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FINAL REPORT OF A MISSION
CARRIED OUT IN SLOVENIA
FROM 27 NOVEMBER TO 1 DECEMBER 2006
IN ORDER TO ASSESS ANIMAL WELFARE
AT SLAUGHTER

Please note that factual errors have been corrected following the comments made by the Slovenian authorities on the draft version of the report.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the outcome of a mission carried out by the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) in Slovenia, from 27 November to 1 December 2006.

The objectives of the mission were to evaluate the measures taken to ensure the requirements for animal welfare at the time of slaughter and killing in Council Directive 93/119/EC, certain aspects of animal welfare during transport in Council Directive 91/628/EEC and how checks of these requirements had been integrated with the requirements for control laid down in Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and Council.

The system set up by the CA ensures an overall satisfactory level of compliance with EU requirements for animal welfare at the time of slaughter and during killing, with the notable exception of the inadequate electrical stunning of poultry.

There were also some weaknesses regarding supervision by the regional level, which was not always sufficient, and regarding recording and reporting of the controls performed, which has been too general to allow a meaningful evaluation of the results. However, this has been counterbalanced by the recent introduction of internal audits, which have resulted in documented procedures being more closely followed.

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

1. INTRODUCTION

The mission took place in Slovenia from 27/11/2006 to 01/12/2006. The mission team comprised two inspectors from the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO), and one national expert from Hungary. The inspection team was accompanied during the whole mission by representatives from the Central Competent Authority, the Veterinary Administration of the Republic of Slovenia (VARŠ) (*Veterinarska Uprava Republike Slovenije – VURS*) (hereafter: CCA).

The mission was undertaken as part of the FVO's planned mission programme and is the fourth in a series of missions on animal welfare at the time of slaughter. An opening meeting was held on 27 November 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 measures taken to ensure the requirements for animal welfare at the time of slaughter and killing in Council Directive 93/119/EC^{1,2}, certain aspects of animal welfare during transport in Council Directive 91/628/EEC³ and how checks of these requirements had been integrated with the requirements for control laid down in Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and Council⁴.

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

COMPETENT AUTHORITY VISITS			Comments
Competent authority	Central	2	Opening and final meetings at the CCA headquarters.
	Regional	1	The Regional office of Kranj to assess preparedness in relation to killing of animals for disease control purposes and to evaluate the outcome of an internal audit of tasks related to animal welfare.
Slaughterhouses		4	Two red meat establishments, one slaughtering cattle and the other pigs. Two poultry slaughterhouses one for turkeys and one for broilers.
Fur farm		1	One chinchilla farm where arrangements for killing were discussed.

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, (hereafter: Directive 93/119/EC).

² All legal references in this report refer, where applicable, to the latest amended version.

³ Council Directive 91/628/EEC of 19 November 1991 on the protection of animals during transport and amending Directives 90/425/EEC and 91/496/EEC, OJ L 340, 11.12.1991, p.17, (hereafter: Directive 91/628/EEC), which is repealed from 5.1.2007 with the entry into force of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations, OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p 1.

⁴ 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, (hereafter: Regulation (EC) No 882/2004)

3. LEGAL BASIS FOR THE MISSION

The mission was carried out under the general provisions of Community legislation and, in particular: Article 14 of Directive 93/119/EC and Article 45 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004.

4. BACKGROUND

Although this was the first FVO mission to Slovenia dedicated entirely to EU legislation on animal welfare at the time of slaughter and killing, certain aspects of these topics were included in previous missions on red meat establishments, which took place prior to Slovenia's accession to the EU and in November 2005 on both red meat establishments and contingency plans for dealing with outbreaks of epizootic disease (DG SANCO/7615/2005). The latter report is available on the DG Health and Consumer Protection website http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/index_en.htm

5. MAIN FINDINGS

5.1. Competent authority

The organisation of the Competent Authorities (hereafter: CA) and how this generally applies to animal welfare controls is described in a report concerning the country profile of Slovenia on food and feed safety, animal health, animal welfare and plant health (ref. DG(SANCO)/8028/2006- MR – final) which is available under this reference on the DG Health and Consumer Protection website http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/country_profiles_en.cfm.

