



Danish Crown

Danish Crown Animal Welfare Position Statement 2024

September 2024



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1. Key Principles

1.1 Purpose

The Danish Crown Group Animal Welfare Position Statement 2022/23 supports the Group Animal Welfare Policy and aims to provide evidence of the impact of the policy at a farm and processing level. Our Group Animal Welfare Policy can be found [here](#).

1.2 Our company

Danish Crown is a global meat processing company and among the largest in its field. As such we recognise the impact of our global activities – on the animals in our care, on our own workforce, on the environment and on the communities in which we operate – and we recognise our responsibility for seeking to make that impact positive. As a farmer-owned cooperative, we are constantly reminded of our obligations and responsibilities towards our surroundings.

Danish Crown is owned by more than 5,400 Danish farmers. Over the years, we have worked closely with our owners and with more than 13,000 farmers supplying our interests in other markets, as well as with researchers and organisations in the agricultural sector. Our aim is to develop high-quality and sustainable livestock production with a focus on animal welfare, breeding and rearing, and veterinary health. Reflecting its leading market position, Danish Crown is a key driver of farm animal welfare advances in many areas, such as market-leading antibiotics control and the development of free farrowing systems in Denmark.

1.3 Sustainable business – “Every Little Thing Counts”.

We believe that good business is predicated on good animal health and welfare, but this is not just a demand from our farmer owners. A sustainable business requires that we meet and exceed both customer and consumer expectations, and in each of our core markets – and in many of our export markets – consumer demand for higher welfare standards continues to grow. Meeting these demands is an essential element of our licence to produce. Danish Crown has developed a sustainability strategy where farm animal welfare, veterinary safety and the use of antibiotics are just

some of the elements that fall within our ‘Sustainable Farming’ programme.

Productivity alone is not the business aim, and our actions and performance targets are crucial to supporting our “Every Little Thing Counts” initiative recognising the ‘less but better’ approach to meat consumption and prioritising quality over quantity. Find out more [here](#).

Specific actions to achieve each of our sustainability commitments – that include animal welfare – are detailed in our [Sustainability Reports](#) and progress is reported annually.

1.4 Animal Welfare in Danish Crown

Better animal welfare is at the heart of Danish Crown. We give high priority to animal welfare and ensure good animal welfare from farm to abattoir. Recent initiatives to strengthen our work on farm animal welfare include:

- Development of a new animal welfare policy supported by a new strategy approved by our Sustainable Farm Forum in December 2021. [Explore the policy here](#).
- Business approval in 2022 for a country-specific Animal Welfare Policy in our Polish business which underpins the established “[Together into the Future](#)” farm programme.

Care and respect for animals and nature are crucial to ensuring that we can produce high-quality products and create value for our customers, consumers, and owners. In order to demonstrate how we and our farmers perform against our policies we collate and review farm and slaughter welfare data. Additionally, the publication of our results in farm assurance, key welfare indicators and antibiotic performance is central to our due diligence commitments. Tracking, trending, and insight of these performance metrics ensures a culture of impact assessment and continuous improvement throughout our supply chain. Read more about our animal welfare impact reporting [here](#).



2. Scope of the Animal Welfare Position Statement

Danish Crown is the largest pork processor and among the largest beef processors in the EU, and trades with more than 130 markets across the globe. As a group, we have primary processing interests in Denmark, Sweden (KLS), Poland (Sokolow), and Germany, and in 2022 we slaughtered some 18.2 million pigs, 750,000 cattle and 59,000 sheep.

Our core business operations include:

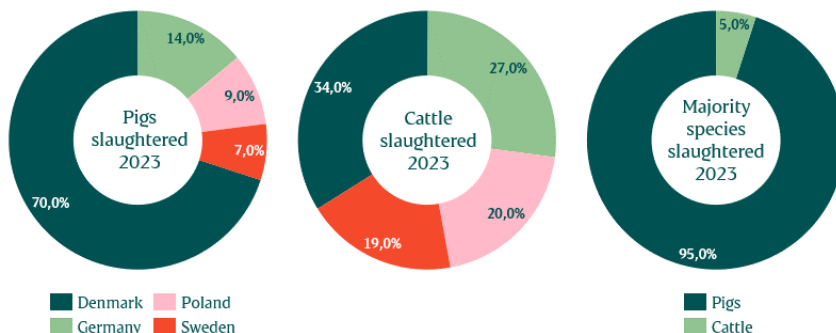
- **Danish Crown** Group interests and subsidiary brands, such as:
 - **Friland**
 - **SPOOR**
- **ESS-Food** and subsidiary retail brands, such as:
 - ESS-Foods
 - DAT-Schaub
 - Dann'Ka
 - Aida (only producing frozen vegetable products)

- **DAT-Schaub** is a casings business (distinct from DAT-Schaub retail brand), adding value to slaughter by-products only. The majority of raw material is traded and as such sourced both within the group and externally. Procurement specifications are customer dictated and fall outside the scope of the Danish Crown Group Animal Welfare Position Statement.

With reference to *Figure 1* below, the pork element of the total Danish Crown business is by far the majority and accounts for 95%, of which, Danish pork is 70%. In contrast, cattle accounts for 4% of total business and sheep 0.3%. Our sheep are slaughtered in Sweden and Germany. Our supply of broilers and fish accounts for less than 0.1% of the total supply chain.

Our over-arching group animal welfare position statement applies to all markets, all animal species (pigs, cattle (incl. dairy cattle), sheep, poultry, and fish) processed within the group. This reflects the fact that our fundamental business operations are associated with slaughter and primary processing.

Figure 1. The proportions of pigs and cattle slaughtered at our abattoirs in each of our countries





3. Management of farm animal welfare

Within Danish Crown group, the Sustainable Farm Forum is responsible for the strategic development of animal welfare. A Senior Management Group, comprising senior executives from across the Danish Crown Group, oversees the development of overall welfare policies. Agriculture Supply Chain Teams in each market work to ensure that animal welfare standards are maintained and gradually improved. They are supported by dedicated teams including animal health and welfare and food safety specialists who work with our supply chains, customers, and industry organizations to ensure that prescribed standards are consistently implemented. We have a three-stage audit process which involves a self-audit by highly trained employees at both the farms and the slaughterhouses, thorough veterinary inspection at all stages, and a significant number of 3rd party announced and unannounced visits from the authorities and customers to audit compliance with welfare legislation. For more information see *Table 1* on farm assurance schemes.

