Coordinated European Animal Welfare Network (EUWelNet)
Deliverable 3

Title: Report of the second meeting of the Advisory Board of EUWelNet, 29th -30th November 2013 Brussels

Authors
David Pritchard, Veterinary Consultancy Services Limited, London, United Kingdom, Chairman Advisory Board
Harry Blokhuis, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Coordinator EUWelNet

Task Leaders
Andy Butterworth, University of Bristol, United Kingdom;
Antonio Velarde, Institut de Recerca i Tecnologia Agroalimentàries (IRTA), Spain;
Bettina Bock, Associate Professor Rural Sociology, Wageningen University, Netherlands;
David Main, University of Bristol, United Kingdom;
Isabelle Veissier, French National Institute for Agricultural Research in Agriculture (INRA), Saint-Genès-Champanelle, France;
Maria Cecilia Mancini, Department of Economics, Università degli Studi di Parma, Italy;
Mara Miele, Human Geography, Cardiff University, United Kingdom;
Marek Spinka, Research Institute of Animal Production, Prague, Czech Republic;
Xavier Manteca, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain.

Rapporteurs
Bryan Jones, Independent Consultant, Edinburgh, United Kingdom;
Peter Jinman, Veterinarian Consultancy Service Limited, London, United Kingdom;
Birgitta Staaf Larsson, Centre for Animal Welfare, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden.

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1. Abstract

In introducing the final meeting of the Advisory Board David Pritchard welcomed the continued support from members and also several new members. He reviewed the objectives of the Board and thanked members for their time and commitment to the project and noted the constructive cooperation with task groups which had played a major role in the progress of work packages 2 and 3. Harry Blokhuis then summarised the background to the project and the consortium and outlined the four work packages. He also described the articles in the new Commission proposal on official controls which describe reference centres for animal welfare and their mission. He looked to the Advisory Board for further advice on the structure and role of the welfare network now foreseen as several Reference centres with associated networks. He noted that training of officials was one function of the proposed reference centres. Bettina Bock reported the WP 2 studies on implementation of three EU laws in 10 Member States (MSs) and further detailed studies in six which had highlighted major differences between MSs. Mara Miele considered the evaluation of the possibility and likelihood of adoption of the identified best practices for implementing EU legislation in EU countries; Xavier Manteca and colleagues reported on the success of the four different knowledge transfer (KT) strategies aimed at four current areas of difficulty in implementing EU welfare law namely broilers, enrichment for finishing pigs, group housing of sows, scientific network and standing operating procedures for killing. In all four studies there was a good level of collaboration between scientists from different countries and participation of stakeholders through the Advisory Board was very useful. Each KT study had been developed, implemented and evaluated over a very short time but had been well received and demonstrated the added value which could be provided by a future welfare network. Isabelle Veissier summarised progress made on producing recommendations on the feasibility and conditions for a European network taking account of the recent Commission proposals. Institutions in all 16 MSs taking part in the project declared interest in the network and analyses of information flows clearly demonstrated a need to develop better links between knowledge creators and knowledge transferors. Some 7 possible scenarios were considered but analysis did not indicate a clear optimal scenario. One lesson learnt from WP3 was that optimal determination of the effectiveness of knowledge strategies can be made by assessing reactions to training, change in knowledge, change in behaviour and results i.e. impact on animal welfare. WP2 concluded that the study made of stakeholders in several member states indicates that the expectations of a Coordinated European Animal Welfare Network are high. Transfer of knowledge and exchange of best practices could in the opinion of the respondents contribute importantly to more consistency in the implementation and the enforcement of animal welfare legislation across Europe, adding to the creation of a "level playing field" for European animal producers. For this it is also considered important that a "common understanding" of the need and purpose of animal welfare legislation would enhance a positive

attitude towards implementation among various actors across the chain. In this regard the network could play an important role in enhancing not only technical knowledge but also the understanding that the required changes contribute to improved animal welfare. The Network should also look into the practical relevance of the knowledge produced and transferred and for this reason closely collaborate with stakeholders.

