

Annex D - Implementation of the Meat Chicken Directive - Animal Health

Registration of Premises

1. To ensure compliance with the new Regulations, Animal Health will need to record certain information about meat chicken producers. Rather than impose burdens on producers, Animal Health will utilise existing information which producers have already provided to the GB Poultry Register.* It is envisaged that premises currently on the GB Poultry Register identified as keeping 500 or more conventionally reared birds for meat production will receive a partially pre-populated registration form from Animal Health. In addition to confirming that current details are correct, producers will be required to supply supplementary information e.g. house identification, maximum stocking density for each house, company and private veterinary surgeon.

2. Producers will need to register by 30 June 2010. Producers who wish to stock houses at a density of more than 33kg/m² up to a maximum of 39kg/m² kilograms per square metre must send this completed form to Animal Health at least 15 working days before stocking at that density. Animal Health will not require prior inspection and approval of these premises. However if information held by Animal Health suggests that there may be non-compliance, inspection of the site will be arranged at the earliest opportunity.

3. Producers who wish to stock houses at a density above 39kg/m² up to a maximum of 42kg/m² must send a completed form to Animal Health at least 15 days before stocking at that density (ideally slightly earlier.) Animal Health will require inspection and approval of these premises prior to stocking at this higher density. Inspections will check compliance with the appropriate provisions of Directive 2007/43/EC as transposed through the draft Regulations.

4. Approval for stocking at a density above 39kg/m² may be withdrawn if Animal Health acquire information which demonstrates that the appropriate provisions of the Regulations are not being met e.g. an on-farm inspection or welfare concerns raised through slaughterhouse monitoring.

Procedure for dealing with welfare concerns identified by the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS)

5. Animal Health will receive notification of potential welfare issues from the MHS through a single point of contact. The notification will be risk assessed and a recommendation will be sent to the relevant Animal Health Divisional Office for appropriate action. A local veterinary officer will review the case based on the recommendation and any locally held information. This is expected to result in a telephone enquiry to gain supplementary information to enable assessment as to whether a site inspection is required. The outcome of the full assessment will result in the person responsible for the birds receiving a letter confirming discussions and outcomes. If the outcome is a site inspection, this will be arranged at an appropriate time.

6. During the inspection the officer will carry out on site checks to ensure compliance with the Statutory Instrument and discuss any remedial action. The inspection may result in no further action, development of an action plan by the person responsible or further inspections and enforcement action if necessary. Discussions and outcomes of site inspection will be confirmed in writing to the person responsible. MHS will also be kept informed of outcomes as a result of their notifications.

Risk Based Inspection Model

7. Animal Health will carry out a number of inspections to ensure compliance with the draft Regulations. These will be undertaken using a risk based approach. The detail of the risk based inspection model is still to be developed however it is expected to be based on the following criteria:

- Has Animal Health visited the production site before
- Has Animal Health visited the Company before
- Have there been any previous notifications of welfare issues from MHS
- What were the findings at previous visits – welfare compliance/non-compliance
- Mortality rate – taken from ‘Food Chain Information’ provided by MHS, i.e. no of birds affected in house/shed.
- House stocking density.

Enforcement Activity

8. The current enforcement arrangements will be maintained whereby prosecutions will be undertaken by the appropriate Local Authority with evidence supplied by Animal Health.

Questions for Consultation

Question: What are your views on the proposed system for notification of stocking density and approval?

Question: Do you have comments on the proposed system of communication between Animal Health and the Meat Hygiene Service?

*'consistent with the changes of use of the Register which came into effect on 1 August 2008. Ref:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2008/080717b.htm>