

Parma, 15 May 2012

**TECHNICAL HEARING ON THE HAZARDS TO BE COVERED BY INSPECTION OF MEAT FROM
FARMED GAME**

(EFSA-Q-2012-00278)

Minutes of the technical hearing on meat inspection of farmed game

Parma, 15 May 2012

EFSA / BIOHAZ

Participants

WG Experts	Niels Bandick, John Griffin, Michael O'Keeffe, Leena Oivanen, Ivar Vågsholm, Helene Wahlström.
Hearing Experts	Francesco Burlini (Italian ostrich farmer association), Arja Helena Kautto (Swedish national food agency), Radim Kotrba (Federation of European deer farmers associations, FEDFA), Alejandro Martinez Requena (Catalan veterinary services), Christian Riciputi (Italian union of poultry and rabbit breeders), Michele Schiavitto (Association of Italian rabbit farmers), Edgar Wullinger (Federation of veterinarians of Europe, FVE)
EFSA:	Michaela Hempen, Marta Hugas (chair), Ernesto Liebana Criado, Pablo Romero Barrios (BIOHAZ) Giusi Amore, Minerva Laranjo Gonzalez, Pia Makela, Elena Mazzolini, Anca Stoicescu, Boryana Tineva (BIOMO) Silvia Ines Nicolau Solano (CONTAM)

Agenda

Welcome and apologies, round the table introductions
Declarations of interest
Adoption of the agenda
Purpose of the meeting and background to the mandate
Presentation of FEDFA on deer
Presentation of FVE on wild boar/deer

Presentation of Italian rabbit farmers association on rabbits and hares
Presentation of Catalan Veterinary Services on rabbits and hares
Presentation of Italian Ostrich Farmer Association on ostrich
Presentation of Swedish Food Administration on reindeer
Questions and answers on the information provided by hearing experts
Closing of the meeting

1. Welcome and apologies

EFSA chaired the technical hearing and welcomed the participants. Around the table introductions took place.

2. Declarations of interest

No new declarations of interest were made apart from those already declared in the Annual Declaration.

3. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

4. Purpose of meeting and background to the mandate

EFSA briefly presented the background to the meat inspection mandate and described the main objectives of the technical hearing i.e. to provide WG experts with an opportunity to get information from stakeholder representatives about slaughtering practices and meat inspection in farmed game, based on the answers to a previously distributed questionnaire. The chair explained that the information that the stakeholder organisations provided as a reply to a questionnaire will be included in an event report. This report will be published by the end of 2012 and might be used as reference in the opinion on the public health hazards to be covered by inspection of meat in farmed game, especially for information that was not available elsewhere.

5. Presentation of FEDFA on deer

The information provided in the presentation is based on a questionnaire that FEDFA sent to representatives from 16 EU MS and Norway and Switzerland. FEDFA represents more than 10,000 farmers in these countries. The number of deer farms is highest in Germany, followed by Austria, the other countries having far less farms. In Europe, approximately 280,000 deer (mainly red and fallow deer) are farmed, and less than half of them are slaughtered annually. Stunning and killing is done on farm. Stunning is performed by either free bullet or captive bolt. Ante-mortem is carried out within 72 h before stunning. Evisceration is done on-farm if they have the facilities, otherwise in the abattoir.

6. Presentation of FVE on wild boar/deer

Ante-mortem inspection of farmed deer as well as wild boar is carried out within 72 hours before stunning and killing. Slaughter is carried out on farm if they have appropriate facilities; otherwise the killed animals are transported to the abattoir for slaughter. The type of slaughter is dry slaughter; evisceration is done similarly to domestic livestock (cattle/pigs). Meat inspection is done according to Reg (EC) 853/2004. Main findings are organoleptic anomalies and parasites (hypodermia, gastrointestinal parasites).

Wild boar can only be slaughtered on farm or in domestic pig abattoirs that are licensed to slaughter wild boar, this includes slaughter of wild boars at different times than domestic pigs.

It was also mentioned that the number of animals slaughtered per farm per day is very low (one to two animals per day).

7. Presentation of Italian rabbit farmers association on rabbits

Rabbit meat production in Europe was 478,620 tons in 2007. In Europe, Italy has the highest production, followed by Spain and France. Intensive farms usually have a closed cycle, i.e. farms keep the animals from birth until slaughter. Some producers use all-in-all-out, other produce continuously. The slaughterhouses are specialised for rabbits, some slaughter more than one million rabbits per year. The slaughter process is similar to that for poultry. The hind feet are cut after post-mortem (PM) inspection. Packaging plants usually process both rabbit and poultry meat.

8. Presentation of Catalan Veterinary Services on rabbits and hares

Hares are usually hunted, not farmed. Data presented is therefore representing rabbit meat production. The official veterinarian uses the following four protocols: inspection of infrastructure and equipment of slaughterhouses, inspection of slaughterhouse processes and products, inspection of self-control at abattoir (prerequisites, HACCP), and inspection of animal welfare conditions. PM inspection of all carcasses of one lot is carried out if a) there is a large variability in the animals of the same lot (e.g. in size or health condition), b) findings in AM inspection, c) they are breeding rabbits (diseases occur more frequently) or d) requirements of the protocols are not fulfilled.

PM inspection is carried out for 5% of carcasses and viscera of each lot if the abattoir fulfills all prerequisites and requirements described in the four protocols of inspection.

9. Presentation of Italian Ostrich Farmer Association on ostrich

Ostriches are produced on small to medium scale, in Italy about 5,000 animals per year. They are usually not slaughtered on farm but transported to the abattoir in trucks with individual compartments to avoid injury. At the abattoir the animals stay for at least 12-24 h at lairage. Electrical stunning is practiced. The slaughter is similar to that of cattle, done in authorized cattle abattoirs.

10. Presentation of Swedish Food Administration on reindeer

Animals are free ranging in a certain area both during summer and winter. Transports are done only with approved lorries and smaller vehicles. In Sweden, reindeer meat production varies between 1,100 and 2,000 ton per year, in Finland it varies between 2,200 and 2,500 ton. FCI is the same as for cattle. PM inspection used is the same as for sheep.

11. Discussion

The presentations were followed by a session of questions and answers, where the experts had the opportunity to seek clarification about a number of issues in the areas of biological and chemical hazards. Some of the issues discussed included the importance of clearly defining farmed game, specifically describing why reindeer, rabbits and ostriches are considered in this context despite the differences in their production as compared to farmed deer and wild boar. In general, it seems that these animal species have much less health concerns than domestic animal species, since they are kept in extensive husbandry (except rabbits). Farmed deer is not only produced for venison production but also for trophy, i.e. same individual animals are reared in enclosed areas and then released for hunting. They are then considered hunted animals and are no longer under the stricter regulations for farmed game (e.g. no ante-mortem inspection).
