

DELIVERABLE

DL.1.1.1: REPORT OF THE EU NETWORK MEETING

*The second EU-network meeting between representatives of Competent Authorities (CAs) and the EU Reference Centre for Animal Welfare of Poultry and other small farmed animals (EURCAW-Poultry-SFA), with the participation of DG-SANTE, two EFSA members, two EFTA representatives and members of the EURCAW-Pigs and EURCAW-Ruminants&Equines as observers took place online on October 2021, 26-27, on 2 * 0.5 days. This meeting was the occasion to present the objectives of the Centre, the actual and the past and present work programme, and the Centre's work since its nomination. Furthermore, it permitted to discuss potential future priority areas of work, identify possible collaboration at the national level, and identify the main needs and expectations of CAs.*

Participants

In total 76 participants, from 23 EU Member States (MSs) participated, including 51 delegates from CAs, five from DG SANTE, and 16 from the three EURCAWs.

Meeting agenda:

Tuesday, 26 October

08:45 Testing of communication equipment

09:00 Welcome and meeting aims (Virginie Michel- EURCAW-Poultry-SFA, and Kirsten Vornhagen - DG SANTE)

09:15 Presentation of EURCAW-Poultry-SFA (Virginie Michel- EURCAW-Poultry-SFA)
Objective, Missions, Priority areas, Target bodies

Reporting of 2020-2021 activities until now, future perspectives for 2021-2022, and topic of discussion by activity

09:30 Activity 1: Coordinated assistance (Virginie Michel, Emilie Nehlig, and Antonio Velarde - EURCAW-Poultry-SFA)

10:00 Activity 2: AW indicators, methods for the assessment, and methods of improvement (Antonio Velarde and Anja Riber - EURCAW-Poultry-SFA)

11:00 Break

11:15 Activity 3: Scientific and technical studies (Antonio Velarde, Frédérique Mocz, Alexandra Contreras, Aranzazu Varvaro, Anja Riber - EURCAW-Poultry-SFA)

12:30 Recap of the day: questions, suggestions, remarks

12:45 Closure of the day

Wednesday, 27 October

08:45 Testing of communication equipment

Reporting of 2020-2021 activities until now, future perspectives for 2021-2022, and topic of discussion by activity

09:00 Activity 4: Training courses (Aida Xercavins, Alexandra Contreras, and Antonio Velarde - EURCAW-Poultry-SFA)

9:30 Activity 5: Dissemination of research findings and innovation (Emilie Nehlig, Virginie Michel, and Antonio Velarde - EURCAW-Poultry-SFA)

MSs feedback on specific topics/cases/issues and discussions

10:00 Success story: [Death on arrival in a Dutch slaughterhouse for poultry](#) (Marieke Hartog, NL)

10:30 Good practices: The handling of poultry before transport (Yvonne Goos, NL)

11:00 Break

11:15 Topics of discussions proposed by MSs

- *Topic 1 The usage of wintergarden of fast-growing broilers*
- *Topic 2 Keel bone fractures in laying hens*
- *Topic 3 Rearing and slaughtering of male (laying) chicks*
- *Topic 4 The implementation of pecking and scratching areas in furnished cages*
- *Topic 5 The light regime for ducks*
- *Topic 6 Establishing a working group on electrical stunning/water bath stunning in poultry*
- *Topic 7 Alternatives to beak trimming and to the removal of toes, spurs, and comb in breeders (egg and broiler production)*
- *Topic 8 In the context of the 'End of the Cage Age', concern about Floor Housing for Quails (mostly egg farms)*

12:20 Recap of the day: questions, suggestions, remarks

12:30 Wrap up (Kirsten Vornhagen - DG SANTE and Virginie Michel- EURCAW-Poultry-SFA)

12:45 Closure

Morning 1: October 26, 2021

The meeting started at 09:00 and Virginie Michel, Coordinator of the EURCAW-Poultry-SFA, welcomed the participants and introduced the agenda.

