

**THIS IS EUROPEAN
POULTRY!**

**HIGH-QUALITY
POULTRY WITH EUROPEAN
GUARANTEE**

PRESS KIT 2020

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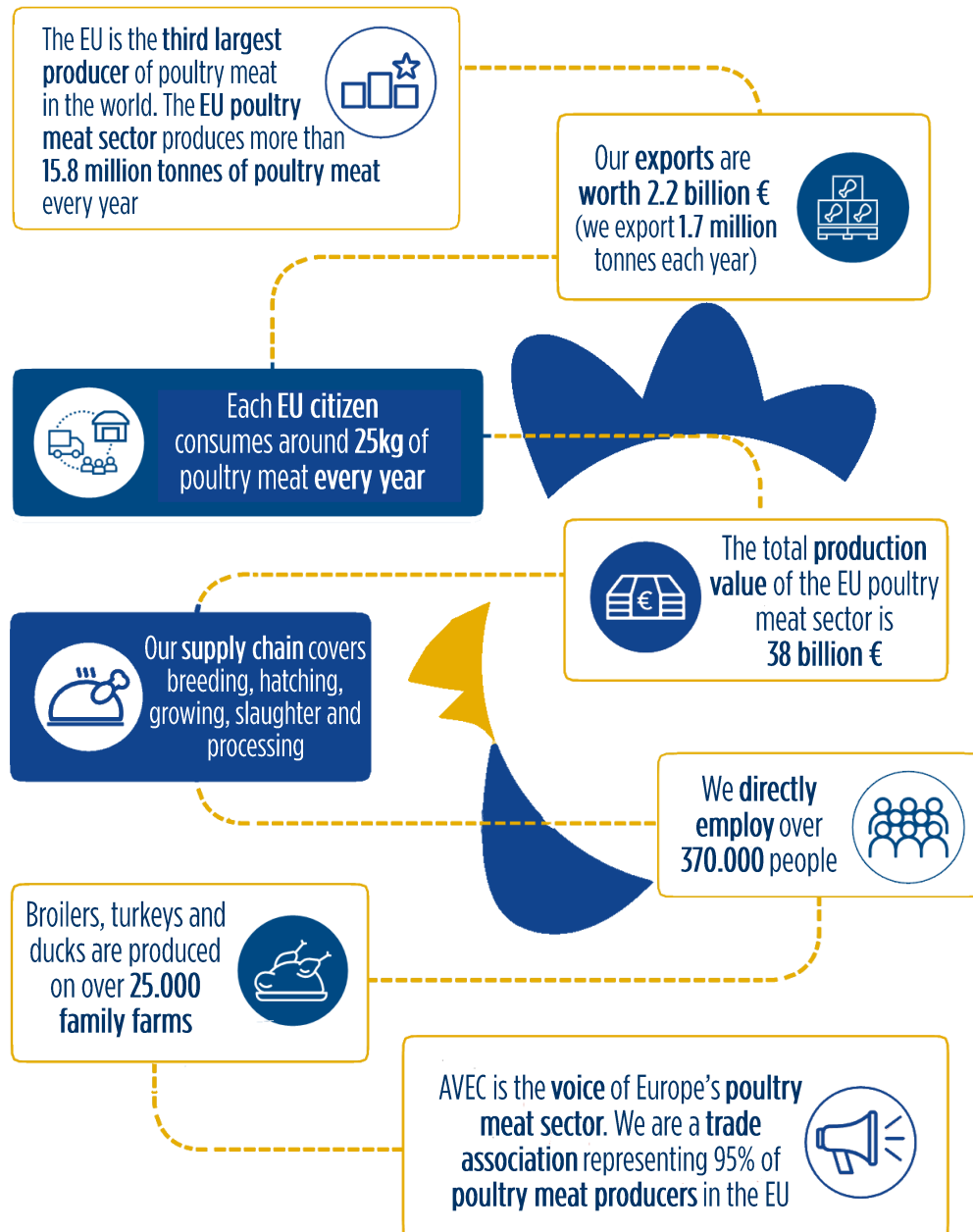
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EU poultry meat production in a nutshell



