

European Reference Centres for Animal Welfare

15th EU Platform on Animal Welfare
17 June 2024



Roles & tasks of the EURCAWS

Introduction of EURCAW-Aqua

Recent highlights EURCAW-Ruminants & Equines

EURCAW-Poultry SFA

EURCAW-Pigs

Univ. of Crete

SLU - Sweden

ANSES - France

WUR - Netherlands



Roles & Tasks of the EURCAWs



EU Reference Centers for Animal Welfare

Art. 95 of **'The Official Controls Regulation'**:

"The Commission shall, by means of implementing acts, designate European Union reference centers for animal welfare that shall support the activities of the Commission and of the Member States"



EU Reference Centers for Animal Welfare

Since October 2018

Since June 2021

Since February 2020

Since February 2024



Main role

→ to assist the NCAs in performing better official controls and enforce EU animal welfare rules

→ to provide scientific information on:

- On-farm welfare: e.g. Directive 95/58/EC
- Animal transport: Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005
- Protection of animals at the time of killing:
Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009



Target groups

- Competent Authorities, Policy Workers and their 'support bodies': science, training, communication

This means we cannot formally respond to questions from farmers, NGO's or other stakeholders in the livestock production chain.



Five main activities

1. COORDINATED ASSISTANCE
2. ANIMAL WELFARE INDICATORS
3. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL STUDIES
4. TRAINING COURSES
5. DISSEMINATION



Introducing EURCAW-Aqua

University of Crete



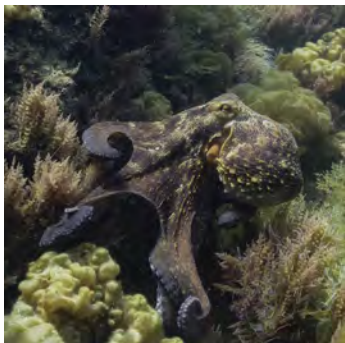


EURCAWaqua

European Reference Centre for the Welfare of Aquatic Animals

June 2024

Project Manager, UoC



EURCAW - Aqua

Since January 2024





The Consortium Coordination Team



❖ **Coordinator**

Department of Biology, University of Crete, Greece



❖ **Deputy coordinator**

**Institute of Parasitology, Biology Centre CAS,
Czech Republic**



❖ **Departament de Biologia Animal, de Biologia
Vegetal i d'Ecologia, Facultat de Veterinària,
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona**

The Consortium Executive Committee



Director

Deputy
Director

Project
Manager

Scientific
coordinator

Deputy



EURCAW Aqua

Activity & role

The **aim** of the EU Reference Centre for the Welfare of Aquatic Animals, is to become a global gold standard for the services provided to EU Institutions, National Competent Authorities and public administrators in Member States.

The Centre is designed to address the main challenges in monitoring the welfare of aquatic organisms, namely the large number of farmed aquatic animals, the diversity of farming systems and the uniqueness of different aquatic environments.

The Centre will address scientific welfare gaps, facilitate the research in the underdeveloped area of aquatic animals' welfare, will foster the collaboration among researchers, organizations and institutions working in the field.

The EU Reference Centre will develop and disseminate knowledge and tools to assist EU Members States in carrying out official controls in aquatic animals' welfare.

EURCAW Aqua

Focus

1. Farmed aquatic animals

European sea bass, gilthead sea bream, carps, trout, Atlantic salmon (and others upon request); Cephalopods

2. Production systems

Earth ponds, open-flow systems, open sea cages, RAS

3. Life cycle / production phases

Broodstock, larvae, juveniles, on-growing animals

4. Main procedures and operations of welfare concern

Grading, Handling, Transportation, Harvest, Slaughter



Core Activities



1. Coordinated assistance

Support



2. Science and best practices

Studies, Technical dossiers, Networking



3. Welfare Indicators / Assessment

Demonstrators, Indicators, Assessment schemes



4. Training

Training materials - Training standards



5. Communication

Support

Working Teams

Coordination Team

- Contact with EU-DG Sante
- Overall operational responsibility
- Networking

Executive Committee

- Setting up work program for operational teams
- Financial management and reporting
- Data management and exploitation

Operational Teams

- Scientific & technical studies team
- Training courses team
- Welfare indicators / assessment team

Ethics Committee

- Review and approve advisory services
- Safeguard unbiased decision making
- Ethical aspects of welfare

