

June 2024

POLICY ON ANIMAL WELFARE

Founded by the agricultural world in 1983, and strengthened by its historic link with La Ferme France, Avril has based its growth over the last 40 years on a unique model for creating value: all profits are reinvested towards the agricultural sectors and in their development in France and abroad, from upstream agriculture to processed products. Present in the human nutrition, animal nutrition, chemicals and renewable energy sectors, the Group has built a strong link between its animal and plant-based activities.

Attentive to demands from society on the subject of animal welfare, Avril elaborated a dedicated policy since 2017 that covers the following sectors in France: pigs, laying hens, poultry (for meat production), rabbits and ruminants. This policy was updated in May 2024 to take account regulatory changes, actions undertaken by the Group and changes in the scope of action in connection with the company's transfers and acquisitions.

This document establishes the reference framework for our employees in the Group and also applies to breeding farms included in our scope of responsibility.

Our ambition

For us, suitable conditions for the housing, transport and slaughter of animals, and disseminating a culture of consideration towards them, are crucial points that demand our attention. Avril's conviction is that we must act to promote animal welfare; this is both an ethical requirement and a key aspect of the quality of our products. Animal welfare forms an integral part of SPRING, our CSR strategy¹.

Our policy is thus based on two main pillars that set our ambition:

- **To identify and remove unacceptable situations** in farms. By "unacceptable" we consider: proven non-compliance with the regulatory framework and the basics of animal farming (sufficient access to water and feed, absence of suffering animals, good management practices for dead animals on farms).
- **To improve practices** through a continuous approach of progress regarding the protection and welfare of animals, by working with different sectoral actors.

Our scope of responsibility

Avril is an important player in different livestock sectors, working with about 26,000 livestock farmers. It has a responsibility to commit to ensuring animal welfare, while listening to the demands of consumers and standing by the farmers to address such demands.

Our scope of responsibility for animal welfare covers our own operations and approximately 1 100 farms² that have a business relationship with Avril that goes beyond customer-supplier relationship. Namely, this scope includes farms in a contractual arrangement with Avril, farms engaged in specific value chains for which Avril defines the terms of reference, farms owned by Avril, farms in which Avril hold majority shares.³ In such situations, we can formulate precise requirements for farmers who, because they are directly responsible for the welfare of their animals, must take them into account. We support farmers whose

¹ [Avril](#)

² Indicative value: the number of farms within this perimeter varies slightly each year.

³ Scope detailed in the appendix

practices are not aligned with our requirements to achieve compliance. If no improvements are observed, Avril shall cease all commercial relations with the livestock farms concerned.

Avril is also a shareholder in a multi-species research farm on the Sourches site in Saint-Symphorien. This farm is made up of the companies Euronutrition (owned at 50% by the Group) and Agroévolution (owned at 100% by the Group). The Sourches farm, where high-precision trials in nutrition and breeding practices are carried out on major species, serves the Group's innovation in animal nutrition, and in particular the research and development of solutions that contribute to improving the well-being of thousands of farm animals.

Our approach

In line with European and French regulations, Avril bases its policy on a globally recognized definition of animal welfare made by the OIE⁴, **the "Five Freedoms"** - freedom from hunger and thirst, freedom from discomfort, freedom from pain, injury or disease, freedom to express normal behavior, freedom from fear and distress⁵.

Avril has a pragmatic and operational approach. This is based on the consideration of all actors towards animals – echoing the first fundamental value of Avril, which is respect – as well as on the implementation of actions to prevent unnecessary pain or stress.

Our four guiding principles

Animal welfare is dependent on numerous factors. We have chosen to organize them around **four guiding principles**.

1 – Nutrition – Feeding animals properly

Feeding helps to cover the animals' needs for essential nutrients and to express natural and species-specific behaviors. By participating in physiological functioning, nutrition is an essential factor in the well-being of animals. Thus, feeding strategies contribute to the good growth of the animal, its digestive comfort, the maintenance of its immune balance, the management of parasites, and the management of its stresses, whether chronic or occasional.

