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FINAL REPORT OF AN AUDIT  
CARRIED OUT IN  
SWEDEN  
FROM 26 OCTOBER 2015 TO 30 OCTOBER 2015  
IN ORDER TO  
DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS ON ANIMAL WELFARE OF ACTIVITIES  
PROMOTING COMPETENCE OF ANIMAL HANDLERS AND KEEPERS

*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 Sweden from 26 to 30 October 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 pig and slaughterhouse sectors.*

*The system of training provided by institutions and the additional activities from the pig farming and slaughter industries produced good competence on animal welfare for pig farmers and slaughterhouse staff.*

*Sweden has implemented the relevant EU requirements concerning training of pig farmers and slaughterhouse staff. The training is well received and considered useful by both sectors.*

*The competent authority's system for evaluation of the effectiveness of the training through the results of the animal welfare inspections in the farm and in the slaughterhouses confirmed the competence and knowledge of the farmers and of the slaughterhouse staff. Farmers keep and handle pigs correctly (e.g. rearing of pigs with entire tails) in line with national requirements that are stricter than Union ones. Existing non-compliances in slaughterhouses are attributed to a reluctance to take on additional administrative burdens by operators.*

*The report makes no recommendations to the Swedish authorities.*

## Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION .....	1
2	OBJECTIVES .....	1
3	LEGAL BASIS .....	1
4	BACKGROUND .....	2
5	FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS .....	2
	5.1 Training activities in the pig farming sector .....	2
	5.2 Training activities in the slaughterhouse sector .....	7
6	OVERALL CONCLUSIONS .....	11
7	CLOSING MEETING .....	11

## ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
AWO	Animal welfare officer
FBO	Business operator
CA	Competent Authority
CAB	County Administrative Board
CCA	Central Competent Authority
EU	European Union
FVO	Food and Veterinary Office
NFA	National Food Agency
OV	Official veterinarian
SBA	Swedish Board of Agriculture (SBA, <i>Jordbruksverket</i> )
SLU	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
SOP	Standard operating procedure

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This audit took place in Sweden from 26 to 30 October 2015 as part of the planned audit programme of the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO). An opening meeting was held with the Swedish Central Competent Authority (CCA) the Swedish Board of Agriculture (SBA-*Jordbruksverket*) on 26 October 2015. 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 a national expert from Portugal and was accompanied throughout the audit by representatives from the CCA.

## 2 OBJECTIVES

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 and broiler farming. The FVO had pre-selected the pig sector for review and the CCA had been asked to select one sector from the three remaining sectors (broilers, transport and slaughter) for which there are also specific EU requirements regarding operator competence. The CCA selected the slaughter sector and therefore the scope of the audit was on the relevant activities in those sectors.

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

Meetings		Comments
Competent authority	3	In addition to the opening and final meeting, another meeting took place with officials responsible for official controls.
Pig sector	2	One joint meeting with farmers trained by the Swedish University of Agriculture Sciences (SLU) and farmers trained by the Upper Secondary Schools. One meeting with trainers from SLU and Upper Secondary Schools.
Slaughter sector	2	One meeting with trainers from Meny(SLU) and animal welfare officers (AWOs) from slaughterhouses and one meeting with trainees from slaughterhouses.
Pig Industry	1	With a representative for the Farm & Animal Health Service.

## 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 I 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 2012 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.

Nine Member States, Sweden was not one of the nine, received a letter of formal notice at the beginning of 2013 for failure to enforce group housing of sows. There have also been high levels of non-compliance regarding provision of manipulable material and avoidance of routine tail docking of pigs and the Commission has been developing guidelines on these topics. For these reasons, professional competence in the pig sector was pre-selected for this series of audits.

## **5 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.1 TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN THE PIG FARMING SECTOR**

#### **Legal requirements**

Article 4 of Directive 98/58/EC.

Article 6 of Directive 2008/120/EC.

#### **Findings**

1. The requirements of Article 4 of Directive 98/58 EC and Article 6 of Directive 2008/120/EC are implemented via national legislation provisions regarding the keeping of animals for agriculture purposes (*Statens jordbruksverks föreskrifter och allmänna råd SJVFS 2010:15 om djurhållning inom lantbruket m.m.* chapter 1, paragraph 5, section 3) which require people attending animals to have adequate knowledge and skills, and to be adequate in numbers, to ensure that these provisions are complied with.
2. A number of training courses available at the upper secondary level (ages 16 to 19) in schools specialised in preparing students for work with animal welfare and management (*Naturbruksgymnasium*) include EU and national animal welfare requirements into the curriculum of the courses. The same is valid for the higher education level (University) of

the national education system in courses such as for Agricultural Technologist or various types of Agronomist or Biologist aiming at preparing students for animal welfare and management in this sector.

