

## ANIMAL WELFARE UPDATE

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### SUMMARY

1. This paper gives an update on FSA activities to drive improvements under the “**Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce**” animal welfare programme in slaughterhouses in England and Wales.
2. The Board is asked to:
  - **consider** the progress made in delivering the “**Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce**” welfare agenda, specifically the latest animal welfare survey and improvements in data analysis;
  - **endorse** the collaborative work done to help facilitate implementation of the Government’s new legislation on CCTV in slaughterhouses;
  - **comment** on the work we have done to clarify the funding position in relation to the cost of delivery of animal welfare policy in slaughterhouses in England and Wales, in advance of EU exit;
  - **review** the work we have done to reduce major and critical welfare incidents in slaughterhouses; and
  - **discuss** the collaborative steps we are taking with other stakeholders to address welfare issues found to have occurred either on farm or in transit.

### INTRODUCTION

3. At the September 2017 Board meeting members considered and approved current and proposed activities in England and Wales as part of our ongoing programme to “**Deter, Prevent, Detect and Enforce**” animal welfare breaches<sup>1</sup>.
4. This paper demonstrates that the activities we committed to under the Animal Welfare Action Plan in the 2017 paper have been carried out and the Plan has been refreshed with new activities. In 2018 we continued our joint working with industry, particularly in the poultry sector where we focused on catching, transport and crate systems. We completed our second animal welfare themed audit in 56 establishments. High level results show that 86% (48) of the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/fsa170905%20%281%29.pdf>

establishments audited had no reasons for concern. In the remaining 14% (8) of establishments all issues were resolved by either the follow up audit or sooner.

5. In February 2018 we carried out an animal welfare survey on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and Welsh Government. The survey was carried out in all operating slaughterhouses in England and Wales and collected data on where animals are sourced from, what methods of slaughter are used and the destination of the meat. In addition, for FSA purposes, we gathered data on third party assurance schemes which showed that 68% of poultry premises and 48% of red meat premises are members of at least one scheme. The most prominent schemes are Red Tractor (32% of all slaughterhouses) and British Retail Consortium (20%).
6. We also continued our work with Defra and industry in preparation for mandatory CCTV in slaughterhouses in England.
7. The welfare programme of work is aligned to Regulating Our Future (ROF) principles that ensure business operators take primary responsibility for all aspects of food they produce, that information is provided to consumers enabling them to make informed choices and that regulatory activity is risk based, targeted and proportionate.

## **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

8. Defra and the Welsh Government have lead policy responsibility for animal welfare issues including those relating to businesses regulated by the FSA. In Northern Ireland the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has policy and delivery responsibility for animal welfare issues.
9. Under EU regulations, full responsibility for animal welfare and food safety in slaughterhouses rests with business operators who must meet legislative requirements in terms of slaughterhouse design, layout, equipment and operation. Their slaughterers must be competent, appropriately trained and be licensed to slaughter all species presented to them. The business operator is responsible for ensuring all animal needs are met and for the welfare of animals in their care. Responsible business operators and their representative organisations have made it clear that welfare breaches are unacceptable and should be effectively addressed.
10. As we approach EU exit there has never been a more important time for the UK meat industry to prove it has some of the highest welfare standards in the world and this will be especially so for our exports. Through our open and transparent welfare reporting system and our collaborative work with business operators and other official control bodies we have been able to focus on areas of concern and share best practices and behaviours. Responsible business operators are receptive to our zero tolerance welfare policy, understanding the benefits this brings to the industry reputation as a whole.

## CONSUMER INTEREST

11. The latest available Public Attitudes Tracker data from May 2018 shows that animal welfare is still the fourth food issue of concern (42%). Sugar, food waste and food prices are the top three concerns.

