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

DG(SANCO)/8040/2006 – MR Final

FINAL REPORT OF A MISSION
CARRIED OUT IN CZECH REPUBLIC
FROM 20 TO 24 MARCH 2006
IN ORDER TO ASSESS ANIMAL WELFARE
AT SLAUGHTER

Please note that factual errors in the draft report, identified by the Czech Competent Authorities, have been corrected in the text of this final report.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the outcome of a mission carried out by the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) in Czech Republic, from 20 to 24 March 2006.

The objectives of the mission were to evaluate the system of supervision of animal welfare at the time of slaughter and killing and in addition a follow-up of the recommendations made in report DG/(SANCO)/7519/2005 has been carried out. It looked in particular at national measures taken in relation to methods of stunning or killing not specified or not foreseen in Council Directive 93/119/EC and as the Commission services are currently considering revision of Council Directive 93/119/EC, further details have been provided on these measures.

The report concludes that the Czech Republic has adopted legislative measures and procedures which go further than EU requirements on issues such as parameters for stunning of animals in slaughterhouses and killing of animals for disease control. The CA has also set up a documented system to ensure compliance with animal welfare requirements during slaughter of animals in slaughterhouses and during killing for disease control purposes. Comprehensive legislation, programme of controls, check-lists, training and system of sanctions have been provided to the official veterinarians who carry out the checks. However, the reporting system recently put in place does not yet ensure that it is possible to make a full evaluation of the results of the controls performed. Regarding the actions taken in response to the recommendations in the report 7519/2005, although not evaluated on the spot, on the basis of the evaluation that was made, satisfactory measures have been taken to address these issues.

The report makes a number of recommendations addressed to the competent authorities of the Czech Republic, aimed at rectifying the identified shortcomings and further enhancing the control measures in place.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The mission took place in Czech Republic from 20.03.2006 to 24.03.2006. The mission team comprised two inspectors from the Food and Veterinary Office (hereafter: FVO).

The mission was undertaken as part of the FVO's planned mission programme and is the second of a series of missions on animal welfare at the time of slaughter.

The inspection team was accompanied during the whole mission by representatives from the Central Competent Authority, The Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic (hereafter: CCA).

An opening meeting was held on 20 March 2006 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 OF THE MISSION

The objectives of the mission were to evaluate the system of supervision of animal welfare at the time of slaughter and killing and to look at national measures taken in relation to methods of stunning and killing not specified or not foreseen in Council Directive 93/119/EC¹ and, as the Commission services are currently considering revision of Council Directive 93/119/EC, details have been provided on these measures. In addition, a follow-up of the recommendations made in report DG/(SANCO)/7519/2005² (hereafter: report 7519/2005) has been carried out.

In pursuit of this objective, the following sites were visited:

COMPETENT AUTHORITY VISITS			Comments
Competent authority	Central	3	Opening and final meetings at the Ministry of Agriculture. In addition the Risk Analysis and Crisis Management Division was visited in Brno.
	Regional	1	Emergency Eradication Centre in Brno to assess the killing of animals for disease controls provided in contingency plans
Slaughterhouses		4	One establishments slaughtering cattle, pigs and ratites One establishment slaughtering ducks, spent hens and broilers One establishment slaughtering rabbits One establishment slaughtering turkeys
Fish cutting plants		2	Two fish cutting plants
Fur farm		1	One farm raising and killing mink and foxes
Fish retail shop		1	One supermarket

¹ Council Directive 93/119/EC of 22 December 1993 on the protection of animals at the time of slaughter or killing, OJ L 340, 31.12.1993, p 21

² The report of this mission is available under the reference number DG SANCO/7519/2005 – MR – Final on the DG (Health and Consumer Protection) internet site at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fvo>

3. LEGAL BASIS FOR THE MISSION

The mission was carried out under the general provisions of Community legislation and, in particular: Article 14 of Council Directive 93/119/EC and Article 45 of Regulation (EC) n°882/2004³.

