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FINAL REPORT OF AN AUDIT

CARRIED OUT IN

AUSTRIA

FROM 25 TO 29 NOVEMBER 2013

IN ORDER TO EVALUATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR ANIMAL WELFARE IN MAJOR FARMED SPECIES

*In response to information provided by the Competent Authority, any factual error noted in the draft report has been corrected; any clarification appears in the form of a footnote.*

## ***Executive Summary***

*This audit describes the outcome of a Food and Veterinary Office audit which took place in Austria from 25 to 29 November 2013.*

*The objective of the audit was to evaluate the implementation of measures aimed at the control of animal welfare on farms, in particular farms keeping species included in Decision 2006/778/EC and covered by the recommendations from the European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes (hereafter “the Convention”) with particular reference to the farming of turkey, geese and cattle.*

*For information purposes, the monitoring and follow-up at the slaughterhouse of the welfare conditions of chickens kept for meat production was also included in the scope of the audit.*

*The national legislation on welfare standards for dairy cattle, turkeys and domestic geese and relevant operating procedures largely implement the recommendations from the Convention concerning these species. Detailed national requirements for the welfare of these species generally go beyond those laid down in the recommendations from the Convention, the only major shortcomings were that national legislation allows tail-docking in cattle when the farming system so requires, and is less restrictive on the use of mechanical calving aids. The CCA has started to harmonise the reporting system for non-compliances required by Decision 2006/778/EC when national legislation is stricter than EU minimum requirements.*

*The CCA and Provincial CAs controls provide assurance on compliance with the recommendations from the Convention and national requirements at cattle, turkey and goose farms. However, the CCA did not ensure that the maximum stocking density for turkeys, set up by national legislation, is not exceeded throughout the production cycle and sick and injured turkeys over 5 kg live weight were killed in farm after stunning with a non permitted method.*

*The requirements of Annex III of Directive 2007/43/EC regarding the reporting of results of checks in poultry slaughterhouses to identify possible indications of poor welfare in the holding of origin were well implemented in the slaughterhouse visited and the CCA expects to implement a similar system at national level by June 2014.*

*The report makes a number of recommendations to the Austrian competent authorities, aimed at rectifying the shortcomings identified and enhancing the implementing and control measures in place.*

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#### ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

|      |   |
|------|---|
| AGES | Agency for Health and Food Safety- <i>Agentur für Gesundheit und Ernährungssicherheit</i> |
| AMA  | Austrian Agriculture Organisation ( <i>AgraMarkt Austria-AMA</i> )                        |
| AV   | Authorised Veterinarian   |
| BMG  | Federal Ministry of Health- <i>Bundesministerium für Gesundheit</i>                       |
| CA   | Competent Authority   |
| CCA  | Central Competent Authority   |
| CoE  | Council of Europe   |
| EC   | European Community  |
| EU   | European Union  |
| FPD  | Foot Pad Dermatitis   |
| FVO  | Food and Veterinary Office  |
| OV   | Official Veterinarian   |
| VIS  | Veterinary Information System   |

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This audit took place in Austria from 25 to 29 November as part of the planned audit programme of the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO). An opening meeting was held with the competent authorities of Austria on 25 November 2013. At this meeting, the objectives of, and itinerary for the audit were confirmed by the audit team and additional information required for the satisfactory completion of the audit was requested.

The audit team comprised two auditors from the FVO and was accompanied throughout the audit by two representatives of the central competent authority (CCA), The Federal Ministry of Health (*Bundesministerium für Gesundheit – BMG*).

## 2 OBJECTIVES

The objective of the audit was to evaluate the effectiveness of control systems in place for animal welfare, in particular:

- The implementation of national measures aimed at the control of animal welfare on farms with selected species included in Decision 2006/778/EC;
- Assess how the recommendations from the European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes (hereafter “the Convention”) have been included in Austrian legislation and/or other administrative arrangements. Specifically, this audit intends to concentrate on the application of the above recommendations with regard to dairy cattle, turkey and geese farms.