Stakeholders Platform

External Associated Experts



COMMUNICATION PORTAL

The main point of contact with the Competent National Authorities

Registration service for regular users

Access to Press Releases, Newsletters, Q&A

HELP DESC

Development & support of a ticketing system

Installation Tool for tracking questions and answers given

Statistical analysis of services

REPOSITORY

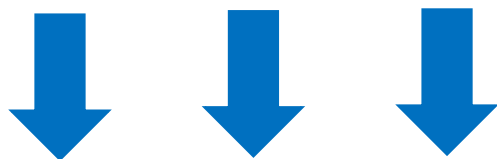
Repository of texts, studies, technical reports

Different levels of access to users

System for informing regular users for new content

Upcoming Activities for 2024

1. Central contact point for Technical Assistance



1.1. Website and email contact point

1.2 Design of help desk policies, rules and procedures

1.3. Provision of ticket management system and knowledge gateway

1.4. Submission and approval of the 2024 Work Programme

Upcoming Activities for 2024

2. Establishing cooperation and regular contacts with the other EURCAWs

3. Network building

4. Review of relevant welfare indicators

5. Review of current courses at MS and regional level

4. Preparation of the 2025 – 2027 Work Programme





Recent highlights EURCAW-Ruminants & Equines

SLU - Sweden



Designated by
the EU Commission



The consortium

- Sweden, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) including the Swedish Centre for Animal Welfare (SCAW)
- Italy, Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise "G. Caporale" (IZSAM)
- France, French National Institute for Agriculture, Food, and Environment (INRAE)
- Austria, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU)
- Ireland, University College Dublin (UCD)
- Greece, Ellinikos Georgikos Organismos-Dimitra/Veterinary Research Institute (ELGO-VRI)

Recent highlights EURCAW-Ruminants & Equines

- 1** Networking
- 2** Recent outputs
- 3** Ongoing work

1 Networking

Workshop in Vienna with Competent Authorities

- 20-21 November 2023
- 23 participants from 18 EU Member States

BTSF in Rome

- 22-24 November 2023
- The official controllers meet the EURCAWs

Meeting with the other three EURCAWs

- 6-7 June 2024



2

Recent: Frequency and quantity of milk feeding to dairy calves

- 1 Mini-Review (REV)
 - 1 Thematic Factsheet (TFS)
 - 1 Indicator Factsheet (IFS)
- es TFS & IFS available in 7 languages



TFS-Ruminants-Equines-2022-02-EN
Version 1 – August 2023
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7788584>

Frequency and quantity of milk feeding to dairy calves

This factsheet is based on I. Idroff, Lena, & Hernandez, Carlos F. (2023). Mini-review - Frequency and quantity of milk feeding to dairy calves. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7794938>.

Biology and needs of calves

Calves are hormonally primed to digest milk during their first 3 weeks of life and intake of solid feed is negligible up to 3 weeks. They can digest significant amounts of solid feed only after 6 weeks, that's why calves are unable to compensate for reduced milk intake until then. From 6 weeks, calves can maintain their growth with concentrates when milk allowance is limited, but shouldn't be considered fully ruminant. Dairy calves are often weaned off milk when they are 2 to 3 months of age, provided they have reached a certain target weight and are eating a certain amount of solid feed daily, these targets varying with breed.

The use of artificial teats when feeding calves, with or without a lower flow rate, promotes a more natural behaviour and therefore increases the time spent drinking and can reduce non-nutritive sucking and cross-sucking behaviours.

Equal requirements

Council Directive 2008/119/EC of 18 December 2008 lays down the minimum standards for the protection of calves and requires that calves must be fed twice a day with an appropriate diet adapted to their age, weight and behavioural and physiological needs, to promote good health and welfare.

Prohibit

To ensure that calves are fed appropriately according to their needs, it is essential to check their body condition. Underfeeding can also be visible with abnormal posture, glow and dullness of the fur, and with abnormal behaviours indicating hunger as detailed in the **Indicator factsheet 'Frequency and quantity of milk feeding to calves'**.

2 Recent: Environmental enrichment

3 Reviews (REV)

- Introduction; Sensory & Feeding; Physical & Occupational

5 Thematic Factsheets (TFS)

- 'The basics'; Cattle; Sheep; Equines; Goats

1 Indicator Factsheet (IFS)

- Environmental enrichment for ruminants & equines



2 Recent: newsletters & news features

December 2023

Welcome to Volume 04 of our Newsletter

Seasons Greetings! In our final newsletter of 2023, we share details with you of new outputs and other activities since September 2023 and provide a roundup of recent news items related to ruminant and equine welfare.