- In recent years approximately 1700 students from upper secondary school and 200 from university have graduated in these areas annually.
- The number of pig holdings in 2014 was 1282. According to SBA data, between 2010 and 2014 there was a decrease of 24% in the number of holdings (413 holdings less) and 9% decrease in the number of pigs (142344 pigs less in 2014).

3. Evaluation of the effectiveness of training:

- There are lists of topics that should be covered and specific goals for what the students should know or be skilled for the education in upper secondary schools and at university level. Those topics and goals are established by the educational institutions and relevant government bodies.
- The SBA does not intervene in decisions concerning course contents and does not evaluate if courses include all relevant requirements from Directives 98/58/EC and 2008/120/EC and the additional national animal welfare requirements. The confirmation of farmers' competence is done through the results of the animal welfare inspections at pig farms.
- The National Agency for Education evaluates the quality of the education provided by the upper secondary schools while the Higher Education Authority (*Universitetskanslerämbetet*) evaluates that provided by universities.
- Both education levels also carry out internal evaluation to determine student satisfaction and achievement of objectives.

4. Representatives from different industry sectors act both as assessors of the training and in lecturing at both upper secondary school and university level.

5. Some changes to the course programmes in recent years are:

- At university level the ethics component/weight in the programme has increased and economics and sustainability are more taken into account. This has caused an increase in the course length from two to three years. The research area has also more influence in the training, as teachers are all involved in research, bring students into it, and also aim to have research results transposed into production practices. The teaching methodology is now more task based with case studies linked to practical application of animal welfare requirements. There are fewer lectures than before.
- All Upper secondary schools have the same examination and course content at basic level, but some schools have some type of specialisation available near the end of the studies. In addition due to feedback provided from students there has been a move to a greater emphasis on practical work.

6. Those courses are additionally complemented with more targeted training provided by stakeholder organisations such as a Swedish certification scheme (*Svenskt Sigill*), the pig business organisation Swedish Pig (*Svenska Pig*) and the Farm and Animal Health service (*Gård & Djurhälsan*) (see also paragraphs 11, 15 and 18).
7. In addition the Vocational Board of Agriculture and Horticulture (*Naturbrukets yrkesnämnd*) which supports vocational education, life-long learning and recruitment in agricultural and horticulture/gardening has introduced a "Green card" exam and certification. This is a voluntary scheme and the green card certifies that the holder of the card has acquired the set standards in animal husbandry (pigs or dairy cattle) or crop production or horticulture production.
  - It is possible to register for a green card examination after having finished the Agricultural or Horticultural College (upper secondary school) or for staff with practical experience in agricultural or horticultural businesses that wish to have a certificate of competence.
  - A minimum of 70% in the examination is required to obtain the green card and the examination is paid by the applicant. The exam for pig husbandry takes half a day and consists of three parts: a theoretical test, a practical test and a practical exercise with oral questions about what to do and why.
  - 26 green card certificates for pig husbandry have been granted in the past three years.

#### **Further information to support conclusions**

8. Graduates from both education levels indicated the following as their main sources of animal welfare information subsequent to completing their studies: veterinary visits to their farms, a pig trade magazine, some internet sites including the SBA for legislation and a network of their own contacts.
9. In relation to the animal welfare content of their courses graduates indicated that:
  - The main positive/useful points for the higher level education were the knowledge provided on the economic consequences and gains from good animal welfare. While the point on which they would have liked to have received more information concerned risks from infectious diseases (either existing or emerging);
  - The main positive point for the upper secondary school level education was the good overall knowledge in many areas and some practical experience gained. While they felt more information on how to perform on farm euthanasia of sick or weak animals would have been beneficial.
10. Teachers indicated that they consider a combination of theory and practice to be the most effective training method. Previous background knowledge, ideally practical, was also considered important to gain the most from the education provided.