4. MAIN FINDINGS

4.1 Competent authority

4.1.1 Competent Authority structure and organisation

The Ministry of Agriculture and in particular the State Veterinary Administration of the Czech Republic is responsible for transposition and implementation of the EU requirements covered by the scope of this mission. The State Veterinary Administration includes a Department for Animal Health and Welfare, with three Divisions, one of which is dedicated to animal welfare issues and one to emergency response in case of an outbreak of contagious disease, including killing for the purpose of disease control.

The Central Commission for Animal Welfare is a state authority, playing a role in the drafting of legislation and co-operating in the organisation of training and producing publications. It is subdivided in four Committees (Farm Animals, Experimental Animals, Pet Animals and Wild Animals). Different sectors and institutions are represented in this Commission, including representatives of all ministries dealing with animal issues, State Veterinary Administration, associations of breeders and animal welfare organisations.

There are 14 Regional Veterinary Administration Authorities (hereafter: regional CA) which are responsible for the implementation of legislation. In each region a Chief Regional Animal Welfare Inspector has been appointed and his role is to manage professional activities of Regional Inspectors.

Regional Inspectors works either outside slaughterhouses where they perform supervision on animal welfare at their relevant workplaces (e.g. assembly centres, farms) within their territories, or within slaughterhouses where they supervise activities, including those related to animal welfare at slaughterhouses.

Certain municipalities play a role mainly in enforcement actions. These are the larger municipalities who also deal with these procedures for neighbouring smaller municipalities. Whenever an infringement that requires an enforcement action is detected by a Regional Inspector, this is referred to the Municipal Authority by the Director of the regional CA and the Municipal Authority will take over the legal proceedings and have the power to impose sanctions. The Municipal Authorities are legally obliged to keep a record of offenders against the Animal Welfare Act No. 246/1992 for one year, to notify the results of proceedings within one month to the relevant regional CA and to request expert advice from the veterinary authorities during the proceedings.

³ 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 OJ L 165, 30.04.2004 corrected and republished in OJ L 191, 28.05.2004, p.1.

Further information on the CA can be obtained at the following websites:
<http://www.svsscr.cz> <http://www.mze.cz/>

4.1.2 Training

The Animal Welfare Act lays down that only a veterinarian who has passed further examinations set by the Central Commission for Animal Welfare and who has demonstrated a good knowledge of the legislation relating to the activities with which he/she may be charged is allowed to perform supervision. Altogether 642 Regional inspectors already acquired this qualification for the performance of the supervision on animal welfare.

In 2005 two courses on continuing education for the regional inspectors with 132 participants and two courses for new veterinary officers were organised. In addition six courses for veterinary practitioners with 336 participants were organised and covered also animal welfare issues.

In 2005 the Veterinary chamber of Czech Republic organised a seminar where a paper “Actual problems in animal welfare” was presented to 85 participants.

4.2 Slaughterhouses

4.2.1 Legislation

The CCA informed the mission team that Council Directive 93/119/EC has been transposed through the Animal Welfare Act and through the Decree n° 382/2004 on protection of farm animals at the time of slaughtering, destruction or other method of killing. During the mission, no legal shortcomings were identified; on the contrary, additional national requirements were found in several areas such as parameters defined for electrical stunning of cattle, calves, pigs, sheep, goats and rabbits and defined parameters for loading and unloading ramps.

4.2.2 Training

The Regional Inspectors working in slaughterhouses received training in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act, including the provisions of the Decree n° 382/2004 and the report of the European Food Safety Authority on Welfare Aspects of Animal Stunning and Killing Methods⁴ (hereafter: EFSA report) They were able to assess the fitness of animals for transport upon their arrival at the slaughterhouses, the competences of the operators’ personnel, the maintenance of stunning equipment and effectiveness of stunning, by checking the absence of corneal reflex, however there was a lack of training on how to assess the other signs of effective stunning.