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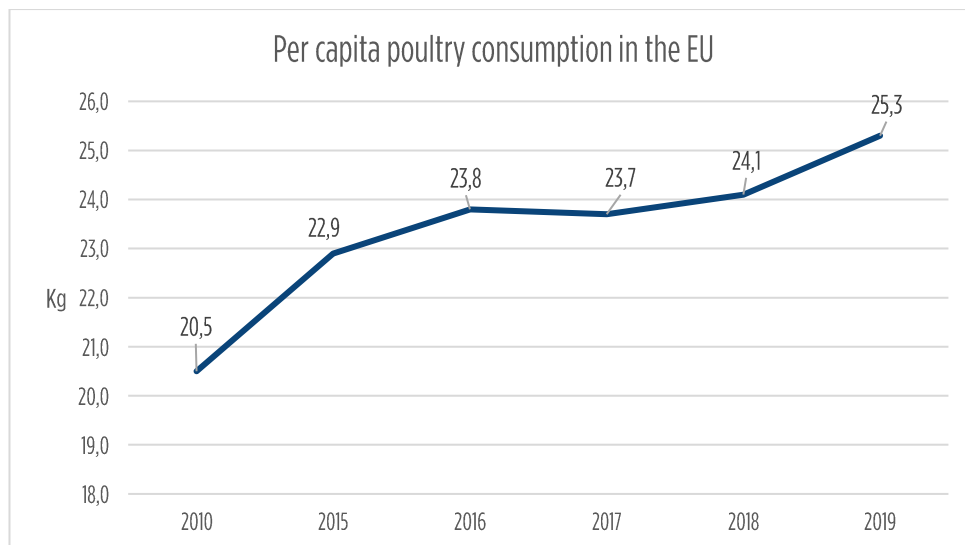
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Key facts about European poultry

Uniform production conditions guarantee safe, first-class poultry meat

Poultry is an important part of the European diet. In the past ten years, EU consumption has increased by 23% to currently 25.3 kilogrammes per capita per year. And experts predict a further slight increase over the next decade.



Source: EU Commission – DG AGRI

Worldwide demand for this affordable source of protein is growing as well, and Europe enjoys a good reputation as a supplier among potential customers. So domestic and external demand will lead to a further production increase in the EU in the years ahead.

The European poultry sector is well prepared, both for the growing demand and for the high requirements regarding food safety, animal welfare and environmental protection. The EU authorities and the European and national associations in the sector are working hand in hand to ensure uniformly high standards across the production chain. No matter which EU country the poultry meat comes from, consumers can always be confident that they are buying safe, high-quality poultry meat produced to high European standards.

A global player with family-based structures

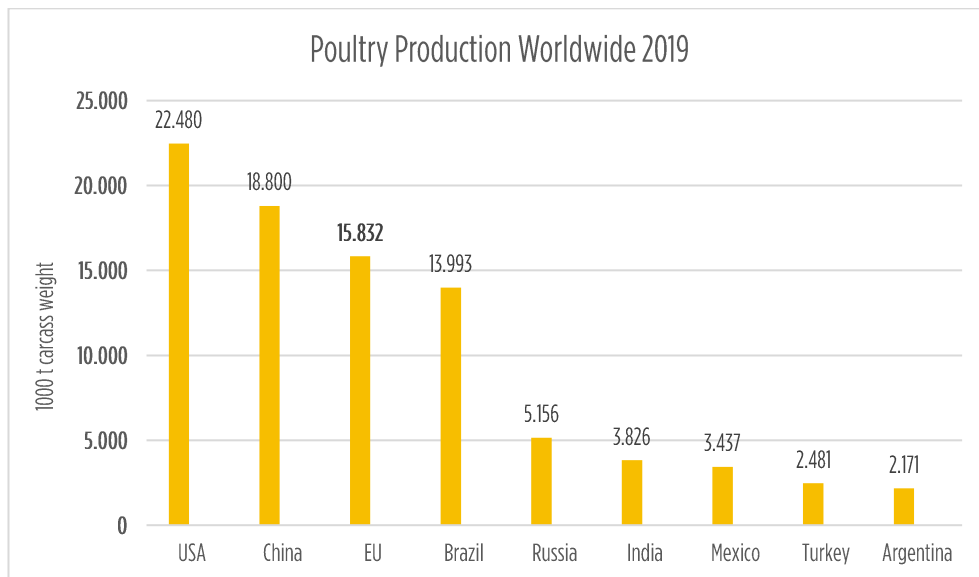
The European poultry sector plays a relevant role on the global stage. With a production volume of 15.8 million tonnes¹ carcass weight in 2019, the EU is the third-largest poultry meat producer in the world², after the USA and China.

