

NEWSLETTER

Quality Transport and Control Post Projects



Coordinator: Centro Ricerche Produzioni Animali - C.R.P.A. S.p.A. C.so Garibaldi, 42 - 42121 Reggio Emilia - ITALY Ph +39 0522 436999 Fax +39 0522 435142 - www.crupa.it - info@crpa.it **Editor:** Istituto G. Caporale, via Campo Boario - 64100 Teramo - ITALY Ph +39 0861 3321 Fax +39 0861 332251 - www.izs.it - protocollo@pec.izs.it **Contributors Baltic Control:** Karina Engström. **Contributors CRPA:** Kees De Roest, Paolo Ferrari, Paolo Rossi. **Contributors Istituto G. Caporale:** Barbara Alessandrini, Giorgia Canulli, Silvia D'Albenzio. **Contributors IRTA:** Cecilia Pedernera, Antoni Dalmau, Antonio Velarde. **Contributors SLU:** Girma Gebresenbet. **Designer:** Francescomaria Di Bonaventura. **Newsletter info:** controlpost@izs.it.

New Animal Welfare protocols for cattle and pigs

According to Regulation (EC) No 1/2005, Control Posts (CPs) aim at ensuring that resting animals during transport are kept in good welfare conditions while maintaining their animals health status. For this purpose, one of the main objectives of the project "Renovation and promoting high quality Control Posts in the European Union" is to plan and design building or renovation of high quality CPs in order to set up a reference for the highest standards concerning the welfare of the animals for such establishment. The work-package n.2 developed valid, reliable and practical tools for assessing the level of the transported animals in the CP before and after renovation. The welfare assessment protocols are focused on the cattle and pigs species and based on the assessment systems developed by the Welfare Quality® project. ➤ page 2



After the introductory Newsletter n. 0 published in March 2012, this number offers a wide range of articles, covering the following key-issues: building and renovation of Control Posts (CPs) in

Europe, new Animal Welfare protocols for bovine and pigs at CPs, innovative certification schemes, cascade training actions for experts and eLearning initiatives for official veterinarians, CPs managers and transporters.

The website www.controlpost.eu was recently renewed and improved in order to host the project Newsletters and many other useful information and tools.

Training on AW assessment protocols at Control Posts



In all the assessment systems – especially the new ones - a critical element is represented by the "assessors". Without competent, credible and...

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Development of eLearning courses for the animal transport system



eLearning is a word derived from "electronic learning". It is a teaching-learning system designed to be implemented using electronic communication...

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Renovation and promoting high quality Control Posts in the EU



The two years project "Renovation and promoting high quality Control Posts in the European Union" - started in 2011 - foresees a significant...

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Certification schemes for Control Posts and Animal Transport



In the last decade quality assurance schemes are becoming increasingly popular in the food industry and agricultural sector, because of the...

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New Animal Welfare protocols for cattle and pigs



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They concern the animal welfare assessment at Control Posts in some crucial phases:

- a) at arrival and during unloading;
- b) during resting / recuperation;
- c) during loading, including the animal fitness for continuing the travel to destination.

The assessment protocols cover 12 welfare criteria grouped into four main principles: good feeding, good housing, good health, appropriate behaviour. They correspond to the questions:

- Are the animals properly fed and supplied with water?
- Are the animals properly housed?
- Are the animals healthy?
- Does the behaviour of the animals reflect optimised emotional states?

Protocols include animal based measures (i.e. their behaviour, health or physical condition) as well as resource and management measures (i.e. space, temperature, equipment, number of available drinkers, and also handling, record keeping, etc.).

Since welfare is a condition of the animal, animal based measures are likely to be the most direct reflection of their welfare state.

During transport, animals have no easy access to food and water, so it is important that they could drink and eat during the resting period at Control Post. At the arrival and during the unloading, the correct use and the availability of facilities is very important because animals may fall or slip.

During the resting time, it is important to provide animals protection from adverse conditions (sun, wind, rain, cold weather). A correct thermal environment prevents sicknesses and improves animal welfare. Those conditions should vary according to the different animal species. For example,

pigs are affected by both cold and hot weather, whereas cattle suffer because of high temperatures.