New Outputs from October to December 2023
 Since September 2023, EURCAW Ruminants & Equines has published the following outputs:

- Thematic Factsheet on the frequency & quantity of milk feeding for dairy calves
- Indicator Factsheet on the frequency & quantity of milk feeding for dairy calves
- A Mini-Review on the frequency and quantity of milk feeding to dairy calves



March 2024

Welcome to Volume 05 of our Newsletter


This is the first edition of the newsletter in 2024. In this edition, we share details on our recent outputs since December 2023, introduce one of our experts in Meet the Scientist, provide links to the Centre's Code of Conduct, work programme, and the designation of the fourth EURCAW, as well as news related to ruminants and equine welfare.

New Outputs in 2024
 Since December 2023, EURCAW Ruminants & Equines has published the following outputs:

- Indicator Factsheet on Environmental Enrichment of ruminants and equines
- Thematic Factsheets on Environmental Enrichment of cattle, goats, equines and sheep
- Inspector@Work article from France





February 2024



SUMMARY

"Animals must be fed, yes – but how, when and with what?".
 An inspector from Alsace in France shares their experience.

March 2024



SUMMARY

"Have the humility to admit when you don't know the answer"

3 Ongoing: Production of factsheets

Fitness for transport



IFS,
TFS

Colostrum provision to calves



TFS,
IFS

Painful procedures



TFS
(2),
IFS

Confinement of horses



REV,
TFS

Hoof care



TFS

3 Ongoing: Production of reviews

Relational
enrichment



REV

Working
equids



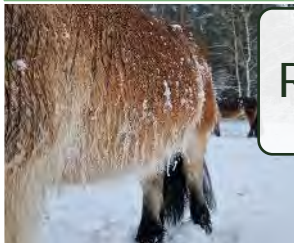
REV

Quality of
care



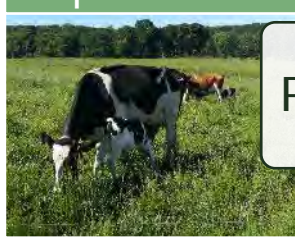
REV

Thermal
Comfort



REV

Access to
pasture



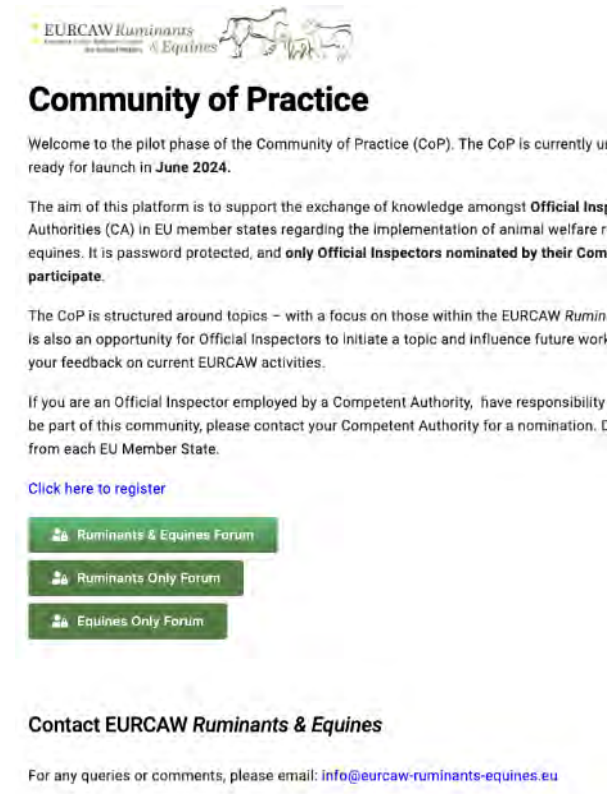
REV

3 Ongoing: Training

- Map the training on AW in EU (4 EURCAWs)
- Design, test and validate a standard model for evaluating training quality
- Production of 3 new training toolkits:
 - ✓ Calf feeding (available)
 - ✓ Pain management (ongoing)
 - ✓ Horse confinement (ongoing)
- 3 webinars –16 May (calf feeding), 2 in Autumn
- 5 eLearning courses (corresponding to 5 toolkits) about to start

3 Ongoing: Community of Practice

- Pilot
- Password-protected platform for knowledge exchange
- Target audience – inspectors & CA
- Preparation
 - ✓ SOP for facilitators
 - ✓ Activity spreadsheet
 - ✓ Internal testing
 - ✓ How to guide
 - ✓ Technical issues to be resolved
- Next steps – invitation to register



EURCAW Ruminants & Equines

Community of Practice

Welcome to the pilot phase of the Community of Practice (CoP). The CoP is currently ready for launch in **June 2024**.

