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FINAL REPORT OF A MISSION  
CARRIED OUT IN  
LITHUANIA  
FROM 19 FEBRUARY TO 22 FEBRUARY 2008  
IN ORDER TO  
EVALUATE THE SYSTEM OF CONTROL IN RELATION TO ANIMAL WELFARE  
OF LAYING HENS

### ***Executive Summary***

*This report describes the outcome of a mission carried out by the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) in Lithuania from 19 to 22 February 2008.*

*The objectives of the mission were to verify the implementation of EU animal welfare legislation applicable to laying hen farms and to assess how some of the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council have been integrated into the controls of this sector . A follow-up assessment was also made of the actions taken following previous missions on animal welfare.*

*The report concludes that the system of controls in place did not ensure that deficiencies in laying hen holdings equipped with cages were detected and corrected. Even though some progress was made, serious deficiencies already highlighted during missions in 2004 and 2006, such as insufficient height of unenriched cages and the installation of cages with no enrichment after Accession were still outstanding.*

*The report addresses to the Lithuanian competent authorities a number of recommendations, several of which had already been made following previous missions.*

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## ABBREVIATIONS & SPECIAL TERMS USED IN THE REPORT

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
CCA	Central Competent Authority
EC	European Community
EU	European Union
FVO	Food and Veterinary Office
OV	Official Veterinarian
QSP	Quality Standard Procedures
RCA	Regional Competent Authority
SAPARD	Special Programme of Pre-accession for Agriculture and Rural Development
SFVS	State Food and Veterinary Service

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

The mission took place in Lithuania from 19 to 22 February 2008, as part of the planned mission programme of the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO).

An opening meeting was held with the competent authorities of Lithuania on 19 February 2008. At this meeting, the objectives of, and itinerary for, the mission were confirmed by the mission team and additional information required for the satisfactory completion of the mission requested.

The mission team comprised two inspectors from the FVO and was accompanied throughout the mission by a representative from the Central Competent Authority (hereafter: CCA), the State Food and Veterinary Service (SFVS) of Lithuania.

## **2 OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSION**

The objectives of the mission were to verify:

- The implementation of EU animal welfare legislation applicable to laying hen farms, in particular the measures put in place to give effect to Council Directives 1999/74/EC and 98/58/EC, Commission Directive 2002/4/EC and Commission Decision 2000/50/EC (repealed by Commission Decision 2006/778/EC).
- How some of the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council have been integrated into the official controls of the laying hen sector.

A follow-up assessment was also made of the actions taken to address the recommendations concerning the welfare of laying hens made in the previous reports ref. DG(SANCO)/7306/2004- MR – final (hereafter: report 7306/2004) and ref. DG(SANCO)/8046/2006- MR – final (hereafter: report 8046/2006) which are available under these references on the DG Health and Consumer Protection website: [http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/index_en.htm)

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

Visits			Comments
Competent authority	Central level	2	Opening and closing meetings with the CCA.
	Regional level	2	The county offices of Vilnius and Telsiai were visited. In Telsiai a meeting with Siauliai CA was also held.
Farms		3	One farm in each County was visited. In Vilnius and Siauliai the houses were equipped with unenriched and enriched cages and in Tilsiai with enriched cages. The farms were selected by the mission team from the lists provided by the CCA.

### 3 LEGAL BASIS FOR THE MISSION

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

- (a) Article 7 of Council Directive 98/58/EC;
- (b) Article 9 of Council Directive 1999/74/EC;
- (c) Article 45 of Regulation (EC)No 882/2004.

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

### 4 BACKGROUND

Previous missions concerning the welfare of farm animals took place in Lithuania in 2003, 2004 and 2006. Report 8046/2006 concluded that although the CA had a comprehensive system for animal welfare controls in farms, the system was weakened by inconsistent reporting, limited supervision and the lack of appropriate enforcement actions taken, in particular in the laying hen sector. As a result, major non-compliances, such as insufficient height of unenriched cages, which were also indicated in previous reports, had not been corrected.

