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## ANIMAL WELFARE UPDATE

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### SUMMARY

1. This paper gives an update on activities in England and Wales on the FSA “**Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce**” programme to drive improvements in animal welfare standards in slaughterhouses.
2. The Board is asked to:
  - **Consider** the progress made in delivering the “**Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce**” programme, particularly the improvements made in analysis and reporting delivered through a new animal welfare reporting system (Chronos);
  - **Discuss** the work done with the poultry industry to address welfare incidents as requested at the last Board Business Committee meeting in June 2017;
  - **Discuss** the Government’s consultation proposals on introduction of mandatory CCTV in slaughterhouses and the potential delivery implications for the Agency;
  - **Endorse** the FSA’s approach to clarifying the funding position in relation to the cost of delivering animal welfare policy in slaughterhouses in England and Wales, in advance of EU exit.

### INTRODUCTION

3. At their September 2016 meeting the FSA Board approved the FSA animal welfare “**Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce**” programme to deliver improvements to animal welfare standards in slaughterhouses in England and Wales.
4. This paper outlines the progress that has been made in delivering that welfare programme, gives insight into the collaborative work done with the poultry sector to address its high levels of welfare incidents and sets out the FSA position in relation to the Defra consultation on mandatory installation of CCTV in slaughterhouses. This paper demonstrates that over the past 12 months the “**Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce**” welfare programme has reached a level of maturity, giving the Board assurance of the progress that has been made in strengthening compliance, improving collaboration, and providing better instruction and reporting on animal welfare.
5. This 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

6. 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, should be effectively addressed and damage the reputation of the industry as a whole.
7. The UK meat industry is regarded as having some of the highest welfare standards in the world. The Government has said it wants to harness these high standards as part of the UK brand, growing market share in exports. The FSA maintains an effective and adaptable system of controls in slaughterhouses across England and Wales, verifying compliance and taking proportionate enforcement action where non-compliance is found.
8. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (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) have both policy and delivery responsibility for animal welfare issues.

## CONSUMER INTEREST

9. The latest Public Attitudes Tracker from February 2017 shows that animal welfare is still the third food issue of concern (44%). Sugar and food waste remain the top two concerns.
10. In the Special Eurobarometer 442: Attitudes of Europeans towards Animal Welfare (published March 2016) key findings were:
  - 40% of Europeans understand animal welfare to 'concern the way farmed animals are treated, providing them with a better quality of life'
  - 94% believe it is important to protect the welfare of farmed animals
  - 82% believe the welfare of farmed animals should be better protected than it is now
  - 64% would like to have more information about the conditions under which farmed animals are treated in their respective countries
  - 87% consider information campaigns on animal welfare to be a good way to influence the attitudes of children and young people towards animals

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## STAKEHOLDER INTEREST AND ENGAGEMENT

11. The FSA delivers animal welfare policies in approved meat establishments as part of Official Controls on behalf of Defra and Welsh Government. These two departments hold the overall policy responsibility for animal welfare in England and Wales, respectively. FSA delivery activity is covered by a Service Level Agreement, under which the FSA carries out all animal welfare inspections and assurance, audits, enforcement, licences and education and awareness.
12. There continues to be a high level of stakeholder interest in animal welfare issues as evidenced by the consistently high volume of animal welfare related Freedom of Information requests (all of which have been responded to within the Government deadline of 20 working days), and the response to any covert video footage of slaughterhouse operations released by animal welfare lobby groups such as Animal Aid.
13. As part of our FSA transparency commitments, from September 2017 we will publish each quarter data on animal welfare non-compliances.

### “DETER, PREVENT, DETECT, ENFORCE” – PROGRESS UPDATE

14. The “**Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce**” Programme is delivered through the Animal Welfare Action Plan and a detailed update on progress against actions is attached at [Annex 1](#). In summary we have:

#### 14.1 Strengthened verification of compliance through:

- Introducing an annual programme of welfare themed audits;
- Mobilising an operational Welfare Assurance Team across the field operations network whose programme of work includes reviews of premises with V-restrainers, bovine restraint boxes, non-stun slaughter operations and those reporting low numbers of non-compliances;
- Designing, developing and launching an enforcement aide memoire to improve the quality of enforcement referrals from the field.

#### 14.2 Improved accountability and collaboration through:

- Setting up the Animal Welfare Steering Group chaired by the Chief Operating Officer and including Defra membership to improve governance and oversight;
- Setting up a welfare central hub with a dedicated team leading and coordinating activity on animal welfare, which has also strengthened relationships with Defra and Welsh Government;
- Including a standing update on animal welfare to the Partnership Working Group which is co-chaired by industry and FSA;
- Working with industry on specific initiatives such as a voluntary CCTV protocol and levels of non-compliance in the poultry industry;

- Including animal welfare as a key performance indicator in the contractor performance management framework for the new veterinary services contract from the end of March 2017.

14.3 Improved education and awareness by:

- Regularly featuring animal welfare on internal communications channels;
- Regular welfare updates to official guidance and instructions;
- Publication of best practice guides in response to potential risks to animal welfare raised by food businesses, front line operations and/or the animal welfare lobby.

14.4 Improved the quality of our analysis and reporting through:

- More structured, timely and regular reporting of animal welfare non-compliances. All non-compliances are reported to the Chief Operating Office and Chief Executive Officer monthly along with detailed explanations of any major and critical non-compliances. These are reviewed at a monthly meeting chaired by the CEO who agrees any follow up action to be taken by FSA, the contractor or the food business operator;
- A comprehensive analysis by FSA Science and Evidence Division of animal welfare non-compliance data from 2015/16 – 2016/17 showing an overall stable trend in slaughterhouses and on-farm but a significant increase in transport non-compliances, which we have flagged to Defra and APHA colleagues;
- The introduction of a new animal welfare enforcement and reporting system (Chronos) which provides more granular data on animal welfare enforcement in a way which makes it more easy to analyse. This has allowed us to begin routine reporting of non-stun slaughter volumes. The Q1 welfare slides and explanatory notes are attached to this paper at [Annex 2](#).