¹ The following figures are preliminary. Source: MEG according to EU Commission, OECD, national data, FAO and EUROSTAT

² After "Brexit", the EU is expected to rank fourth.

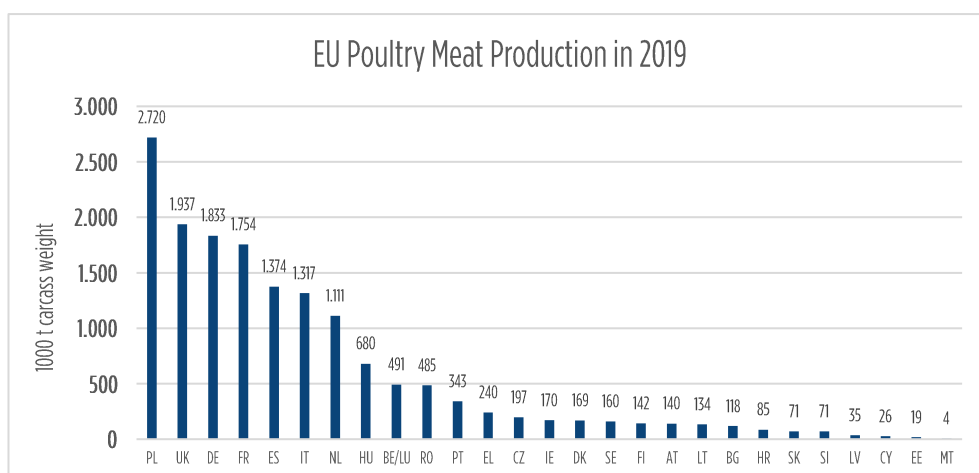
The vast majority of the EU production is consumed in the European Union itself. Thanks to strong intra-Community supply chains, the EU can cover its own demand for poultry and is not dependent on imports from third countries.

Around 1.7 million tonnes of EU poultry production (product weight) are exported, mainly to Southeast Asia, other non-EU European countries, and Africa.



Source: MEG according to OECD and national data

Chicken meat accounts for the largest share (83%) of EU poultry production, at 13 million tonnes. Turkey meat (2.1 million tonnes – 13%) and duck meat (550,000 tonnes – 4%) follow at a large distance.



Source: MEG according to OECD and national data

The EU poultry sector plays an important role not only in its function as a meat supplier, but also as an economic factor. More than 370,000 people work directly in breeding, growing, fattening, slaughtering, and

processing – most of them in one of the 25,000 family farms. In addition, there are many indirect jobs, for example in the feed sector, in packaging, and in the machinery industry that produces the equipment used in slaughterhouses.

The COVID-19 crisis shows the critical need to strengthen the sustainability and resilience of our societies and how our economies function. This is necessary to, above all, minimise the risk of similar health emergencies in the future, which are more likely to occur as climate and environmental impacts escalate. We are convinced that there is no better option for us in health, sanitary and sustainability terms than supporting the European Poultry meat sector.

The goal of EU Poultry Meat producers is to bring high quality poultry meat, which is affordable and sustainably produced to the table of EU citizens. So therefore, when it comes to making the EU food system more sustainable by designing a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system in the EU - European Poultry Meat is part of the solution.

Strong voice of the poultry industry – The European umbrella organisation AVEC

EU institutions are not the only entities that set standards for the quality and safety of poultry meat. The sector itself is also well organised. At European level, the Brussels-based umbrella organisation AVEC (European Association of Poultry Processors and Poultry Trade), firmly pulls together the threads of all national member organisations. It represents around 95% of poultry meat producers in the EU and is in constant contact with all relevant EU and international organisations and decision-makers.

The AVEC members ensure that production conditions are continuously improved. Their experts get together in working groups, of which the following four are among the most important:

- The Working Group on **Animal Health and Welfare** is actively engaged in maintaining and developing high animal welfare standards. This includes the continuous exchange on strategies to reduce the use of antibiotics.
- The working group for **Food Safety and Quality** defends and improves food safety standards through innovation in science and technology.
- The Working Group on **Sustainable Production** works to reconcile all the pillars of environmental policy – economic, social, and environmental. In concrete terms, this means, for example, tackling the challenges posed by climate change while at the same time ensuring the viability of producers.
- Through the Working Group on **EU Poultry Sector and Trade**, AVEC accompanies the WTO multilateral trade agreements. In this way, it guarantees fair conditions of competition with third countries. One of the current challenges is to negotiate a post-Brexit agreement with the UK, as maintaining open trade is crucial for the sector.

