

Network on NCP for EC Regulation 1099/2009 Minutes of the 3rd meeting

**Held on 22 23 October 2018, Parma
(Agreed on 06 November 2018)**

Participants

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

| Country | Name ¹ |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Austria | Katrina Eder |
| Belgium | Ester Peeters |
| Bulgaria | Silvia Peeva |
| Cyprus | --- |
| Croatia | Branka Bukovic Susic |
| Czech Republic | Richard Wallo |
| Denmark | --- |
| Estonia | David Arney |
| Finland | Satu Raussi |
| France | Clara Marce |
| Germany | Michael Marahrens |
| Greece | Katerina Ntontorou |
| Hungary | --- |
| Ireland | O'Nuallain Niall |
| Italy | Alessandra Raucci |
| Latvia | Iveta Kocina |
| Lithuania | --- |
| Luxembourg | Carlo Georges |
| Malta | --- |
| Netherlands | Marien Gerritzen |
| Poland | Krystyna Pedrakowska |
| Portugal | --- |
| Romania | Adina Ciurea |
| Slovakia | Zuzana Hurnikova |
| Slovenia | Tea Dronjic |
| Spain | Antonio Velarde |
| Sweden | Charlotte Berg |
| United Kingdom | Richard Aram |
| Iceland | Kristin Gudlaugsdottir |
| Liechtenstein | --- |

| | |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| Norway | Cecilie Marie Mejdell |
| Switzerland | Peter Jacob |

- **Hearing Experts**

Domitilla Pierucci (IT)

- **European Commission:**

Stanislav Ralchev (DG SANCO)

- **EFSA:**

Denise Candiani (chair): ALPHA Unit

Alessandro Broglia: ALPHA Unit

Frank Verdonck: ALPHA Unit

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

Apologies were received from Cyprus, Denmark, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal and Liechtenstein.

The UK Member State representative participated via webconference.

2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Agreement of the minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Network on NCP for EC Regulation 1099/2009 held on 18 October 2017, Parma.

The minutes were agreed by written procedure on 03 November 2017 and published on the EFSA website.

4. Topics for discussion

4.1. DG SANTE activities on protection of animals at killing

The European Commission (Stanislav Ralchev, DG SANTE, Unit G2 'Animal health and welfare') provided an overview of the work and actions to improve animal welfare at slaughter and killing. He presented the elements of a new Commission mandate to EFSA about slaughter and killing for reasons other than slaughter for all species (see 4.2.). Dr Ralchev also presented the deliverables prepared in the frame of a DG SANTE project on development of educational materials on the protection of animals at the time of killing. Factsheets were produced including best practices related to slaughter of animals in small slaughterhouses and on-farm killing for different purposes. They are available into 22 EU official languages and were distributed to the EU Member State competent authorities. The factsheets and an informative video can be found at the link:

https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare/practice/slaughter_en

MS requested further information related to: i) the possibility of printing the factsheets for further distribution and use in slaughterhouses – the Commission representative answered that several copies of the factsheets were sent to the

MS competent authorities; however, factsheets are downloadable from the website and printable; ii) the possibility of printing only parts of the factsheets depending on the fact that according to national legislation parts of the factsheets might be illegal in some MS - the Commission representative answered that copyright rules should be checked and it would be good to send a request to the Commission; iii) it was clarified that in the factsheet about on-farm killing animal categories are not differentiated; iv) the factsheet on slaughter without stunning was not produced.