## STAKEHOLDER INTEREST AND ENGAGEMENT

12. The FSA carries out its welfare activities on behalf of Defra and Welsh Government under a Service Level Agreement. This work includes inspections and assurance, audits, enforcement, licences and education and awareness.
13. The Animal Welfare Steering Group reports regularly to the Partnership Working Group; a joint FSA/Industry representative forum. The report includes the latest position of the Animal Welfare Action Plan and published welfare statistics.
14. There has been a lower level of stakeholder interest in animal welfare issues in slaughterhouses during this period and we have noted reduced activity by animal welfare lobby groups in relation to slaughterhouse operations. Generally, there have been fewer animal welfare related Freedom of Information requests and all those received have been responded to within the Government deadline of 20 working days.
15. As part of our FSA transparency commitments we began publishing quarterly reports on welfare non-compliances from 1 April 2017. All published reports can be found at the following link:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/animal-welfare#reports-of-our-checks>

## PROGRESS ON THE ANIMAL WELFARE ACTION PLAN (AWAP)

16. The “**Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce**” Programme is delivered through the AWAP. The summary below highlights key achievements over the year and a detailed update can be found in section 1 of [Annex 1](#):

### 16.1 Strengthened verification of compliance by:

- our work with Defra and industry in preparation for mandatory CCTV in slaughterhouses in England;
- concluding our second welfare themed audit;
- completing all reviews of premises with: restricted viewing of slaughter; V-restrainers; bovine restraint boxes; non stun slaughter operations and those reporting low numbers of non compliances; and
- establishing a dedicated web page on Food.gov for external facing welfare data and guidance;

### 16.2 Improved accountability and collaboration through:

- our joint working with industry on a Guidance on Catching and Transport for the poultry industry;
- our programme of targeted visits by the Welfare Assurance Team;
- establishing service standards for the quality and frequency of feedback from other stakeholders involved in welfare incidents on farm and in transit; and
- our successful negotiations with Defra and Welsh Government for increased funding for animal welfare controls.

16.3 Improved education and awareness by:

- working with Defra to develop the Guidance which sits alongside CCTV legislation; and
- publishing Q&As to enhance the CCTV Guidance.

16.4 Improved quality of our analysis and reporting through:

- Production of monthly animal welfare non-compliance statistics from the Chronos reporting system and quarterly publication of the results;
- Completion of an animal welfare survey in all operating slaughterhouses in England and Wales on behalf of Defra and Welsh Government.

## **CCTV IN SLAUGHTERHOUSES**

17. In February 2018 legislation to make CCTV cameras mandatory in England, to safeguard animal welfare in slaughterhouses, was laid in Parliament. The legislation relates to England only as animal welfare policy is devolved.
18. The legislation came into effect on 4 May 2018 and there is a transition period for industry to comply by 5 November 2018. The FSA worked closely with Defra on the consultation prior to the legislation being laid, and since then we have continued to work collaboratively with Defra and industry, developing guidance to support the legislation and holding joint FSA/Defra workshops with industry to assist a smooth implementation process.
19. In addition to the guidance, FSA Official Veterinarians (OVs) and the dedicated FSA Welfare Assurance Team are available on a daily basis to assist business operators as they prepare to install or upgrade their CCTV equipment. The legislation requires CCTV coverage of all areas where live animals are present and business operators are required to provide OVs with their completed plans showing where the cameras will be installed. The FSA will be monitoring compliance rates during September and October and sharing this information with Defra.
20. Both the FSA and Defra have kept industry well informed during the consultation, legislation and transition phases and all operating slaughterhouses in England are required to be compliant by 5 November 2018.

21. In March this year the Welsh Government announced a £1.1million Food Business Investment scheme package of grant aid specifically for small and medium sized slaughterhouses in Wales. The grant covers both capital and investment and the provision of advice on animal welfare and could also be used in the installation and upgrading of CCTV monitoring systems, if the business operator so wished. Welsh Government continues to explore the possibility of future legislation. The voluntary joint CCTV protocol was successfully adopted in 2017 between FSA and Industry will remain in effect in both England and Wales. This protocol sets out specific detail on how footage should be used as part of the monitoring process.
22. The situation in Northern Ireland remains unchanged. Over 99% of animals and birds processed in Northern Ireland are slaughtered under CCTV coverage and there are no plans to make the installation of CCTV in slaughterhouses compulsory.

