

PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO AQUATIC ANIMAL WELFARE

EU 2024

Over 9,000 EU citizens were asked about the welfare of aquatic animals...

the majority agreed that fish can feel pain, and they care about their welfare

71%

agree that fish feel pain

91%

think fish welfare should be protected to the same or greater extent than the welfare of other animals we eat

Transparent and ethical use of public funds towards aquaculture is important to people

88%

think there should be public records explaining how funds are used

86%

think funds should only be used to support farms that ensure high animal welfare

79%

think funds should only support farms that are sustainable

Research was carried out by Sapience on behalf of Compassion in World Farming and Eurogroup for Animals via an online survey between 20th March and 5th April 2024. Data shown is based on 9197 adults from 9 EU countries (Czechia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the Netherlands).


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There's real appetite for legislative change to improve aquatic animal welfare in the EU

Citizen support for legislation that would:

require the use of best practices and the latest science to meet the welfare needs of farmed aquatic animals	80%
guarantee high welfare during live crustacean transport 	79%
requires farmers to stun aquatic animals before slaughter	70%
prohibit farmers from feeding farmed fish with wild-caught fish that could otherwise be eaten by humans	62%
ban the sale of live fish, lobsters and crabs	60%
prohibit farming new carnivorous species 	58%

 because it's an unsustainable use of resources!

Public awareness of aquaculture practices is low...

48% of people appeared to have low awareness of current fish farming practices

% of those who were unaware

That most farmed salmon are deaf due to intensive breeding	82%
The percentage of farmed fish that die during rearing is much higher than farmed land animals	66%
That fish usually spend 2-5 years growing on farms 	65%
That wild-caught fish are common ingredients in farmed fish feeds	63%
That most farmed fish are not stunned before slaughter 	61%
That farming systems typically don't allow fish to exhibit all of their natural behaviours	42%
That antibiotics are commonly used in fish farming 	40%

...And around half mistakenly believe that 'sustainable' equals high animal welfare

When they see the term "sustainable" on the label

47%

 assume the fish was killed quickly and painlessly

56%

 assume farmed fish were kept in conditions allowing them to exhibit all natural behaviours

However, most people want higher welfare options, and are willing to pay more for them

93%

would like to buy higher welfare fish products

69%

would like to see information about the way fish were farmed and killed on the label of all products

61%

say the welfare of the fish impacts which product they buy

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