Actions taken in response to the recommendations made in report 8046/2006 and the comments of the CA are indicated in the relevant part of the report and the effectiveness of several of these actions was assessed during the current mission, as the CCA subsequently indicated that all cages complied.

## **5 MAIN FINDINGS**

### **5.1 COMPETENT AUTHORITY**

The organisation of the Competent Authorities and the control system for animal welfare are described in report 8046/2006 and in the country profile of Lithuania (ref. DG(SANCO)/8030/2006- 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](http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/country_profiles_en.cfm).

The following are further details of the CA and of their tasks in relation to animal welfare which include changes that have taken place after the publication of the country profile and the latest report.

The CCA indicated that at central level the Animal Health Department was renamed the Animal Health and Welfare Department and instead of four specialised animal welfare officers there were now two active officials and one open vacancy. Further information on the CA can be obtained at the website: [www.vet.lt](http://www.vet.lt)

Regarding coordination, there were regular monthly meetings between the central and regional levels. In addition, the CCA held two meetings on 15/11/2007 and 24/1/2008 with the Regional Competent Authorities and laying hen farmers in order to discuss the implementation of the requirements for the welfare of laying hens and to emphasize that in case of non-compliances regarding stocking density or dimensions of cages, the producers must submit an action plan. Following these meetings, the CCA addressed an instruction letter to the RCAs reminding them to implement the requirements of the legislation concerning welfare of laying hens and to apply the enforcement measures foreseen in the legislation in case of non-compliance.

Concerning measures supplementary to inspections, a brochure on welfare of animals including laying hens will be provided to farmers within the framework of the Twinning Project "Strengthening of Control System for the Protection of Animals in Lithuania" signed with Austria in July 2007.

### *5.1.1 Verification of checks*

#### System of supervision

Report 8046/2006 recommended that the system of supervision is improved, in particular, so that official veterinarians carry out more consistent and effective official controls in laying hen farms as required by Article 8 (3)(a) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004. The CCA indicated that the system of supervision is the same as described in report 8046/2006 but that new rules for the future organisation of Counties and Districts foresee that the District CAs will be supervised by the Internal Audit Service.

The mission team noted that :

- The County CA of Telsiai detected that in one District the programme of inspection, which requires quarterly checks in laying hen holdings, was not respected as in some cases there was one year and a half between inspections and sent a letter to the District asking them to comply with the programme.
- The County CA of Siauliai did not detect that following a farmer application to obtain SAPARD funds for the installation of cages, the District OV had certified after an on the spot inspection that the enriched cages installed were in compliance with EU legislation, even though this was not the case as these were not furnished with litter, nests or perches as required by Article 6 of Directive 1999/74/EC.
- The CCA did not detect that the information on laying hen holdings equipped with cages provided by the RCAs was not accurate. Before the mission the CCA provided a table with a summary of the OVs' checks performed from October 2006 until December 2007 in the 20 laying hen farms registered in the country indicating the deficiencies found. At the opening meeting, the CCA completed this information with the letters from producers updating their action plans for correction of the non-compliances detected; a CCA representative stated that based on these action plans and the results of the RCA's checks, all the farms with unenriched cages in the country were in compliance with Article 5 of Directive 1999/74/EC. However, following findings of the mission team during site visits, the CCA provided new data on non-compliances in laying hen farms at the closing meeting; these data showed that in five holdings there were 24 houses in use with non-compliant unenriched cages as regards to height requirements. These 24 houses represent approximately 30% of the total number of houses equipped with cages or 68% of the total number of houses equipped with unenriched cages in the country.

#### Internal audits

Concerning audits, report 8046/2006 recommended that audits of the system of inspections of animal welfare on farms are carried out as required by Article 4(6) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004. The internal audit service of the CCA carried out in December 2006 two audits on the welfare of laying hens in two counties and one holding in each of the two counties selected was visited.

