

## **DELIVERABLE**

**DL.4.2.1 – REVIEW REPORT ABOUT SOME MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR TRAINING COURSES ON ANIMAL WELFARE ASSESSMENT USEFUL DURING OFFICIAL CONTROLS IN BROILER FARMS.**

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## 1. Introduction

The legislation requires training activities in animal welfare for official inspectors, in order to overcome the differences on education and professional experience between inspectors. To harmonise the quality, relevance and practicability of the training among Member States (MS), there is a need for minimum standards of training activities on poultry welfare.

Last year EURCAW-Poultry-SFA [reviewed the training material](#) in use at BTSF, of some MSs or at other levels (e.g., national and regional training courses) for the three first priority areas (deliverable [D.4.1.1](#)). Material from BTSF training courses is a good starting point, as it describes animal based indicators (ABIs), mostly from the Welfare Quality project (2009). National training provides deeper information about some resource based indicators (RBIs) and management based indicators (MBIs), but not for all of them. Furthermore, there is not enough information to ascertain if the methodology for their assessment is fully covered.

This document contains the minimum standards that MS might have into consideration when developing training courses for official controls at broiler farms. Training is meant as further training or continuing education for inspectors who work with animal welfare official controls of broiler. For example, training can include calibration between inspectors, seminars, lectures on new legislation, the biology behind the legislation, and communication.

The diversity of the different MS on how training is organized has to be taken into account: hence, “standards” for training will not fit all national needs and need to be adjusted to the different contexts in the EU MS.

## 2. Suggestions for training standards

### 2.1. Preparation of the training

There are some general aspects essentials when planning training activities (regardless of the topic) which should be considered<sup>1</sup>:

- Optimal number of participants: between 8 and 15.
- Duration: 1- 3 days.
- Learning goals should be prepared and adapted to national expectations and needs.
- Teachers should be appropriate to the topic and the target group, and can be linked with universities or professional training companies, but also could be inspectors, veterinarians, industry specialists or come from farmer’s organizations.
- Provide attendees material in advance to prepare the training (e.g. read a text, prepare a case study from practice, etc.).
- Alternate type of activities (e. g. theory in the morning, practice in the afternoon; combine lectures and working groups).
- Train from 9:00-17:00. During the evenings is time to socialise and let people catch up with their emails.
- Language should fit to the competences of the students.
- Always evaluate the course.

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<sup>1</sup> Based in the work of EURCAW-Pigs in this topic.

## 2.2. General information and learning goals

General information about broilers anatomy, physiology, behaviour and animal welfare could be provided as introduction to any training course. Depending on the aim of the training course and the audience background, some general topics can be addressed in more depth and can be linked with specific requirements or concerns. When planning the course introduction lectures, the following basic learning goals and knowledge should be considered, and adapted to the aim of the course:

- Anatomy and physiology: digestive system, vision and light perception, feathers and plumage, thermal comfort, genetic selection.
- Biology and behaviour in relation to aggression and hierarchy, comfort behaviours (foraging, preening, stretching, wing flapping, dust bathing), resting behaviour.
- Health and biosecurity
- Relevance of the incubation period (factors that affect welfare during this phase, for example temperature, humidity, egg storage) and first week of age (imprinting, nutrition, environment).
- Animal welfare definition. Practical aspects about handling and restraining poultry.
- EU-legislation (Protection of animals kept for farming purposes, Minimum standards for the protection of chickens kept for meat production, National legislation when appropriate).
- Description of the main production systems in the EU or national context.

## 2.3. Examples in relation to specific training

Once the general information has been addressed, the training course can focus on specific legal requirements or indicators useful for official control. The following sections provide examples of learning goals, activities and links of knowledge, as a sort of standard for different topics of specific training.

ABIs should be taken into account whenever possible. BTSF training courses address in detail some ABIs, but not in all their editions and not all of them. RBIs and MBIs could be also useful regarding some legal requirements. More information about this can be found in D.2.1.2. "[Description of the considered validated indicators among the identified ones and associated methodology](#)", from EURCAW-Poultry-SFA.

