

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 transport sub-group was split into three working groups to discuss 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 on both long and short journeys for intra-EU and export trade, in hot (>30°C within the means of transport) and cold (< 5°C within the means of transport) conditions, as well as other adverse weather conditions. However, most of the discussion focused on exports to Turkey.

The group concluded that there was no need for further research on this topic, the Animal Transport Guides are useful and their further dissemination needs to be considered.

Regarding enforcement, the transport sub-group concluded that in response to the recent letter from the Commissioner to Ministers regarding high temperatures during exports to Turkey, Member States should have a harmonised approach to ensure that such journeys do not take place if temperatures are expected to be >30°C within the means of transport.

ACTIONS:

- Develop factsheets for inclusion in driver training courses, and also for organisers, transporters and police authorities.
- Develop a communication strategy and consider translation into all EU languages.
- Member States should report on 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.

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 suggested¹. 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.

¹ After the meeting it was confirmed that TRACES has been updated to include a booking systems for control posts.

- 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.
- Need for better facilities at the entry point into Turkey.
- 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 a mobile phone application 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.

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

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

- 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 considering drafting a question to EFSA on risks for the transport of unweaned calves.

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

Next Meeting

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

List of Participants

European Commission: DG SANTE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

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: [REDACTED].

Invited Experts: [REDACTED], Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Food Safety, [REDACTED], Federal Research Institute for Animal Health, Germany, [REDACTED], Pali Group, the Netherlands, [REDACTED], Australian Mission to the European Union and NATO.

Observer: European Agri-Cooperatives (COCEGA).