The scope of the audit will include dairy cattle, turkey and geese farms. Only for information proposes, the monitoring and follow up at the slaughterhouse of the welfare conditions of chickens kept for meat production was also included in the scope of the audit.

In pursuit of these objectives, the following meetings were held and sites visited:

| Visits                 |          |   | Comments   |
|------------------------|----------|---|--|
| Competent authority    | Central  | 2 | Opening and final meetings.  |
|                        | District | 2 | In the provinces of Lower Austria and Carinthia.   |
| Farms                  |          | 3 | One for dairy cows, one for geese and one for turkeys, selected by the central competent authority.                    |
| Poultry slaughterhouse |          | 1 | The monitoring and the follow up at the slaughterhouse of the welfare conditions of chickens kept for meat production. |

### **3 LEGAL BASIS**

The audit was carried out under the general provisions of Union legislation, in particular Article 45 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004. A full list of the legal instruments quoted in this report is provided in Annex 1 and refers, where applicable, to the last amended version.

### **4 BACKGROUND**

The most recent audit concerning animal welfare on farms took place from 20 to 26 January 2011. The results of this audit are included in report 2011-6096 which is accessible at: [http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/ir\\_search\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/ir_search_en.cfm) . This report concluded that there was a good system of animal welfare controls in place. Most of the EU requirements were respected and some went beyond the minimum standards. The controls of farm welfare were generally well implemented, however, the system to verify effectiveness of the checks needed to be enhanced.

### **5 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

#### **5.1 COMPETENT AUTHORITY**

##### **Legal requirements**

Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 requires the Member State to designate the competent authority (CA) responsible for the purposes and official controls set out in the Regulation. It also lays down operational criteria for the CA.

##### **Findings**

There have not been significant changes in the structure and organisation of the CCA and the Provincial CAs in the period since the last FVO animal welfare audit in 2011. These CAs structure and the organisation of official controls in farms is described in the country profile of Austria which is accessible at: [http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/country\\_profiles\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/country_profiles_en.cfm) . Additional information is available in the CCA's website at: <http://bmg.gv.at> .

A Standing Commission on Implementation composed of representatives from the CCA, the CAs of the Provinces and the Ministry of Agriculture meets twice per year. It coordinates actions for implementation of legal requirements, including animal welfare topics.

##### Verification activities on the checks -Reporting of controls

Inspections at farms are carried out by Official Veterinarians (OVs) of the Provincial Districts. From the information provided by the CCA the system for verification of controls can be summarised as follows:

- All the results of farm inspections are entered in the Veterinary Information System (VIS) database via harmonised checklists and guidelines for the most relevant animal species.
- The Provinces have to report to the Federal level (Data Statistics Department within the Agency for Health and Food Safety (AGES)) three times per year on the implementation of the official control plan.
- The Data Statistics Department in AGES evaluates the validity and consistency of the data entered in VIS and produces an overall evaluation which is transmitted to the BMG for

evaluation<sup>1</sup>.

- If the information, data and measures taken are clear and sufficient, then data are collected and incorporated by the BMG into the annual report. If not, a deviation report will be produced by the BMG and will be sent out to the Provinces for clarifications and/or further measures.

The audit team reviewed the information collected during the inspections of farms as required by Decision 2006/778/EC and noted that regarding cattle in 2012:

- In Carinthia 9 holdings (5% of the holdings inspected) had deficiencies concerning solely records. In Styria 98 holdings (30% of the holdings inspected) had deficiencies concerning staff, controls, records, freedom of movement, buildings and accommodation and/or feed, water and other substances. A representative from the Province of Carinthia indicated that they did not report all cases in order to avoid over-reporting as in his opinion the Austrian requirements are stricter than EU requirements.

