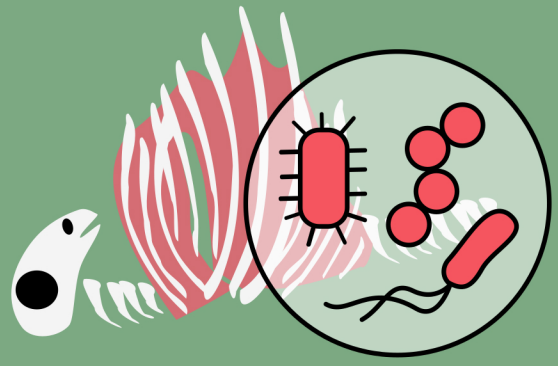


VULTURES AND SANITARY REGULATIONS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

We need vultures

Vultures are often overlooked and perceived as lowly scavengers, yet their scavenging lifestyle that gives them a bad reputation makes them so important for ecosystems, nature and society.



Also known as nature's cleanup crew, vultures do the dirty work of removing rotting carcasses, helping keep ecosystems healthy and likely limiting the spread of disease.

Let's not forget how vultures can help livestock keepers save money since they can rapidly consume animal remains, eliminating the need for a carcass disposal service!

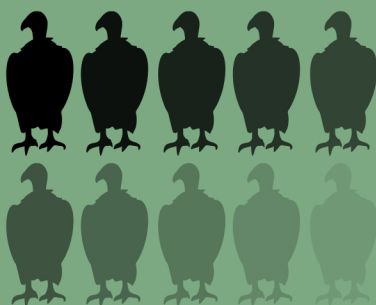


But sanitary regulations in the European Union (EU) have complicated matters in recent years.

The impact of EU sanitary regulations on vultures



The outbreak of mad cow disease (BSE) in the EU led to a restrictive sanitary regulation (EC 1774/2002) that prohibited the abandonment of dead livestock in extensive farming in the field.



Due to the decrease in food availability, vulture populations suffered a drop in breeding success, an increase in mortality of young individuals and a halt in population growth.

To mitigate these negative consequences, in 2011, the EU approved a regulation (EC 142/2011) that allowed farmers to leave some carcasses in extensive systems, with Spain leading the way as the best-practice example.



The LIFE RE-Vultures project analysed the practices of EU sanitary regulations to improve vulture feeding conditions and food availability in Bulgaria and Greece.

Vulture restaurants in the Rhodope Mountains

The project then implemented supplementary feeding practices in the Rhodope Mountains to primarily benefit the Cinereous and Griffon Vulture populations. In Greece, the project introduced feeding methods adapted to different species and less intensive feeding sites operated by local livestock breeders, deterring the gathering of many birds together, therefore, minimising competition among vultures.

The project builds feeding sites in compliance with European directives and national veterinary legislations, following these requirements:

- Authorisation granted by competent authorities
- Accessibility for food delivery
- Fence installation to prevent mammals from entering the site
- Enough space for landing and take-off