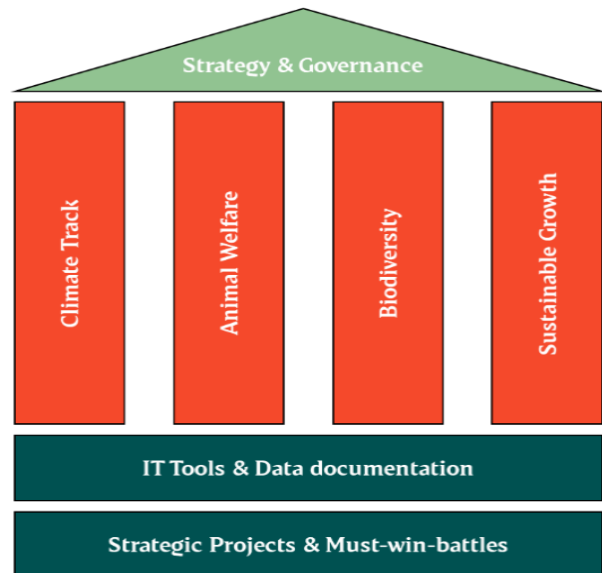
While there may be differences in scope and detail between our various markets, across all our supply chains, a range of health and welfare indicators are measured at each link in the chain. In addition to supporting our aim to seek continuous improvement in animal health and welfare, performance measurement is also a prerequisite to delivering business sustainability through the supply chains in which we operate.

3.1 Sustainable Farm Forum (SFF)

Within the Danish Crown group, the SFF is responsible for the strategy and governance of the key areas of sustainable farming. This includes climate footprint, animal welfare, biodiversity, and sustainable growth. The SFF takes responsibility for the overall animal welfare improvement within the group, involves relevant subject matter experts, facilitates constant sharing of knowledge and best practice, approves the overall targets and roll-out plans within each of the

strategic focus areas, and ensures that our business develops to support our sustainability strategy.

Figure 2. The key areas of Sustainable Farming in Danish Crown Group value chain: climate footprint, animal welfare, biodiversity, and sustainable growth.



3.2 Agriculture Supply Chain Teams

Dedicated Agriculture Supply Chain teams work closely both with colleagues within the businesses and with farmers, industry organisations, and customers to ensure that prescribed welfare standards are maintained and, wherever possible, improved.

In each of our markets, the Agriculture Supply Chain team led by the Agriculture Director is responsible for:

- Establishing, communicating, and monitoring animal health and welfare standards.
- Managing and monitoring independent third-party audit programmes.
- Providing information to the Management Board in the country in which they operate.



3.3 Continuous improvement in farm animal welfare

Setting clear objectives is fundamental to our overarching goal of driving improvements in animal health and wellbeing throughout Danish Crown and across its subsidiary business activities. Increasingly this goes hand in hand with meeting the targets outlined in our broader sustainability agenda [Sustainability reports - Danish Crown](#).

Our objectives are also articulated in our 2021-2026 Strategy Plan "Feeding the Future".

The first two pillars, that underpin the entire strategy, focus on the need for major investments in sustainability, the supply chain and innovation from farm to fork - while at the same time moving away from demanding increases in production and pig numbers and instead working to develop systems where current pig numbers will be optimized within supply chain capacity, reinforcing our 'less but better' ethos. This approach represents significant investment in the supply chain and embraces welfare and sustainability.

Examples of workstreams and associated targets are illustrated below:

- **Continued development of Welfare Outcome Measure (WOM) Programme**

We are committed to setting evidence-based targets to both raise the level of animal welfare and demonstrate continuing and well-established good practice within Danish Crown Group. This covers all operations from farm through transport to slaughter.

To this end we have established:

- Priority animal welfare targets for the entire business group in 2022.
- A multi-disciplinary, cross-compliance approach as a means of delivering the Welfare Target Project across all business units, embedding linkage between sustainability, marketing, commercial etc.

This approach emphasises the importance of WOM to business activity as a whole.

Deliverables to date include:

- Dissemination of agreed animal welfare target metrics [Sustainability reports - Danish Crown](#)
- Workshop was conducted to identify relevant species-specific animal welfare criteria for the

expansion of the Animal Welfare procurement prerequisites.

- Agreement of defined timeline for the development and implementation of species-specific Codes of Practice in Denmark, Sweden, Germany, and Poland i.e. by end 2023.

Figure 3. Danish Crown's [Supplier Code of Conduct](#)

The Danish Crown Supplier Code of Conduct

Compliance with the Code of Conduct is a prerequisite for cooperation with Danish Crown.

The Code:

- constitutes a legally binding document for all suppliers;
- reflects Danish Crown's commitment to the UN Global Compact;
- recognises the importance of animal welfare and ethics.

The Code is based on:

- applicable national legislation;
- international rules and regulations;
- recognised international standards and agreements.

- **Expansion of Animal Welfare Procurement Prerequisites**

While the majority of our raw material is sourced within the Group and over which we have direct control, a large project has been defined with the objective to map our supply chain of externally sourced meat and to further clarify raw material requirements, specifically animal welfare expectations. A pilot project is in place to test feasibility of implementing revised criteria, whereafter it will be implemented as part of future contract requirements for suppliers by the end of 2023. Communication plans are currently being considered.

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- **Research into viable alternatives to CO2 stunning**

Controlled atmosphere stunning remains the majority approach within the pork supply base due to the recognized benefits of group handling, the effectiveness of the process and the lack of any other scientifically validated, commercially viable alternative delivering equivalent or enhanced welfare outcomes.



While no viable commercial alternatives to CO2 at high concentrations have been developed yet, Danish Crown supports the search for alternatives. Reflecting this commitment, Danish Crown is a member of an EU consortium whose aim is to find viable alternatives to CO2 stunning in the environment of large-scale processing operations. The commission will focus on animal welfare but also consider other factors including environmental impact and financial implications. Danish Crown is also prepared to invest in humane alternatives when commercially available.

- **Avoidance of permissible mutilations**

As a key part of Danish Crown's commitment to avoid routine mutilations in pigs and improve animal welfare, Danish Crown will quadruple the amount of entire (non-castrated) male pigs that are slaughtered in its supply chain from 450,000 in 2022 to around 1.5m annually, with the first throughput of these additional entire males scheduled to commence in summer 2023.. Danish Crown has also been seeking views from the market regarding attitudes to immuno-castration (and the use of Improvac) to deliver improved animal welfare and meat quality. Responding to market signals, Danish Crown has initiated trials of Improvac in its Danish pig supply and will monitor performance and response.

- **Climate Track**

The aim of the Climate Track programme is to work with farmers to raise the standards of both organic and conventional production in Denmark, Sweden, Poland, and Germany, so that all livestock supplied to Danish Crown meet several sustainability parameters (including animal welfare) tailored to reflect production-specific considerations as outlined [here](#).