The CCA representative indicated that they have noted these discrepancies between Provinces and they were discussed during the last meeting of the Standing Commission on Implementation held in October 2013. The CCA planned to discuss this further at the meeting scheduled for December 2013. The CCA indicated during the closing meeting that:

- They have already informally asked the Provinces for clarifications by e-mail or by phone.
- The BMG often had to write back to the Provinces for clarification on the annual reports and this lengthened the reporting process. The CCA decided that as from the 2013 annual report, the BMG would be creating reports for each Province and sending them the draft reports for confirmation of the data<sup>2</sup>.

### Audits

- The CCA indicated that in 2012 it had not carried out any audits at all but had instead performed follow-up and analysis of the audits carried out in the previous years.
- At the time of the FVO audit, three Provinces had been audited for animal welfare: Vorarlberg in 2010, Styria in 2011 and in November 2013 Upper Austria on ante mortem and post mortem checks. The CCA indicated that no major deficiencies were found.
- From 2009 to 2011 all nine Provinces were audited for all topics including audits on animal welfare. In 2013 a second cycle of audits was started, with three Provinces to be audited per year. The CCA indicated that they expect to audit all Provinces for animal welfare by the end of 2018.

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<sup>1</sup> *In their response to the draft report the Competent Authority noted that: The Federal Ministry of Health has access to the data entered into the VIS by the Provincial Districts at all times and can therefore follow the results of the inspections.*

<sup>2</sup> *In their response to the draft report the Competent Authority noted that: In order to ensure a consistent overall assessment, the annual report for 2013 is now being produced for the first time by the Federal Ministry of Health for the individual provinces, is submitted to the provinces for evaluation, and then taken by the Federal Ministry of Health as the basis of the annual report for the EU.*

- The CCA indicated at the closing meeting that a new audit manual would be adopted following a meeting in November with the heads of the Provinces. This would include the planned audits for 2014.

## Conclusion

The CCA has started to harmonise the system of reporting non-compliances on animal welfare when national legislation is stricter than EU minimum requirements. However, the absence of clear guidance from the CCA has resulted in significant discrepancies in the number and categories of non-compliances reported by the Provinces. Animal welfare controls have been adequately covered as part of the system of audits carried out.

### 5.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF ANIMALS KEPT FOR FARMING PURPOSES

#### Legal requirements

Council Decision 78/923/EEC concerning the conclusion of the European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes and Council Decision 92/583/EEC on the conclusion of the Protocol of amendment to the European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes have approved the Convention on behalf of the EU. Recommendations adopted under the Convention must be applied by the Member States, in national legislation or by other administrative arrangements.

#### Findings

Concerning legislation and other administrative arrangements which give effect to the recommendations from the Convention concerning the protection of cattle, turkeys and domestic geese, the CCA indicated that:

- They have been implemented by the Federal Law Gazette-FLG No 82/1993, as well as in the Austrian Federal Act on the Protection of Animals-*Tierschutzgesetzes* (FLG I No 118/2004 as amended by FLG No 80/2013), and in the 1st Animal Husbandry Regulation -1. *Tierhaltungsverordnung* (FLG II No 485/2004 as amended by FLG II No 61/2012).
- It provided operating procedures in the form of handbooks which are publicly available. These include checklists and guidelines on how to assess the criteria included in the checklists.

The audit team noted that:

- Forced feeding of animals is prohibited by national legislation (Cruelty to animals Act, section 5.2.11 general. 12). There is also national legislation for certain requirements that go beyond the recommendations from the Convention. These include, for instance, minimum space allowances, such as 40kg/m<sup>2</sup> for turkeys; minimum dimensions for cattle stalls; minimum figures, such as a minimum light intensity of 40 Lux in cattle farms; and the minimum age for surgical interventions (e.g. two weeks of age for dehorning of cattle).

Certain requirements of Austrian legislation do not comply with the recommendations from the Convention:

- Docking of cattle's tails is permitted if absolutely necessary for farming needs to prevent injury to the tail. This is not in compliance with Article 17 of the Council of Europe (CoE) recommendations concerning cattle that forbids this practice with the sole exception being for procedures performed for veterinary medical purposes.