AVEC shares its Brussels offices and team with the European Live Poultry and Hatching Egg Association (ELPHA) as well as with the European Poultry Breeders (EPB).

ELPHA promotes the common interests of the European live poultry sector in the policy area of live poultry and hatching eggs, making representations to the European institutions. The main interests of ELPHA members are in the areas of EU trade and export, animal health, animal welfare and genetics. ELPHA also recognises that food safety and security starts with the high-quality production of live poultry.

EPB is a member of ELPHA and promotes the interests of companies that are active in poultry breeding in the EU.



AVEC is a part of *The European Livestock Voice* - a multi-stakeholder group of 11 like-minded partners in the livestock food chain, that have decided to unite to bring balance to the debate around a sector playing such an essential role in Europe's rich heritage and future. The associations involved, which represent sectors ranging from animal health to feed, to breeding and animal farming and farmers, aim to inform the

public about the societal value of livestock production and its contribution to global challenges, offering an alternative narrative to current debates. The EU Livestock Voice has created a [website](#) with factual information about production practices and key information on the livestock sector in Europe.

The stakeholders in The European Livestock Voice besides AVEC are:



Animal Health



Meat Processors



Farmers & cooperatives



Leather



Breeders



Foie Gras



Feed



Feed additives



Fur



Livestock & meat trade

AVEC is member of the International Poultry Council

The objectives of The International Poultry Council (IPC) include encouraging the development and application of uniform and science-based international sanitary and marketing standards for poultry; promoting technical cooperation and the exchange of science-based principles between national authorities; promoting the transparency of governmental policies affecting poultry in all countries; and maintaining a dialogue with relevant international organisations such as the OIE, Codex Alimentarius, FAO, WHO and WTO.



Text and figure sources:

- [AVEC Annual Report 2019](#)
- www.avec-poultry.eu
- Statistics paper “EU poultry meat production”
- MEG-Marktbilanz Eier Geflügel 2020

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A pioneer in animal welfare and sustainable production

The EU poultry industry sets global standards

In recent years, consumers have been paying increasing attention to how their food is produced. A growing focus is on animal welfare and sustainable production. The European poultry meat sector feels well prepared to meet these expectations. The sector is proud to produce according to the very strict EU rules that apply throughout the entire production chain – “from farm to fork” (and even earlier in the chain). The sector is committed to continuously improving production conditions in terms of resource conservation and animal welfare. It has achieved a lot in this respect: the current standards that apply to EU poultry meat are among the highest in the world. Here is a brief overview of the central aspects of EU poultry meat supply chain:

1. Animal welfare – A goal that comes with many obligations

Animal welfare is a top priority in the EU. Universal, scientifically based standards guarantee that poultry farming meets the same minimum requirements in all Member States. As broiler farming accounts for almost 87 per cent of European production, there is particularly detailed legislation in this area. In addition, the individual countries have the option of adopting more stringent provisions.

1.1 Barns – Many parameters guarantee an animal-friendly habitat

In the EU, fattening poultry is reared in large flocks in floor systems and not in cages, as is often assumed. This allows the birds to move freely and perform their natural behaviours such as pecking, scratching, and dustbathing. In the EU, a maximum stocking density of 33 kilogrammes per square metre for chickens has been set. This type of density is reached only towards the end of the rearing phase. According to the Council Directive (EC) 2007/43, however, it can be increased to up to 42 kilogrammes for chickens under very strict conditions.

In the barns, the animals always have access to fresh drinking water and feed. The floor is covered with natural bedding, and the lighting provides a natural day-night rhythm. Air circulation, dust content, humidity, and air quality are subject to constant electronic monitoring to ensure that the animals are reared in conditions appropriate to their species.