4.2.3 Programme of audits and inspections

Controls of animal welfare requirements in slaughterhouses are carried out in accordance with the CCA Instruction No. 2000/01/EPIZ, last amended by amendment of 15 March 2005, which partly contains requirements of Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004. The CCA Instruction lay down that:

⁴ Opinion of the Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare on a request from the Commission related to welfare aspects of the main systems of stunning and killing the main commercial species of animals, The EFSA Journal (2004), 45, 1-29. see: www.efsa.eu.int

- The frequency of the checks should be based on previous checks and on other parameters, such as intensity and level of production, and on the specific provisions described for each category of animals or activities;
- Daily checks on protection and care of animal welfare at slaughter are performed by Regional Inspectors using a check list issued by the CVO and 10 points regarding animal welfare are checked. Records of these checks are entered in a national computer database (*Klient-Hygi*) which should be accessible in every establishment via Internet;
- Quarterly checks on operator's records concerning arrival and unloading of animals, checks on slaughtering devices used and equipment are performed either by Regional Inspectors or by the Chief Regional Animal Welfare Inspector. No check list is required for such checks and no specific records have to be kept;
- Yearly checks on animal welfare at each slaughterhouse, on the establishments and on the checks performed by the operators, are performed by the Chief Regional Animal Welfare Inspector or by his/her delegate. At the same time also a supervision of the Regional Inspector in the slaughterhouse is performed. A programme for these checks is prepared at the beginning of the year by each of the regional CA. A check list in accordance with Decree No. 382/2004 is used and the results of the checks are entered in the computer database.

An audit on how the controls defined in CCA instructions are performed by individual regional CA are carried out by the Head of Division for Animal Welfare or by an inspector designated by the Head of the Department of Animal Health and Welfare of the State Veterinary Administration. During these checks internal organisational procedures of the regional CA and keeping of records are checked. An Annual Report on Animal Welfare is produced every year, which gives a good overview of the checks performed.

4.2.4 Audits and inspections carried out

The mission team noted that:

- There were a sufficient number of Regional Inspectors in each slaughterhouse, who during their daily controls performed checks on a sample of animals.
- Checks of lairages were mostly sufficient, ensuring that the lairages are adequate and protected against adverse weather conditions. However, in the rabbit slaughterhouse and in the duck slaughterhouse the cleaning of transport crates was very noisy and took place in the same area where animals were being handled. In the turkey slaughterhouse visited, lairages lacked adequate ventilation and as a consequence temperature and humidity were too high. Also the birds were shackled very close to the wall and as the result they repeatedly hit the wall with their wings during shackling, while wing flapping. The CCA explained that they used the wall in order to prevent excessive wing flapping when shackling the birds.
- In the rabbit slaughterhouse one of the workers handled the animals very roughly, whereas the other worker handled them in a more humane manner. The CA took no action on this issue.

- The effectiveness of stunning was checked by the absence of the corneal reflex; however other signs of effective stunning were not checked by the Regional Inspectors. The mission team noted some signs of ineffective stunning such as a cow breathing rhythmically during bleeding, turkeys showing wing flapping during bleeding and ducks suffering pre-stun shocks due to the overflow of water from the water bath. In addition the heads of some ducks were not completely immersed in the water, thus they were not efficiently stunned. In the rabbit slaughterhouse one worker didn't allow enough time, in accordance with the operators guidelines, for the exposure of the animals to the electric current and as a consequence the animals were not effectively stunned. A second worker did provide an adequate time of exposure and thus effective stunning was ensured. The above mentioned deficiencies were not noted by the Regional Inspectors.
- The stunning equipment was adequately maintained and the maintenance records and that the back-up equipment was in place were regularly checked by the Regional Inspectors. However in the cattle slaughterhouse no cartridge was placed in the back-up captive bolt pistol and the Regional Inspector stated that, due to security reasons the number of cartridges issued to the person performing stunning, corresponded to the number of animals to be slaughtered that day. This arrangement didn't allow the proper use of back-up equipment. In the rabbit slaughterhouse, mechanical back-up equipment was available to stun the animals, but it was not used on an animal which had not been adequately stunned before being bled. The CA took no action on this issue.
- The mission team was told that the performing of quarterly checks in the slaughterhouses was conducted differently in different regions and were performed either by Regional inspectors or by Chief Regional Animal Welfare Inspector and no check list were used and no records were kept. The absence of check lists and records, made it difficult for the mission team to assess the results and outcome of these checks.
- The yearly checks were performed in all slaughterhouses and the records of those checks were kept by the regional CA although these checks were organised differently between the regions.