- Sections 7 and 15 of the Animal Welfare Act permit the use of mechanical calving aids in any circumstances by a skilled operator. However, Annex B12 of the recommendations from the Convention concerning cattle states that they should be avoided and used only in exceptional circumstances.

## Conclusions

The national legislation on welfare standards for dairy cattle, turkeys and domestic geese and relevant operating procedures largely implement the recommendations from the Convention concerning these species, with the exception of tail-docking of cattle and mechanical calving aids.

### 5.3 CHECKS ON FARMS

#### Legal requirements

Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 requires that official controls are carried out regularly, on a risk basis and with appropriate frequency.

Article 6 of Directive 98/58/EC lays down that Member States shall ensure that inspections are carried out by the CA to check compliance with the provisions of this Directive.

Information to be submitted to the Commission pursuant to Article 8 of Decision 2006/778/EC shall be contained in the tables set out in Annex IV of this Decision. Annex III of this Decision classifies the action taken by the CA in three administrative categories of non-compliances.

#### Findings

The Animal Welfare Inspection Ordinance lays down that at least 2% of all agricultural holdings must be inspected annually. The AGES selects the farms based on identified risks. Each Province plans and organises the official controls to be executed by the relevant District OVs. Animal welfare is one of the topics checked as part of cross compliance managed by the Austrian Agriculture Organisation (*AgraMarkt Austria-AMA*) which receives one of the four protocol inspection copies. The audit team reviewed a number of inspection files in two District offices visited and noted that:

Regarding collection and reporting of information:

- In 2013 in the Province of Carinthia the CA's request to address a non-compliance within a deadline of less than three months was categorised as “B” instead of “A”.
- Code B-15 of the checklist refers to the prohibition of the tethering of calves as prescribed by Point 7 of Annex I to Directive 2008/119/EC. The audit team noted that this field was missing in the electronic database used at provincial level meaning that tethering of calves could not be reported electronically. The provincial OV clarified that every paper report is read and evaluated at provincial level and manually inputted into the table of Annex IV to Decision 2006/778/EC<sup>3</sup>.

Concerning two cases of enforcement reviewed in the Province of Lower Austria:

- In one case the tethering of calves was detected by the OV and this was immediately corrected by the farmer. The farmer was also warned not to repeat the non-compliance. The audit team also noted that, if relevant for cross compliance, AMA would decide on reduction of payments in accordance with a scale ranking the infringements and would contact the

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<sup>3</sup> *In their response to the draft report the Competent Authority noted that: Number B-15 of the checklist for cattle is also displayed in the VIS making possible to enter information on the tethering of calves electronically at any time. Discrepancies through use of the K-VIS, one of Carinthia's own databases, were not foreseen by the central authorities and will also not be tolerated by it due to the risk of inadequate reporting on the tethering of calves.*

farmer directly. The OV did not have feedback from or access to the AMA decision. A CCA representative added that cross compliance checks are discussed regularly with the Ministry of Agriculture and also in the Standing Commission on Implementation.

- National legislation specifically prohibits the use of rubber bands for tail docking of sheep. A case was referred on 15 June 2010 to the District sanction department. The OV indicated that he presumed that the fine was paid as he was not notified to give an opinion in the case of a farmer's objection (or to give evidence in court in the framework of a legal action).

## **Conclusion**

The system of inspections in place has the risk of under-reporting of tethering of calves, which is counterbalanced by the supervision of every case at provincial level into the reporting table of Annex IV of Decision 2006/778/EC and the cross compliance check managed by AMA.

The system implemented by the CCA ensures that adequate enforcement action is taken when non-compliances are detected.

### *5.3.1 Checks on Dairy Farms*

## **Legal requirements**

The recommendations from the Convention concerning cattle provide details which need to be considered when inspecting the arrangements on dairy farms.