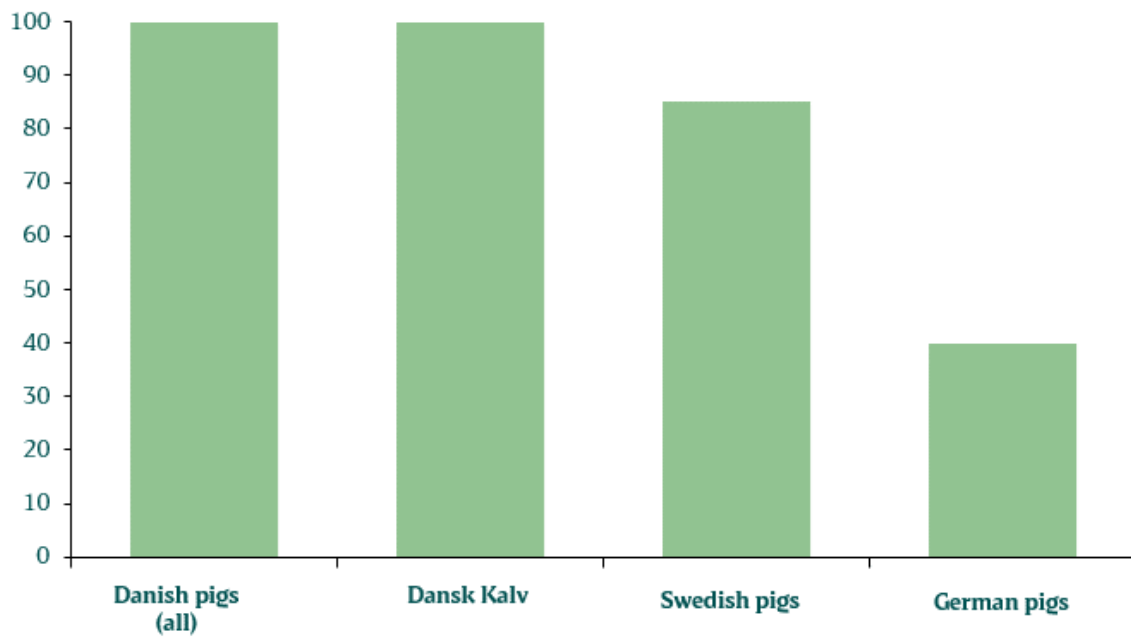
In order to be certified:

- The farmer must work in a targeted and systematic manner to ensure continuous improvements.
- Targets and initiatives must be defined for several key sustainability parameters such as environmental and climate impact, animal welfare and business ethics.

Examples of parameters include medicine use and mortality of sows, piglets, and slaughter pigs. Through this extensive data collection and evaluation, the certification is intended to help increase the transparency around farming. The farms are audited every three years by an independent third party (as a part of Climate Track, and in addition to other external welfare audits), although internal audits are carried out more frequently.

The initial target was for 100% of Danish pig suppliers as well as *Dansk Kalv* producers (34% of Danish cattle supply) to be certified by 2021, and the target has been achieved (*Figure 5*).

Figure 5. Percentage Group Participation in Climate Track (including animal welfare metrics)



In Sweden approximately 85 % of Swedish slaughter pigs are covered by the Climate Track (named "KLS Gårdsdata"). In Germany 40 % of slaughter pigs are included in the Climate Track.

Our goal is that in 2025, 80 % of our cooperative owners and contract suppliers of slaughter animals in Denmark, Sweden, Poland, and Germany will be following the Climate Track.

3.4 Farm assurance

The good quality of our products starts on the farm and continues through to the slaughterhouse. Care and respect for the animals and nature are crucial for ensuring that we can produce high-quality products and create value for our customers and for consumers – and, at the end of the day, for our owners. We require national legislation compliance, and our Code of

Conduct (*Figure 3*) requires that all animals are treated humanely, their needs are met and the globally recognized Five Freedoms (as defined by the Farm Animal Welfare Council) are respected.

The Five Freedoms

- Freedom from hunger & thirst - by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health & vigor.
- Freedom from discomfort - by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- Freedom from pain, injury, or disease - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment
- Freedom to express normal behavior - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities, and the company of the animal's own kind.
- Freedom from fear & distress - by ensuring conditions and care which avoid mental suffering.

We are committed to ensuring that across the group, all supplying farms and processing sites comply with legislative standards at both EU and national level (which in some areas, can exceed EU requirements).



3.5 Farm animal welfare assurance schemes

In addition to meeting both the EU and national animal welfare legislation, Danish Crown operates within industry standards such as the Global Red Meat Standard, Danish Product Standard and the Danish Crown Product Standard for UK Welfare Pigs in Denmark, the QS scheme in Germany, and the Grundcertificering Gris in Sweden. These schemes are summarised in *Table 1* and include schemes that operate to higher animal welfare standards.

In terms of animal welfare, Danish Crown adopts a push: pull strategy, working to strengthen basic standards while developing programmes that may initially be demanding and small in scale, but which provide a pathway to wider participation. This has led to the development of a range of Danish Crown programmes to deliver higher welfare products to meet specific market, customer, and consumer requirements. Examples of these “internal concepts” include Dansk Kalv in Denmark, Together into the Future in Poland, and many others (see *Figure 6* below for more information). Farmers participating in higher welfare programmes are rewarded with a price premium. Both our farms and production sites are regularly audited by independent parties, such as government organizations, assurance scheme auditors and our customers.

In 2023/24 in our Danish, Swedish and German supply chains 100% of pigs, 75% of cattle, 8% of sheep are sourced from producers that are accredited to recognised animal welfare schemes, such as Danish Product Standard and Danish UK Contract in Denmark, Grundcertificering Gris in Sweden, and QS in Germany. These independent assurance schemes set standards that in many areas are higher than both EU and national legislation. Additionally, our Polish pork and cattle supply chains work to company equivalent schemes designed to deliver consistently high animal welfare standards.

Besides these widely accepted independent assurance schemes, we have higher farm welfare assurance schemes developed by Danish Crown. These include the concepts Antonius and Bornholmer pigs, Friland pigs and cattle, Dansk Kalv, Danish Beef Cattle, and the Together into the Future programme developed by our business unit in Poland. Most of our internal concepts are further certified by an independent assurance scheme, and this includes all Friland concepts, Dansk Kalv, as well as Antonius and Bornholmer pigs. All our organic certified meat is certified to a higher welfare assurance scheme.

As a proportion of our group operation 47% of pigs, 31% of cattle and 8% of sheep are reared to higher welfare standards. 100% of broiler chickens and egg laying hens in our supply chain are audited to either basic or higher farm assurance standards. In total 46% of animals in our supply chain are being reared to higher welfare standards. *Table 1* below summarises the farm assurance schemes within Danish Crown and highlights those that are higher welfare assurance schemes.



Table 1. Farm assurance schemes that Danish Crown pigs, cattle and sheep are covered by in each primary production country in 2022. Proportions are based on the total number of livestock in each country.

*indicates a higher welfare assurance scheme.¹ relates to dairy cull cows entering slaughter.

	Pigs	% Total country participation	Cattle	% Total country participation	Sheep	% Total country participation
Denmark	Danish Transport Standard	100	Danish Transport Standard	39 % (100 % covered by Danish Crowns own Code of Practice for Transporters)	N/A	
	Danish Product Standard	100	Dairy farm assurance* ¹	47		
	Global Red Meat Standard	100	Friland Organic (also 2 Hearts)*	8		
	Danish UK Contract*	31	Danish Beef Cattle*	3		
	Friland Organic (also 3 Hearts)*	2	Friland Beef Cattle and Nature Care (also certified by Animal Protection Denmark) *	2		
	Antonius (also 2 Hearts)*	0.5	Dansk Kalv (also 2 Hearts) *	34		
	Friland pigs (also 3 Hearts)*	0.5				
	Bornholmer pigs (also 2 Hearts)*	0.6				
Sweden	Grundcertificering Gris*	100	KRAV*	10	KRAV*	9
	KRAV*	1,6	EU-Organic *			
	EU-Organic *	0.7				
Germany	QS	100	QS	11	None	0
	Global Red Meat Standard	100	Organic *	71		
	ITW*	62		12		
	Organic *	1				
Poland	Together into the Future programme*	80	Together into the Future programme*	8	N/A	

100% of pigs and 71% of cattle that come from Germany are certified by farm assurance schemes (QS and organic). Through this farm assurance we know that the animals are raised according to higher welfare standards and the farmers are subject to continuous control by independent auditors.

