

Analysis of major deficiencies detected during the non-discriminatory inspections and action plan to address them as provided for in Article 27(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005

Member State: Ireland

Year: 2017

Acronyms used in this document.

AFIT	Agricultural Field Inspection Testing
AWD	Animal Welfare Division
CA	Competent authority
CCA	Central competent authority
CDAWR	Cross Divisional Animal Welfare Report
DAFM	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
FPN	Fixed Payment Notice
MS	Member State
RO	Regional (Veterinary) Office
OV	Official Veterinarian
VPHIS	Veterinary Public Health Inspection System

Explanatory Notes:

- (i) *Category 1 inspections refer to official controls at slaughter plants, assembly centres and holdings.*
- (ii) *Category 2 inspections refer to official controls at livestock markets and the ports of Dublin,, Greenore, Foynes, Rosslare and Waterford and the airport of Shannon*
- (iii) *The results of the risk based documentary checks carried out on the returned journey logs is included in the report.*
- (iv) *Ireland implements a system whereby approximately 25% of returned journey logs are selected for detailed checks after the completion of the journey. The selection of these journey logs is based on the risk of non compliance associated with the transporter responsible for the individual journeys. DAFM officials with responsibility for assessing these journey logs are instructed to deal with minor deficiencies at a local level and report any major deficiencies to the CCA for further action.*
- (v) *In addition to the journey log checks mentioned (iii) above, non-compliances detected on foot of information provided to the Irish CA as a result of the close co-operation with the Dutch and French Authorities is included under documentary checks (Watering and feeding, journey time, suitable drinking facilities and resting)*

1. ANALYSIS OF THE MAJOR DEFICIENCIES DETECTED DURING NON-DISCRIMINATORY INSPECTIONS 2017

A major deficiency is one that had a direct negative impact on the welfare of the animals being transported or one which is likely to have a direct negative effect on the animals at some point during the planned journey. The decision to class a deficiency as “major” takes into account all relevant issues relating to the journey such as the type of animals being transported (e.g. the effect of wet/insufficient bedding on young animals versus adult animals), the length of the intended journey (e.g. necessity for the provision of water and temperature control on long journeys), the current and expected weather conditions and so on.

Water drinkers not working or unsuitable for the species or age of animal would be considered a major non-compliance but providing it was rectified immediately on foot of a routine check by an OV or by the transporter prior to the commencement of the journey, it is not recorded as a major non-compliance. Thus, the classification of the deficiency must take into account the action taken to address the non compliance and the timeframe in which the issue was rectified.

Further detail and analysis of major deficiencies

1.1 Fitness for transport

The number of animals classified as unfit for transport in 2017 was similar to previous years with most incidents being detected during pre-export checks at an assembly centre or holding and as a proportion of the total movements in the population were small. Individual cases were deemed unfit for transport following veterinary and technical staff inspection. In Ireland the loading of approximately 90-95% of consignments of animals for export is supervised by an OV. Thus 188,000 bovines exported were assessed for fitness to transport by the OV during routine identification checks associated with health certification and during loading itself. Therefore animals that are unfit to transport by virtue of illness or age are routinely removed from the consignment by either the OV or the transporter/organiser at any stage of this process and the number detected does not necessarily reflect an attempt on behalf of the transporter/organiser to transport animals that are inherently unfit for the intended journey. Therefore although considered major deficiencies, in this context they are routinely and regularly addressed before export and not considered to be a major issue. The fitness for transport non-compliances detected during transport checks at slaughter plants and during routine ante mortem inspections are of a more serious nature. They involved non-compliances such as transport of an animal with a fractured limb, significant lameness, pregnancy, cancer, or other disease processes. All were followed up by cross reporting the incident via DAFM’s CDAWR to the relevant RO and in most cases by issuing a legal notice to the keeper, suspending the transporter and withdrawing their certificate of competence. Fixed Payment Notices (FPN’s) are now in their fourth year of operation and have been widely accepted by transporters as a means of imposing penalties for non-compliances.

1.2 Transport practices/space allowance/height

The majority of the deficiencies recorded in this category of non-compliance were minor issues relating to inadequate hygiene or lack of disinfection which were rectified on the spot.

1.3 Means of transport

As has been the case in previous years the majority of non-compliances detected in this category were minor issues such as vehicles with loose fixtures and fittings, sharp projections, leaking water drinkers. Such non-compliances usually arise as a result of ongoing wear and tear to vehicles with inadequate maintenance. In the majority of cases the problem was either rectified on the spot or where there was no imminent risk to the welfare of the animals, within an agreed timeframe.

The shipments by dedicated livestock vessels were all subject to a preloading inspection and approval of the vessel prior to loading and non-compliances were rectified prior to loading of animals.

1.4 Watering / feeding / journey times and rest periods

The system of formal collaboration between the Irish and French authorities that started in 2011 to address the difficulties arising out of insufficient Control Post capacity in Cherbourg has been phased out. This collaboration resulted in an increase in Control Post capacity for unweaned animals in the vicinity of Cherbourg to 4000 animals (from a capacity of 2500 animals in 2016) and the construction of two new Control Posts since 2015. Informal collaboration continues with risk based monitoring of transporter compliance of journey times and resting periods. The target for Irish Calves arriving in Cherbourg is to have 100% compliance with the requirement to rest immediately. There is a plan in place to achieve this goal.

1.5 Documentation

Most of the non-compliances that occurred during category 2 inspections were detected during documentary checks at Rosslare port and all related to minor omissions from journey logs, section 1.

