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DG(SANCO)/8039/2006 – MR Final

FINAL REPORT OF A MISSION
CARRIED OUT IN DENMARK
FROM 06/02/2006 TO 10/02/2006
IN ORDER TO ASSESS ANIMAL WELFARE
AT SLAUGHTER

Please note that a number of modifications have been made following the comments made by the Danish authorities on the draft version of the report. Clarifications provided by the Competent Authorities of Denmark are given as footnotes, in bold, italic, type to the relevant part 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 Denmark, from 6 to 10 February 2006.

The objectives of the mission were to evaluate the system of supervision of animal welfare at the time of slaughter and killing. 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 Denmark has adopted legislative measures and procedures which go further than EU requirements on issues such as religious slaughter, killing outside slaughterhouses, killing of fur animals and fish. The DVFA 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, guidelines, check-lists, training and system of sanctions have been provided to the official veterinarians who carry out the checks. However, the system recently put in place does not yet ensure that official veterinarians apply it in a uniform way in all slaughterhouses.

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

1. INTRODUCTION

The mission took place in Denmark from 06/02/2006 to 10/02/2006. The mission team comprised 4 inspectors, 3 inspectors from the Food and Veterinary Office (hereafter: FVO), and one inspector from EFTA Surveillance Authority (EFTA), and operated as two sub-teams for the site visits.

The mission was undertaken as part of the FVO's planned mission programme and is the first 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 Justice and the Danish Veterinary & Food Administration (hereafter: CCA).

An opening meeting was held on 06 February 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 or 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, facts finding details have been provided on these measures.

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

COMPETENT AUTHORITY VISITS			Comments
Competent authority	Central	2	Opening and final meetings at the Ministry of Justice with the presence of representatives of the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration
	Regional	1	1 visit to the Animal Health Unit at the Regional Veterinary and Food Administration Centre of Region South to assess the killing of animals for disease controls provided in contingency plans
	Local	1	1 visit to the Control and Enforcement Office Vejle of Region South to discuss methods used for stunning and killing fish

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.

Slaughterhouses		4	2 high throughput establishments one slaughtering cattle, the other one slaughtering poultry 2 low throughput establishments one slaughtering cattle, sheep and pigs, the other one slaughtering cattle, horses, sheep, pigs and ostriches
Mobile slaughtering and killing devices		2	1 demonstration of the functioning of small and large CO2 containers used for killing hens and piglets 1 demonstration of the functioning of a mobile plant used to kill end-of-lay laying hens raised in battery cages
Fish Cutting plants		2	2 fish cutting plants
Fur farms		2	1 farm raising and killing chinchillas 1 farm raising and killing minks

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, Article 45 of Regulation (EC) n°882/2004² and the general provisions of Decision 98/139/EC³.

4. BACKGROUND

A previous mission to Denmark on animal welfare at the time of transport and slaughter was undertaken from 09.09.2002 to 13.09.2002. The report of this mission is available under the following reference numbers: DG SANCO/8776/2002 – MR – Final on the DG (Health and Consumer Protection) internet site at http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fvo/index_en.htm.

Additionally, two missions on contingency plans were carried out in 2002 and in 2003. The reports of these missions are available under the following reference numbers: DG SANCO /9101/2003-MR-Final and DG SANCO /8722/2002- MR-Final on the DG (Health and Consumer Protection) internet site at http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fvo/index_en.htm.

5. MAIN FINDINGS

5.1 Competent authority

5.1.1 Structure

Central Competent Authority

The Ministry of Justice is responsible for the transposition of EU directives and for the drafting of national legislation regarding animal welfare. The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (hereafter: DVFA) is responsible for supervising and

² Regulation (EC) n°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.

³ Commission Decision of 4 February 1998 laying down certain detailed rules concerning on-the-spot checks carried out in the veterinary field by Commission Experts in the Member States, OJ L 38, 12.02.98, p.10.

carrying out the controls, and the police takes action against infringements of the legislation.

The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration belongs to the Ministry of Family and Consumer Affairs. The central head office was restructured in October 2005 and has now 12 divisions, a controller unit, an audit unit⁴, a management secretariat and an executive board.

Two technical divisions are involved in animal welfare at slaughter and killing:

- The Division of Animal Welfare, Food Quality and marketing Practices is responsible for preparing instructions, guidelines and communications and for arranging training sessions on animal welfare for official veterinarians. It also assists the Ministry of Justice during the drafting of national legislation on animal welfare.
- The Animal Health Division is responsible for monitoring contingency plans and therefore the killing of animals for disease controls. It prepares contingency plans and provides the regions with models for completing the practical details of contingency plans. It organises exercises and provides training sessions on contingency plans for official veterinarians.

One managerial division and a general unit are involved in monitoring animal welfare at slaughter and killing:

- The Control Coordination Division is responsible for ensuring that all controls are performed according to the same principles in the Regional Veterinary and Food Administration Centres. It organises and supervises the quality of the controls performed at regional levels. Regarding slaughter of animals, it has provided in December 2005 guidelines and instructions on risk assessment, frequency of audits, and reporting of inspections in order to comply with the new requirements of the food hygiene package. These documents mainly conceived for meat inspection include also animal welfare requirements.
- The Controller Unit is a general unit which is responsible for ensuring that the quantity of controls foreseen by the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration are performed by the regions. Each region has a contract management with the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration and sends quarterly reports of its activities (e.g. 5 % of farms must be controlled each year in respect of animal welfare, number of controls performed in the regions are notified in quarterly reports).

The Police takes action to penalise animal welfare infringement cases which are notified by the official veterinarians. Coordination between the Police and the Danish Veterinary Administration is organised through training of police officers on animal welfare infringements cases and through a circular which has been sent to all

⁴ The Audit Unit is an autonomous unit which performs audits of the controls carried out to implement the Food Act and reports its results directly to the Veterinary and Food Control Committee of the Danish Parliament. For the time being, it is not involved in auditing controls on animal welfare or animal health.

police chiefs requesting that a meeting on animal welfare should be held each year between the local police departments and the regional food and veterinary authorities.

Regional Competent Authorities

In January 2006, the 10 regional veterinary and food centres have been restructured in 3 regions: Region South, North and East. In each region, Control and Enforcement Offices are responsible for the controls of animal welfare at slaughter in slaughterhouses and farms. There are two Control and Enforcement Offices in the Region East and four Control and Enforcement Offices in both Region South and Region North. Official veterinarians and private contracted veterinarians by the region carry out the animal welfare controls in connection with slaughter at slaughterhouses and on farms. Controls on herds are performed by official veterinarians. Specially trained personnel from the regional food and veterinary authorities are also responsible for inspections at slaughterhouses for foot pad lesions in broilers for slaughter.

