

FARM ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT

2005



THE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE & FOOD
AN ROINN TALMHAÍOCHTA AGUS BIA

Members of the Public and Interested Parties wishing to communicate with the Council on issues relating to Farm Animal Welfare can do so by contacting the:

Secretary
Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council
Department of Agriculture and Food
Kildare Street
Dublin 2
Tel. 01-6072049
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STATEMENT FROM CHAIRMAN

I am delighted to welcome you to this review of the work of the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council (FAWAC). Established in 2002, the Council has in its relatively short life been very successful in promoting animal welfare in a practical way and continues to address a number of important issues. The high workload of Council members is reflected in the large amount of meetings held throughout 2005.



FAWAC continues to produce booklets on animal welfare guidelines and in this regard it launched in June 2005, Animal Welfare Guidelines for Horses, Ponies and Donkeys. The guidelines have been developed with the intention of encouraging farmers to adopt and maintain the highest standards of animal husbandry.

Other areas of animal welfare considered by FAWAC were those concerning fur farming and ritual slaughter without stunning. Council heard presentations on these issues from interested parties and its deliberations are ongoing.

In 2005, FAWAC also produced a report entitled "Availability of Veterinary Medicines in Ireland" which was presented to the Minister for Agriculture and Food in September 2005. The advice given by Council on veterinary medicines is grounded on a good scientific basis and on a practical approach and I am happy to report that those recommendations specific to the Department of Agriculture and Food were addressed in the Animal Remedies Regulations enacted in November 2005.

At the request of FAWAC, The Scientific Advisory Committee on Animal Health and Welfare looked at the use of electro-immobilisation on farm animals in Ireland from the perspective of the physical and psychological effects on animals subjected to the procedure. Following this, a report was produced on the use of electro-immobilisation on farm animals in Ireland. This committee presented its findings to the Minister of Agriculture and Food, in June 2005. It advocated the introduction of legislation banning the use of electro-immobilisation in restraint of animals other than in slaughter plants *post mortem*. The Department of Agriculture and Food sought the considered views of various stakeholders on this issue. The responses received have expressed various and contrasting perspectives. In particular, a number have argued for electro-immobilisation to be prohibited. They contend that its use is unnecessary and aversive to animals and that a combination of early interventions and the use of more humane methods provide preferable options. As against that, others maintain that it is necessary to retain the electro-immobilisation option principally to provide for the safety of persons engaged in the handling of fractious animals in the perceived absence of other control methods. The Department is currently evaluating the significance of the issues raised and it is expected that it will complete its deliberations in the near future.

I am also happy to report that the roll-out of the Early Warning System continued in 2005 and is now operating in every county in Ireland.

There are a number of important welfare issues which will feature over the coming year – the transport of live animals on which a Regulation was agreed in December 2004 with various elements to be implemented over the next few years.

We are currently working on producing guidelines on the Welfare of Broiler Chickens following the outcome of discussions at EU level and hope to finalise and publish these in 2006.

Later this year, we hope to invite Professor Christopher Wathes, Chairman of the Farm Animal Welfare Council in the United Kingdom, to address one of our meetings. We look forward to hearing him outline his views and vision for the future of animal welfare.

The recent introduction of the Single Payment Scheme has brought about a major change in the way farming is supported by the European Union through the Common Agricultural Policy. The role of agriculture is changing along with the expectations of modern society in relation to issues such as food safety, the environment, and animal welfare standards.

On a global basis, the recent initiative by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) to become the leading international organisation in the field of animal welfare is to be welcomed and I am of the view that it is a positive move towards promoting better animal welfare. Council also monitors The European Food Safety Authority, which impinges on animal welfare, and we have been in contact with other member states regarding farm animal welfare with a view to developing links with them.

I would like to thank all those who supplied information or made presentations to Council over the past year. As you can imagine, these have made a very positive contribution to the work of FAWAC and I think all members would agree with me when I say that the work of Council would not be possible without their invaluable help.

The contribution of the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council is a further important step in advancing animal welfare and maintaining public and consumer confidence, and I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to all of the members of Council for their very constructive approach to our work.

On behalf of Council, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Minister Mary Coughlan TD, for her support throughout the past year and for her positive response to the recommendations made to her by Council.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support given by the Department of Agriculture and Food and to thank our Secretary, Ms Teresa O'Halloran and Ms Irene Dunne, Secretary to the sub-groups.

Ag súil go mbeidh dea-thoradh ar ár gcuid oibre amach anseo.