## **Findings**

The CCA has drawn up a handbook and checklist to carry out inspections on cattle farms and made them publicly available. The handbook provides detailed guidance on how to interpret the requirements and includes drawings and tables with minimum and maximum figures for floor slats, pen sizes, and light intensity requirements which are summarised in the checklist.

The audit team compared a number of the recommendations from the Convention concerning cattle with the national equivalents, such as the recommendation not to keep cows and heifers on a fully slatted area, the opportunity to access the outside when possible and the provision of separate solid floored bedded pens recommended for use prior to calving time, which were all equivalent.

The audit team visited a commercial dairy farm and observed a routine inspection carried out by an OV and noted that:

- The OV carried out a competent, complete inspection of all areas of the farm and its activities. He used the checklist for background information and guidance and was very familiar with the requirements of the national legislation and the various transitional periods applicable.
- In general, the condition of the animals, their welfare and the environmental conditions were all effectively assessed.
- The OV detected two deficiencies. The first one regarding the requirement in national legislation for a light intensity of at least 40 Lux in one area of the farm, which was corrected on the spot by switching on the lights in that specific area. The second one was the risk of injury due to bad maintenance in an old barn, for which a one week deadline for correction was granted.
- Article 17 of the recommendations from the Convention concerning cattle indicates that dehorning without anaesthesia by heat cauterisation on animals shall be carried out on animals under four weeks of age. National legislation (section 7 of the Animal Welfare Act) limits the age for this procedure to two weeks. Dehorning was done by the farmer at less

than one week of age with a heat cauterization device which produced sufficient heat for at least ten seconds. This is in compliance with the recommendations from the Convention concerning cattle and with Austrian legislation.

- Point 5 of Annex B of the recommendations from the Convention concerning cattle indicates that animals should be given the opportunity to go outside whenever possible and in summertime preferably every day. The national legislation follows this recommendation by requiring that cattle should have appropriate movement opportunities, a suitable outlet or grazing granted for at least 90 days a year. In the premises visited the farmer and the Provincial CA indicated that although the adult cows did not go grazing they have movement opportunities in the free stalls and in the external aisle leading to the milking parlour.

### 5.3.2 *Checks in turkey farms*

#### **Legal requirements**

The recommendations from the Convention concerning turkeys provide details, including emergency killing, which need to be considered when inspecting the arrangements on turkey farms.

#### **Findings**

The CCA has drawn up a poultry handbook and made it publicly available. It also issued a specific checklist to carry out inspections on turkey, goose and duck farms with explanatory notes on how to interpret the requirements.

The audit team compared a number of the recommendations from the Convention concerning turkeys with the national equivalents, which in general are more precise or are beyond the recommendations from the Convention concerning turkeys, such as the maximum stocking density of 40kgs live weight per square metre (the recommendations from the Convention concerning turkeys do not set figures for stocking density) or the minimum light intensity of 20 Lux at bird's eye level (recommendations from the Convention concerning turkeys indicate that this shall be at least 10 Lux).

The audit team visited a commercial farm and observed a routine inspection carried out by an OV and noted that:

- The OV had feedback information from the slaughterhouse, such as ante and post mortem results, including deaths on arrival. The previous OV check on the farm was performed in October 2007.
- The OV carried out a competent and complete inspection of the birds, equipment and facilities of the house visited. The birds present in this house were in the middle of the production cycle and there was space for movement. The OV performed a satisfactory inspection of one bird, checking for hock burns, breast lesions and pododermatitis, and checked that there was a dedicated pen for sick animals.
- Farm records indicated that during the final stages of the breeding cycle an average of 40 sick or injured birds were culled each week. The killing of these birds, weighing more than 5 kg live weight, was performed after mechanical dislocation of the neck. This stunning method is not permitted under Table 1, Chapter I of Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 for birds weighing more than 5kg live weight.

