Animal Welfare - Annex 3

FSA 24/09/08 - Analysis of animal welfare trends for major and critical non-compliances in England and Wales FY – 2023

Management summary

Analysis of non-compliance numbers for the FY 2023 by location indicate that, slaughterhouse related non-compliances increased by 2% compared with previous year, on farm by 36% and transport reduced by 16%. Over the last 3 years, slaughterhouse non-compliance numbers have averaged 363 per year, which indicates that FY 2023 (362) is in line with recent trends.

The average non-compliance numbers over the last 3 years for transport and on farm have been 3090 and 702 per year respectively. Comparing the respective 3-year average numbers for transport and on farm with FY 2023, indicate below average numbers in FY 2023 for transport (2522) and above average numbers for on farm in FY 2023 (734). Over the last 3 years the combined transport and on farm non-compliances have averaged 3793, which indicates that FY 2023 (3556) is below the average.

1. Throughout this report 'FY 2023' refers to the year from April 2023 to March 2024.

2. The number of CCTV non-compliances identified by live viewing of CCTV decreased from 16 to 3 cases, and the number of non-compliances identified by retrospective viewing of CCTV increased from 37 to 45 cases. The number of non-compliances of CCTV regulations reduced from 18 to 14 cases. The number of non-compliances identified in person increased from 270 to 282 cases.

3. Lairage remains the process point with the highest number of non-compliance cases (112 i.e., 1 less than FY 2022) at 31% of the total number of non-compliances for FY 2023.

4. The process points that recorded increases in FY 2023 are bleeding 48 (change +7), stunning 65 (change +15) and management 59 (change +4). Lairage 112 (change -1), unloading 12 (change -13) and movement 66 (change -3) recorded decreased levels over their FY 2022 cases.

5. Lairage (31%), movement (18%) and stunning (18%) were the top 3 locations for non-compliances, accounting for 67% of all cases.

6. Poultry related breaches accounted for more than a third (34%, change -3) of all cases, cattle (29%, change +2), sheep (24%, change -1) and pigs at 11% (+2).

7. Cattle and Pigs related non-compliances increased by 11% and 21% respectively in FY 2023, but poultry and sheep recorded decreases of 6% and 3% respectively.

Section 1: Analysis of non-compliance by location

Figure 1 illustrates the comparative change in non-compliance levels for the respective animal welfare locations over the last 3 financial years: FY 2020 to FY 2023. This shows that, transport related non-compliances decreased by 16% in FY 2023, on-farm non-compliances increased by 36% and slaughterhouse increased by 2%.

Figure 1: Changes in non-compliances by financial years and location.

Figures in brackets denote the absolute change in the number of cases from FY 2022 to FY 2023.

Figure 2 shows the comparative trends in non-compliance levels for the respective locations from FY 2020 to FY 2023.

Figure 2: Trends in non-compliances per location.

Table 1 below is a summary of non-compliances by severity (level 3 and 4) and location (transport, on farm, and slaughterhouse) for the last 3 financial years (FY 2021 to FY 2023). Compared with other locations, slaughterhouse non-compliances are relatively split between major and critical cases, whereas in the other locations the number of critical cases far outweighs that of major non-compliance cases.

Table 1: Number of non-compliances by financial years and location.

Table showing the number of non-compliances by financial years				
		All animal welfare breaches: April 2021 - Mar 2022		
FY 2021	**Severity**	**Transport**	**On Farm**	**Slaughterhouse**
Major	**Level 3**	38	10	192
Critical	**Level 4**	3067	825	180
		3105	**835**	**372**
		All animal welfare breaches: April 2022 - Mar 2023		
FY 2022	**Severity**	**Transport**	**On Farm**	**Slaughterhouse**
Major	**Level 3**	21	8	198

	Severity	Transport	On Farm	Slaughterhouse
Critical	Level 4	3323	530	156
		3344	538	354
		All animal welfare breaches: April 2023 - Mar 2024		
FY 2023	Severity	Transport	On Farm	Slaughterhouse
Major	Level 3	29	6	193
Critical	Level 4	2793	728	169
		2822	734	362

Section 2: Slaughterhouse only analysis

Figure 3 illustrates the composition of total non-compliances in FY 2021 to FY 2023 by different categories i.e., CCTV related and regular cases.

