

## **DELIVERABLE**

### **DL.1.1.3: REPORT ON THE THIRD ANNUAL REFLECTION BOARD (RB) MEETING**

The third Reflection Board (RB) meeting between representatives of RB organisations (from the EU Platform on Animal Welfare) and the EU Reference Centre for Animal Welfare of Poultry and other small farmed animals (EURCAW-Poultry-SFA), with the participation of DG-SANTE as observer, was held remotely via Teams in the afternoon 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2023. This meeting was the occasion to present the new Work Programme of the Centre, its activities since the last meeting, and to exchange, discuss and identify possible future collaborations and interests.

### **Participants**

In total 14 participants, six of them from the seven EU platform entities forming the RB (one participant represented two entities), one from DG SANTE, and seven from EURCAW-Poultry-SFA, were connected.

**The reflection board** is composed of Association/institutions/entities member of the EU Platform on Animal Welfare:

1. Eurogroup for Animals
2. Association of Poultry Processors and Poultry Trade in the EU (a.v.e.c.)
3. European Rural Poultry Association (ERPA)
4. European agri-cooperatives (COCEGA)
5. European farmers (COPA)
6. European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders (EFFAB)
7. Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE)

### **Meeting agenda:**

|       |       |  |
|-------|-------|--|
| 13:00 | 13:05 | Welcome (V. Michel)  |
| 13:05 | 13:15 | Welcome (DG SANTE, E. ALAEZ Pons)  |
| 13:15 | 13:45 | <b>Questions to EURCAW-Poultry-SFA (activity 1)</b> (E. Nehlig, C. Tolini, M. Guinebretière)<br>Quick Q2E feedback + presentation of the two rabbits answers + the pullet one  |
| 13:45 | 15:15 | <b>Update on the Centre's actual work (activity 2 and 3)</b> (V. Michel, A. Riber, L. Kremer, A. Velarde) including 10 min break <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rabbits SLH study</li><li>• Broiler chickens studies</li><li>• Pullets factsheet</li><li>• Best practices</li><li>• Depopulation methods project short presentation</li><li>• Fitness for transport in end of laying hens (FFT EOLH) project short presentation</li><li>• Show the turkey video</li><li>• Summary table mentioning current work (walking ability, classyfarm (LH, Broiler) and turkey husbandry in EU).</li></ul> |
| 15:15 | 15:30 | <b>Update on the Centre's actual work (activity 4)</b> (A. Velarde)<br>Overview of last deliverables (DLs), new ones, feedback on the last two webinars + future webinars in 2024  |
| 15:30 | 15:55 | Open discussion  |
| 15:55 | 16:00 | Closure (V. Michel)  |

The meeting started at 13:04. Virginie Michel, Coordinator of the EURCAW-Poultry-SFA, welcomed the participants and introduced the agenda.

Virginie Michel presented the aim and activities of the Centre. The Centre aims at supporting the Competent Authorities and DG SANTE in improving the enforcement of the legislation on animal welfare. In particular, by providing scientific and technical expertise, carrying out studies and developing methods for improving and assessing the welfare level of animals. The Centres has five core activities:

- ✓ 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

### Priority areas for EURCAW-Poultry-SFA: Welfare of

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

Ester ALAEZ Pons (DG SANTE G5) welcomed everybody and apologized on behalf of Kirsten Vornhagen who could not be present as she is on sick leave. She hoped that the discussion would be of interest to RB members, as their opinion is important for the Centre. She wished a good and fruitful meeting to all participants.

*The activities of the Centre were presented, with a focus on what was achieved since last year meeting.*

- [Questions to EURCAW-Poultry-SFA \(activity 1\) \(E. Nehlig, M. Guinebretière, C. Tolini,\)](#) (PDF presentation slides 09-28)

### **Sub-activity 1.2 technical assistance and query service**

Were presented:

- [The answers to query Q2E-EURCAW-Poultry-SFA-2023-001](#) and [Q2E-EURCAW-Poultry-SFA-2023-002](#) about rabbit welfare
- [The answer to Q2E-EURCAW-Poultry-SFA-2023-004](#) about perches arrangement in LHs aviaries.