Training of operator's staff

Training of handling, stunning and bleeding procedures of the workers was performed by the business operator with collaboration from the regional CA. Evidence of training (attendance lists, programmes of training) was present in all slaughterhouses visited and it was noted that, with the exception of one worker in the rabbit slaughterhouse, workers were adequately trained. In the turkey slaughterhouse it was noted that the programme of training was very general and that it didn't include the method of stunning used in that particular slaughterhouse, which was head only stunning using electrical tongs.

Reporting of animal welfare inspections

From 1 January 2006 the daily checks are recorded using the national computer database. Prior to this they were recorded, but not entered in the computer database. The 10 points regarding animal welfare are checked and entered in the database. These include the accompanying documentation, time of the transport, transport vehicle, fitness of animals, injuries and number of dead animals upon arrival, unloading, handling of animals, stunning, bleeding and start of dressing procedures.

Yearly checks in slaughterhouses have been performed since 1993 and from 1 January 2006 the results of these checks, performed using a check list in accordance with Decree No. 382/2004, are entered in the same computer database.

In the four slaughterhouses visited, the mission team noted that the results of daily checks were regularly entered into the database; however, in the cattle slaughterhouse visited during the mission the Regional Inspector couldn't access the database. There were no instructions from the CCA on what to do in such cases. In the three other slaughterhouses, where the access to the database was possible, it was not always easy to access and evaluate all the data. The CCA explained that the system was very new and it still needed some improvements to be fully operational and that the summarised data could be extracted by IT specialists at the CCA level.

Follow up, corrective measures and sanctions

According to the Animal Welfare Act, the regional CA has the power to issue a demand for corrective measures, such as in the case, where the transport crates for turkeys were inadequate. Where this is not successful or the problem is deemed more serious administrative sanctions under the Animal Welfare Act or Veterinary Act No. 166/1999 could be applied.

If the infringements detected violate the provisions of the Veterinary Act, such as where heavily pregnant cows were sent to slaughterhouse, the sanctions are administered by the Director of the regional CA. If the infringements detected violate the provisions of the Animal Welfare Act, such as in the case where a person slaughtering the animals was not properly trained and in the case where a lame bull was transported to the slaughterhouse, the sanctions were administered by the Authorities of the Municipalities. From the documents seen, it was noted that the flow of information and collaboration between the regional CAs and Municipality Authorities is adequate and that the sanctions were administered in a timely manner.

In extreme cases, mostly where management of animals has completely broken down, usually more related to certain farms than to slaughterhouses, the cases can go to the court where sanctions can be issued using the provisions of §203 of the Penal Code.

4.3 Killing animals for disease control

Legislation

The provisions of Directive 93/119/EC regarding killing of animals for disease control have been transposed into Czech legislation and an additional specification is that a Regional Inspector qualified in accordance with the relevant Animal Welfare legislation shall be present at the time of killing. Methods of killing of animals described in the legislation are:

- For bovine animals, horses, donkeys and its cross-breeds or animals of similar weight: stunning by captive bolt pistol, followed by killing by electric current (1,8 – 2,8 A / 250 V). Electrodes must be placed on the back and on the cardiac region for at least 25 seconds; for the improvement of electric current conductivity, the cardiac region and back of bovine animals shall be moistened with 25% sodium chloride solution.
- For pigs, sheep, goats or animals of similar weight: stunning by electric current (1,5–2,5 A / 250 V). Electrodes must be placed on the head at least for two seconds, followed by killing with electric current (1,4 – 2,1 A/250 V) by placing

the electrodes on the chest for 10 to 25 seconds. To increase the conductivity and to ensure a good electrical contact, the place of contact between the skin and electrodes shall be moistened or the wool in this area shall be removed.