In each region, there is one Animal Health Unit which is responsible at local level for ensuring the operational aspects of contingency plans and therefore for the animal welfare aspects of killing animals for disease control. Official veterinarians from the Animal Health Units also carry out animal welfare controls in farms.

The central and regional authorities use various tools of communication to coordinate their activities: regular meetings, distribution of guidelines, instructions and communications on the intranet are organised.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are represented through different committees, organisations and institutions: The Ethical Committee has been consulted and has given opinions in relation to religious slaughter. The Animal Welfare Council has been consulted and has given opinions on the fitness of end-of-lay laying hens. The Veterinary Council gives opinions related to potential prosecution cases. The opinions given by these committees are published and are used as a basis to change the legislation and to assist official veterinarians making a decision.

The industry is directly involved in the implementation of some legal requirements. It has provided guidelines on how to kill animals on farms for cattle, pigs and fur animals. The poultry industry has provided guidelines on how to handle laying hens and broilers and is involved in monitoring and recording data on fitness for transport of end-of-lay laying hens and foot pad lesions of broilers in slaughterhouses.

5.1.2 Legislation

The CCA informed the mission team that Council Directive 93/119/EC has been transposed through the Act on the protection of animals and order n°1037 of 14 December 1994 with subsequent amendments on slaughter and killing of animals. During the mission, no shortcomings were identified and on the contrary additional national requirements were found in several areas such as slaughtering pregnant animals, slaughtering animals according to a religious rite, killing animals outside slaughterhouses, killing of fur animals or slaughter of fish. Details on these additional requirements are given in each relevant part of the report.

5.1.3 Training

A catalogue of training events is published each year on the DVFA's intranet. Trainings on animal welfare at slaughter and on contingency plans are provided every year. Official veterinarians can apply for training and their application must be approved by the region. On the spot training and supervision of inspectors are also provided locally.

In 2006, a specific programme of training will be organised for newly recruited official veterinarians and auxiliaries working in slaughterhouses to comply with Annex I chapter IV paragraphs A and B of regulation (EC) n° 854/2004⁵. A specific programme will also be organised for official veterinarians and auxiliaries already employed in slaughterhouses.

5.2 Slaughterhouses

Legislation

The CCA mentioned that the Danish legislation has additional requirements for slaughterhouses compared to those of directive 93/119/EC, examples include:

- Lactating animals must be milked as necessary, and no later than eight hours after arrival at the slaughterhouse. Animals remaining there for more than eight hours must be milked every 12-14 hours after the first milking at the slaughterhouse.
- Slaughter of pregnant animals kept for farming purposes and horses in the last tenth part of the pregnancy period is forbidden.
- Foot pad lesions of broilers must be monitored in slaughterhouses.
- Dislocation of the neck and ritual slaughter are forbidden for ostriches.
- Special requirements where animals are slaughtered without prior stunning (ritual slaughter)

Risk assessment and programme of audits and inspections

Controls of animal welfare requirements in slaughterhouses are integrated in the system set up for controlling slaughterhouses by the CCA (Control and Coordination Division) in December 2005 in order to comply with Regulations (EC) n° 882/2004 and n° 854/2004.

For each slaughterhouse, the official veterinarian must provide an annual control plan which describes the number of audits and inspections which are planned for the year and the areas that will be covered. Four to six audits of the operator's own checks per year must at least be scheduled. The total number of audits scheduled increases or diminishes depending on the results of risk assessment. The criteria used to judge the risk presented by an establishment are related to food hygiene and no

⁵ Regulation (EC) n° 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 EU L 139, 30.04.2004 corrected and republished OJ L 226, 25.06.2004 p.83.

specific criteria had been included for animal welfare. Risk for animal welfare is indirectly assessed through the general judgement of the official veterinarian on the operator's own checks and through the sanctions previously imposed on the slaughterhouse.

At the end of the year, the audits carried out must have covered all the areas of controls listed in the annual control plan and are classified in the category "other" and three areas must be covered: animal welfare during transport, animal welfare from suppliers, and animal welfare at stunning and bleeding.

In addition to audits, official veterinarians carry out inspections to control the functioning of the establishment.

The inspection team noted that the planning of audits and inspections for animal welfare was conducted differently according to the region or to the veterinarian responsible of the slaughterhouse:

- In Region South, in the small multi species slaughterhouse, the official veterinarian applied the system put in place by the CCA and planned one targeted audit of the operator's own checks in December (month of the year when the number of animals slaughtered is the highest) and 12 inspections on animal welfare requirements, one each month where the specific check-list for animal welfare provided by the CCA will be used.
- In Region North in the poultry slaughterhouse and in the cattle slaughterhouse, no specific audits had been scheduled for animal welfare since the official veterinarians declared that the daily checks performed during ante mortem inspections were sufficient. Therefore on the annual control plan, "daily checks" have been written for animal welfare issues. The lack of audits scheduled means that the official veterinarian will not have the opportunity to perform thorough and in depth checks of the operator's own checks for animal welfare, such as checking the training of the personnel involved in slaughter or the maintenance of equipment.
- In Region North, in the small multi species slaughterhouse, no individual annual control plan had been set up yet.

These discrepancies between slaughterhouses and regions are not compliant with the system put in place by the CCA and in three out of the 4 slaughterhouses visited, the situation is not compliant with Article 3 and point 4 of Article 4 of Regulation (EC) n° 882/2004 which foresees that official controls are carried out regularly and consistently on a risk basis.

Organisation of daily inspections in the slaughterhouses

Circular dated 23 December 1988 on the stunning of animals for slaughter requests that during their daily ante mortem and post mortem inspections official veterinarians must check animal welfare requirements.

The CCA (Animal Welfare Division) has produced a series of documents in order to help the official veterinarians when performing animal welfare inspections: a circular dated 23 December 1998 on the slaughter of animals; several guidelines and announcement letters regarding fitness of animals for transport and slaughter; an

announcement letter in July 2005 on the electrical stunning of pigs; and at the end of 2005 several check-lists on animal welfare for pigs, cattle and poultry slaughterhouses. The CCA mentioned that these check-lists are the most recent and their use is not compulsory.

In the four slaughterhouses visited, the mission team noted that, during their daily controls, official veterinarians performed adequate checks on a sample of animals:

- To assess the fitness of animals for transport upon their arrival at the slaughterhouses.
- To control the effectiveness of stunning by testing for the absence of corneal reflex and by ensuring that animals stay unconscious during bleeding.
- To ensure that no further dressing is performed before bleeding is complete.
- To ensure that people restraining animals and stunning them had overall an appropriate knowledge and that the animals were efficiently stunned.
- To score the foot pad lesions of broilers to assess their welfare during their rearing.

