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HEALTH & CONSUMER PROTECTION DIRECTORATE-GENERAL  
Directorate F - Food and Veterinary Office

DG(SANCO)/7306/2004 – MR Final

FINAL REPORT OF A MISSION  
CARRIED OUT IN LITHUANIA  
FROM 21/06/2004 TO 25/06/2004  
IN ORDER TO REVIEW CONTROLS  
CONCERNING ANIMAL WELFARE

*Please note that clarifications provided by the Lithuanian Authorities on a draft version of this report are given as footnotes, in bold, italic, type to the relevant part of the report.*



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## ABBREVIATIONS & SPECIAL TERMS USED IN THE REPORT

CA	Competent Authority
CCA	Central Competent Authority
EEC	European Economic Community
EC	European Community
EU	European Union
FVO	Food and Veterinary Office
SFVS	State Food and Veterinary Service
TRACES	Application linking all Member States and which assists controls by allowing tracing of animal movements

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The mission took place in Lithuania from 21 to 25 June 2004, as part of the planned mission programme of the Food and Veterinary office (FVO).

The mission team comprised 2 inspectors from the FVO and one Member State expert, and was accompanied during the whole mission by a representative from the central competent authority (CCA), the State Food and Veterinary Service (SFVS) of Lithuania.

An opening meeting was held on 21 June 2004 with the CCA. At this meeting, the objectives of, and itinerary for, the mission were confirmed by the inspection team, and additional information required for the satisfactory completion of the mission requested.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

This mission was the first FVO mission concerning animal welfare since the accession of Lithuania to the EU. Prior to accession, the FVO carried out a mission in the framework of accession preparations, in order to assist and monitor progress with the adoption of EU requirements on animal welfare.

The objective of the current mission was to verify the application of Community law in the field of animal welfare. In pursuit of this objective, the following meetings were held and sites visited:

VISITS			Comments
Competent authority	Central	2	Opening and final meeting held at the SFVS headquarter.
	County	2	SFVS County office of Vilnius.
Slaughterhouses		2	Selected by inspection team at opening meeting.
Laying hen farm		1	Selected by the inspection team in advance of the mission.

## 3. BACKGROUND

Following the previous, pre-accession mission, a number of recommendations were made and the Lithuanian CA undertook the implementation of an action plan to address these.

## 4. LEGAL BASIS FOR THE MISSION

The mission was carried out under the general provisions of Community legislation and, in particular:

- Article 9 of Council Directive 99/74/EC;<sup>1</sup>
- Article 14 of Council Directive 93/119/EC;<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Council Directive 1999/74/EC of 19 July 1999, laying down minimum standards for the protection of laying hens, OJ L 203, 3.8.1999, p. 53 (hereafter: Directive 99/74/EC).

- Commission Decision 98/139/EC of 4 February 1998 laying down certain detailed rules concerning on-the-spot checks carried out in the veterinary field by Commission experts in the Member States<sup>3</sup>.

## **5. MAIN FINDINGS**

### **5.1. Competent Authority**

The CCA for animal welfare is the State Food and Veterinary Service (SFVS), which is headed by a Director who is also the Chief Veterinary Inspector of the Republic of Lithuania. The Director reports directly to the government. Its Animal Health Department is responsible for transposition, implementation and enforcement of animal welfare requirements. The control and inspection is carried out by governmental bodies subordinate to the SFVS Head Quarters (SFVS at 10 Counties, 34 Districts and 4 Cities).

A separate Food and Veterinary Audit Service acts directly subordinate to the Chief Veterinary Officer and carries out audits to verify the performance of the County, District and Local Services. Further information regarding the SFVS is on their web site: <http://www.vet.lt/>

### **5.2. Information to producers**

In their action plan the CCA undertook to provide information on the animal welfare requirements to the pig sector and to inform the poultry sector that forced moulting of laying hens does not comply with EU requirements, and indicated that :

- Information had been distributed to pig farmers.
- Although forced moulting was not detected in inspections from January to June 2003, appropriate measures would be taken to ban this practice.