The audit team of the CCA did not identify the ineffectiveness of the control systems put

in place by the local CAs:

- In Klaipeda County, there were cages of insufficient height, contrary to Article 5.1.4 of Directive 1999/74/EC, in ten houses of the farm visited by the audit team neither the local CA or the audit team had detected these non-compliances. This was discovered by the mission team from the documentation provided by the CCA at the closing meeting on laying hen holdings in cages.
- In Siauliai County, in the farm visited by the audit team, which was also visited by the mission team, there was a house equipped with cages of insufficient height and 25 % overstocked, contrary to Articles 5.1.4 and 5.1.1 of Directive 1999/74/EC. Neither the local CA or the audit team had detected these non-compliances.

### *5.1.2 Training of veterinarians*

Report 8046/2006 pointed out that several training courses on welfare of farmed animals were given in 2004 and that the CCA indicated that more training on this topic was foreseen for 2007.

The mission team noted that no training on the welfare of laying hens was organised in 2007 despite previous commitments from the CCA. The CCA indicated as part of the Twinning Project on animal welfare signed with Austria, a training course of two to three days is planned for April 2008 and that it will include a practical part on how to carry out checks in laying hen holdings equipped with cages or using alternative systems.

The mission team noted that the OVs met during farm visits did not detect deficiencies due to a lack of practical training on how to perform checks on technical requirements such as perches and litter in holdings equipped with enriched cages or measurements of height of cages and assessment of maximum capacity in laying hen holdings equipped with unenriched cages. This is further detailed in part 5.5.

### *5.1.3 Documented procedures*

Animal Welfare procedures on farms have been incorporated into the Quality Standard Procedures system of the CCA and have been accredited since 30 June 2007. These documented procedures have been provided to staff carrying out animal welfare checks on farms, as required by Article 8(1) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004; they include check lists with references to the legal basis for each point, inspection programmes, guidelines for follow-up of inspections and corrective actions, and templates for reporting on inspections.

The mission team noted that there was no further guidance explaining how to check technical provisions of animal welfare legislation regarding laying hens, such as perches and litter in holdings equipped with enriched cages or how to perform measurements of cages and assess the maximum capacity of holdings equipped with unenriched cages. This is further detailed in part 5.5.

## **5.2 LEGISLATION**

In response to the recommendation from report 8046/2006 regarding the transposition into Lithuanian legislation of the prohibition to build or to bring into service for the first time unenriched cages, as required by Article 5(2) of Directive 99/74/EC, from date of Accession, the CA amended as recommended the legislation by Order of 29/5/2007 that entered into force on 6/6/2007. Regarding implementation of this requirement, the CA provided a list of farms with the number of houses where cages were installed from the date of Accession till 13/6/2007; in total 36 houses were equipped with cages, 50 % of the houses with enriched cages and the other 50 % with cages suitable to become enriched but with no enrichment such as nests, litter or perches, contrary to the requirements of Article 6 of Directive 1999/74/EC.

Although a comprehensive check of national legislation was not carried out during the mission, it was noted that the definition of "usable area" in the Lithuanian legislation does not include the requirements of having an area of at least 30 cm wide with a floor slope not exceeding 14%, with headroom of at least 45 cm, as laid down in Article 2.2(d) of Directive 99/74/EC.

## **5.3 REGISTER OF LAYING HEN ESTABLISHMENTS**

The mission team noted that the CCA addressed the recommendation on the register of laying hen establishments made in report 8046/5006; the register for laying hen holdings now contains the data required by point 1 of the Annex to Directive 2002/4/EC and is accessible to the CAs of Lithuania for the purpose of tracing eggs put on the market for human consumption as required by Article 1(3) of Directive 2002/4/EC.

In total, there are 20 registered laying hen holdings of more than 350 laying hens in Lithuania and around 98% of the laying hens of Lithuania are housed in 17 holdings equipped with cages (either enriched or unenriched).

The mission team noted that the data contained in the register are not always accurate regarding the maximum capacities of the laying hen holdings as these are not assessed adequately by OV's. This is further detailed in part 5.5.