However, official veterinarians did not pick up the following deficiencies:

- Regarding unloading of animals, in the small multi species slaughterhouse of Region North, the unloading concrete ramp had a very steep slope which does not comply with point 1 of chapter II of Annex A of Directive 93/119/EC.
- Regarding lairages, in the small multi species slaughterhouses of Region North and of Region South, the inspection team noted that the drinkers were not functioning properly which does not comply with point 9 of chapter II of Annex A of Directive 93/119/EC. In the poultry slaughterhouse of Region North, cages of broilers were placed close to the spot where lorries are washed and no precautions were taken to avoid unnecessary excitement of the birds during the washing procedure, which does not comply with Article 3 of Directive 93/119/EC.
- Regarding handling of animals, in the poultry slaughterhouse of Region North, one of the handlers, employed on a temporary contract, was very rough when shackling broilers and threw a live broiler in a plastic container. The veterinarian declared that checking the training of people employed had not been done which does not comply with Article 7 of Directive 93/119/EC. In the small multi species slaughterhouse in Region South, sheep were caught by one leg and dragged to the place of slaughter which is not compliant with Article 3 of Directive 93/119/EC.
- Regarding electrical stunning equipment, the electrical device used for pigs and sheep in the small multi species slaughterhouse of Region North did not have any audible or visible alarm to indicate the length of time of its application which does not comply with point II 3.A.2 b) of Annex C of Directive 93/119/EC. Additionally, in the poultry slaughterhouse using a high frequency waterbath stunner, the CA had not determined the strength

and duration of the current used (point III 1 B 3 of Annex C of Directive 93/119/EC).

- Regarding maintenance of stunning equipment, the captive bolt pistols used as the main stunning equipment for cattle were not properly maintained in the 2 small multi species slaughterhouses of region North and South. Asked by the inspection team, the operators declared that they waited till the pistol felt loose to change the relevant parts. This is not compliant with point 1 of article 6 of directive 93/119/EC.
- Regarding back-up for stunning equipment, the captive bolt pistols were not kept at the place of slaughter in the 2 small multi species slaughterhouses visited in Region North and in Region South. This is not compliant with point 2 of Article 6 of Directive 93/119/EC.

These non-compliances were not detected either because they were not part of the official veterinarians' audits, supervision or daily checks or because the circular dated 23 December 1998 on the stunning of animals for slaughter does not sufficiently expand on the legislation or specify how checks must be carried out in practice. One official veterinarian mentioned that the annual training organised by the DVFA on animal welfare at slaughter did not provide any detailed information on the subject of poultry every year.

Reporting of animal welfare inspections

The system of reporting for animal welfare inspections is included in the general reporting system described in the general guidelines for audits and set up for food hygiene. Specific provisions have been added for the reports on animal welfare inspections, because, in contrast to the results of food hygiene, they cannot be published.

For each slaughterhouse, the official veterinarians must write an annual control plan, daily control reports, and a monthly summary report according to the formats provided by the DVFA and then enter them in the database of the control and enforcement office. Ante-mortem and post-mortem records must be kept but no specific format is required and they are not included in the database. The monthly summary report is published on the internet.

A specific guideline dated September 2005 regarding specifically animal welfare reports was sent by the DVFA to the official veterinarians asking that animal welfare checks in slaughterhouses must be recorded by a mark in the “*andet*” (other) of the daily control report. Details of the findings must be written on an additional control report and the results of animal welfare inspections must not appear on the monthly summary control report because there is no legal provision in the Danish legislation allowing the publication of the reports on animal welfare on the internet⁶. Additionally, in broiler slaughterhouses, official veterinarians must record the results of the scores obtained for foot pad lesions for each supplier.

⁶ *In their response to the draft report, the Danish Authorities noted that the monthly summary control report is published on the internet. If no more than 12 inspections per year are planned at a slaughterhouse, no summary report is produced, and the inspection reports themselves are published on the internet.*

In the four slaughterhouses visited, the mission team noticed that each veterinarian used a different system to record the results of animal welfare inspections:

- In the multi species slaughterhouse of Region South, the official veterinarian recorded the results of animal welfare controls on the daily control report as foreseen by the DVFA.
- In the small multi species slaughterhouse of Region North, the official veterinarian recorded only the results of ante mortem inspections on the daily control report. No records were kept of the checks performed during stunning and bleeding.
- In the poultry slaughterhouse of Region North, the official veterinarian recorded only the results of ante mortem inspections which included assessing the welfare on broilers during transport and at unloading but did not include the checks performed for stunning and bleeding. The official veterinarian was also recording the scores of foot pad lesions on computerized records.
- In the cattle slaughterhouse of Region North, the veterinarian recorded the results of animal welfare checks including those performed for stunning on the ante mortem records.

Three slaughterhouses out of the four visited did not record all the results of animal welfare controls as foreseen by the DVFA and in section II of Annex I of Regulation (EC) n° 854/2004. The recent changes in the reporting system partly explain this lack of harmonization but as a consequence, the DVFA will not be in a position to audit appropriately the results of animal welfare controls in slaughterhouses.

Follow up and sanctions

The system of sanctioning for animal welfare is different from the one used for food hygiene. When a deficiency is detected up, the veterinarian can give an oral warning so that corrective action is taken immediately or give a written warning to notify the operator that he has to take corrective action. Only one written warning can be given for the same infringement, then the official veterinarian must report the case to the Police.

Follow up of infringements was timely. In the small multi species slaughterhouse of Region South, an ineffective electrical stunning of lambs was noted and the following slaughtering day a new assessment of the stunning method was made and was judged satisfactory.

Procedures for sanctions were followed in a timely way. The official veterinarians were helped in this procedure by the CCA which provides them with an autotext model with legal references and main points to include in the letter to the Police. In the slaughterhouse for cattle of Region North, a case of a cow sent in the last tenth part of pregnancy was diagnosed during the post-mortem inspection. The case was notified the following day to the Police. In the small multi species slaughterhouse in Region North, a pig with chronic arthritis was sent to the slaughterhouse. Two cases were sent within the same month to the Police, one for the farmer and one for the transporter.

Police feedback varied between regions, depending on whether the regional food and veterinary authorities' annual meetings with the police had taken place and who had participated. In Region South, the official veterinarian has established contact with a local police officer during this meeting and had access to information relevant to the cases sent. In region North, the official veterinarian has not participated in the annual meeting with the Police and did not have feedback on the cases sent.