- For piglets, rabbits, rodents, poultry, pigeons or animals of similar weight the killing shall be carried out using CO₂ gas of the minimum concentration of 70% in devices consisting of an impermeable chamber equipped with gas distribution and a pressure container with a reduction valve; when the concentration is achieved, the animals shall be placed in the chamber for at least four minutes and stay in there until they are dead.
- Poultry flocks on high density farms will be killed by electric current (50 Hz, 180 V, 140 mA) in water bath stunners, i.e. on an equipment operating as a shortened slaughtering line, where they stay at least for four seconds; large containers which are normally used by rendering plants and can be adapted for killing of poultry with CO₂.

CA structure

The Risk Analysis and Crisis Management Division of the CCA is located in Brno and is responsible for preparing contingency plans, analysis of disease situation and organisation of simulation exercises and training of veterinarians to deal with emergency situations. Contingency plans for Foot and Mouth Disease, Classical Swine Fever and Avian Influenza/ Newcastle Disease have been prepared and approved by the EU Commission.

At the regional level there are two Emergency Eradication Centres, one in Brno and one in Hradec Kralovy, which are responsible also for organising the killing of animals in case of a disease outbreak. In case of an outbreak it is planned that a working group would be established, consisting of veterinarians from the regional CA and contracted personnel, such as slaughterhouse workers and drivers. On the spot, manpower would be provided by fire fighters, police, army and animal keepers.

Implementation

Technical resources and equipment are shared between the CCA and State administration for material resources; the latter grant permission for use of the equipment on receiving the request from the CCA. During the mission the inspection team noted that in the Emergency Eradication Centres visited the equipment for emergency use was in storage and well maintained.

A desk simulation exercise for Avian influenza had been performed. Based on experiences from this simulation exercise, the Contingency plan for Avian Influenza was updated in March 2006. An estimation of the number of animals that can be killed per hour has been made, taking into account the capacity of rendering plants, types of devices and the way they would be used. The CCA has prescribed methods for killing large batches of poultry and how many birds can be killed by certain methods (e.g. 1000 broilers per hour using electricity) based on average values for killing birds on farm. The CCA stated that a method of filling hen houses or buildings with CO₂ is currently being discussed.

4.4 Killing fur animals

Legislation

The provisions of Directive 93/119/EC regarding killing of fur animals has been transposed into the Czech legislation and methods of killing have been prescribed.

Organisation of controls

Fur farms are registered according to the Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002⁵. Currently there are 14 such farms in Czech Republic. In accordance with the CCA instructions at least 10% of holdings (checks on 25% of holdings are recommended) are to be checked yearly and the regional inspector is to use a check list.

Observations

- In the mink and fox farm visited, checks were regularly performed by the Regional Inspectors and the records of these checks were available.
- The killing of animals could not be assessed because this was not the killing season for mink and foxes. The CA indicated that killing of mink is performed over a very short period of time between November and December. Some male mink are killed in April.
- The device for killing is a box which contains up to 50 mink and is fitted with a CO₂ bottle from which the gas is released. Female animals are killed in approximately one minute and male animals in approximately one and a half to two minutes. After that the animals are left in the box for an additional five minutes. The killing device is moved from one group of cages to another, minimising the handling of animals.
- During the inspection it was noted that the Regional Inspector didn't have the possibility to check the CO₂ concentration in the killing box for mink, due to a lack of measuring instruments. The operator didn't have the equipment to measure CO₂ concentration; however, new equipment has been recently provided to the regional CA and they stated that it will be used in the future for checking the gas concentration when checks are made at the time of killing.
- Foxes are killed with an electrical device with two electrodes. One of the electrodes is put into the rectum and other to the mouth of the animal and the current is applied for 5 to 7 seconds. There is no possibility to check the level of amperes delivered to the animals, but the Regional Inspector who was present at the time of killing stated that the method is very efficient and produces rapid death.
- Killing equipment for mink and foxes was well maintained and the records of maintenance were kept by the owner. The electrical device for killing foxes is regularly checked by an approved technician and the records of those checks are kept.
- The person performing the killing had a good knowledge of the methods of killing that he uses and for which working protocols had been developed and endorsed by the regional CA. Guidelines, provided by the fur industry and based

⁵ Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 October 2002 laying down health rules concerning animal by-products not intended for human consumption OJ L 273, 10.10.2002, p.1.

on the Council of Europe Recommendation concerning fur animals⁶, were also available on the farm visited.