The following are some further details in relation to the organisation of the CA and tasks related to animal welfare at the time of slaughter and killing:

- At central level, there is one specialised animal welfare officer in the Animal Health and Welfare Sector.
- At regional level, officials in the Public Health Departments of each regional office supervise the work of the official veterinarians (OVs) in slaughterhouses. Each regional CA also has a specialist animal welfare officer who acts as an advisor to the other colleagues.
- Private veterinarians are authorised by the CA to carry out certain official tasks, and are obliged to be available for any eradication of epizootic diseases, including tasks concerning the killing of animals on farm.

In relation to killing animals for disease control purposes, the CCA is responsible for preparing contingency plans and organising simulation exercises for eradication of epizootic diseases and training veterinarians to deal with such situations. The National Disease Control Centre is responsible for defining the killing methods and where and when to apply them.

The Internal Veterinary Inspection Sector of the CCA is responsible for ensuring that all veterinary inspections, including those for animal welfare, are carried out and reported in a uniform way throughout the country, as required by Articles 4(4) and 8(1) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 and that when infringements are found

during inspections, they are followed up or sanctioned, as required by Article 8(3)(b) and Article 55(1) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004.

The Quality Assurance and Internal Control Service of the CCA, which reports directly to the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO), carries out internal audits of all veterinary related activities of the regional services, as required by Article 4(6) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004. Amongst their audits, three in 2006 in three different regions focused on animal welfare at slaughter.

Cooperation with other services

The CCA has made arrangements with the Ministry of Defense, including the Civil Protection Service and the Veterinary Department of the Army, to cooperate on issues involving the eradication of epizootic diseases.

Training of inspectors

The CCA organised training for OVs, as required by Article 6 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004, with training sessions dealing with animal welfare at slaughter/killing. The CCA organised several sessions in cooperation with the TAIEX office of the European Commission⁵, two concerning slaughter in 2005 and one simulation exercise concerning Foot and Mouth Disease in 2006. At least one OV in each region had attended the 2005 training sessions.

Further information on the CA can be obtained at the website: <http://www.vurs.gov.si>

5.2. Legislation

Although a comprehensive check of national legislation was not carried out, it was noted that:

- Article 7 of Directive 93/119/EC requires the CA to ensure that persons in slaughterhouses who work with live animals to possess the necessary knowledge and skill for their job. In national legislation this has been the subject of a specific requirement for specific training to be provided to such staff, although there is a transitional period until 9 February 2007 for the implementation of this national requirement.
- During the mission it was noted that training of workers was performed by the slaughterhouse management with some involvement from the OVs. A programme has been put in place for more formal training early in 2007, in co-operation with a national veterinary institute.

5.3. Slaughterhouses

5.3.1 Approval of slaughterhouses

All the slaughterhouses visited had been re-approved in 2006 on the basis of the EU hygiene and control rules which came into force on 1.1.2006 (European Parliament and Council Regulations (EC) No 852/2004⁶, No 853/2004⁷, No 854/2004⁸ and No

⁵ Technical Assistance Information Exchange Instrument of the Institution Building unit of the Directorate General Enlargement of the European Commission.

⁶ Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on hygiene of food stuffs OJ L 139, 30.04.2004 p 3, as corrected OJ L 226, 25.06.2004 p.3-21.

882/2004). The details of animal welfare requirements were more consistently covered after June 2006 when a specific checklist was made available to OVs as part of the procedure for carrying out approval. Regulation (EC) No 853/2004, Annex III, Section I, Chapter II, 1 indicates that aspects of the construction and layout of the lairages must be considered in relation to animal welfare. It was noted that in one red meat slaughterhouse, the operator had to describe to the CA the process of transport, lairage and handling in detail for new species such as ostriches. The CCA guidance was limited regarding stunning of this species and another regional CA with relevant experience was consulted prior to approval.