The aim of this platform is to support the exchange of knowledge amongst **Official Inspectors (CA)** in EU member states regarding the implementation of animal welfare for ruminants and equines. It is password protected, and **only Official Inspectors nominated by their Competent Authority can participate**.

The CoP is structured around topics – with a focus on those within the EURCAW Ruminants & Equines. It is also an opportunity for Official Inspectors to initiate a topic and influence future work. Your feedback on current EURCAW activities is also welcome.

If you are an Official Inspector employed by a Competent Authority, and you wish to participate in this community, please contact your Competent Authority for a nomination. Contact details are available from each EU Member State.

[Click here to register](#)

- Ruminants & Equines Forum
- Ruminants Only Forum
- Equines Only Forum

Contact EURCAW Ruminants & Equines

For any queries or comments, please email: info@eurcaw-ruminants-equines.eu



Recent highlights EURCAW-Poultry SFA

ANSES - France



Co-funded by
the European Union



AARHUS UNIVERSITY



EURCAW-Poultry-SFA has 5 Priority areas

1. Broiler chickens on farm
2. Laying hens in alternative housing systems
3. Stunning and killing
4. Rabbits on farm, with a focus on alternative housing systems
5. Turkeys on farm and during transport



Activity 1 - Technical assistance, query service

Last achievements

- **4** queries answered in 2020
- **3** queries answered in 2021
- **5** queries answered in 2022
- **10** queries answered in 2023
- **1** queries answered in 2024, **4** under preparation

Pullets Factsheet : Assess Pullet Welfare on-farm



ONLINE

Main indicators for on-farm assessment of pullet welfare



Introduction

Conditions during the rearing period can impact not only pullet welfare but can have long lasting implications affecting the subsequent laying period. For instance, foraging and injurious pecking behaviour, sensitivity to stressors, and the ability to navigate the environment have been shown to be impacted by rearing conditions (Janczak and Riber, 2015).

Aggressive interactions

Associated major welfare concern: group stress.

Definition: Aggressive interactions include pecks to the head area, threats, chases, and fights between birds.

Measurement: Observe (either live or through video) the number of aggressive interactions that occur in a given time frame. These interactions typically occur sporadically with a brief duration, so longer observation periods may be necessary. Additionally,

Pullets Factsheet : Assess Pullet Welfare on-farm



25 Animal based Indicators detailed in the factsheet :

Aggressive interactions

Balance problems

Dustbathing

Fear response

Foot lesions

Injurious pecking

Keel bone damage

Locomotion

Mortality

Panting or huddling

Physiological stress indicators

Piling and smothering

Play behaviour

Plumage condition

Preening

Pushing and jostling

Reduced bone quality

Reluctance to use range

Respiratory problems

Resting birds on elevated structures

Signs of predation

Uniformity of body weight

Walking, scratching, pecking

Wing and leg stretching

Wing Flapping



European Union Reference Centre
for Animal Welfare *Poultry SFA*



Best practice Factsheet

Design and management of outdoor ranges for optimal use by layers



Introduction

An outdoor range provides laying hens with the opportunity to perform natural behaviours in a diverse and stimulating environment. This has the potential to increase the welfare of the birds. However, to achieve this, the birds need to find the outdoor range attractive. Among the important factors for range attractiveness is natural vegetation which provides foraging opportunities and cover that increases the birds' sense of security and protects against predation and harsh weather conditions (e.g., strong wind, bright sun or precipitation).

Natural vegetation in the outdoor range

Creating an attractive outdoor range for laying hens involves:

- Planting rows of trees and bushes perpendicular to the barn to create corridors leading away from the barn (Fig. 1).
- Planting grass in the corridors between rows of trees and bushes. Practical tip: Make sure that the corridors are wide enough for the machinery needed.

