

Analysis of results 2013 and action plan NL 2014

Results

In 2013, more than 53.300 consignments of live animals were checked and approved by the official veterinarian before dispatch to another Member State (or third country through another Member State). This number does not include consignments of day old chicks, for which a specific control system is in place with random checks.

The number of journals that were checked was lower than the year before (7.878 versus 8.666 in 2012). However, there were much more non-compliances leading to an intervention or a request for further information. This is the result of performing more risk based checks, compared to random sampling.

In 2013, there were 2.543 specific checks focussed on animal welfare during transport: inspections by the road-side, at slaughterhouses, at assembly centres and on the farms. This indicates a recovery of these specific checks; a 14% increase compared to the year 2012.

The project on poultry transport, aiming to analyse critical points in the poultry sector (from farm to slaughterhouse) was performed as planned. The focus was on Council Regulation (EC) 1/2005, approval of vehicles (in particular for travel times longer than 12 hours), suitability of the crates and damage to the animals prior to and during transport. The results were presented during the meeting of National contact points from 3-5 June 2014 in Grange. The main conclusions are that both the implementation of the rules as the official checks need to be improved.

Non-compliance

The vast majority of the instances of non-compliances do not concern activities that might have an adverse effect on the welfare of the animals inspected, but rather relate to administrative issues.

Accordingly, the most frequent shortcomings relating to documentation have been the following:

- Delays in returning the journey logs or satellite navigation system records, or not returning the journey logs at all.
- Irregularities in completion of journey logs.

Of course, irregularities in documentation required by Council Regulation (EC) 1/2005 could reflect infringements against the EU welfare rules and could possibly indicate that other important welfare rules which are more difficult to inspect are not followed either.

The most frequently found infringements that are not solely administrative but which unquestionably affect the animal's welfare are:

- the length of the journey, especially for transports with cattle where transporters take resting periods up to 9 hours* and not stopping at control posts when this is required[†]; and
- overloading, especially for pig transports

Action plan 2013

The action plan for 2014 focuses on the continuation of the risk based approach. Risk based checks, based on the historical level of compliance of the separate target groups (e.g. drivers, organisers,

* The length of a journey is an issue for transports of cattle where after 14 hours of travel, a rest period of minimum 1 hour is required, sufficient for the animals in particular to be given water and if necessary fed. Resting time to care for the animals can be extended with two more hours when necessary. When resting times are too long (often up to 9 hours), the transport is not in conformity with one of the general conditions of the Transport Regulation, namely that "all necessary arrangements have been made in advance to minimise the length of the journey and meet animals' needs during the journey;" (Article 2(a)) and "the transport is carried out without delay to the place of destination and the welfare conditions of the animals are regularly checked and appropriately maintained; (Article 2(f)). However, due to the conflicting EU rules on driving and resting times for chauffeurs, this specific part of legislation is often violated

[†] In particular transports of calves from Ireland and pig transports to Spain.

traders, etc) and countries of departure/destinations leads to more effective controls. Administrative checks will remain important and the checks on navigation data will continue.

Other important actions for 2014 are:

- Poultry transports. This was also the main subject of the meeting of National contact points from 3-5 June 2014 in Grange, where it was clearly shown that certain welfare rules for poultry during transports prove to be difficult to implement. Related to this, are the problems faced in the enforcement of these rules. This is also demonstrated by the study that was performed in the Netherlands in 2013, focussing on the catching and transport of different types of poultry for different purposes (national movements, intra trade, destination slaughter or breeding, etc). As a result of this study, in 2014, there will be more targeted checks on poultry transport, in particular transports over 12 hours.
- The planned review and possible adaptation of approval requirements of vehicles to set the right standards for the increasing number of completely closed (fully conditioned) trucks is still ongoing. These trucks are mainly used for pig transports but also for other animal species, such as calves. Together with experts from other EU member States, and assisted by the FVO, discussions about the difficulties that these trucks pose as regards the requirement that vehicles should “provide access to the animals to allow them to be inspected and cared for”[‡], are still ongoing. .
- There will be a continued focus on the uniform and consistent use of the updated intervention policy for animal transports, which describes the whole ‘toolbox’ of possible non-compliances and interventions (such as warnings, fines, etc)..
- Cooperation with other Member States but also NGO’s has improved over the years and this will remain important.

[‡] as laid down in point 1.1(f) of Chapter II to Annex I of the Council Regulation (EC) 1/2005