

## **DELIVERABLE**

**DL.4.2.2. – REVIEW REPORT ABOUT SOME MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR TRAINING COURSES ON ANIMAL WELFARE ASSESSMENT USEFUL DURING OFFICIAL CONTROLS IN LAYING HENS.**

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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). Some lectures give details of resource based indicators (RBIs) and management based indicators (MBIs), but these are mostly on furnished cages, which is no further updated. National training provides deeper information about RBIs, 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 alternative systems for laying hens. Training is meant as further training or continuing education for inspectors who work with animal welfare official controls of laying hens. 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 laying hens 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, reproductive system, vision and light perception, feathers and plumage, thermal comfort, genetic selection.
- Biology and behaviour in relation to aggression and hierarchy, injurious feather pecking, comfort behaviours (foraging, preening, stretching, wing flapping, dust bathing), nesting behaviour, 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, beak trimming).
- 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 laying hens, National legislation when appropriate, the 'End the Cage Age' initiative).
- 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. comb condition (abnormalities or pecking wounds), skin lesions, body condition (keel prominence), feather integrity (plumage condition on the back of the head and general plumage condition), foot pad lesions or toe damage, keel bone damage, other pathologies (enlarged crops, eye pathologies or respiratory infections, enteritis), mortality.
- 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 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 pecking damages, keel bone damage 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 will 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 laying hens (2019), available on-line here: [http://www.welfarequality.net/media/1294/wq\\_laying\\_hen\\_protocol\\_20\\_def-december-2019.pdf](http://www.welfarequality.net/media/1294/wq_laying_hen_protocol_20_def-december-2019.pdf)
- Laywel project: <https://www.laywel.eu/>
- Assurewel project: <http://www.assurewel.org/layinghens.html>
- Temple, D.; van Niekerk, T.; Weeks, C.; Manteca, X. (2017). *Guidelines feather pecking Hennovation*. Hennovation Project, Feather Pecking extension guidelines. Available on-line here: [https://www.fawec.org/media/com\\_lazypdf/pdf/Guidelines\\_Feather\\_Pecking.pdf](https://www.fawec.org/media/com_lazypdf/pdf/Guidelines_Feather_Pecking.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](#).
- From EURCAW-Poultry-SFA, factsheet about severe feather pecking [in prep].

## 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.
- Practical knowledge about how to score the different RBIs and MBIs.
- 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.

For the training of some RBIs (e.g. perches availability), a group discussion will help to share experiences and examples (e.g. about materials in use, location of the perches and interpretation about what aspects to consider for the assessment of a perch). Each participant will provide some photos to be presented and discussed. Participants will be distributed in groups to discuss and agree about e.g. what can be considered a suitable perch and how to measure their length. A member of each group should report back to the plenary session one example of agreement and one of disagreement in the group.

Hands-on suggestions from professionals are also a practical way to learn. Some experienced inspectors will give suggestions about how to assess specific requirements, for example thermal comfort. 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 can be provided to understand how to check their functioning or which locations in the farm are better for the assessment of the ABIs. Case studies will be also a good option to explain different realities.

Gas measurements (ammonia, carbon dioxide) and dust level are also appropriate topics to be addressed 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 laying hens (2019), available on-line here: [http://www.welfarequality.net/media/1294/wq\\_laying\\_hen\\_protocol\\_20\\_def-december-2019.pdf](http://www.welfarequality.net/media/1294/wq_laying_hen_protocol_20_def-december-2019.pdf)
- EFSA (2015). Scientific opinion on welfare aspects of the use of perches for laying hens. EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Animal Welfare (AHAW). EFSA Journal 13(6):4131, 69 pg. Available on-line here: <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/4131>
- From EURCAW-Poultry-SFA: [Method for assessing gas concentrations in alternative systems for laying hens.](#)
- From EURCAW-Poultry-SFA: [Method for assessing light intensity in alternative systems for laying hens.](#)
- 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 laying hens.

#### 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

- Best Practice Hens project: <https://bestpracticehens.eu/>
- 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 laying hens 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.