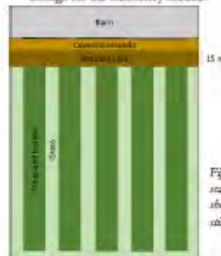


Fig. 1. Diagram (not to scale) of an outdoor range showing a design found to stimulate bird use.

- The distance from the barn/veranda to the rows of trees and bushes should not exceed 15-20 m.



- Trim the sides of trees and bushes if necessary to ensure visibility from one end of the corridor to the other. This allows hens to look out for predators and can increase their comfort on the range.



- If the birds are incapable of keeping the grass short, then mow paths in the grass cover to create "highways".



Best practice Factsheet

Additional factors important for optimal use of outdoor ranges

Protection against predators – safe haven

Tall vegetation gives the birds a sense of security. However, it is also important to ensure predators are kept out of the outdoor range. It is advised to:

- Inspect the fence daily. Not only does this ensure early detection of damage to the fence, but regular presence of humans likely also has a preventative effect.



Access from an early age

While the design and management of the outdoor range are important for optimal range use, it is emphasized that this should be combined with providing birds outdoor access as early as possible during the rearing period. Depending on climatic conditions this may be as early as 4-5 weeks of age.



Covered veranda – smooth transition

A covered veranda functions as a smooth transition between the dark and climate-stable indoor barn and the bright and climate-variable outdoor range, reducing the fear-provoking effect of venturing outdoors.

In addition, during outbreaks of avian influenza where access to the outdoor range is denied, birds are usually still allowed into the covered veranda, ensuring that they stay familiar with the outdoor climate, so they are prepared when access to the full outdoor range is again provided.

- Place two electrical wires on the outside of the fence: one about 10 cm above ground level to deter ground predators and one about 1 m above ground level to deter deer from destroying the fence.
- The fence should be dug about 1 m under ground (horizontally on the outside) to prevent ground predators from digging under the fence.





General:

Identify a refined list of indicators that can be used to assess the state of consciousness of head-only electrical stunned rabbits in commercial slaughterhouses to ensure consistency of controls.

Specific:

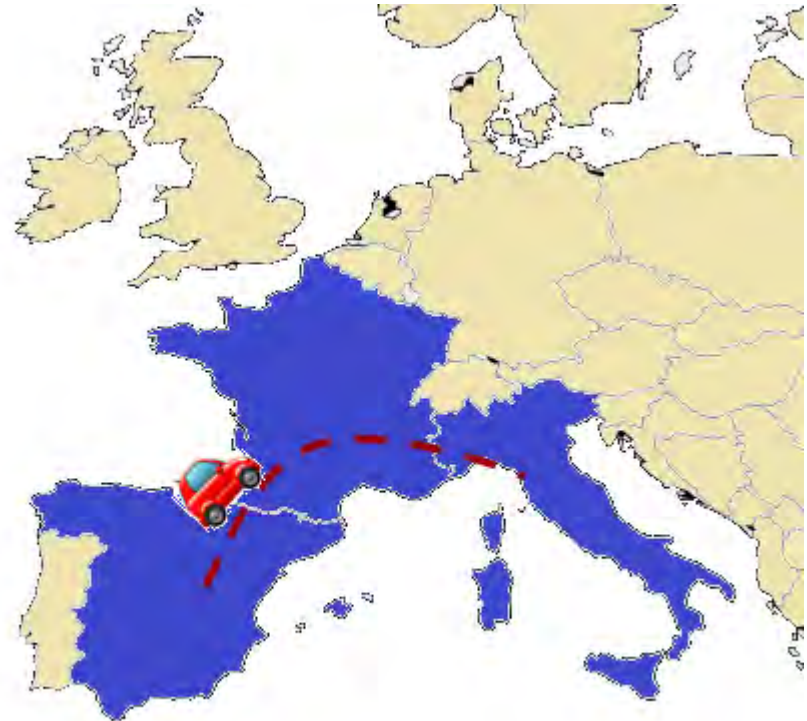
1. Assess the **inter-observer repeatability** of the most valid and feasible indicators of consciousness according to the EFSA.
2. Elucidate the **correlation** among the indicators
3. Assess **efficiency of stunning**



