

Animal welfare

The FSA Animal Welfare Action Plan for England and Wales which is used to document, track and evaluate the delivery of animal welfare improvements.

The 'Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce' programme is delivered through the FSA Animal Welfare Action Plan for England and Wales which is used to document, track, and evaluate the delivery of animal welfare improvements. We have a zero-tolerance approach towards animal welfare non-compliance and use a hierarchy of enforcement to stop avoidable animal suffering and prevent future non-compliance. Policy and implementation are the responsibility of Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in Northern Ireland.

The action plan aligns with the strategic objective trust in food: make it easy for businesses to maintain food safety and standards. A steering group, comprising representatives from the FSA, Welsh Government, and Defra, review outstanding actions and approve new activities.

Objectives in 2021/22

- strengthen verification and compliance
- improve accountability and collaboration
- improve education and awareness
- improve the quality of our analysis and reporting

Progress against objectives

Strengthened verification and compliance by:

- running our fourth animal welfare themed audit
- enhancing animal welfare documentation
- introducing Demonstration of Life for small ruminant animals
- triaging of potential prosecution cases
- supporting industry during COVID-19 with exceptional circumstances guidance

Improved accountability and collaboration through:

- the expansion of joint working forums with industry and representatives
- building closer working relationships and consultation across the supply chain
- negotiating with Defra and Welsh Government to fund our animal welfare controls

Improving education and awareness by:

- enhancing guidance about certificates of competence, evidence gathering, and decision-making
- producing industry communications and best practice guidance on a range of animal welfare themes

Improved quality of our analysis and reporting through:

- strengthening of monitoring and reporting on animal welfare standards

- continued enhancements to the animal welfare database
- publication of animal welfare non-compliance statistics

In 2021/22 there were more than 1 billion animals (1,036,098,739) processed in slaughterhouses. Over 99.9% (1,035,943,907) met animal welfare compliance standards and regulations. Of the 154,832 animals processed not in compliance with animal welfare regulations, 51,132 experienced some impact on their welfare.

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