

DELIVERABLE

WRITTEN SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION AND OUTCOMES OF THE ANNUAL EU NETWOK MEETING

Annex 1: Roadshows' ideas and potential needs

Annex 2: Meeting satisfaction survey



The fifth 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 one DG SANTE unit G5 representatives, three EFSA representatives and three EFTA representatives as observers, took place online on October 2024, 01-02, on 2*0.5 days. This meeting was the occasion to present the Centre's work performed since the last meeting in 2023. Furthermore, it permitted participants 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 49 participants, from 22 EU Member States (MSs) participated, including 29 delegates from EU MSs CAs, one from DG SANTE, and 13 from EURCAW-Poultry-SFA.

Meeting agenda:

Tuesday 01/10/24

09:00 – 09:05: Welcome (V. Michel)

09:05 - 09:15: Welcome DG SANTE (DG SANTE)

09:15 - 09:20: EURCAW-Poultry-SFA introduction (V. Michel)

09:20 – 09:50: Results of the survey conducted on the EURCAW-Poultry-SFA's activities (activity 1) (*E. Nehlig*)

09:50 – **11:50:** Update on the Centre's actual work (activities 1, 2, and 3) (*E. Nehlig, A. Riber, M. Guinebretière, F. Mocz, A. Contreras*)

10:45- 11:05 Break

11:50 – 12:55: Topics of discussion proposed by MSs

13:00: Closure of the first session (V. Michel)

Wednesday 02/10/24

09:00 - 009:05 Welcome (V. Michel)

09:05 – 09:25 Update of the Centre's actual work on training (activity 4) (A. Xercavins)

09:25 – 09:45 Update of the Centre's actual work on Dissemination (activity 5) (E. Nehlig)

09:45 – 10:45 Participative session: males chicks culling banishment in: France (B. Favier), Germany (S. Schreiber), Italy (A. Ferraro), Austria (K. Eder)

10:45- 11:05 Break

11:05 – 12:25 Interactive session:

- Work Programme proposal 2025-2027 (V. Michel, A. Riber, F. Mocz, A. Velarde, A. Xercavins)
- EURCAW-Poultry-SFA Roadshows (A. Velarde)
- EURCAW-Poultry-SFA Community of Practice (CoP) (V. Michel)
- EURCAWs Common work (including results of the survey on guidance of assessment of stunning equipment) (A. Velarde, E. Nehlig)

12:20 – 12:30 wrap up second morning the closure is foreseen at 12:30, if interesting discussion we may prolonged until 13:00 (V. Michel)

12:30: Closure of the meeting (V. Michel)

Day1: October 1, 2024

Welcome words from EURCAW-Poultry-SFA:



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

No questions asked.

Welcome words from DG-SANTE:

Kirsten Vornhagen welcomed everyone and spoke about the European Commission initiatives. The initiative of a pilot project of the Commission to produce a guide for cage-free farms was highlighted. In conclusion, she wished all participants a fruitful meeting and reunion.

No questions asked.

EURCAW-Poultry-SFA Introduction (*PDF presentation slides 6-11*):

Virginie Michel, coordinator of the EURCAW-Poultry-SFA, introduced the 4 EURCAWs.

The four Centres have five core activities in common:

- ✓ Coordinated assistance
- ✓ Animal welfare indicators.
- ✓ Scientific and technical studies
- ✓ Training courses
- ✓ Dissemination of research findings and innovations

The five actual EURCAW-Poultry-SFA priority areas were presented, they concerning the assessment of animal welfare:

- 1. Broiler chickens on farm
- 2. Laying hens in alternative housing systems
- 3. Stunning and killing
- 4. Rabbits on farm, with a focus on alternative housing systems
- 5. Turkeys on farm and during transport

The EURCAW-Poultry-SFA Team was briefly introduced. *No questions asked.*

1. Results of the survey conducted on the EURCAW-Poultry-SFA's activities (activity 1) by E. Nehlig, (*PDF presentation p 12-29*).

Issues discussed:

- The results of the survey will be sent to the Commission to be taken into consideration in the evaluation of the centre.

No chat question asked.