Kirsten Vornhagen welcomed everybody, spoke about the European Green Deal adoption, including the Farm to Fork strategy. In the future, the European Commission will revise the European legislation at farm, during transport, and ban cages.

Virginie Michel presented the aim and activities of the EURCAWs (*PDF presentation slides 5-12*). The Centres aim at supporting the enforcement of the legislation on animal welfare, which is one of the Commission's priorities. The EURCAWs provide technical support and coordinated assistance to national CAs in carrying out official controls in the field of animal welfare. The Centres also contribute to the dissemination of good practices on animal welfare in the EU. In particular, by providing scientific and technical expertise, carrying out studies and developing methods for improving and assessing the welfare of animals.

The three Centres have five core activities in common:

- ✓ Coordinated assistance - Central contact point for Competent Authorities, networking and prioritising effort.
- ✓ Animal welfare indicators – indicators and methods for assessment and improvement.
- ✓ Scientific and technical studies – Provision of knowledge on priority areas and demonstration of good practices.
- ✓ Training courses - evaluation of training needs and develop standards for effective training.
- ✓ Dissemination of research findings and innovations

The four actual EURCAW-Poultry-SFA priority areas were presented:

- 1) Welfare of broilers on farm.
- 2) Welfare of laying hens in alternative systems.
- 3) Assessment of welfare during electrical waterbath stunning for broilers and turkeys.
- 4) From 2021 onwards: Welfare of rabbits on farm with a special focus on alternative systems

The EURCAW-Poultry-SFA Team was briefly introduced, and what the Centre is and is not.

Reporting of 2020-2021 activities until now, future perspectives for 2021-2022, and topic of discussion by activity

The past and present Work Programmes were presented, for Activities 1-4, with a focus on what was achieved by the Centre, and what is planned for 2022.

Activity 1: Coordinated assistance by Virginie Michel, Emilie Nehlig, and Antonio Velarde (*PDF presentation slides 14-25*).

Issues discussed:

Sub-activity 1.2: Technical assistance, query service

Both the CAs and the EURCAW-Poultry-SFA members are getting used to the query procedure. It has been clarified that the Centre's aim is not to interpret the legislation, but to give scientific and technical opinion.

Activity 2: AW indicators, methods for the assessment, and methods of improvement by Antonio Velarde and Anja Riber (*PDF presentation slides 27-45*).

Issues discussed:

Sub-activity 2.2: Identification of 'Iceberg' Indicators

- Footpad Dermatitis (FPD) was discussed as a possible iceberg indicator.
- EURCAW-Poultry-SFA encouraged the MSs to ask queries or contact the Centre.
- Open public consultation on the revision of EU animal welfare legislation (available here: https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12950-Animal-welfare-revision-of-EU-legislation_en). The consultation period is 15/10/2021 to 21/01/2022.
- Discussion about which gas devices are used in other MSs. An exchange of information arose.

Activity 3: Scientific and technical studies by Antonio Velarde, Aida Xercavins, Frédérique Mocz, Alexandra Contreras, Aranzazu Varvaro and Anja Riber (*PDF presentation slides 48-71*).

Issues discussed:

Sub-activity 3.3: Examples of good welfare practices

- Re-stunning of turkeys at slaughter was discussed.
- The Centre asked about the age restriction of the slaughterhouses videos. The Centre proposed to keep the age restriction unless delegates think the opposite. This was discussed again on the 27th.

Activity 4: Training courses by Aida Xercavins, Alexandra Contreras and Antonio Velarde (*PDF presentation slides 73-79*).

Issues discussed:

Sub-activity 4.3: Develop course material for specific topics

The CAs delegates are interested in the future webinars presented.

The Turkey welfare on farm as a priority topic was discussed briefly here, and more in depth the next day:

- Blunting of the beak, keel bone damage, and waterbath stunning were proposed as topic to work on.