All the cases sent to the Police are communicated to the DVFA, which records them as a basis for its annual report etc.

Supervision and auditing

The system of supervision is general and not specific for animal welfare. At regional level it should ensure that in each slaughterhouse the number of audits planned for the year is performed and that all areas have been covered.

A supervisor from the control enforcement office checks the quality of controls performed by the official veterinarian by checking reports and by doing "over the shoulder" inspections during an audit inspection performed by the inspector.

The system of audits has been set up at the end of 2005 and it is therefore too soon to assess it.

5.3 Religious slaughter

The CCA differentiates two types of religious slaughter: "ritual" slaughter where the killing is performed before the animal is stunned (e.g. Jewish slaughter) and "halal" slaughter where the killing is done after the animal has been stunned.

5.3.1 "Ritual" slaughter

For ritual slaughter according to an Islamic or Jewish rite, the Ministry of Justice introduced the following specific legal provisions in order n°1037 of 14 December 1994 following two opinions given by the Ethical Committee on religious slaughter in April 1997 and in March 2005:

The animals must be restrained, and when slaughtering cattle a box must be used to maintain the animal in an upright position. The box must be adjustable to the animal's size, so that the head and body are held as gently as possible.

- Cattle must be stunned with a captive bolt pistol immediately after the incision of ritual slaughter.
- When poultry are slaughtered, each animal must be restrained manually while the throat is cut and until death occurs.
- Both carotid arteries and jugular veins must be manually incised with a sharp tool immediately after the animal is restrained.
- Ritual slaughter of all animals, except for poultry, must take place in an export authorised slaughterhouse.
- Ritual slaughter shall take place under the continuous supervision of an official veterinarian.

- Slaughterhouses wishing to carry out slaughter without prior stunning must notify the competent authority (DVFA).

One slaughterhouse had performed ritual slaughter of cattle and sheep following these rules till August 2004; no poultry slaughterhouse performed ritual slaughter because the obligation of restraining the birds manually until death occurs is not compatible with a commercial throughput. Currently, no animals are slaughtered by ritual slaughter in Denmark.

5.3.2 “Halal” slaughter

For halal slaughter, no specific legal provisions or guidelines have been provided by the CCA and the system of controls is identical to the one put in place for other slaughterhouses. In fact, the only differences between halal slaughter and “normal” slaughter is that the method of stunning must be a reversible method approved by the religious community and that the incision for killing, after prior stunning, must be done at the throat and by a person approved by the religious community.

Halal slaughter of cattle

The high throughput slaughterhouse visited in Region North performs halal slaughter on cattle twice a year. A demonstration of the halal slaughter of cattle was performed in front of the inspection team. Cattle were first restrained in a mechanical restrainer where their heads were lifted by a mechanical device to ensure a good presentation for the slaughter man. Following stunning, they were shackled and the ritual cut performed by a person approved by the religious community and employed by the company. The animals did not regain consciousness during the bleeding.

The official veterinarian checked halal slaughter in the same way as normal slaughter. Every slaughtering day, the veterinarian checks that the operator has controlled the equipment used for stunning by looking at a recording sheet kept where the stunning is performed. The veterinarian verifies that the stunning is satisfactory by checking the absence of corneal reflex on a sample of animals. The veterinarian also checks that the bleeding is satisfactory by observation on a sample of animals. The Veterinarian mentioned that the bleeding was longer with the ritual incision compared with the chest sticking which is usually performed and that she sometimes requests the person doing the ritual incision to cut the skin of the neck and the blood vessels to ensure a proper bleeding after the ritual incision has been performed. The veterinarian records daily the results of her findings on the ante mortem sheet. During the visit, the inspection team checked (since that was not done by the veterinarian) the skulls of the animals that had been stunned by concussion. Fractures were seen on several skulls. This is not in compliance with point 2 (a) of Annex C of Directive 93/119/EC which provides that an effective stun must be produced without fracture of the skull.

Halal slaughter of poultry

The high throughput slaughterhouse visited in Region North performed halal slaughter of broilers on a daily basis. The inspection team saw that the stunning and bleeding processes are identical whether the slaughter is halal or not. The broilers are all stunned in a high frequency electrical water bath stunner and killed by an

automatic neck cutter in the presence of a person approved by the religious authority and employed by the company who also performs manual back up. The official veterinarian checked that the corneal reflex was absent on the birds after the stunning. The veterinarian did not make any comment on the placement of the person manually cutting the necks. This employee was not placed as close as possible after the automatic neck-cutter allowing therefore the stunned birds to stay longer with an inappropriate cut of the neck. This is not compliant with point 1 of Annex D of Directive 93/119/EC which provides that bleeding must be started as soon as possible after stunning. The veterinarian did not check the results of the “own checks” of the operator performed on the stunning equipment. The operator explained, when asked by the inspection team, that he records daily the electrical parameters and the speed of the conveyor belt in the high frequency water bath stunner. Additionally, two birds are stunned before the slaughter starts and then are observed to assess the time it takes them to return to consciousness. Respective times were 1.27 and 1.39 minutes on the day of the visit. The inspection team noted that part of the poultry meat put on the market by this slaughterhouse is labelled as being halal.

5.4 Slaughter and killing outside slaughterhouses

The DVFA has set up a system of controls to ensure that animal welfare requirements are implemented when animals are slaughtered and/or killed outside slaughterhouses.

The Danish legislation has several specific provisions for animals slaughtered outside slaughterhouses:

- Slaughtering and killing outside slaughterhouses of equidae, cattle, ostriches, dogs and cats, with the exception of newborn puppies and kittens, can only be done by a skilled person such as a veterinarian, a slaughter man, a person with a hunting licence or people who have received instruction on how to perform slaughter. This applies to farmers who slaughter animals for their own consumption.
- Pig farmers with holdings placed under specific quarantine rules must have a captive bolt pistol on the farm and it should be used by a person instructed to use it for emergency killings.
- Animals considered unfit for national or international transport are defined in the legislation. These animals must be either killed on the spot, if this is at market, or depending on their condition, transported to a slaughterhouse within a radius of 30 km or to a nearby slaughterhouse.

Checks are performed by official veterinarians from the control and enforcement office during their visits in farms, at slaughterhouses or during checks at markets and assembly centres.

- In farms, official veterinarians check that farmers slaughtering animals for their own consumption have stunning equipment and that the animals are bled following the stunning during the controls performed in 5% of farms each year. The checks are carried out by interviewing the farmers.