Professor Patrick Fottrell
Chairman

December 2006

FARM ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council (FAWAC) was established in 2002 and brought together for the first time in Ireland, representatives of the principal stakeholders from other Departments – North and South – to veterinary representatives, in an advisory body to the Minister. It has a broad mandate. The Council is a non-statutory body and is independently chaired. The Council provides a permanent forum whereby each of the organizations with their different perspectives on farm animal welfare, can meet to try to reach consensus on various aspects of the welfare issues. Such consensus represents a valuable input to policy formulation, whether in relation to national initiatives or proposals at EU level. The Council identifies ways in which the welfare of farm animals can be further improved and prioritises areas requiring attention. The need to ensure proper protection for animals and the desire to maintain consumer confidence in animal products is a key task for Irish farmers in the future.

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

- * To identify ways in which the welfare of farm animals can be further improved and to prioritise areas requiring attention.
- * At the request of the Minister/Department of Agriculture and Food, to consider and advise on proposals for EU and national legislation relating to farm animals.
- * To consider ways of increasing public awareness and development and dissemination of information relating to welfare of farm animals as the Minister may seek from time to time.

QUORUM

A Quorum was established by the Council, to ensure that meetings would be properly constituted with the presence of a sufficient number of members to reflect the spectrum of interests.

Groupings represented are as follows:

- * **Departments/State:** Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF); Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Northern Ireland (DARDNI); Teagasc; (4 persons in all),
- * **Farm Bodies:** Irish Farmers' Association (IFA); Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association (ICMSA); Irish Co-operative Organisation Society Ltd (ICOS); Committee for Irish Livestock, Dealers, Exporters, Hauliers and Shippers; (6 persons in all),
- * **Welfare Bodies:** Compassion in World Farming (CIWF); Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ISPCA); Wexford Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (WSPCA); (3 persons in all),
- * **Veterinary Interests:** Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University College Dublin (UCD); Veterinary Ireland; (3 persons in all).

The quorum is based simply on the number of members of FAWAC present at any given meeting, taking account of the different perspectives involved. It will be based on a combination of numbers of members present and groupings represented. On this basis the quorum will be **8 members**, excluding the Chair and Secretary, comprised of **no less than 2 from each of the groupings** mentioned.

CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE FARM ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Chairman

Professor Patrick Fottrell

Former President of the National University of Ireland, Galway. He is also a member of the Board of Teagasc and has chaired several other government committees.

Members

Dr Alison J Hanlon

Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University College Dublin.

Mr Jackie Cahill

Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association.

Ms Colette Connor

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Northern Ireland.

Ms Mary-Anne Bartlett

Compassion in World Farming.

Mr Tom Doyle

Irish Co-operative Society Association.

Ms Angela McCarthy

The Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Dr Bernadette Earley

Teagasc Research Centre.

Ms Barbara Bent

Wexford Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Mr Sean O'Laoide

Veterinary Ireland. Vice President of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe.

Mr Dermot Sparrow

Veterinary Ireland.

Mr Stephen Foley

Committee for Irish Livestock, Dealers, Exporters, Hauliers and Shippers.

Mr Kevin Kinsella

Irish Farmers' Association.

Mr Richard Kennedy

Irish Farmers' Association.

Mr John Bryan

Irish Farmers' Association.

Mr Tom O' Donnell

Department of Agriculture and Food.

Mr Martin Blake

Department of Agriculture and Food.

Secretary:

Ms Teresa O'Halloran.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

In 2005 the Council held five meetings. The sub-groups met on fifteen occasions during the course of the year. Minister Mary Coughlan TD, addressed the June meeting and officially met members of Council. In her address she re-iterated the importance of the welfare of farm animals particularly in a country where agriculture continues to be such an important sector, and where animal welfare has become a high priority among the general public. She thanked Council for their valuable advice to herself and her predecessor.



Minister with Council at meeting in June

PUBLICATIONS 2005

FAWAC Biennial Report 2003/2004

The Animal Welfare Guidelines for Horses, Ponies and Donkeys

These and all other reports produced by FAWAC are available on our website
www.agriculture.gov.ie/fawac

CONTACT US

If you would like to find out any further information about the Council please contact:

The Secretary
Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council
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Kildare Street
Dublin 2
Ireland

Tel: 00 353 1 6072049
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Email: fawac@agriculture.gov.ie
Website: www.agriculture.gov.ie/fawac

The minutes of all Council meetings held are posted on the FAWAC Website.