## **5.4 INSPECTIONS OF LAYING HEN ESTABLISHMENTS**

Report 8046/2006 recommended that when deficiencies are detected in laying hen farms, corrective actions are taken when needed and that measures are taken so that housing systems for laying hens comply with the requirements of Articles 4 and 5 of Directive 1999/74/EC.

### *5.4.1 Follow up of the farm visited during mission 8046/2006*

The laying hen farm with cages visited in Vilnius County houses approximately 30% of the laying hens in Lithuania and had also been visited during previous FVO missions in 2003, 2004 and 2006.

Report 8046/2006 had informed the CA that deficiencies such as insufficient height of the cages, overstocking or the introduction of unenriched cages after the date of Accession had either not been detected or had been tolerated by the CA and that the CA had approved the producer's proposal to gradually renovate the houses which were equipped with non-compliant cages by 2012 whereas all the requirements of Directive 1999/74/EC were already applicable from 01.05.2004.

The mission team checked the OV's inspections reports produced between November 2006 (after mission 8046/2006) and December 2007, visited six houses of this farm and reviewed the action plan proposed by the company and approved by the CA in order to assess the progress made to correct the deficiencies listed in report 8046/2006.

The mission team noted that:

- Regarding overstocking, the OV detected deficiencies in several houses during previous checks and had required the company to take corrective actions within one month. Follow up visits were also carried out to ensure that the excess laying hens had been removed.
- Regarding the height of the cages, eight houses equipped with unenriched cages which in report 8046/2006 had not a minimum height of 40 cm over at least 65% of the area were not operational anymore and some of them were under reconstruction. However, two houses equipped with unenriched cages measuring less than 35 cm at some points and with a height of less than 40 cm over at least 65% of the area contrary to Article 5.1(4) of Directive 1999/74/EC were still in operation. The CA indicated that, despite their commitments to allow the introduction of new flocks only in compliant cages, this had been exceptionally allowed due to overproduction of chicks as there were breeding units on the same site. The action plan of the farm indicated that all these houses would be in compliance regarding height of cages by March 2009.
- Regarding the introduction of unenriched cages after the date of Accession, the OV indicated that the eleven houses which had been equipped with cages with no enrichment after the date of Accession were still operational; he added that although these cages are suitable to become enriched none of these cages have been furnished with perches, litter and nests in order to transform them into enriched cages compliant with Article 6 of Directive 1999/74/EC. Since November 2006 (after mission 8046/2006) one house was renovated and equipped with enriched cages but with no litter contrary to Article 6.1(c) of Directive 1999/74/EC. Little progress has been made since mission 8046/2006 to ensure that laying hens are not housed in non compliant cages introduced after the date of Accession and this situation is likely to persist for at least three more years as the action plan agreed between the producer and the CA foresees enrichment of cages in all the houses only by the end of 2011.

Additionally, the mission team noted during the visit to one house equipped with unenriched cages that the District OV had not detected that the design and dimensions of

the cage door did not allow the removal of an adult hen without causing unnecessary suffering, contrary to point 7 of the Annex to Directive 1999/74/EC.

#### *5.4.2 Inspections in two other laying hen establishments*

The mission team visited one farm in Telsiai County which was equipped with enriched cages. In this farm, the District OV:

- Did not know how to calculate the length of perches required by Article 6.1(d) of Directive 1999/74/EC and had not received any technical training or guidance on this issue.
- Did not detect that no litter was provided, as there was just a hard plastic board. Article 2.2(c) of Directive 1999/74/EC defines litter as any friable material enabling the hens to satisfy their ethological needs and Article 6.1(c) of Directive 1999/74/EC requires that such litter makes pecking and scratching possible. The CCA had not provided any training or guidance on this point.
- Did not detect that the farmer did not retain the records of mortalities for a period of at least three years, contrary to the requirements of point 6 of the Annex to Directive 98/58/EC, and as a result information on the number of hens present during the entire laying cycle of the two previous batches was not available.
- Had detected that the farm was 25 % overstocked at the previous two repopulations; the overstocking had been corrected one month later but no sanctions had been taken against the farmer; the mission team noted that this farm had been again 25 % overstocked for the third consecutive time when it was repopulated two months ago and that the excess number of hens had been sent one month later to a daughter farm.