Our business unit in Poland, Sokolow (acquired by Danish Crown Group in 2014) has been undergoing integration into the group, which has been a wide-ranging task. In 2018, Sokolow established an Animal Welfare Department and developed its own farm

assurance programme “Together into the Future”, which has a focus on areas such as animal welfare, nutrition, genetics, environment, biosecurity, and food safety. Currently, the program is audited by dedicated employees from the Sokolow Agriculture Supply Chain department, periodically by representatives of feed companies supplying feed, and official veterinarians. Supervision over the farm is carried out by a veterinarian who looks after the herd, selected by the farmer. Participation in the scheme is targeted to grow and currently stands at 80% of pigs and 8% of cattle raised in Poland. In 2022, Sokolow developed its own



animal welfare policy that has now had internal approval and is operational within the business and underpins the “Together into the Future” programme. Our internal concepts (both those additionally certified by an independent assurance scheme and those with no external certification) are summarised below (figure 6).

The additional animal welfare requirements are in comparison to the national legislation in Denmark and Poland (for *Together into the Future* programme).

Figure 6. Infographic of Danish Crowns’ “internal concepts” for higher farm animal welfare. Each concept image details its bespoke additional welfare requirements (in comparison to national legislation).





3.6 Scandinavian values and animal welfare

Scandinavian countries have long been known to have some of the strictest animal welfare regulations and veterinary inspections in the world and they cover the entire process from the rearing of the animals on the farms to the inspection of every single animal at the slaughterhouses.

77% of our total pigs, 53% of our total cattle and 84% of our sheep are born, raised, and processed in Denmark and Sweden.

Animal wellbeing has always been a top priority for both Scandinavian farmers and consumers alike, and high animal welfare standards are simply the way things have always been done here. This is reflected in the high health status of animals in Scandinavia – here livestock have some of the lowest antibiotic consumption levels both in Europe and globally. The welfare is also reflected in the high meat quality as well as top quality of cattle hides. The skin of Scandinavian cattle is minimally impacted by body lesions, insect bites or scratches. This results in supreme leather products, and our subsidiary Scan-Hide now offers completely traceable hides so that customers are guaranteed they receive products from high quality Scandinavian cattle.

In Sweden we source animals from KRAV-assured farms. KRAV standards are stricter than the EU regulations for organic production and also cover more than the requirements in the Swedish Animal Welfare Act. KRAV certification covers 9% of sheep, 10% of cattle and 2% of pigs sourced for Danish Crown in Sweden.

All sheep are slaughtered in geographies that adhere to EU legislative requirements as a minimum. 84% of sheep are sourced from Sweden and 100% of these adhere to national higher welfare specifications e.g. tethering of any form of close confinement is not permitted, sheep must be kept in pairs or groups, tail docking is not permitted, mulesing is strictly forbidden and no slaughter may take place without stunning, coupled with specific environmental management requirements under the Swedish Agriculture Environment Scheme (AES). Within ESS-Food, 94% of chicken and 100% of farmed salmon is sourced to EU legislation or higher.

3.7 Farm audits

100% of our farms are periodically audited by an independent auditor, which could be commissioned by the government, farm assurance schemes or our customers. In Danish Crown we have processes in place to review audit reports from animal welfare accreditation schemes and from customer audit visits. In the event of a non-compliance, as set out in the Supplier Code of Conduct (*Figure 3*), the issue will be investigated, and corrective actions taken where required within an agreed timescale. Periodic review of reports is carried out to identify any structural challenges that may need communication to our supply chains.

3.8 Control of animal welfare at production sites

At each of our primary processing facilities and in all markets, we have Animal Welfare Officers (who are required to receive specialist animal welfare training from external training bodies), and independent government vets to ensure that our welfare standards are implemented. This includes veterinary inspection of all animals upon delivery to the plants. Carcasses are also inspected by official veterinarians and checks include signs of compromised animal welfare.

All our production sites receive internal and independent 3rd party audits on a continuous basis. Independent audits can be performed by the authorities, auditors from the industry schemes as well as our customers. An illustration of this independent auditing can be found in the Swedish organic KRAV scheme that has a clear focus on animal welfare and the environment. All our Swedish plants are certified according to KRAV and have 3rd party audits twice a year – one an announced visit for the whole KRAV scheme, and the other, an unannounced audit focused on animal welfare only. And that's just one of the schemes in which we participate. The table below indicates the number of audits our abattoirs are subject to in each of our countries.



Table 2. The number of internal and independent 3rd party animal welfare audits at Danish Crown abattoirs in Denmark, Germany, Sweden, and Poland per year.

Abattoirs		Internal audits	Independent 3 rd party audits
Denmark	Cattle	1	3
	Pigs	1	4
Germany	Cattle	1	3
	Pigs	4	1
Sweden	Cattle	0	2
	Pigs	0	2
	Sheep	0	2
Poland	Cattle	1 audit per week	2-3
	Pigs	1 audit per week	2-3

In addition to legislative pre-requisites all our employees who handle live animals at the abattoirs receive training in animal handling and welfare. In all operating countries it is required by law that abattoir workers hold an official certificate indicating their competence of working with live animals. In Denmark, the workers at the pig abattoirs receive an internal refresher course once every 3 years, while in Germany, all abattoir workers receive animal welfare training

once a year by an external company SGS. In Poland, all abattoir employees undergo internal and external training in the principles of animal management including animal welfare. Following initial completion of the statutory external training programme all employees then receive annual training delivered by the Animal Welfare Officer to ensure continued understanding of best practices of animal handling and welfare.



4. Traceability

Robust traceability systems are demanded by both customers and consumers to ensure that the expected standards of food safety, animal health and welfare are consistently delivered. All our supply chains are required to meet levels of traceability as set out in EU legislation, but we also deliver higher levels in order to meet standards set out in national legislation and a range of quality assurance schemes and customer standards. Those standards extend to inputs to the various livestock systems and include, for example, animal feed and its constituent ingredients, and livestock medicines.

For example, Danish beef can always be traced back to the farm where the animal was raised. All cattle have an 11-digit earmark. The first six digits indicate where the animal was born, and the last five digits are the specific number of the individual animal. Earmarking ensures full traceability throughout the food chain from farm to table. The animal carries the same ear tags throughout its life, and the tag on the left ear contains

a chip, allowing the farmer to access the information using a scanner.

When it comes to pigs, we can track the meat to the daily production. We always know which group of farms delivered the pigs for slaughter on a particular day, and therefore, we are able to trace our pork to the farm-group level.