- Checks of fitness for transport of animals (except for end of lay laying hens) are carried out following a procedure described in a letter sent by the DVFA to the control and enforcement offices. Veterinarians must check fitness for transport on farms when animals are sent outside Denmark for export or intra-community trade or to markets. According to this letter, if an animal is found unfit for transport, the official veterinarian must either request the killing of the animal on the spot, or send it for slaughter to the nearest slaughterhouse provided that it is located less than 30 km away and that the animal won't suffer during transport. In the latter case, the veterinarian issues a certificate to describe the case to the veterinarian at the slaughterhouse. A copy of the certificate completed with the results of post-mortem inspection must be sent back to the veterinarian performing the controls.
- Specific guidelines have been adopted regarding the transport of end-of-lay laying hens, especially those raised in battery cages. The Animal Welfare Council gave an opinion that these hens are unfit for transport considering the number of dead hens arriving at slaughterhouses and the percentages of broken wings or legs found at post-mortem inspections. A letter sent to the control and enforcement offices by the DVFA requests that end-of-lay laying hens must be examined as to their fitness for transport at the same time as the animal health examination, when they are to be transported abroad for slaughter. If the hens are considered fit for transport, the veterinarian must sign a certificate and the hens are slaughtered in a slaughterhouse where the number of dead animals, broken wings and legs are monitored to verify that the hens were fit for transport. If the hens are considered unfit for transport, the hens are killed either in a mobile CO₂ container (see description in 5.5) or in a mobile plant used to kill the hens and transform them into pulp used to feed fur animals. Furthermore, a growing number of egg producers are having their hens killed in a mobile plant instead of sending them elsewhere, even though they are fit for transport.
- A demonstration of the mobile plant used to kill hens was organised for the inspection team. This mobile plant is temporarily approved on the basis of Regulation (EC) n° 1774/2002⁷. The DVFA sent a letter to the regional food and veterinary authorities confirming approval of the plant. The approval addressed to the owner of the plant requires that specific measures should be taken when the plant is operated to ensure that killing occurs in compliance with Directive 93/119/EC. The official veterinarian performs an ante mortem inspection before killing takes place but is not present during the killing. The mobile plant is a lorry with a conveyor belt, a gas chamber with a measuring device for CO₂ and a container for the pulp obtained. The plant is used up to two to three days a week. The driver and trained handlers are operating the plant according to an instruction written by the company and following consultation with the DVFA. The hens are put on the conveyor belt by the handlers, go through the gas chamber where they are exposed to a 50% concentration of CO₂, lose consciousness within 30 seconds and are

⁷ Regulation (EC) n° 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 EU L 273, 10.10.2002, p.1.

processed into pulp in two minutes. The killing can be stopped with stop buttons placed to stop the conveyor belt at different points and the driver can check that the animals are dead by ensuring that they are not moving. The only existing emergency back-up system is to stop the process. The DVFA had not checked the training of the driver of the lorry who supervises the killings.

5.5 Killing animals for disease control

Structure

The general organisation of contingency plans is overall similar to the one described in previous reports DG(SANCO)/9101/2003-MR-Final and DG(SANCO)/8722/2002-MR-Final. The changes are linked to the restructuring of the central competent authority in October 2005 and to the restructuring of the regional competent authorities in January 2006.

The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (DVFA) is now part of the Ministry of Family and Consumer Affairs and is divided in 12 divisions. The Animal Health Division is responsible at central level for ensuring the preparation and supervision of contingency plans.

The 10 regional veterinary and food centres have been restructured in 3 regions (Region South, North and East). In each region, one animal health unit is responsible at local level for ensuring the operational aspects of contingency plans. The regional contingency group which used to coordinate plans between the 10 regions does not exist anymore.

Organisation and supervision

The animal health division has written contingency plans for Foot and Mouth Disease, Classical Swine Fever and Avian Influenza/ Newcastle Disease. Each plan contains a general part which is identical for all diseases and an operational part which is specific to each disease. The contingency plans describe the methods to be used to carry out the killing but do not give detailed instructions regarding animal welfare. The methods cited are in compliance with Annex E of directive 93/119/EC.

To ensure that animal welfare requirements are met during killing for disease the Animal Health Division:

- Provides annual training to official veterinarians on contingency plans where organisation of killing of animals is part of the curriculum and has organised 2 practical exercises, one in 2005 for Foot and Mouth Disease and one in 2004 for Classical Swine Fever.
- Provided the regions with models to fill out where specific and practical arrangements in case of an outbreak are described (such as list of local suppliers, of local veterinarians and of persons competent to carry out killing), instructions regarding the use of materials for killings (one memo for the use of CO2 containers for hens and one instruction for the use of CO2 containers for piglets) and one memo to be used and completed in holdings where killings take place.

- Requests that a person responsible for the killing who can be either an official veterinarian or a veterinarian employed by the cattle or swine industry is appointed to each holding where killing for disease controls takes place. The name of this person is written on the memo.
- Made arrangements with the cattle and swine industry to secure the availability of a sufficient number of personnel employed in slaughterhouses and trained to use a captive bolt pistol. It has also made arrangements with the agriculture, the slaughtering industry and the Danish Emergency Management Agency to secure the availability of a sufficient number of personnel for handling or killing animals.
- Ensured that small CO₂ containers are stocked in Animal health Unit and that rendering companies have CO₂ large containers for gassing poultry and piglets/weaner pigs.
- Analysed and published the assessment of the Newcastle Disease Outbreak in Denmark in 2002 including a part on how euthanasia should be carried out.
- Has set up a working group including a member of the Animal Welfare, Food Quality and Marketing Practices Division to find other methods than CO₂ containers to kill poultry. The goal is to find a method using gas that will kill the birds in the buildings without manual handling of the birds. This new method will therefore guarantee the safety of people performing the killing in the case of an Avian Influenza outbreak, prevent the stress on the birds of handling and allow a faster stamping out.

Implementation

At local level, each Animal Health Unit must ensure that the model for each contingency plan, where contact numbers are listed, is updated and that the necessary material for killing is available and properly maintained.

During the visit at the local enforcement office, it was noted that boxes containing killing material (captive bolt pistol, material necessary to inject pentobarbital) were available and that their contents were checked regularly. Pentobarbital was available but locked up in cabinets for safety reasons. In each “killing box”, instructions were present indicating the dosages to be used for pentobarbital (except for ducks) and the proper position for the use of a captive bolt pistol. Two types of CO₂ containers were presented to the mission team:

- A small CO₂ container used for poultry kept in backyard farms (except for geese and ducks) which has a capacity of 20 hens.
- A large CO₂ container (30 m³) used for poultry and piglets or weaner pigs of less than 20 kg which has the capacity to kill 3 500 hens. Four large containers are available at rendering plants. A guideline on how to use these containers was issued by the DVFA and pictures on how to use the containers were provided in the assessment of the outbreak of Newcastle Disease in 2002 to the official veterinarians. The concentration of CO₂ is measured via a probe; 50% is recommended for poultry; the poultry are unconscious after 15 to 30 seconds and are dead in less than two minutes.

