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DG Health and
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OVERVIEW REPORT

Systems to Prevent the Transport of Unfit Animals in the EU

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Health and food audits and analysis

DG(SANTE) 2015-8721 - MR

**OVERVIEW REPORT ON SYSTEMS TO PREVENT THE TRANSPORT OF UNFIT
ANIMALS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Executive Summary

Despite regulations prohibiting the transport of “unfit” animals, injured animals arrive on a daily basis to slaughterhouses in the European Union. The primary responsibility in this area lies with animal keepers and transporters, and it is for national authorities to enforce it.

The report examines data and facts available in this area and gives an overview of the official national systems in place to ensure that only animals fit for transport are sent from farms to slaughterhouses.

To avoid incidents, it is necessary to have early identification of animals that should not be moved and effective alternatives to deal with them. The report includes good practices and lists/describes available tools for identification of these cases on farm. It highlights the link between the availability and ease of slaughtering on farm and consequent reductions in the incidence of the transport of unfit animals. While it is in the producers’ best financial interest to invest in care for their animals, the facts show that there may be little motivation to do so if it means a significant economic loss, which seems often to be the case.

National authorities have effective mechanisms at slaughterhouses to detect animals that should not have been transported. Communication and coordination between official departments and authorities is the key to ensure an effective system that prevents or reduces the incidence or recidivism of problems. Competence barriers and poor inter-departmental communication are often root causes of ineffective enforcement.

There is no generalised use of actions such as suspension or revoking of licences, increased controls or restrictions in activity. While most Member States opt for administrative processes (fines) and sanctions, the former are generally too long to be effective and the latter too low to be dissuasive.

The report evaluates private veterinarians' role in the transport of unfit animals through certification of their fitness and offers measures that have been effectively used to tackle this issue.

Cross-border movements and use of foreign hauliers are challenges for enforcement.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

Abbreviation	Explanation
CIRCABC	Communication and Information Resource Centre for Administrations, Businesses and Citizens
COPA –COGECA	European farmers and agri-cooperatives
DG	Directorate General of the European Commission
EU	European Union
NGO(s)	Non-governmental organisation(s)

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Every year, more than 110 million cattle and 260 million pigs are moved from farms to slaughterhouses in the European Union¹ (EU). In the majority of cases, cattle and pigs intended for slaughter are both healthy and fit for transport. In the small number of cases when health or fitness for transport is compromised, animals should be slaughtered or killed on farm. Fitness for transport is a major contributor to successful transportation in terms of food safety, animal well-being, and economic outcomes².

The EU's Treaty of Lisbon, in force since 2009, recognised animals as sentient beings. They are therefore likely to find journeys stressful and tiring. If they are fit and healthy prior to the journey then they will be better able to tolerate the stresses of the journey, due to temperature variations, unfamiliar environment and noises. Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations³ is the legislation that governs the welfare of animals during transport in the European Union.

For the transport of animals, we find the key welfare requirement in Article 3 of the Council Regulation, stating 'No person shall transport animals or cause animals to be transported in a way likely to cause injury or undue suffering to them.' In order to comply with this welfare requirement, Article 3 (point b) further requires that 'the animals are fit for the journey'. Further legislation applicable to the fitness of animals transported for slaughter are to be found in Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin, Regulation (EC) No 854/2004 laying down specific rules for the organisation of official controls on products of animal origin, and Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing. This legislation lays down provisions on issues such as checks at the place of departure for fitness for transport, situations where animals cannot be considered fit for transport, ante and post-mortem inspections and conditions for emergency slaughter outside slaughterhouse and for the placing on the market of meat of animals which have been subject to such slaughter.

