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” ongoing 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 improvements in reporting and data analysis and the improvement plans, including subsequent guidance provided to field staff;
   - Endorse the collaborative work done to facilitate the successful implementation of the Government’s new legislation on CCTV in slaughterhouses throughout England;
   - Note the work done to clarify and enhance the funding in relation to the cost of delivering the animal welfare policy in slaughterhouses in England and Wales;
   - Consider the work done to facilitate the implementation of the requirements in Annex II, Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 in December 2019.

INTRODUCTION

3. This paper provides the annual report to the Board on the FSA delivery activity on animal welfare encompassed in our “Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce” Animal Welfare programme.

4. The paper covers:
   - Background and context
   - Updates on continued consumer and welfare group interest
   - Highlights of the key deliverables from the animal welfare action plan
   - Key issues arising from the successful implementation of CCTV
   - Updates on the implementation plan for the requirements of Annex II, Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 and the current compliance landscape
BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

5. 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 slaugtherers must be competent, appropriately trained and hold a Certificate of Competence 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, should be effectively addressed and damage the reputation of the industry as a whole.

6. In 2019 the FSA has continued to actively encourage liaison with industry organisations and created joint welfare forums involving Defra to cooperate with industry on the development of improvements for the welfare of animals at all stages of the slaughter process, including transport.

7. The UK meat industry has some of the highest welfare standards in the world and this is key to growing market share, particularly at such a relevant time for the development of export agreements. As an excellent modern regulator, the FSA maintains an adaptable and effective system of controls in slaughterhouses across England and Wales, verifying compliance and taking proportionate enforcement action where non-compliance is found.

8. Defra and the Welsh Government lead on animal welfare policy regarding controls within businesses approved and overseen by the FSA. The FSA delivers controls and leads on enforcement. In Northern Ireland the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has policy and delivery responsibility for animal welfare issues. Funding for welfare activities carried out on behalf of Defra and Welsh Government has increased by 22% in 2018/19 to reflect the on-going work involving animal welfare controls and the recent successful implementation of legislative changes in relation to mandatory installation of CCTV in slaughterhouses in England.

9. 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.

CONSUMER AND STAKEHOLDER INTEREST

10. The latest available Public Attitudes Tracker data from May 2019 shows that animal welfare is now the third wider food issue of concern, with 43% of all respondents recording concern about animal welfare standards when prompted about a number of topics. Food waste and sugar in food are the top two concerns, with food prices showing the same percentage of concern as animal welfare.

11. From April 2018 to March 2019, 14 Freedom of Information requests related to welfare matters were received and dealt with by the welfare team, this represents
7.5% of all FSA requests and 28% of all requests related to field operational activities. Around 28% of all welfare-related requests involved religious slaughter practices and over 21% referred to compliance with the implementation of CCTV requirements.

12. During the same period two Parliamentary questions were answered, both referring to the implementation of CCTV requirements in England.

13. Since March 2018, the FSA has been made aware of two instances of undercover filming by animal welfare activist groups in slaughterhouses. Welfare non-compliances of a varying degree of severity were identified through the available footage. The FSA took robust, prompt and proportionate enforcement action on both occasions, ensuring immediate prevention of any further adverse impact on animal welfare. One incident occurred before CCTV requirements were legislated and the other in an abattoir in Wales where CCTV is not mandatory.

14. In February 2018 the FSA carried out a Slaughter Method Survey on behalf of Defra and Welsh Government in all operating slaughterhouses in England and Wales. The survey collected data on where animals are sourced from, what methods of slaughter are used and the destination of the meat. The results of this survey were published by Defra in January 2019. As a direct result of the publication one Freedom of Information request was received and answered by the welfare team. A summary of the survey results directly related to slaughter practices is attached to this report in Annex 1.

PROGRESS ON THE ANIMAL WELFARE ACTION PLAN (AWAP)

15. The “Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce” Programme is delivered through the AWAP. Annex 2 of this report highlights key achievements over the year and agreed future actions in the areas of:

   i) Strengthened verification of compliance
   ii) Improved accountability and collaboration
   iii) Improved education and awareness
   iv) Improved quality of analysis and reporting

CCTV IMPLEMENTATION IN SLAUGHTERHOUSES

16. In November 2018 the legislation to make CCTV cameras mandatory to safeguard animal welfare in slaughterhouses in England was fully implemented after an initial transitional period. The FSA worked closely with Defra on the implementation period, developing guidance and holding workshops, as well as liaising with industry stakeholders to ensure proportionality and consistency. All slaughterhouses in England were confirmed as compliant with CCTV requirements by the end of February 2019. The progress of compliance and the parallel enforcement activity is reflected in Annex 3 of this report.

17. Several challenges were overcome during the implementation period particularly:
• CCTV footage must be stored for 90 days; this presented issues to industry due to the cost of storage and the ability of some CCTV systems to provide this storage capacity. We are still identifying and addressing deficiencies related to storage when unpredicted events (i.e. power cut) have demonstrated a weakness in this area of compliance.

• CCTV cameras on gas stunning systems; guidance was provided on the minimum requirements for footage from within gas stunning systems. There is an on-going legal appeal to a notice requesting compliance with this specific requirement, however it is worth noting that the plant achieved compliance within the requested period.

• CCTV must be provided in field lairages; there is an on-going legal appeal to a notice served requiring the provision of CCTV in a field lairage. This case involves complex legal discussions on the use of a field lairage and its implications in other areas of compliance (i.e. hygiene, disease control); the plant has ceased the use of the field in activities directly related to its slaughter operations.