Nutrition – Animal nutrition is our core business and our primary lever for contributing to the well-being of animals. Avril is able to provide feed solutions adapted to each species, each physiological stage and each production method. In addition, our expert companies develop nutritional and biocontrol solutions (premixes, additives, nutritional specialties) and services to improve dietary balance and animal well-being.

2 – Health – Acting to ensure the health of farmed livestock

A key factor in the economic performance of livestock units, health is also a condition that is necessary to the welfare of animals, as underlined by the OIE. Animal health is a key skill within Avril, requiring different types of expertise which, since 2009, have been grouped under our Sustainable Animal Health Management (SAHM)⁶ approach. This approach aims to prefer preventive solutions (livestock management, biosecurity, feeds, vaccination, biocontrol, etc.) rather than curative interventions. Antibiotics can, however, be used (subject to prescription rules) to treat sick and suffering animals.

⁴ World Organisation for Animal Health

⁵ Detailed in the appendix

⁶ See our dedicated SAHM page – [Démarche Gestion Sanitaire Durable | Sanders](#)

Biosecurity & Biocontrol – The health status of livestock units is essential to guaranteeing optimal living conditions for animals. Biosecurity covers all preventive hygiene methods that can limit the introduction and spread of diseases in livestock farms. Several Avril companies develop and market innovative products to improve the health status of animals.

Veterinary follow-up – Our technical teams collaborate with the veterinarians attached to livestock units and we also have an internal team of 16 veterinarians who works with groups of livestock farmers. The veterinarians elaborate and follow preventive health plans specific to each species and implement SAHM guidelines.

3 – Housing – Ensuring good living conditions for animals

As a central element of any farm, livestock housing has a direct effect on both the living conditions of animals and the working conditions and safety of livestock farmers.

Farm management – Through monitoring and recommendations, our 300 technical advisors provide support on a daily basis to ensure the control of environmental conditions that are essential to the good health of animals (air quality, temperature, moisture levels, etc.).

Gradual improvements to housing – Avril supports its partner livestock farmers through technical advice, trials of alternative housing systems or possibly financial support, in order to facilitate the modernization of existing buildings.

Financial support is available to modernise livestock farms for animal welfare and to enhance the environmental performance of livestock buildings. For example, in the poultry sector, Sanders, Avril's animal nutrition subsidiary, offers financial aid for the construction and renovation of buildings (installation of natural light through windows, environmental enrichment, etc.) and their equipment.

In 2023, Sanders renewed a €6 million aid plan for the future of livestock farming.⁷ The aim of the 3rd pillar of this aid plan was to contribute to the well-being of animals and farmers. Financial support was provided to develop parcs with tree cover for laying hen farms.

4 – Integrity – Nurturing a culture of consideration for animals

Research – Avril is a shareholder in a farm located in Sourches (Sarthe France) which is dedicated to innovation in Animal Nutrition. This research farm is a place of innovation, with trials conducted each year to better understand the needs of the animals, and promote the best possible solutions. A trial consists of comparing different kinds of feed or farming practices to assess their effects on the animals' production of eggs, milk or meat, behaviour, welfare or environmental emissions. The data collected allows us to improve the diet, living conditions and environmental impact of farm animals in France and abroad. In addition to these research and innovation activities, the site will focus on the deployment of these innovations in the future.

Constantly striving to improve its practices, the Sourches farm has set up a reference framework on animal welfare and an approach to ensure the everyday dissemination of a culture of consideration towards animals and improvements of practices. Thus, the staff of

⁷ See press release on the 2023 aid plan : https://www.sanders.fr/sites/default/files/cp_plan_daides_pour_lelevage_de_demain_def_1.pdf

Sourches, researchers, and engineers are trained in animal welfare and experimentation. They observe the animals on a daily basis to ensure their well-being. A dedicated animal welfare structure reviews tests and practices to identify areas for progress (training, investment, procedures etc.). This work is conducted in collaboration with an external veterinarian to improve the health and comfort of animals and to advance the human-animal relationship.

