

Superlist Animal Welfare: Dutch supermarkets place choice for animal welfare with their customers

Dec 14, 2021

Many animal products without relevant quality label for animal welfare in the shops; no targets for reduction of meat.

Dutch supermarkets are not doing enough to increase the share of more animal-friendly products, such as meat, dairy and eggs with a relevant quality label for animal welfare. Almost all supermarkets, with the exception of Ekoplaza, place the responsibility for more animal-friendly products mostly with their customers. These are the conclusions from Superlist Animal Welfare that was published today. Superlist Animal Welfare investigates to what extent supermarkets stimulate a diet that contributes to better animal welfare.

The research conducted by research foundation Questionmark in collaboration with World Animal Protection, shows that the supermarkets are starting to take little steps to improve animal welfare. In the meantime however, animal products without a quality label for animal welfare are still widely available in the shops and supermarkets are not yet focusing on the reduction of meat, dairy and eggs.

More animal-friendly not available everywhere

Supermarkets usually place the responsibility for a more animal-friendly choice with their customers. With the exception of Ekoplaza, most supermarkets offer multiple animal products without making an extra effort to improve animal welfare. Extra effort means certification with at least one star "Beter Leven Keurmerk", a quality label-system introduced in 2007 to motivate more animal-friendly farming practices. Progress in this field varies over the product segments of the supermarkets: eggs are ahead of meat, dairy lags behind. Hardly any action has been taken in the area of fish welfare.

Charlotte Linnebank, director of Questionmark: "Animals, including animals in the livestock industry, deserve a respectable life. The majority of Dutch people agree on this and expect supermarkets to take responsibility for

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proper treatment of all animals behind the meat, fish, dairy and eggs they offer. Supermarkets are well positioned for this as they determine what they sell in their shops. They can choose to only sell animal products with a quality label for animal welfare. We see some chains already taking small steps. I hope this Superlist encourages them to speed up and make their entire assortment more animal-friendly."

Supermarkets are not aiming to reduce the sale of animal products yet

Almost all supermarkets mention the growing demand for alternatives to animal products and express the wish or expectation to sell more of these products in the coming years. Albert Heijn, Coop and Ekoplaza also provide figures. However, this growing demand is by none of the supermarkets linked to tangible objectives to stimulate meat reduction.

Dirk-Jan Verdonk, director of World Animal Protection: "Eating less meat not only means that less animals suffer in the livestock industry, it also means less greenhouse gas emissions, less deforestation for the production of animal feed, less pollution from manure surpluses. The switch to plant-based alternatives is therefore also important for wild animals: the global livestock industry severely affects their habitats. With Superlist Animal Welfare, we want to inspire supermarkets to make different choices, on the way to a more animal-friendly and sustainable food system."

First steps on reporting and objectives

Ekoplaza is the only supermarket that uses "Beter Leven Keurmerk 3" (the highest quality label for animal welfare) as a lower limit for all meat, dairy products and fresh eggs. Apart from fish welfare, where Ekoplaza is already taking very big steps, there is no room for further ambition in terms of reporting and objectives for Ekoplaza.

Several other supermarkets, with Albert Heijn leading the way, have started to measure and report on animal welfare through their sales figures. The researchers noticed clear improvements in reporting after sharing the methodology of the Superlist with the supermarkets. On chicken, all supermarkets have set clear objectives. Coop extends this to pork and beef for the entire range, Jumbo only for the range of private labels.

Ranking

Frontrunners and laggards

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Based on the research results and the weighting, a ranking of the supermarkets was prepared. The ranking shows which supermarkets belong to the Front runners (green), the laggards (red) and which are average (yellow) according to how well they help their customers to make a choice that contributes to better animal welfare (left side graph) and how they aim for the reduction of the sale of animal products (right side graph).

