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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Directorate F - Food and Veterinary Office

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FINAL REPORT OF AN AUDIT
CARRIED OUT IN
AUSTRIA
FROM 27 APRIL 2015 TO 30 APRIL 2015
IN ORDER TO
DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ANIMAL WELFARE TRAINING
PROGRAMMES

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 took place in Austria from 27 to 30 April 2015 to determine the effectiveness and suitability of the activities to ensure staff looking after or handling farm animals possess the appropriate ability, knowledge and professional competence. The audit focussed on the sectors of pig farming and live animal transport.

The report concludes that the high quality of training courses in Austria has been achieved by underpinning training in the Federal Animal Welfare Act and using a quality system to deliver and assess suitability and effectiveness. Competent Authorities and training bodies are providing several training activities and produce large quantities of information on animal welfare for stakeholders. Training courses are planned in consultation with all stakeholders involved and are promoting a high level of awareness.

National legislation recognises some academic courses as equivalent to training courses although assurances that the training required by Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 is included in these academic courses is not always provided.

These training activities however have not prevented the occurrence of some non-compliances to the requirements of Directive 2008/120/EC, such as tail-docking, as these are influenced by other factors.

The report makes 1 recommendation to the Austrian authorities so that all training courses for drivers and attendants transporting live animals can provide assurances that training on all the necessary subjects is carried out.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

Abbreviation	Explanation
BMG	the Ministry of Health (<i>Bundesministerium für Gesundheit</i>)
CA	Competent Authority
CCA	Central Competent Authority
EC	European Community
EU	European Union
FVO	Food and Veterinary Office
LFI	the Rural Training Institute (<i>Ländlichen Fortbildungsinstitut</i>) of the Chamber of Agriculture
OV	Official veterinarian
WIFI	the Institute for Economic Development (<i>Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitute</i>) of the Federal Economic Chamber

1 INTRODUCTION

This audit took place in Austria from 27 to 30 April 2015 as part of the planned audit programme of the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO).

An opening meeting was held with the competent authorities (CAs) on 27 April. At this meeting, the objectives of, and itinerary for, the audit were confirmed by the mission team. The audit team comprised two auditors from the Food and Veterinary Office and one national expert and was accompanied throughout the audit by representatives of the central competent authority (CCA) – the Ministry of Health (*Bundesministerium für Gesundheit* – BMG).

2 OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The objective of the audit was to determine the effectiveness and suitability of the activities to ensure staff looking after or handling farm animals possess the appropriate ability, knowledge and professional competence.

The scope of the audit included the relevant activities in the sectors of pig farming and the transport of live animals.

In pursuit of the objectives, the following meetings were held:

Meetings		Comments
Competent Authorities	5	As well as an opening and final meeting, three meetings took place with CA staff responsible for carrying out controls on the sectors of pig welfare and animal transport
Pig breeders/keepers	2	One meeting with pig breeders who have followed training in pig welfare and one meeting with prospective farmers who are in training
Trainers	3	Meetings with training providers in three Provinces

3 LEGAL BASIS

The audit was carried out under the general provisions of EU legislation and, in particular Article 45 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules.

EU legal acts quoted in this report are provided in Annex 1 and refer, where applicable, to the last amended version.

4 BACKGROUND

The EU strategy for the protection and welfare of animals 2012-2015 (COM(2012) 6 final/2) that was adopted in January 2012¹ indicated that one of the key issues which needed to be addressed was that many stakeholders lack sufficient knowledge about animal welfare. Subsequently a study on animal welfare education was launched to identify the animal welfare topics which should be included in the professional curricula of those involved with animals and which actions would be needed to improve awareness among those professions. This study should be finalised in 2015.

This series of FVO audits aims to identify activities that are suitable and effective in delivering high levels of knowledge and competence to the professional sectors on animal welfare, and therefore achieve a high level of compliance with animal welfare requirements.

5 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN THE PIG FARMING SECTOR

Legal requirements

Article 4 of Directive 98/58/EC.

Article 6(b) of Directive 2008/120/EC.

Findings

1. The EU requirements for training courses in the pig farming sector in Austria are met through training provided by training bodies, namely: the Rural Training Institute (*Ländlichen Fortbildungsinstitut* – LFI) of the Chamber of Agriculture, and Agricultural and Technical Schools which include the training requirements of Directive 2008/120/EC into the curricula of the courses delivered.

