

DELIVERABLE

**DL.4.2.3 – REPORT ABOUT MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR TRAINING COURSES ON
ANIMAL WELFARE ASSESSMENT FOR OFFICIAL CONTROL OF WATERBATH
STUNNING OF BROILERS**

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1. Introduction

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

Poultry welfare is measured using animal-based (ABI), resource-based (RBI), and management-based indicators (MBI). Until recently, training courses on animal welfare focused on the assessment of animals' environment (*i.e.*, RBI) and management (*i.e.*, MBI). It was presumed that if the resources and management were pertinent, animals were protected. However, science shed light that assessing RBI may not reflect high welfare standards since they were not reflecting the animal experience itself. For this reason, a change in paradigm has driven to an overall assessment system for animal welfare based on observations of the animal (*i.e.*, ABI). Hence, it is known that ABI are a more valid measure of well-being although it is necessary an integrated approach in which RBI and MBI are also considered. However, the description of the method of evaluating animal welfare through these indicators is still a pending issue in most courses that EURCAW-Poultry-SFA revised (*e.g.*, Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF), national training courses of some Member States) available in deliverable [D.4.1.1](#).

This document describes the minimum standards that Member States may have into consideration when developing training courses for official controls to protect welfare of broilers in slaughterhouses that use waterbath stunning. Training is meant as further training or continuing education for inspectors who work with animal welfare official controls of broilers at slaughterhouse. For example, training can include not only the indicators for the assessment of animal welfare but also the methods and the harmonisation of the checks among inspectors, and communication workshops.

2. Suggestions for training standards

2.1. Preparation of the training

Some key general aspects when developing training activities should be considered from the beginning by the entity/person delivering the training:

- Optimal number of attendees: between 8 and 15.
- Duration: 1 to 3 days.
- Language used should be clear and understandable by all participants.
- Lecturers/trainers should be appropriate to the topic and the target group. They can be linked to universities or professional training companies, but also could be inspectors, veterinarians, or scientific researchers in this field.
- Provide in advance the training material to the attendees (*e.g.*, slide show, read a text, prepare a case-study from practice, etc.).
- Alternate types of activity (*e.g.*, theory in the morning, practice in the afternoon; combine lectures and working groups).
- Training schedule from 9:00 to 17:00. Evenings should serve to let the attendees socialise.
- At the end, receive feedback from attendees to evaluate the course.

2.2. General information and learning goals

The course is expected to provide participants with practical knowledge and skills on:

- Main references to the European Union legislative requirements for broiler welfare at the time of killing.
- The waterbath stunning method and the scientific basis for proper stunning and slaughter of broilers.
- Assessment of the state of consciousness using the most relevant ABI.
- Methods for the assessment of the state of consciousness in broilers.
- Sample size calculation to assess efficiency of stunning.
- Tools for calibration and practical training in assessing the ABI for the state of consciousness.
- Identifying risk factors of inefficient stunning and electro-immobilisation in broilers.
- Actions to improve welfare within the identified risk factors and indicators to assess improvements.
- Knowledge about challenges in relation to communication with business operators during inspection.

2.3. Activities

Lectures explaining the ABI related to the state of consciousness should be split according to the stage: before and during bleeding. For each stage, it should start with definitions of the outcomes of the most relevant ABI and reference videos showing outcomes of consciousness. Afterwards, additional videos can be shown, and the trainees should be asked for individually assessment. Afterwards, the scoring can be discussed among the participants as an inter-observer repeatability exercise. The deviation among the participants should be finally discussed to achieve the golden standard.

A visit to a slaughterhouse can be useful to understand the complexity of the systems and gain practical skills on the assessment of the ABI of the state of consciousness in broilers and risk factors. Groups of 3-4 people can work together and discuss about the same animals.

Hands-on suggestions from professionals are also a practical way to learn. Some experienced inspectors could recommend how they do the evaluation in a slaughterhouse. The session should include their practical experience about how they check the key electrical parameters, time of exposure in waterbath, wet shackles, and the level of bird's submersion in the waterbath among others as well as the ABI related to the state of consciousness.

Case studies are also a good choice to show different slaughterhouse realities. Exercises to practice how to calculate sample size according to the objective of the checks can be proposed.

A session to share information about good practices or tools is 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.

A group work session about challenges in relation to communication with business operators during inspections (introduction of the topic, group work, and discussion) should be proposed. The trainees can 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, are a good start: *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?

2.4. Links to knowledge

- 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 at: <https://edepot.wur.nl/531433>
- Anneberg I, Vaarst M, Sorensen JT. 2012. The experience of animal welfare inspections as perceived by Danish livestock farmers: A qualitative research approach. *Livest. Sci.*, 147:49-58.
- EFSA (European Food Safety Authority). 2013. Scientific Opinion on monitoring procedures at slaughterhouses for poultry. *EFSA Journal*, 11(12):3521. Available at: <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.2903/j.efsa.2013.3521>
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- 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>
- EURCAW-Pigs: Video-recorded interview with inspector focusing on challenging situation during welfare inspection in slaughterhouses, EURCAW-Pigs website [forthcoming].
- EURCAW-Poultry-SFA. Description of the considered validated indicators among the identified ones and the associated methodology, state of consciousness after waterbath stunning of broilers and turkeys. Available at: https://sitesv2.anses.fr/en/system/files/EURCAW-Poultry-SFA-D2.1.2-WBS_v2.pdf
- EURCAW-Poultry-SFA. Factsheet: https://sitesv2.anses.fr/en/system/files/Factsheet_waterbath_broiler.pdf

3. Conclusions

Having a solid ground about the scientific basis for proper stunning of broilers, the risk factors of ineffective stunning and the most relevant indicators to assess the state of are key goals to protect broilers welfare at the time of killing. Inspectors should also be able to calculate sample size to assess efficiency stunning and the frequency to do the checks.

Participative activities such as lectures, working groups, hands-on suggestions and case-studies are highly recommended. These activities provide the opportunity to discuss between colleagues the methodology used. Harmonisation on criteria between inspectors when using ABI is also a fundamental part of the learning goals to suppress hesitation during the evaluations. Tools for better communication are also crucial to feel confident and to solve positively the conflicts that might occur.