### 2.3.1. Specific training of behavioural and health indicators

#### Learning goals

- Knowledge about indicators for the assessment of the behaviour and health and their validity, reliability, and feasibility.
- Training in the assessment of the behaviour and health related indicators, i.e. skin lesions, body condition, hock burns, foot pad dermatitis or toe damage, walking ability, other pathologies (eye pathologies or respiratory infections, enteritis), mortality. Some ABIs can be collected at slaughterhouse, but they reflect the farm conditions i.e. breast blisters, hock burns, foot pad dermatitis, ascites, dehydration, septicaemia, hepatitis, pericarditis, abscess, cellulitis, joint lesions, scratches.
- Knowledge about the scoring of these indicators and classification between a moderate or severe (if applicable).

- Guidelines for an aligned selection of animals for inspection under different conditions.
- Tools for calibration and practical training in assessing the indicators.

### Examples of activities

Lectures explaining the ABIs related to behaviour and health can be organized, with photos of the different scoring methods. It will be start with a description of the ABIs and reference photos for each scoring category. Afterwards, photos will be exposed, and the trainees will be asked for individually assessment. Afterwards, the scoring will be discussed among the participants as a repeatability exercise. The deviation among the participants will be finally discussed to achieve the golden standard.

Iceberg indicators such as walking ability and mortality have been described in the EURCAW-Poultry-SFA deliverable (see below “Examples of links to knowledge”) together with their validity, reliability and feasibility. Experiences from the use of these ABIs can be also shared and discussed.

An on-farm visit could be useful to discuss the scorings with real examples. Groups of 3-4 people can work together and discuss about the same animal.

### Examples of links to knowledge

- Welfare Quality assessment protocol for broilers (2009), available on-line here: <http://www.welfarequalitynetwork.net/media/1293/poultry-protocol-watermark-6-2-2020.pdf>
- From EURCAW-Poultry-SFA, [List of candidate iceberg indicators for priority areas 1&2 to be developed on farm with description of the method, validity, reliability and feasibility.](#)

## 2.3.2. Specific training of resources and management

### Learning goals

- Knowledge about specific RBIs and MBIs for the assessment of the legislation.
- Knowledge about ABIs available for the assessment of resource related requirements (for example, feather cleanliness).
- Practical knowledge about how to score the different RBIs and MBIs (for example, dust test sheet).
- Knowledge about available tools to assess RBIs and MBIs, how to use them and how to maintain or calibrate them.

### Examples of activities

Lectures explaining the RBIs, MBIs and ABIs are needed in first place.

Iceberg indicators for broilers such as feather cleanliness and litter quality have been described in the EURCAW-Poultry-SFA deliverable (see “examples of links to knowledge”) together with their validity, reliability and feasibility. Experiences from the use of these ABIs could be shared and discussed.

Hands-on suggestions from professionals are also a practical way to learn. Some experienced inspectors could give suggestions about how to check thermal comfort, for example. The session should include their practical experience about how to check temperature, humidity, ventilation and the ABIs related to thermal comfort (panting, huddling, shivering). Technical details about different ventilation systems could be

necessary to understand how to check their functioning or which locations on the house are better to assess the ABIs. Case studies could be also a good option to show different realities.

Gas measurements (ammonia, carbon dioxide) and dust level are also good topics to address with hands-on suggestions. The session should include the description of the available devices for assessment, how they work and how to calibrate them. EURCAW-Poultry-SFA will develop a factsheet during 2022 about the methods for the assessment of dust level on farm, that could be used and delivered.

An on-farm visit can be useful to understand the complexity of the systems and to check the use of the available tools.