Within the EU and elsewhere, there is limited published data on emergency and casualty slaughter of animals and on cases of transport of unfit animals. Downer animals - especially dairy cows (known commonly as "downers") represent an important group of animals unfit for transport. The downer cow is not well defined, but it is "a cow unable to stand voluntarily". The main reasons for dairy cows to go down are linked with the intensification of the production, and are mainly due to post-calving trauma, metabolic issues (such as milk fever) or diseases such as mastitis or metritis. Animal welfare non-governmental organisations (NGOs) had been pointing out for some time that there were significant problems in several Member States, notably with the transport of unfit cows to slaughterhouses. This was particularly in regions with large numbers of dairy cows with high levels of milk production. They collected data from competent authorities through

¹ Source: Eurostat- 2013

² Perspectives on transportation issues: The importance of having physically fit cattle and pigs. [Last accessed March 18, 2014]. Available from: <http://www.grandin.com/behaviour/perspectives.transportation.issues.html>

³ Annex 2 to this report provides references for all the legal texts quoted in this report

questionnaires, which underlined the extent of the problem and highlighted the unreliability of certain statistics given and the absence of enforcement. The NGO umbrella group at EU level, *Eurogroup for Animals*, led a stakeholders' initiative with the general aim of getting rid of this practice and published a guideline “Practical Guidelines to Assess Fitness for Transport of Adult Bovines” in May 2012⁴. Other participants included industry representatives (the European Livestock and Meat Trades Union and the European farmers and agri-cooperatives (COPA –COGECA)), the European Livestock Transporters, the NGO Animals Angels, the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe, the Institute de l'Elevage and the International Road Transport Union. The guide has been translated into 16 EU languages and has been widely disseminated.

An overview report on a previous series of audits from DG Health and Food Safety to seven Member States in 2006 and 2007⁵ concluded that where competent authorities had initiated sanctions when severely injured large animals had been transported this had led to a reduction in the number of such cases.

DG Health and Food Safety included the transport of unfit animals in the scope of several subsequent audits on animal welfare during transport between 2010- 2012, in particular to regions where there was intensive dairy farming. In 2012 DG Health and Food Safety brought the issue to the Network for animal welfare during transport where the National Contact Points from each Member State discussed the matter.

This overview report summarises:

- The results of audits of 13 Member States between 2013 and 2015 and;
- Other documentation studied relevant to this issue.

The Member States where a good practice regarding transport of unfit animals was identified by the audit are highlighted in this report. These good practices are practices that have demonstrated to produce good results in terms of ensuring the implementation of the legislative requirements to ensure that animals are fit for transport, as required by Article 3 and Chapter I of Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 1/2005. They do not constitute legal requirements and in a number of cases go beyond these.

The 13 Member States audited account for 80% of the cattle populations of the EU. The audits' primary objective was the official controls on animal welfare at the time of slaughter, but as official controls in slaughterhouses include controls on animal welfare during transport, the audits also evaluated whether only animals fit for transport were sent to slaughterhouses⁶ and whether this was supported by the implementation of a procedure for emergency slaughter outside the slaughterhouse⁷. This procedure, established in Regulation

⁴ http://www.afsca.be/publications-en/_documents/2012-05-11_final_transport_guidelines_en.pdf

⁵ General report of a series of missions carried out in 2006-2007 to evaluate controls of animal welfare at the time of slaughter and killing (DG(SANCO)/2008-7974 – GR) available at: http://ec.europa.eu/food/DG_Health_and_Food_Safety/overview_reports/details.cfm?rep_id=22

⁶ As required by Article 3 and Chapter I of Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 1/2005

(EC) No 853/2004, outlines the rules whereby the meat from such animals may be used for human consumption. One of the requirements is that the animal must have suffered an accident that prevented its transport to the slaughterhouse for welfare reasons. There are however many cases where animals cannot be transported to the slaughterhouse for welfare reasons, for example an extremely lame cow, but because the animal has not suffered an accident, such animals don't meet the requirements for "emergency slaughter outside the slaughterhouse". Persons required to make a decision are often uncertain on how to deal with such cases and sometimes transport very lame animals to the slaughterhouse, against welfare requirements, as hygiene rules might be more strictly adhered to than welfare ones. Killing such animals on farm does not comply with the "emergency slaughter outside the slaughterhouse" procedure, so there may be an incentive to salvage the meat value of the animal by transporting the animal alive for slaughter.