#### **Additional activities**

11. Training provided by Svenska Pig and the Farm and Animal Health service general goal is to improve the farmers' skills and competence in animal welfare, health and management to strengthen the farmers business and competitiveness as well as complying with the animal welfare legislation. Specific goals are then set for each specific course. To reach the farmers these training courses are held locally, regionally and nationally at various places in the country.
12. Representatives from different industry sectors are involved in planning, organising, and implementing these training courses as well as in their evaluation.
13. The SBA generally does not assess these courses but with exceptions such as courses including the use of anaesthetics when castrating piglets. In this case the SBA has approved both the training schedule and the training material.
14. The SBA receives information on the evaluation of these courses. In addition the SBA also evaluates fostering of professional development in general through querying participants randomly.
15. The following are some of the training events provided by these stakeholder organisations in order to promote knowledge and professional competence:
  - "Welfare and health of Piglets" (*Smågriskurs för bättre djurhälsa*) included issues relating to leg and foot injuries, provision of straw and care of sows prior to farrowing. "Welfare and health of pigs for slaughter" (*Slaktsvinkurs för bättre djurhälsa*) included issues relating to housing environment, health, feed and water. Some of the issues have been included in a current course on "How to reduce piglet mortality".
  - "Conditional use of veterinary medicinal products", is a scheme to allow farmers to treat animals after the condition has been diagnosed by a veterinarian. The veterinarian has prescribed medicine including instructions on how it should be used. The farmer may treat animals in accordance with the instruction. In order for this to be possible all farm workers in that farm must have attended a course and passed the respective written examination. 670 farmers have attended this course and passed the examination. The farms in the scheme must be visited by a veterinarian at intervals of no less than five to eight weeks. At each visit the veterinarian fills in an "animal welfare declaration" that includes points such as: cleanliness, available surface area, litter, clinical condition and so on.
  - A Swedish national requirement makes it mandatory from 1 January 2016 to use anaesthetic when castrating piglets while Dir. 2008/120/EC imposes it only for piglets of more than seven days of age. Approximately 1350 persons have attended training on this, "safe and pain free castration", since 2011.

### **Effect on compliance**

16. Farmers and animal caretakers have to have the necessary pig welfare knowledge in Sweden but neither EU nor national legislation prescribes how this competence is

acquired. They may get their education in various ways including through training provided by the industry. The education available aims to teach students about animal welfare, official controls aim to see that standards are subsequently met.

17. The Swedish farmers association has developed a guideline document on all legal requirements applicable to pig producers. The guidelines include a checklist that farmers can use to do their own checks of compliance with all relevant legal requirements, including animal welfare.
18. There is a pig industry certification scheme called "Basic Certification for Pigs" (*Grundcertifiering gris*) that is voluntary but the larger Swedish slaughter houses only accept pigs that come from farms with this certification. This scheme contains provisions equal to the Swedish animal welfare legislation as well as some additional requirements from the industry. This system of certification started in 2010 and is controlled by an independent third-party inspection with inspectors accredited by the national accreditation body (Swedac).
19. Since the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2010, private veterinarians complete an "animal welfare declaration" when visiting farms which are part of the scheme "Conditional use of veterinary medicinal products". A minimum of one such annual declaration is sent to the official services as well as any declaration that registers non-compliances. The veterinarians that issue the declarations must be from one of three veterinary organisations that are approved to carry out these visits.
20. Official inspectors indicated to the audit team that the pig farmers' association guidelines and these two voluntary schemes help in increasing animal welfare competence and compliance with requirements.
21. Sweden is one of two EU member states that have implemented a full ban on tail docking. Additional national requirements for litter and available surface area (amongst others) help in keeping tail biting at low intensities and incidence (less than 2% of animals affected according to slaughterhouse data). Swedish consumers are supportive of this ban and pay more at retail for Swedish pig meat as compared with pig meat coming from other member states.
22. The non-compliances detected during official controls on farm concerned mainly cleanliness and/or litter quality, in 17% to 14% of controls, the official inspectors considered these non-compliances to be caused not by lack of knowledge but by insufficient official control frequency.

#### Conclusions on training activities in the pig farming sector

23. The system in place, with inputs from both official and industry sources, is effective and suitable to ensure that pig farmers possess the appropriate ability, knowledge and professional competence on animal welfare.

24. The additional activities from industry, in particular the schemes “Conditional use of veterinary medicinal products” and “Basic certification for pigs”, and other additional information also had a positive effect on farmer’s competence and compliance with animal welfare requirements, due to their practical approach and subject relevance.
25. Official controls confirm the effectiveness of training through the results of inspections where most non-compliance stems from failure to implement rather than lack of knowledge.

## 5.2 TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE SECTOR

### Legal requirements

Article 21 (a) and (c) of Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009, hereafter the regulation.