## **CURRENT PRIORITIES AND NEXT STEPS**

### **Consultation on mandatory CCTV**

15. On 11 August Defra launched a public consultation to seek views on a proposal for mandatory CCTV recording in slaughterhouses in England for animal welfare purposes, in line with the Government's manifesto commitment. This is a welcome development following the FSA Board's endorsement of mandatory CCTV in September 2016. The consultation can be found at the following link:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/farm-animal-welfare/cctv-in-slaughterhouses>

16. The proposals in the consultation relate to CCTV being installed and operated in all areas of approved slaughterhouses where live animals are present, e.g. where they are unloaded, kept in lairage, handled and moved, stunned and killed. It also proposes that authorised officers such as Official Veterinarians of

the FSA should have unfettered access to CCTV facilities to monitor and verify animal welfare compliance in slaughterhouses.

17. The Defra consultation closes on 21 September and is targeted at all individuals and organisations concerned with the slaughter of animals and welfare at slaughter. The FSA is undertaking a comprehensive appraisal of delivery and enforcement implications to feed into this consultation. This will highlight such issues as lead times for implementation, appropriate training, cost of enforcing non-compliance, access to footage and information security considerations. The consultation relates to England only as animal welfare policy is devolved.
18. The Welsh Government is considering all responses to the report of the Safeguarding Animal Welfare at Slaughter Task and Finish Group, set up to consider the implementation of CCTV in Welsh slaughterhouses (the [report](#) was published in October 2016). The Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group has also been asked to look into this specific issue and the Welsh Government will take into account the findings of the Framework Group, in addition to a broad range of views from all sides of the debate, before deciding on further action. The Welsh Government will keep in regular contact with Defra to monitor the consultation in England.
19. As over 99% of animals and birds processed in Northern Ireland are slaughtered under CCTV coverage, in addition to the Department's Official Veterinarians being present in slaughterhouses during the hours of slaughter, including in the small percentage not covered by CCTV, there are no plans to make the installation of CCTV in slaughterhouses compulsory. The systems currently in place provide assurance that welfare standards are being met in Northern Ireland.

### **Funding for delivery of animal welfare Official Controls**

20. The implementation of the Welfare at Time of Killing Regulations (WATOK) came into force in 2013 in Wales and 2015 in England. In addition, the introduction in 2016 of the Agency's "**Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce**" animal welfare programme has generated a considerable increase in enforcement activity on animal welfare.
21. Under the provisions of the Service Level Agreement with Defra and Welsh Government, FSA received a contribution of c.£40k for animal welfare activities in 2016/17. In 2017/18, this contribution is expected to rise to c.£50k. Although this is an increase on 2016/17, it represents only a small proportion of the overall cost of delivering the Government's animal welfare policy in slaughterhouses.
22. Costs are not always straightforward to quantify, as some activities such as ante-mortem inspections, are undertaken for both hygiene and animal welfare purposes. On a conservative basis, we estimate the full cost to the FSA of delivering animal welfare activities, including contractor costs, to be in excess of £1m. We anticipate these costs are likely to increase as a consequence of implementing and enforcing the introduction of mandatory CCTV, continued

consumer and media interest in animal welfare, and Government commitments to be a world leader in animal welfare standards following EU exit.

23. As a priority we intend working with Defra, Welsh Government and industry to more accurately quantify the cost of delivering animal welfare policies in slaughterhouses in England and Wales and agree an appropriate and sustainable resourcing approach for the future.

### **Collaborating with the poultry sector on improving standards**

24. Over 950m poultry are slaughtered annually in the UK. This is a high volume industry which sees a higher than average proportion of welfare non-compliances. Over the past 12 months the FSA has been working closely with industry to understand the root causes of these welfare issues and whilst incidents in this sector remain high relative compared to others, we have been able to help industry take action to address this. On initial review, our data indicates that the majority of non-compliances occur either on-farm or in transport. The following initiatives have been carried out:

- On-farm – FSA data from a particular premises showed a high level of broken legs which were considered by FSA staff to have occurred at catching, on farm. The business operator undertook two separate, closely monitored catching exercises using different catching methods. However, the exercise showed no significant differences in the numbers with broken legs and not the levels of breaks we were seeing in our reported figures. The business operator then commissioned independent scientific research which showed that the de-feathering system in one particular premises was causing the majority of the broken legs post-mortem;
- In transport: poultry crate management system – the poultry sector uses crates to transport birds from farm to slaughterhouse. Poorly maintained crates can cause injury and/or death to birds. This is the type of non-compliance frequently found by Official Veterinarians. Together with industry, the FSA developed a best practice guide for identifying and removing damaged crates from an operator's system and this was rolled out industry wide in April 2017. We will be conducting an impact assessment in April 2018;
- In transport: haulier information – in the past the FSA welfare reporting system did not allow for routine capture of specific data relating to transporters. The new Welfare and Enforcement reporting system (Chronos) allows us to capture detailed information including name of haulier, name of driver and registration of vehicle. This key information is now passed directly to the Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA) and Trading Standards for their Welfare in Transport team to investigate.

25. A visual of this data story can be found at [Annex 3](#).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

26. This paper gives an update on activities in England and Wales on the FSA “**Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce**” programme to drive improvements in animal welfare standards in slaughterhouses.

27. The Board is asked to:

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