5.3.2 Inspections

The system of inspection carried out was as follows:

- The CCA draws up an annual inspection programme, which encompasses all the tasks carried out by the regional CA and which was primarily set up as part of an initiative to provide the Government with information on the activities of the various state bodies. OVs then draw up a work programme to reflect their activities on the basis of the categories provided in the CCA programme. There is one category "controls of animal welfare at slaughter", and although the CCA indicated that such checks are carried out on a constant basis, different OVs had indicated different numbers of checks in their work programme for this category. OVs reported, at least monthly to the regional level, on the work they had carried out according to the categories provided. A representative of the CCA indicated that information from these regional reports would be used as part of a risk analysis, as required by Article 3(1) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004, and would be used as a basis for subsequent checks. However, the inspection team noted that only the number of checks of animal welfare at slaughter are included in these reports but details are not given regarding the aspects that were checked or the outcome of these checks.
- Documented procedures had been provided by the CCA to staff carrying out animal welfare checks in slaughterhouses, as required by Article 8(1) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004, such as check lists and guidance on technical aspects. The format to record and report the details of daily inspections were not specified and instead details of checks were recorded in an individually created OV log book. Regulation (EC) No 854/2004, Annex I, section II, chapter I, 1 and 3 requires the CA to record and evaluate the results of inspection activities. A representative of the CCA indicated that the public health sector of each region supervise the work of each OV based on the review of the OV's log book. CCA checklists had been completed for all slaughterhouses visited; however OVs assessing poultry slaughterhouses had marked most points as not applicable.

⁷ Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific rules for food of animal origin OJ L 139, 30.04.2004 p. 55, as corrected OJ L 226, 25.06.2004 p.3-21, (hereafter: Regulation (EC) No 853/2004).

⁸ Regulation (EC) No 854/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific rules for food of animal origin OJ L 139, 30.04.2004 p. 83, as corrected OJ L 226, 25.06.2004 p.3-21, (hereafter: Regulation (EC) No 854/2004).

- OV's carried out checks of food business operator's "own checks" for issues such as maintenance of stunning equipment as instructed by the CCA and as required by Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 Article 10, 2(a).
- Although CCA instructions indicated that written corrective actions should be given where deficiencies were detected, as required by Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 Article 54(3), oral warnings had been given for many deficiencies noted in log books. Where the OV had decided that an incident was serious the food business operator had been notified such as an incident where there were high mortalities in a consignment of broilers. An internal audit report also indicated that written notification of deficiencies was not always sufficient.

Regarding checks of animals arriving at slaughterhouses it was noted that:

- An internal audit report for Kranj region indicated that there were certain problems with transport and handling at slaughterhouses, in particular that cattle were frequently tied by horns during transport; Directive 91/628/EEC Annex, Chapter I, Section A, 2(f) forbids animals to be transported if restrained in this manner. A follow-up inspection by the internal audit team of the CCA indicated that more training of slaughterhouse staff had been provided; the OV had been instructed to carry out more stringent supervision and take enforcement action as necessary, all of which had resulted in an improved situation.
- OV's in both pig and poultry slaughterhouses had worked out the maximum numbers of animals for typical deliveries of pigs and poultry based on the requirements of Chapter VI of the Annex to Directive 91/628/EEC, and this was subsequently monitored, primarily as part of the operator's system of own checks. In neither poultry slaughterhouse were birds able to stand in their natural position in the transport crates, contrary to the requirements of Chapter IV, point 34 (b), applying Chapter I paragraph 2 (a) of the Annex to Directive 91/628/EEC and, although all levels of the CA present during the visit were not able to confirm whether the provisions for sufficient head space in the national legislation applied to poultry, the inspection team later noted that this had been correctly transposed into national legislation. It should be noted that this requirement is maintained in Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 Chapter III, Section 1.3 (a) which is applicable from 5.1.2007.
- Guidance from the CCA did not provide any details regarding unloading of poultry. In one poultry slaughterhouse, three poultry transport modules, one on top of the other, were automatically unloaded onto a conveyor belt, where some birds had been previously unloaded but had not been moved sufficiently out of the way to avoid the others from being unloaded on top of them, such an arrangement does not take adequate account of Article 3 of Directive 93/119/EC to spare avoidable excitement, pain and suffering.
- Enforcement actions had been taken to discourage the transport of seriously injured cattle. Article 12 of Directive 93/119/EC requires that such animals are killed on the spot, and in Maribor region, fines had been imposed on transporters, keepers and veterinarians who had allowed the transport of such cattle to take place. Figures at national level indicated an increasing trend away from the live transport of casualty cattle and towards the transport of carcasses of such animals to slaughterhouses instead.