WORKING GROUPS

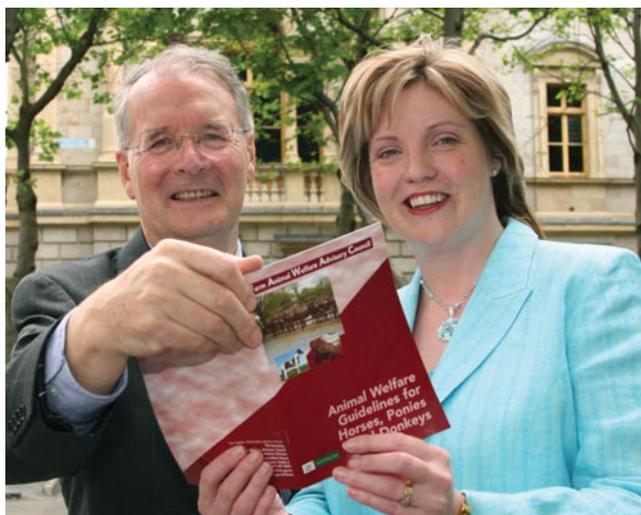
The Council carries out detailed reviews in small sub / working groups comprising a cross section of members. They are responsible for providing detailed research and advice for discussion and endorsement by Council.

Farm Animal Welfare Education Sub-Group

The work programme includes a Sub-Group on Education, to compile guidelines on welfare codes for farmers. Five meetings were held during the year.

Education Guidelines published by FAWAC in 2005

Minister Mary Coughlan TD, launched the Animal Welfare Guidelines for Horses, Ponies and Donkeys, in June 2005. Feedback to Council regarding the impact of these guidelines has been very positive.



Fawac Chairman Prof. Patrick Fottrell and Minister for Agriculture and Food, Ms Mary Coughlan TD at the launch of guidelines for Horses, Ponies and Donkeys in June 2005

Horse Welfare

In February 2005, Council expressed concerns in relation to horse welfare, in particular, the requirement that carcasses of the 'non-food' horse, and horses 'without passports' to be excluded from the food chain. There was a view that this could lead to serious welfare issues, particularly as a result of the increasing cost of the disposal of animal by-products. Council has made recommendations to the Minister to facilitate the establishment of a Working Group of key stakeholders to ensure that Ireland puts in place contingency plans to avert this potential welfare problem and the potential damage to the reputation of the Irish horse industry.

Broiler Welfare

The farming of chickens for meat production (broiler chickens) represents an important farming sector within the EU and is one of the most intensive farming systems. This type of production presents challenges for the welfare and health of the animals in question. Council Directive 98/58/EC, The Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes, which is general in scope, currently covers the welfare aspects of the meat bird sector.

The EU Commission has considered the matter, following a report from the Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare in March 2000, and on the basis of these considerations has prepared a proposal for a Council Directive laying down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production (presented by the Commission 30.05.2005). As a result of this proposed Directive, the Education sub-group decided to commence working on publishing broiler welfare guidelines aimed at those working in the industry. In December 2005, this group reported that the document was near completion however they will not be able to finalise the report until The Broiler Welfare Directive has been adopted at EU and National level. The Council will continue to monitor this matter.

Members of Education Sub-Group

Mr Sean O'Laoide - Chairperson, (Veterinary Ireland)

Ms Barbara Bent - (Wexford SPCA)

Dr Bernadette Earley - (Teagasc)

Mr Dermot Sparrow - (Veterinary Ireland)

Mr John Stack - (IFA)

Mr Michael Flynn - (IFA)

Mr Niall O'Nuallain - (co-opted from DAF)

Mr Ned Morrissey - (co-opted from IFA)

Veterinary Medicines Working Group

It was agreed that the non-availability of certain veterinary medicines was having a negative impact on the welfare of farm animals in some cases. To discuss this matter and report to Council, a Veterinary Medicines Working Group was established. The group held three meetings during the year and produced a report that was presented to Minister Mary Coughlan TD, in June 2005.

Many of the solutions contained in the report have to be implemented at both National and EU level including changes to EU legislation, monitoring of the Pharmaceutical industry, information on the availability and permitted use of medicines, labelling controls etc. Information should be more readily available at farm level and to veterinary surgeons. It also suggests that grant aid be made available for development of veterinary medicines.

