

## Network on Animal Health and Welfare Minutes of the 15th meeting

**Held on 26-27 June 2018, Parma, Italy  
(Agreed on 08 July 2018)**

### Participants

- **Network Representatives of Member States (including EFTA Countries):**

Country	Name
Austria	---
Belgium	Joel Loir
Bulgaria	Madlen Vasileva
Croatia	Tomislav Mikus
Cyprus	Yiola Iacovou
Czech Republic	Richard Wallo
Denmark	Else Enemark
Estonia	David Richard Arney
Finland	Taina Mikkonen
France	Clara Marce
Germany	Michael Marahrens
Greece	Katerina Marinou
Hungary	Anna Zsófia Oszoli
Ireland	Niall O'Nuallain
Iceland	Thora Johanna Jónasdóttir
Italy	---
Latvia	Rudite Varna
Luxembourg	----
Netherlands	Nanda Ursinus
Norway	Dean Basic
Poland	Przemyslaw Cwynar
Portugal	----
Slovakia	Zuzana Hurníková
Spain	Teresa Villalba
Sweden	Karin Olsson
Switzerland	Liv Sigg
United Kingdom	Rebeca Garcia

### Participants from pre-accession countries

Country	Name
Albania	----
Bosnia And Herzegovina	Armin Colakovic
FYROM	Biljana Smilenovska
Montenegro	Aleksander Stamatovic
Serbia	Marko Stojiljkovic
Turkey	Yasin Şen

- **Experts**

**Members of AHAW Panel:** Virginie Michel, Antonio Velarde

- **Hearing Experts:** Celia Malhere (FR)

- **Observer:** Maria Garcia

- **European Commission:**

Unit F2: Desmond Maguire, Vasco Antunes (via videoconference on 26th June 2018)

- **EFSA:**

ALPHA Unit: Denise Candiani (Chair), Alessandro Broglia, Frank Verdonck, Nikolaus Kriz (Head of ALPHA Unit)

## **1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

The Chair welcomed the participants.

Apologies were received from Austria, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Romania and Slovenia.

## **2. Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was adopted without changes.

## **3. Agreement of the minutes of the 14th meeting of the AHAW Network held on 14-15 May 2018, Parma**

The minutes were agreed by written procedure on 29 May 2018 and published on the EFSA website.

## **4. Exchange of information**

### **4.1. EFSA presentation of the recent work on Animal Welfare**

A presentation was given about the most recent work carried over by EFSA in the field of Animal Welfare. In particular, Network members and observers were reminded about the scope and legislative framework of EFSA's Networks. EFSA's networks consist of nationally appointed EU MS organisations with expertise in the fields covered by the network. They are established within the frame of EFSA's Management board decision (MB 18 03 10-item 7 doc 6) in accordance with art. 22(7) and 23 (g) of Reg. No 178/2002/EC. Their aim is to facilitate scientific cooperation in the field of EFSA's mission. The AHAW Network is composed by about 30 members and 10 or more observers, in average, and is chaired by EFSA staff from the AHAW Team. The format of the meeting is such that a first session of the meeting is dedicated to the exchange of information between EFSA and MSs, whereas the second part is dedicated to a specific topic that is selected yearly prior to the meeting.

Recent EFSA work focused on the animal welfare at slaughter. In 2013, EFSA has produced guidance on the assessment criteria for studies evaluating the

effectiveness of stunning interventions regarding animal protection at the time of killing. EFSA is therefore assessing new or modified stunning methods that are

submitted to the Commission by private business operators. At the end of 2017, EFSA delivered its opinion on the use of low atmosphere pressure system for stunning of poultry and concluded it provides a level of animal welfare at least equivalent to that ensured by the currently allowed methods. EFSA is currently finalising a work to update this guidance with view to the methodology for demonstration of the equivalence in terms of welfare outcomes with the existing approved stunning methods.

In addition, EFSA hosts the coordination of the National Contact Points (NCP) for the Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing. The second NCP meeting was held in October 2017 and the discussion focussed on the scientific and technical aspects relating to the approval of slaughterhouses, scientific opinions on guides to good practice, recommendations in relation to inspections and audits. Also, a common template for the certificates of competence of slaughterhouse operators was developed to be used by national competent authorities in a harmonised way amongst EU Member States.

#### **4.2. MS presentation**

A presentation from France was discussed about specific aspects of implementation of EC Reg 1099/2009. In particular, the following points were discussed: i) methods for checking the stunning equipment effectiveness, ii) methods for stunning o poultry of more than 5 Kg, iii) role of animal welfare officer and iv) use of CCTV in slaughterhouses.

Updates from NL, UK, HR were given about their management of stunning equipment. With respect to the role of animal welfare officer, the EU Commission Unit F2 representative stated that reports are available from FVO including all information about the role of the officer. Finally, national guidelines are published in UK and available on the internet where it is clarified that CCTV equipment is not a replacement of the inspector, but it's used to reinforce the role of the inspector. In Belgium the use of CCTV is not mandatory.