Small break out groups with both Advisory Board and project members discussed specific tasks relating to the future network. This report summarises the discussion in each group and the feedback discussions and conclusions during the second plenary session. Further ideas for the structure of future network were developed noting the need for including both reference centres and associated regional networks. The Board recognised the competing needs for regional basis to facilitate KT and communication on the one hand and a species or topic basis to facilitate technical expertise on the other. Whilst it may be difficult to ensure independence of the network which includes stakeholders it is essential to ensure its impartiality. Assurance of quality and credibility of outcome is essential so mechanisms for moderation, audit and validation of reference centres and their associated networks are required. The Board welcomed the work done by the project in identifying mechanisms for sharing material as a means of reducing workloads on Competent Authorities. The pilot has demonstrated that a welfare network could add value by generating and disseminating best practice for implementing EU laws and practical measures useful for farmers, Competent Authorities as well the Commission.

2. Introduction

The background to this project is a call for proposals from the European Commission (SANCO 2012/10293) with a view to obtaining a grant for a pilot project on a Coordinated European Animal Welfare Network. A consortium led by Professor Harry Blokhuis from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, SLU, responded to this call and won the grant. The consortium has 26 partners with 16 EU countries represented. The project started 1st January 2013 for one year.

The project, now called EUWelNet, evaluates the feasibility and usefulness of a network that could assist the competent authorities and stakeholders in implementing EU legislation on animal welfare. The concept is of a network of institutions with recognised knowledge on animal welfare, and independent from specific private interests, that could supply technical assistance, promote innovation, disseminate scientific and applied research, and take a lead in education and vocational training. Further information on this project is available at www.euwelnet.eu.

Veterinary Consultancy Services Limited (VCS) provided advice to the consortium during the tender and its role in the project is to run the independent Advisory Board. David Pritchard, Director VCS Ltd, acts as the independent chairman of the Advisory Board with Peter Jinman as deputy. The composition of the Advisory Board was laid out in the EUWelNet Consortium's description of work. The broad-based Advisory Board reflects the project's emphasis on selected examples of EU animal welfare legislation and their implementation across all Member States. By attracting wide stakeholder input via members' networks, the Advisory Board will help ensure the transparency, relevance, validity, reach and quality of the work. Its involvement in the project will also provide the Board with a basis to make firm and independent recommendations concerning a future coordinated European animal welfare network. The arrangements for the second meeting were as agreed by the Board at the first meeting. Invitation letters, registration forms and codes of practice were sent to the CVOs of the 28 Member States of the EU as well as Norway and Switzerland, the EU institutions involved with animal welfare (DG SANCO, EFSA, FVO), International organisations (OIE, FAO, EUROFAWC) and European organisations representing animal and meat industries (Copa-Cogeca, EFFAB, IFAH, UECBV), veterinary and welfare science (FVE, IASE, ISAH), welfare education (EVVPH, ECAWA, AWARE), welfare organisations (CIWF, Eurogroup, VierPfoten, WSPA) and European Animal Welfare Platform (FAI).

ANNEX I lists the participants attending plenary and small groups and also includes those offering support for the Project but not attending. ANNEX II contains the Invitation letters to CVOs and Institutions, Registration form, Code of practice, and Agenda. ANNEX III contains all the presentations made during the second Advisory Board meeting.

3. Session 1 Update on of progress made by EUWelNet

The chairman David Pritchard welcomed members especially those new to the Advisory Board (AB) noting that several more representatives of Member States had joined the Board. He reviewed the work the AB had done for the project and thanked members. The AB has facilitated the studies with

Competent Authorities for WP2. All four tasks in WP3 have benefited from the AB completing questionnaires, and reviewing training materials and attending workshops for WP3.The main role of the network is using knowledge strategies to improve compliance with the legislation. Today we need to take the lessons learned from this work and explore how best we can develop a future network of reference centres.

Work Package 1 Status and coordination of EUWelNet

Harry Blokhuis noted that the main objectives of EUWelNet were described in the call for proposals (SANCO 2012/10293) as 'to investigate (and make recommendations) on the feasibility and usefulness of a network of technical resources designed to assist the competent authorities and the stakeholders in improving the implementation of EU legislation on animal welfare through targeted knowledge strategies.' The EUWelNet consortium was built on existing partnerships within the Welfare Quality Network and the AWARE project. The activities are organized in four Work Packages (WPs) each addressing the main objectives of the project.

The establishment of the consortium and the coordination of the pilot study take place in WP1. The work here includes for instance activities related to contractual and financial issues, communication with the Commission, organization of website and internal communication platform and the activities of the Advisory Board.