2. Update on the Centre's actual work (activities 1, 2, and 3) by E. Nehlig, A. Riber, M. *Guinebretière, F. Mocz, A. Contreras, A. Velarde (PDF presentation p 30-109).*

Issues discussed:



Technical assistance Q2E service: how to send a query, how to find an answer, last Q2E answers

- No questions asked

<u>Q2E-Poultry-SFA-2023-009</u>: Ad libitum access to water for broiler breeders

- No questions asked

Q2E-Poultry-SFA-2023-011: Pullets rearing in the first weeks in aviary

• No questions asked

<u>Q2E-Poultry-SFA-2024-003</u>: Pullet lighting improvement & <u>Q2E-Poultry-SFA-2024-004</u> Broiler lighting improvement

- No questions asked

<u>Q2E-Poultry-SFA-2023-007</u>: Catching of turkeys in a loose house and Q2E infographic In collaboration with <u>La Chaire bien-être animal</u>, the Centre developed an <u>infographic</u> issued from the Q2E answer: <u>Catching of turkeys in a loose house</u>, which is shown. It can be used as a graphic tool for operators in the field for improved turkey welfare.

 Question (Q) from the chat: Are there efforts to evaluate the catching methods manually and mechanically? Investigations of injuries at the slaughterhouse?
 Answer (A): EURCAW Poultry-SFA is not aware of any studies addressing this topic for turkeys.

The Centre's work, for Activities 2-3, with a focus on what was achieved by the Centre, since last meeting in 2023 was presented.

Issues discussed:

Factsheet: Injurious Pecking in Turkeys

- No questions asked

Factsheet: Footpad dermatitis in Turkeys

- No questions asked

Factsheet: The assessment of plumage damage and emaciation at slaughterhouse in laying hens

- No questions asked

Coffee break

Scientific study on the validity, reliability and repeatability of two visual scoring methods of assessment of the litter quality

- No questions asked

Scientific study in commercial slaughterhouses of rabbits



- Q: is the size of the slaughterhouse was linked to the results.
 A: No. There are other important factors to consider, for example: wetting the head, cleaning of electrode, etc. This will be addressed in the webinar planned for November 2024.
- Q: which would be the maximum stun-to-stick interval?
 A: EURCAW Poultry-SFA recommends the shortest the better, but above 5 seconds there is a high risk of recovering consciousness. A webinar and a factsheet are planned to further develop this information.

Good Practices 3: work, achievements, gather information

- No questions asked

3. Topics of discussion proposed by Member States (PDF presentation p 113-135).

Issues discussed:

The topics proposed by the Member States when they registered to the event were presented. Some were addressed during the presentations; one was not in the remit of the Centre (ABP disposal). The other topics were detailed one by one:

Turkey welfare

A MS would like to talk about turkey welfare. As CA, they have included turkey for an action plan for animal welfare. But there is nothing to be used from the EU. What about others MS? Do you use stocking density? ABI? ...?

A: EURCAW-Poultry-SFA produced documents such as factsheets, best practices and queries. They can be used. Moreover, EFSA will provide end of 2025 a report about turkey welfare.

Two MSs expressed that they do not have specific legislation, but one of them has recommendations about stocking density.

Another MS has a national regulation about stocking density, feeding and drinking space and litter.

A last one expressed that they also have national regulation.

→ Documents will be sent to the Centre who will spread the information to all CAs.

Catching methods for turkeys before transport to the slaughterhouse

The concern MS explained that a new national regulation is effective since January: hematomas and fractures in turkeys should be lower than 3%. However, it is always more. They look on broken wings, legs... But they don't know if they are coming from injuries themselves on the farm or due to catching or due to transport or slaughter? The MS heard that it is better with mechanical catching but no studies were available to confirm it. Sometimes they use a very old system for mechanical catching. Maybe it's the cause for the too high lesions prevalence? Also, gas system used for slaughter, inducing wing flapping, might be a cause of lesions? What the others CAs or EURCAW think?

A: all the outputs from EURCAW-Poultry-SFA were reminded. There is a query recommending how to recognize lesions, but it is difficult to always differentiate where they come from. No comments from others CAs.