Regarding checks of lairages it was noted that:

- OV's had worked out the capacity of the pens in lairages (0.5-0.8 m² depending on the category of pig) on the basis of guidance given during training, which had been organised in co-operation with TAIEX. This maximum stocking rate had subsequently been included in the slaughterhouses own procedures. Directive 93/119/EC Annex A, Section II, 6 requires that slaughterhouses must have a sufficient number of pens for adequate lairaging and Regulation (EC) No 853/2004, Annex III, Section I, Chapter II, 1(c) indicates that the size of the lairage facilities must ensure that the welfare of animals is respected.
- The CCA had recently amended written guidance to include more information on the handling of animals and restraint, and had recommended that 75% of movements should be made without the use of an electric goad; however during the visits all cattle and approximately half of the pigs were moved by using such goads. The OV of the pig slaughterhouse had made remarks about handling problems and, although it had not been recorded as a deficiency, the CA and management were seeking ways to improve the movement of pigs.

Regarding slaughter procedures it was noted that:

- As required by Directive 93/119/EC Annex C, Section II, 3, B (1), the CCA had determined the strength and duration of the current required to stun poultry in waterbath stunners; however, these parameters were not followed in either slaughterhouse visited and as a result birds were inadequately stunned. The OV of the turkey slaughterhouse did not think that the figures in the CCA guidance were practical when issues of meat quality were also considered; the company had indicated in its standard operating procedures that they were striving for the lowest voltage so that haemorrhages in the meat were minimised. In the broiler slaughterhouse visited, the OV was not sufficiently knowledgeable regarding the signs of effective stunning and representatives of both the central and regional CA expressed doubts about the parameters set in their own instructions, suggesting that they needed to assess both the current practices in slaughterhouses and to consult the companies who manufacture the equipment on this issue.
- Guidance was not followed in relation to the stun to stick interval for electrically stunned pigs, where arrangements to achieve this in 15 seconds had not been achieved and it was also not followed in relation to the cutting of both carotid arteries when bleeding broilers. However guidance went further than the minimum standards on these issues, as Directive 93/119/EC Annex D requires stunned animals to be bled as soon as possible with the incision of at least one carotid artery. A previous report indicated that where there had been a major delay with the bleeding of pigs following stunning, well beyond that which was normally achieved and where pigs on the line were showing obvious signs of consciousness, the OV had imposed fines of €600 on the food business operator and €100 on the operative in charge.
- The guidance provided by the CCA to the inspection team regarding actions to take in the event of a breakdown of a waterbath stunner indicated that the line shall be accessible so that in case of breakdown the animals not having reached the water-bath stunner can be unhooked, and those already stunned and remaining in the water-bath may be appropriately bled. Representatives from the slaughterhouses indicated that broilers and turkeys would be unshackled after 3

and 6 minutes respectively following a breakdown. In the case of the broiler slaughterhouse 34 birds were accommodated at the same time in the stunner. Article 3 of Directive 93/119/EC requires that animals are spared avoidable suffering, and as birds which had reached the waterbath are likely to drown in such a time before being unshackled, this requirement had not been adequately considered by the CA in relation to such a situation.

5.4. Slaughter outside slaughterhouses

Checks had been performed of the slaughter of pigs on farms, particularly tourist farms where home produced meat is offered on the premises. The regional CA indicated that after the food business operator (farmer) announces that he intends to slaughter animals, the OV does an ante mortem check and a professional slaughterman stuns the pigs with a captive bolt.

There are three chinchilla rearing holdings registered for fur production in Slovenia and on only one is killing carried out; animals are exported from the other two farms. The keeper had consulted a specialist private veterinarian who had supervised the use of CO₂ for killing the animals and had provided advice on the signs of death. Although the CA carry out annual checks of such farms, they had not supervised the killing of animals and had relied on the expert advice given by the private veterinarian to ensure that the requirements of Article 10 (2) and Annex F (6) of Directive 93/119/EC were met.

5.5. Killing animals for disease control purposes

The CCA have concluded separate agreements for Avian Influenza, Foot and Mouth Disease and Classical Swine Fever with the Ministry of Defence in order to get the Veterinary Unit of the Army deployed in outbreak situations.

