

*Please note that the material below is for information only, as the deadline for applications has now passed. If you have any queries, please contact:*

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## **FUTURE MEAT CONTROLS – RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS**

### **MC1R0001 – Outcomes and values of current ante-and post-mortem meat inspection tasks**

In order to model what a future system of official controls might look like, first the Agency needs to assess the contribution of current official controls in the detection of conditions that are relevant to public health, animal health and animal welfare.

Current ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections tasks are described in Regulations 853/2004 and 854/2004. We require a contractor to examine each task in relation to the following:

- a) What are the outcomes of current ante- and post-mortem inspection tasks?
- b) What is the value of current ante- and post-mortem inspection tasks and their outcomes?
- c) Could these outcomes be achieved at other steps?
- d) Are any outcomes missing?

It is anticipated that this research will be carried out as a literature review exercise supported by expert opinion. We envisage that subsequent projects within the programme will build on the outcomes of this project.

### **MC1R0002 – Review of ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection data needs**

Official controls are required by EU legislation to verify that Food Business Operators comply with hygiene rules. The Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) is responsible for delivering these controls in all approved fresh meat premises and for recording outcomes of inspection tasks. The Agency wishes to commission research to discover any future applications of this inspection data.

The specific objectives for this project are to:

- define by species the critical and optimum data that should be collected to monitor current and most relevant public health, animal health and welfare conditions; and
- evaluate the inspection data being currently collected against data needs identified above, and identify possible data gaps that may need to be addressed to improve the epidemiological surveillance of relevant animal health, public health and welfare conditions.

We envisage that subsequent later projects within the programme will build on the outcomes of this project.

**MC1R0003 – To assess whether public health, animal health or animal welfare is placed at increased risk if an Official Veterinarian (OV) is not present when Plant Inspection Assistants (PIAs) are carrying out post-mortem inspection of poultry**

The Optimisation of MHS Resources in Slaughterhouses Report (2008), identified opportunities for optimising use of OV resources, by applying the derogation allowing the requirement for OV presence during post-mortem inspection to be relaxed.

The aim of this piece of research is to study the effect on risk of amending the requirement for 100% OV presence during post-mortem inspection of poultry.

Applicants will be requested to:

- a) assess the reliance of PIAs on OVs and the supervisory role of OVs;
- b) analyse protection levels for the current inspection system where PIAs may carry out post-mortem tasks supervised by OVs; and
- c) develop a range of scenarios in order to assess changes to public health, animal health and welfare protection resulting from the modification of OV supervision levels.

**MC1R0004 – Comparison of post-mortem inspection findings of outdoor and indoor fattening pigs**

Background

Regulation (EC) 854/2004 prescribes specific post-mortem inspection procedures for pig carcasses and offal, encompassing visual inspection of carcasses and offal, organ palpation and heart and lymph node incisions.

Annex I, Section IV, Chapter IV, B2 of Regulation (EC) 854/2004 allows for fattening pigs housed under controlled housing conditions since weaning to undergo only visual inspection. However, as this does not apply to outdoor pigs, different slaughter line set-ups are necessary for processing mixed batches, which makes applying this provision impracticable.

Research Requirement

The aim of this piece of research is to determine:

- conditions found in outdoor and indoor pigs;
- which conditions, which are relevant to public health, animal health and welfare, would not be identified should visual inspection be carried out instead of traditional inspection for both indoor and outdoor pigs; and
- changes in risk to public health, animal health and animal welfare from performing visual inspection on outdoor pigs.

Available MHS and industry (BPEX/BPHS) data, as well as other appropriate data sources, should be considered for this study.

**MC1R0005 - To assess the benefit to public and animal health of post-mortem inspection of green offal in red meat species at slaughter**

Under EU food hygiene legislation, Regulation (EC) 854/2004 relates to the organisation of official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption. Annex I, Section IV, Chapter I, Point B, prescribes offal of red meat species must undergo post-mortem visual inspection and palpation.

The FSA wishes to commission research to investigate the potential impact on animal and public health of a modification of this control measure. Proposals will look to:

- a) establish what conditions, which are relevant to animal health, public health and welfare, are being identified as a result of green offal inspection as currently performed; and
- b) develop a range of scenarios to assess any changes to the risks to public health, animal health and welfare which the modification or removal of this control requirement may pose. Scenarios should consider the following:
  - Risk to public health, animal health and welfare from undetected conditions.
  - Alternative control/verification methods to detect conditions which could potentially be undetected should this inspection requirement not be in place.

Outcomes from this research will be used to inform FSA policy and the review of EU meat official controls.

**MC1R0006 – To assess whether public health, animal health or animal welfare is placed at increased risk if Official Auxiliaries (OAs) rather than OVs perform ante-mortem inspection of: i) young/prime red meat animals and ii) poultry**

Currently an Official Veterinarian (OV) carries out ante-mortem inspection of all animals before slaughter. The Agency wishes to commission research assessing whether risk to public health, animal health or animal welfare is increased if Official Assistants (OAs) rather than OVs perform ante-mortem inspection of:

- young/prime red meat animals; and
- poultry.

Applicants will be expected to:

- a) identify conditions that an OV would be expected to detect during ante-mortem inspection when performed as defined in the Manual for Official Controls and those actually detected based on historical data;
- b) undertake an analysis of competencies necessary to carry out ante-mortem inspection duties identifying the level of training required;
- c) assess the level of protection to public health, animal health and welfare of current ante-mortem inspection arrangements; and
- d) analyse the impact on public health, animal health and welfare of modifying or removing this control requirement.