The organization of EUWelNet proved to be effective and the activities are running according to plan and within the allocated budgets. The activities in WPs 2 and 3 are almost completed and the work focuses now on the last phase to make recommendations on the feasibility and usefulness of a Coordinated European Animal Welfare Network. The input of the Advisory Board is extremely pertinent to ensure relevance, validity, reach and quality of the outcomes and recommendations.

Work package 2 Identification of bottlenecks of implementing EU legislation on Animal welfare

Bettina Bock and Mara Miele reported the findings of WP2. With regard to the identification of bottlenecks they found considerable variation between Member States in the socio-economic and political context in which the implementation of EU legislation for animal welfare takes place, and this affects the speed and smoothness of implementation. The size of the middle class in each country influences consumer demand for animal friendly products and retailers' initiatives for segmenting the animal food market according to animal welfare credentials. The extent to which farm animal welfare is a matter of social debate affects the relevance of this issue in the national political agenda. More specifically they found that implementation proceeds more smoothly where there is a pre-existing national policy for animal welfare and a high level of collaboration between public and private actors and agencies.

The extent to which food supply chains are vertically integrated is also important. Farm assurance schemes that include animal welfare monitoring, support implementation as they set conditions for market entrance, and assist enforcement through regular private inspections.

The meat chicken and pig directives have been implemented in most countries, although there are still problem areas where compliance is lagging behind such as stocking densities in the case of broilers and group housing of sows in the case of the pig directive. The implementation of the killing regulation has not been completed in most countries. The situation is more variable for the killing regulation. The identified bottlenecks include limits in effective monitoring, technical and institutional obstacles, but also problems in knowledge transfer. Frequent interaction and collaboration between public and private actors and agencies was considered to play an important role in this respect as it promoted the early identification of knowledge gaps and co-production of knowledge as well as wide dissemination of knowledge and tailor-made information and training of target groups.

Work package 3 Develop, implement and evaluate knowledge strategies

Four different knowledge strategies aimed at four current areas of difficulty in implementing EU welfare law were studied. In all four studies there was a good level of collaboration between scientists from different countries and the participation of stakeholders through the Advisory Board was very useful. Evaluation showed that target audiences were very positive about the knowledge transfer strategies. It was useful to have several types of training resources and in several languages. There is a need for more involvement of small producers but lack of time of the participants was a major constraint.

1. The "Broiler Directive" team lead by Andy Butterworth developed a web tool designed to meet the need to exchange information and to harmonize data collection and use.
The approach used was to determine what technical data some ten MSs collected, establish how MSs use data to make decisions on compliance, determine how MSs use technical data in relation to variable stocking densities and finally review the sharing knowledge, guidance and training materials. MSs varied with the types of post-mortem indicators they collected and how they collected and stored the data and developed guidance materials. Both the workshop and the web tool proved useful in sharing information between MSs and there are clearly opportunities for adding value and reducing the burden to CAs for this approach and also for gaining harmonisation of measurement of welfare levels across the EU.

2. The pig Directive "Enrichment" team lead by David Main developed an e-learning tool on enrichment material and tail docking requirements of finishing pigs to meet the need to provide extensive and detailed scientific knowledge to CAs. A fully operational e-learning training package was produced which was well researched and illustrated. It was trialled by 121 trainees in 11 Member States and included veterinary inspectors, farm advisers, assurance certificate assessors and a small number of farmers. The course was welcomed but the format was not ideal for farmers and so

additional farmer material was produced. There was a perceived conflict between science and practice and also different opinions on key technical issues especially the value of natural foraging behaviour and also the value of enrichment objects and straw. A study designed to evaluate the e-learning tool found that participants were better able to identify enrichments that were less likely to achieve compliance and increased the importance of modifying a barren environment. It also increased the proportion of respondents correctly identifying that a farm with no evidence of tail lesions should stop tail docking. Participants had increased confidence to identify scenarios where non-compliance was less obvious. Overall the e-learning tool was able to effectively disseminate welfare science to official inspectors and could potentially be edited to be "official guidance". E-learning would also have benefits by supporting farmer focused knowledge transfer methods on enrichment and tail biting.

3. The pig Directive "Group housing of sows" team lead by Xavier Manteca produced Fact sheets and a Power Point presentation to meet the need to have material to assist trainers in practical, on-farm sessions. Five fact sheets in four languages were produced, four for pig producers and another one for competent authorities along with a set of digital material for pig producers. These were tested in three countries with small groups of farmers. The training was well received as most would recommend it to peers. Their opinion that the content of the course was dependent upon experience suggested that the targeting of material might be useful.