Inappropriate or stressful handling can frighten animals, and induces some risks of injuries for them. Stress is likely to be very important at CP, because the animals are not familiar with the place and the handler. It is also very difficult to move stressed animals, because they may refuse to move on or try to escape from the corridors. It is then risky for the handler if they turn back, or kick and run away.

Good practices help to minimize stress and secure handling. CP owners are responsible for the good care of the animals, so they have to avoid them to get injured.

Eleven Control Posts from 5 countries (France, Poland, Germany, Italy and Spain) are involved in this project and are participating in the welfare assessment; for this reason protocols are available in English, French, German, Italian, Polish and Spanish.

The scientific approach requires that each CP participating in the project will be assessed several times before and after renovation.

Information coming from the assessment activities let the assessors identify the causes of poor welfare conditions and formulate advices to the CP owners on possible improvements. The data of the assessment are included in a risk based analysis, properly designed for linking key infrastructure parameters to animal physiological and behavioural needs, as well as health status at CPs.

These protocols represent a solid basis for the development of a CP certification system, as well as for the implementation of training material addressed to transporters, official vets and CP owners.

Training on AW assessment protocols at Control Posts



independent assessors, no certification scheme can be applied to satisfy both stakeholders and consumers. That's the reason why – within the project “Renovation and promoting high quality Control Posts in the European Union” – it was necessary to properly train a selected group of official veterinarians on the routine use of these protocols in the beneficiary countries.

The consortium training strategy foresees two different initiatives. The first one - held from 18 to 21 April 2011 in Reggio Emilia (Italy) – has been addressed to eleven experts from project partners, in order to let them acquire the necessary skills for arranging cascade training initiatives at country level (IE and IFIP from France, FLI from Germany, NAGREF from Greece, ICT from Italy, SGGW from Poland and IRTA from Spain, WUR from The Netherlands).

The training methodology adopted stressed a practical approach: classroom presentations where supported by exercises, pictures, video clips and in field activities at farms and slaughter-

houses. During the classroom phases, rationale and execution of the measures were presented as well as the data collection procedure (sample size and order to be followed to take the different measures). The results of the simulated animal welfare assessment were compared at horizontal level (among trainees) and at vertical level (with experts/trainers).

In order to disseminate - at national level - acquired knowledge on the use of the new protocols on cattle and pigs, the educational material of the first training event - as well as the course agenda - were translated in: French, German, Italian, Polish and Spanish. On this basis, the scientists trained in April 2011 trained and evaluated a minimum of 2 official veterinarians per CP in their own country. The beneficiaries showed motivation and interest in the new animal welfare protocols and they got involved very well in the assessment activities, even when they represented extra job.

In the following table a distribution of training activities and veterinarians trained per each country is presented.

COUNTRY	SPECIES	TRAINING COURSES		VETS TRAINED	
		Nr. TRAINING COURSES	DAYS PER TRAINING	CONTROL POSTS VETS	EXTERNAL VETS
POLAND	Pig	1	2,5	2	2
	Cattle	1	2,5		
SPAIN	Cattle	1	3	5	10
FRANCE	Cattle	2	2	5	1
	*Pig	0	0	0	0
ITALY	Cattle and Pig	1	5	6	4
GERMANY	Cattle	1	3	1	1
TOTAL				19	18

* After renovation

Table 1 - Number of national veterinarians trained by country

Development of eLearning courses for the animal transport system

Pure usability	Pure quality dimensions	Common dimensions
Visibility	Clear syllabus	Aesthetics-Aesthetic design
Memorability	Alignment of course objectives	Course management-course information
Flexibility	Clearly defined learning outcomes	Online support, content support
Reducing redundancy	Variety of learning tasks	Interactivity-opportunities for interaction
Error prevention	Critical thinking	Consistent and functional feedback and help-opportunities for students to receive feedback
	Opportunities for self-assessment	Efficiency-completeness
	Alignment between objectives, activities and assessments	Accessibility-accessibility
	Comprehensive assessment strategy	

*adapted from Oztekin et al (2010)

Table 1 - Evaluation of eLearning: comparison of checklists in the usability and quality dimensions

means such as internet, unlike the traditional face-to-face teaching-learning style. In some cases, eLearning style is also expressed as Open and Distance Learning (ODL), web-based learning, Internet-based learning, and Information and Communication Technology - ICT-based learning (Graf, 2002; Oztekin et al., 2010; M-Torres et al., 2011).