The inspection team noted that:

- There was no information to the pig sector advising on requirements to avoid the routine tail docking of pigs.
- A representative of the CA indicated that forced moulting is still practised and no measures have been taken to ban it, contrary to the earlier undertaking provided to the Commission.

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<sup>2</sup> Council Directive 93/119/EC of 22 December 1993 on the protection of animals at the time of slaughter or killing, OJ L 340 of 31.12.1993 p.21(hereafter: Directive 93/119/EC)

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 38 of 12.02.1998, p. 10

### **5.3. Registration of laying hen holdings**

In relation to the setting up of a system for registering holdings and for the labelling of eggs, the CA indicated that:

- Holdings which do not meet the requirements of Directive 99/74/EC will not be registered and will not therefore be able to market eggs.
- Regarding labelling of eggs, The Ministry of Agriculture will amend the Order on technical regulation for marketing of eggs.

The inspection team noted that:

- Details regarding the keeper, the owner and the maximum capacity of the establishment are not indicated in the register as required by Annex of Directive 2002/4/EC.
- On the farm visited, the number stamped on the eggs could not be found in the register provided by the CCA and the eggs came from cages that did not comply with the minimum requirements of Directive 99/74/EC.

### **5.4. Inspections of laying hen holdings**

In relation to compliance with Directive 99/74/EC, the CCA indicated that:

- Complete information on holdings that do not meet the requirements will be available after October 15, 2003.

The inspection team noted:

- Lithuania has not applied for a derogation for farms, which do not meet all the requirements of Directive 99/74/EC.
- An overview of the level of compliance is not yet available.
- On the farm visited, the CA had already detected that the three buildings seen by the inspection team were slightly overstocked, that in one of the buildings the cage height was insufficient and that no claw shortening devices were in the cages. However, the CA had not detected a shortage of water drinkers in one house.
- The CA had approved the producer's proposal to gradually renovate the houses, which were not in compliance, between now and 2007, whereas all the requirements of Directive 99/74/EC are applicable from 1 May 2004.

### **5.5. Inspection reporting**

In order to harmonise the way the results of inspections are collected to meet the requirements of Commission Decision 2000/50/EC, the CA indicated that uniform inspection questionnaires had been approved in July 2003.

The inspection team noted:

- Questionnaires were in use and quarterly reporting to the other levels of the CA should ensure requirements of Decision 2000/50/EC are met.

## **5.6. Authorisation of transporters**

In relation to the requirements of Council Directive 91/628/EEC concerning transporters, the CCA indicated that:

- Each transporter would be obliged to give a written undertaking by the end of 2003.
- The system of authorisation would be modified so that international transporters can be rapidly identified.

The inspection team noted that:

- The written undertaking by the transporters is in place.
- Training of the transporters and licensing of the vehicle are mandatory and vehicles are inspected once a year.
- The system of authorisation has not been modified to enable rapid identification of international transporters.

## **5.7. Checks of vehicles**

In relation to their commitment to ensure that checks meet with EU requirements and that results are recorded so that they indicate the vehicle checked, the CA stated that:

- Uniform questionnaires for inspections were updated in October 2003.
- The checklist for vehicles refers to the vehicle/transporter inspected and there is a requirement to indicate the space available on board the vehicle and to indicate the possible loading densities of animals of different species for the specified vehicle.

The inspection team noted that:

- New check lists are used for inspecting vehicles annually and refer to the vehicle/transporter inspected. The check list also indicates space availability.
- The allowed loading density for each category of animal was not indicated for each vehicle.

## **5.8. Route plans**

In their action plan the CCA had undertaken to ensure that route plans are only approved when the plan has been appropriately completed. The CCA stated that:

- The local CA is obliged to approve route plans only if they are appropriately completed and checks the returned route plans to determine if requirements regarding stops for animal rest, feeding and watering were met.
- The CCA randomly checks if the returned route plans underwent the proper approval procedure.