Has been done previously with Chickens and Turkeys

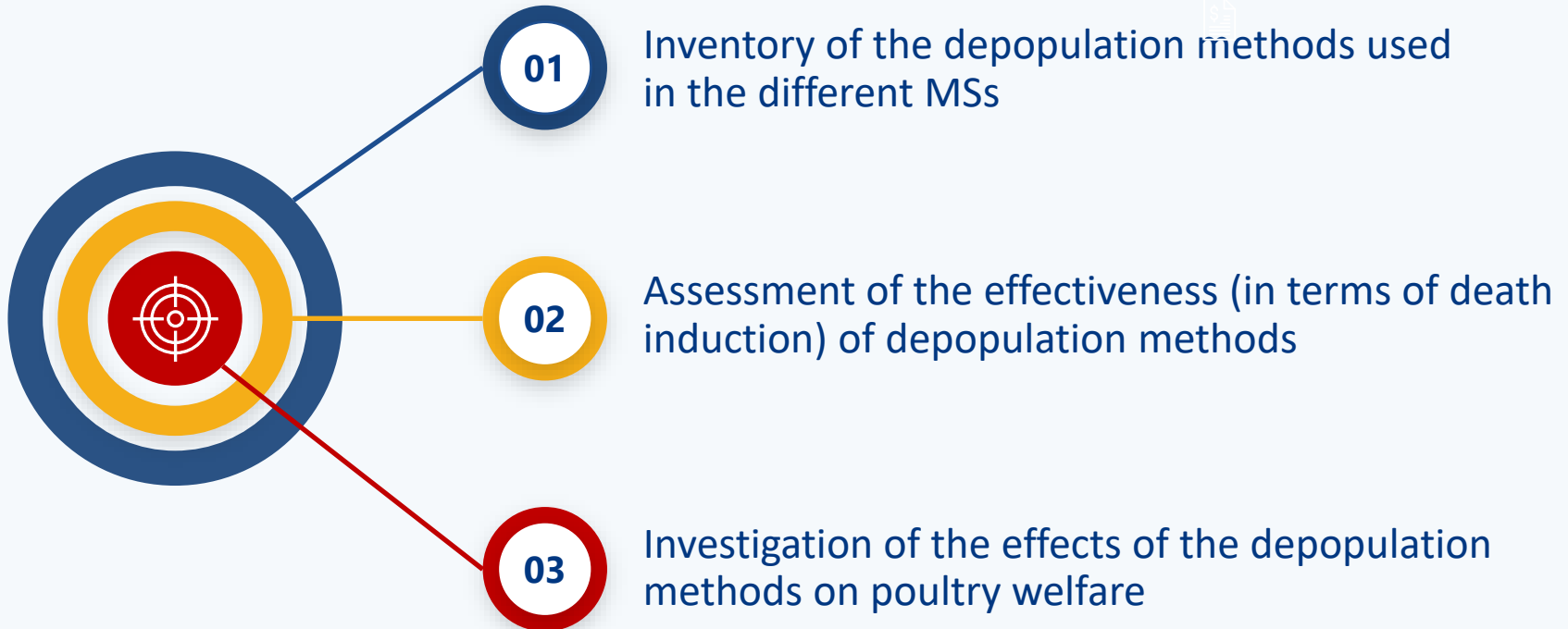
Experiment/report
Scientific paper
Indicator fact sheet
Webinar

Rabbit slaughterhouses:



