

Questionnaire

Country: Finland
The Country is: EU Member State
Author of the Questionnaire: Vier Pfofen, Maria Blomster and Kirsi Puoliväli
Note: –

Question	Article	Note
I. DATA AND DOCUMENTS		
What is the number of companion animals and/or stray animals in your country? Do you have any other data (e. g. rate of companion animals per inhabitant)?	–	There are virtually no strays in Finland, but naturally certain number of runaways or abandoned animals. There are no official numbers of stray animals in Finland.
Does the country have a specific animal welfare legislation?	–	Yes, there is Animal Welfare Act, Animal Welfare Regulation and decrees issued by the Government in Finland. Penalties in AW crimes are currently tightened and national register of people banned on keeping animals will be formed in June 1st 2011. AW Law is expected to be completely revised during the next parliamentary term.
Which other laws and ordinances refer to animal welfare?	–	See above.
II. GOVERNANCE		
<i>BASIC ETHICAL CONCEPT IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM</i>		
What is the basic ethical concept in your political system concerning animal welfare?	–	Not known.
Is the animal welfare act based on animal welfare as the principle value of the legislation?	–	No.
Do animals have a right to life?	–	Not known.

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Which reasonable causes have to be met for an official permission to kill a healthy animal?	–	An animal has to be killed as quickly and painlessly as possible. It may only be done by a person who has sufficient expertise. Permissible killing methods for different animal species are prescribed in the Statute on Animal Protection and in more detail in the related ministerial Decision.
CONSTITUTION		
Is animal welfare part of the constitution?	–	No.
ANIMAL WELFARE IN PARLIAMENT		
Is there an animal welfare committee in the parliament?	–	There's an unofficial animal welfare club in the Parliament.
ANIMAL WELFARE IN GOVERNMENT		
Are there any official animal welfare bodies in the government? (e. g. Ombudsman, Commissioner)	–	Farm Animal Advisory Board was established in 2009.
Which ministry/ministries is/are responsible for animal welfare?	–	Ministry of Agriculture.
ANIMAL WELFARE IN AUTHORITIES		
How is the status of competent authorities for animal welfare legislation and are they/is it linked to a ministry and which ministry is it?	–	Not known.
ANIMAL WELFARE STRATEGY, BIRTH CONTROL AND SCHOOL PROGRAMMES		
Does the country have a national animal welfare strategy?	–	For farm animals.
Is there an obligation for the government to do and publish an annual or biannual animal welfare report?	–	Yes.
Are there legal or administrative measures which provide birth control of animals?	–	No.

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Are there (mandatory) school programmes on animal welfare?	–	No.
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III. DOGS/CATS IN LEGISLATION

DEFINITIONS

Does the law or another enactment include a definition of animals as “sentient beings”?	–	No.
Are animals defined as goods (object/chattel)?	–	Yes. Not specifically in any law/act but animals are considered goods (i.e. property other than real property).
Does the law include definitions of companion animals, abandoned animals and/or stray animals?	–	A companion or a hobby animal is a dog, cat or other small animal, which is kept for company, hobby, selling, relay, rent, breeding, training, schooling, maintaining or taking care of. It is also a dog used in customs, army, border patrol or police or a dog used for guarding, hunting, sledding or as a guide or assisting dog or any similar tasks. (Definition can be found in the Decree issued by Finnish Government on Protection of Dogs, Cats and other small-sized Companion Animals.)

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION IN THE LEGISLATION

Can an animal be treated like an asset (e. g. in insolvency, confiscation, divorce, separation)? May an animal be used as an evidence in a court procedure?	–	Yes, if the dog has monetary value.
Is winning of a bet or any other gain from an action which causes pain and/or suffering of an animal punishable?	–	AWA and AW regulation indirectly define them as animal cruelty.
May an animal be obtained as a prize?	Art. 18	It is forbidden to give any animals away as a prize.

IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION

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Is identification and registration of animals mandatory and where are they registered and what is registered? What about costs?	–	No.
BREEDING		
Are there any clauses on breeders and is there a national register for breeders?	AWA 24 §, AW regulation 24 § and in Decree on Protection of Dogs, Cats and other small-sized Companion Animals §§8 and 14	If one keeps or sells companion animals professionally or in large scale, one must give a notification to the regional authority. Regulation Reg.24 § When breeding animals, one shouldn't use means of reproduction which can cause pain or suffering to an animal. One shouldn't keep an animal for breeding purposes if breeding causes harm to animal's welfare or health. Decree 8 § Puppies are not allowed to be weaned too early, but it should be done on the best possible moment considering the welfare of the dam and the puppies. Decree 14 § The dam must have a peaceful, cozy and familiar place to give birth. The dam must be left in peace while preparing to give birth and while nursing. One shouldn't use the bitch for breeding too often.
Does the law proscribe the minimum care obligations for animals at breeders?	Art. 15	Animal which is in one's care must not be abandoned or left without care. Animal must have enough food suitable for it, water and other care it needs. When animal gets ill it must get proper treatment. Welfare and conditions of an animal must be verified often enough.
Is breeding of defects punishable?	–	Yes.
Does the law provide for limitations on animals mutilations? (e. g. tail docking, ear cropping, de-voalization, declawing, obligation to use anaesthesia.)	Art. 3, 7 AWA and Art. 14 AW	Amputations without medical reason are implicitly forbidden. There are several exemptions for farm animals.
Which reasonable causes have to be met for an official permission to kill a healthy animal by a breeder?	–	An animal has to be killed as quickly and painlessly as possible. It may only be done by a person who has sufficient expertise. Permissible killing methods for different animal species are prescribed in the Statute on Animal Protection and in more detail in the related ministerial Decision.

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TRANSPORT, TRAVEL, SELL OF CATS (TRADE)

Is withholding of food and/or water from the animal(s) during a long transport punishable?	Animal Transportation Act 6 §	Water and suitable food must be given to animal as well as animal must be given rest considering the species and the age of an animal, vehicle, circumstances and length of the transportation and other matters affecting the animal's need of water, food and rest during the transport.
Must a companion animal be quarantined upon arriving in your country?	–	Not known.
Is it allowed to sell dogs/cats at a pet shop?	–	Not known.
Is there a ban on markets, shows, exhibitions or other events where one can buy an animal?	§ 27 AWA	It is forbidden to sell animals in any mobile trade.
Is there an age-limit for children to buy an animal?	–	Not known.

KEEPING AND LIMITS OF KEEPING

Does the law proscribe the minimum care obligations for animals at keepers?	Art. 15	Animal which is in one's care must not be abandoned or left without care. Animal must have enough food suitable for it, water and other care it needs. When animal gets ill it must get proper treatment. Welfare and conditions of an animal must be verified often enough.
Is there a special regulation which rules keeping of companion animals?	–	No.
Is there a list of banned or dangerous animals?	–	No.
May a landlord forbid a renter to keep an animal?	–	Not known.
May neighbours file complain against an owner, e. g. if he/she does not inhibit his/her animal from (ceaseless) noises?	–	It may be a violation to the Criminal Code (invasion of domestic premises: disturbing the domestic privacy of another by making noise).