Traditional face-to face training has well known limits in terms of number of trainees, time and costs< so a set of eLearning tools is proposed, to overcome such barriers and allow a quick and effective spreading of knowledge and expertise. eLearning, in fact, allows beneficiaries to achieve deep knowledge and treasure time dedicated to learning: contents are delivered through a web based platform, accessible without time and/or space constraints.

Nowadays, eLearning is an important tool which is growing as an attractive industry enjoying the high demand of users (Thompson and MacDonald, 2005; Oztekin et al., 2010). Improving the quality of eLearning is getting attention and it requires extensive planning/design work, time and resources. Oztekin et al. (2010) proposed a comprehensive checklist of eLearning system by integrating both quality and usability perspectives in the evaluation of eLearning system (see Table1).

According to Thompson and MacDonald (2005), there are four main factors on which designing eLearning courses (that respond to emergent needs of learners) depends. These are:

- Possibility of learning experience by collecting and acting on feedback;
- Possibility of modular course design that enables quick modification;
- Access to resources (time, finance, skilled man power);
- Level of e-moderators' willingness to play dual roles as both facilitator and designer.

In the globalisation process, the

work market and working environment change so rapidly that workers and professionals - width various levels of education - need trainings at different times in relation to their career. The modern education systems have to address this issue and support their graduates to have the ability of "learning to learn" for their whole life (Littlejohn, et al., 2008; M-Torres et al., 2011). In this type of continuous learning process,

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eLearning systems can play great role. Some of the aims of eLearning systems are to:

- create online learning-teaching environment and augment the face-to-face training systems;
- connect learners, instructors and tool designers and increase the interaction between them;
- increase the efficiency of training
- disseminate training opportunities to remote regions;
- increase the number of trained professionals;
- strengthen the concept of "learning to learn";

- improve the quality of teaching-learning system by facilitating easy access to resources, services, cooperation even when the resources and services are available at remote area.

Although eLearning is an effective training methodology, there are challenges related with it (Granpeesheh et al., 2010; Thompson and MacDonald, 2005;Oztekin et al., 2010). Some of the potential challenges are:

- Quality issues;
- Community building (enabling learners engage in a level of community that best suited their comfort and capability) and using emergent design strategies to respond to learning needs;
- Less direct contact with the experts/lecturers which reduces the opportunity to ask questions;
- eLearning may have negative impact on group cohesion especially when not followed by in-person training by experts.

During the development of eLearning tools, different aspects should be taken into consideration:

- the external appearance of the eLearning tool must be adaptable to the users' training;
- the tool should be designed to be suitable to the topic or the subject to be learned;
- it has to be convenient to collect feedback for performance evaluation and improvement;
- it should have data import and export ability with a variety different formats best fit to users' need;
- it should have features that enable to manage the teaching-learning progress;
- it should offer an attractive and friendly environment (attractive graphical design, easy language, and adequate help option) for the teaching-learning process.

Numerous tools are used for eLearning; some of theme are listed in Table 2. With the aim to provide targeted information to all the main categories of stakeholders, actively responsible for the welfare conditions of transported animals over long journeys, the project "Renovation and promoting high quality Control Posts in the European Union" is going to offer 3 different eLearning courses to the following groups of beneficiaries: official veterinarians, transport companies, CP managers and CP staff. A fourth course of common

interest is going to be offered them too.

The four eLearning modules will allow a quick and effective dissemination of knowledge and expertise on: legislation, bio-security and health risk, work safety, animal welfare and practices, logistics and information systems. By October 2012, the eLearning tools will be progressively available in English, French, German, Russian, Arabic, Spanish, Italian and Greek.