Further information to support conclusions

2. The Federal Animal Welfare Act of 2005 sets out the need to increase public awareness of animal welfare. In one of the three Provinces visited the CA has introduced this into the mission statement (to promote and strengthen animal welfare awareness of every single person) allowing it to better allocate resources to training activities.
3. CA representatives have indicated that the introduction of the Federal Animal Welfare Act and its provision to increase awareness has been the driving force behind the commitment of the CAs and training bodies to provide training activities and information on animal welfare.
4. The CCA has published the checklist for official controls on the requirements of Directive 2008/120/EC and relevant guidelines on its website. This document:

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/actionplan/docs/aw_strategy_19012012_en.pdf

- is used in all training programmes and is referred to by both trainers and trainees as a self-evaluation tool;
 - offers practical guidance to pig producers on issues such as tail-docking.
5. Courses provided by the LFI for pig animal welfare generally cover one specific topic (e.g. use of manipulable material). Interested farmers can attend the courses of their choice. The courses provided and their contents are developed in consultation with the industry and with representatives of the CA who also have a role as trainers.
6. With regards to training courses provided by the LFI:
- the variety of courses provided for pig animal welfare are generally based on the requests of the stakeholders e.g. The CAs have organised meetings with stakeholders in particular when there are changes or deadlines to legislation such as group housing of sows;
 - the degree of the CAs' involvement varies depending on the size of the industry meaning that in the Districts where there is a high density of pig farms the number of courses provided for pig welfare, and the involvement of the CA, is greater;
 - the LFI has a quality assessment system in place which allows a good evaluation of the delivery of the course (content, applicability, knowledge of tutor, documents provided, etc.). It also gives the possibility to trainees to propose requests for future changes to the course content. These courses have had high scores in evaluations from the start.
7. Courses provided by the Agricultural Schools integrate pig animal welfare with other subjects such as animal nutrition, farm management and quality systems.

Activities additional to training

8. Information regarding the welfare of pigs on farms has been made available on the CCA website.
9. The Chamber of Agriculture regularly publishes a journal which covers all topics of agricultural interest, including animal welfare. This journal is sent to all the members of the Chamber of Agriculture.
10. Additional activities carried out by the LFI are:
- contribution to the publication of the journal by the Chamber of Agriculture;
 - the provision of a consultancy service to the members of the Chamber of Commerce including for pig farmers. Some of these consultancies are free of charge;
 - partially subsidising the subscription fees for the training courses provided by the LFI.

11. The trained operators met highly valued the quality of the courses organised by the LFI, in particular the practical experience demonstrated by the trainers.
12. Agricultural School trainees have indicated that animal welfare awareness is a focal point in the training they were receiving and emphasised their interest in animal behaviour. The greater difficulty foreseen by these trainees is how to make the economics of farm management and consumer demand and animal welfare work towards a common goal.
13. OV's have indicated that the larger farms are in general compliant to the requirements of Directive 2008/120/EC. The more common non-compliances detected are generally in smaller farms where the operators nonetheless possesses the necessary knowledge. The CCA reported that the trade in pigs is a major obstacle to preventing tail-docking (fattening farms prefer buying pigs with docked tails).

Conclusions on training activities in the pig farming sector

14. The introduction of the Federal Animal Welfare Act has strongly promoted the inclusion animal welfare in training activities and literature developed for farmers. Training courses are planned in consultation with all stakeholders involved and are promoting a high level of awareness. Many of these courses include a quality evaluation system which would enable the training body to improve the system if needed.
15. These training activities however have not prevented the occurrence of some non-compliances to the requirements of Directive 2008/120/EC, such as tail-docking, as these are influenced by other factors².

5.2 TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN THE LIVE ANIMAL TRANSPORT SECTOR

Legal requirements

Article 17(1) and Annex IV of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005.

Findings

16. Similarly to the pig sector, the EU requirements for training courses in Austria in the sector of transport of live animals are met through training provided by training bodies, namely: the LFI, the Agricultural and Technical schools which include the training

² *In their response to the draft report the CA noted that regarding tail docking of pigs:*

According to Annex 5 point 2.10 of the Austrian "1. Tierhaltungsverordnung, BGBl. II Nr. 485/2004 idgF" (1st Regulation on the Keeping of Animals") docking of tails is permitted only if:

- piglets are not older than seven days or
- docking is carried out by a veterinarian using effective anaesthesia and analgesics,
- a maximum of half the tail is removed
- procedure is necessary to prevent future injuries of animals.

Furthermore, according to Annex 5 point 5.4 of the "1. Tierhaltungsverordnung" keeping tail docked pigs is only permitted if the fattening factory keeps records concerning:

- quantity and quality of manipulable material provided to animals
- quantity and quality of tail and ear biting.

requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 into the curricula of the courses delivered, and the Institute for Economic Development (*Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitute* – WIFI) of the Federal Economic Chamber.

17. Under the provisions of the Animal Transport Training Ordinance (92/2008) people in possession of certain educational degrees can be given an equivalent to a driver's certificate of competence. The audit team has seen examples of assurances given by Agricultural Schools that the topics listed in Point 2 of Annex IV of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 have been included in the training course but have not seen similar assurances for degrees in Veterinary Medicine or Master's program in Animal Science or Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Sciences at the University of Natural Resources.