In this chart 'Regular' means non-compliances identified by or reported to the FSA Official. 'CCTV (live and retrospective)' means non-compliances identified via CCTV review by the FSA Official. 'CCTV regulation' means breaches of CCTV regulations, for example degradation of cameras. 'No SOP' although a Regular non-compliance is shown separately due to its prominence of occurrence historically.

In FY 2023, the proportion of CCTV (live and retrospective) non-compliances decreased by 2ppts from 15% of total non-compliances to 13%. The proportion of CCTV regulation non-compliances decreased by 1ppts from 5% in FY 2022 to 4% in FY 2023. The proportion of No SOPs non-compliances increased by 1ppts from 4% in FY 2022 to 5% in FY 2023.

Comparing the number of actual cases for FY2022 and FY 2023, CCTV (live and retrospective) breaches decreased by 9% (from 53 cases to 48), and CCTV regulation non-compliances by 22% from 18 to 14. Recorded incidents of No SOPs increased from 13 cases in FY 2022 to 18 in FY 2023, and the number of regular non-compliances increased by 4% from 270 to 282 cases.

Overall, recorded incidents of slaughterhouse non-compliances increased by 2% in FY 2023 (from 354 cases to 362). Total numbers of non-compliances have remained stable over the last 3 years, with a peak in CCTV live numbers in FY 2022.

Figure 3: Breakdown of slaughterhouse non-compliances by financial year.

Figure 4 highlights the total non-compliance comparison between FY 2022 and FY 2023 by quarters. The comparison shows increased levels of non-compliances in Q2, and Q3 of FY 2023 compared with the same period in FY 2022. Compared with FY 2022, there were increases of 4% (92 to 96) and 24% (76 to 94) in Q2 and Q3 respectively in FY 2023. These increases were almost offset by comparative declines of 2% and 11% respectively in Q1 and Q4 of FY 2023.

Increased levels of non-compliances in Q3 were mainly due to increased levels of stunning and bleeding non-compliances in comparison with the same period in FY 2022. Their combined totals trebled from 5 cases in November 2022 to 15 cases in November 2023.

Figure 4: Change in slaughterhouse non-compliances by financial year quarters FY 2022 vs FY 2023.

Figure 5 shows non-compliances by process points within the slaughterhouse. Sheep related lairage cases account for 11% of all slaughterhouses non-compliances (a decrease of 1ppts) followed by cattle lairage with 10% of the total breaches in FY-2023. In terms of the actual number of non-compliances, sheep related lairage decreased from 43 cases in FY 2022 to 38 cases in FY 2023, and cattle related lairage increased from 39 cases to 37 in FY 2023.

There were changes in the level of cattle related management breaches, which have increased from 3 cases in FY 2022 to 17 cases in FY 2023, and cattle related stunning cases from 8 cases to 22 cases in FY 2023.

Figure 5: Number of non-compliances by animal species and process point – FY 2023.

Figure 6 illustrates the comparative change in the non-compliance numbers for FY 2022 and FY 2023 by process types per animal species in slaughterhouses. It captures changes across animal species year on year. For example, it highlights the increased numbers in management and stunning of cattle discussed in the previous paragraph. This chart also highlights the significant decrease in the number of management related cases in poultry from 32 cases in FY 2022 to 21 cases in FY 2023.

Figure 6. Comparison of FY 2022 and FY 2023 slaughterhouse non-compliances by animal species.

Figure 7 shows the trends in recorded slaughterhouse breaches split by severity over the past four years. The number of recorded level 3 non-compliances decreased by 3% in FY 2023 from 198 cases in FY 2022 to 193, while recorded level 4 non-compliances increased by 8% (from 156 to 169) over the same period.

Levels of non-compliance severity:

Level 3 (MAJOR non-compliance) – Potential risk to welfare.

Level 4 (CRITICAL non-compliance) – Poses a serious and imminent risk to animal welfare.

Figure 7: Trends in slaughterhouse non-compliances – FY 2020 to FY 2023

Figure 8 illustrates the change in numbers of non-compliances across all animal species in FY 2023 in comparison with FY 2022. Cases involving cattle have increased by 11% (95 to 105), pigs by 21% (34 to 41), sheep decreased by 3% (90 to 87) and poultry by 6% from 132 to 124 cases. Cattle account for 29% of total non-compliances a decrease of 2ppts from FY 2022, pigs 11% (+2), poultry 34% (-3) and sheep 24% (-1). Other animal species make up the remaining 2%.