Several cases related to either no transport documentation or no authorisation and arose from unannounced roadside checks.

2. ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS THE MAJOR DEFICIENCIES

The majority of non-compliances detected during transport checks carried out in 2017 were minor issues.

2.1 Fitness for transport

DAFM continually monitors the level of non-compliance with fitness for transport requirements and analyses the reasons behind their occurrence. DAFM has disseminated the Animal Transport Guides on the DAFM website. These documents provide operators with additional information to aid them when checking whether animals are fit for a journey and ensure that they take the appropriate action in marginal cases in particular. The documents have been circulated to all DAFM staff involved in carrying out transport checks and they are encouraged to share them with transporters.

2.2 Transport practices

Of the non-compliances identified and reported on in 2017, most were minor and rectified on the spot and accompanied with a verbal warning.

2.3 Means of transport

Ireland continues to operate an inspection system whereby approximately 90-95% of consignments of livestock are checked prior to being transported on a long journey. This system includes a check of the animals, means of transport and accompanying documentation. The results of these checks are available for analysis and follow up action where necessary. DAFM will continue to implement this very high inspection rate in relation to all long journeys during 2018.

DAFM's transport inspection forms have been revised and have been integrated into the AFIT system. The new inspection system includes a provision whereby in the event of a serious non-compliance being identified at an inspection the AFIT system will automatically generate the need for a re-inspection. This will ensure that any major non-compliance is followed up and closed out.

2.4 Watering / feeding / journey times and rest periods

The formal system of collaboration between France and Ireland mentioned above has been a very useful enforcement tool in that it allowed both CAs to monitor compliance with journey time and rest period requirements by Irish transporters, particularly those transporting calves. DAFM will monitor the transition to the risk based system of checks. Ireland continues to implement the Court of Justice ruling that Regulation 1/2005 applies to exports to Third countries.

2.5 Documentation

The documentary non-compliances detected during journey log checks (section 1) during transport (at Rosslare port) are very minor in nature (e.g. total space provided/estimated total weight of consignment not filled in), and the non compliance rate has continued to fall. Transporters have been temporary suspended for failure to return journey logs.

3.0 Other actions to address transport issues during 2018

Pet Transport

All transporters involved in commercial movements of small animals (pets) must now be authorised and have a certificate of competence. All the NGO's involved in the re location of pet animals to other countries must also apply for authorisation. A certificate of competence training course has been designed in conjunction with Teagasc, who carry out the delegated function of training.

Hot Weather Transport Ban

Similar to other years, DAFM continues to implement a ban on the transport by road vehicles of animals to Turkey, Greece, and North Africa for the months of July and August.

Transport targets 2018

The CCA will continue its campaign to achieve full compliance in pet transport authorisation.

The CCA will continue to work towards all Irish calves arriving in Cherbourg rest in the immediate vicinity.

Education

All transporters and certificate of competence holders whose certificates have expired have been contacted to notify them of the requirements. The first Certificates of Competence were issued in 2007. A campaign is underway to promote awareness of the need to retrain for any of those people still involved in animal transport.

The bodies involved in delivering the delegated function have provided extra training course to cater for the demand.

Dedicated Livestock Vessels

During 2017 voyages involving the export of livestock from Ireland to third countries took place. Under the provision set out in Article 1 (3) of Regulation 1 of 2005, Ireland implements stricter national measures on sea transport. The national legislation was updated in 2016 (Carriage of Livestock by Sea Regulations 2016) and several vessels have been inspected since. All shipments involve a pre-loading inspection of the vessel by the official veterinarian before permission to load is given. This inspection involves checking the structures and ventilation, watering and electrical systems. 30000 bovines were shipped in 2017 with a similar mortality level to 2016. A consignment to Turkey and the Lebanon was accompanied by an OV and recommendations issued to the vessel owner. DAFM also commissioned a filming of the procedures for approval and inspection of dedicated vessels and this has been made available to the public.

Consignments in 2018 will continue to be monitored closely to ensure compliance with regulations.

Training

Further staff training of the VPHIS technical and professional staff took place in 2017 and included a refresher course on all aspects of transport.

Cross Divisional Reporting System

In 2017 DAFM continued the existing CDAWR to allow DAFM officials to report any welfare issue detected at a slaughter plant, livestock market or assembly centre to the RO in which the keeper/transporter is located using a standard reporting format. The welfare/transport non-compliance was further investigated at regional level in addition to the action taken by the reporting official when the non-compliance was originally identified. This system ensures that welfare/transport non-compliances detected are followed up and closed out. Non-compliances identified in 2017 resulted in penalties such as FPN's, suspensions of authorisations, certificate of approvals and or certificates of competence. In addition several commercial transporters were identified as having no authorisation or certificates of competence and these were issued with compliance notices.

Non Governmental Organisations

Animal Welfare Foundation, Animal Angels and Eyes on Animals all made representations to Ireland during 2017 on long distance transport of animals and in particular the transport of bovines to Turkey.

DAFM met with these organisations and noted their concerns and explained the reasons why live exports of bovines are considered necessary for Ireland's farmers.

Enforcement Action

Enforcement actions used in 2017 included the use of Fixed Payment Notices, oral and written warnings, issuing of statutory notices and notifications to the CA of other Member States. Several transporters had their authorisations suspended, while some drivers had their certificate of competence withdrawn or suspended and reissued following re-attendance and passing the exam.