Closure of the day at 12:12 CET.

Morning 2: October 27, 2021

The meeting started at 09:00 with the presentation of Activity 5, followed by the MS success story (*Death on arrival in a Dutch slaughterhouse for poultry by Marieke Hartog, NL*), and a good practice (The handling of poultry before transport by Yvonne Goos, NL). Topics proposed by EURCAW-Poultry-SFA and MSs were then discussed altogether.

Reporting of 2020-2021 activities until now, future perspectives for 2021-2022, and topic of discussion by activity

The past and present Work Programmes were presented, for Activity 5, with a focus on what was achieved by the Centre, and what is planned for 2022.

Activity 5: Dissemination of research findings and innovation by Emilie Nehlig, Virginie Michel and Antonio Velarde (*PDF presentation slides 84-89*).

Issues discussed:

Sub-activity 5.1: Maintenance and implementation of the Centre website

- The newsletter should inform readers about what is new on the Centre's website. It should focus on EURCAW-Poultry-SFA, to let readers know what is done with the European Commission.
- An email should be sent to CAs NCPs when something new is published online as they don't have time to check the website every week.

Sub-activity 5.3: Development of a knowledge base with relevant documents and other items

Several MSs were agreeing that the knowledge base will give access to useful information.

Sub-activity 5.4: Translation of the documents on the Centre website in national languages

- According to several MSs, the translation of factsheets in every national language is really important. It is often an issue for farmers or inspectors to access this kind of document when they don't speak English.
- The translation service of the Commission is only for the European Commission documents. The EURCAWs have to find a way to translate by their own means their documents.
- EURCAW-Poultry-SFA needs the help of the MSs to translate in the other languages.

- There is a discrepancy because the Centre has a goal of dissemination, but the European Commission is not implicated in the translation in national languages. Therefore, significant documents are not accessible for field people in certain countries.
- The EURCAW-Pigs is facing the same problem. A solution would be that MSs translate in their own language and the Centres check, but these translated documents will not be official.
- EURCAW-Poultry-SFA has asked if the national CAs could verify the translation in their own national languages once it is done by the Centre. Several MSs replied yes.

Slaughter videos age restriction for was discussed again.

Agreement on no restriction for the slaughter videos on the factsheet was found.

MSs feedback on specific topics/cases/issues and discussions

- **Success story:** [Death on arrival in a Dutch slaughterhouse for poultry](#) by Marieke Hartog, NL (*PDF presentation slides 91-110*).

Issues discussed:

- decrease of the death on arrival
- look at who is the organiser of the transports
- data collection and centralized database
- **Good practices:** [The handling of poultry before transport](#) by Yvonne Goos, NL (*PDF presentation slides 111-120*).

Issues discussed:

- Cost increases.
- Ante mortem inspection on the farm in MSs.
- Control of catching process in the Farm in MSs.
- ILVO project (Belgium): “keepone”; cost and benefits.
- Possibility to provide the catching guideline to EURCAW-Poultry-SFA.

Topics of discussions proposed by the centre (PDF presentation slide 124)

- *Topic 1 Specific needs for webinars for the next work programme.*
- *Topic 2 Laying hens: characteristics of perches for fulfilling hens needs*
- *Topic 3 Alternatives to beak trimming and to the removal of toes, spurs, and comb in breeders (egg and broiler production).*
- *Topic 4 How to consider area under platforms?*
- *Topic 5 About what turkey topics are interesting MSs.*

Issues discussed:

- Several MSs have a major interest in topic 2 on perches, and topic 3 on beak trimming alternatives.
- MSs would like the Centre to work on:
 - Beak trimming (broilers, turkeys).

- FPD assessment (broilers, turkeys).
- Transport of turkeys.
- Postmortem indicators in slaughterhouse.
- Stocking density for turkeys.
- Lighting regimes and quality for turkeys.
- Turkeys slaughtering.
- Assessment of the on-farm welfare at slaughterhouse level for turkeys.
- Management and mutilations in turkeys.