4.5 Slaughtering of fish

Legislation

Czech legislation contains provision for selling live fish in water tanks which have to be properly oxygenated. Previously the legislation contained a provision for mandatory stunning of fish before slaughtering; however, recent changes to the Animal Welfare Act abolished this provision.

Organisation of controls

The majority of fish farmed in Czech Republic are sold alive. 15 establishments are currently approved for slaughtering and processing of fish, where the controls of slaughter are carried out. The system of inspection in fish processing establishments is very similar to controls in slaughterhouses and is included in the CCA instructions. Daily checks were performed by the Regional Inspector and the results were entered in the computer database. Comprehensive annual checks are performed by Chief Regional Inspector for Animal Welfare and the results are entered in the computer database as well.

In retail shops checks, using the check list for Public Health purposes, which includes also some Animal Welfare aspects, were performed by Regional Inspectors for public health.

Observations

- In both establishments visited, fish were stunned before processing. In both cases the management intends to continue with this practice in the future, because it not only prevents fish from suffering, but it also facilitates better working procedures. The main methods of killing are electrical stunning for carp and by exposure to carbon dioxide for trout. Only stunning and killing of carp was seen during the mission.
- In one establishment the Regional Inspector performs daily checks at the arrival. The check is done on one fish from each tank on the lorry and includes eye reflex, tail reflex, skin flexibility and the colour of the gills. In second establishment those checks were done randomly.
- In the first establishment the fish were unloaded from the truck using a slide and then placed in a buffer. A batch of fish (around 80kg to 100kg) is conveyed to the stunning device. The electrical parameters were set to stun and kill the fish by the food business operators and written in their procedures (220-230 Volts, 50 Hertz and 8,2 – 8,6 Amperes for five minutes for 100 kg of carps). A device for monitoring electric parameters and automatic timer was in place. The operator checked whether the fish were adequately stunned by applying an electric shock and looking in the mirror placed above the stunner to see if the movement of the fish was still present. In the event that the fish had not been properly stunned, the stunning procedure could have been prolonged.

⁶ Council of Europe, Standing Committee of the European Convention for the Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes, Recommendation Concerning Fur Animals, Adopted by the Standing Committee on 22 June 1999. see: www.coe.int

- In the second establishment, fish were conveyed to the stunning device directly from the water tank. The electrical parameters were set to stun and kill the fish by the food business operators and written in their procedures (220 Volts, 50 Hertz and 4-5 Amperes) with three different time possibilities (three, five or seven minutes). The duration of stunning is set up every morning by the business operator taking into account the species of fish to be stunned, the size of the fish, the temperature of the water and time of the year. A device for monitoring the electric parameters and automatic timer was in place.
- In both establishments the electrical stunning equipment was well maintained and records were kept and were checked by the Regional Inspector during annual checks.
- The workers working in both establishments were trained on aspects of animal welfare by the business operators. The records of training were kept and were checked by the regional CA during yearly checks.
- In the retail shop, fish were either sold alive or killed using a special hammer. The quantity of fish in each tank was in accordance with national legislation, and the tanks seemed to be adequately aerated. However, there was no measuring device to measure the concentration of oxygen, which is prescribed in the national legislation, and the oxygenation was not checked during the checks performed by the Regional Inspector.