4.2. EFSA's ongoing mandates on animal welfare

EFSA presented the ongoing work in the field of animal welfare and precisely:

1) Mandate on welfare of rabbits received from the European Parliament:

Welfare of farmed rabbits was recently raised and discussed in an EU Parliament meeting and a "Motion for a European parliament resolution on minimum standards for the protection of farm rabbits" (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A8-2017-0011&format=XML&language=EN>) was developed by the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development in January 2017. In 2005 and 2006, EFSA has published scientific opinions on i) the impact of housing and husbandry systems on the health and welfare of farmed domestic rabbits and ii) welfare aspects of the main systems of stunning and killing of farmed deer, goats, rabbits, ostriches, ducks and geese, respectively. The EU Parliament therefore considered it opportune to request EFSA to update its scientific opinions on different aspects of health and welfare of rabbits kept for meat production in Europe. Two scientific opinions will be developed: one on health and welfare of rabbit farmed in different production systems, including organic production systems. This will include all aspects related to housing, rearing and nutrition and the effects thereof on rabbit health, welfare and behaviour. Interactions between the different areas will also be addressed. The second opinion will focus on stunning and killing methods for rabbits. This will include the indication of the most suitable method for stunning and killing of rabbits, including indicators to assess unconsciousness and death of the animals. The deadline is December 2019. MSs requested some additional information: i) whether transport of rabbits was to be covered in the opinions – EFSA clarified that it was not in the scope of the mandate; ii) a recent report about rabbit farming produced by the Commission – EU Commission representative clarified this was related to findings from audits.

2) two mandates on slaughter and killing received from the European Commission:

The OIE has decided to revise its Terrestrial Animal Health Code and in particular the two chapters on Slaughter of animals (Chapter 7.5) and Killing of animals for disease control purposes (Chapter 7.6).

The Commission would like to request EFSA to review the scientific publications provided in its previous opinions of 2004 and 2006 to provide a sound scientific basis for the future discussions at international level on the welfare of animals in the context of:

- slaughter i.e. killing animals for human consumption (mandate 1)
- other types of killing i.e. killing for other purposes than slaughter (mandate 2).

These are the Terms of Reference of the two mandates:

Mandate 1: Scientific opinion on the slaughter of animals (killing for human consumption).

This will cover two categories of animals: i) free moving animals (cattle, buffalo, bison, sheep, goats, camelids, deer, horses, pigs, ratites) and ii) animals in crates or containers (i.e. rabbits and domestic birds). It will cover the following processes and issues: arrival of the animals, unloading, lairage, handling and moving of the animals (free moving animals only), restraint, stunning, bleeding, slaughter of pregnant animals (free moving animals only), emergency killing (reasons and conditions under which animals have to be killed outside the normal slaughter line), unacceptable methods, procedures or practices on welfare grounds.

For each process or issue in each category, EFSA will:

- Identify the animal welfare hazards and their possible origins (facilities/equipment, staff),
- Define qualitative or measureable criteria to assess performance on animal welfare (animal based measures),
- Provide preventive and corrective measures to address the hazards identified (through structural or managerial measures),
- Point out specific hazards related to species or types of animals (young, with horns, etc.)

Mandate 2: Scientific opinion on killing of animals for other purposes than slaughter. This will cover the cases of large scale killings which take place in case of depopulation for disease control purposes and for other similar situations (environmental contamination, disaster management, etc.) outside slaughterhouses and the killing of unproductive animals that might be practiced on-farm (day-old chicks, piglets, pullets, etc.). It will cover the following processes and issues: handling, restraint, stunning, killing, unacceptable methods, procedures or practices on welfare grounds.

Considering the number of animal species to be covered by these two mandates, the AHAW Panel will divide the work into four species-specific scientific outputs per each mandate, leading to a total of eight outputs to be delivered at different timings starting from September 2019 and ending in December 2020. The scientific opinion on domestic birds will be developed as first while the remainders will be initiated one after the other so to develop the opinions partially in parallel.

4.3. Exchange of information among MSs

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. Their aim is to facilitate scientific cooperation in the field of EFSA's mission.

The following topics were discussed for exchange of information:

Question 1 (Sweden)

Are slaughterhouse employees holding a veterinary degree also required to take the animal welfare at slaughter course and get a certificate of competence to be able to work with live animals there, like everybody else, or are veterinarians expected to have achieved that competence during their training and hence exempt from the requirement?

The representative from Slovenia explained that in her country the prescriptions from Reg 1099 were better specified: regardless of school degree, only a person who can prove education on stunning and killing can be appointed. They organise specific trainings for official veterinarians too. In Ireland, competences achieved through trainings are assessed. In Spain, a vet degree is not necessary and there is no need for a certificate of competence. In France neither.