The Minister for Agriculture and Food formally responded to the report stating that she has dealt with the recommendations appropriate to her Department to the extent that it is possible to do so within the current legal and other relevant frameworks. It is worthy to note that the Department of Agriculture and Food has forwarded a copy of the report to the EU Commission with a view to advancing the issues appropriate to that body. Other issues raised by this report remain to be addressed by the industry itself. Council is aware that a lot of progress is being made but that the issue must continue to be prioritised and progressed.

The Department of Agriculture and Food published draft legislation entitled Animal Remedies Regulations 2005 and engaged in a public consultation process. The Animal Remedies Regulations 2005 were finally adopted in November 2005 but are to be revisited in the future re. *exemption criteria*. Council will continue to engage with the Department on an ongoing basis for updates on developments as well as continue to monitor progress in this area.

The Report on Availability of Veterinary Medicines in Ireland is available on the FAWAC website: www.agriculture.gov.ie/fawac

Members of Working Group on Veterinary Medicines

Mr Dermot Sparrow - Chairperson, (Veterinary Ireland)
Ms Colette Connor - (DARDNI)
Mr Tom Doyle - (ICOS)
Mr Sean O'Laoide - (Veterinary Ireland)
Mr John Stack - (IFA)
Dr Thomas Barragry - (co-opted from UCD)
Mr Pat Brangan - (co-opted from DAF)
Mr Philip Kirwan - (co-opted from DAF)
Mr Lorcan McCabe - (co-opted from ICMSA)

DAFI/IFA/ISPCA Collaborative Early Warning/Intervention System for Animal Welfare Cases (EWS)

In 2004, FAWAC introduced an Early Warning/Intervention System (EWS) for animal welfare cases involving the Department of Agriculture and Food, Irish Farmers' Association and the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

The objective of this system is to provide a framework within which farm animal welfare problems can be spotted before they become critical or overwhelming. This will in turn facilitate timely, effective and sensitive intervention or the provision of assistance by, as appropriate, public agencies, neighbours, farming bodies and welfare groups. The new system will allow for concerned individuals to approach their local IFA representatives, their local SPCA or indeed the Department in the knowledge that the matter will thereafter be dealt with in the most effective, timely and sensitive manner. This can only be to the benefit of the animals themselves and the persons concerned. However, where circumstances so warrant, it is recognised that prosecutions may be taken by the Department of Agriculture and Food. The role of the Garda Síochána under the Protection of Animals Acts 1911 and 1965 is also acknowledged.

The EWS commenced as a pilot system in November 2004 in Counties Donegal, Roscommon, Carlow, Wexford and Kilkenny. A decision was made to roll it out on a regional basis and it is currently operating in the North West, North East and South West regions since October and December 2005 respectively. The system will become operational in the final region i.e. the South East in the second week of January 2006. It is important that the three representatives from each county should arrange meetings at local level to get to know each other, share experiences and exchange information and views.

Four meetings were held in 2005 and the Steering-Group attended all of them. The response and attendance of participating organizations at meetings has been very good. Some of the key issues discussed throughout the year include concern for farmers who are experiencing financial problems, overstocking, repeat renting of land, not feeding animals, dead animals, sheep scab, disposal of casualty animals, the change in farming practices, and the growth in part time farming. All members expressed concern about people who continue to break the law regarding the welfare of their farm animals. It is agreed that trust amongst all parties involved is crucial. It is envisaged that meetings will take place on a regional basis in 2006. The group is working towards stimulating greater public inter-action and awareness.

Members of Steering Group on Co-Operation

Mr Tom O'Donnell, Chairman, (DAF)
Mr Michael Flynn, (IFA)
Mr Pat Murray, (IFA)
Mr Sean O'Leary, (IFA)
Ms Elizabeth Tilson, (IFA)
Ms Barbara Bent, (Wexford SPCA)
Ms Angela McCarthy, (ISPCA)
Ms Irene Bergin, (ISPCA)
Mr Niall O'Nuallain, (DAF)
Mr Michael Fallon, (DAF)
Mr Martin Blake, (DAF)



South East Region EWS Team



North East Region EWS Team



North West Region EWS Team



South West Region EWS Team

Regional Groups on Co-Operation 2005



Use of Electro-immobilisation on Live Farm Animals in Ireland (EI)

The Scientific Advisory Committee on Animal Health and Welfare issued a report in March 2005 to the Minister of Agriculture and Food, advocating the introduction of legislation barring the use of EI in restraint of animals other than in slaughter plants *post mortem*. DAF has consulted with all the relevant stakeholders and all have responded. Their views were submitted and are being considered at present by the Minister. Improvements in the availability of veterinary sedatives and the rise of administering veterinary medicines to feral animals was also discussed.