The death of animals is checked by opening the lids of the containers. The DVFA mentioned that it takes 7 to 8 hours to fill up the containers with hens, and one veterinarian and two technicians are needed at the container, merely to check that the birds are killed humanely. In addition, assistants bring the poultry from the stalls to the containers. For pigs weighing approximately 20 kg or less, the same containers are used but a slide is used to facilitate humane handling of the pigs and the recommended concentration of CO₂ is 90%.

During the visit at the local enforcement office, the inspection team noted that the regional contingency plans have not been updated to take into account the restructuring of the DVFA. For now, each of the 10 local enforcement offices has its previous written documents and material. The DVFA also mentioned that the Avian Influenza and Newcastle Disease plan was not updated. The DVFA mentioned at the final meeting that the priorities for 2006 will be to update this plan and to gather the material and the documents at the 3 regional animal health units.

5.6 Killing fur animals

Legislation

The CCA mentioned that Danish legislation has additional requirements to the EU requirements regarding the keeping of fur animals in farms and regarding the killing of chinchillas. For killing chinchillas by electrocution with cardiac arrest, the legislation requires that chinchillas must be restrained by the tail and that the electrodes must be placed on the tail close to the root and on one of the ears. A current of an average value of 0.57 amps must be applied for at least 60 seconds.

Organisation of controls

The official veterinarians do comprehensive controls for fur animal welfare using a check list provided by the division of animal welfare, food quality and marketing practices. Specific points of the check list are dedicated to the methods used to kill the animals. The controls are carried out throughout the year and are not currently targeted during the killing of animals. 5 % of the farms are checked every year. The CA stated that they will continue to perform checks of farms during the whole year in order to check all the phases of rearing fur animals but that some of the inspections will be targeted during the killing season⁸ for mink and foxes (there is no killing season for chinchillas).

Observations

- In the chinchilla farm visited, the restraint and killing of one chinchilla by electrocution was demonstrated and was judged compliant with the requirements of Directive 93/119/EC by the inspection team. The owner of the farm had designed his own restraining and killing system made of a piece of wooden board, 2 electrodes and an electrical circuit fitted with a

⁸ The DVFA indicated that killing of mink is performed over a very short period of time between the 10th of November and the 1st of December. Some male mink are killed in April.

transformer that ensures the delivery of at least 0.57 amps to each animal. The chinchilla lost consciousness instantly and death occurred while the animal was unconscious within less than 1 minute. The owner of the farm declared that to ensure that the chinchillas are dead, he dislocates their neck after they have been electrocuted.

The official veterinarian did not check the number of amperes applied to the chinchilla and did not make any remark concerning the dislocation of the neck. Upon the request of the inspection team, the owner lifted the box covering the transformer where the number of amperes and the voltage could be seen: 1.4 amps and 220 volts.

- In the mink farm visited, a demonstration of the killing of animals could not be made because this was not the killing season. The device is a box, which is placed on a sort of wheelbarrow and contains up to 50 minks. The box is fitted with an engine providing carbon monoxide through a tube fitted with a filter. The killing device can be moved from one group of cages to another minimising the handling of animals.

The owner said that he operated his device according to the recommendations of the guidelines provided by the fur industry for minks and foxes. The engine works before the first animal is introduced in the box and runs continuously to ensure an appropriate concentration. The 1% in volume required by Directive 93/119/EC is not assessed but the owner indicated that every year the engine is tested in a workshop. The gas is filtered and cooled when passing through a fibre glass tube. If the animals do not move after being 10 minutes in the box, the owner considers the animals are dead.

5.7 Slaughtering and killing of fish

Legislation

Danish legislation contains a requirement that anyone killing animals, including fish, must ensure that the animal is killed as quickly and painlessly as possible.

Organisation of controls

Controls of slaughter are organised in cutting factories for fresh and seawater fish where the vast majority of fish farmed in Denmark are slaughtered. Animal welfare checks are carried out by official veterinarians from the local and enforcement offices and are included in the programme set up for food hygiene for these cutting plants. No specific training, guidelines or check-lists have been provided to the veterinarians but the control and enforcement unit of Velje, where most of the fish farms and cutting plants are located has a section for aquaculture where 3 veterinarians are specialized in fish and are designated as contact persons for other veterinarians in other regions.

Observations

- The main methods of killing are stunning by exposure to carbon dioxide followed by bleeding for seawater trout and electrical stunning followed by decapitation for fresh water trout.

- Two cutting plants for fresh water trout were visited during the mission. In both plants, the official veterinarians checked: the conditions of transport of fish in plastic containers provided with oxygen; the tanks where fish were unloaded; the procedure of the business operator used for slaughtering and killing fish; and that the fish were immobile after electrical stunning/killing and did not react when touched on the eyes.
- In both plants, the fish were sucked up from the waiting tanks and at the same time removed from water and were placed in a container with electrodes. The electrical parameters were set to stun and kill the fish by the food business operators and written in their procedures (48 V and 4 to 8 minutes for 500 kg of fish in one plant and 48 V for a minimum of 10 minutes for 350 kg in the other plant). In one of the plants visited, the business operator mentioned that to take into account the decrease of electrical conductivity of fish during winter, he raised the voltage from 45 to 70 volts. No device showing the parameters was in place but the operators explained that they monitored the speed at which the tank is filled and the mass of fish present in the tank on a daily basis because these parameters are critical to obtain adequate stunning and killing. The operators also ensured that after the stunning, all the fish are immobile before being decapitated.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Competent authority

- 1) The structure of the central competent and regional authorities was adequate with a clear attribution of responsibilities and appropriate means of communication between the different authorities involved in animal welfare. An active participation of stakeholders involved in the implementation of animal welfare requirements is ensured.
- 2) Danish legislation on animal welfare at slaughter and killing has requirements that go beyond those of Directive 93/119/EC in particular for slaughtering pregnant animals, slaughtering animals according to a religious rite, killing animals outside slaughterhouses, killing of fur animals and slaughtering fish.
- 3) Training on slaughter and killing is organised every year for official veterinarians. However, no specific training is organised for slaughter of poultry. In 2006, the DVFA is offering a training programme for inspectors to comply with Article 6 of Regulation (EC) n° 882/2004 and with Annex I chapter IV paragraphs A and B of Regulation (EC) n° 854/2004 should be available for inspectors.