Figure 8. Change in the number of non-compliances per financial year by animal species.

Figure 9 shows the split by severity of cases for each of the slaughterhouse process points. Lairage has 112 total cases with 64% and 36% level 3 and 4 respectively. Bleeding (48 total cases) has the highest proportion of level 4 cases (77%), followed by movement (66 cases) with 62% being level 4 cases and stunning (65 total cases) with 49% level 4.

Figure 9: Slaughterhouse non-compliances by process point – FY 2023.

Figure 10 illustrates the changes in non-compliances by process point between FY-2022 and FY-2023. The chart shows increased (blue bars) cases in bleeding, management and stunning process points, compared with FY 2022 and decreases (orange bars) in lairage, movement, unloading and other.

Figure 10: Change in number of slaughterhouse non-compliances by process point – FY 2022

Figure 11 also highlights the increases in non-compliances across all the identifiable categories of animal species in FY 2023. Cattle, pigs and other species had increases of 10, 7 and 2 cases respectively. Poultry and sheep recorded decreases of (-8) and (-3) respectively.

Figure 11. Change in number of slaughterhouse non-compliances by animal species – FY 2022.

Section 3: Analysis of Transport and On Farm non-compliances

Figure 12 illustrates changes in the number of on-farm and transport related non-compliances for FY 2022 and FY 2023. There has been a reduction in transport non-compliances across all animal species except sheep. In general, transport non-compliances have reduced by 16% in FY 2023. Most of the major sources of non-compliances in transport have recorded decreases in cases, particularly cases of Death on Arrival (DOA) – multiple deaths have declined by 71% from 350 cases in FY 2022 to 101 in FY 2023.

On farm non-compliances on the other hand have increased by 36% in FY 2023 compared with FY 2022, but back to the levels in FY 2021. These changes have been driven by steep increases in cases of pododermatitis, mastitis, arthritis, broken horns and hernias (see table 3).

Figure 12. Non-compliances in Transport and On-farm by animal species.

Tables 2 and 3 illustrate the major sources of On-farm and transport non-compliances in FY 2023 and compares with their previous levels in FY 2022. Dead on arrival (DOA) remains the leading source of transport related non-compliances but declined by 14% in FY 2023. The category which experienced the highest rate of increase for transport was unloading causing injury, from 3 to 14 cases.

Table 2. Major causes of Transport non-compliances - FY 2022 v 2023.

Type	FY 2022	FY 2023	Change
Dead On Arrival (DOA)	1223	1056	-14%
Trapping	953	857	-10%

Type	FY 2022	FY 2023	Change
Late stages of pregnancy - Identified at PM	279	243	-13%
Incoordination/unable to walk/unable to stand	182	237	30%
Dead On Arrival (DOA) - Multiple deaths	350	101	-71%
Dead On Arrival (DOA) - suspected cold/heat stress	-	67	-
Broken Leg	44	65	48%
Lameness score of 3	52	32	-38%
Late stages of pregnancy - Identified at AM	26	30	15%
Lameness score of 2	18	29	61%
Crates/modules poorly maintained	-	18	-
Lameness score of 4	35	18	-49%
Unloading causing injury	3	14	367%
Other*	179	29	-84%
Total	**3344**	**2796**	**-16%**

Other* – the sum of all the remaining 28 minor categories in FY 2023.

Table 3. Major causes of On Farm non-compliances – FY 2022 v 2023.

Type	FY 2022	FY 2023	Change
Pododermatitis	57	115	102%
Mastitis	8	84	950%
Bruising	72	77	7%
Open Wounds	48	75	56%
Broken limbs	71	61	-14%
Prolapse	35	31	-11%
Tail bites	68	31	-54%
Broken horns	1	27	2600%

Type	FY 2022	FY 2023	Change
Lameness score of 3	-	24	-
Arthritis	8	22	175%
Hernias	8	17	113%
Eye infection	9	16	78%
Lameness score of 2	-	12	-
Overgrown/Ingrown horn	24	10	-58%
Other*	129	132	2%
Total	**538**	**734**	**36%**

Other* – the sum of all the remaining 26 minor categories in FY 2023.

Lameness scores would usually fall under transport regulations; however, the OVs have been providing greater detailed evidence of the origin of these conditions. We have identified a number of older, partially healed lameness cases which occurred on farm in FY 2023.