4. The "Killing Regulation" team lead by Antonio Velarde established a scientific network and developed standard operating procedures (SOPs) to meet the need to share scientific expertise and to provide guidelines to assess stunning effectiveness and monitor unconsciousness.

A technical network of experts was set up with five countries to develop and improve standard operating procedures to implement welfare requirements at slaughter (of poultry, pigs, cattle and sheep). They identified the main causes of difficulties in implementing EU law in slaughterhouses related to the implementation of minimum electrical requirements for effective water bath stunning in poultry and the assessment of unconsciousness after mechanical stunning in bovines, electrical stunning of ovine and poultry, and gas stunning in pigs. An evaluation of effectiveness of SOPs was made in 25 slaughter houses over a short period of two months. About two thirds of the slaughter houses used the SOPS to adapt, update or introduce an SOP but the rest did not take them up during the study although some intend to do so later due to the short time given by the project for implementation.

The role of the scientific network was established as principally providing advice to Member States including providing guidelines but also having links to the Commission and to the FVO.

Work package 4 Overarching analysis and recommendations on feasibility and conditions

WP4 conducts an overarching analysis of the results from the previous WPs. A survey within countries participating in EUWelNet showed that the level of interest in joining a future network is high. The links between knowledge creators and other actors (especially transferers) varied across

countries, demonstrating the need for a more formal network. The analysis of existing models of international networks helped design several scenarios for a putative future network on animal welfare; these scenarios – structured either by country or by topics/species – are being analysed for their relevance and functionalities. The efficiency of knowledge strategies tested in the project or in other projects run by EUWelNet partners was analysed in terms of reactions of trainees, change in knowledge or behaviour, and potential improvements in results; this showed that a wide range of methods can be used depending on the topic and the audience. External conditions for such a success were also established, such as consistency across and within Member States, and involvement of stakeholders. In parallel, analysis of ways to identify bottlenecks is being made in order to propose the most efficient mechanisms. WP4 will make final recommendations to DG-SANCO on the basis of the outcomes of each project task and on the discussions with the Advisory Board.

4. Summary of Sessions 2 and 3 Small group discussions and plenary of future of Welfare network

Each group comprised project partners and Board members from competent authorities, industry, advisers and welfare NGOs. The format of the discussion groups provided for three issues relating to the future network to each be discussed by two groups. Four additional issues, two issues relating to social factors involved in implementing EU laws and two issues on knowledge transfer strategies, were each discussed by a single group. Summaries of the discussions in small groups were presented to the plenary followed by discussion of their findings by all members. Details of chairmen and rapporteurs and members taking part in each of the ten small group discussions are at Annex I.

Each breakout group was moderated by a chairman and started with the task group leader making a short presentation outlining the issues for discussion and the advice required from the Advisory Board members (Available at annex III). The main points raised during the discussions in both the small groups and at the plenary session following presentation by the task leader/rapporteur are summarised below.

Discussions on Work Package I Establishment and Coordination of the network

Groups 1 and 6 WP1. How stakeholders can be involved in a future network while ensuring the independent nature of the network.

This issue stimulated lively and broad discussion, with interesting differences emerging between the two groups. There was general agreement in the following four areas.

1. Roles: The network should support the implementation of welfare legislation through unlocking, sharing and disseminating knowledge. It should be an information provider. For instance, it can help

recognise and share good practice. Information should be gathered, filtered and reported in a clear, easily understandable way.

2. Conditions / Requirements: Though it was agreed that there is no such thing as independence and the network must be seen to be impartial; it must not be agenda driven regardless of its eventual structure and composition. Early and continuing stakeholder involvement is crucial. One scenario is that stakeholders could be members of the network functioning as consultants who advise rather than as members of a management board. An advisory board comprising committed stakeholders and a science board composed of internationally recognised experts should be established early in the planning process. All tasks should have practical input.

3. Clarity of disseminated material is absolutely essential at all levels. Such material should also be tailored to suit the target audience e.g. language, hard copy material, internet web based material. Assurance of quality and credibility of outcome is essential so mechanism for moderation, audit and validation are required. It is important to avoid duplication of effort and 'reinventing the wheel'. Other existing networks should be taken into account, worked with, adapted and/or adopted.

4. *An overarching requirement is to 'keep it simple'.*

Among the issues to be resolved were:
How should the attainment and maintenance of balance and commitment of stakeholder involvement be managed? Can this be a responsibility of the advisory board?