4.1 Traceability of hides

Danish Crown is open and transparent to sharing information about our products and we are committed to high level traceability. An example of utilizing traceability knowledge is SPOOR, a Danish Crown company producing leather from Danish Crown cattle hides and a part of Scan-Hide. SPOOR have developed a new, very innovative system enabling consumers to trace the history of their leather product. Each hide gets an individual laser imprint, identifying the animal and farm and various factors related to this, for example if of organic origin. Find out more [here](#).



5. Animal health & welfare in Danish Crown supply chains

Animal health and welfare is a cornerstone of our business. To meet both societal and customer expectations, we demand of ourselves that, as sentient beings, all livestock that we process are treated humanely throughout their lives. Reflecting local market demands and national legislation, there will be differences across our businesses, and while EU legislation forms a statutory minimum, in many areas, the standards (whether from national legislation, industry, company and customer welfare programs) exceed this baseline. The welfare schemes that we participate in extend beyond the farm to include transport and processing, and processes for dealing with any non-compliance are set out within these schemes.

5.1 Key commitments

Commitments are detailed in our Group Animal Welfare Policy available [here](#), and our reporting evidence is summarised in our Welfare Outcome Measure Reporting document [here](#).

5.2 Responsible use of antimicrobials

The use of antibiotics for the purpose of promoting growth is prohibited under Veterinary [Medicinal Products Regulation](#) (Regulation (EU) 2019/6) and is applicable to both livestock products of EU origin and all 3rd country imports.

Additionally, routine prophylactic (i.e. routinely preventative) and the routine metaphylactic use of antibiotics is not permitted in any of our livestock supply chains. Danish Crown advocates a responsible use of antibiotics and requires that its suppliers have a special focus on limiting the use of antibiotics and promoting preventative herd health programmes based on excellent management practice to ensure both animal and human health. This requirement applies across all markets and species. This includes limiting the use of antibiotics that are the highest priority “critically important antibiotics” for human health (HPCIA’s as defined by the World Health Organisation), and in our Danish and Swedish supply chains, their use is either banned or permitted only under exceptional

circumstances. Antibiotic use is monitored across all markets and is under the supervision and authorisation of veterinarians.

Denmark and Sweden are among the lowest users of livestock antibiotics of all the major pig producing countries and their well-established antibiotics control systems are held as an example for others. In Scandinavia, we have a perspective that healthy animals do not need antibiotics and both Denmark and Sweden have a long tradition of preventative health work. We continuously review our practices and approach to production to ensure we are doing everything we can to limit the use of antibiotics. This includes supporting innovation and research to reach best practice on our farms. Denmark separated veterinary advice from sales of medicines back in 1994 and introduced the VETSTAT system in 2000 that records all sales of livestock antibiotics. With this as a foundation, Denmark introduced the Yellow Card scheme in 2010 that sets levels of consumption, above which penalties would be applied. With such continued drive to lower the use of antibiotics, the level has been lowered four times since its introduction and continues to compare very favourably with comparative data across many of our key export markets e.g. [VARSS \(UK\)](#).

Antibiotics data in Denmark can be accessed via [VETSTAT](#) that monitors the consumption of antibiotics in the Danish pig production on an ongoing basis, and the annual [DANMAP](#) report. The use of antibiotics in livestock in Sweden is available in the [SVARM](#) (Swedish Veterinary Antibiotic Resistance Monitoring) report published by the SVA (National Veterinary Institute). Danish Crown antibiotic usage is summarised in the Welfare Outcome Measure Report [here](#). Regular review of this data is used to guide our farmers in their usage and reduction plans.

Our position remains that antibiotic use should always be “as little as possible” but “as much as necessary” to safeguard animal welfare; especially at a time when the pig industry is facing the challenge of zinc oxide removal from the diet of young pigs at weaning – a life stage when they can be particularly vulnerable.



Our Polish business, working with a key retail customer, has introduced a pork programme, where antibiotics are completely excluded in the fattening phase, and focus is placed on increased space requirements and waste and slurry management. Initial scale is small, but growth is expected. In 2023, these animals made up 7% of total pig supply in Poland. We are continuing our work to increase the number of animals in the antibiotic-free concepts, whilst taking care to ensure positive animal welfare.

5.3 Avoiding the use of growth-promoting substances

The use of antibiotic growth promoters and growth hormones is not permitted within our farming systems across the group. It should be noted that their use has been banned in Sweden since 1986, in Denmark since 2000, and in the EU since 2006.

5.4 Encouraging best practice

We are committed to advancing animal welfare standards within Danish Crown, with our suppliers and the wider industry. Examples of how we set out to achieve this include participating in knowledge sharing programmes, collaborating with industry and educational institutions, and undertaking projects aimed at enhancing farm animal welfare. In addition, we are constantly developing our own animal welfare concepts in Danish Crown, and our farmers are always encouraged to join one of our concepts or any of the independent farm assurance schemes. Farmers participating in higher welfare programmes are rewarded with price premiums.



6. Knowledge sharing

We strive to stay at the forefront of global and local animal welfare developments to identify key opportunities for integration into our own supply chains. This is achieved through local and group knowledge transfer programmes, and through active engagement with industry organisations and education institutions. As an example, in May 2019, Danish Crown formed an Animal Welfare Network Group involving professionals in the business and abattoirs. The group now meets quarterly to share information and knowledge covering animal welfare aspects from farm to transport and slaughter.

Also, a network group for Animal Welfare Officers at the Danish abattoirs has been established and is meeting quarterly.

The stated aims of this group are to share best practice, seek solutions to areas needing attention and to discuss the interpretation and implementation of legislation.

Additionally, we recognise the importance of providing a platform to share information and learnings. As an example, in 2022, we were a Special Sponsor of the Cattle Congress in Herning ([Kvægkongres 2022](#)). More examples of knowledge sharing are given in sections 7 and 8 below.



7. Innovation & research

Danish Crown seeks to support and deliver continuous improvement across its supply chains and invests financially and through resource provision in a variety of research projects to drive performance. Reflecting its leading position in each of its home markets Danish Crown and its subsidiaries are also actively involved in helping to

drive industry improvements in animal welfare. This is achieved through active participation in the work of industry bodies and through partnerships with academic institutions. For example, in our outdoor production supply chain we have more than 30 projects running currently. Examples of collaborations are listed in *Table 3*.

Table 3. Examples of educational institutions and industry organisations that Danish Crown’s business units collaborate with regarding animal welfare and sustainability.