### FUNDING FOR DELIVERY OF ANIMAL WELFARE OFFICIAL CONTROLS

23. As we reported last year, the introduction of new welfare legislation in 2013 in Wales and 2015 in England, together with the FSA's welfare programme started in 2016 and more recently the new CCTV legislation has led to significant increase in FSA costs in delivering animal welfare policies.
24. Under the Service Level Agreement with Defra and Welsh Government, in 2017/18 FSA received a contribution of c£50k which does not meet the true costs of welfare official controls which we conservatively estimate to be in excess of £1m, only a small proportion of which is recovered from industry
25. During the period we have continued our negotiations with Defra and WG for increased contributions and we are pleased to report that for 2018/19 Defra and WG will contribute c£170k. The increased amounts will go towards CCTV implementation and enforcement costs (Defra contribution only), annual welfare themed audit and OVs time for recording non-compliances, referrals for investigation and general welfare enforcement in slaughterhouses.
26. The uplift does not cover any FSA legal team costs for appeals and investigations nor the welfare portion of inspection costs and these are areas we will be discussing with Defra and WG for the financial period 2019/20.

### DATA STORIES

#### Reduction of major and critical welfare incidents in slaughterhouses

27. Part of the “**Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce**” enhanced reporting programme includes gathering and analysing major and critical welfare incidents in slaughterhouses. Each report is discussed at CEO level monthly. This reporting process enables each incident to be assessed in detail, ensuring correct and consistent enforcement actions are taken by OVs and, where possible, working with the business operator to prevent similar incidents happening again.

28. Analysis of data since the introduction of this process in 2016 shows a clear downward trend for major and critical incidents in slaughterhouses in England and Wales and leads us to believe that the FSA welfare programme is achieving the desired results.
29. Whilst this downward trend is good news for the FSA and business operators alike, we will continue to maintain and enhance our welfare programme and future activities under the Plan can be found in section 2 of [Annex 1](#).

#### Welfare incidents on farm and in transit

30. Delivery responsibility for animal welfare on farm lies with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and for animals in transit with Local Authorities, through Trading Standards. Where animals or birds arrive at slaughterhouse with welfare issues which have occurred either on farm or in transit we use the new referral process in Chronos to report this information to the relevant investigating body.
31. In 2017 we reported on this important collaborative work, which was in its initial stages, and we explained how the new system captures detailed information, including detailed information about farms and hauliers which allows APHA and Trading Standards to focus their enforcement efforts.
32. Analysis of welfare data from the old welfare reporting system and Chronos for the period April 2015 to April 2018 shows that both on farm and in transit welfare incidents have an upward trend, with in transit incidents being significantly higher. When Chronos came on line in April 2017 the numbers of incidents rose, due to improvements in granularity and accuracy of the data recorded, however the trend continues to rise.
33. OVs are proactive in making on farm and in transit referrals, with their reporting responsibilities monitored through Defra KPIs and the FSA contract performance management framework. However, the multiple enforcement bodies involved can make gathering and analysing follow up information and feedback difficult. The FSA is anxious to close the welfare loop and to ensure that appropriate enforcement action is taken for welfare incidents which occur outside its remit.
34. With this in mind, in July we held a joint workshop with APHA, Local Authorities and Trading Standards to discuss improvements to the feedback reporting mechanism. Improvements agreed include APHA becoming the single point of contact for feedback, an agreed service standard for timely reporting and integrating FSA Chronos with the APHA OneHealth system so all parties can see updates on action taken.
35. It is hoped that by sharing FSA knowledge and best practice with APHA and local authorities / Trading Standards and by increasing the focus on these types of incidents the upward trends we have seen can be halted.
36. A visual of the welfare analysis outlined above can be found in the data stories at [Annex 2](#).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

37. The Board is asked to:

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