Is it possible to offer some level of confidentiality within groups/tasks without compromising the mission to share information and knowledge?

Will the network be sectorial, should it target specific sectors and is there one network /reference centre or several? Should this be left for the Member State to decide rather than set at the outset to follow a given format?

Can stakeholders pose questions directly to the network?

Who has access to the network?

Should efforts be made to engage with candidate countries (to help them prepare) and with countries wishing to export to the EU?

Discussions on Work Package 2 Bottlenecks and difficulties in implementing welfare legislation

Group 4 Presentation of WP2 results on bottlenecks and facilitating factors for the implementation of EU regulation in 10 study countries; General discussion about ways for overcoming identified bottlenecks

After briefly presenting the results of WP 2 the following questions were considered: (1) Were the identified bottlenecks recognized? (2) Were there any additional bottlenecks? (3) What could the network do to address the bottlenecks?

1. Were the identified bottlenecks recognized?

All bottlenecks were recognized but with variable relevance across MS, stakeholders and sectors, depending also on the level of food chain integration.

2. Were there any additional bottlenecks?

A variety of additional bottlenecks were identified e.g.

- Competition between countries can hinder the exchange of guidelines etc.
- Awareness of the need for and value of animal welfare legislation among farmers and inspectors and the development of a positive attitude towards implementation
- Difference in how inspectors address farmers (control versus support)
- Existence of a shared understanding of the purpose of the legislation
- Inaccessibility of existing training (place, language)
- Difficulty to give concrete advice on what to do especially on small farms (Croatia, Slovenia)

3. What could the network do to address them? Several examples of best practice of remedial measures were considered which a future network could facilitate more widely in the EU.

- Germany demonstrates how differences between countries can be bridged. They engaged the authorities from all 16 federal states (Land) in translating the EU directive into actions and inspection criteria, based on a common interpretation. This document is used by the veterinary services in more then 400 Kreise (smaller administrative areas) where inspection takes place. It is also translated into guidelines for farmers.

- In Sweden they developed training for inspectors to ensure a more similar inspection process.

- In France they developed guidelines on how to implement the killing regulation for cattle. The participants agreed that it would be important to share these guidelines among MS.

Supporting and advising farmers in how to improve the situation on the farms was considered important by all, although it was also felt that inspection according to clear rules gives farmers security and assistance to do the right thing. In addition it was considered important to work towards a shared understanding of the purpose of the legislation especially among farmers and inspectors. Besides, more knowledge should be provided to the general public.

From the farmers viewpoint it is crucial that they understand that implementation works, how it contributes to improved welfare and how it works in practice. A shared training of inspectors and farmers worked very well in Sweden.

Discussions on Work package 3 Knowledge transfer strategies

Group 5. What can the results from WP3 tell us about knowledge transfer strategies for improving legislation compliance?

Training, guidance, welfare requirements work best if the industry can see economic or other advantages to what is being requested / required.
Most welcome are mechanisms for sharing material as a means of reducing workloads on CAs and can have potential to improve harmonisation.
A barrier can be the identification of the right people to address specific questions which could be reduced by a structured approach which a reference centre could facilitate.
Accessibility – can/should information be accessible to all, or is there capacity for 'specialist sharing'?
If you make it easy to share knowledge / information then it becomes possible. Nobody wants extra work and it is important that information is easy to understand and well presented.
The legislation promotes training activities and it might be possible to link to BTSF.
Although information availability on the web is useful there is added value in face to face contact.
This is where real interaction, exchange and sharing takes place but it is expensive.
Different countries have different structures – and therefore identifying different influences and key players in each country is important.
It is also important to be adaptable to both the content and the route of dissemination of the material.
Some countries have been doing things far longer than others, and it takes a period of time for changes to bed in and achieve harmonisation of welfare standards.
'Administration' is often the hub of success / failure – clear effective procedures, templates and data recording systems can be very effective in promoting change.
Knowledge is not only about 'requirements' but also about 'why is it important' from a welfare perspective? Sometimes the understanding of welfare and welfare science may of real value.

What are the limitations to Knowledge transfer?
Immediate reaction is often 'how much is it going to cost us'?
Welfare information has commonly been seen as an imposition.
Small producers have felt that the legislation was putting them at a disadvantage, and also that they felt left out of channels of communication.

The question is not now so much of the current state of the material, but more of the issue of maintaining and continuing to develop the material.