Question 2 (Belgium)

Inspections in slaughterhouses – In Flanders, ante-mortem control is done by veterinarians that are permanently present. We would like to shift to unannounced visits of veterinarians (driving from one slaughterhouse to another). Opinion or experiences from other Member States?

In Sweden it is compulsory to check the animals on an individual basis. In Slovenia there are not unannounced inspections but they do it for transport and since then they found more infringements.

Question 3 (Belgium)

Use of nitrogen foam to euthanise piglets on farm (in a transparent box). Opinions or experiences from other Member States?

In Sweden a project is starting but for the moment is about foam only (no gas). In general, if commercial companies want to test a new method, they have to ensure to deliver the same level of welfare. In the Netherlands, an ongoing project in collaboration with DEFRA is running where foam is showing promising results. In Germany some experiments were carried out on surplus non survival piglets, but EEG records were not performed so it is not known yet when the loss of consciousness occurs.

Question 4 (Belgium)

CO₂ stunning of pigs in slaughterhouse: Dip-lift or carrousel? Which system is most humane?

The Swedish representative explained that in her experience the effect on welfare depends much on the conditions applied. However, in the dip-lift piglets are forced making it less acceptable from the welfare point of view. The carrousel is generally preferred but is influenced by the speed by which the pigs are brought to the system.

The Dutch representative explained that it depends on the applied gas concentration; there is no difference in terms of welfare. It also depends on the duration of the induction phase (Germany), however in the dip-lift higher concentrations of CO₂ are reached quicker (Spain). Finally, a representative commented that for pigs group access to the system is favourable and that

welfare is compromised in those systems where the access is individual (Switzerland).

Question 5 (Belgium)

Indicators to assess consciousness in rabbits after electrical stunning: is absence of breathing a good indicator?

For electrical stunning, the best indicators are tonic/clonic seizures and absence of corneal reflex.

4.4. Sharing of documents and information among NCP with Microsoft 365

EFSA set up a common shared space on the Microsoft 365 platform for sharing information between NCP such as guides to good practice, opinions, training material, and other existing resources. It can be found at this link:

<https://efsa815.sharepoint.com/sites/TeamNCPNetworkReg1099-2009?e=1:e1d04e829386477fa9da39761feb0394>

Following the discussion held at the last meeting of October 2017, a common template for the certificates of competence was created based on the information collected. For the meeting of 2018 an attempt to collect manufacturer's instructions was done; however, no instructions were collected due to lack of availability from MSs. MSs explained that a lack of share of instructions exist within the slaughterhouses in their countries and in general only big slaughterhouses have the instructions. It was also clarified that the role for the scientific support is to review the material and not to provide it. Instructions should be provided by manufacturers.

In preparation of the meeting of next year, it was agreed to share and upload on the corresponding folder of O365 the national Standard Operating Procedures. The scope is to produce a checklist of SOPs, namely how the competent authorities can supervise the put in place of SOPS from the slaughterhouses. Each MS representative will translate his/her checklist and during the meeting a common template for the checklist in English will be produced.

Related to the other folders of the O365 platform, it was discussed that the use of the folder "Relevant meeting" is a good idea and that in general any new initiative at MS level should be shared. For the "Training material", in Sweden some trainings are organised in English for slaughterhouse operators. However, in most countries those trainings are not the role of the competent authorities but are organised by private companies.

It was agreed to keep the exchange via email as a quick method to request information among MSs.

4.5. Exercise on "Hazard identification and ranking for poultry at slaughter"

The second part of the meeting was dedicated to the exercise on "Hazard identification and ranking for poultry at slaughter". An event report was produced including the outcomes from the exercise and is published on EFSA's

website. The report includes information on what hazards should be addressed first during the phases of the slaughter process to ensure proper animal welfare.

5. Date for next meeting

Next meeting will be held in fall 2019 (date to be fixed).