The majority of the trials carried out at Sourches farm are focused on the feed. In this case, simple weighing, consumption records and animal observations are sufficient for the comparison of the studied feeds. The animals are raised in conditions similar to those of a conventional farm. More than 95% of the milk, meat or eggs of the animals raised in Sourches farm enter the usual marketing channels and are used for human consumption.

In accordance with the regulations governing the welfare of animals kept for experimental purposes (in particular, Directive 63/2010/EU), the research centre is approved, and certain trials are subject to prior examination and approval by an external ethics committee (the Pays de la Loire ethics committee for the Sourches farm) and by the Ministry of Research (Decree 2013/118 and decrees).

At the Sourches farm, this includes tests to assess the digestibility of raw materials (ruminant, pig, poultry, rabbit). These studies are essential for the design of feed which covers the needs of the animals and ensures their good health, while reducing their environmental footprint. In addition, tests may be carried out at the request of Avril's companies at other research centres that meet the same regulatory requirements and whose research projects have also been validated by an ethics committee. The tests carried out concern the evaluation of raw materials or additives for animal nutrition to demonstrate their safety of use for the animal, the consumer, the user and the environment, as well as their efficacy. The efficacy to be demonstrated relates to technological aspects (to increase preservation, limit oxidation, etc.), sensory aspects (to improve palatability), nutritional aspects (to increase energy and vitamin intake, etc.), zootechnical aspects (to improve digestibility, etc.) or anti-parasite aspects (to prevent infections or limit their incidence, reduce the use of antibiotics, etc.).

As part of the regulatory authorisation process for the marketing of additives in the European Union, in vivo tests may be required by the Authorities to assess the efficiency of the additive in terms of its intended functionality, or to assess its safety for target animal species. In these cases, the tests must comply with the regulatory requirements for animal welfare, while following the criteria established by a recognised and audited quality assurance system (e.g. Good Laboratory Practice). The test must be carried out by qualified personnel using appropriate facilities/equipment.

Finally, as part of the regulatory authorisation process for the marketing of chemical substances (European REACH regulation - Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and restriction of CHEMicals) and when absolutely necessary, tests are carried out to generate the toxicological and ecotoxicological data required to protect human health and the environment. These tests are carried out in establishments approved by the public authorities and therefore comply with regulations on the welfare of animals kept for experimental purposes.

The projects carried out by Avril companies are all guided by the '3Rs' rule. We work particularly on the following topics:

- **Replace:** *in vivo* tests are replaced as much as possible by alternative methods (by combining different approaches: computer models, prediction of the nutritional quality of feeds by NIR⁸ spectroscopy, *in vitro* models). We are involved in two public-private partnerships that bring together other players of the profession on these aspects. In addition, we have allocated substantial internal resources and RID⁹ efforts to develop alternative methods. To date, animal tests are still necessary to produce reference data and validate other methods for which we already have promising proofs of concept. Nevertheless, animal testing is still necessary today: firstly, to produce reference data and thus permit the calibration of alternative methods; secondly, to satisfy regulatory requirements for the issue of marketing authorisations for functional solutions; and, more generally, to carry out assessments for which alternative methods are not available.
- **Reduce:** A team of biostatisticians is involved in the construction of the test protocols and proposes experimental designs aimed at optimizing the experimental devices (farm buildings, number of animals) while guaranteeing the relevance and statistical reliability of the responses. By challenging the question posed upstream of a test, by invalidating certain leads, this approach allows us to define relevant tests and avoid unnecessary repetition. In addition, based on the history of our test data, we develop new response models. We also draw on existing data in the scientific literature, using methods based on similarity with existing substances: cross-referencing, grouping, weight of evidence.
- **Refine:** Before the trial, refining consists of improving housing conditions, working to enrich environments, avoiding and limiting animal stress by implementing non-invasive methods, and developing the human-animal relationship. In addition, each of our test protocols defines well-being criteria through precise and measurable indicators. Daily observation of the animals allows us to react, adjust and improve certain practices in order to maintain the level of animal welfare. More specifically, the devices used to study digestibility are the subject of major research work to improve the living conditions of the animals.