There is also the case of "emergency killing", as defined in Article 2(d) of Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009, where prior stunning is not required. This is where there is no other practical possibility to alleviate the animal's pain or suffering, and is only used under exceptional circumstances, such as accidents in remote locations. In the context of this report, animals are usually not in extreme pain or in inaccessible locations when decisions are taken regarding the on farm killing of an injured animal. "Emergency slaughter outside the slaughterhouse" is therefore the most relevant definition and implementation of this procedure helps to reduce non-compliance with rules on fitness of animals for transport.

2 PLANNING OF OFFICIAL CONTROLS

In order to ensure effective implementation of animal welfare rules, each Member State has to prepare a multiannual national control plan. Controls should be decided on a risk basis. Audits highlighted that good risk-based systems adapted to the national/local situation help to identify problems in the area of transport of unfit animals and to target them. Preventive actions to minimise transport of unfit animals when this has been identified as a problem is good practice. As an example, one competent authority in Germany visited a high number of dealers and advised them on fitness of animals for transport after assessing the data on infringements for these operators.

Good practice was observed in Italy, where a regional authority prioritised this area after a DG Health and Food Safety audit in 2010 highlighted extensive problems with the transport of unfit cattle.

⁷ Procedure for emergency slaughter outside the slaughterhouse is laid down in Annex III Section I Chapter VI of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004, and includes conditions for disposal of animal by-products

Good practice (IT): specific risk allocated to transport of cull cows

- A regional authority in Italy identified a particular risk for animal welfare in connection with the transport of weakened or unfit cull cows from dairy production to slaughterhouses.
- They set up a project (i.e. they allocated specific resources) to target this animal population during their checks and implemented it.
- Transport of unfit cattle was detected, enforcement measures had been prepared and action could be taken to sanction offenders.

Most countries visited do not allocate particular risk to the transport of unfit animals. One of the reasons is that many Member States do not keep data, and are not required to, which makes quantification of the problem impossible. One of DG Health and Food Safety's audits uncovered a major animal welfare risk of unfit bovines being transported for slaughter and concluded that the resources involved in processing these cases would merit targeted action in particular slaughterhouses/geographical areas.

3 TRANSPORT OF UNFIT ANIMALS AND IDENTIFICATION OF CASES

EU legislation does not require any specific documentation for moving animals from farm to slaughter in relation to their fitness (unless the animals are moving to another country). In most Member States, the keeper and the transporter are accountable for ensuring that the animal is fit for the journey ahead. In cases where the keeper has doubts on the fitness conditions, he/she can require the service of a veterinary practitioner, who will issue a veterinary certificate stating the fitness of the animal. In these cases, the practitioner is accountable for his/her statements.

The Regulation lays out a number of conditions which may cause an animal to be declared unfit⁸. In addition, in most Member States, further guidance from competent authorities and/or other sources is available to stakeholders and official staff to help prevent the transport of weaker and possibly unfit animals for slaughter.

Records kept in slaughterhouses by animal welfare officers and official veterinarians are sources of information regarding the fitness of arriving animals. The amount and quality of records available are diverse and of variable quality. Records from operators (animal welfare officers) and officials do not always match: frequently during the audits, one of the sources indicated presence of unfit animals that was not reflected in the other.

All countries perform routine ante-mortem checks, which allow them to identify problems and non-compliances in this area. Good practices were seen in United Kingdom and Belgium where official controls were based on good documented procedures for dealing both with

⁸ Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005, Annex I, Chapter I, Point 2 provides details where animals are to be considered unfit for transport.

suspect animals arriving at slaughterhouses and for the arrival of carcasses where the animals had undergone emergency slaughter on farm. In both countries there were good procedures for investigation and follow-up suspect breaches of the legislation including the collection of evidence and reporting to the competent authority responsible for sanctions.

There is evidence of unfit cows and pigs transported to slaughterhouses (e.g. animal welfare officer's records, post-mortem findings), in many cases with veterinary certificates which do not indicate any health or welfare conditions that render them unfit for transport. Consequently those accompanying certificates ascertaining their fitness for transport are at best misleading and at worst false.

The situation was particularly unsatisfactory in one Member State where there was evidence of hundreds of unfit animals arriving to slaughterhouses accompanied by certificates issued by private practitioners attesting their fitness.