### Findings

26. In Sweden the CA responsible for the implementation of Article 21 of the Regulation is the SBA. No one is allowed to carry out slaughter unless the person has received training or has been granted the Certificate of Competence on the basis of experience equivalent to training, as required by the Regulation. There are 108 approved slaughterhouses for red meat and 23 for poultry.
27. The CA has delegated the organisation of the training courses to a separate entity, the Meny consortium a section of the University, SLU. Meny organises the final written test of its own training courses as well as training courses provided by others.
28. In addition to Meny, the SBA have authorised seven training bodies to provide training, such as certain slaughterhouses, industry organisations and private consultants. The mandatory requirements for these training bodies and details of bodies and entities to which tasks have been delegated have been made publicly available by the competent authority via the Internet.
29. Meny is the main course provider. The Meny training can be carried out either at physical training events or as web-based distance education.
- The Meny course training material is complemented with other activities on the web such as lectures. Although there is no practical part, the course contains theoretical training on practical cases. The participants are recommended to get the practical experience under supervision in the slaughterhouses.
  - Meny indicated that the strength of this form of training is that it is easily accessible to many people; modules are flexible and participation is inexpensive. On the other hand Meny also indicated that there are not enough opportunities for discussion and exchange of experience.
  - In 2012, 30 AWOs attended a combined course (group work, individual work and a final test) and 10 people did the e-learning course. In 2013 and 2014 there were

90 participants in the e-learning course and 15 people did the test without a prior e-learning course. In 2015 40 people did the e-learning course, 20 the test without a prior e-learning course and 12 already certified AWOs participated in a “full day at SLU” course for discussion of experiences.

30. The final written test is developed in collaboration with SBA and approved by SBA, representatives from both red and white meat slaughterhouses were also consulted.

- Examination is carried out after e-learning, combined course or test without a previous e-learning course.
- The final written test of multiple choice questions with the same categories as the training material “DISA” is carried out on line. Questions are randomised for each individual test. To obtain the Certificate of Competence this test has to be passed.
- If the test is done at a distance, an approved invigilator has to accompany the participant and technical support is available by phone.

31. The DISA training material was originally developed by a project group of researchers and veterinarians affiliated to the SLU, in cooperation with representatives from the SBA and the National Food Agency (NFA). It is currently managed by the Swedish Centre of Animal Welfare, an entity within the SLU.

- The DISA material is based on a module system, by species (ruminants & horses, poultry, game & ostriches, rabbits and fur animals respectively) and by focus area (biological principles, legislation, handling of animals, stunning of animals, use of weapons, killing/bleeding, consequences of animal handling at slaughter, product quality). Learning outcomes are specified for each module.
- This material also includes connections to specimen standard operating procedures (SOPs) and a module on how religious slaughter can be performed in combination with the stunning methods laid down in Annex I of the Regulation.
- The web based DISA material is a mixture of text, pictures, video clips, and interactive material aimed to keep to keep the attention and to suit the different ways of learning of the participants.

32. The SBA provided the financial support for the development of DISA which is publicly available on [www.disa.slu.se](http://www.disa.slu.se) and free of charge.

33. Until now the SBA and the FBOs have not identified language as being an issue as they had a low staff turnover and most people have an adequate knowledge of Swedish.

- The CA indicated that there have been recent requests for DISA material to be translated to other languages such as Polish but due to limited resources only a translation to English is planned to be available next year. One of the approved organisations can provide training courses in Arabic, English or Farsi but there has been no demand for this.

34. Training on animal welfare is promoted by the industry which also had representatives involved in the development of the training material. Representatives from the industry were also among the first to evaluate the training and the examination tests. Before the course started it was tested by people responsible for animal welfare at 17 slaughterhouses as well as a representative from the Board of Agriculture. The input from these testers was considered important for improving the training.
35. Many slaughterhouses have routines in place for supervision of trainees. The two largest red meat slaughterhouses in Sweden have their own training and education approved by the Board of Agriculture and that training may contain practical on the job training. In both slaughterhouses:
- The person providing the education is generally the animal welfare officer (AWO) working together with other experienced persons; AWOs have completed the Meny course. Around 25 staff attended in-house training in one of these slaughterhouses.
  - Theoretical training was provided to experienced people who had been employed for more than 3 years. Some practical guidance is provided to new employees before they do theoretical training course and take the Meny examination. As line workers do very practical work there is further detailed practical guidance and hands-on training afterwards.
36. The AWOs met considered the DISA-material very helpful and that it can be used as a reference material for internal training and to find answers to most animal welfare questions. However they indicated that some of the material is not relevant for all workers as some parts of it are a bit too theoretical for a person working in a lairage.
37. The AWOs met indicated that the process to organise a final exam for staff is easy but that it would be useful after the written examination if the system informed them about questions which have been answered incorrectly.
- After comments were made by AWOs following the first exams, the wording of some of the exam questions was changed to make them less academic and clearer. However, the AWOs met during the audit indicated that the written test still causes difficulties for their staff with lower literacy levels and that certain multiple choice questions have more than one correct answer.
  - After each course there is a voluntary electronic evaluation form that can be filled in with questions to grade the use of the training material and the examination.
38. The SBA has issued 120 certificates of competence on the basis of examination and 1100 to persons demonstrating relevant professional experience of at least three years.