Country	Institute/Industry organisation
Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danish Technological Institute DMRI • Copenhagen University, Animal Sciences • Aarhus University, Department of Animal Welfare Science • SEGES
Sweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Svenska Köttföretagen (The Swedish Slaughterhouse Association) • Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, SCAW (Swedish Centre for Animal Welfare) • Gård- & Djurhälsan (an advisory company, Farm and Animal Health) • RISE (Research institute of Sweden)
Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poznan University of Life Sciences • University of Environmental and Life Sciences, Wrocław Siedlce University of Natural Sciences and Humanities University of Warmia & Mazury • University of Agriculture, Krakow • University of Sciences & Technology, Bydgoszcz • Polish Academy of Sciences
Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stiftung Tierärztliche Hochschule Hannover • Beratungs- und Schulungsinstitut für Tierschutz bei Transport und Schlachtung • SGS

7.1 Danish Crowns’ Friland Research Centre: Centre for Free Range Livestock

The [Centre for Free Range Livestock](#) is a farm research center owned by Friland (part of Danish Crown group) together with Animal Protection Denmark. The Centre is a development and demonstration hub focused on organic and free-range livestock production systems. It’s aims are to create positive development in animal welfare and farm sustainability. This is achieved mainly through extensive project work on site which is then translated to commercial application through the Friland annual conference, publications, seminars, presentations at industry conferences, commercial

collaborations, and workshops. Some projects are initiated by the Centre, and some are led in collaboration with partner universities, private organisations, and farmers. Main work areas include:

- Strengthened animal welfare on farms
- Increased production of high welfare meat in outdoor production systems
- Innovation in all aspects of outdoor livestock production



- Reduced environmental impact in outdoor production systems
- Strengthened efforts for climate, nature, and biodiversity as a natural part of production
- Securing and stabilizing farmers' economies through competitive production

As a co-owner of the Centre, Friland both contributes and benefits directly and indirectly from many animal welfare-focused projects that support development and innovation in the sector. Whilst the Centre is focused on Free Range production systems, knowledge sharing, and wider industry dissemination of learnings is key and evident in our collaborations, publications, and industry event participation. At Danish Crown we are always striving to move the industry to better animal welfare in all production systems.

Figure 7. An example of farmers visiting the farm Risberg on Funen. Click on the image for a link to the full video.



Some of the most recent animal welfare projects initiated or joined by the Centre are detailed below. For more information visit the project homepage ([Forside - Center for Frilandsdyr](#)).

PROJECT: Shelter solutions for beef cattle in natural areas

Background: Outdoor cattle must have access to shelter to provide shade in the summer, and protection from the wind and precipitation in the winter. For more robust breeds, natural shelter opportunities can substitute a human-made shelter. However, in some natural areas the building of a permanent shelter is prohibited, and natural shelter is lacking (due to the lack of tree vegetation or naturally hilly landscape).

Project aims: To investigate shelter solutions for outdoor beef cattle where natural shelter is not

available. To produce an inspiration catalogue with shelter solutions from different nature areas.

Partners: Internal Centre for Free Range Livestock project

Timeline: May 2020 – March 2023

Project outcomes to date include an article with Animal Protection and presentation at Friland Annual meeting. Links to the project and presentation [here](#).

PROJECT: Agroforestry - a sustainable agricultural system for plant breeding and milk production

Background: The planet's resources need to be used more sustainably. Agricultural production must become holistic and bring benefits to nature and society. Combining livestock production with forestry can help to solve this challenge. It has been shown that incorporating trees into agricultural production can reduce climate footprint, reduce nitrogen leaching, increase the value of nature and the fertility of the soil. It can also lead to higher animal welfare including through enrichment of the rearing environment. Agroforestry has never been developed to a large scale in Denmark, and although the farmers are ready, they lack the knowledge about the effects of the system and practical know-how.

Project aim: To create sufficient knowledge about the effects of agroforestry systems so that a significant proportion of Danish farmers will see such a form of production as a real opportunity. As part of the project,

the effects of trees on animal welfare (regarding shade, shelter, and skin care) will be investigated.

Investigations include quantifying positive welfare outcomes through recording cattle behaviour, their use of trees for skincare and GPS of cattle movement to demonstrate preference.

Partners: Innovation Centre for Organic Farming, University of Copenhagen, Skovdyrkerne, Them Andelsmejeri, Ellinglund, Sommerbjerg, Sinatur Hotel and Conference, Forum Østergaard, Nyborggaard

Timeline: July 2020 – December 2024

Project outcomes include peer reviewed publications, media articles, hosting workshops, open days, presentations, and collaboration with "Plant a tree campaign" Danish Society for Nature Conservation. Links to the project, publications and presentations can be found here: [Skovlandbrug \(ROBUST\) - Center for frilandsdyr](#).



PROJECT: Finishers in open barn systems

Background: The environmental and climatic impact from pig production must in general be reduced. This also applies to the production in open and naturally ventilated barn systems and must be achieved without compromising animal welfare and productivity.

Project aims: To show the way to an optimal resource utilization, by means of improving an already existing and well-known production concept. To produce targeted production advice and in-depth knowledge of the pigs' comfort in the barns as the leverage for improved productivity.

Timeline: Jan 2022 – December 2024

Project outcomes include presentation at Friland annual conference and there are currently two pilot farms testing the concept. Link to the project & presentation [here](#).

PROJECT: New concepts for paddocks with trees and free-range sows for the benefit of the environment (OUTFIT)

Background: Outdoor sow production is challenged by a high loss of nutrients from the paddocks.

Project aim: To develop, demonstrate and investigate new paddock concepts with diverse trees in organic systems. This will include looking into how trees can enhance the welfare of pigs, among others by providing shadow in the summertime and giving environmental enrichment.

Partners: Danish Technological Institute, Aarhus University

Timeline: Jan 2021 – July 2025

Project outcomes to date include articles. Link to the project [here](#) and [ICROFS](#).

Figure 8. Image taken from OUTFIT project homepage. Click on the image to reach the [homepage](#).



PROJECT: Organic pigs with undocked tails when housed in large pens

Background: It can be very challenging to prevent tailbiting among pigs housed in large pens. Not least in the organic system where pigs are undocked.

Project aims: To prevent tailbiting among undocked pigs housed in large pens. The benefit of using natural complementary feed with behaviour-reducing properties is investigated.

Timeline: Jan 2024 – December 2025

Link to the project is [here](#).

PROJECT: Furtherance of Free-range Pigs, Flora and Fauna (4F)

Project aims: The main purpose of 4F is to contribute to an increased market share of organic pork by developing, documenting, and demonstrating outdoor systems that meet consumers' expectations regarding animal welfare (natural behavior), environmental considerations, and improved biodiversity. It includes examining a new summer-winter grazing concept designed for sows without nose ringing.

Partners: Århus University, Hestbjerg Økologi, Risbjerg Landbrug

Timeline: Jan 2024 – December 2027

Link to the project is [here](#) and [ICROFS](#)

PROJECT: Intact males in organic pork production

- A larger trial focusing on intact males in the organic porc production is being planned to start up primo 2025



7.2 Wider industry research collaborations

Danish Crown has been instrumental in supporting recent research relevant to the wider livestock industry.

PROJECT: Ways to improve sow handling at slaughterhouse

Problem: As comparatively low value-animals little attention has been focused on improving handling conditions of cull sows.

Project aim: To investigate the impact of key variables such as group size, ramp design, and human-animal interaction on sow behaviour and ease of handling at the slaughterhouse.

Partners: Aarhus University, Denmark.