Disbudding calves

Council are looking at ways of encouraging farmers to disbud calves at a very early stage and also at the possible introduction of a ban on the practice of de-horning mature animals. Reference was made to Norway, where de-horning must be performed before the age of six weeks by a veterinarian. Usually, sedation is used and local anesthesia must be used, and from 2005, some form of long lasting painkiller must also be administered. There is a view that should the use of EI be prohibited, it should be done on a phased basis with a total ban on de-horning animals over a certain age – a strategic approach is needed. The Council will continue to monitor the developments in this area.

EU Review of Slaughter of Animals Legislation

It was felt that there was a need to progress a routine contingency dispatch protocol for the slaughter of individual animals on-farm, particularly where it is not viable to transport the animal to an abattoir for disposal. This is to be followed up with the development of a protocol for the mass on-farm slaughter of animals particularly in disease situations. It is suggested that situations whereby animals are locked up by the State for disease control reasons should also be looked at with regard to the welfare of those animals.

PRESENTATIONS RECEIVED BY COUNCIL

Ritual Slaughter without Stunning

2004

- * Dr Yakkov Pearlman, Chief Rabbi, Jewish Representative Council of Ireland.
- * Mr Steve Wotton, HNC, MSc., AW Training, Department of Clinical Veterinary Science, Division of Farm Animal Science, University of Bristol, UK.

2005

- * Mr Ali Saleem, Islamic Cultural Centre Dublin (ICCD).

The ICCD and the Council continue to engage with a view to all parties coming to a satisfactory conclusion.

Fur Farming

Following a number of presentations on fur farming it was agreed that there is a need for the Department of Agriculture and Food to look at the possibility of registering all fur premises including rabbit, minx and fox farms. Council discussed the introduction of an Enabling Act in order for specific areas, not covered by any welfare legislation, to be legislated for. A letter issued to the Minister recommending introduction of enabling legislation. The Minister has responded by acknowledging that her Department is responsible for the protection of farmed animals, however, as regards other categories of animals, it is the responsibility of other Departments/Agencies. It should be pointed out that the Department of Agriculture and Food had at an earlier stage sought to set up an inter-departmental committee to address some aspects relating to welfare and other related issues for these non-farmed animals. The Minister is considering the request of Council to convene an inter-departmental committee in order to regulate the non-farm animal welfare sector. Council will continue to monitor this issue.

Welfare Quality

Council received a presentation from Mr Cathal Cowen, Teagasc Food Marketing Research Group, on 'Welfare Quality - Science and Society Improving Animal Welfare' - further information can be obtained on www.welfarequality.net

TRANSPORT OF ANIMALS

Under Council Regulation (EC) 1/2005, which comes into effect on 1 January 2007, there is a proposal that transporters/operators will require a certificate of competence. This Council has identified the need to address the provision of training. This is planned for early 2006. The possibility of producing Animal Welfare Guidelines for farmers engaged in transporting was discussed.

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF FAWAC

Council is monitoring the impact of FAWAC publications generally and is keen to communicate directly and more effectively with farmers and consumers. It intends to stimulate greater public inter-action and awareness of FAWAC especially having regard to the range of activities undertaken which impact directly or indirectly on the general public. Council will continue to monitor progress in this area.

ISSUES RAISED DURING THE YEAR

Fish Farming

After several presentations concerning the welfare of farmed fish, Council decided to make recommendations to the Minister for Agriculture and Food with a request that she convey these concerns to the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

Use of Calving Jacks

Discussions took place concerning the proper use of calving jacks.

Passport for Horses

Concern was raised regarding enforcement of horse passport requirements particularly between Irish and UK ports. A letter, agreed by all members, was drafted regarding humane disposal of horses and was issued to the Minister for Agriculture and Food. Council will follow up this issue in 2006.

Ragwort

The proliferation of ragwort around the countryside and the danger that this presents to animals was also discussed. The Department of Agriculture and Food stated that this comes under the Noxious Weeds Act 1936. It is hoped to raise awareness, via the press, to all occupiers and owners of land that they have a legal obligation to control noxious weeds.