Regarding space allowance and maximum capacity:

- In general the Provincial CA controls stocking density when the OV checks the premises. Regarding maximum mortality rates, there were no intervention levels outlined in the

checklists.

- For implementation of this requirement section H1 of the checklist indicates that surface area and building dimensions should be measured. The farmer indicated that he regularly weighs the birds and carries out thinning in order to slaughter in groups.
- The maximum capacity for this holding according to the VIS was 17500 birds and the total surface of the three houses was 3440m<sup>2</sup>. The audit team noted that there was no explanation from the OV, the Provincial CA or the CCA on how this number was calculated. At the closing meeting a representative of the Provincial CA indicated that the maximum capacity of the farm visited was determined at the time of the construction authorisation, mostly based on environmental regulations (waste produced) some authorisations might have been granted before the requirement of 40kg/m<sup>2</sup> came into force.
- The audit team noted that there was no system in place to calculate what should be the maximum number of birds at the beginning of the production cycle in order to prevent overstocking at the moments of highest stocking density during the production cycle, i.e. at end and at the time of thinning (using, for example, previous mortality records, weight reports from the slaughterhouse, proportions of males and females).

The farmer reported that previous flocks had high mortality rates, mainly at the beginning and at the end of the production cycle, 7% for female birds and 12% for males. These were reduced to the average mortality rates at the time of the audit of 3.5% and 6.5% respectively after getting advice from the cooperative to which most farmers belong in Austria, which holds monthly meetings with the hatcheries.

At the closing meeting a CCA representative indicated that the Meat Department had an advisory body (Animal Health Service) that in June 2013 adopted an all-in-one concept, including poultry health. There is a pilot project for 2014 on animal welfare indicators for poultry.

### 5.3.3 *Checks in goose farms*

#### **Legal requirements**

The recommendations from the Convention concerning geese and their cross-breeds provide details, including emergency killing, which need to be considered when inspecting the arrangements on goose farms.

#### **Findings**

The CCA indicated that forced feeding of animals and live plucking of feathers is not allowed in Austria. The audit team compared a number recommendations from the Convention concerning geese with the national equivalents, which in general are more precise or are beyond these recommendations. National legislation, for example, sets a maximum stocking density of 15 kg live weight per square metre and, when access to outside space is granted it sets a minimum of 10 m<sup>2</sup> of space allowance per bird.

The audit team visited a free range organic commercial farm with around 900 birds at the end of the production cycle and observed a routine inspection carried out by an OV. It noted that:

- The OV performed a full inspection using the official checklist which concluded with a warning to the farmer to improve the protection of the birds against adverse weather conditions.
- Neither the recommendations from the Convention concerning turkeys nor Austrian national legislation provide for the number or the length of the feeders and drinking water troughs, and the dimensions of water baths. The OV judged that drinking water, feed and the water

baths present were sufficient for the number of animals. The audit team noted that there was no competition between the birds for these facilities.

- The farmer indicated that the total farm area was around 10000m<sup>2</sup>, thus providing more space allowance per bird than the minimum 10m<sup>2</sup> set in national legislation, and that fresh pasture was provided by moving the fences regularly.
- The birds were in good condition. The OV detected a bird with lameness and the farmer explained that in the case of injuries he kept the bird under three days observation in the pen for sick animals close to his house. In the case of absence of signs of recovery the goose will be slaughtered by the owner for his private domestic consumption, in accordance with Article 1(3)(b) of Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009.

