

Animal Welfare - Annex 1

FSA 24/09/08 - Report by Junior Johnson and Kevin Maher

Animal Welfare Action Plan – actions completed 01/04/23 to 31/03/24

The Animal Welfare Steering Group is comprised of representatives from the FSA, Defra, Welsh Government, and Devolved Administrations. The Steering Group monitor progress of activities on the Animal Welfare Action Plan and identify and agree new activities to be added to the Animal Welfare Action Plan.

Strengthening verification and compliance

Action	Description
Conduct Animal Welfare themed audit.	<p>Between January and March 2024, the FSA animal welfare team conducted an animal welfare themed audit, which looked at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CCTV (requirements, maintenance, and access)• Back up stunning equipment (operation and maintenance)• Lairage (water, feed, and provision)• Prioritising unfit animals (provision and killing)• Handling and restraint (suitability and operation)• Stun to stick time (operation and governance)• Monitoring of unconsciousness/death (protocols and governance) <p>The audit found that Food Business Operator (FBO) systems are broadly implemented in compliance with the legislation and provide a good level of assurance that the animal welfare legislative requirements are fulfilled.</p>
Develop an online facility for applying for a Temporary Certificate of Competence (TCoC).	<p>During 2023-2024 we developed an online TCoC form for applicants to slaughter or kill animals in approved slaughterhouses. The online system was tested extensively and communicated to the meat industry before being implemented on 5 February 2024.</p>
Conduct a Demonstration of Life (DoL) survey.	<p>In 2023-2024 we ran a halal industry stakeholder survey to investigate why take-up of DoL had been lower than anticipated, and whether there were any barriers. The survey was issued to 29 recipients and five recommendations were developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide more information about DoL to those surveyed.• Encourage use of the scheme on the FSA website.• Encourage use of the scheme at industry meetings.• Encourage stakeholders to promote the scheme.• Temporarily remove the FSA fee.
Support mandation of CCTV in Wales.	<p>In 2023-2024 we have supported Welsh Government in their progression toward introducing mandatory CCTV in slaughterhouses regulations. This included running a field survey to assess the levels of CCTV already voluntarily in operation and assisting Welsh Government with the production of guidance.</p>

Clarifying accountability and improving collaboration

Action	Description
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Enhance our extreme weather animal welfare reporting.	In 2023-2024 we liaised with other government stakeholders to review the extreme weather animal welfare reporting process that we introduced in 2022-2023. This led to several enhancements to the process, such as a change the trigger system (using UKHSA alerts) and revised template letters for distribution to operational staff and industry representatives.
Agree 2023-2024 Animal Welfare Service Level Agreement (SLA).	We agreed funding of the 2023-2024 animal welfare SLA with Defra and Welsh Government and we developed and agreed Key Performance Indicators.
Deliver improvements under the animal welfare referrals joint working group.	We improved guidance and procedure and we continued to enhance data sharing on repeat offences and offenders to support enforcement decision making by APHA and LAs.

Improving education and instruction

Action	Description
Produce referrals guidance.	We worked with Local Authorities and APHA to produce and refine a process flow to improve consistency of actions following a non-compliance referral to them.
Produce technical guidance.	We produced new technical guidance or enhanced existing guidance relating to liaison with APHA, LAs, hauliers, and FBOs. Referring of incidents to LA / APHA. Various animal conditions, and animals that are unfit for human consumption. FBO standard operating procedures. The movement of animals. The use of back-up stun devices, and stunner records. Certificate of competence (CoC) applications. CoC enforcement. The period of retention of CCTV, and on checks of the functionality of CCTV systems.
Develop guidance for applicants of a TCoC.	We designed and published revised guidance to assist those intending to apply for a TCoC using the online application process.

Better analysis and reporting

Action	Description
Produce a Board report.	We produced 2022/23 Animal Welfare board paper.
Run and report on a 2024 slaughter sector survey.	In February 2024 we ran the biennial slaughter sector survey in all slaughterhouses in England and Wales on behalf of Defra and Welsh government.
Enhanced data reporting.	We continued to refine our publicly open data, as well as data tailored for FBOs and other regulators.