Alarm system in case of failure in ventilation system [in broiler chickens]



- Example of Italy (Lombardi) who have an emergency plan. It is difficult to give very specific recommendations, they are really technical specifications. EURCAW can provide indicators of
 - heat stress. But not the technical specifications (i.e., depends on the manufacturers).
 - Q: what backup systems are available and in use in others MS?
 A: a generator is mandatory in some country. Automatic opening of the windows may help but sometimes it is not enough. A MS explained that usually they have an alarm and a backup system presence is part of the checklist of the inspectors.

Dead-on-arrival (DOA) for broiler chickens and laying hens at the slaughter house

- The concerned country explained that in average 0.11%Broilers, 0.29% laying hens are dead on arrival. They have a working group with the poultry sector. They wonder if the %DOA is acceptable or not, comparable or not with others MSs. They see an elevation during colder months, also during hot months.
- Q: Is the distance or waiting time at the slaughter house linked to this?
 - A: the management at the slaughterhouse is also important.

A MS shared a table with %DOA recorded /day: around 200 000 broilers /day -> 0.05 to 0.12% DOA recorded. But they do not record the reason. If the weather conditions are cold during more than 10 days (i.e., <10°C), they take decisions to put curtains on transport and perform constant monitoring. All of that contributes to have low %DOA.

Apparently, there is no consensus on the threshold DOA%, it depends on the country, climatic conditions etc.

Rabbits in alternative (non-cage) systems

No question asked

EURCAW Poultry SFA

Prolonged husbandry of laying hens

 Discussion on the percentage of condemnations. The concern country explained that more than they can see up to 8% of condemnations (not fit for consumption), even more than 15% can be observed in certain cases. This may be due to the ban of beak trimming, or may be due to prolonged life (up to 130 weeks). Inspectors on farms did not see anything suspect about that on the field.

Catching broilers by the legs and upside down

- Exchange on experiences.
- A new paper comparing welfare and economics for different catching methods exist.
- In Belgium: research project on catching (broilers and laying hens) (manual vs. automatic). No differences on birds' condition, but it depends of the indicators you look at. At this time, NGOs push for modification of the way to catch and carry poultry. But nothing is applied for the moment.

Dealing with floor eggs in an animal friendly way (no electrical wires in the corners) *No question asked*

Genetic related welfare issues in broilers (point discussed on 02.10.24)

- Q: sometimes it's difficult to isolates genetic as a cause of welfare issues. It is multifactorial problem. How the others countries deal with that?
 A: probably all countries have the same problem, especially for broilers farms. Different
- commercial alternatives exist to fast growing. It depends on the consumer demands.
- Q: some animals have problems (beaks, legs...): is it due to incubation, or genetic?



A: look back to the hatchery – why there is abnormal chicks? It is a problem of a genotype type? This needs to be investigated. Feedback from hatcheries is necessary for the EU Commission.

Stocking density assessment in Broiler houses

Stocking density is calculated retrospectively.

- Q: how? Does anyone check it during the cycle? How to get the actual average weight of birds at the time of inspection? There are concerns to use farmers devices because they might not be accurate. How the others do?

A: 25 birds are weighted during inspection with manual device (either from farmer or from official vet). Not 100% sure if it is the accurate weight but you can check if in accordance with the genetic performance growth. The numbers of animals is determined according to the records.

Mobile housing requirements for laying hens and broilers

- No time to discuss it
- Enrichment in laying hens- quantity and type
 - No time to discuss it
- Optimum litter management
 - No time to discuss it

How to manage all the information / production of the EURCAW's

- This point was mentioned discussed on day two during the Activity 5 overview.

Closure of the day at 13:00 CEST

Day 2: October 02, 2024

The meeting started at 09:02.

4. Update on the Centre's actual work on training (activity 4) by A. Xercavins (PDF

presentation p 138-142).

No issues discussed. No question asked.

5. Update on the Centre's actual work on dissemination (activity 5) by E. Nehlig (*PDF presentation p 143-150*).

Discussion on positive feedback on the "Scientific Output Overview" webpage and the translations.