### **Conclusions on cattle, turkey and goose farms**

The CCA is implementing satisfactory controls on requirements which go further than those of the recommendations from the Convention concerning cattle, turkeys and geese. Inspections are carried out regularly and provide assurance of compliance with the recommendations from the Convention and national requirements for these species. However, the CCA did not ensure that the maximum stocking density for turkeys, set up by national legislation, is not exceeded throughout the production cycle and sick and injured turkeys over 5 kg live weight were killed in farm after stunning with a non permitted method,

#### **5.4 COLLECTION OF INFORMATION ON REPORTING OF RESULTS OF CHECKS IN POULTRY SLAUGHTERHOUSES**

### **Legal requirements**

Points 2 and 3 of Annex III of Directive 2007/43/EC, which also apply for stocking densities lower than 33 kg/m<sup>2</sup>, require OVs at poultry slaughterhouses to evaluate the results of the post-mortem inspection to identify possible indications of poor welfare in the holding of origin. In cases where the mortality rate or post-mortem inspection results are consistent with poor animal welfare conditions, these have to be communicated to the keeper of the animals and to the CA for appropriate actions to be taken.

### **Findings**

National legislation on chickens kept for meat production defines the maximum stocking density for chickens at 30 birds/m<sup>2</sup> with no exemptions, whereas Article 3 of Directive 2007/43/EC provides for stocking densities up to 42 birds/m<sup>2</sup> under certain conditions.

The CCA indicated that Austria had not yet a system in place to monitor post-mortem indicators of animal welfare in poultry slaughterhouses. The audit team noted that:

- No specific instructions or guidance have been issued on how to implement Annex III of Directive 2007/43/EC.
- The CCA explained that they had met the poultry producers and that by June 2014 they expected to implement a similar system to the one in place in the slaughterhouse visited by the audit team, i.e. a scoring system for foot pad dermatitis (FPD).

The audit team visited one large commercial slaughterhouse selected by the CCA and observed its system of controls related to the evaluation of ante and post-mortem indicators of animal welfare. It noted that every flock delivered to the slaughterhouse had to be examined for a number of welfare

indicators including:

- Control of information from the producer regarding mortality rates and inspection on arrival of a number of birds in crates.
- Counting and recording of chickens which are dead on arrival. The authorised veterinarian (AV) analyses possible causes such as transport, previous flock problems and harvesting reasons. The AV set a reaction trigger of 0.33% deaths to start corrective action.
- Control of other indicators from post-mortem results, which may indicate welfare problems in house, for instance hock burns, breast blisters and emaciation.
- Control of FPD: a number of birds of every flock must be examined for foot pad lesions and each foot must be given a score. The score for the feet sample is then calculated in a ten points scoring system. If the total score is 9 or 10 the AV must react.
- Indicators for problems with catching of birds are graded from 1 to 5 with reaction triggers at the 4 and 5 grades.
- Regarding rejected carcasses, the AV set a reaction trigger at 0.66%.

The audit team reviewed the documentation of actions taken for a flock with 1.2% deaths, 50% hock injuries related to the harvesting machine, and 0.5% carcasses rejected. The corrective action taken included:

- The AV's report sheet with a table listing the number of birds dead on arrival, detained carcasses and other results.
- The slaughterhouse operator's reports to the farmer communicating the results and informing that the meat value was reduced to lower price category and warning him that next time he would not be allowed to sell to this slaughterhouse.
- There was no report to the District OV, as it was a first time case of this non-compliance. The Provincial CA indicated that in 2012 and 2013 there were no reports for action from the slaughterhouses in the Province.

## **Conclusions**

The slaughterhouse visited has a well-conceived and implemented system for assessing and reporting on welfare indicators found at post-mortem in poultry slaughterhouses that, together with price reductions when standards are not respected and the lack of communications to the Provincial CA for actions, are consistent with good welfare conditions on the broiler farms supplying this slaughterhouse. Although there was no such system in place which is applicable to all slaughterhouses, the CCA is working on implementing one at national level by June 2014.

## **6 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS**

The national legislation on welfare standards for dairy cattle, turkeys and domestic geese and relevant operating procedures largely implement the recommendations from the Convention

concerning these species. Detailed national requirements for the welfare of these species generally go beyond those laid down in the recommendations from the Convention, the only major shortcomings were that national legislation allows tail-docking in cattle when the farming system so requires, and is less restrictive on the use of mechanical calving aids. The CCA has started to harmonise the reporting system for non-compliances required by Decision 2006/778/EC when national legislation is stricter than EU minimum requirements.