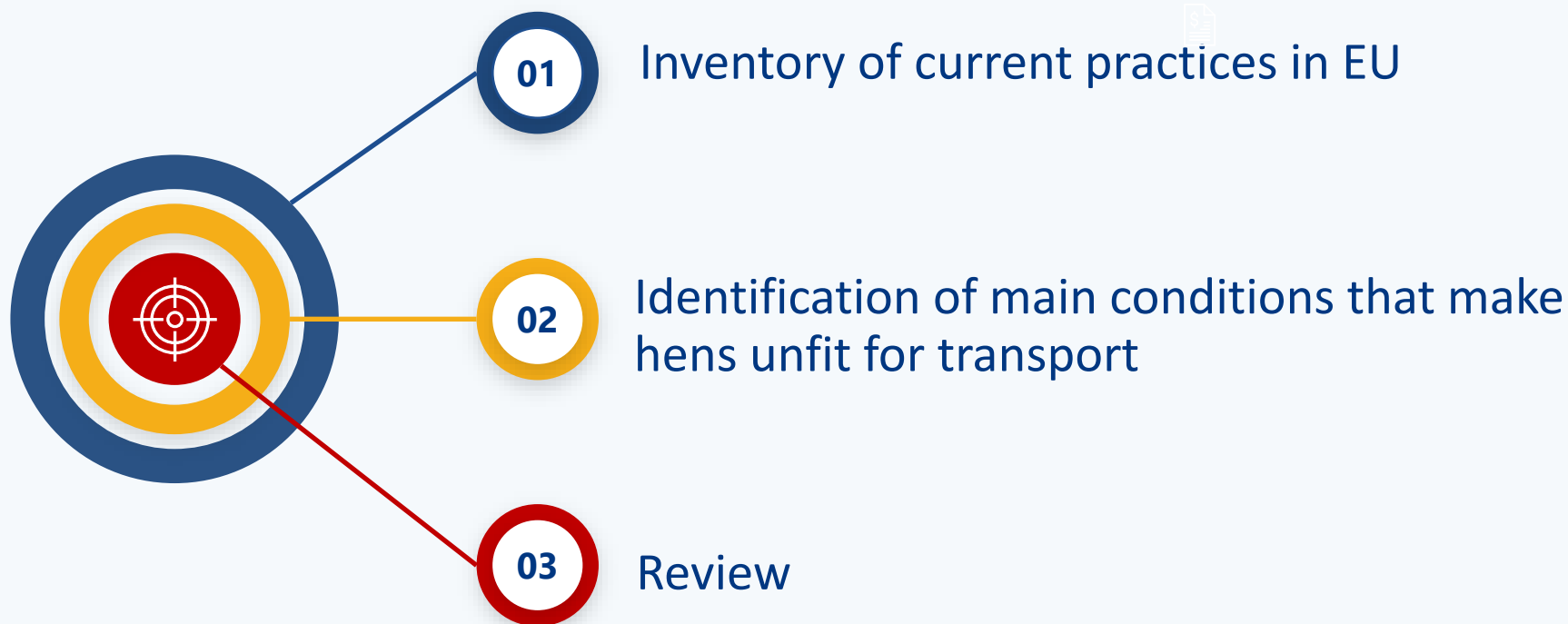
15-18 different slaughterhouses
from the three main rabbit producer
countries in the EU

Goals



AIM: Make recommendations on the types of on-farm killing methods to adopt for the most effective and humane depopulation according to the farm characteristics and species at stake

Activity 3 : future work. ACTIVITY ON Fitness for transport for end of lay hens



AIM: Make recommendations on the assessment of fitness for transport of end of lay hens.

Activity 4. Development of training material for specific topics



Webinar induction to unconsciousness in broilers during exposure to CAS.

2 MAY 2023



Webinar assessment welfare of rabbits on farm

14 NOVEMBER 2023



Webinar assessment welfare of turkeys on farm

JUNE 2024



**Webinar assessment consciousness after electrical
stunning in rabbits**

NOVEMBER 2024



EU Reference Centre
for Animal Welfare *Pigs*



Recent highlights EURCAW-Pigs

WUR – The Netherlands



Designated by
the EU Commission



WAGENINGEN
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH



AARHUS
UNIVERSITY

FRIEDRICH-LOEFFLER-INSTITUT

FLI

Bundesforschungsinstitut für Tiergesundheit
Federal Research Institute for Animal Health

1 Training videos

- Preparing the inspection and meeting the farmer
- Communication about animal welfare issues
- Introducing new colleagues to inspection
- Inspecting and advising
- Collegial sparring



2 Factsheet translations

In the first years of EURCAW-Pigs we produced around **45 Indicator Factsheets** to support monitoring pig welfare on farm, during transport and at the abattoir



2 Factsheet translations



Qu'indique l'état corporel ?

- Mettre à disposition un régime adapté et équilibré est une nécessité pour maintenir le bon état corporel des animaux.
- Des pratiques inadéquates peuvent être le résultat de problèmes concernant le ou les distributeurs.
- Les installations d'alimentation et d'abreuvement doivent être conçues, vérifiées et réglées de manière à limiter les risques de contamination de la nourriture et de l'eau, ainsi que les effets négatifs pouvant résulter des ruminants.



Worauf weist die Körperkondition hin?

- Eine angemessene und ausgewogene Fütterung ist Voraussetzung für eine gute Körperkondition.
- Zu dünne Schweine können auf eine unzureichende Menge und Zusammensetzung des Futters hinweisen.