FUTURE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Review of current legislation with regard to availability of vet medicine following report by working group on vet medicine,

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Animal welfare at marts and markets,

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Welfare of battery caged hens,

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Animal welfare/school programmes/the consumer,

↓
Transport of horses and horse welfare,

↓
Visit to FAWC UK, liase with similar organisations within EU,

↓
Slaughter of animals on-farm/routine contingency dispatch protocol, monitor welfare of animals held by the state, possible publication of guidelines for the slaughter of animals on farms,

↓
Possible review of Electro Immobilisation with regard to use on live farm animals and development of a strategic approach for disbudding calves,

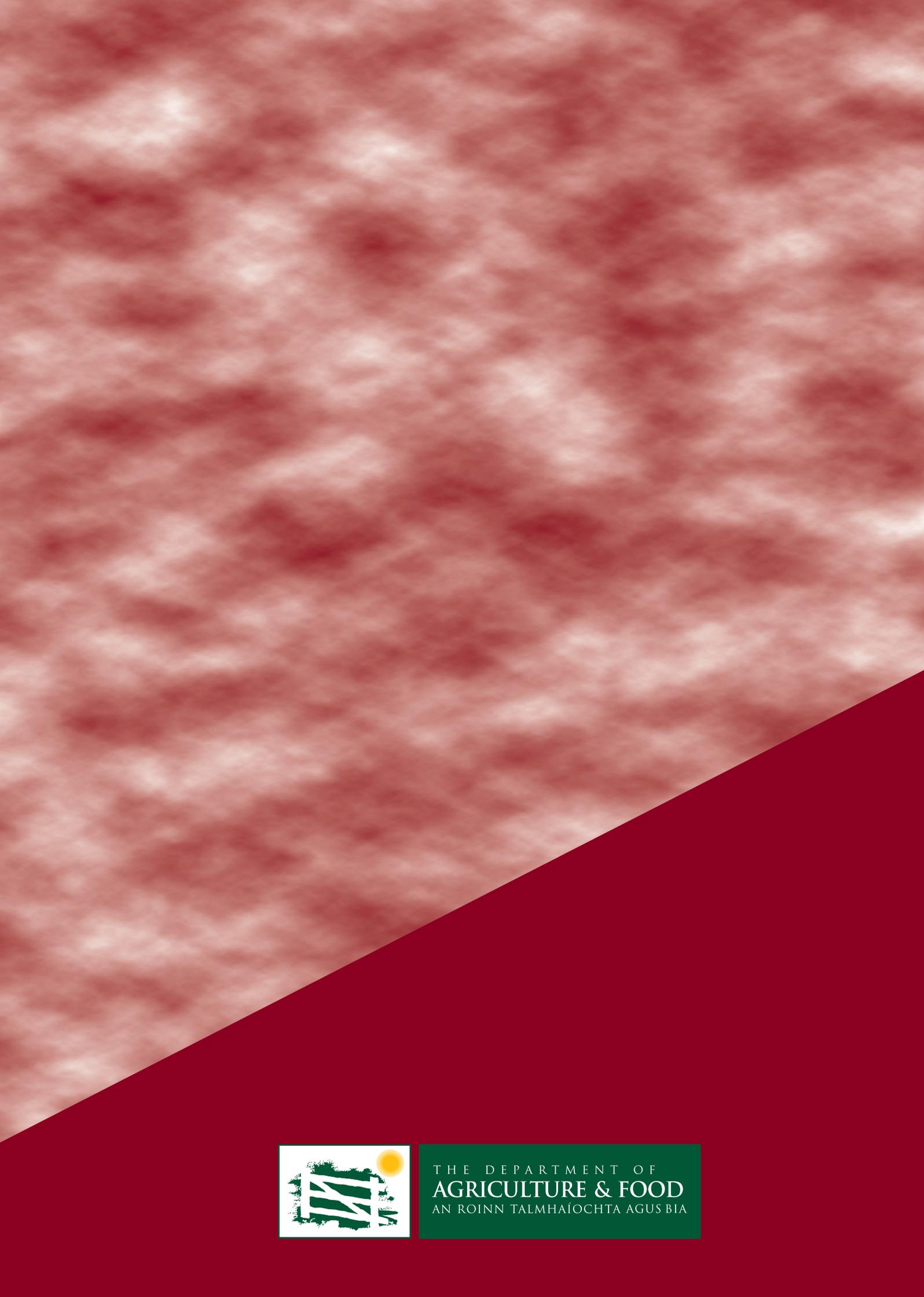
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Publication of Education guidelines for welfare of broilers,

↓
To raise greater public inter-action awareness/to engage with professional bodies to launch a public awareness programme,

↓
Engage with relevant bodies concerned with Ritual Slaughter,

↓
Animal Transport, training and education for hauliers, publish a good practice guidelines,

↓
Fur Farming



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