Italy, which presented similar problems in the past, has taken effective measures to tackle the problem of transport of unfit cull dairy cows under false certificates. Some of the effective measures applied included:

- Informing all competent authorities, private veterinarians, farmers, transporters and meat producers associations on the relevant findings and recommendations from previous DG Health and Food Safety audits;
- Meeting the national federation of veterinarians to discuss training needs for veterinarians issuing certificates and pushing it to develop such training;
- Increasing awareness on cows unfit for transport (e.g. posters for farmers, translation of “Practical Guidelines to Assess Fitness for Transport of Adult Bovines”);
- Creating a national report template to be used by authorities to notify the police and legal services when false certificates of fitness for transport are detected.
- Traffic police were trained by two NGOs and subsequently the police wrote their own transport guidance pocket book.
- Carrying out intense campaigns targeting the transport of unfit animals (e.g. 650 livestock vehicles checked in 30 days - 180 police cars involved).
- Imposition of fines (e.g. 534 reported violations, € 345.000 in total of administrative fines imposed by police).

Other reasons for transporting unfit animals are related to difficulties in slaughtering on farm and missing infrastructure (e.g. problems to get a slaughter man, absence of equipment to move the carcass, long administrative procedures to get authorisation, unavailability of stunning equipment). The transport of unfit animals is generally related to economic gain. Slaughtering an animal on farm implies additional cost for the keeper. For instance, it requires the presence of a veterinarian to certify the animal, the possible use of a slaughter man and transportation to the factory for dressing. Slaughterhouses do not have the obligation to accept emergency slaughtered animals and many of them do not take them as they involve higher hygienic risk.

In some cases, where animals arrived with veterinary certificates recording that the animals had broken limbs and other injuries, national guidance was the cause of the problem. As this guidance allowed transport "with particular care", which is not in line with point 2(a) of Chapter I of Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 which lays down that animals unable to move independently without pain or walk unassisted shall not be considered fit for transport.

4 ON FARM SLAUGHTER

Routine ante mortem inspections at slaughterhouses, required by Regulation (EC) No 854/2004, enable the detection of animals which should not have been transported for slaughter. In addition implementation of the "emergency slaughter outside the slaughterhouse" procedure should reduce non-compliance with the transport of unfit animals as this procedure allows the meat from such injured animals to be salvaged.

Some audits indicate an inverse correlation between slaughter outside the slaughterhouse (i.e. on farm) and transport of unfit animals: when very few animals were slaughtered on farm, there were more unfit animals arriving to slaughterhouses. For instance, in one region in Poland, the incidence of unfit animals transported fell by 60% between 2013 and 2014. During the same period the number of animals emergency slaughtered outside the slaughterhouse in this region increased by 235%. A regional project in Italy to prevent transport of unfit cows for slaughter resulted in a five-fold increase in the number of cows emergency slaughtered on farm in less than two years.

For animals emergency slaughtered on farm it is worth differentiating between animal welfare issues and their suitability to enter the food chain. Only healthy animals may be slaughtered for human consumption and it is the responsibility of the veterinarian carrying out the *ante-mortem* inspection to judge whether the animal was healthy before the event which brought about the need for emergency slaughter. Animals unfit to travel should be stunned and bled hygienically if, in principle, they will enter the food chain. Animals can be killed differently if they are to be disposed of as fallen stock (animal by-product), but killing must be carried out without causing avoidable or unnecessary suffering.

There is a large range of situations in Member States regarding the possibility to kill or slaughter on farm unproductive and healthy animals that have suffered an accident. Procedures, requirements and infrastructure to facilitate on farm killing/slaughter were very variable. The review of some online farmers' fora indicates that, in some rural areas, farmers face difficulties to slaughter and market the meat of animals that suffered accidents. Recent Swiss studies conclude that condemnation rates are much higher and less uniform following emergency slaughter^{9,10}. Slaughterhouses have reduced in number and therefore are further from the sites of production, which adds to the problem. It should be taken into account that

⁹ "Risk Factors for Whole Carcass Condemnations in the Swiss Slaughter Cattle Population" F. Vial, S. Schärner, M. Reist . PLoS One. 2015; 10(4): e0122717. Published online 2015 Apr 22. doi: [10.1371/journal.pone.0122717](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0122717)

¹⁰ "Evaluation of Swiss slaughterhouse data for integration in a syndromic surveillance system". F. Vial & M. Reist. BMC Veterinary Research 2014, 10:33 <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1746-6148/10/33>

for a farmer, it is always a loss to have to dispose of animals as fallen stock. At the time of this report, the least valuable cull cow prices stayed at around 3 €/kg¹¹ which means that every animal disposed of as fallen stock represents at least a farm loss of around €500.

