

## Statement

### **Unsanitary Conditions for Serbian dairy cattle at Rusko selo 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012**

In 2010 we issued a statement relating to the environmental conditions for dairy cattle in this farm. We stated that it was clear from the photographs that these cattle were being kept in squalid, filthy, unhealthy and completely unacceptable conditions. The cattle in the pictures shown were standing in water contaminated with excrement. The matted nature of their coats shows that they were unable to keep clean and had clearly been in these conditions for some time.

We are disturbed to discover that in 2012, conditions do not seem to have improved. Pictures from the farm show the cattle lying in their own manure. Unsurprisingly, their coats were dirty due to being forced to lie in their own excrement. Contact between their udders and faeces and urine and dirt on the teats increases the risk of infection by a range of micro-organisms including e coli. These can cause mastitis which is a risk to the health and welfare of the cattle as well as to the health of people who consume dairy products from this farm. These are also conditions in which flies are likely to breed with further risks of disease spread.

In the event of rain it seems clear that the lying area would again become waterlogged. Wet feet can lead to a range of hoof conditions and increased risk of lameness.

Cattle need a comfortable, clean and well-drained area to lie down, receive adequate rest and remain healthy. The squalid conditions these cattle are being kept in plainly fail to meet basic welfare or hygiene standards as laid down by Council of Europe Convention and EU Directive which require that animals are prevented avoidable suffering and kept in conditions which avoid risks to their health.

It is clear beyond doubt that what is shown in these photographs does not comply with existing EU legislation, and consequently could impact Serbian accession to the EU. In the event of Serbia's accession, these photographs could form the basis of a formal complaint to be made to the Legal Affairs Dept of the EU associated with animal welfare.

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NB Relevant information from the EU Directive and Council of Europe Convention is attached overleaf.

## **COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes**

### **Article 3**

Member States shall make provision to ensure that the owners or keepers take all reasonable steps to ensure the welfare of animals under their care and to ensure that those animals are not caused any unnecessary pain, suffering or injury.

### **From the Annex:**

#### **Animals not kept in buildings**

12. Animals not kept in buildings shall where necessary and possible be given protection from adverse weather conditions, predators and risks to their health.

### **Council of Europe Convention covering the Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes:**

#### **Article 9**

1. Animals should be maintained in a clean condition.
2. Those parts of the accommodation with which the animals come into contact should be thoroughly cleansed, and where appropriate, disinfected, every time the accommodation has been emptied and before new animals are brought in. While the accommodation is occupied by the animals, the interior surfaces and all equipment therein shall be kept satisfactorily clean.