Project outcomes: Initial research findings were communicated in 2021 and have informed lairage design plans at Danish Crown Blans facility. This represents significant investment in addressing welfare challenges in an often-overlooked aspects of the supply chain. A project summary was published in Pig Progress: [3 ways to improve sow handling at slaughterhouses - Pig Progress](#).

PROJECT: Umbilical hernia and transportation in pigs

Background: Umbilical hernia is a welfare problem for pigs and may cause economic loss if the hernia becomes so large that the animal is not allowed to be transported to the abattoir.

Project aims: To gain a better knowledge of the preventive measures against umbilical hernias. To strengthen the uniformity of the assessments of transport suitability for pigs with umbilical hernias.

Partners: SEGES, Copenhagen University

Timeline: Jan 2021 – December 2023

Project outcomes to date include publications in Pig Magazine. Link to the project with links to publications at the bottom of the page: [Navlebrok og transport \(seges.dk\)](#).

7.3 Priority research areas at Danish Crown

PROJECT: Exploring alternative systems during farrowing

Background: Farrowing crates are widely used as the most viable system to optimise the welfare of both the sow and piglets in production units and the safety of the stockperson. Danish Crown has been a key partner in the consideration of alternative systems. However, it is recognised that one of the challenges when transitioning from farrowing crates is an increase in piglet mortality.

Project aims: To assess the performance of ten different free-farrowing systems. To provide research outcomes to Danish farmers as they consider adopting these systems. To produce industry relevant and valuable information to mitigate welfare impacts when transitioning from farrowing crates.

Partners: SEGES and Danish academics. Wider Danish research (of which Danish Crown has oversight) in this area has also involved a dialogue with organisations such as the RSPCA (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) and CIWF (Compassion in World Farming).

Timeline: ongoing

Project outcomes include steps to deliver practical on-farm messaging to Danish farmers about alternatives to the farrowing crate, such as this webinar: [On-demand: Webinar "Alternatives to the farrowing crate" - Pig Progress](#), and this website: [Loose sows \(seges.dk\)](#).



Advancing farm animal welfare

Case study: *The Dansk Kalv initiative and brand where “Ethics, animal welfare and good quality go hand in hand”*

PROJECT: Identifying beef cattle breeds most suitable for crossbreeding with dairy cattle as part of the Dansk Kalv initiative and brand.

Background: Male calves born from dairy cows historically have been seen as a lower value “by-product” of dairy production, since they do not go on to produce milk and rearing these animals for meat has been commercially challenging. As a result, practices existed to put male dairy calves down immediately after birth. This has always been recognised as a high priority issue and in January 2018 Danish Crown entered into a cooperation agreement with a large Danish wholesaler to sell cross-bred calves under the Dansk Kalv brand to Danish restaurants & canteens.

Project aims: To find which dairy/beef crossbreeds result in calves with the highest meat quality, lowest carbon footprint, and the best feed conversion ratio. To ensure that all the male calves born in the dairy industry are given a chance to a good life without being an economical burden for the farmer.

Partners: Aarhus University, SEGES and Viking Genetics

Project outcomes include the success of the Dansk Kalv brand having established the industry accepted Jersey dairy cow crossed with a meat-producing bull. This yields veal of a very high quality. The calves have extra space in the shed with straw bedding. In addition, they are fed with raw milk and roughage, and are regularly inspected by a veterinarian. This combination of high quality and high animal welfare standards is being sought by chefs throughout Denmark, giving the opportunity to farmers, wholesalers, and chefs to work together to make the most of the resources available. Sales have been steadily increasing since its introduction and animals reared as Dansk Kalv increased from 32% in 2020 to 35% in 2023.



Image source: [Viden - Danish Crown Professional](#)

Danish Crown is committed to eliminate the problem of redundant bull calves and has become involved in other projects in the value chain to address this challenge and turn it into an opportunity for positive welfare and customer satisfaction.



8. Public engagement in animal welfare

8.1 Together with customers and consumers

Danish Crown products contribute to around 49 billion meals each year and we see sustainable food as a growing trend that will increase in both value and volume across markets. This is an opportunity for us to become even more relevant for our customers and for consumers by offering safe, sustainable, healthy, and nutritious products with informative labels. We are therefore developing food concepts together with customers from retail, foodservice, and the food industry. The concepts include high-quality meat products with different sustainability value propositions as well as a broad product range of plant-based protein products. The rise in consumer attention to sustainability is also reflected in our marketing activities. More information on our new food concepts can be found in our [Sustainability Report](#) and on our website [The Green Butcher – Veggie Range](#). Communicating precisely and transparently about our sustainability performance is critical to ensure stakeholder trust in our brands and products, and we are strongly focused on documenting our sustainability claims and statements.

8.2 More plant-based alternatives to meat

Danish Crown is a global meat processing company and among the largest in its field. As such we recognise the impact of our global activities – on the animals in our care, on our own workforce, on the environment and on the communities in which we operate – and we recognise our responsibility for seeking to make that impact positive.

In our Sustainability Report we recognise that we are living in a changing world and that there is a need for more plant-based alternatives to meat. As a result, our Feeding the Future strategy aims to create more value from the raw materials available through stable meat production and to increase our range of plant-based protein products.

Responsibility for development of our plant-based interests is embraced within a two-tier governance structure as set out in our [Sustainability Report](#) (pages 16-19). The owner management has overall responsibility for setting our ambitions with regards to sustainability, while the company management is responsible for driving the decisions necessary to achieve these ambitions and ensure implementation. Danish Crown clearly recognises the ‘less but better’ approach to meat consumption and as part of its overall strategy, has the target of becoming the market [leader in plant-based meat alternatives](#) with an ambition to increase to [10-20% of turnover in Denmark, Sweden and Poland, derived from plant-based products by 2027](#). In June 2022, following the launch of the Green Butcher range, we held 20% market share in Denmark. This implies that 5% of the Danish population bought our products within the first 4 months. To support this growth we have collaborated with the SEGES Innovation [Plant Based Business Centre](#) to focus on driving growth of more locally produced plant based products, and support projects such as [this](#) project at Copenhagen University to find the best raw materials for tomorrow’s plant-based food. Our targets are ambitious and not without challenges, and while consumer interest has been broadly encouraging, as reported in markets across Europe, recent significant pressures on household budgets has seen a short-term dampening of demand. We communicate to customers on reducing reliance on animal-based foods by sharing [information on plant-based diets](#) with [guidance](#) on how to implement them in daily routines. This also includes various [social media campaigns](#).



8.3 Consumer surveys

The Pig Project (PP)

Consumer's ability to understand animal welfare issues is very important for the market-driven development of animal welfare. Therefore, Danish Crown together with Copenhagen University is completing consumer surveys in China, Germany, UK, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Denmark to understand which issues the consumers understand and where we need to inform the consumers more about animal welfare issues. An outcome of this project includes the development of a [benchmarking tool published in the journal Animals](#).

8.4 Farm visits

At Danish Crown we celebrate and promote our high standards of animal welfare at every stage from farm to transport, lairage and processing. Communication and education are key to our ways of working and this extends to welcoming visitors into our pig and cattle facilities with purpose-built viewing galleries. Typically, we receive up to 25,000 visitors a year at our Horsens facility including many school, college, and university student groups). For those unable to visit our sites in person we have free access to our ['virtual' tours online](#).