Good practice (UK): guidelines for on farm killing/slaughtering of unproductive animals

- One British assurance scheme published good guidelines on killing animals outside slaughterhouses, included the killing of unproductive animals, indicating who, where, how and by what method persons involved in killing animals on farms on welfare grounds can do so, as required by Articles 6 and 7 of the Regulation¹².
- From the official side, there is guidance from the Food Safety Authority to veterinarians on the same issue.¹³
- From the cattle veterinary association there is guidance for veterinary surgeons and farmers on the slaughter of cattle which are injured or shows signs of abnormality¹⁴

Good practice (IT): operative manual on the "fit-for-transport" conditions of animals with pathologies and the management of downer cows¹⁵

- Published by the Italian society of preventive medicine, together with the national reference centre for animal welfare.
- It includes tables and pictures for most pathologies and injuries indicating clearly if animals are or are not fit for transport.
- It suggests specific methods for killing based on experience and cost, for animals unfit for transport,
- It includes on farm emergency slaughter and a decision tree to assess, in principle, the suitability of the carcass to enter the food chain.

¹¹ "Beef and veal: weekly carcass prices-2015 week 38". European Commission, Agriculture and Rural Development. http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/beef-veal/presentations/carcass-prices/index_en.htm

¹² <http://assurance.redtractor.org.uk/contentfiles/Farmers-5418.pdf>

¹³ <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/guidancenotes/meatregsguid/emergencycattleslaughter>

¹⁴ http://www.adlib.ac.uk/resources/000/264/566/Emergency_Slaughter_Booklet.pdf

¹⁵ <http://www.veterinariapreventiva.it/pubblicazioni.html>

Some interesting facts uncovered during the audits:

- Mobile slaughterhouses are available in some Member States, but their use is not extensive.
- The animal welfare implications of killing animals outside slaughterhouses was not considered sufficiently as part of official checks in some countries. Stunning equipment was not always available or used, which resulted in a different and equally serious, welfare problem. In one case, the competent authority interpreted “emergency killing” to mean that in such circumstances prior stunning was not required, although the presence of a veterinarian was required to carry out *ante-mortem* check.

5 INVESTIGATIONS, FOLLOW-UP AND ENFORCEMENT

Good practice was seen in the Netherlands for pigs, where the comprehensive and integrated system for control and enforcement on the fitness of animals arriving at slaughterhouses proved very effective.

Good practice (NL): comprehensive and integrated system

- A pig slaughterhouse developed an operational procedure regarding fitness for transport: in the case of unfit animals arriving at the slaughterhouse the slaughter operator warned the transporter and/or the farmer and downgraded carcasses to category 3 or below.
- When the official veterinarian assessed that animals should not have been transported a non-compliance report was issued and reported to the Intervention Bureau Animals (entity managing the database);
- This authority issued a warning to the keeper, the transporter and the driver.
- The national database allows searching for recurrent offenders. If further action or investigation is necessary the relevant Food and Product Safety Authority branches may act at farm, transport or slaughterhouse level.

The levels of investigation of cases where unfit animals arrive to slaughterhouses vary greatly in different countries and regions. In some cases, officials automatically take for granted that the unfitness of animals arises during transport as documentation arriving with the animals do not indicate any negative health or welfare conditions. Although *post-mortem* inspection has the potential to more easily detect welfare conditions that rendered animals unfit for transport, such as muscular damage and age of the lesions which may not be apparent during *ante-mortem* inspection of the animal at the time of arrival at the slaughterhouse, there is little evidence of use of this tool to prove whether the lesion arose during transport. The European Food Safety Authority has already highlighted that meat inspection information is under-utilised and that it has potential in the surveillance for welfare¹⁶.