Further information to support conclusions

18. The CCA has indicated that prior to the introduction of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 training activities on animal welfare during transport were already being carried out based on the requirements of national legislation.

19. Training courses on the requirements of Annex IV of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 have to be approved by the CCA.

20. The training courses offered by LFI and WIFI take into consideration past experience of the trainee and are organised as follows:

OPTION 1:			Common to OPTIONS 1 & 2					
Proof of 1year previous experience			4 hours moduleB	Test (multiple -choice)	Certificate for short distance transport	4 hours moduleC	Test (multiple -choice)	Certificate for long distance transport
OPTION 2:								
80hours practice under direct supervision of certified driver	4 hours moduleA	Test (multiple -choice)						

21. The topics of the courses offered by LFI and WIFI are similar and have been agreed upon by these two training bodies in consultation with the stakeholders to ensure consistency in the quality and contents of the courses delivered.

22. The system in place for the examination:

- is composed of multiple choice questions that are selected form a central database managed by the CCA;
- there are two correct answers for each question and the trainees have to identify both of these answers;

- the pass mark is 60%. When the outcome of the exam is between 50% and 60% the trainee can take an oral test to reply to a limited number of additional questions to reach the 60% mark.

23. The LFI evaluates the delivery of its training courses on transport using the same quality assessment system used in the training courses for pig welfare. Course evaluation has been high from the start (see also Point 6 bullet 3).

Activities additional to training

24. The CCA has produced handbooks for long and short distance transport of animals. These handbooks are also available on the CCA's website.

25. Similarly to the activities carried out in the pig welfare sector, the Chamber of Agriculture regularly publishes a journal which covers all topics of agricultural interest, including animal welfare. This journal is sent to all the members of the Chamber of Agriculture (see also Point 9).

26. Similarly to the activities carried out in the pig welfare sector, the LFI:

- contribution to the publication of the journal by the Chamber of Agriculture;
- provides a consultancy service to the members of the Chamber of Agriculture who act as live animal transporters, drivers and attendants.

27. In 2007 the Chamber of Agriculture has published brochures on the short and long distance transport of animals, and updated these brochures in 2013. These brochures were produced in collaboration with the LFI.

28. The CCA indicated that the most frequent non-compliances to the requirements of Regulation (EC) NO 1/2005 detected in Austria are of documentary nature. The most frequent non-compliance forwarded by the Austrian National Contact Point to the counterparts in other Member States for the purposes of Article 23(5) of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 is the transport of unfit animals. This is in contrast with Austrian transports where the rate of compliance to this requirement has increased over the years.

Conclusions on training activities in the live animal transport sector

29. Training courses are planned in consultation with all stakeholders involved and are promoting a high level of awareness. These courses are part of a quality system which enables training bodies to regularly assess the courses and improve their suitability and effectiveness.

30. National legislation recognises some academic courses as equivalent to training courses although assurances that the training required by Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 is included in these academic courses is not always provided.

6 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Training courses in Austria are of high quality and are using a quality system to deliver and regularly assess suitability and effectiveness. This has been achieved by underpinning training in the Federal Animal Welfare Act and a high level of commitment by CAs and training bodies to promote awareness of animal welfare due to the inclusion of this principle in national legislation.

CAs and training bodies are providing several training activities and developing large quantities of information on animal welfare for stakeholders. Training courses are planned in consultation with all stakeholders involved and are promoting a high level of awareness. Training bodies are using a quality system to regularly assess the suitability and effectiveness of these courses.

National legislation recognises some academic courses as equivalent to training courses although assurances that the training required by Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 is included in these academic courses is not always provided.

These training activities however have not prevented the occurrence of some non-compliances to the requirements of Directive 2008/120/EC, such as tail-docking, as these are influenced by other factors.

7 CLOSING MEETING

A closing meeting was held on 30 April 2015 with representatives of the CAs, at which the main findings and preliminary conclusions of the audit were presented by the audit team.

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 recommendation set out below:

No.	Recommendation
1.	To ensure that academic courses recognised as equivalent to training courses for drivers and attendants transporting live animals provide training on all the subjects listed in Point 2 of Annex IV of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005. Recommendation based on conclusion 30. Associated finding: 17.

ANNEX 1 – LEGAL REFERENCES

Legal Reference	Official Journal	Title
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
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
Dir. 2008/120/EC	OJ L 47, 18.2.2009, p. 5-13	Council Directive 2008/120/EC of 18 December 2008 laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs
Reg. 1/2005	OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p. 1-44	Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations and amending Directives 64/432/EEC and 93/119/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1255/97