Assessment Protocol for Measuring and Monitoring Sheep Welfare in Long Distance Transportation

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Why develop this protocol?

Each year thousands live sheep are transported huge distances across Europe on journeys lasting anything from 30-90 hours. With increasing duration of journey, the welfare of animals generally gets worse.
## Total number of live animals transported (intra Union trade and import to/export from EU)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>% change 2005-2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>4,209,196</td>
<td>9,112,233</td>
<td>4,335,078</td>
<td>+3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>3,973,008</td>
<td>4,222,859</td>
<td>4,299,255</td>
<td>+8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigs</td>
<td>16,438,637</td>
<td>21,696,563</td>
<td>27,802,500</td>
<td>+70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horses</td>
<td>176,348</td>
<td>224,449</td>
<td>147,122</td>
<td>-17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: EC Report, 2011, using data from Traces*
The Project:
SANCO/2011/GR/CRPA/SI2.610274

‘Development of an EU wide animal transport certification system and renovation of Control Posts in the European Union’

The project foresees:

- Renovation of Control Posts, located on important flows of animals in the EU, using high quality criteria;

- Elaboration of a scientifically based animal transport certification scheme of animals transported over long journeys.

Project COORDINATOR:
Dr Kees de ROEST, CRPA, Italy

www.controlpost.eu
WP2

LEADER: Dr Hans Spoolder
Wageningen UR Livestock Research

- To list potential criteria to assess compliance to legislation;
- To develop animal welfare assessment protocols for cattle, pigs, horses and sheep during transport (assessed shortly after transport);
- To train assessors in the use of these protocols;
- To develop animal welfare monitoring systems for drivers and third parties;
- To provide a checklist addressing animal welfare and compliance to legislation and that can be used for certification of transporters.
Base references

- Research papers
- EFSA Scientific Opinion, 2011
- EC Regulations
  - EC Regulation 1/2005
  - EU Council DIRECTIVE 98/58
  - Council Regulation 1255/97
- Existing Welfare Assessment Protocols
  - SANCO/D5/2010/CRPA/SI2.578062
  - Welfare Quality®
  - Institut de l’Elevage
- Literature Study
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welfare Criteria</th>
<th>Animal and Management based Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Absence of prolonged hunger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Absence of prolonged thirst</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Comfort around resting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Thermal comfort</td>
<td>Panting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Ease of movement</td>
<td>Slipping, falling, reluctance to move</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Absence of injuries</td>
<td>Dead on arrival, non-ambulatory, injuries Dead in resting pens Coughing Hampered respiration, exhaustion Handler performing forbidden practices, handler slapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Absence of disease</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Absence of pain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Expression of social behaviours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Expression of other behaviours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Good human-animal relationship</td>
<td>Handler moving excitedly, handler making loud noises, appropriate handling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Positive emotional state</td>
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### Welfare Criteria

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- Unloading duration, density, low deck height, bedding
- Bedding on the ramps, gaps or steps before the ramps, gaps between truck and lateral protections, gaps or steps after the ramps, blocking zones, ramp slope, slipping zones
- Hollow walls, sharp edges, lighting for animals, lighting for handlers
Protocol tested in practice in Greece and in Italy

50 transports were assessed (October 2012 - June 2013)

**Country of departure:**
- France (n=4)
- Greece (n=7)
- Hungary (n=14)
- Poland (n=1)
- Romania (n=18)
- Spain (n=6)

**Country of destination:**
- Greece (n=25)
- Italy (n=25)
Animal based and management based measures

AT ARRIVAL AND DURING UNLOADING

**Animals**
- Dead on arrival
- Non-ambulatory (downer)
- Coughing
- Injuries
- Falling
- Reluctance to move
- Slipping

**Handlers**
- Moving excitedly
- Making loud noise
- Slapping/ hitting
- Forbidden practices
- Appropriate handling
Animal based and management based measures in the RESTING PEN

Animals

- Dead in resting pen
- Exhaution
- Panting
- Hampered respiration

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Resource based and transport based measures
BEFORE UNLOADING STARTS

- Check with driver
- Type of truck
- Weather

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Resource based and transport based measures

DURING UNLOADING

- Duration of unloading
- Ramp covering
- Ramp flooring
- Ramp floor conditions
- Ramp lateral protections
- Gaps or steps before the ramp
- Gaps between lorry doors and lateral protections

- Gaps or steps after the ramp
- Ramp slope
- Blocking zones
- Lighting for orientation
- Lighting for handling

Photo Courtesy of NAGREF-VRI

Sossidou et al., 27 August 2013
Ramps: flooring, lateral protections, gaps between lorry doors and lateral protections, covering, gaps after the ramp
Ramp slope

50 cm
Resource based and transport based measures

AFTER UNLOADING

- Sheep density
- Bedding
- Deck height adequacy
- Sharp edges
- Water supply
- Temperature monitoring and control systems
Facilities, hygiene etc, were in most of the cases at acceptable levels;

Overcrowding: there was not sufficient space in 58% of the transports with unshorn sheep and in 38% of transports with shorn sheep;
Preliminary results from assessments (II)

- 12% of the trucks deck height was not adequate;

- In 8% of the trucks there were sharp edges;

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Preliminary results from assessments (III)

- Trucks often did not have digital **tachographs**;
- Trucks often had **GPS** that were out of order;
- In approximately 50% of the trucks, **drinking points** were not working and in 42% of the trucks there was no water available.
During unloading the percentage of falling animals and flocks were considerable (up to 100% of the flocks during unloading). This might be related to a too steep ramp slope (in 20% of the trucks) and handlers behaviour during unloading (in approx. 40% this was inappropriately).

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Ordinary problems for the assessors

- No reservation in CPs or last moment reservations;
- Non stop long distance transports of animals although in the transport documents it was declared a stop in a CP;
- Late arrivals on purpose aiming at avoiding the veterinary inspection;
- Vagueness in regards of estimated travel times and real travel times;
- Lack of communication between vet and transporter;
- Long distance transport of assessor to reach the place of animals’ unloading;
- Difficult access to the places of animals’ unloading;
Ordinary problems for the assessors

- ‘Slipping’ and ‘Slapping’ sometimes occur after the 3-meter assessing area, thus, these parameters should not be taken into account, no matter how intense they are;

- Mixing of unloaded animals with others from different trucks in resting pens was making the observations in ‘impossible’;

- Sometimes farmers were really suspicious about the activity.
CONCLUSIONS

Preliminary results indicated that the main parameters affecting sheep welfare are overcrowding, handler’s behaviour and deficiencies of truck equipment.
Acknowledgements

Merci pour vôtre attention!!!