Issues discussed:

- Lack of time of the Cas to digest every production from the EURCAWs and needs to help them on this.
- Coordination between NRCs and EURCAWs
- Difficulty to have translations in countries without NRCs or help to deal with the national languages' translation.
- WP mailing to all CAs ASAP to let them organise and anticipate what the Centre will produce

6. Participative session: males chicks culling banishment in Europe by A. Favier (FR), S. Schreiber (DE), K. Eder (AT), A. Ferraro (IT) *(PDF presentation p 151-183).*

Issues discussed:

Males chicks culling banishment in France (B. Favier)



- Discussion was stimulated mainly regarding the ban exclusions. It was discussed if the ban has changed the proportion of brown versus white hens since the possibility of ovo sexing only applies to brown. It was also discussed how the derogation for chicks used as feed for animals was administrated and traced. Questions were noted by the presenter and a follow-up with further answers is expected.
- Using dual purpose breeds was mentioned as an alternative to culling male chicks. The challenges of meeting market standard with these breeds were highlighted as a limitation.

No chat question asked.

Ban on the killing of male layer chicks (S. Schreiber)

- There was discussion on which method for in ovo sexing is "better". Pros and cons of each type of method were listed. The imaging methods are non-invasive and do not require sampling every egg, however, the initial investment in the technology may be greater. It is described that there is often an arrangement between the companies behind these technologies and the hatcheries where the hatcheries essentially pay to lease the machine and pay a fee per egg to the company. This means that the company must guarantee a certain level of precision.
- Discussion on differences in pain perception between mammalian and avian embryos. The
 presenter noted that they are not the scientist who conducted the study but the results
 indicated that it was not possible to completely rule out the possibility of pain past day 12 of
 incubation, therefore the ban was instated from this day (precautionary approach).
- Q: what happens to the male chicks that are not sexed in ovo and terminated?
 A: the organic sector has an agreement: all male chicks are reared and slaughtered in Germany.
 From the conventional sector, hatched males primarily go to other member states where they are reared and slaughtered and meat is marketed.

Chat comment:

 "E. g. in the ecological sector in Germany there are breeding approaches for "dual-use"chicken, to have breeds /crossing better adapted to expectations and needs of the ecological agriculture. If desired more information can be made available via email to the EURCAW-Poultry-SFA, to spread it."

Ban on culling viable chicks in Austria (K. Eder)

- Discussion about the lack of in ovo sexing in Austria.
 Q: Do you believe that the amount of in ovo sexing will increase in the future?
 A: the presenter believes that it will not increase in the future because of the success of raising the males and the need for the chicks as feed for other animals.
- Q: Can hatched conventional chicks be raised in organic production or must they be used for feeding?

A: these chicks are used mainly as feed. The presenter does not think it is allowed to raise conventional chicks in organic production.

No chat question asked.

Plenary session on the ban of culling male chicks in some EU Member States (A. Ferraro)



This led to a larger discussion on similarities and differences between the bans in the different countries. Some countries' bans seem to be more focused on 'killing or not' (e.g., DE, AT) whereas other countries' bans seem more focused on the method (FR, IT) due to negative public perception of maceration (IT). It is mentioned that alternatives to CO₂ like low atmosphere pressure stunning are being investigated.

No chat question asked.

Coffee break

7. Interactive discussions by V. Michel, A. Riber, F. Mocz, A. Velarde, A. Xercavins, (*PDF* presentation p 184-209)

Issues discussed:

Work Programme proposal 2025-27

> Broiler

No question asked.

Laying hens

No question asked.

> Turkeys

No question asked.

Slaughter and killing

Q: when will the scientific study on duck stunning in waterbath will be published? *A: May 2027*

Rabbits

No questions asked.

> Training

No questions asked.

Disseminating research and innovations

No question asked.

EURCAW-Poultry-SFA Roadshows

Padlet results in annex 1

- Discussions about the purpose of the roadshows. Roadshows are meant to be physical meetings between the EURCAW and official veterinarians. Roadshows are giving the opportunities to target specific issues of the visited country and enhance direct links with those



who applied implementation of the EU legislation, on farms, at the time of killing, and during transport. Objectives are: having more direct communication, a better view of the output's documents and the website plus a better knowledge of the EURCAW.