On farms – The livestock farmers with whom we work take care of their animals on a daily basis in order to provide them with optimum conditions for their growth. All their actions are designed to prevent situations that might affect the well-being of their livestock. Thus, interventions on animals (are sometimes necessary to prevent certain risks of injury. In the case of pigs, these requirements are justified in the Annual Health Check (AHC).

Sanders' 2023 aid plan for tomorrow's livestock farming contributes to the well-being of animals and farmers by financing mechanised and/or robotised equipment to improve animal handling conditions (vaccination equipment, Eazyvac-type trolleys, washing robot, drying dispenser, etc.).

Transport of animals – Avril strives to be vigilant regarding transport. In order to prevent injuries to animals, Avril seeks to remind farmers about the fundamental principles and good practices governing the loading of livestock.

Sanders' 2023 support plan for tomorrow's livestock farming contributes to animal welfare by funding equipment for collecting animals for slaughter (species concerned: rabbits). This involves a welfare transport trolley developed for rabbits, which reduces the number of times animals are handled and improves animal welfare, maneuverability, and comfort

⁸ Near-infrared spectroscopy

⁹ Research Innovation Development

at work. There are also plans to test the use of the trolleys in the transport lorries of a regional sector, with a view to more rapid and widespread deployment.

Implementation

In line with our twofold ambition – to eliminate unacceptable situations and improve practices – we have focused our efforts on two priorities: the monitoring of farms in our scope of responsibility and the development of parcs with trees for laying hens.

Monitoring of farms – In order to promote good working conditions for farmers and enable optimum living conditions for the animals, we have developed an indicator, the EVE indicator, to identify farms involved in more virtuous production processes. This indicator covers broiler poultry farms, i.e. around 600 farms nationwide. We have chosen to focus this indicator on broiler poultry farms, given the number of farms in this sector for which Avril is responsible. We are also in constant contact with downstream clients in this sector, who are very keen to see it evolve in line with societal expectations.

The EVE indicator is based on criteria for virtuous practices that capture the complexity of the issues farms have to address. The criteria covers two themes: animal welfare, taking into account the living environment provided by the farm; and the environmental footprint of farms. The aim is to assess 25% of our target perimeter in 2024, 50% in 2025 and 75% in 2026, and to draw up progress plans. The EVE indicator is one of the 14 indicators of our SPRING responsibility approach. As such, it is included in Avril's mandatory CSR reporting.¹⁰

Animal welfare assessment of farms - At the same time, we are working on the extra-financial assessment of all the farms within our scope of responsibility and are integrating animal welfare criteria into our farm monitoring tools. The aim is to be able to provide information on the animal welfare measures implemented on the farms: number and type of enrichments, animal welfare practices (beak treatment, declawing, etc.), compliance with the LPF (Le Porc Français) specifications for the Avril pork sector (e.g. natural light for the animals), and so on.

Development of alternative housing: collective cages for the rabbit industry - New societal expectations and forthcoming European legislation are moving towards a ban on cages in fattening rabbit farms. Avril has taken part in a multi-stakeholder, multi-skilled working group (Sanders, Mixscience, breeders and the ELVILAP group, as well as the downstream sector): the Lap'Avenir 2 programme, which has developed a new method, Cuniloft®, reconciling the well-being of the breeder and animal welfare. This new method encourages rabbits to express their natural behaviour, with burrows, raised mezzanines and natural light. It also helps to restore pride in the farming profession and encourages the renewal of generations of farmers. The MSA Portes de Bretagne contributed through its expertise in terms of gestures and posture, as well as on work arduousness and ergonomics, to ensure that the solution developed reduces difficult working conditions for farmers.

The project was a winner in FranceAgriMer's call for projects for structuring the sector and was acclaimed by the CIWF welfarist association for improving animal welfare (it was awarded a Golden Rabbit in 2021).