The farm visited in Siauliai County had been audited by the Internal Audit Service in December 2006, who detected among other findings overstocking in one house equipped with enriched cages and the lack of claw shortening devices in another house, the subsequent action plan of the company indicated the dates at which these deficiencies were corrected.

In this farm the mission team observed that neither the District OV nor the audit team had detected:

- That one of the houses had unenriched cages whose height was less than 35 cm at some points and less than 40 cm over at least 65 % of the area, contrary to the requirements of Article 5.1.4 of Directive 1999/74/EC;
- That one of the house equipped with unenriched cages was 25 % overstocked. The OV had calculated the surface of the cage and had estimated that 3.8 hens could be placed per cage; from this calculation, he wrongly concluded that four hens per cage could be placed in each cage whereas only three hens could be placed per cage in order to provide each hen with the minimum 550 cm<sup>2</sup> of cage area required by Article 5.1.1 of Directive 1999/74/EC.

The OV indicated to the mission team that he had not received training or guidance on

how to assess the height or the stocking density of cages.

#### *5.4.3 Inspections of alternative systems for laying hens*

Report 8046/2006 concluded that in the farm using alternative system visited the OVs had detected the absence of perches, contrary to Article 4.1(d) of Directive 1999/74/EC; nonetheless the farm had been approved for operation; moreover no action plan had been requested from the farmer and no deadlines for installing perches had been fixed by the CA.

Upon request from the mission team, the CA provided documentation which demonstrated that perches had still not been installed in this farm; the CA indicated that because the company did not find appropriate perches by the time repopulation was due, the farm had been repopulated even though there were no perches.

The CA added that they had sanctioned the company with two fines of respectively 30 euros and 60 euros and that the action plan of the company foresees the installation of perches in 2008.

#### *5.4.4 Reporting of farms inspections*

Report 8046/2006 concluded that although the CA had set up a system to report the results of inspections carried out in farms as required by Decision 2000/50/EC, the data collected and reported were not always consistent regarding the number of infringements and the number of holdings.

The mission team noted that the data collected and reported for the results of inspections carried out 2007 were consistent in the three counties visited; however, for years 2006 and 2005 Telsiai County underreported infringements detected as they were not communicated to the CCA.

In 2008, the information collected from the counties on the results of inspections carried out in laying hen holdings will have to comply with the new format of Decision 2006/778/EC; a CCA representative stated that no specific guidelines on how to collect the relevant data had been issued yet but this issue would be addressed within the framework of the Twinning Project with Austria.

### **5.5 FOLLOW UP, SANCTIONS AND PENALTIES**

Following report 8046/2006, the CCA committed in its action plan to strengthen enforcement measures at local level (e.g. restriction of marketing of the production, suspension of veterinary approval) in order to ensure correction of non-compliances in laying hen holdings.

A summary of the sanctioning system was provided in report 8046/2006.

The CCA indicated that:

- Within the framework of the two documented procedures regarding follow up and corrective actions of the QSP system, inspectors adapted their actions on a case by case basis.
- Since mission 8046/2006, the RCAs had suspended the approval of two very small laying hen farms due to careless management leading to non compliance with general animal welfare requirements.