6.2 Slaughterhouses

- 1) The DVFA has set up a system to check animal welfare requirements in slaughterhouses which is part of the more general one put in place at the end of the year 2005 for food hygiene. This provides for the

approach laid down in Regulations (EC) n° 882/2004 and n° 854/2004⁹.

- 2) Planning of audits in slaughterhouses on the basis of risk assessment had been organised by the DVFA but was not performed in a uniform way between the different regions and establishments (Article 3 and point 4 of Article 4 of Regulation (EC) n°882/2004). As a result, in three out of four slaughterhouses visited, no specific targeted audits of the operator's own checks on animal welfare at slaughter had been scheduled.
- 3) The daily inspections performed by the official veterinarians at ante mortem and post mortem ensure that only fit animals are slaughtered by staff trained and skilled in stunning and bleeding and that animals are stunned and bled effectively. However, deficiencies such as steep unloading ramp (point 1 of chapter II of Annex A of Directive 93/119/EC), broken drinkers in lairages (point 9 of chapter II of Annex A of Directive 93/119/EC), washing of lorries close to broilers' cages (Article 3 of Directive 93/119/EC), inappropriate handling of animals (Articles 3 of Directive 93/19/EC, inadequate stunning equipment used (chapter II, A, 2 (b) of Directive 93/119/EC), improper maintenance of main (Article 6 of Directive 93/119/EC) and back-up stunning equipment (Article 6 of Directive 93/119/EC) were not detected by the official veterinarians. Also, official veterinarians did not check the training of the people employed for handling animals and did not determine the strength and duration of the current for poultry water bath stunner (Article 7 and point II, 3, B, 1 of Annex C of Directive 93/119/EC). Official veterinarians did not detect these non compliances either because their supervision or other checks were inadequate, because they did not audit certain aspects of the operators' own checks, and/or because the DVFA had not provided sufficient guidance and training on how to perform the controls.
- 4) Reporting and recording the results of animal welfare inspections have been set up by the DVFA but was not done in a uniform way by the official veterinarians. As a consequence, it will be difficult to evaluate and audit the results of animal welfare inspections in slaughterhouses (Annex I, section II of Regulation (EC) n°854/2004 and point 4 of article 4 of Regulation (EC) n°882/2004).
- 5) Follow up of inspections was timely and the procedure for sanctions was well managed by the official veterinarians. However, the level of feed back information received from the cases differed, because the meetings with Police did not always take place.

⁹ *In their response to the draft report, the Danish Authorities noted that the DVFA has drawn up an action plan for the re-approval of establishments which must be approved in accordance with Article 3 of Regulation (EC) N°854/2004. Re-approval will be carried out by the end of 2007. In the case of establishments covered by the derogation in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) N° 2076/2005, the deadline for re-approval will, wherever possible, be agreed with the establishment, but will not be later than the end of 2009*

6.3 Religious slaughter

- 1) Slaughterhouses doing “Halal slaughter”, which is characterized by reversible stunning before bleeding, are checked within the general system of surveillance and supervision. No specific instructions or practical training had been given to the official veterinarians regarding the checks of the stunning and bleeding methods used for “Halal slaughter”. As a result, some deficiencies regarding the implementation of Directive 93/119/EC were not picked up by the official veterinarians such as the presence of skull fractures on cattle after use of a concussive method for stunning (point II, 2. (a) of Annex C of Directive 93/119/EC) or the inadequate placement of the religious person doing the back-up manual neck cutting of poultry (point 1 of Annex D of Directive 93/119/EC).

6.4 Slaughter and killing outside slaughterhouses

- 1) The CA has taken measures to ensure that animals are slaughtered and/or killed outside slaughterhouses in compliance with Directive 93/119/EC. Specific national legal provisions for the slaughter and killing of animals outside slaughterhouses go beyond the requirements of Directive 93/119/EC such as for the slaughter and killing of e.g. cattle and ostriches by a skilled person and for animals which should be considered unfit for transport and killed on the spot. Enforcement action by the CA was effective in dealing with such cases.
- 2) The system ensured that end-of-lay laying hens raised in battery cages which were unfit for transport were killed on the spot in a mobile plant using carbon dioxide for killing.

6.5 Killing for disease control

- 1) The DVFA has set up a system to ensure that the killing of animals for disease controls is done using methods compliant with Annex E of Directive 93/119/EC, that the corresponding equipment and trained personal are available thanks to a network of industry stakeholders and state agencies and that the supervision of killing in holdings is done by a trained veterinarian. Moreover practical exercises, a debriefing on euthanasia performed during a Newcastle Disease outbreak and continuous research work by a working group at central level indicate a high degree of preparedness.
- 2) All the documents and materials regarding contingency plans have not yet been revised to take account of the restructuring. Additionally, the contingency plan for Avian Influenza and Newcastle Disease has not been updated yet at central level. The Animal Health Division plans to address these two issues in 2006.

6.6 Killing of fur animals

- 1) The Danish legislation has specific provisions for the killing of fur animals, defines which methods of killings should be used for the

different species and provides electrical parameters for the electrocution of chinchillas. The methods listed to kill fur animals are compliant with Annex F of Directive 93/119/EC.

- 2) Checks of 5% of farms with fur animals are done by the official veterinarians who use a check-list provided by the DVFA; however, as checks for killing are mainly performed by interviewing the farmers, some deficiencies may be overlooked.

6.7 Slaughtering of fish

- 1) The Danish legislation contains a general requirement that anyone killing animals including fish, must ensure that the animal is killed as quickly and painlessly as possible. Inspections are carried out in farms and cutting plants and official veterinarians working in the aquaculture sector have been identified as contact persons for technical advice. It was ensured that fish were stunned before decapitation.

6.8 Overall conclusion

Denmark has adopted legislative measures and procedures which go further than EU requirements on issues such as religious slaughter, killing outside slaughterhouses, killing of fur animals and fish. The DVFA 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, guidelines, check-lists, training and system of sanctions have been provided to the official veterinarians who carry out the checks. However, the system recently put in place does not yet ensure that official veterinarians apply it in a uniform way in all slaughterhouses.