¹⁰ SPRING: [Avril](#)

By spring 2024, 3 farms had been converted to the Cuniloft® model, including 2 young farmers. 3 buildings (poultry and ruminant) have been converted to the Cuniloft® model, and around 15 projects are being created or considered for conversion, representing 17% of the farms for which Sanders is responsible. Lastly, 3 breeding halls have been equipped with other types of alternative housing to cages (feedlots).

Evolution of the laying hen units – Avril is committed to developing its laying hen branch to respond to demands from consumers and guarantee a long-term future for breeders. The aim is to add trees and shrubs to the parcs of Label Rouge, Plein Air and Organic breeders. We have developed an in-house classification of types of parcs according to the density of trees and shrubs present. The target is that trees will be present on 100% of the laying hen units by 2030, with an intermediate goal set for 2025.

In addition, Sofiprotéol (a finance company and subsidiary of Avril) is committed to ensuring that animal welfare is taken into account in its investments and in the monitoring of its holdings, and encourages the companies it finances to make progress in this area.

Governance

This policy is supervised by Avril’s Executive Committee, which defines its ambitions and major orientations. The management team of the Avril Solutions pour l’Agriculture (ASA) business line is responsible for the operational implementation of the policy. The team is also in charge of steering the RID projects and providing nutritional solutions related to animal welfare.

The guiding principles set out in this policy apply throughout Avril. The ASA management team is responsible for informing the other players in the sectors (breeders, transporters, slaughterhouses) with whom they interact.

Our commitments for farms within our scope of responsibility¹¹

Guidelines	Our commitments to support the farmers
Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multi-species - Increase our research and development efforts in nutrition on our main themes related to animal well-being: digestive comfort, stress management, immune balance, support for new breeding practices. ▪ Broiler poultry - Using nutrition to help reduce pododermatitis¹² ▪ Rabbit - Developing a specific feeding strategy to support the development of alternative housing
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multi-species - Continue the implementation of our Sustainable Animal Health Management (SAHM) progress plan for the rational use of antibiotics. ▪ Multi-species - Extending the monitoring of antibiotic consumption via appropriate systems (e.g. Indic@vet¹³)

¹¹ Our scope of responsibility: our own operations and the farms in a contractual arrangement with the Group, farms engaged in specific value chains, farms owned by the Group, farms in which the Group has a stake.

¹² Inflammation of poultry feet

¹³ Indic@vet : a traceability application for the use of medicines in livestock farming

Guidelines	Our commitments to support the farmers
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pig - Accompany farmers setting up freedom farrowing pens for sows ▪ Chicken - Supporting farmers introducing intermediate growth strains ▪ Chicken - Actively deploy natural light on chicken farms, in particular by providing financial support for the installation of windows. ▪ Rabbit - Develop "welfare"¹⁴ housing in partnership with downstream customers and retailers ▪ Rabbit - Continue diagnostics of environmental comfort in the breeding farms ▪ Broiler poultry - Deploy the EVE indicator within our area of responsibility
Animal integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multi-species - Continue to disseminate and apply the "3 R's: Replace, Reduce, Refine" in all of our research trials and develop alternative methods ▪ Pig - Conduct nutrition and environmental enrichment trials to reduce tail docking Meat poultry - Deploying the EVE indicator within our area of responsibility. ▪ Rabbit - Conducting nutrition and environmental enrichment trials to favor natural behavior

¹⁴ Welfare-oriented housing: Collective parks or other "welfare" specifications, access to the outdoors, etc.

APPENDIX

Definition of animal welfare

This definition is internationally recognized by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and is based on the main principles of the *Farm Animal Welfare Council* (FAWC), known as the five fundamental freedoms:

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

Avril's activities in different livestock sectors

As France's 5th-largest agri-food group, Avril is strongly committed to working alongside livestock farmers through its ASA division: Avril Solutions pour l'Agriculture.