¹⁶ Scientific Opinion on the Public Health Hazards to be Covered by Inspection of Meat (Swine) EFSA Journal 2011;9(10):23

It is difficult to ascertain the degree of the problem, as figures of unfit animals arriving to slaughterhouses spread through a broad range, even within different regions of the same country. In some cases, the differences can be explained by the differences in animal populations, type of production and size of businesses. In others, the analysis of data obtained from individual slaughterhouses, regional and central authorities raises doubts about the reliability of some official statistics (e.g. a small slaughterhouse stated an average of two downer cows per day, but the statistics for the whole region indicated only 13 unfit bovines for the entire year).

In the majority of cases, there are effective mechanisms at slaughterhouses to detect animals that should not have been transported. Communication and coordination between official departments and authorities were identified through DG Health and Food Safety audits as cardinal to ensure an effective system that prevents or reduces the incidence or recidivism of problems.

The absence of clear, easy channels of communication and feedback between public and animal health authorities and legal services for cases involving the transport of unfit animals hinders effective enforcement. Strict competence barriers and poor inter-departmental communication, including absence of feedback, were frequent weaknesses in the systems which hindered free discussion and progression of such cases.

Member States face a challenge regarding the issuing of veterinary certificates which do not record unfitness of animals when they should, as they have not always developed mechanisms to engage with private practitioners and sometimes there is no willingness to tackle this issue; it is not uncommon to find resistance in the official veterinary sector to admit and act on cases of certification malpractice involving other veterinarians (private practitioners).

Cross-border transport, where unfit animals are transported from one Member State to another also creates a challenge for enforcement, as the non-compliance originates in a different Member State. The internationalisation of livestock transport, where companies based in another country move the animals presents similar difficulties to competent authorities.

Enforcement actions were observed in all countries visited. After detecting cases of non-compliance, authorities generally choose warning letters as the first action to prevent re-occurrence, although some countries hold hearings as a first step. Depending on the country, these letters are sent to the transporter, the driver, the keeper, the veterinarian signing the certificate or to a combination of them. In several Member States, enforcement frequently ends here.

All Member States audited have the possibility to impose fines and sanctions and most use this option. Administrative processes for this and the quantities fined vary enormously between countries. In many cases, the procedure is too long and fines imposed at the end are low in comparison with the value obtained for the animal (e.g. a fine of €250 was imposed to transport a bull with a broken leg, when the approximate value of a slaughter bull may be

around €1500). Many authorities consulted agreed that sanctions are often ineffective and too low to be dissuasive.

There is no generalised use of other possible actions in case of non-compliance, such as suspension or revoking of transporter licences, increased controls or restrictions in activity.

For many authorities it is difficult to identify recurrent offenders. Certain tools, such as centralised databases for enforcement, enable authorities to have a good overview of actions taken to address non-compliances and facilitate recognition of recurrent offenders.

Good practice (UK): guidance for initiating enforcement

- Flow charts are available to guide the official decisions on suspect breaches on animal welfare.
- These include the verification of the conditions of the animal, the collection of evidence and reporting to the appropriate CA.
- There is a central database for enforcement actions.

6 MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY MEMBER STATES

Recommendations were made in reports to the Member States audited which were specific to those Member States. However, in light of the issues identified during the series of audits, the points below should be considered by all Member States when reviewing their controls of transport to slaughter.

1. Ensure that an effective system is implemented to detect, act upon and follow up on transport of unfit animals. Possible components of such a system as seen during the DG Health and Food Safety audits include:
 - Production of guidance on minimum conditions of fitness for transport of animals destined for the slaughterhouse;
 - National procedures to assist official veterinarians to properly investigate and collect evidence from cases where animals suspected as unfit for transport at the start of the journey arrive at slaughterhouses;
 - Use of *post-mortem* inspection to better identify animals that should have not been transported;
 - Concrete procedures for follow-up action, in particular for data sharing so that the different authorities involved work closely together and establish better communication for enforcement action in each case (for notifying and for feedback). This includes standard forms for notifying the competent authorities responsible for sanctions and those responsible for the farm of origin. Equally standard forms should be available to facilitate feedback to the official veterinarian from these recipients;
 - Use centralised databases for enforcement, to obtain a better overview of actions taken to address non-compliances and identification of recurrent offenders so that future controls can be better risk based;