18. The availability of CCTV in England has already proven valuable. Early analysis of enforcement data indicates that CCTV has been instrumental in the identification of non-compliances and provision of improved evidence to support welfare enforcement. From the 5 November 2018 to the end of June 2019:

• Nine critical welfare incidents attributable to slaughterhouse controls (out of a total of 151 in the period) were identified solely by the viewing of CCTV footage during verification tasks carried out by Official Veterinarians (OV).

• An added 30 critical incidents were confirmed by the viewing of CCTV footage when the OV was informed of issues but had not witnessed them directly or a finding indicated a potential welfare non-compliance that could only be verified through CCTV.

• A further 26 critical welfare incidents were supported by CCTV evidence. A full review of the implementation of CCTV requirements will be carried out within two years of the implementation date and led by Defra with FSA support.

19. In March 2018 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 may be used in the installation and upgrading of CCTV monitoring systems; applications for this grant have now been submitted. Welsh Government continues to explore the possibility of future legislation. In the meantime, the voluntary joint CCTV protocol which was adopted in 2017 between FSA and Industry will remain in place and field staff were requested to review its use and encourage business operators to participate during June 2019.
20. As previously reported, the situation in Northern Ireland remains unchanged. Over 99% of animals processed in Northern Ireland are slaughtered under CCTV coverage and there are no plans to make the installation of CCTV in slaughterhouses compulsory.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ANNEX II REQUIREMENTS

Legislative Background

21. Regulation (EC) No. 1099/2009, Article 29 contains a transitional provision to Article 14 (1), delaying the implementation of the requirements of Annex II until 9th December 2019 for installations and equipment in use before the 1st January 2013.

22. Within Article II there are a number of provisions that relate to lairage facilities, restraining equipment and facilities, electrical stunning equipment (including waterbath stunners) shackle lines and gas stunning equipment.

23. Both The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (England) Regulations 2015 and The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (Wales) Regulations 2014 contain in Schedule 8 transitional provisions similar to certain requirements in Annex II so many aspects of operation should be already compliant with some of the stipulations within Annex II.

Main new welfare enhancements

24. In very general lines, the main requirements within Annex II not contained within current domestic legislation include:

- Improvements in the use of mechanical ventilation by requesting an alarm within the system
- Improvements in the protection of animals during handling in the lairage by requesting specific structural demands for passageways and waiting pens
- Stricter requirements for restraining equipment which must be designed to facilitate stunning
- Extended requirements for the display and recording of electrical stunning parameters, including the need to maintain stunning records for at least one year
- Stricter requirement for electrical stunning equipment (not waterbath) to provide a visible and audible warning of exposure
- Extended requirements for the structure and access to waterbath stunning equipment
• Reduction of the **hanging time** for poultry before stunning; time decreased to one minute for poultry and two for turkeys, ducks and geese (current legislation allows one minute more for each)

• Improvements on the **shackling** of conscious poultry by requesting a breast comforter and appropriate size and shape of metal shackles

• Stricter requirements within **gas stunning** equipment by specifying design improvements and requiring specific records of parameters to be kept for a year

**Summary of Main Implementation Actions**

25. An implementation plan has been designed and widely shared with Defra, Welsh Government, industry and interested parties. The implementation plan includes:

- **Industry information and liaison**: Initial written communication, joint meeting with Defra and Welsh Government, creation of a Q&A document

- **Regulatory consistency plans**: programme of meetings with policy teams, including discussions with devolved administrations for consistency of application

- **Compliance landscape and enforcement preparedness**: four field surveys to be conducted in the run up to implementation to inform organised targeted visits by the Welfare Assurance Team based on a specific risk assessment; enforcement flow to be presented at a field workshop pre-implementation

- **Guidance and support**: Initial TECFiles article published; Manual for Official Controls updated and expanded; Q&A and enforcement flow chart distributed, as mentioned above.

**Current Compliance Rate**

26. The first of four planned field surveys was carried out during June and analysis of the results has provided an early indication of the level of compliance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALL PLANTS</th>
<th>Plants surveyed</th>
<th>243</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Already Compliant</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Compliant</td>
<td>29.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plants that plan to comply</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>45.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plants that haven't revealed compliance plans in one or more requirements</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>25.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27. The main areas of current non-compliance have been found to be:

- **Poultry slaughterhouses**
- Over 32% of poultry plants do not have an alarm on ventilation systems
- Over 15% of poultry plants do not have a breast comforter installed for the shackling line
- Over 35% of poultry plants do not have a waterbath stunning system that records the electrical parameters or stores them for the required length of time

Red meat slaughterhouses

- The main issue in red meat slaughterhouses relates to the display and recording of electrical stunning parameters with over 52% of plants not consistently recording these currently.
- The requirement to provide a visual and audible alarm when exposure to the stunning current is not sufficient is not compliant in over 30% of red meat plants.

28. Industry representatives for small abattoirs have raised concern about the ability to comply, particularly with the requirements for electrical stunning equipment, as this may place an unaffordable burden on their members.

29. The FSA continues to liaise closely with industry representatives to provide clarification on requirements and assess the possible impact on implementation.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

30. This paper sets out an update on activities in England and Wales under our ongoing programme to “Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce” animal welfare breaches.

31. The Board is asked to:

- **Consider** the progress made in delivering the “Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce” welfare agenda, specifically the improvements in reporting and data analysis and the improvement plans, including subsequent guidance provided to field staff;

- **Endorse** the collaborative work done to facilitate the successful implementation of the Government’s new legislation on CCTV in slaughterhouses throughout England;

- **Note** the work done to clarify and enhance the funding in relation to the cost of delivering the animal welfare policy in slaughterhouses in England and Wales;

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Annex 1

Summary on slaughter method survey results

Annex 2

Detail on AWAP

Annex 3

CCTV implementation progress data

Annex 4

Welfare trends for major and critical non-compliances

Annex 5

Data on welfare compliance by slaughterhouse size