The mission team noted that:

- Overstocking was not tolerated by the CA of Vilnius County; when overstocking was detected in one of the houses of the farm visited, corrective actions within one month were requested and follow up visits were performed by the OV to ensure their implementation. In Telsiai county, according to the records of checks performed in two farms, slight overstocking detected in one farm was subsequently corrected by removing the hens; in the other farm around 25% overstocking was detected in two consecutive repopulations and the owner was sanctioned with a fine of 100 Lt (30 euros). In the farm visited in Telsiai county, despite the CA request not to have overstocking at the next repopulation, overstocking of 25% was found at the time of repopulation for three consecutive cycles of production; each time corrective measures had been taken to remove the excess of hens but no sanctions had been imposed on the farmer.
- In the farm visited in Vilnius County, corrective actions to transform the cages introduced after the date of Accession into compliant enriched cages will be completed only by the end of 2011 according to the action plan of the company approved by the CA.
- The CA authorised the repopulation of a large holding in the country using alternative system although it did not have perches and accepted to extend till June 2008 the deadline in the action plan to install perches. The CA had sanctioned the company with two fines of 30 euros and 60 euros but this did not dissuade the company from repopulating the farm without taking corrective actions.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

1. Coordination between the central and local levels of the CA is satisfactory. Although specific meetings were also attended by laying hen farmers, these were organised more than one year after mission 8046/2006 and failed to ensure that better compliance was achieved.
2. Despite commitments of the CCA following mission 8046/2006 to improve the supervision of the different levels of the CA in relation to animal welfare checks (Article 8(3)(a) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004), the procedures in place to verify the effectiveness of the official controls had been not adequate. As a result, the CCA was not able to identify that incorrect certification necessary for the provision of

SAPARD funds had been issued and that in around 68 % of the houses of laying hen holdings equipped with unenriched cages of the country there were non compliant cages regarding height requirements (Article 5.1.4 of Directive 1999/74/EC).

3. Following a recommendation in report 8046/2006, audits of the system of inspections of animal welfare on farms, as required by Article 4(6) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004, were carried out by the Internal Audit Service of the CCA. However, these were not fully effective as they failed to identify the ineffectiveness of the control systems put in place by the local CAs which did not detect serious deficiencies such as cages of insufficient height and systematic overstocking in laying hen holdings (Articles 5.1(4) and 5.1(1) of Directive 1999/74/EC).
4. Despite the commitments of the CCA to organise training in 2007, the last training courses provided by the CCA to OV's for inspecting laying hen farms (Article 6 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004) were organised in 2004 and were insufficient to ensure that the technical requirements of Directive 1999/74/EC were adequately checked by OV's.
5. Even though documented procedures for inspection of laying hen establishments have been provided to OV's by the CCA, as required by Article 8(1) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004, these were not detailed enough on how to check some specific provisions of EU legislation regarding laying hens. As a result, OV's did not perform adequate assessments of requirements such as perches and litter (Articles 6.1 (d) and (c) of Directive 1999/74/EC) in holdings equipped with enriched cages or measurements of cages and assessment of maximum capacity (Article 5 of Directive 1999/74/EC) in holdings equipped with unenriched cages.
6. Following a recommendation in report 8046/2006, the CCA has fulfilled its commitment to transpose into Lithuanian legislation the prohibition to build or bring into service for the first time unenriched cages after the date of Accession, as required by Article 5.2 of Directive 1999/74/EC. This prohibition came into force in June 2007. However, 50% of the houses with cages that were installed between the date of Accession and June 2007 do not comply with the requirements of Article 6 of Directive 1999/74/EC regarding nests, perches or litter and in some cases corrective actions to transform these cages into compliant enriched cages will not be implemented before 2011.
7. The definition of "usable area" laid down in Article 2.2 (d) of Directive 1999/74/EC is not correctly transposed into Lithuanian legislation as it does not include the requirements of having an area of at least 30 cm width with a floor slope not exceeding 14% and with headroom of at least 45 cm.
8. Following a recommendation in report 8046/2006, the register for laying hen holdings contains the data required by point 1 of the Annex to Directive 2002/4/EC and it is publicly accessible.
9. Despite repeated commitments following missions in 2004 and 2006 and assurances given by the CCA before and at the beginning of the mission, cage production systems for laying hens using unenriched cages still do not comply with the requirements of Article 5.1.4 of Directive 1999/74/EC regarding height; 30 % of the

houses in the country are equipped with cages of insufficient height.

