



De dromedaris ingelijst?

Een onderzoek naar de regelgeving bij de introductie van nieuwe productiedieren in Nederland met een casestudie over de dromedaris (*Camelus dromedarius*)

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Summary

In article 34 of the Dutch Animal Health and Welfare Act is stated which animals are allowed to be kept for production goals in the Netherlands. This so-called positive list consists of a wide variety of animals, from insects to mammals that are kept for a wide variety of production goals. When formulating article 34, two criteria were used officially to determine what species should be placed on the positive list.

- Is it possible to keep the animal species concerned in a way that it does justice to the primary needs of that animal species?
- Can this way of keeping the animal species be realised in the Netherlands?

The positive list is not a final product. Animal species can be added to this list whenever is shown that keeping this animal species for a production goal can be realised without unacceptable animal welfare consequences. After a number of requests to add new fish species to the positive list, the Animal Welfare Council has developed a review framework and procedure for fish species in 2003. In 2006, a request was submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture Nature and Food Quality to get the one-humped camel on the positive list. The applicant wanted to keep one-humped camels for milk production. An exemption was conferred for two years. During that period the applicant has to prove that one-humped camels can be kept and milked without unacceptable animal welfare problems in the Netherlands.

The objective of this research was to clarify the process of formulating and enforcement of article 34. Furthermore, to study how this article is applied by taking the case of the one-humped camel. The main questions were:

- How was the positive list formulated? And what criteria played an essential role in reality?
- What is the current policy according to article 34?
- What are problems related to keeping one-humped camels for production goals?

The case of the one-humped camel was compared to three other exotic animal species with the same production goal (water buffalo for milk production) or another production goal (ostriches and barramundi for meat production).

Different stakeholders were interviewed to gain more insight into the process of formulating article 34. Also documents related to the process of decision making concerning article 34 have been studied. Experts of the one-humped camel, ostriches, water buffalo and barramundi were interviewed and farms were visited. At three locations in the Netherlands (Cromvoirt, Amersfoort, and Heilig Landstichting) behaviour of one-humped camels was studied. Time budget and specific behaviour indicating welfare problems were recorded. Furthermore, behaviour around machine milking was recorded at the location in Cromvoirt, the only place in the Netherlands where one-humped camels were milked.

It was found that the positive list of article 34 was a compromise among the criteria of the Ministry of Agriculture Nature and Food Quality and interests and/or goals of stakeholders such as scientists, representatives of NGO's, farmers, consumers, et cetera. No specifically formulated criteria have been used to decide what animal species were placed on the positive list. The regulation to determine what animals species could be added to the list was used inconsistently. This inconsistency was due to both the existing law and common practice of animal keeping.

Animal species can be added to the positive list when passing the protocol of adding new species for production goals successfully. The applicant has to deliver a document regarding the welfare of the animal species to be kept for production goals. For fish species information of an independent researcher and the judgement of an independent committee has to be delivered additionally. The Minister of Agriculture Nature and Food Quality takes the final decision whether animal species are added to the positive list. The procedure for fish species and for the one-humped camel was not completely similar. It has not become clear whether there exist differences in criteria between different animal species that are kept with a similar production goal.

Based on this research it was concluded that keeping one-humped camels in the Netherlands is

possible when certain requirements are met. Machine milking of one-humped camels, however, has shown some animal welfare problems. The animals showed stress related behaviour during milking. Factors that caused stress were probably the milking procedure (no udder massaging before connecting to the milking machine, relative long connection to the milking machine, oxytocin injection during each milking). Separating mother and young during periods of the day caused stress especially for the young animals.

The fact that requests to add new species on the positive list are judged with more or less standard procedures makes it possible to perform an objective determination whether an animal species can be kept for production goals without unacceptable animal welfare problems in the Netherlands. Although the procedures can be improved, they are well enough described to be used. A more fundamental question is whether it is fair to use strict procedures for new animal species while for animal species that already are on the list not such clear procedures were followed. This could be a reason to start such a procedure for all animal species that are kept for production goals. This is justified because in article 34 is stated that animal species can be removed from the positive list whenever acceptability of keeping that animal species for production goals is at issue. That may be due to new knowledge about the animal species or due to new developments in the keeping of an animal species. Concurrently with starting a procedure for all animal species, specific requirements can be formulated that should be met. Current practice of keeping animals for production in the Netherlands complicates the use of the same criteria for all animal species due to the possible effects for the Dutch animal production sector.