The CCA and Provincial CAs controls provide assurance on compliance with the recommendations from the Convention and national requirements at cattle, turkey and goose farms. However, the CCA did not ensure that the maximum stocking density for turkeys, set up by national legislation, is not exceeded throughout the production cycle and sick and injured turkeys over 5 kg live weight were killed in farm after stunning with a non permitted method.

The requirements of Annex III of Directive 2007/43/EC regarding the reporting of results of checks in poultry slaughterhouses to identify possible indications of poor welfare in the holding of origin were well implemented in the slaughterhouse visited and the CCA expects to implement a similar system at national level by June 2014.

## 7 CLOSING MEETING

A closing meeting was held on 29 November 2013 with representatives of the CCA and Provincial CAs. At this meeting the main findings and preliminary conclusions of the mission were presented by the audit team. The representatives of the CCA and Provincial CAs did not express any major disagreement with these and provided a number of clarifications to the audit team which were duly noted and have been included in this report.

## 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

The competent authorities are invited to provide, within 25 working days of receipt of the report, an action plan containing details of the actions taken and planned, including deadlines for their completion, aimed at addressing the recommendations set out below:

| N°. | Recommendation  |
|-----|---|
| 1.  | The CCA should complete measures to ensure a consistent reporting system between Provinces of the non-compliances required by Decision 2006/778/EC, in particular when national legislation is stricter than EU minimum requirements.   |
| 2.  | The CCA should ensure that national legislation does not conflict with Article 17 and Annex B12 of the Council of Europe recommendations concerning cattle.   |
| 3.  | The CCA should ensure that the maximum stocking density for turkeys, set up by national legislation, is not exceeded throughout the production cycle in order to satisfy Article 14(1) of the Council of Europe recommendations concerning turkeys.                           |
| 4.  | The CCA should ensure that sick and injured poultry over 5 kg live weight are killed on farm only after stunning in accordance with the methods and the specific requirements related to the application of those methods set out in Annex I of Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009. |

The competent authority's response to the recommendations can be found at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/rep\\_details\\_en.cfm?rep\\_inspection\\_ref=2013-6805](http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/rep_details_en.cfm?rep_inspection_ref=2013-6805)

## ANNEX 1 - LEGAL REFERENCES

| Legal Reference  | Official Journal   | Title   |
|------------------|--|---|
| Dec. 78/923/EEC  | OJ L 323, 17.11.1978, p. 12-13   | 78/923/EEC: Council Decision of 19 June 1978 concerning the conclusion of the European Convention for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes   |
| Dec. 92/583/EEC  | OJ L 395, 31.12.1992, p. 21-21   | 92/583/EEC: Council Decision of 14 December 1992 on the conclusion of the Protocol of amendment to the European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes  |
| Dir. 98/58/EC    | OJ L 221, 8.8.1998, p. 23-27   | Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes   |
| Reg. 882/2004    | OJ L 165, 30.4.2004, p. 1, Corrected and re-published in OJ L 191, 28.5.2004, p. 1 | Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules |
| Dec. 2006/778/EC | OJ L 314, 15.11.2006, p. 39-47   | 2006/778/EC: Commission Decision of 14 November 2006 concerning minimum requirements for the collection of information during the inspections of production sites on which certain animals are kept for farming purposes          |
| Dir. 2007/43/EC  | OJ L 182, 12.7.2007, p. 19-28  | Council Directive 2007/43/EC of 28 June 2007 laying down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production  |
| Reg. 1099/2009   | OJ L 303, 18.11.2009, p. 1-30  | Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 of 24 September 2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing   |
| Dir. 2008/119/EC | OJ L 10, 15.1.2009, p. 7-13  | Council Directive 2008/119/EC of 18 December 2008 laying down minimum standards for the protection of calves  |