

Introduction

As defined in the EURCAW-Poultry-SFA work programme: *"In agreement with DG SANTE the European Animal Welfare Reference Centres will visit veterinary inspectors in the different Member States in their own countries to be able to better support their work as inspectors in the field of husbandry, transport and slaughter. The idea is to meet the inspectors in their own countries to address their main issues in their own language."*

Within the consortium it was agreed to deliver the first EURCAW-Poultry-SFA Roadshow in Italy. The event took place in Brescia Italy on 02 and 03 July 2025 and was organized by the Italian members of EURCAW-Poultry-SFA, IZSLER. The Italian central competent Authority (CCA) expressed its interest in the topic: animal welfare indicators collected at slaughter to assess welfare on farm as this is key to the implementation of the Italian animal welfare annual control plan for poultry.

Participants

The focal point of the Italian Central Competent Authority (CCA) and a representative group of 23 veterinary officials, responsible for official controls in poultry slaughter plants, from the main poultry producing regions, participated to the event for a total of 24 participants plus the three Italian members of EURCAW-Poultry-SFA. (Annex 1)

Meeting agenda

Wednesday, 2nd July

- 14:00 Welcome & introduction of all participants
- 14:15 Introduction and update of EURCAW-Poultry-SFA activities
- 14:45 Presentation of the EU Partnership activities related to the topics on indicators at slaughter, for assessment of welfare on farm with particular focus on FPD
- 15:15 Coffee Break
- 15:45 Italian National animal welfare annual control plan (PNBA 2024) and updates on related national welfare legislation on poultry
- 16:15 Icebreaker exercise on FPD scoring
- 17:30 Discussion on Data from Slaughterhouses: Collection, Analysis and Interpretation, type of welfare data collected: at arrival, handling, stunning, slaughter
- 18:00 **Closure**
- 20:00 Evening Dinner

Thursday, 3rd July

- 09:00 Icebreaker exercise on FPD scoring on foot sample protocol (2nd part)
- 10:00 Report on data collection and evaluation at a slaughter-plant in ASL Cuneo 1 and interactive discussions on type of welfare data collected at slaughter
- 11:30 Coffee break
- 12:00 Verification of stunning equipment
- 12:15 Fitness for transport
- 12:30 Use of the EURCAWS outputs, how to improve dissemination and suggestions for future activities or topics for the EURCAW Work Program
- 12:45 Wrap up
- 13:00 Closure

Summary of the meeting

Day 1. After welcoming and presenting all participants, the organizers gave an introduction and update on EURCAW-Poultry-SFA activities followed by a presentation of the EU Partnership activities related to indicators at slaughter, for assessment of welfare on farm with particular focus on FPD (foot pad dermatitis). The focal point of the Italian CCA presented the Italian National animal welfare annual control plan (PNBA 2024) and gave updates on related national welfare legislation on poultry. The presentation was followed by a discussion during which participants gave input on how they carry out their controls at slaughter and difficulties and concerns. Later, an icebreaker exercise on FPD scoring was administered to the participants, and the results were discussed the following day.

Day 2. The session opened with a recap of the Italian scoring system for FPD in comparison with the scoring proposed by EURCAW-Poultry-SFA. This was followed by the presentation of the Mentimeter results from the exercise of day1 and a discussion on critical image examples. It was difficult to reach consensus on some images. The images were scored once again with a second Mentimeter, excluding those that received 100% correct answers. The results of the mentimeter exercise are reported in Annex 2. After the Mentimeter exercise, two of the participants presented a report on data collection and evaluation at a slaughter-plant in their district (ASL Cuneo 1) which stimulated very interactive discussions on the type of welfare data collected at slaughter and how these are collected and analyzed. Other topics briefly discussed (due to time constraints) were the verification of stunning equipment and fitness for transport. A questionnaire related to the topic stunning equipment was administered and is provided in Annex 3. Finally, there was a debate on the use of EURCAWS outputs, how to improve dissemination and suggestions for future activities or topics for the EURCAW Work Program. During the event all the participants were provided with a folder containing printouts of the EURCAW-SFA facts sheets most relevant to welfare at slaughter.

Points raised, questions asked.

According to national legislation, sanctions and/or provisions are applied when Cumulative mortality rate (CMR) goes beyond a fixed threshold. According to some of the participants, however, CMR alone should not be sufficient to trigger interventions since there are cases in which CMR is high even in farms where welfare is respected and CMR is rather due to high 1st week mortality for which the hatchery should be partly held responsible.

Also, Dead on arrival (DOA) in broilers was quite discussed and considered reliable as welfare indicator at transport but not so reliable for the assessment of welfare on farm.

FPD is currently assessed on all broiler batches slaughtered. However, some participants believe that accurate scoring could be performed only in case of a high prevalence of FPD lesions saving time for other activities. It was also considered that Interfacing with farm veterinarians is a key point.

Stocking density standards in containers during transportation reported in Regulation 1/2005 may be unsuitable for certain weight categories according to some participants. The CCA following points raised during the discussion intends to revisit current thresholds and flowcharts used for official inspections. The mentimeter exercise was also useful to discuss and reconsider the indications provided to the field inspectors by the CCA on how to score FPD. The idea is to slightly modify the description of the 3 levels used for scoring and provide a set of photo examples. A proposal was made to hold similar meetings regularly to support harmonized welfare assessment and improve communication across regions since this was requested by several participants.

Visit, if any

No visit was organized.

Stakeholder meeting, if any

No stakeholder meeting was organized.

Roadshow satisfaction survey

An online satisfaction survey was administered by IZSLER as host of the meeting and the participant's feedback was very positive (see Annex4). Duration, usefulness of topics treated, and quality of the event met the expectations of the participants.

A second satisfaction survey was conducted on paper with 3 questions shared by EURCAW-Pigs and administered during their roadshows.

- 1- How can we better support your work?
- 2- What elements of the roadshow should we definitely keep?
- 3- What new things should be added to the roadshow?

From the surveys returned an extract for each of the questions answered is reported below:

- 1) How can we better support your work?
 - Periodic (every 6 M) repetition of similar events (preferably physical eventually virtual) for updates and confrontations between official inspectors
 - Creating a Platform where inspectors can share common issues and exchange on ways to tackle them
 - Thematic factsheets and videos
 - Specific training for inspectors dealing with multispecies slaughter plants where there is a risk that poultry is not dealt with specifically and adequately
- 2) What elements of the roadshow should we definitely keep?
 - Surely the formulation of the roadshow that enabled a direct confrontation between participants which helps to adopt a uniform approach between colleagues in dealing with practical issues in daily work
 - The exchange of experiences between field inspectors CCA and EURCAW experts
 - Duration of the event and splitting it into 2 half days
- 3) What new things should be added to the roadshow?
 - Exercises to align and standardize animal welfare evaluations
 - Other different welfare topics in next editions where OV's can share their own experiences

Conclusion

The feedback from the participants was very positive and there was an overall consensus that these events should be delivered more often on a routine basis. The most appreciated aspect appeared to be the opportunity given to exchange experiences between field inspectors, CCA and EURCAW experts.



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