The meaning of words – translation – there may even be issues regarding the actual meaning of the words (for example 'manipulation').

Discussions on Work Package 4: Overarching analysis and conditions for future network

Task 4.1 To identify potential partners of a future coordinated European animal welfare network, and to determine their interest in and expectations of such a network. Group discussions 3 & 8: WP4 task 4.1 Qualification criteria for being in the network – Qualifications to be a reference centre.

It was difficult to discuss membership of a future network without knowing its exact missions and budget. The group positioned the role of the network in relation to the cycle of risk identification, assessment, management and implementation in relation to animal welfare as assisting Member States with implementation and monitoring of risk management procedures. See Figure 1

Figure 1 Cycle of activities involved in the development and the implementation of EU legislation on animal welfare explaining the role of network in relation to other EU activities in regard to AW : the role of the network is to facilitate compliance and smooth implementation of legislation
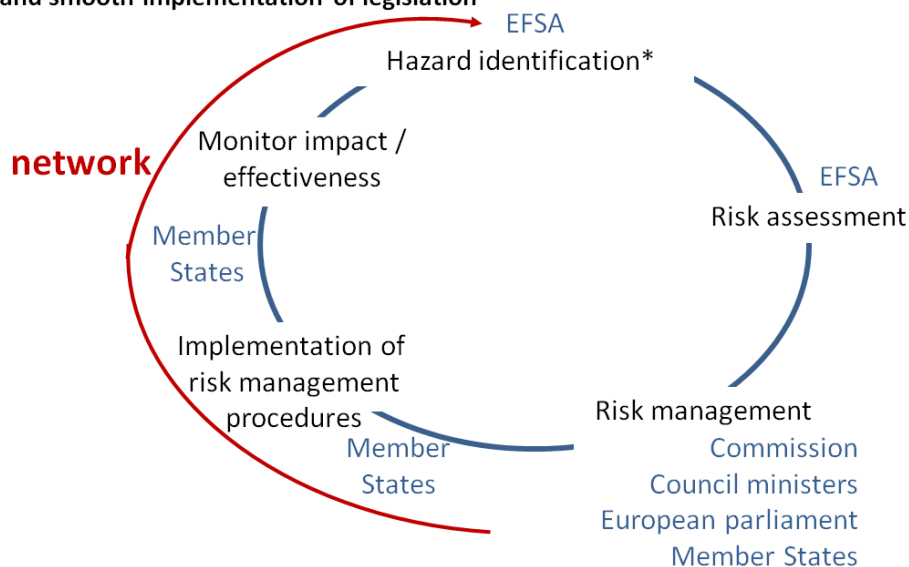
* Hazard identification = hazards for animal welfare (negative aspects)

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As the network's primary role will be to help Member States comply with EU legislation it would be appropriate to recommend that it is co-financed by EU and by Member States. A 2-layer organization was proposed with a few <u>reference centres</u> regionally based and interconnected with each other to form the inter-regional network. The second layer would consist of various institutions/organisations in each region connected to the reference centre forming regional networks. This organization would help build capacities in each region and improve training of staff of Competent Authorities. Regional centres should assist in overcoming possible cultural and linguistic barriers to improvements in animal welfare. Reference centres should have enough qualifications in terms of: possibility to be co-financed, quality of management and governance, ethical attitudes, technical expertise (to mobilize knowledge), understanding of the industry (to solve practical problems), critical mass, and capacity to mobilize a network. Regional centres should provide multidisciplinary scientific skills (including animal welfare and veterinary science, epidemiology, economics, social science); understanding of enforcement using both education and sanctions to change behaviour; they should be ready to share knowledge and translate it in practice. The quality management process along with regular reviews of reference centres is needed to maintain high standards. Based on the experience of the pilot network a reference centre could consist of one or several institutions and there would be benefits in rotating leadership within a region. Institutions connected with the regional centre shall be chosen according to their experience and record of successful contribution to improving animal welfare coupled with assurances of probity, ethics and resources.

Task 4.2: Construction and cost/benefit analysis of scenarios for a coordinated European animal welfare network
Group discussions 2 and 7 – Task 4.2 Evaluation of future scenarios

The group discussed three potential scenarios for the future Network.

Scenario 1: Management Board develops strategies etc. centrally. Each Member State (MS) has a Reference centre (RC) which can be organisation(s) which provide knowledge i.e. Universities and research institutes. The Coordinating Body (CB) deals with each RC. There are interactions between members of the Network in between MSs.