4.6 Follow up of the Recommendations in Report 7517/2005

Report 7517/2005 recommended to the CA to ensure that:

- A more detailed check lists are drawn up, with reference to the different criteria that should be checked and met.
- Private veterinarians signing the document for transporting animals receive adequate training and guidance.
- The registration of the holdings with laying hens is in compliance with the relevant legislation and that the register is kept updated
- In case an emergency slaughter is needed during transport, this is performed in a way that does not cause any unnecessary suffering to the animals.
- A system for the control of the route plans is put in place, both to verify times before the journey and to ensure route plans are returned when the journey is completed.
- Roadside checks of vehicles transporting animals on long distance are organised.
- Resting times at the assembly centres are respected before animals are loaded on vehicles
- Transport of casualty animals to slaughterhouses comply with the relevant legislation.

Although not evaluated on the spot during the mission these issues were again discussed with the CCA and the following points were noted:

- More detailed check lists have been drawn up.
- Training for veterinarians who sign transport documents was performed and included also the transport of casualty animals to slaughterhouses.
- In all cases where emergency slaughter or killing on the spot during transport is needed, this is performed by a veterinarian.
- Control of route plans has been organised and roadside checks of vehicles transporting animals have been performed with the police.
- Regarding the registration of holdings with laying hens, the CCA stated that the database is in place and although it is still in a test phase it should be operational in the forthcoming months.
- Regarding the resting times at assembly centres, the amendments to the Animal Welfare Act were not made; however, the need to transpose this requirement into national legislation will be superseded when Regulation (EC) No 1/2005⁷ enters into force.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Competent authority

- 1) The structure of the CA is adequate to ensure that the relevant legislation, guidelines, supervision and controls in the field of animal welfare are efficiently prepared and performed with a clear attribution of responsibilities and appropriate flow of information.
- 2) The fundamental competence of the Regional Inspectors to perform checks is ensured by their training and examination in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act. In addition, continuing education courses and seminars on animal welfare organised by the CCA and Veterinary Chamber allow additional knowledge to be acquired on an on-going basis.

5.2 Slaughterhouses

- 1) Czech legislation on animal welfare at slaughter has requirements that go beyond those of Directive 93/119/EC such as the parameters for the electrical stunning of certain species.

⁷ 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, OJ L 3 of 5.1.2005, p. 1.

- 2) The system set up by the CA to check animal welfare requirements in slaughterhouses complies with the approach laid down in Regulations (EC) No 882/2004 and No 854/2004⁸.
- 3) Daily checks performed by the Regional Inspectors ensure that most of the animal welfare requirements are respected; however certain deficiencies were not picked up during these checks, because the CCA had not provided sufficient guidance and training on how to perform certain controls, such as further details on how to assess the effectiveness of stunning apart from the checking for absence of a corneal reflex.
- 4) It is not possible to conclude on the efficacy of the quarterly checks carried out as no records of these checks were kept.
- 5) The system of yearly checks provides assurance that that the Regional Inspectors perform their tasks adequately and that the animal welfare requirements in slaughterhouses are respected.
- 6) A system for reporting and recording the results of animal welfare checks has been set up, however there are still some operational problems with the database, notably the extraction of data and evaluation of the results, as it is only in initial phase of implementation.
- 7) Follow up and corrective actions were effective. Whenever infringements were identified, administrative sanctions were imposed in a timely manner thanks to a good collaboration between regional CAs and Municipalities.

5.3 Killing for disease control

- 1) The CA has set up a system to ensure that the killing of animals for the purposes of disease control is done using methods compliant with Annex E of Directive 93/119/EC and necessary equipment and trained personal are available.
- 2) Czech legislation on animal welfare at killing has requirements that go beyond those of Directive 93/119/EC in particular it defines the parameters for killing certain species of animals and it has, in addition, a requirement for a Regional Inspector to be present at the time of killing.
- 3) Contingency plans are in place and a simulation exercise has enabled the CA to work through some issues involved, but there has been less emphasis on difficulties which might arise with the practical application of methods such as the use of electrical stunning on farm.

5.4 Killing of fur animals

Yearly checks performed by the Chief Regional Inspector for Animal Welfare ensure that killing methods used in fur farms are compliant, killing equipment is

⁸ Regulation (EC) No 854/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific rules for the organisation of official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption. OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p.206.

well maintained and the persons performing the killing have a good knowledge of the methods used.