#### **4.3. Presentation of the European Animal Welfare Reference Centre**

Legal background for the establishment of the European Animal Welfare Reference Centre is EU Reg 625/2017 on official controls. The scope of the centre is to provide scientific and technical expertise, develop animal welfare indicators, develop methods of assessment and improvement, support scientific and technical studies, promote training in Member States and non-EU Countries and ultimately disseminate research findings and technical innovations. The first centre will be dedicated to the welfare of pigs, being this a priority for the enforcement of EU Directive 120/2008. In particular, competent authorities need long term support in this field. Following a call for proposals from the EC, the proposal from Wageningen (NL), Aarhus (DK) and FLI (DE) was selected and the centre was assigned. The Commission is preparing the appropriate forms and systems to formalise the Contract. The first contract covers 2018, and aims to

agree with MSs on the approach the Centre will take. In 2019-2020, there will be a second period dedicated to development of networks.

A discussion was then held on the possible ways the centre can support MSs. MSs posed questions about:

- Possibility that other MS visit experimental units for pigs organised by the Centre: to be clarified as soon as the Centre organisation will be finalised. It was clarified that as soon as a programme for the Centre will be prepared, MSs will be informed through different channels (e.g. BTSF, other trainings etc);
- Risk of conflict with national policies: the Centre programme will be focused on exchange of information related to policy implementation. The Centre will organise courses to farmers, but also to officials about policy implementation. EC Unit F2 informed that there are 2 countries that are already implementing the pig directive on a routinely basis;
- Support from national reference centres: the coordinated assistance is a task of the centre and a national supporting board will be created (MSs might be invited to create a network). In this respect, MSs commented that small countries might not have a national reference centre.

#### **4.4. Discussion on implementation of COM REC 336/2016 and enforcement of Directive 2008/120/EC and 98/58 (on pigs)**

The EC Unit F2 representative presented (via video) the summary of outcomes from audits related to implementation of COM REC 336/2016 and to the application of Council Directives 2008/120/EC and 98/58/EC over a three year period (2017-2019). Overall aim is the avoidance of routine tail docking and the provision of enrichment material.

Five audits were performed (NL, ES, DK, IT, DE), four of which are published. In overall, estimates for tail docking are 98.5-100% (i.e. done on a routine basis). Measureable compliance criteria were inadequate in most cases and the enforcement action was variable.

Member State were requested to submit Action Plans on Directive 2008/120 and 98/58 by Jan 2018. A preliminary Action Plan assessment was performed: 24 out of 26 action plans were received (2 delayed) and 21 out of 24 were assessed. 20 plans proposed improvements and there was a wide variation in plan scope, details and deadlines. The major improvements in compliance criteria reported were enrichment material, cleanliness, thermal comfort and air quality. Most of MSs will proceed to enforcement in late 2018 or beginning of 2019.

Next steps are the finalisation of the action plan assessment, the review of MS compliance. MS will be informed on request for updates and clarifications. Measures taken by the EC relate to dissemination of Good Practice through e.g. BTSF training on pigs aligned with SANTE Work Plan, liaison with AW Ref Centre, contribution to DG AGRI consultation on revised CAP, TAILS team visits.

A session on sharing of experiences and practices related to implementation of COM 336/2016 from MSs was then held. MSs discussed about difficulties rising from the implementation attempts and about solutions and best practices. Some MSs presented their Action Plans. In the Netherlands, the EC audit was held in May 2017 and concluded that there is still a need for the development of a national strategy to reduce routine tail docking. In the Dutch action plan, for the

compliance criteria communication campaigns for farmers were organised about enrichment material as well as instructions and guidelines for inspectors were developed. For thermal comfort and air quality, new enforcement procedure was put in place based on scientifically validated criteria, resource- and animal-based measures (in collaboration with WUR – University). For the on-farm risk assessment on tail biting, a protocol and checklist were developed and it was tried in 15 pilot farms. The results will be used for development of instructions, guidelines and for the enforcement strategy. The approval of the on-farm Risk Assessment protocol is foreseen by the third quarter of 2018 whilst the implementation of criteria in regular inspections by 2019. In Estonia, compliance criteria for the implementation of COM 336/2016 were fulfilled, two presentations were held for pig producers and one for agricultural consultants for dissemination of the policy, a questionnaire/checklist is in preparation and a website is under construction. The provision of straw as enrichment material for pigs is largely discussed with view to the recent ASF outbreaks and investigation on other materials are being performed. In Latvia, the Competent Authority prepared the Action plan in collaboration with the Pig Breeders Association Board and Ministry of Agriculture, competent authorities have informed pig producers about the EC Commission initiative and future actions and an action plan has been sent to Commission. Animal Welfare experts from Baltic States had a meeting in May 2018 with the purpose of harmonizing actions and plans in the Baltic States. Also in Latvia discussions are held about other enrichment material than straw or different methods for straw storage due to the ASF outbreaks.

#### **4.5. Exercise on “Identification of elements for risk assessment related to on-farm killing”**

An exercise was performed in a second session of the meeting. Aim of the exercise was to define at a high level what methods are available to perform on-farm killing per each species and their associated welfare outcomes. Two separate exercises were held for i) on-farm killing for disease control (e.g. Avian Influenza outbreaks in poultry) and ii) on-farm killing for welfare reasons (e.g. surplus piglets, lame cows).

Doctor Celia Malhere presented the recent experience in France with on-farm killing of poultry (several species) due to outbreaks of Avian Influenza (2016-2017). She presented the epidemiological situation and strategies, depopulation methods, prospects and need for the future. Doctor Antonio Velarde presented some examples from the experiences in Spain for on-farm killing of pigs and cattle for welfare reasons. Details and outcomes of the exercise are published in a separate event report on the EFSA webpage dedicated to the AHAW Network.