Scenario 2: The CB decentralises the scientific questions and strategies to dedicated RCs for each species (RC SP). The RC SP is situated in one MS and will be the reference for all other MSs. A RC SP can be an existing body designated/chosen based on its competencies. Each MS has a lead member for each species (M S) which liaises with the RC SP.

Scenario 4: The Management Board (MB) of the Network defines the knowledge strategies. The Coordination Body obtains scientific input from a scientific (advisory) committee and external experts. Each MS has a Reference Centre (RC) which can be a national authority or an organisation related to AW. The European Network here doesn't go into organisational issues inside the MSs

The wide ranging discussion went beyond the various scenarios presented and considered the following 6 issues.

Roles of the Network. A main aim of the network is to provide tools and knowledge to support people to do what they are supposed to do in the context of EU animal welfare legislation. This could also involve simplification/streamlining of activities. The work should mainly be based on existing knowledge although some practical applied research may be necessary. The Network could also play a role in preventing duplication of efforts. Farmers are not the only end users of the Network but also Competent Authorities (CAs) and the Commission could be considered an end user of data from the Network.

Prioritization of tasks. Identification of problem areas should be based on input from other institutions (EU Commission/DG SANCO, EFSA, FVO, MSs, etc.) as well as input from end users through the Network. On this basis the network's Coordinating Board plans a yearly work programme.

Reference Centres. It was estimated that there will be a budget for five or six reference centres which could either be identified according to geographical criteria (Western Europe, Northern Europe, etc.) or be based on a species or a topic area. They could be a 'virtual' network of people in different institutions or a physical institution. Also public-private partnerships were suggested.

Link to stakeholders. Stakeholders should be connected in some way to the Coordinating Body for instance in an Advisory board. The role of farmers was stressed in this connection.

Link to Member States (MSs). National 'contact points' could represent MSs and national Competent Authorities. They could spread information to end users and also gather feedback data and measures of effect. They could be related to slaughter contact points and/or could be linked to national 'branches' of the Network like the partner institutions in EUWelNet.

Coordinating Body should consist of a stable and permanent group of professionals. It should be proactive in analysing needs and suggesting activities. It should coordinate the activities of the Network/RCs and liaise with national animal welfare contact points both receiving and providing information from/to MSs and the Commission.

Task 4.3 To propose efficient and effecti**ve ways of monitoring the implementation of EU legislation on animal welfare.**

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Group 9 Task 4.3 Identification of examples of best practices for successful implementation of the EU regulation and effective monitoring.

Knowledge gaps:

'*Farmers do not believe that manipulable material is important*' even though there is evidence it is important for their welfare and that stressed animals have a less efficient immune system and are more prone to diseases. Farmers should be convinced that it is important and relevant to them to implement the regulation. There is a lack/paucity of studies that show the importance of these measures for better production systems and lack of studies linking animal welfare improvement with economic performance.

Farmers' workshops are useful for sharing best practices, producing and sharing videos: Finland has a web page on pig enrichment, alternatives to straw which addresses cost and other relevant issues for the implementation of the pig directive.

Clearer guidelines about the implementation: too much is left to the interpretation of the national or regional authorities which might be good in a context where there is already experience and knowledge (scientific and practical) but it is more problematic where these conditions are not present (e.g. what are the possible options for the '*manipulable material for pigs*?' *what are the costs for these options? Which ones are more suitable for my type of production*? etc. …)

More involvement of the farmers is needed in the definition of the guidelines for the implementation of the EU regulations: a good example is the Dairyman EU project that brought together farmers from different countries to discuss the different options for the successful innovative practices http://interdenominationally/en/dairyman. Other examples are the study groups in the Netherlands, the 'Animal Transport working group' that meet in Ireland, the Nordic Countries working group on animal welfare that meet twice a year.

A supportive action for a more consistent implementation of the EU animal welfare regulation could be the collection of photo and video material for developing guidelines for the national /regional authorities as well as for the organisation of educational initiative and training. A task for the Network of Centres on animal welfare could be to become a *warehouse* for the collection, dissemination, translation, update and maintenance of such material.

A possible task for the Network of Centres for AW could be to collect and prepare the material needed to facilitate the implementation of the future/ new EU animal welfare regulation.

