

Minutes

**Meeting of the sub-group of the EU platform on Animal Welfare – Animal Transport  
16 May 2018, Grange**

This was the first meeting of the transport sub-group of the EU platform on animal welfare. The meeting was not public.

The transport sub-group aims to contribute to the objectives of the Platform by providing information, recommendations and proposals for practices which help deliver better animal welfare during animal transport. The role of the platform is to assist the Commission with the development and exchange of coordinated actions on animal welfare.

The transport sub-group identified the issues which were the highest priority to work on and three working groups discussed the following topics. Conclusions and actions were presented and agreed with all members of the sub-group.

**1. Extreme weather conditions**

The scope included the transport of ruminants, pigs, poultry and horses on both long and short journeys for intra-EU and export trade, in hot ( $>30^{\circ}\text{C}$  within the means of transport) and cold ( $<5^{\circ}\text{C}$  within the means of transport) conditions, as well as other adverse weather conditions. Exports to Turkey were also discussed.

The group agreed that Animal Transport Guides and Factsheets cover the main issues related to animal transport under extreme weather conditions. Therefore, any factsheets or other dissemination material to be developed on extreme temperatures and weather could be based on Animal Transport Guide contents. They should be kept simple, translated into all EU languages and included in the mandatory courses for drivers.

Regarding enforcement, the transport sub-group stressed that Member States should have a harmonised approach to follow the Commissioner's call that such journeys do not take place if forecasted temperatures are expected to be  $>30^{\circ}\text{C}$  along the route.

Crucially, the group deems it necessary to highlight in a specific document, detailed possible actions to be taken when transporters are faced with unexpected extreme temperatures/weather, proposed solutions for difficulties to comply/ care for animals such as in relation to vehicles ventilation systems and on board monitoring systems (temperature sensors, satellite navigation data)

**ACTIONS:**

- Develop factsheets, based on Animal Transport Guides, for inclusion in driver training and refresher courses, and also for organisers and transporters, and inform official veterinarians and police authorities.
- Preparation of a document identifying research gaps, possible solutions for improvement of vehicles and define the interaction needed with the other two working groups (unweaned and export). Identify which part of existing legislation is problematic and provide solutions.
- Development of scenario-solution document: problematic situations that may occur in relation to transport of animals and extreme temperatures/extreme weather and possible solutions. For this point in particular, input from industry will be sought.
- Develop a strategy for dissemination of all of the above.

## **2. Exports of cattle**

The group discussed the planning and execution of exports by road, including the role of authorities, organisers and transporters and the need to anticipate delays at exit points and border crossings. A veterinary check at the moment of loading was considered better practice. A mobile phone application to assist organisers, transporters and drivers in the dispatch of exports was discussed. Better use of, and adaptations to TRACES were suggested<sup>1</sup>. The merits of the Australian export supply chain assurance system were considered. Due to time constraints the group could not fully detail each recommendation but the other agreed main points included:

- UECBV to act as focal point for dissemination of information and best practices to organisers and transporters.
- Define recommendations for organisers and transporters, placing a very high emphasis on correct, comprehensive planning of the journey, including the stages in non-EU countries (e.g. contingency plans, export specific training, account for weather conditions, feedback on the outcome of exports).
- Identify the main organisers and transporters involved to achieve maximum impact with the dissemination of information and recommendations from the group.
- List import requirements for the main destination non-EU countries.
- To encourage competent authorities in non-EU countries to set up a contact point (with the possible support of the OIE and its network of National Focal Points on animal welfare).
- List resting facilities for animals in non-EU countries.

The group also proposed to include in the agenda for the next meeting, exports by sea and an application for electronic devices, including mobile phones, to assist organisers, transporters and drivers in the dispatch of exports.

## **3. Unweaned animals**

The focus was on calves of two to five weeks of age, transported over long distances. The group applied the twelve Welfare Quality criteria and concluded that the greatest risks for animal welfare were: prolonged hunger, thermal comfort and the health/fitness of calves. One member of the sub-group expressed disappointment that enforcement of EU rules was not discussed.

### **ACTIONS:**

- Conduct a scientific literature review, including indicators of calf health and the energy/feeding needs of unweaned calves on farms, relevant for preparing animals for transport and possibly to the actual transport.
- List animal based indicators which may be used at departure, during and after transport, to best assess if there is an animal welfare problem.
- Develop information for organisers/transporters on the needs of calves on long journeys.
- Develop a technical specification for a vehicle manufacturer taking account of the welfare challenges for transport of calves.

Evangelia Sossidou agreed to list gaps in research, identified as part of the transport guide project, deliverable one, relevant to the above three groups.

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<sup>1</sup> After the meeting it was confirmed that TRACES has been updated to include a booking system for control posts.

A summary of the above conclusions and proposed actions will be presented at the meeting of the EU platform on animal welfare on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018.

#### **4. Other**

The priorities in the mandate are innovations; policy indicators; knowledge transfer and enforcement. Outside of this scope, the following points were made:

- Calls to change the legislation.
- Calls to oblige operators in non-EU countries which export meat to the EU to comply with the EU legislation.
- Member States are considering drafting a question to EFSA on risks for the transport of unweaned calves.
- Need for better facilities at the entry point into Turkey.
- Member States should consider the reporting of actions taken following the letter dated 26.04.2018 from the Commissioner, to comply with the conditions on transport that the Regulation requires when forecasted temperatures are above 30°C.

#### **Next Meeting**

The second meeting of the sub-group of the Animal Welfare Platform, Animal Transport is scheduled for Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

#### **List of Participants**

**European Commission:** DG SANTE: Ana Ramirez-Vela, Terence Cassidy, Patrick Caruana, Ignacio Carro-Perez, Vasco Antunes, Desmond Maguire, Patricia Purcell, Stanislav Ralchev.

**Member States:** Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Spain and the Netherlands.

**International Organisations:** OIE.

**Business and Professional Organisations:** Association of Poultry Processors and Poultry Trade in the EU (a.v.e.c.), European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders (EFFAB), Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), International Society for Applied Ethology (ISAE), European Livestock and Meat Trading Union (U.E.C.B.V.).

**Civil Society Organisations:** Animals' Angels, Compassion in World Farming, Eurogroup for Animals, VIER PFOTEN International (VIER PFOTEN).

**Independent Experts:** Luc Mirabito, Evangelia Sossidou, Antonio Velarde Calvo.

**Invited Experts:** Tea Dronjić, Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Food Safety, Michael Marahrens, Federal Research Institute for Animal Health, Germany, Raoul Maas, Pali Group, the Netherlands, Thomas Parnell, Australian Mission to the European Union and NATO.

**Observer:** European Agri-Cooperatives (COGECA).