1.2 Expertise and competence are top priorities

For the farmers, the welfare of their animals is the first priority. Responsible care, in-depth knowledge, and longstanding experience are the most decisive guarantors of animal welfare. Farmers inspect their flocks at least twice a day and document all the relevant parameters. Strict regulations also apply to barn hygiene: all barns must be regularly and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

1.3 Feed – The basis for good meat

EU regulations on animal health stipulate that the animals must receive feed appropriate to their species and age. Correct feeding is also very important in the interests of the consumer, as it has a considerable influence on the quality of the meat. For this reason, the EU has strict legislation on animal feed. The authorities regularly monitor the production and storage of raw materials at the various stages of the production chain. Plant ingredients such as wheat, maize and soya make up the majority of animal feed. In addition, a number of additives like vitamins and minerals are approved that improve the quality of the feed, and hence the animals' health and welfare.

1.4 Animal health and veterinary care – Animal welfare is paramount

All the birds in a flock are checked twice a day. All adjustments of environmental conditions and interventions, such as changes to the ambient temperature, must be fully recorded. Regarding antibiotics, it is important to stress that they are never administered to animals as a preventive measure, but only if the birds are ill – and on prescription by a veterinarian. They are essential for treating sick animals so that their health does not deteriorate further. The EU poultry sector is committed to a responsible use of antibiotics which means to use as little as possible – but as much as needed to ensure animal welfare. Some EU Member States have developed comprehensive plans to mitigate the use of antibiotics in the poultry production and have achieved impressive results. If treatment is unavoidable, as with all other drug applications, sufficient time must elapse before slaughter to make certain that the active ingredients are sufficiently broken down and are no longer detectable in the meat.

1.5 Transport – High standards guarantee a stress-free journey to the slaughterhouse

Guidelines also exist for transport from the breeding farm to the slaughterhouse. For example, the animals must be completely healthy and the strict regulations on space during transport and transport times must be observed. As a rule, the animals must not be on the road for longer than 12 hours. Another decisive factor for animal welfare is the staff's expertise and responsible behaviour in everyday production.

1.6 Slaughter and processing – Strict hygiene and labelling requirements ensure high product safety

Strict hygiene regulations apply to the entire process, from slaughtering to further processing and marketing: every room and all equipment must meet high standards. The companies are obliged to apply HACCP-based procedures. Compliance with animal welfare and hygiene requirements is monitored by an official veterinarian who carries out numerous checks before and after slaughter.

Before slaughter, all animals are stunned to ensure that any avoidable pain, suffering, stress or excitement is prevented. The official veterinarian and their assistants are present in the slaughterhouse throughout the day to supervise the operations.

Moreover, whether chilled or frozen: each packaging unit must be labelled when it leaves the slaughterhouse or processing plant, so that it can be traced.

2. Sustainability – Measures to protect valuable ecological resources

European poultry meat is a source of affordable, lean, high value, traceable protein, produced with high standards of food safety, animal welfare and environmental protection – therefore European Poultry meat is a part of the solution when it comes to designing a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system in the EU – the Sustainable From 'Farm to Fork' strategy.

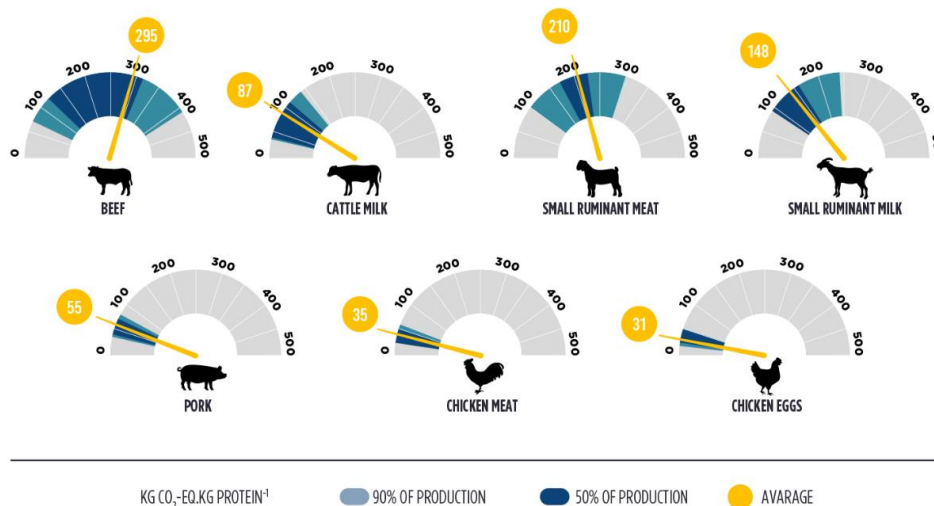
2.1 Land use and energy consumption – Modern technologies enable savings