### **Additional activities**

39. Training additional to that legally required is part of quality schemes or industry led initiatives.
40. In the poultry sector the third party certification that carries out audits on the whole

production chain also includes animal welfare training activities in the slaughterhouses.

### **Effect on compliance**

41. Official supervision over animal welfare in slaughterhouses is done by Officials from the NFA and from the County Administrative Boards (CAB) coordinated by the SBA. Official Veterinarians (OV's) from the NFA perform routine inspections that include animal welfare aspects and officials from CAB perform official controls exclusively on animal welfare that cover training as well as operations.
42. The non-compliances detected during annual official controls on slaughterhouses concerned mainly gaps in the SOPs. Most concerned procedures such as dealing with animals unable to walk and key parameters for stunning; noted respectively in 19% and 18% of the controls performed in 2014. The officials considered these non-compliances, mainly in small slaughterhouses, to be caused not by lack of knowledge but due to the reluctance of the FBO to write a comprehensive SOP.
43. Officials from NFA, CBA and SBA indicated to the audit team that slaughterhouse staff tend to be very receptive, will accept changes and that in general people that have a certificate of competence work well. They also indicated that:
  - Some people that have a certificate of competence based on three years' experience do things wrongly because that is how they learned to do it and they keep doing it.
  - The current system of training is good but the vocabulary of the test can be difficult for the literacy level of some of the slaughterhouse staff.
  - Routine meetings to discuss animal welfare issues between CAB officials, OVs and AWOs have started in some regions of Sweden and have benefited animal welfare.
44. Regarding findings in the slaughterhouses that could be linked to an animal welfare problem on the farm of origin, a guideline document is available to officials with intervention levels for body lesions, hernias of pigs, shoulder ulcers, ingrown hooves, body condition, and tail biting.

### **Conclusions on training activities in the slaughterhouse sector**

45. The training courses and examinations are effective for ensuring that slaughterhouse staff have the appropriate level of competence. However, certain aspects were not completely suitable for the target group as some training material and certain exam questions were difficult to understand for some literacy levels.
46. The additional activities from the industry, such as facilitating the examination and providing practical training to their staff, and additional sources of information such as the OVs in the slaughterhouses, help slaughterhouse staff to increase their competence to carry out the relevant slaughter operations.
47. Official controls confirmed the effectiveness of training as the results of the inspections found staff to be competent. The non-compliances detected, such as incomplete SOPs in small

slaughterhouses, are more due to a reluctance to take on additional administrative burdens than lack of knowledge on animal welfare.

## **6 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS**

The system of training provided by institutions and the additional activities from the pig farming and slaughter industries produced good competence on animal welfare for pig farmers and slaughterhouse staff.

Sweden has implemented the relevant EU requirements concerning training of pig farmers and slaughterhouse staff. The training is well received and considered useful by both sectors.

The competent authority's system for evaluation of the effectiveness of the training through the results of the animal welfare inspections in the farm and in the slaughterhouses confirmed the competence and knowledge of the farmers and of the slaughterhouse staff. Farmers keep and handle pigs correctly (e.g. rearing of pigs with entire tails) in line with national requirements that are stricter than Union ones. Existing non-compliances in slaughterhouses are attributed to a reluctance to take on additional administrative burdens by operators.

## **7 CLOSING MEETING**

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

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=2015-7422](http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/rep_details_en.cfm?rep_inspection_ref=2015-7422)

## ANNEX 1 – LEGAL REFERENCES

<b>Legal Reference</b>	<b>Official Journal</b>	<b>Title</b>
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. 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. 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. 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