10. Regarding overstocking in cage systems, even though there was some progress since the last mission in 2006 this was not sufficient concerning unenriched cages (Article 5.1.1 of Directive 1999/74/EC).
11. Despite the commitments of the CCA following report 8046/2006 to ensure compliance through approved action plans giving deadlines to achieve compliance, alternative production systems still do not comply with the requirements regarding perches, contrary to Article 4.1.1 (d) of Directive 99/74/EC.
12. Because the CA have taken insufficient actions to ensure enforcement measured despite their commitments following report 8046/2006, the correction of serious deficiencies detected in laying hen holdings is delayed or not enforced contrary to Article 54 (1) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004.

### 6.1 OVERALL CONCLUSION

The system of controls in place did not ensure that deficiencies in laying hen holdings equipped with cages were detected and corrected. Even though some progress was made, serious deficiencies already highlighted during missions in 2004 and 2006, such as insufficient height of unenriched cages and the installation of cages with no enrichment after Accession were still outstanding.

## 7 CLOSING MEETING

A closing meeting was held on 22 February 2008 with representatives of the CCA. At this meeting, the main findings of the mission were presented by the FVO team and the representatives of the CCA provisionally accepted these findings.

## 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

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

The Competent Authorities should take measures to ensure that:

No.	Recommendation
1	The procedures in place to supervise and verify the effectiveness of the official controls in relation to inspections of animal welfare of laying hens are improved (Article 8(3)(a) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004).
2	The quality of internal audits carried out by the Internal Audit Service of the CCA is improved regarding audits on animal welfare in laying hen holdings (Article 4(6) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004).
3	The training of official veterinarians (Article 6 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004) is organised in such a way that it allows them to acquire adequate knowledge

No.	Recommendation
	regarding all technical aspects of animal welfare controls in laying hen holdings .
4	Documented procedures (Article 8(1) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004) are improved so that they provide sufficient guidance on how to assess the technical requirements of Directive 1999/74/EC.
5	The definition of the usable area in laying hen holdings as laid down in Article 2. 2(d) of Directive 1999/74/EC is correctly transposed into Lithuanian legislation.
6	Cage production systems equipped with unenriched cages comply with the requirements of Article 5 of Directive 1999/74/EC, in particular regarding height requirements and stocking densities.
7	Cage production systems equipped with enriched cages comply with the requirements of Article 6 of Directive 1999/74/EC, in particular regarding litter, perches and nests.
8	Alternative production systems for laying hens comply with the requirements of Article 4 of Directive 1999/74/EC, in particular regarding perches.
9	When deficiencies are detected, effective enforcement measures are taken, as required by Article 54 (1) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004, in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of Directive 1999/74/EC.

#### **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/food/fvo/ap/ap\\_lithuania\\_7689\\_2008.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/ap/ap_lithuania_7689_2008.pdf)

The competent authority's response to the recommendations can be found at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/ap/ap\\_lithuania\\_7689\\_2008.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/ap/ap_lithuania_7689_2008.pdf)

## ANNEX 1 - LIST OF LEGISLATION REFERENCED IN THE REPORT

Reference	OJ Ref.	Detail
Directive 1999/74/EC	OJ L 203, 3.8.1999, p. 53–57	Council Directive 1999/74/EC of 19 July 1999 laying down minimum standards for the protection of laying hens
Directive 98/58/EC	OJ L 221, 8.8.1998, p. 23–27	Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes
Regulation (EC) No 882/2004	OJ L 165, 30.4.2004, p. 1, Corrected and re-published in OJ L 191, 28.5.2004, p. 1	Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules
Decision 2006/778/EC	OJ L 314, 15.11.2006, p. 39–47	2006/778/EC: Commission Decision of 14 November 2006 concerning minimum requirements for the collection of information during the inspections of production sites on which certain animals are kept for farming purposes