Issues discussed with RB members:

- The distance between perches,

- Question (Q): The selection criteria of the literature used to answer Q2Es: is grey literature also taken into account? Answer (A): The Centre mainly consults scientific published literature but also consults grey literature, and asks expert opinions from research teams working on the concerned topics when necessary.
- [Update on the Centre's actual work \(activity 2 and 3\) \(M. Guinebretière, V. Michel, A. Riber, L. Kremer, A. Velarde\) \(PDF presentation slides 29-95\)](#)

Were presented:

[Pullets Factsheet](#)

Issues discussed:

- Q: Which indicators were considered for the factsheet? A: only Animal Based Indicators (ABIs), not resource or management based indicators
- Q: Could it be possible for the Centre to share the presentation prior the event? A: We will try our best to send the presentation in advance of the next event.
- Q: ABIs are not easy to check for veterinarians during official controls, do you have a scoring system of iceberg indicators that are easy to access and evaluate? A: The Centre is aware that some ABIs can be challenging to assess. The Centre works also on iceberg indicators. Please see documents online.

## [Study of rabbit consciousness after head only electrical stunning](#)

No Issues were discussed

## [Broilers chicken welfare studies](#)

No Issues were discussed

## [Best practices](#)

No Issues were discussed

## [Depopulation method for poultry project short presentation](#)

Issues discussed:

- RB members highlighted that this study will be really useful.
- Q: Did you hear anything about the use of ventilation shutdowns? A: It is used in emergency cases when there is no other. It may have been used in the case of multiple breakouts at the same time due to the unavailability of equipment.
- More cooperation and coordination between countries were promoted during the Workshop. As the fact that this method is unethical.
- Q: Was all house gassing considered in your study? A: Yes.
- Q: It is also important to consider how the disease can be spread, depending on the method used. A: only validated methods will be assessed.
- The difficulty of having access to the EU MSs depopulation reports was discussed.
- Q: Will the Centre make a clear statement on the use of the ventilation shutdown?

A: The output of this work will highlight, for each method used, its advantages and disadvantages.

The Centre can draw conclusions about welfare concerns. It is not within the remit of the Centre to advise the Member States how to implement the regulation. The Centre can express its concerns but cannot state formally what is authorized and what is not.

- **FFT EOLH project short presentation**

Issues discussed:

- Q: As the draft of the new transport regulation has been released now, how do you feel from a scientific perspective, and what will you do with the results of the survey? A: We had no time to review in depth the proposal. Our next task will be to read it carefully and see if it fits with our work.
- A RB member highlighted that the work of the three EURCAWs on this topic is essential as the topic of fitness for transport (FFT) is not well defined in the proposal of regulation for transport of animals. The EURCAW aims to support the CA in the inspection of fitness for transport with guidance and other supporting materials
- Q: Was the transport guidance project not taken into account for this work, as it is a very good tool? A: The Centre is aware of the transport guidance project, as some of us were part of the working group. The EFSA report was considered first, but this project was also considered in the Centre's work.
- Q: Why was 'dead on arrival' not used as an indicator for FFT, as it's measured everywhere at slaughterhouses, and can be considered as an objective criterion? A: dead on arrival is a very important ABI, however, before the birds die, they already experience animal welfare problems. Therefore dead on arrival is a very late indicator
- Q: Why was 'assessing diseases at slaughterhouse' part of the survey about FFT send to members states, as normally when they are with disease, animals should not reach the slaughterhouse? A: If ill animals arrive to the slaughterhouse is because the fitness for transport might not have been assessed properly.
- Q: Slaughter houses (SLH) for spent hens are specific, which is the reason why sometimes End-of-lay hens (EOLH) have to be transported for a long period. All over the EU, they are less and less EOLH SLH, so transport might tend to be longer. A: agree, this is the reason why EOLH are a vulnerable category.
- Q: Will you insist on retrieving the missing data from non-answering member states? A: We have already asked several times.

[Assessment of the state of consciousness after waterbath stunning in turkeys video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eo1PAazQ-6g\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eo1PAazQ-6g)

No Issues were discussed

[Table mentioning the current Centre work on walking ability, ClassyFarm \(Laying hens, broiler chickens\) and turkey husbandry](#)

No Issues were discussed

[Update on the Centre's actual work \(activity 4\) \(A. Velarde\) PDF presentation slides 96-101\)](#)

Issues discussed:

- Q: Webinar are for Competent Authorities (CA) Contact Points and official inspectors. Would it be possible for us to attend? A: The target is EU MSs CA Contact Points and official inspectors. The first part of the webinar is recorded and available on our website for stakeholders.
- DG SANTE confirmed that according to the Official Controls Regulation, the EURCAWs' target is EU MSs CA and official inspectors. The material is made available online for everyone.

### **Open discussion**

No specific open discussion session was needed as participants discussed freely during the meeting.

### **Wrap-up**

Virginie Michel highlighted that the Centre is looking for information regarding animal welfare Good Practices, FFT and training material. RB members should feel free to contact the Centre per email about these topics.

### **Closure of the meeting**

The meeting was closed at 15:45