The inspection team randomly selected route plans issued in May/June for consignments of horses for slaughter to other Member States and noted that:

- Copies of route plans approved by the CA were not kept. The only copies available were printouts from TRACES and one such plan for a consignment to Italy did not indicate all the requirements foreseen in EU regulations (complete itinerary, locations of stops, number of the health certificate or accompanying documents). A representative from the CA explained that he would not check the route plans as it was considered satisfactory if the data was accepted by TRACES. However this application is not yet developed to verify route plans.
- The CCA have not yet carried out random checks to monitor if the route plans had undergone a proper approval procedure.
- The route plans for consignments to one Member State were satisfactorily completed and had been returned. However, route plans for consignments to another Member State (Italy) had not been returned. The CA explained that in the case of non return, a letter would be sent to the transporter and, if necessary, further export would be prohibited. However such steps had not yet been taken in the office visited.

## **5.9. Surveillance in slaughterhouses**

In relation to the provision of water in slaughterhouses and effective surveillance of stunning of animals, the CA indicated that:

- Renovation plans for slaughterhouses would include the stunning equipment and that, during inspections, stunning of animals and provision of water for animals, not brought directly to slaughter, would be emphasised.
- The use of electrical equipment, which does not span the brain, for stunning cattle, will not be allowed after accession, even as a backup.

The inspection team noted that:

- Water was provided and this requirement is included in the new check list.

- Handling of animals was appropriate, except where some bovines were tied by the horns, which is contrary to point 2(f) Chapter IA of Council Directive 91/628/EEC.
- Stunning of cattle during the visits was performed with a captive bolt pistol and was effective. Instructions on the use of such equipment were available.
- In one slaughterhouse the stunning box, which was designed for use of an electrical stunning device, made it difficult to use the captive bolt pistol.
- A slaughterman in one slaughterhouse indicated that he used electrical stunning equipment when the captive bolt was ineffective. The CCA indicated at the final meeting that this slaughterhouse would be closed until this equipment is replaced and all slaughterhouses suspected of having this equipment would be inspected and similar action taken as necessary.
- The district visited had not received instructions about the use of electrical stunning of cattle. The reports of inspections did not highlight that such equipment did not comply.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

### **6.1. Information to producers**

- 1) Although information had been provided to the pig sector, this did not address routine tail docking.
- 2) No measures had been taken to prohibit forced moulting (point 15 and 16 of the Annex of Council Directive 98/58/EC).

### **6.2. Holdings with laying hens**

- 1) Contrary to the CCA action plan, the register of holdings does not contain all the information required (Annex of Directive 99/74/EC) and eggs are not labelled as laid down in point 2 of the Annex of Directive 2002/4/EC.
- 2) Lithuania continues to permit the marketing of eggs from holdings that do not comply with requirements of Directive 99/74/EC, and has authorised the continued use of such cages until 2007, even though Lithuania has no derogation to do so.

### **6.3. Inspection reporting**

The introduction of checklists and reporting procedures should ensure the requirements of Decision 2000/50/EC are met.

#### **6.4. Authorisation of transporters**

- 1) The system of authorisation has been modified so that a written undertaking is signed by the transporter, however, the system does not yet ensure rapid identification of international transporters<sup>4</sup>.
- 2) The mandatory training of transporters is a worthwhile initiative that has been implemented by the Lithuanian CA.

#### **6.5. Transport checks**

The introduction of standard checklists should improve the monitoring of transport conditions, which is largely carried out as part of vehicle licensing. However this will not replace the need for checks at the locations laid down in Article 8 of Directive 91/628/EEC, and checks at slaughterhouses do not yet ensure that requirements such as the prohibition on the tying of animals by the horns (Chapter I, A2(f) of Annex of Council Directive 91/628/EEC) are respected.

#### **6.6. Route plans**

The undertaking to ensure that route plans are approved only when appropriately completed has not been fully addressed, as the local level rely on TRACES, which is not yet operational in this regard, and the CCA has not yet carried out random checks as they had indicated.

#### **6.7. Surveillance in slaughterhouses**

- 1) The CA has addressed the issue of surveillance in slaughterhouses through monitoring of renovation plans and regular inspection. Although the check list emphasises stunning of animals, the CCA had not given explicit guidance on electrical stunning of cattle and inappropriate devices continue to be used.
- 2) The provision of water, which is now highlighted in the check list, has been addressed.