In relation to the killing of poultry it was noted:

- The army can provide a gas chamber for killing birds with CO₂, which had been recently tested during an exercise in November 2006 and operated at a rate of 50 average weight birds exposed to 70% for at least 2 minutes. Directive 93/119/EC Annex C, III, 3 requires the CA to lay down the concentration and length of exposure to CO₂. However, as the CA also indicated that the tank had an overall capacity of 300 birds per hour, this would seem to limit its use to backyard flocks.
- The CCA indicated that for larger farms they would seal off the building and pump in the gas. The concentration and length of exposure to CO₂, which the CA is required to lay down (Directive 93/119/EC Annex C, III, 3), indicated a rate of 17.5 kg of CO₂ for every 1000 m³ of air and that all the birds would be dead in 15 minutes. The rate of application of CO₂ had established following a twinning project with Italy; however, the inspection team expressed reservations about these figures as this would result in a concentration of 0.77% CO₂, which would not have any effect on the birds.
- The contingency plan for poultry also includes the use of hydrogen cyanide (HCN), but the use of this gas as a humane killing method has been questioned

by EFSA⁹ which does not recommend it as it causes respiratory difficulties before the onset of unconsciousness and is dangerous to humans.

- A representative of the CCA indicated that the contingency plan for Avian Influenza is going to be updated early in 2007 and that killing methods and coordination of activities between the different levels of the CA will be further considered. Article 17 of Directive 92/40/EEC¹⁰ required Member States to ensure, *inter alia*, access to equipment and personnel, so that killing of animals can proceed efficiently. Similar requirements are contained in Article 62 of Directive 2005/94/EC¹¹ which replaces Directive 92/40/EEC from 1.7.2007.

In relation to preparedness for the killing of mammals:

- The CA provided to the inspection team a TAIEX report on a Foot and Mouth Disease simulation exercise held in June 2006, which recommended that the CA should immediately establish contractual arrangements with slaughtermen and companies supplying killing equipment; however this had not yet been done. A representative of the CCA indicated that this was a heavy administrative burden and that discussions with their legal advisors were also necessary before undertaking such arrangements.
- The CCA indicated that previously they had initial difficulties in obtaining electrical stunning equipment for killing a flock of sheep for disease reasons. Steps have subsequently been taken, such as in the region visited where an inventory of electrical stunning equipment and captive bolt pistols available from the slaughterhouses in the region had been drawn up, to better ensure that such equipment can be procured, but no formal arrangements had been made to better ensure the availability of such equipment for use on farm. A representative of the CCA indicated that they trusted the civic duties of those concerned to enable them to deal with any possible disease outbreak.
- This regional office visited had lists of people who could carry out certain tasks in relation to the killing of animals, such as slaughtermen and the catchers normally employed for this purpose on poultry farms.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1. Competent authority

- 1) Arrangements within the CA are adequate to ensure that the relevant legislation, guidelines, training, and controls in the field of animal welfare are in place; however, the information being gathered to enable the CA to adopt a risk based approach to inspection, as required by

⁹ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en.html>. Report on welfare aspects of animal stunning and killing methods, p. 204

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ Council Directive 2005/94/EC of 20 December 2005 on Community measures for the control of avian influenza and repealing Directive 92/40/EEC, OJ L 10, 14.10.2005, p. 16.

Article 3(1)(a) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004, does not provide a sufficient basis to identify the risks associated with animal welfare at the time of slaughter.

6.2. Legislation

Further specifications in national legislation provide a good basis to ensure that slaughterhouses staff who work with live animals possess the necessary knowledge and skill, as required by Article 7 of Directive 93/119/EC.

