



During the forced feeding stage, the liver increases in size and weight, ultimately reaching 7 to 10 times its original size. The gain in liver weight is accompanied by an 85% increase in the duck's live weight.

This obesity affects the ducks' behaviour; they become less active and spend more time asleep. The ducks also start to pant more in order to discharge the additional warmth generated by the high-energy feed. Ducks do not possess sweat glands and must therefore release any excess heat via panting. The 2 to 4% mortality rate during the 2-week forced feeding stage is as high as during the 12-week rearing period.

In addition to the behavioural and physiological arguments, the ethical aspect also weighs heavy due to the fact that the ducks are force fed.

The risk of animal welfare being adversely impacted during the forced feeding stage is extremely high. For this reason, the Flemish Animal Welfare Council does not recommend waiting for the results of the aforementioned research, but rather implementing a ban on forced feeding with immediate effect.

Specifically, this means a ban on new companies employing forced feeding for the production of foie gras and phasing-out measures (with a view to full economic compensation) for existing companies.

Footnote:

*The Belgian Farmers' Union, ABS and Andibel do not wish to endorse this opinion based on the principle that free enterprise must be safeguarded.*