5.5 Slaughtering of fish

Although EU legislation doesn't prescribe specific requirements for the slaughter of fish, the system of surveillance of fish processing plants was similar to the one set up to control slaughterhouses and ensured that the transport, handling and stunning of fish were satisfactory.

5.6 Follow-up of the Recommendation in Report 7517/2005

On the basis of the evaluation that was made and although not evaluated on the spot, satisfactory measures have been taken to address these recommendations.

5.7 Overall conclusion

The Czech Republic has adopted legislative measures and procedures which go further than EU requirements on issues such as parameters for stunning of animals in slaughterhouses and killing of animals for disease control. The CA has also set up a documented system to ensure compliance with animal welfare requirements during slaughter of animals in slaughterhouses and during killing for disease control purposes. Comprehensive legislation, programme of controls, check-lists, training and system of sanctions have been provided to the official veterinarians who carry out the checks. However, the reporting system recently put in place does not yet ensure that it is possible to make a full evaluation of the results of the controls performed.

Regarding the actions taken in response to the recommendations in the report 7519/2005, although not evaluated on the spot, on the basis of the evaluation made, satisfactory measures have been taken to address these issues.

6. CLOSING MEETING

A closing meeting was held on the 24th of March 2006 with representatives of the Central Competent Authority. At this meeting, the main findings and conclusions of the mission were presented by the inspection team. The representatives of the Central Competent Authority comment which are included in the report and said that they will address the shortcomings that have been identified by the inspection team.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

To the competent authorities of Czech Republic

Within 25 working days of receipt of the final mission report, the Competent Authorities are requested to present a plan of actions, including a timetable for their completion, to address the following recommendations.

The CCA should ensure that measures are taken so that:

- 1) The results of audits and inspections performed in slaughterhouses for animal welfare requirements, which are reported and recorded in databases, can be evaluated by the

CA at all levels (Annex I, section II of Regulation (EC) n°854/2004 and point 4 of article 4 of Regulation (EC) n°882/2004).

- 2) Additional training or guidelines are provided to the official veterinarians on how to perform complete controls at slaughter and killing in slaughterhouses (Article 6 of Regulation (EC) n°882/2004).
- 3) Ducks and rabbits are spared any avoidable excitement during lairaging in slaughterhouses (Article 3 of Directive 93/119/EC).
- 4) Turkeys must be provided with adequate ventilation in lairages (point I, 2, of Annex A of directive 93/119/EC).
- 5) Rabbits and turkeys are handled in slaughterhouse in an appropriate manner to spare any avoidable pain or suffering (Article 3 and 7 of Directive 93/119/EC)
- 6) Training of handlers is such that they possess the necessary skill, ability and professional knowledge on the handling, stunning and bleeding procedures specific to their workplace. (Article 3 and 7 of Directive 93/119/EC)
- 7) Appropriate back-up stunning equipment is kept at the place of slaughter (point 2 of Article 6 of Directive 93/119/EC).
- 8) Contingency plan for Avian influenza is updated and takes into account the killing of large butches of poultry, to ensure rapid and efficient eradication of any outbreak. (Article 17 of Directive 92/40⁹)

8. ADDENDUM TO MISSION REPORT DG SANCO 8040/2006

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

In relation to 1, from 1 May 2006 the computer database has been improved and the data are now available and can be evaluated whenever needed.

In relation to 2 and 6, a series of meeting will be arranged with inspectors at different levels, where the control of stunning of animals will be discussed and instructions, according to the EFSA report principles, will be given.

In relation to 3, 4 and 5, the regions concerned will perform checks aiming to ensure that the conditions of slaughtering of ducks, rabbits and turkeys will be improved.

In relation to 7, an opinion of the Work Security and Safety Office will be sought on this issue and on this basis the instruction for the food business operators will be prepared.

In relation to 8, that in April 2006 a test was made on killing ducks and geese with CO₂ and that no major problems were detected.

⁹ Council Directive 92/40/EEC of 19 May 1992 introducing Community measures for control of avian influenza, OJ L 167, 22.06.1992, p.1.