Topics of discussions proposed by MSs (PDF presentation slides 125-131)

- *Topic 1 The usage of wintergarden of fast-growing broilers*
 - Can wintergarden be counted as a usable area?
- *Topic 2 Keel bone fractures in laying hens*
 - New knowledge is needed.
- *Topic 3 Rearing and slaughtering of male (laying) chicks*
 - Several MSs would like to know how to rear and slaughter the males from layer lines, as there are differences between the broilers and layers directives. There is a gap of knowledge on this subject.
 - Paper: Rearing Male Layer Chickens: A German Perspective, <https://doi.org/10.3390/agriculture8110176>
- *Topic 4 The implementation of pecking and scratching areas in furnished cages*

In Finland, those areas are not available constantly. How do other MSs interpret that? How often must they be distributed (day, week?)?

 - France has worked on that for many years with Anses. Cellular concrete or untreated wood were proposed. This is quite new. France will know more about that in a few months, as an instruction to local competent authorities is ongoing.
- *Topic 5 The light regime for ducks*

MS is struggling with the light regime for ducks in reference to animal welfare. Animal welfare impact? Minimum lux standard? Literature on that?

 - https://www.researchgate.net/publication/40117249_Welfare_of_ducks_in_European_duck_husbandry_systems.

Table 2 of the paper describes something on lighting schedules in ducks: “Welfare of ducks in European duck husbandry systems| European duck meat production is based on the use of Pekin, Muscovy and Mule duck genotypes that vary in their behavioural and physiological... “
- *Topic 6 Establishing a working group on electrical stunning/water bath stunning in poultry*
- *Topic 7 In the context of the ‘End of the Cage Age’, concern about Floor Housing for Quails (mostly egg farms)*
 - Sweden have a very small production of quails, but they keep them on the floor, not allowed in cages.
 - Quails are not allowed as production animals in the Netherlands.
 - EFSA is starting a scientific opinion including the welfare of quails

- *Topic 8 (from the first morning discussion): manual guide for official control in poultry slaughterhouses including welfare indicators (GR)*
- Greece would like to be informed if other MSs have issued manuals or guides for the official control in poultry slaughterhouses including assessment of welfare indicators.

Other topics discussed:

- How to decrease FPD in chicken?
Farmers are responsible for seeking advice. Farmers in Ireland are trialling different litter types. Areas that are at risk of getting wet, so maintenance of drinkers, entry of pipes to houses are examples of areas they are looking at.
- Interest for information and devices used by MSs for measuring ammonia, CO₂, and light. Official veterinarians in Ireland use the Draeger device. When the device works, it is working well. However, they can be temperamental. Recalibration is regularly needed.
- Interest for nest characteristic in furnished cages. *The Centre propose to the MS to send a query (e.g. fulfilling the needs of animals for lying).*
- Spain has a procedure in slaughterhouses for detecting insufficient on-farm animal welfare (In Spanish, currently under review)
https://www.aesan.gob.es/AECOSAN/docs/documentos/seguridad_alimentaria/gestion_riesgos/Procedimiento_deteccion_post_mortem_bienestar_pollos_engorde.pdf

Wrap-up (Kirsten Vornhagen - DG SANTE and Virginie Michel- EURCAW-Poultry-SFA)

Kirsten Vornhagen had no specific further point to raise. She thanked the delegates for their active participation. The Centre's main tasks are to support MSs implementing legislation, provide network building, and exchange information. She thanked the EURCAW-Poultry-SFA for the quality of the exchanges with participants and for the work update. This contributes helping improve animal welfare all over the EU. She looked forward to further discussion.

Dr Virginie Michel thanked all participants for joining and active participation. The Centre hopes to meet physically next year for the third meeting. She recommended MSs to send queries, share knowledge experience, and problems.

Virginie Michel closed the meeting at 12:22 (CET).