6.3. Slaughterhouses

- 1) Animal welfare aspects have been adequately considered at the stage of approval of slaughterhouses, as required by Regulation (EC) No 853/2004, Annex III, Section I, Chapter II, 1, with specific stocking densities established for lairages.
- 2) Although documented procedures for checks in slaughterhouses, as required by Article 8(1) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004, sometimes went beyond minimum requirements such as further limiting the use of the electric goad, setting limits for stun to stick intervals for electrically stunned pigs and the cutting of both carotid arteries of poultry, they were not sufficiently comprehensive for all issues regarding animal welfare at the time of slaughter. As procedures generally focused on red meat species and were less adequate for assessing poultry welfare, deficiencies in the transport and unloading of poultry were not detected (Article 3 of Directive 93/119/EC and Directive 91/628/EEC Annex, Chapter IV, 34 (b)) and not fully satisfactory procedures had been established for the event of a breakdown in a waterbath stunner (Article 3 of Directive 93/119/EC).
- 3) Internal audits, as required by Article 4(6) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004, have improved the supervision of OV's by the regional CA and have helped to ensure that procedures in establishments are followed, such as giving written corrective actions rather than oral warnings when deficiencies are detected, as required by Regulation (EC) No 882/2004, Article 54(3). However, measures taken to verify the effectiveness of inspections, as required by Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 Article 8 (3), were not always sufficient, particularly in regions where audits of inspections had not been carried out. Although the CCA had established the strength and duration of the parameters needed for electrical stunning of poultry, as required by Directive 93/119/EC Annex C, II, 3, B (1), this guidance was not followed and the other levels of the CA were not sufficiently aware that stunning was insufficient. Supervision by the other levels of the CA was also hindered by the lack of a standardised format for recording the results of checks.
- 4) Enforcement actions, which were taken for most serious infringements, have helped to ensure better compliance, such as to discourage the transport of seriously injured animals, as required by Article 12 of Directive 93/119/EC.

6.4. Slaughter outside slaughterhouses

Adequate measures had been taken to ensure that the requirements in relation to the slaughter of pigs on farm and in relation to the killing of fur animals were respected, as required by Article 9 and Article 10 (2) of Directive 93/119/EC respectively.

6.5. Killing for disease control purposes

- 1) Preparedness for dealing with epizootic diseases, including co-operation with other services, is generally satisfactory for ensuring that humane methods of killing will be used in such an event, as required by Article 10 (1) of Directive 93/119/EC; however, concerning whole house gassing of poultry, the concentration of CO₂ provided for in the contingency plans would not be sufficient for this purpose. Also, the use of hydrogen cyanide, which is indicated as an option in contingency plans, is questionable as a humane method of killing.
- 2) Preliminary steps have been taken to ensure that necessary equipment and personnel are available to deal with killing during a disease outbreak, the Civil Defence and the Army are state services and so are available to the CA in such a situation, but apart from formal arrangements with certain veterinary practices no contractual arrangements have been made with others involved, as the CA is relying on the civic duties of the people concerned.

6.6. Overall conclusion

The system set up by the CA ensures an overall satisfactory level of compliance with EU requirements for animal welfare at the time of slaughter and during killing, with the notable exception of the inadequate electrical stunning of poultry.

There were also some weaknesses regarding supervision by the regional level, which was not always sufficient, and regarding recording and reporting of the controls performed, which has been too general to allow a meaningful evaluation of the results. However, this has been counterbalanced by the recent introduction of internal audits, which have resulted in documented procedures being more closely followed.

7. CLOSING MEETING

A closing meeting was held on 1 December 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. In their reaction to these findings, a representative of the CCA emphasised that certain corrective measures had been taken immediately in relation to the stunning of poultry.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. To the competent authorities of Slovenia

Within 25 working days of receipt of the translated 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 take measures to ensure that:

- 1) The risks associated with animal welfare at the time of slaughter are identified so that a risk based approach to inspection is adopted, as required by Article 3(1)(a) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004.
- 2) Documented procedures are provided for all controls implementing Directive 93/119/EC, as required by Article 8(1) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004.
- 3) The results of inspections are recorded in a form that allows the effectiveness of inspections to be adequately verified, as required by Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 Article 8(3).
- 4) Adequate controls are in place to ascertain compliance with requirements in slaughterhouses, such as the stunning of poultry, as required by Article 8 of Directive 93/119/EC.
- 5) Adequate plans are in place to allow access to equipment and personnel so that killing of animals can proceed efficiently, such as in relation to Avian Influenza, as required by Article 62(2) and Annex X, 5 of Directive 2005/94/EC, and so that killing methods do not cause any avoidable excitement, pain or suffering, as required by Article 3 of Directive 93/119/EC, further consideration is given to the use of Hydrogen Cyanide and adequate concentrations of CO₂ are determined for killing poultry, as required by Directive 93/119/EC Annex C, III, 3.

9. COMPETENT AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Once the report has been published, the competent authority response to the recommendations can be found at the following link:

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/food/fvo/ap/ap_slovenia_8038_2006.pdf