

## **Annex C – Industry Training requirements in Directive 2007/43/EC**

### **Background**

The Directive 2007/43/EC lays down minimum rules for the protection of meat chickens (broilers). A specific part of this Directive (Article 4 (1) and (2)) contains provisions relating to the training of persons responsible for the welfare of meat chickens on the farm unit. The Directive states that these training courses should focus on animal welfare aspects of production and cover specific topics as listed in Annex IV of the Directive. Completion of training should be rewarded with a certification which is approved by the competent authority.

Article 4(3) of the Directive also allows member states to recognise prior experience and qualifications in lieu of completing a training course. This idea is commonly known as “Grandfather Rights”.

This part of the Directive is an important part of ensuring continued good practice in the Meat Chicken Industry. Stockmanship is a key factor in ensuring high standards of animal welfare for all species and in all different types of systems. Defra is keen to work with the meat chicken industry in this important area.

This part of the consultation document sets out our proposed ways of implementing this article of the Directive and also includes a set of questions to be answered by consultees.

### **Draft Statutory Instrument**

The training provisions of the Directive are implemented in paragraph 2 of the new Schedule 10 to the Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007, inserted by the draft Welfare of Farmed Animals and Mutilations (Permitted Procedures) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009.

### **Training Courses**

There are already existing qualifications in place that relate to working on poultry units and that cover a wide range of topics, including animal welfare. One of the main types qualifications available to livestock workers are National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

NVQs are qualifications that are nationally recognised and are relevant to an individual’s current employment. Workers train for these qualifications in their workplace. The NVQ is a valued qualification as it shows that a person can do the job in question to the standard the industry requires. The assessment is a mixture of a demonstration of competence in work activities and assessment of a portfolio of evidence built up over time. This type of learning and demonstration of competence is especially relevant for practical industries such as agriculture.

In the area of meat chicken production the relevant NVQ is in Livestock Production (Poultry) with options taken to reflect the type of unit on which the candidate works. The NVQ in livestock production is based on National Occupational Standards which

have been developed by Lantra, the Sector Skills Council for Agriculture. The awarding body is the National Proficiency Test Council (part of the City and Guilds Group). As with all bodies which award qualifications the NPTC is accredited by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) which oversees the work of awarding bodies in England. The QCA is a Non-departmental Public Body of the Department of Children, Schools and Families. The work of the QCA is currently being moved to a new body called Ofqual, this new regulator will be responsible to Parliament rather than Government Ministers.

This NVQ in Livestock Production Poultry is made up of both mandatory and optional units. The importance of animal welfare is reflected in the fact that the unit “LP4 – Assist in establishing and maintaining conditions appropriate to the welfare of livestock” is mandatory as is “LP5 – Assist with maintaining the healthy performance of livestock”.

LP4 covers areas such as accommodation/living conditions, providing the right level and quality of food and water, dealing with livestock emergencies, record-keeping and knowledge of physical and behavioural change. Candidates must demonstrate knowledge of the appropriate legislation, codes of practice and the five freedoms.

LP5 covers areas such as inspecting livestock for signs of health, ill health and well being and subsequently administering the necessary treatments with the right equipment to animals with problems and completing accurate records of the process.

We are proposing that a Level 2 NVQ in Livestock Production (poultry) is the minimum qualification that stock-keepers working on broiler units should hold. This links in with the work of the poultry industry’s “Poultry Meat Training Initiative”.

### **Recognition of prior experience**

The directive offers Member States the options to recognise prior experience obtained before 30 June 2010 in lieu of completion of a training course and that Member States will issue certificates attesting to this experience. These systems are often colloquially known as a “grandfather rights”.

Defra believes that good stockmanship is the key to high standards of animal welfare and recognises that formal training courses and assessment to set national standards provides confidence in an individual’s ability to do a good job. However, we also recognise that many workers in the poultry industry have many years of practical experience at looking after birds and are excellent stock-keepers. Such workers may also hold a range of qualifications in an appropriate subject.

Defra is proposing that a recognition of prior experience scheme will operate for a limited period. This scheme will be based on knowledge of the topics set out in the Directive in Annex IV and knowledge of the legislation and welfare code. It is anticipated that this scheme will be run via a self-declaration of this competence to the Competent Authority followed by the issue of a certificate. These certificates of prior experience would need to be presented at inspections by Animal Health. If welfare problems were found at units with stock-keepers with prior experience certificates Animal Health would take appropriate actions. This could include a

written warning to stock-keepers to seek training as necessary and obtain a national qualification as detailed above. It is likely that the process of obtaining a certificate of prior experience would involve a charge by the competent authority to cover administration.

Existing industry workers who hold NVQs, HNDs or Agricultural Degrees will be able to present their certificates during Animal Health inspections as evidence of their training and assessment.

### **Code of Recommendations**

For many years Defra has produced a series of Codes of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock. The existing meat chicken code was released in 2002. As set out in the Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulation 2007 any person responsible for a farmed animal must not attend to the animal unless he is acquainted with any relevant code of practice and has access to the code while attending to the animal. In addition people who employ or engage any persons to attend to a farmed animal must ensure that said persons have received instruction and guidance on the code and are familiar with the code and have access when attending to the animals.

Nothing in this new Directive and national legislation will alter this provision, therefore stock-keepers, unit managers and companies will need to ensure that they and their employees are familiar with the new Code of Recommendations that will reflect the new legislation.

This links into any formal training and assessment being undertaken as knowledge of the code and its provisions is an important part of the NVQ in livestock production.

**Question: Comments and suggestions are welcome on any aspect of our proposed methods of implementing the training provision of the Directive via the use of NVQs. In particular we welcome views on our proposal to run a “grandfather rights” scheme. Is this something that is needed and how many farmers and stock-keepers would wish to take advantage of this scheme?**