Poultry meat has a very good environmental scorecard compared to many other foods. One reason for this is the optimal feed conversion, which is associated with lower emissions. 1.5 kilogrammes of feed can produce 1 kilogramme of chicken and 2.6 kilogrammes of feed can produce 1 kilogramme of turkey³. Furthermore, the area required to produce one kilogramme of chicken meat is only eight square metres. EU poultry producers are also continuously developing additional measures to minimise energy consumption in their barns. Computer-assisted control technologies support them in this quest. Many farms generate their own energy, e.g. with photovoltaic or biogas systems.

2.2 Protecting our air and water – Favourable CO₂ footprint and conscious avoidance of pollution

Compared to other foods, the carbon footprint of poultry meat is very low. Only 4.22 kilogrammes of CO₂ are produced per kilogramme of conventional poultry meat⁴.

Global emission intensities by raw material per protein base⁵ (tonnes cwe)



Source: <http://www.fao.org/gleam/results/en/>

³ Source: ZDG-Geflügeljahrbuch 2020

⁴ Source: <https://www.deutsches-gefluegel.de/oekobilanz-gefluegel> according to WWF

⁵ All commodities are expressed in a per protein basis. Averages are calculated at global scale and represent an aggregated value across different production systems and agroecological zones."

Poultry is also ahead of other types of meat in terms of water consumption: between 2,390 and 3,900 litres of water are needed to produce one kilogramme of poultry meat⁶. And EU poultry producers always try to use the precious resource of water even more efficiently.

Text and figure sources:

- [AVEC Annual Report 2019](#)
- ADAS Study: Comparison of the Regulatory Framework and Key Practices in the Poultry Meat Supply Chain in the EU and USA
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- [ZDG Geflügeljahrbuch 2020](#)

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⁶ Source: <https://www.deutsches-gefluegel.de/oekobilanz-gefluegel>

Five truths behind the most common myths about EU poultry

Conscious nutrition is a high priority for most people. They want to know how healthy their food is and where it comes from – and that is a good thing. However, among the relevant information, persistent myths abound – including some about European poultry. Here are five truths that do away with common misconceptions:

Truth 1: European chickens and turkeys are raised only in barn farming in extensive stables

In the whole of the EU, barn farming is the only form of farming used for poultry meat production. The birds can scratch, peck and move about on the floor according to their natural needs. In the chicken barns, an optimal environment is ensured for the birds in terms of light, humidity and other parameters. In organic and open-air farming, the birds additionally have fenced-in green outdoor areas where they can move about freely. And there is always enough drinking water for chickens, turkeys et al., as well as species- and age-appropriate feed.

Truth 2: European poultry is free from hormones

The use of hormones and growth enhancers in breeding has long been banned throughout the EU. To optimise the rearing process, producers now use a much more effective and at the same time animal-friendly method: contemporary, robust and healthy poultry breeds. In combination with balanced feed and optimal environmental conditions, this enables breeders to produce high-quality meat at affordable prices.

Truth 3: European poultry is free from antibiotic residues

Antibiotics may only be administered by veterinary prescription, and according to the principle 'as little as possible, as much as necessary'. A responsible use of antibiotics is needed to treat sick animals so that their well-being is not compromised.

In recent years, the use of antibiotics in the poultry sector has been drastically reduced by numerous measures across the entire breeding chain. They include improved biosafety, the selection of robust breeds, optimised feed and barn management (temperature etc.).

After treatment, the animals are slaughtered only after a legally prescribed waiting period – called the withdrawal period. This is to ensure that the meat that is later consumed by the consumer no longer contains any traces of medication in. In addition, the meat in the slaughterhouse is regularly inspected for traces of antibiotic residues.

Truth 4: European poultry is free of added water.

In the EU, consumers can rely on buying pure muscle meat without any additional water injections. Poultry preparations, such as marinated meat, may contain water in addition to spices and other ingredients. All admixtures must be listed on the label. Of course, poultry preparations are also regularly subjected to strict inspections.

Sources:

- ADAS Study: Comparison of the Regulatory Framework and Key Practices in the Poultry Meat Supply Chain in the EU and USA
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- Press Release Unaitalia: Uova e carni bianchi, 5 fake news da sfatare
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