- Q: Who is the target? A:(Official veterinarian inspectors).
- The EU Commission is aware that it's not possible to meet all official veterinarian inspectors, but some of them have the ability to reach other colleagues. DG SANTE asks MSs to cooperate and to welcome EURCAW-Poultry-SFA and discuss specific questions with them.

No question asked in the chat.

EURCAW-Poultry-SFA Community of Practice (CoP)

A participant reminded that a similar space has been tested in the past, but that it was not really used. Advice: think twice before doing it, and do not put too much effort on this activity.

No question asked in the chat.

EURCAWs Common work

- Audio versions in multiple languages: no questions asked
- App for on-field inspectors: no questions asked
- Guidance for the assessment of stunning equipment. CAs were asked whether they would be interested in such an output. Six persons answered in the chat, all stating that it is a good idea. Austria has guidelines on the topic, which can be shared with the EURCAW-Poultry-SFA. No question asked in the chat.

Wrap-up and Conclusions (Virginie Michel- EURCAW-Poultry-SFA)

Virginie Michel thanked all participants and invited them to the 6th annual EU network meeting in Maisons-Alfort, France, in October 2025.

Closure

Virginie Michel closed the meeting at 12:40 (CEST).

A meeting satisfaction survey was conducted. Answers are available in annex 2.

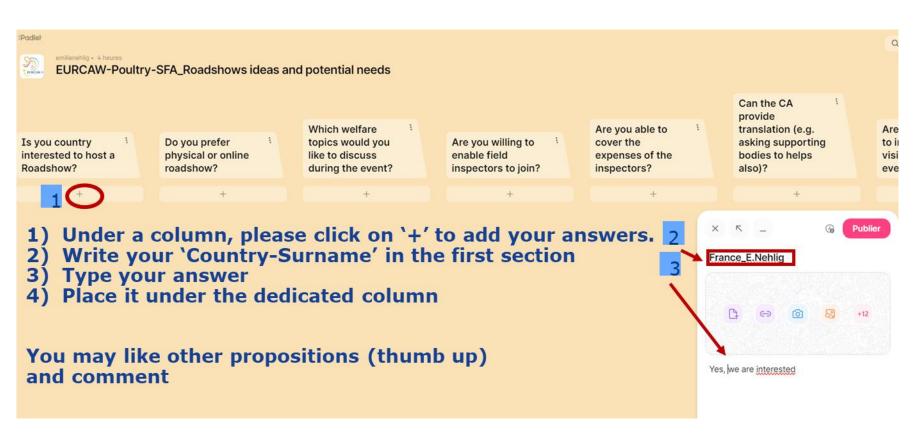


Annex 1: Roadshows' ideas and potential needs



Identify future Roadshows' ideas and potential needs

Instructions:



Results:



Is your country interested to host a Roadshow?	Do you prefer physical or online roadshow?	Which welfare topics would you like to discuss during the event?	Are you willing to enable field inspectors to join?	Are you able to cover the expenses of the inspectors?	Can the CA provide translation (e.g., asking supporting bodies to helps also)?	Are you interested to include a field visit (for physical event)?	Open comments, your expectations:
Yes.	Physical if it's possible to cover the expenses. If not, online meeting	killing for disease control; pullets' welfare; Turkey and duck welfare	Yes.	the expenses of the inspectors it's possible to cover	yes	yes	To improve the animal welfare controls and the knowledge in specific areas.
Yes. (Before I get approval from management, my country would be interested, but we have some constraints regarding the resources).	Due to financial constraints - online.	turkey welfare - all aspects: husbandry and slaughter	yes, it would be done for them	for online that would be possible	lt's not up to me personally	Field visit, yes	Training courses will be good options for inspectors on the spot
Maybe in the future	Online	killing methods in emergency situation, mobile housing of poultry	yes, it is mostly for them	l am not sure	we need to find a solution for the translation and contact our SB to check	Yes, I can organize a field visit	The objective of this activity should be clarified and also the added value of it.