Risiken für Schwarzweilßen

Eine unzureichende Menge und Zusammensetzung des Futters sind an den Auftreten von Schwarzweilßen beteiligt. Die Körperkondition ist ein Indikator einer unzureichenden Ernährung und ein Indikator, um das Risiko für Schwarzweilßen einzuschätzen.

RISIKOANALYSE

- ✓ Fütterung

Gesetzliche Anforderungen

Richtlinie 98/58/EG. Die Tiere müssen eine gesunde, angemessene und angemessene Nahrung erhalten, die ihnen in ausreichender Menge zur Verfügung zu stellen ist, und sie gesund blicken und ihren Verhaltensbedarf decken können. Dar ist die Futtermittel und Tränkezeit der Tiere keine unnötigen Leiden oder Schäden verursachen und die Futter- oder die Flüssigkeitsration darf keine Stoffe enthalten, die ihnen unnötige Leiden oder Schäden zufügen können." (Anhang, Nummer 14)

Die Tiere müssen so abfüttern, die ihren physiologischen Bedürfnisse entsprechen, Zugang zu Nahrung haben. (Anhang, Nummer 15)



¿Qué indica la condición corporal?

- El suministro de una dieta adecuada y equilibrada es un requisito para una buena condición corporal.
- Las prácticas inadecuadas pueden ser el resultado de uno o varios distribuidores.
- Las instalaciones para el suministro de alimentos y agua deben ser diseñadas, comprobadas y ajustadas de tal forma que se reduzca al mínimo el riesgo de contaminación de los alimentos y del agua y se eviten las consecuencias negativas que se derivan de los rumiantes.



Wat geeft lichaamsconditie aan?

Een goed gebalanceerd voederprogramma en voldoende water zijn een vereiste voor een goede lichaamsconditie.

- Onvoldoende voer kan het resultaat zijn van een onvoldoende hoeveelheid of kwaliteit van het verstrekte voer.

Risico's voor staartbijten

Onvoldoende kwaliteit en/of kwantiteit van voer speelt een rol bij het optreden van staartbijten. Een goede lichaamsconditie kan een verhoogde risico op staartbijten beperken.

RISICOANALYSE

- ✓ Voeding

Wettelijke vereisten

Richtlijn 98/58/EG zegt in de Bijlage: "De dieren moeten een voldoende hoeveelheid gezond en voor de soort in de leeftijd geschikt voeder krijgen zodat zij in goede gezondheid blijven en aan hun levensdoelstellingen voldoen kunnen". Het voederprogramma moet erin denken en de wijze van voeding moet de dieren geen overmatig lijden of letsel veroorzaken." (Bijlage, punt 14)

"Alle dieren moeten voldoende krijgen met tussentijd die bij hun levenswijze behouden passen." (Bijlage, punt 15)

In 2021-2022 we translated them into 4 languages:

- German
- Spanish
- French
- Dutch



2 Factsheet translations

In 2023-2024 more translations are underway:

- **Romanian** (with help from the Romanian NRL on Animal Welfare)
- **Polish** (with help from Poznan University of Life Sciences)
- **Danish** (with help from our EURCAW colleagues in Denmark)



3 Roadshows

- Meeting inspectors **in their own country – in their own language**
- 2023: NL, DK and DE
- 2024: ES, RO and PL

- 2 day meetings, 10-40 inspectors, 4-6 EURCAW staff
- Topics are chosen in advance by the inspectors



4 Podcast series – under construction

- inspiration and information for inspectors! The episodes are hosted by Spotify for Podcasters.

Podcast: Pig welfare in action



Pig Welfare in Action is a podcast series from EURCAW-Pigs, especially for pig welfare inspectors. This initiative emerged from contacts with inspectors in the field who described how they would spend many hours travelling to farms for inspections and also expressed a keen interest in both topics of welfare as well as the experiences of other inspectors.

In this series, you will hear inspectors telling their personal stories during inspections of pig welfare, and experts giving insight and knowledge on specific pig welfare topics. Expect inspiration and information! The episodes are being hosted by [Spotify for Podcasters](#).

[Listen on spotify](#)

www.eurcaw-pigs.eu

info.pigs@eurcaw.eu



www.eurcaw-poultry-sfa.eu

info@eurcaw-poultry-sfa.eu



www.eurcaw-ruminants-equines.eu

info@eurcaw-ruminants-equines.eu



EURCAW-Aqua: pavlidis@uoc.gr