Task 4.4: Determination of the effectiveness of knowledge strategies to overcome specific bottlenecks hampering implementation of EU legislation on animal welfare

Group 10 Task 4.4 – What are the key features of knowledge strategies that are likely to maximize their impact? How can reference centres support dissemination of animal welfare knowledge and compliance with legislation?

Four broad goals for welfare governance were agreed:

1. *Consistency between Member States* – "level playing field".

There is a need for clear agreed legislation and guidance from the European Commission. Full implementation of EU directives including appropriate process (e.g. inspection and non-compliance procedures) and outcomes.

2) *National Relevance & Engagement* – "common understanding"

There is a need for technical expertise to be available at national level which is able to promote engagement in developing and implementing policy using appropriate language. Research capacity at a national level should ensure research protocols have local relevance to welfare policy and also to communicate back to supranational level about the specificity of national systems of production

3) *Farmer involvement.* – "bottom-up approach"

There is a need for dialogue and active collaboration with existing farmer communities / networks / associations / co-operative groups during policy development and implementation to maximise their understanding and to develop sufficient technical expertise amongst farmer representatives to ensure active participation in developing the KT strategy. Where training programmes are used, these should ensure optimum educational methods and evaluation techniques are used to maximise educational benefit for farmers or other recipients.

4) *Relevance for consumers* – *"transparent, credible and meaningful"*

Making public the results of the monitoring in all the Member States.

Implementation of the legislation in line with consumer expectations.

Where national legislation goes beyond European requirements, consumers may also want to be informed on how and why there are such differences.

How can reference centres support dissemination of animal welfare knowledge and compliance with legislation?
S*upport for promoting implementation of legislation*

- help fill "knowledge gaps" within Member States / competent authorities but not replace the function of competent authorities.
- facilitate implementation of legislation e.g. make it easier for competent authorities
- share ideas on implementation between member states. This should also include review scientific merit of ideas and methods.
- aim to ensure an evidence-based approach to practical implementation. Needs to be distinct role from existing organisations e.g. EFSA & FVO

Work with suitable organisations
- respect existing organisational structures including different balance of public and private organisations.
- pro-actively facilitate exchange of ideas (even if no obvious organisational structures).

Deliver correct format
- use appropriate format of knowledge transfer for each target audience.
- evaluate the effectiveness of knowledge transfer approaches (Reaction, Knowledge, Behaviour, Results)
- use a range of formats, including lower cost options (e.g. e-learning, social media) as well as face to face methods (e.g. calibration between inspectors).

Assess the effectiveness of Knowledge Transfer programmes by assessing the following key impacts:

1. Reaction (What has been feedback from those involved?)

2. Learning (Has the initiative improved knowledge or skills?)

2. Behaviour (Has this increased knowledge changed the behaviour of people?)

4. Results (Has there been any change in welfare outcomes?)

Conclusions

David Pritchard noted the enthusiasm of the Board and thanked them for their constructive advice. It was clear that considerable trust and confidence has been built up between the project and the Board. Further ideas for the structure of a future network has been developed during discussions between the Board and the project. There appeared agreement on the need for a two tier structure of reference centres and associated regional networks. The board recognised the competing needs for Reference centres on a regional basis to facilitate KT and communication on the one hand and a species or topic basis to facilitate technical expertise on the other. A reference center is essentially a functional unit but it could be a virtual rather than fixed staff and buildings, Whilst it may be difficult to ensure independence of a network which included stakeholders it is essential to ensure its impartiality. Assurance of quality and credibility of outcome is essential so mechanisms for moderation audit and validation of reference centers and their associated networks are required. The Board welcomed the work done by the project in identifying mechanisms for sharing material as a means of reducing workloads on CAs and noted that it could have the potential to improve harmonisation. The pilot has demonstrated to the Board that a welfare network could add value by generating and disseminating best practice for implementing EU laws and practical measures useful for farmers and Competent Authorities as well the Commission.

Harry Blokhuis recalled the excellent quality of the reports on the progress from different WPs. Both the studies on implementation of EU law by various Member States and the comparison of different methods of knowledge transfer were at the cutting edge of work in these fields. He thanked the Board for the very good input through the reports from the group work on the first day and the plenary discussion on the second day. The meeting format works very well. To **keep it simple** is important. Start with **reality**. Stakeholders, farmers and industry are the groups we are working for. We have been careful to relate to the end users and come back to them. There are many possibilities as to how a network could be organised and the main points will be lifted in drawing our final report. The Advisory Board has made a good contribution and the project consortium now has a challenge to use this information.