7. CLOSING MEETING

A closing meeting was held on the 10th of February 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 Ministry of Justice and of the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration offered comments which are included in the report and said that they will address the shortcomings that have been identified by the inspection team.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

To the competent authorities of Denmark

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) Official veterinarians perform audits of the operators' own checks in slaughterhouses regarding animal welfare requirements in a uniform way (Article 3 and point 4 of Article 4 of Regulation (EC) n°882/2004).
- 2) The results of audits and inspections performed in slaughterhouses for animal welfare requirements are reported and recorded in databases in a uniform way so that the CA can evaluate and audit the results of the controls (Annex I, section II of Regulation (EC) n°854/2004 and point 4 of article 4 of Regulation (EC) n°882/2004).
- 3) Adequate 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).
- 4) The ramps for unloading animals in slaughterhouses have a minimum slope (point 1 of chapter II of Annex A of Directive 93/119/EC).
- 5) Drinking water is available to animals which are not taken directly upon arrival to the place of slaughter (point 9 of chapter II of Annex A of Directive 93/119/EC).
- 6) Broilers are spared any avoidable excitement during lairaging in slaughterhouses (Article 3 of Directive 93/119/EC).
- 7) Animals are handled in slaughterhouses by people with the necessary knowledge and skill and are spared any avoidable excitement during movement (Articles 3 and 7 of Directive 93/119/EC).
- 8) Electrical stunning equipment has an audible or visible device indicating the length of time of its application to an animal (chapter II, A, 2 (b) of Directive 93/119/EC).
- 9) Back-up for stunning equipment is kept at the place of slaughter of the animals for emergency use (point 2 of Article 6 of Directive 93/119/EC).
- 10) Stunning equipment is maintained (point 1 of article 6 of Directive 93/119/EC).
- 11) Training of handlers is checked by official veterinarians (Article 7 of Directive 93/119/EC).
- 12) Official veterinarians determine the strength and duration of current used for waterbath stunner in poultry slaughterhouses (point II, 3, B, 1 of Annex C of directive 93/119/EC).
- 13) When concussion is used for stunning cattle, no fracture of the skull occurs (point 2. (a) of chapter II of Annex C of Directive 93/119/EC).
- 14) Documents and materials for contingency plans are reorganised to take account of the restructuring and the contingency plans for Avian Influenza and Newcastle Disease are updated (point 3 of Article 13 of Regulation (EC) n°882/2004).

9. ADDENDUM TO MISSION REPORT DG(SANCO)/8039/2006

With their comments on the draft version of this report, the CCA provided an action plan which addressed each of the recommendations. In particular, the CCA made the following commitments to improve the system of controls of animal welfare requirements in slaughterhouses and to correct the deficiencies identified in the different slaughterhouses visited:

- Regarding recommendation n° 1, the DVFA will identify “animal welfare” as a separate area when drawing up the auditing guidelines for 2007, which will help to ensure that all animal welfare requirements are checked and complied with. Uniformity between the regional food and veterinary authorities will be achieved by issuing circulars and guidelines and holding meetings at which all inspection departments will be represented. The DVFA is planning to revise the guidelines on documentation of checks relating to animal welfare requirements at slaughterhouses by the end of 2006. In the letters addressed to the heads of the regional authorities on 1 June 2006, the DVFA highlighted the points to be followed for performing regular animal welfare audits and checks in slaughterhouses.
- Regarding recommendations n° 2 and n°3, the DVFA will ensure that checklists used in slaughterhouses are regularly updated and that check lists specific to animal welfare requirements at slaughterhouses are used during animal welfare inspections. Appropriate provisions on the stunning of animals will be included in the new guidelines on documentation of checks relating to animal welfare requirements at slaughterhouses and the previous outdated circular on stunning will be repealed before the end of 2006. In the letters addressed to the heads of the regional authorities on 1 June 2006, the DVFA highlighted the need for appropriate reporting and recording of the results of animal welfare audits and inspections.
- Regarding recommendation n°3 on training, the DVFA will ensure regular training on animal welfare in slaughterhouses for all official veterinarians. In the letters addressed to the heads of the regional authorities on 1 June 2006, the DVFA indicated that a number of official veterinarians must be trained to carry out checks in relation to animal welfare requirements.
- Regarding recommendation n° 4, in the letters addressed to the heads of the regional authorities on 1 June 2006, the DVFA requests from the head of the region concerned that it should be ensured in connection with re-approval of the slaughterhouse that the slope of entry and exit ramps should be kept to the minimum possible.
- Regarding recommendation n° 5, in the letters addressed to the heads of two regions concerned on 1 June 2006, the DVFA requests that the slaughterhouses be informed in writing that animals which are not taken directly to the place of slaughter must have access to drinking water and that compliance with this requirement must be checked.
- Regarding recommendation n° 6, in a letter addressed to the head of the region concerned on 1 June 2006, the DVFA requests that it should be ensured that the slaughterhouse puts in place a procedure to avoid unnecessary excitement to the broilers kept in cages before slaughter and during washing at the slaughterhouse.

- Regarding recommendation n°7, in the letter addressed to the head of the region concerned on 1 June 2006, the DVFA request that it should be ensured that the slaughterhouse is informed in writing that animals must be handled by persons with the necessary knowledge and skills, and be spared any avoidable excitement during handling.
- Regarding recommendation n° 8, the DVFA stated that the stunning device was fitted with visible signal and that the operator demonstrated to the mission team that the light lit up when there was current between electrodes in a bucket of water.
- Regarding recommendation n° 9, in the letter addressed to the head of the regions concerned on 1 June 2006, the DVFA requests that it should be ensured that the back-up stunning equipment for emergency use must be at the place of slaughter when slaughtering is taking place.
- Regarding recommendation n° 10, in the letter addressed to the head of the region concerned on 1 June 2006, the DVFA requests that it should be ensured that the stunning equipment is properly maintained.
- Regarding recommendation n°11, in the letter addressed to the head of the region concerned on 1 June 2006, the DVFA requests that it should be ensured as soon as possible that the official veterinarian checks the training of personnel, including workers employed to handle animals.
- Regarding recommendation n°12, in the letter addressed to the head of the region concerned on 1 June 2006, the DVFA requests that it should be ensured without delay that the official veterinarian determines the strength and duration of the current used for water bath stunner in poultry slaughterhouse.
- Regarding recommendation n°13, the DVFA stated that during the mission calves were stunned by concussion and not adult cattle, which is normally slaughtered for halal slaughter and very rarely suffers skull damage after stunning by concussion. In the letter addressed to the head of the region concerned on 1 June 2006, the DVFA requests that the slaughterhouse be informed in writing that skull fractures must not occur when cattle is stunned by concussion, and that the concussion stunning equipment should not be used in the future on animals under the age of 12 month or bulls.
- Regarding recommendation n° 14, the DVFA stated that Contingency plans had been amended to take into account the DVFA's most recent restructuring and that the operational plans for avian influenza and for Newcastle Disease will be amended respectively by 1 January 2007 and 31 December 2007.