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Which reasonable causes have to be met for an official permission to kill a healthy animal by a private person?	–	An animal has to be killed as quickly and painlessly as possible. It may only be done by a person who has sufficient expertise. Permissible killing methods for different animal species are prescribed in the Statute on Animal Protection and in more detail in the related ministerial Decision.
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KILLING

Which reasonable causes have to be met for an official permission to kill a healthy animal (also to get products of animal origin, e. g. for animal testing purposes or food supply)?	–	An animal has to be killed as quickly and painlessly as possible. It may only be done by a person who has sufficient expertise. Permissible killing methods for different animal species are prescribed in the Statute on Animal Protection and in more detail in the related ministerial Decision.
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Can animals be kept in shelters indefinitely? If not, is there specific time frame (for a vet) to kill an animal kept in a shelter?	–	Yes. There is no restriction in law about that.
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ABUSE OF ANIMALS

Does the law address cruelty to animals? If so, does it provide for sanctions?	–	Yes, in Criminal Code (gross animal welfare offence, crime, minor crime) and in Animal Welfare Act (misdemeanor).
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Is sexual abuse of animals punishable?	–	Not known.
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Is maltreatment and/or suffering of animals perceived as a criminal offense? If so, what sanctions are foreseen?	Criminal Code Ch 17 14 – 15 §	Criminal Code applies if the animal is left without necessary nutrition. Criminal Code Ch 17, 14 § and 14 a, 15 and 15 a (felony, crime, minor crime) dog and cat fur marketing crime punishes these offences with fine or imprisonment up to 4 years.
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UN-OWNED ANIMALS, SHELTERS, ABANDONED ANIMALS

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Are there regulations on lost/found animals?	Animal Welfare Act Chapter 2 15 §	<i>Impounded animals</i> (1) The municipality must see to the organization of the temporary care of dogs and cats and similar small-sized pets and hobby animals found straying at large and impounded in its territory. (2) An animal that is impounded must be kept for the minimum of 15 days, after which the municipality has the right to sell, give away or kill the animal. (3) The municipality has the right to collect reimbursement from the owner or possessor of the animal for the costs of impounding, care and possible killing of the animal. (4) If the police has been notified of the impounding of a dog as referred to in section 55 of the Hunting Act (615/93), the police must notify the municipal facility for impounded animals of this.
Who is owner of an abandoned animal?	–	The original owner until the municipality sells or gives away the animal to a new owner. Please, see the previous answer.
May a private person establish an animal shelter?	–	Yes. Nothing specific about establishing a shelter in the law. AWA 15 § regulates that municipalities must see to the organization of the temporary care of dogs and cats and other small pet and hobby animals found straying at large and impounded in its territory.
Can animals be kept in shelters indefinitely? If not, is there specific time frame (for a vet) to kill an animal kept in a shelter?	–	Yes. There is no restriction in law about that.
Is local community financing activities of collecting of abandoned and lost animals?	–	No.
Must a finder of a stray and/or abandoned animal report the finding to a competent authority?	–	No.
Are there possibilities to adopt an abandoned animal?	§ 15 AWA	There are almost 200 shelters in Finland. Adopting practices vary, but most of the shelters are promoting adoption.
Are there legal or administrative measures which provide birth control of stray animals?	–	No.

VETERINARIANS

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Is negligence (of a vet or a veterinary assistant) punishable?	–	Yes, if s/he works as a public official (for the state or municipality).
Does the law provide for limitations on animals mutilations? (e. g. tail docking, ear cropping, devocalization, declawing, obligation to use anaesthesia.)	Art. 3, 7 AWA and Art. 14 AW	Amputations without medical reason are implicitly forbidden. There are several exemptions for farm animals.
Which reasonable causes have to be met for an official permission to kill a healthy animal by a veterinarian?	–	An animal has to be killed as quickly and painlessly as possible. It may only be done by a person who has sufficient expertise. Permissible killing methods for different animal species are prescribed in the Statute on Animal Protection and in more detail in the related ministerial Decision.
POLICY OF BIRTH CONTROL FOR OWNED AND UN-OWNED ANIMALS		
Are there legal or administrative measures which provide birth control of animals?	–	No.
IV. ENFORCEMENT		
List of case studies and / or relevant court decisions.	–	Not known.
V. PRACTICAL INFORMATION		
List of veterinary organisations in your country.	–	The Finnish Veterinary Association
List of animal welfare organisations in your country.	–	Animalia

(29th May 2013)