodation floor shall be solid.

8. As social animals, solitary housing shall be an exception. Group of juveniles, after weaning and prior to sexual maturation, should preferably be litterwise.

9. In order to prevent excessive fur loss, special care shall be taken in handling chinchillas. It is recommended that the tail root is held between thumb and index finger while putting the other hand around the thorax and front legs to support the body. Fur shall not be plucked from live animals.

10. **Guidelines for minimum space for chinchillas**

	Free area (m^2)[1]
Adult animals, up to two animals	0.5
Single adult with cubs	0.5
Juvenile after weaning	0.3[2]

The minimum height of any accommodation should be 100 cm.

The figures above shall be taken into consideration, in particular when new accommodation is constructed or when existing accommodation is replaced.

11. In the design, construction or reconstruction of accommodation for the animals, endeavours shall be made to develop and apply systems which are, in the light of available scientific knowledge, appropriate to their biological needs.

Research shall be carried out which will establish standards and develop housing systems that minimise the risk of diseases and injuries and provide a stimulating environment to enable animals to fulfil their biological needs, as deduced from studies of the animals in nature and in farm conditions. Such systems shall include the need for adequate freedom of movement and the opportunity for observation of other animals and surroundings, climbing, thermo-regulation, jumping, and other social and exploratory behaviour.

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[1] No accommodation should be less than 50 cm wide.
No accommodation should be less than 60 cm long.

[2] For each additional animal, an additional space of 0.16 m^2 should be provided.

APPENDIX F

METHODS OF KILLING FUR ANIMALS

I. Physical methods

Electrocution
A method of electrocution shall be used which leads to immediate loss of consciousness and cardiac arrest. For foxes, where electrodes are applied to the mouth and rectum, a current of an average value of 0,3 Ampere must be applied for at least 3 seconds.
Electrocution equipment shall be fitted with a device indicating the current under load, which is clearly visible to the operator.

Projectiles penetrating the brain
Animals may be killed by projectiles which enter the cerebral cortex. If a captive-bolt method is used bleeding shall be performed immediately after use.

II. Inhalation methods

The chamber in which the animals are exposed to the gas (mixture) is designed, constructed and maintained in such a way as to avoid injury to the animals and allow them to be observed.
The gas must induce deep general anaesthesia and must then cause certain death.
The animals must remain in the chamber until they are dead.
Except when permitted below, only gas or gas mixtures which do not cause breathlessness or respiratory distress during induction shall be used. Gas or gas mixtures which are aversive should not be used.

Carbon monoxide
The animals must be introduced into the chamber only after it contains carbon monoxide at a concentration of at least 1% by volume, preferably supplied from a cylinder containing 100% carbon monoxide.

The gas produced by a petrol engine which has been specially adapted for the purpose may be used provided that this gas:

- has been adequately cooled (eg by passing the gas through water),
- has been sufficiently filtered (eg by a metal filter) and
- is not accompanied by irritant gases or material,

and that the system is tested by the owner before each batch of animals is killed.

Carbon dioxide
Carbon dioxide may be used to kill mustelids and chinchillas until less aversive gases or gas mixtures with equivalent effect are available.
The animals must be introduced into the chamber only when the atmosphere contains the highest possible concentration of carbon dioxide supplied by a source of 100% carbon dioxide.

Chloroform
Chloroform may be used to kill chinchilla.
The animals must be introduced into the chamber only if it contains a saturated chloroform-air mixture, to avoid suffocation.

III. Injectable agents

Lethal injections
Pentobarbitone sodium solution (200 mg/ml) or any other anaesthetic which has been shown to produce similar effects, with the exception of Chloral Hydrate, may be used to kill in particular mustelids and foxes.
Muscle relaxants shall only be used when anaesthesia has been induced.