

France pledges to end chick culling in 2022

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German animal rights activists throw toy chicks into a fake shredding machine to protest the killing of male chicks.

France will outlaw the culling of male chicks in the poultry industry in 2022 after years of protests from animal welfare activists, Agriculture Minister Julien Denormandie said Sunday.

Millions of male chicks are killed after hatching every year, most often by being shredded or gassed with [carbon dioxide](#), because they do not produce [eggs](#) and do not grow as large as females.

Farmers say no practical and affordable ways exist to tell a chick's sex in the egg at mass production facilities, and an EU directive from 2009 authorises shredding as long as it causes "immediate" death for chicks less than 72 hours old.

But opponents denounce unnecessary cruelty and point to improving techniques for finding males before they hatch.

"As of January 1, 2022, all poultry hatcheries will have to have installed or ordered machines letting them learn a [chick](#)'s sex in the egg," Denormandie told the daily Le Parisien.

"2022 will be the year when shredding and gassing of male chicks ends in France," he said, saying the law would prevent the killing of 50 million male chicks every year.

The state will provide a financial aid package of 10 million euros (\$11.8 million) to help farmers buy the necessary equipment, he added.

The move comes after Germany said in January that it would also ban the controversial practice next year.

Switzerland banned the shredding of live chicks last year, but still allows them to be gassed.

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