### Examples of links to knowledge

- Welfare Quality assessment protocol for broilers (2009), available on-line here: <http://www.welfarequalitynetwork.net/media/1293/poultry-protocol-watermark-6-2-2020.pdf>
- EFSA; de Jong I, Berg C, Butterworth A, Estevez I, 2015. Scientific report updating the EFSA opinions on the welfare of broilers and broiler breeders. External scientific report. Supporting Publications 2012:EN-295, 116pp. Available on-line: <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/en-295>
- From EURCAW-Poultry-SFA, [List of candidate iceberg indicators for priority areas 1&2 to be developed on farm with description of the method, validity, reliability and feasibility.](#)
- From EURCAW-Poultry-SFA: [Method for assessing gas concentrations in broiler farms.](#)
- From EURCAW-Poultry-SFA: [Method for assessing light intensity in broiler farms.](#)
- From EURCAW-Poultry-SFA: Report of the study in experimental facilities to ascertain different indicators and methods for broiler chicken welfare under different housing conditions.
- From EURCAW-Poultry-SFA, factsheet about on farm assessment of feather cleanliness.
- From EURCAW-Poultry-SFA: Factsheet about the methods for the assessment of dust level [in prep]

### 2.3.3. Best practices

#### Learning goals

- Knowledge on good practice/tools available for broilers.

#### Examples of activities

A session to share information about good practices or tools will be a good way to update knowledge about relevant topics. Participants can be asked to provide good practices examples from their experience, or companies can be invited to share examples of new standards for relevant topics.

EURCAW-Poultry-SFA is also working to identify potential demonstrators of examples of success and during 2022 is going to prepare factsheets describing best practices.

#### Examples of links to knowledge

- From EURCAW-Poultry-SFA, DL 3.3.1: A list of the identified potential demonstrators of examples of success that is selected for visits.
- From EURCAW-Poultry-SFA, factsheets describing the good practices for each example of success [in prep].

#### 2.3.4. Communication

##### Learning goals

- Knowledge about challenges in relation to communication with farmers during inspection.

##### Examples of activities

A group work session about challenges in relation to communication with farmers during inspection (introduction of the topic, group work and discussion). The trainees will work in small groups to share experiences on how good or bad communication has affected the inspections. Questions to discuss, proposed by EURCAW-Pigs in their training materials: *do you have examples of miscommunication? What contributed to it? What worked in this or other situations? How could it have gone better? Have you encountered situations that were violent or hostile? How did you deal with it? Are there tools that you feel would better equip you for conflict resolution in your work?*

EURCAW-Pigs has developed reports on this specific topic that could be used for discussion (see below “Examples of links to knowledge”). They propose to include a lecture from an occupational psychologist or other expert in communication to provide practical tools for better communication and conflict resolution.

##### Examples of links to knowledge

- EURCAW-Pigs; Authors Overstreet, K., Anneberg, I., 2020. *Farmers, inspectors and animal welfare: possibilities for change. A Review*. Available on-line here: <https://edepot.wur.nl/514920>
- EURCAW-Pigs; Authors Overstreet, K., Anneberg, I., 2020. *Improving communication – relevant tools and resources*. Available on-line here: <https://edepot.wur.nl/531172>
- Anneberg, I; Vaarst, M; Sandøe, P; 2013. *To inspect, to motivate – or to do both? A dilemma for on-farm inspection of animal Welfare*. Available on-line here: <https://edepot.wur.nl/531433>
- Anneberg, I; Vaarst, M; Tind Sorensen, J; 2012. *The experience of animal welfare inspections as perceived by Danish livestock farmers: A qualitative research approach*. *Livestock science*, Volume 147, Issues 1–3, August 2012, Pages 49-58.
- EURCAW-Pigs: Video-recorded interview with inspector focusing on challenging situation during welfare inspection in slaughterhouses, EURCAW-Pigs website [forthcoming].

### 3. Conclusions

To have a good grounding about poultry behaviour and physiology is important to understand the Directive and to provide answers and guidance to the farmers in relation to the legislation and the needs of their animals. However, specific materials are essential to deliver a good training course. The examples described in this report can be used according to the needs and relevance for inspections of broilers in the MS.

Participative activities such as working groups, case-studies, hands-on suggestions, etc, are highly recommended. They provide the opportunity to discuss between colleagues the open norms and interpretations. Calibration in the use of ABIs is also an important part of the learning goals to achieve harmonization between inspectors. Without tools to harmonize criteria, inspectors could feel isolated in their decisions about compliance of the legislation. Tools for better communication are also crucial to feel confidence and to solve positively the conflicts that might occur.