

Annex E: Implementation of the meat chicken Directive: Slaughterhouse Activity and Meat Hygiene Service

Monitoring at the slaughterhouse by the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) represents a vital component of the meat chicken Directive. Importantly it is here that welfare outcomes will be measured and acted upon. This document outlines the main changes that will be required to operations in the slaughterhouse once the Directive comes into force.

Information required at the slaughterhouse

The information that producers will be required to provide at the slaughterhouse will build upon that currently provided in the food chain information report.

All producers will be asked to provide the following additional information:

1. **Stocking density** – Maximum throughout the production cycle.
2. **Batch number or load number** (optional) – In the situation that chickens from a given house are not taken for slaughter together, a batch number will be useful so that data (e.g. total flock mortality) can be calculated on a house basis.
3. **CPH number** – Producers who do not currently have a CPH number will be provided with one when they register with Animal Health (AH) (see Annex D for further information on registration).

Additionally, for flocks stocked above 33kg/m², further information will be required:

4. **Breed or hybrid line of the chickens**
5. **Daily mortality rate** – the Directive defines this as *“the number of chickens which have died in a house on the same day including those that have been culled either for disease or because of other reasons divided by the number of chickens present in the house on that day, multiplied by 100.”* The intention of the Directive is for producers to provide a mortality rate for each day of the production cycle. Having explored this at length it does not appear practicable at this stage, either from the position of industry having to provide this data or from the position of the MHS having to record and collate this data. For this reason, producers will instead continue to be asked for ‘House mortality to age when the Food Chain Information completed’. This is the ‘crude’ mortality rate, which is defined as the total number of chickens which have died or been culled to date divided by the number of chickens placed in the house. A trigger level will be set with respect to this value, and if the value provided exceeds this trigger level the producer may be asked to provide mortality rates for each day of the production cycle (which they are legally obliged to keep). Additionally, producers will continue to be asked to provide a single mortality rate value for the last 7-14 days of production.

Question: What are your opinions on only requiring producers to provide mortality rate data for each day of production when the value provided for

'House mortality to age when the Food Chain Information completed' exceeds a set trigger level?

- 6. Cumulative daily mortality rate** – the Directive defines this as “*the sum of daily mortality rates*”. This value is not the same as the crude mortality rate that producers currently provide within the field “House mortality to age when the Food Chain Information completed” (defined above). The cumulative daily mortality rate is more complex to calculate and, to begin with, producers will be given the option of providing the crude mortality rate value that they are already familiar with. Guidance will be made available on the calculation of cumulative daily mortality rate and, over time, we will request producers to change to providing the cumulative daily mortality rate.

Welfare monitoring and follow-up

There will no change to the procedures for carrying out ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections in the slaughterhouse. Several of the post-mortem inspection conditions that are currently recorded have been identified as potential indicators of on-farm welfare. Trigger levels will be established for these conditions on the basis of data collected in 2009. In situations where these levels are exceeded, producers will be notified (as they are currently informed of their inspection results) and, additionally, information will be passed on to AH who will consider whether or not an on-farm welfare inspection is required. Similarly, AH will be informed when mortality rates exceed set levels and this may also trigger an on-farm welfare inspection. MHS will also be kept informed of outcomes as a result of their notifications (see Annex D for further information on AH welfare inspections triggered by slaughterhouse information).

Two further checks will be carried out at the slaughterhouse. Firstly, the stocking density provided by producers will be checked against AH records to ensure that producers stocking above 33kg/m² have notified AH. Secondly, as required by the Directive, the plausibility of mortality rate data provided by producers will be checked automatically by taking into account the number of chickens placed, the number slaughtered and the number dead on arrival at the slaughterhouse.

Question: What are your overall opinions on the proposed monitoring and follow-up procedures at the slaughterhouse?