I cannot make this decision alone and must consult with the ministry. This also applies to the assumption of expenses. I would also like to discuss the relevant topics with other poultry experts.	online due to expenses	methods how to improve breeding technology in broilers to lower the prevalence of pododermatitis duck welfare	yes	no	I need to check	Yes	
sounds interesting, but I have to discuss this with the management, when there are more details	Roadshow to me seems physical meetings	Piling behavior and death by crushing in laying hens Measures against crushing in rearing and laying hen housing	Depends on the regional CA	Yes, but must be discussed with management	I need to check with our RC	Yes, good idea	
Depends on the conditions	Both is fine to me	The subject I am personally involved with is welfare at the poultry slaughterhouses.	Yes	This point would be a difficulty for sure for us.	I don't think so	YES	



Yes, but must be discussed with management	online	I would ask colleagues about it, to prepare the activity properly	Yes	lt's not up to me personally	yes	Yes	
It could but not sure to have the resources to do so. Anyway, open to discussion if our country is a good option	It is easier to realize online than physical - in terms of time and financial effort	Measurement of air quality with a focus on best used equipment if possible Most common diseases/disorders and possible treatment options at poultry farms for a better understatement and decision making of the culling management for animal welfare reasons during an official inspection Other topics will very likely be added in the future	Yes			yes	
I cannot make this decision myself; it need to be discussed at SVFA SR.	I prefer online meeting	Enrichments, turkeys, mutilations	Yes				



Enforcement lies with the CA on Lander / local level, further consideration is necessary, no statement possible at present.	physical, depending on costs	I`m interesting in upright catching of broiler chickens and laying hens	yes		
It would be very useful, but I can't make a decision, I have to discuss it with my colleagues, management and Ministry	I prefer online meeting	Animal Based measures for turkey			
Yes, with sure		it should be discussed with colleagues			



Annex 2

Meeting satisfaction survey

The online survey access QR code and the link were provided to participants at the end of the meeting and per email. 13 meeting participants on 49 attending the meeting answered the survey.

Satisfaction regarding the interest in their activities, meeting organization, suggestion of improvement, future meeting topics, and open comments were asked. Participants had the opportunity to give comments using the open comments section.

Globally, the respondents were very satisfied of the meeting.

Results:

The interest in terms of in your activities has satisfied your expectations:	Mean value 8.4		
(Assessment criteria: 10 extremely satisfied, 1 very dissatisfied)			
Topics suggestions for next meeting (6 answers):			
Day old chicks killing			
Give us as much information as possible on spent hens.			
Translated into English: Brief introductions to the responsibilities in the indiv	vidual EU membe		
states and, if applicable, current activities relevant to all other participants.			
Laying hen systems houses. Guidelines for assessing same as differences of	interpretation o		
standards and requirements between MSs			
Not yet			
Pullet raising, benchmarks/limit values concerning reportable findings at the	slaughterhouse i		
turkeys and laying hens, complexity of laying hen systems,			
In general, you were satisfied with the virtual meeting:	13 yes, 0 no		
(Assessment criteria: 10 extremely satisfied, 1 very dissatisfied)			
The organization has satisfied your expectations:	Mean value		
	8.8		
Organizational suggestions for improvement (2 answers):	I		
No, all OK			
Translated into English: Please clarify the questions from the MS in advance, if ne	ecessary, and sen		
them to all participants. This allows the questions to be shocked and information	to be propored f		

Translated into English: Please clarify the questions from the MS in advance, if necessary, and send them to all participants. This allows the questions to be checked and information to be prepared for a broader exchange.



The content has satisfied your expectations:	Mean value	
(Assessment criteria: 10 extremely satisfied, 1 very dissatisfied)	8.8	
Future content suggestions (2 answers):		
No, all OK		
No, the format has everything that it needs - work done, work planned, one o	r two topics that are	
presented in more detail - I really appreciated the culling of chicks theme - that	t was great	
Other comments (2 answers):		
Keep up the good work!		
Thank you for an interesting meeting. It is difficult to get feedback from couvirtual meetings.	intries for queries a	