Comprising the companies Sanders (animal nutrition), MiXscience (animal specialities), Terrial (organic fertilisation) Feed Alliance (purchase of raw materials) and Solteam (import of non-GM soya, traced and guaranteed 'deforestation-free' for use in animal feed), the ASA division is committed to developing global solutions for more efficient and sustainable livestock farming in France and abroad.

The scope of our responsibility in livestock sectors

We intervene at different levels in livestock production sectors. At the animal-rearing stage, Avril's involvement varies depending on the business relationship between the Group and the farmers. There are three main situations:

- Customer-supplier relationship: Avril sells feed to the farmer and provides advice on its use,
- Contractual relationship: Avril and the farmer are bound by a contract, or involved in a specific value chain
- Equity-based relationship: Avril holds a majority share in the farm

If the Group is in a customer-supplier relationship, it may formulate recommendations for the attention of the farmers concerned.

In the cases of contractual or equity-based relationships, Avril is able to specify its requirements regarding the issue of animal welfare. This is applicable to about 1,100 farms, with the following (indicative) distribution by species: 19% laying hens, 60 % broilers, 11 % pigs, 10 % rabbits.¹⁵

¹⁵ Indicative values: the number of farms within this perimeter and the breakdown by species varies slightly each year.

Our Research, Innovation and Development projects (RID)

Feeding contributes to the proper physiological functioning and therefore contributes to the health and well-being of the animals. Thus, our RID projects in nutrition contribute, through the development of products and services, to the improvement of animal welfare. Here is a non-exhaustive list of the themes that guide our RID programs.

RID Projects
Sustainable Animal Health Management
Contribute to the well-being of animals by developing feeds ¹⁶ that promote a balanced digestive flora [Pork, Poultry, Ruminants, Aquaculture]
Development of alternatives to manage parasite risk [Poultry, Rabbit, Ruminant]
Development of solutions to reduce the impact on animals of biotoxins from raw materials [Pig, Poultry]
Development of biocontrol ¹⁷ solutions in animal breeding [Pig, Poultry, Aquaculture, Ruminant]
Indic@ponte et Indic@vol: traceability tools to collect performance indicators from poultry farms [Poultry]
Development of auditing tools for rearing practices, for example Aquascope: a diagnostic tool to improve the sanitary and bacteriological quality of water in animal breeding [Multi-species]
Animal Welfare
Tests on living conditions and enrichment of environments [Multi-species]
Study of the impact of dietary and hygiene solutions on tail-biting [Pig]
Development of a feeding program adapted to entire (non-castrated) male pigs [Pig]
Study of the impact of feed form and composition on the behavior of chickens with untrimmed beak [Broilers, Laying hens]
Nutritional solutions and biocontrol to limit the appearance of pododermatitis in poultry [Poultry]
Development of feed and nutritional solutions to mitigate the effects of summer or tropical conditions on poultry and ruminants [Poultry, Ruminant]
Podoscope: tool for auditing rearing practices and measuring pododermatitis [Poultry]
« 3R » Replace – Reduce - Refine
Development of measurement methods through imaging and fecal or salivary biomarkers [Pig, Ruminant, Rabbit]
Development of various <i>in vitro</i> methods to study the antimicrobial, antiparasitic, antiviral and antimycotoxin activities of natural active ingredients and their release in the gastrointestinal tract [multi-species]
Development of <i>in vitro</i> methods for predicting the nutritional values of raw materials and feed and functionality of active ingredients [Multi-species]
Development of methods for predicting the nutritional quality of feeds by NIR spectroscopy [multi-species]

¹⁶ The term 'feed' is used in the regulatory sense, and includes additives, premixes, raw materials and complete and complementary compound feeds.

¹⁷ Live bacteria have the ability to direct the microbial populations of the colonised environment, notably through the competitive exclusion mechanism. Their use can therefore favour the establishment of positive bacteria to the detriment of undesirable bacteria. Biocontrol in livestock farming seeks to promote a balance in microbial ecosystems, as part of a more sustainable approach than the use of certain chemical molecules.