Figure 9. Visitors to Danish Crown can see process from slaughter to packaging at our Horsens facility



To support transparency and to raise awareness of animal welfare and sustainability, Friland invited Danish consumers to visit some of our cooperative owners to see how everyday life is on a modern farm. In 2021/22, some of our Friland farmers opened their doors and tested live-recording from the stables as a new way to engage consumers in everyday life on a modern farm, animal welfare and organic meat production. The close connection between Friland and consumers was reflected in the 2024 rating of Friland as the 8th highest on the Sustainable Brand Index, in which Danish consumers have ranked over 250 companies.

More information about annual open farm events and meet the farmer profiles can be found [here](#).

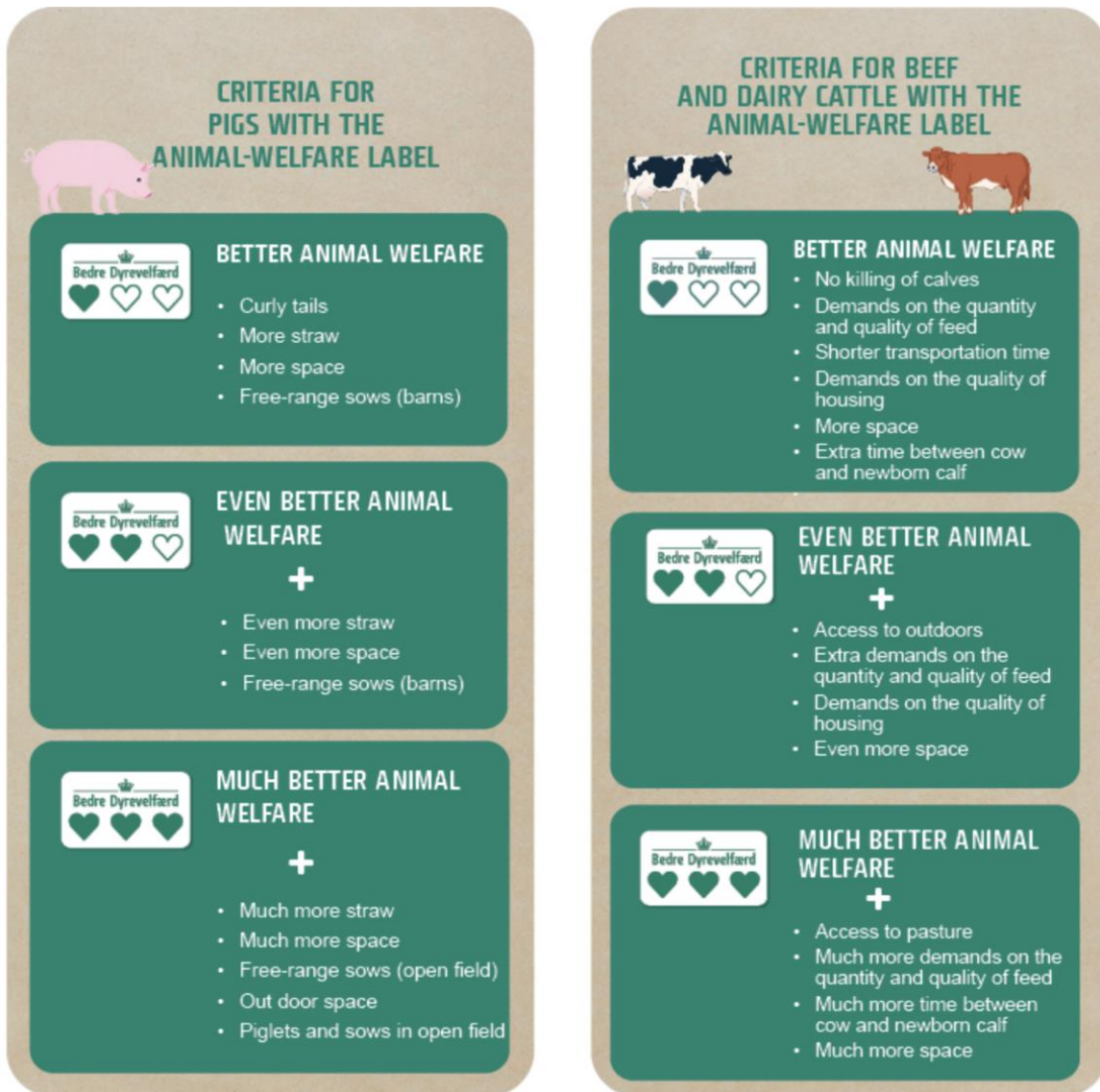
8.5 Product labelling

Danish Better Welfare (3 Hearts) scheme

In 2017, Danish Crown was a key partner and driver in the development and launch of the governmental animal welfare label: Danish Better Welfare (3 Hearts) scheme ([Bedre Dyrevelfærd](#)). This scheme sets out a range of enhanced animal welfare requirements for livestock production systems. Today, we are actively involved in the ongoing private-public partnership, which continuously assesses and develops this scheme. *Figure 10* below illustrates the main welfare improvements in pig and cattle farms (as compared to the minimum legislative requirements). Within Danish Crown we have a continuous focus on driving the development of new products which can be labelled "Bedre Dyrevelfærd". In 2023, 10% of Danish beef and 3% of Danish pigs were raised to the Danish Better Welfare Hearts scheme for Danish Crown.



Figure 10. Infographic detailing additional animal welfare requirements in pig and cattle farms (as compared to the minimum legislative requirements) in order to meet the "Bedre Dyrevelfærd" 1, 2 and 3 hearts labelling scheme.





8.6 Colleague engagement

Danish Crown internal colleague magazine "Krogen" is available publicly and reaches 26 000 employees globally. The [November 2022 edition](#) contained a special feature on our company animal welfare concepts for pigs.

Figure 11. Danish Crown [Krogen colleague magazine November 2022 issue](#), pages 10-11: "Bornholmergrisen: The pig that the farmer reserves for himself".



8.7 External engagement

Danish Crown's external shareholder magazine "Indsigt" provides new and current information from the shareholder group. Issues are publicly available [here](#).

Recent communication includes update on sustainability targets and progress on the Dansk Kalv initiative.

Figure 12. [Indsigt magazine](#), Danish Crown's cooperative owner magazine with news and current insights from the group. May 2022 issue front cover.





9. Awards and recognition in farm animal welfare

Our employees are our most valuable asset, and our top priority is to ensure good jobs and a safe and productive working environment in which people thrive. Stock persons and farmers form an important part of our supply chain and are crucial in ensuring the delivery of excellent husbandry, management, and animal welfare practices. Recognition of hard-working employees at farm level is therefore important and has

been recognised externally over successive years including numerous prestigious category nominations at the 2022 [Herning International Pig Congress](#) including:

- [Outstanding Trainee](#)
- [Outstanding Effort](#)
- [Outstanding Employee](#)