- To provide guidance regarding on farm emergency slaughter and find mechanisms to decrease farmers' burdens to slaughter unfit animals on farm;
 - Good documented procedures for the arrival of carcasses at slaughterhouses where the animals had undergone emergency slaughter on farm.
2. Assess and increase the level of commitment of stakeholders (private veterinarians, farmers, transporters and animal dealers and slaughterhouse operators) to tackle this issue and establish clear, easy channels of communication with them so that they are continually reminded of their roles and responsibilities.

7 ACTIONS TAKEN OR PLANNED BY THE COMMISSION SERVICES

The Commission services translated “*Practical Guidelines to Assess Fitness for Transport of Adult Bovines*” into 16 languages. 18 Member State authorities subsequently informed DG Health and Food Safety that they have used this guidance to improve controls of animal welfare during transport and confirmed that it was essential to have the document in the different languages to ensure that this document was widely disseminated.

In addition, DG Health and Food Safety:

- facilitated a specific discussion on the mentioned guide and promoted its use, at a meeting of the National Contact Points for animal welfare during transport;
- held discussions specifically aimed at enforcement and preventative actions to address the transport of unfit animals during another meeting of the National Contact Points;
- launched in 2015 a pilot project on "best practices for animal transport". The final output of the pilot project will be an analysis of the different practices on the assessment of animals in order to bring best practices to light. Based on this analysis the project will establish Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for transporting animals and a strategy to disseminate them among stakeholders including the possibility of training courses if necessary.
- shared procedures identified as good practice via a collaborative Commission's online platform (CIRCABC¹⁷ - *Communication and Information Resource Centre for Administrations, Businesses and Citizens*) and will consider possible further actions to assist competent authorities on enforcement of this requirement, in particular so that competent authorities have the opportunity to see and subsequently develop:
 - Indicators which could be used to assess the extent of the problem and monitor progress.
 - The role of organisations of business operators, farmers, transporters and veterinarians in adopting guides to good practice.
 - Administrative arrangements practised in other Member States and how these contribute to better enforcement.

¹⁷ <https://circabc.europa.eu/faces/jsp/extension/wai/navigation/container.jsp>

- The better targeting of checks, and involvement of the Police as necessary, in achieving successful enforcement.

DG Health and Food Safety may propose this issue for discussion within the Platform for animal welfare which is planned to be established in 2017.

ANNEX 1 – LEGAL REFERENCES

Legal Reference	Official Journal	Title
Reg. 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
Reg. 852/2004	OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p. 1, Corrected and re-published in OJ L 226, 25.6.2004, p. 3	Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs
Reg. 853/2004	OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p. 55, Corrected and re-published in OJ L 226, 25.6.2004, p. 22	Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin
Reg. 1/2005	OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p. 1-44	Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations and amending Directives 64/432/EEC and 93/119/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1255/97
Reg. 1099/2009	OJ L 303, 18.11.2009, p. 1-30	Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 of 24 September 2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing

ANNEX 2 – DETAILS OF INDIVIDUAL DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY AUDITS CONSIDERED FOR THIS OVERVIEW REPORT

Country	Dates of Audit	SANTE ref. no.
Latvia	23-28 Feb 2014	2014-7077
Italy	02-14 Mar 2014	2014-7075
Spain	31 Mar-10 Apr 2014	2014-7079
The United Kingdom	28 Apr-09 May 2014	2014-7080
Denmark	04-09 May 2014	2014-7061
Germany	09-20 Jun 2014	2014-7073
Czech Republic	15-20 Jun 2014	2014-7060
Hungary	23 Jun-04 Jul 2014	2014-7072
The Netherlands	15-26 Sep 2014	2014-7078
Belgium	23 Nov-03 Dec 2014	2014-7059
Poland	08-13 Mar 2015	2015-7420
France	07-17 Apr 2015	2015-7427

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