

Introduction to the number of surplus animals in Belgium

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What are surplus animals?

- Common yet misleading term
- 'Surplus' suggests excess or avoidable animals, but reality is more complex
- = animals bred for scientific purposes and killed without being used in a procedure
- Three criteria:
 - bred for scientific purposes
 - killed
 - not used in a 'procedure' (as defined by the European Directive 2010/63/EU)

How and why did we collect this data?

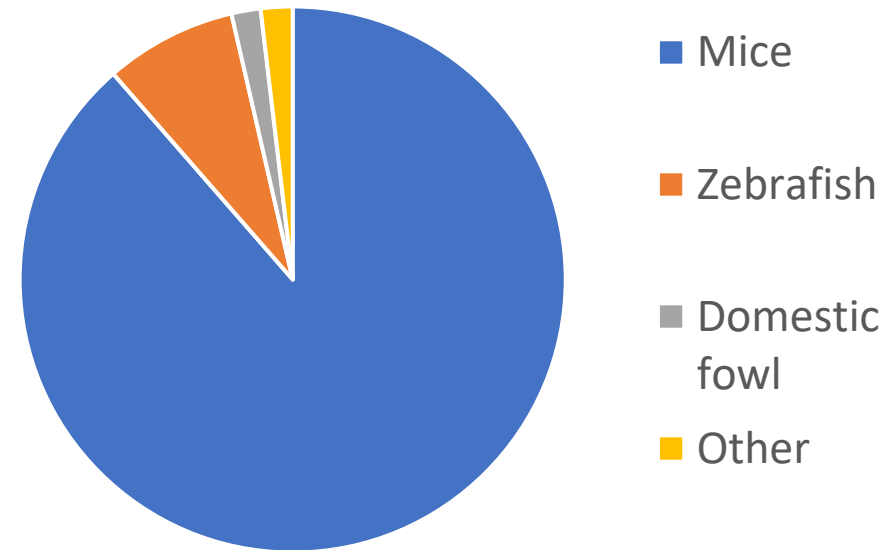
- European Directive 2010/63/EU
 - Member States required to report data every 5 years on surplus animals
 - 2017, 2022, 2027, ...
- Belgium: data gathered by the three regions through
 - ethical commissions (info from labs)
 - registered breeders

Belgium's surplus animal numbers (2022)

- **489 768 surplus animals reported in Belgium**

- Breakdown:

- Mice: 88.58%
- Zebrafish: 7.81%
- Domestic fowl: 1.73%
- Other species: small percentages



Comparison with animal procedures (2022)

- **489 768 surplus animals reported in Belgium**
- 457 222 animal procedures reported in Belgium
- Ratio between surplus animals and animal procedures
 - Surplus animals / animals used in procedure
 - = $489\,768 / 457\,222$
 - ≈ 1.07

Comparison within the EU

- **489 768 surplus animals reported in Belgium**
 - 9 572 759 surplus animals reported in Europe (EU27 + Norway)
 - Wide variation among countries, e.g.:
 - Bulgaria: 110 surplus animals
 - France: 2 765 934 surplus animals
- Presence of large commercial breeders / breeding animals for export
- Conventional breeding vs. breeding genetically altered lines

Comparison over time

	Belgium				
	Surplus animals		Animal procedures		Ratio surplus / procedures
2017	475 769		543 094		0.88
2022	489 768	+2.95%	457 222	-15.81%	1.07

	Europe				
	Surplus animals		Animal procedures		Ratio surplus / procedures
2017 (EU 28)	12 597 816		10 216 446		1.23
2022 (EU 27 + Norway)	9 572 759	-24.01%	8 819 078	-13.68%	1.08

Zooming in on the Belgian data (2022)

- **489 768 surplus animals reported in Belgium**

Why?

- 1) produced during maintenance of an established genetically altered line
 - (382 570 animals or 78.11%)
- 2) produced in the process of creating a new genetically altered line
 - (4 066 animals or 0.83%)
- 3) bred and killed specifically for organ or tissue collection
 - (32 072 animals or 6.55%)
- 4) other reasons
 - (71 060 animals or 14.50%)

Zooming in on the Belgian data (2022)

- **489 768 surplus animals reported in Belgium**

Why?

- 1) produced during maintenance of an established genetically altered line
 - (382 570 animals or 78.11%) → of which 109 972 also used for organ and tissue collection
- 2) produced in the process of creating a new genetically altered line
 - (4 066 animals or 0.83%) → of which 532 also used for organ and tissue collection
- 3) bred and killed specifically for organ or tissue collection
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- 4) other reasons
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Organs and tissues collected from 142 576 surplus animals: 29%

(European average: 17%)

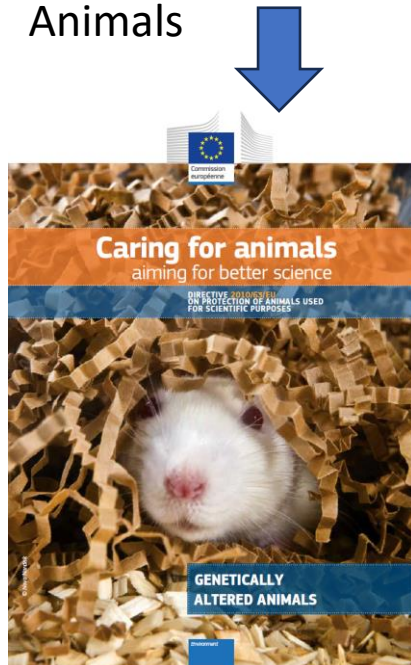
(Europe median: 16%)

Conclusion

- Surplus animals > animal procedures
- Mainly mice
- Maintaining genetically altered lines contributes significantly to the high number of surplus animals
- Surplus is in this context not a synonym for 'excess' or 'leftover'
- High use of surplus animals for collecting organs and tissues

Further information

- https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/chemicals/animals-science_en
 - second EU Implementation Report, SWD(2024)183 final →
 - guidance document Genetically Altered Animals ↓



Thank you

- Questions?
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