#### **6.8. Overall conclusion**

The new check lists and guidance provides an improved basis for animal welfare controls. Although many of the measures included in their action plan had been applied, certain undertakings given by the CCA regarding significant non compliances, the use of inappropriate electrical stunning equipment and the continuing use of inadequate cage systems for laying hens, had not been implemented.

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<sup>4</sup> *In their response to the draft report, the Lithuanian Authorities indicated that the SFVS is able to identify international transporters through close contacts with county and district SFVS and Border and Transport State Veterinary Service*

## **7. CLOSING MEETING**

A closing meeting was held on 25 June 2004 with the CCA and CA of the county visited. At this meeting, the main findings and conclusions of the mission were presented by the inspection team. The CCA did not express any major disagreement with these. Assurances regarding the use of equipment for electrical stunning of cattle were given and, in addition, the CCA indicated that they would address the remaining areas of non compliance as soon as possible.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **To the competent authorities of Lithuania**

- (1) To ensure that routine tail docking of pigs is not permitted (Directive 91/630/EEC Annex, Chapter I point 8).
- (2) Regarding laying hen holdings:
  - (a) To complete the registration of holdings with the information required in the Annex of Directive 2002/4/EC.
  - (b) To ensure that holdings with more than 350 hens meet the requirements of Directive 99/74/EC, in particular the cage specifications.
  - (c) To ensure that a distinguishing number is stamped on the egg as required by point 2 of the Annex of Directive 2002/4/EC.
  - (d) To enforce the prohibition on forced moulting of laying hens (point 15 and 16 of the Annex of Council Directive 98/58/EC).
- (3) Regarding transporters: to ensure that the system in place allows the rapid identification of international transporters (Council Directive 91/628/EEC Chapter II, Article 5 A, 1a).
- (4) Regarding route plans: to ensure that
  - (a) Journey times are verified.
  - (b) Route plans are returned after the journey.
- (5) Regarding surveillance in slaughterhouses: to ensure that
  - (a) Restraint facilities are appropriate to the stunning equipment (Annex B of Council Directive 93/119/EC).
  - (b) Electrodes of devices used to stun animals span the brain (Council Directive 93/119/EC Annex C, II.3.A1).

## **9. ADDENDUM TO MISSION REPORT DG(SANCO)/7306/2004**

In their comments on a draft version of this report, the CCA provided the following initial reaction to the recommendations:

- (1) Routine tail docking of pigs is not permitted, except in cases when this procedure is needed for animal health reasons.
- (2) Regarding laying hen holdings:
  - (a) The register of the laying hen holdings is updated with the information required in the Annex of Directive 2002/4/EC.
  - (c) Currently distinguishing number is stamped on the egg as required by point 2 of the Annex of Directive 2002/4/EC.
  - (d) Forced moulting of laying hens is prohibited in the Republic of Lithuania. Veterinary inspectors are instructed to check strictly the system of water supply to the cages where laying hens are kept.
- (3) By the Order of the Director of SFVS of 10 June 2004 all subjects, including animal transporters are currently undergoing veterinary approval procedure and will be included into the Register, which is available at the web site of SFVS.
- (4) County and district SFVS are obliged to approve the route plans only if they are appropriately completed. In the case of non return, a letter has to be sent to the transporter and, if necessary, further export shall be prohibited. SFVS is strengthening the control under the management of route plans. Food and Veterinary Audit Service on the regular basis performs controls on all activities (including approval of route plans) of SFVS.
- (5) Regarding surveillance in slaughterhouses:
  - (a) The SFVS is monitoring the proper restraint of animals before stunning.
  - (b) By the Order of SFVS of 5 July 2004 inappropriate devices for electrical stunning of cattle were prohibited. The new questionnaires for the inspections of slaughterhouses approved by the Order of SFVS of 31 August 2004, ensures that inappropriate devices for electrical stunning of cattle are not used.