In general terms, the pursued learning objectives are:

1. understanding social, cultural and scientific bases supporting European norms on animal welfare during transport;
2. learning basic principles of animal physiology (cattle, pigs, sheep), with special reference to their needs and behaviours;
3. achieving knowledge on the requirements of European norms on the protection of animals during transport and related operations (EC/01/2005), on the Community criteria for staging points (EC/1255/97), and on the harmonization of certain social legislation relating to road transport;
4. being able to fill and maintain all documents related to transport;
5. achieving knowledge on the effects of transport on live animals and meat quality;
6. performing appropriately all loading, unloading and handling operations, to care first care to animals in case of emergency, and to protect personnel safety; and
7. achieving knowledge on satellite navigation systems and current and future.

Within the different eLearning methodologies available in the new Information & Communication Technology scenario, the four courses will be based on the asynchronous self-learning one.

It implies that scientific and technical contents will be available in a Learning Content Management System (LCMS). The access to this platform will be authorized only to official participants.

The beneficiaries selection procedure for each course according to the language will be done in September 2012.

A specific call will be opened on the project website www.controlpost.eu. Sensitisation initiatives promoted by the consortium partners will support the impact of the enrollment strategy in their own countries.

N°	TOOLS	REFERENCES
1	DDL (Demand Driven Learning Model). It considers five inter-related dimensions: structure, content, delivery, service, and outcomes of eLearning programs.	Thompson and MacDonald (2005).
2	UseLearn checklist:- It integrates the quality and usability dimensions in evaluation of eLearning systems	Oztekin et al. (2010)
3	AdopeAuthorware based computer program- an eLearning tool used for training behavioral therapists	Granpeesheh et al. (2010)

Table 2 - Some of tools used for implementing and/or evaluating eLearning system

Renovation and promoting high quality Control Posts in the EU

► improvement of equipment and management systems adopted by eleven Control Posts (CPs) located at the cross roads of relevant flows of animals transported over long journeys in the European Union. CPs are located in France (4), in Poland(1), in Italy (3), in Germany (2) and in Spain(1).

A complex strategic approach based on planning, designing and co-financing the building and renovation of such establishments, aims at increasing the quality standards of the services offered, for guaranteeing the respect of the animal welfare principles, bio-security and work safety measures, as well as of the environmental sustainability.

After a first visit aimed at establishing the specific renovation needs of each Control Post, the approval procedures coordinated by CRPA foresees - as initial step - the definition of the list of

by the CP owners has been changed, in particular as regards bio-security measures. Not all of them planned to create bio-fence; this omission has been corrected.

The final business plan contains provisions for the disposal of dead animals outside the installed bio-fence and perimeter of the CP and the installation of feeding silos which allow only outside access of transport means of feed mills. Particular attention has been given to bio-filter zones for drivers and staff with showers and dressing rooms. Such changes in the draft investment plan required continuous recalculation of investments and exchange of information between the beneficiary CP and CRPA.

In some CP a significant enlargement of the number of animal places is foreseen, as these are located on important cross roads of animal trans-



interventions and the CP business plan. Analytical cost calculation using a specific national databank of tariffs/prices concerning stable equipment and construction works, follows as third step. With the aim to identify the most appropriate suppliers, CP owners have to collect - at least - five bids from local companies and mail them to CRPA for the selection of the "best for money" offers.

After a formal communication concerning the result of the bid, the Control Posts participating in the project have "green light" for starting the renovation plan.

Almost all CPs followed the above described procedure and started their investments. Assistance during the work is provided - at national level - by the research institutes involved in the project consortium. In some cases, the draft investment program presented

port in Europe. In those cases, either reconstruction is foreseen or new stable building/s. The CPs follow the recommended space allowances for the different species of animals, as EU Regulation 1255/97 does not contain prescriptions to this respect.

In the second project: "Development of EU wide animal transport certification system and renovation of Control Posts in the European Union" - started in January 2012 - six additional CPs participate as partners. They are located in Poland, Hungary, Greece and France. In April and May 2012, the CP owners received the first visits by CRPA experts. They prepared a report containing the findings of the renovation need analysis.

These CPs are now adapting their original plans according to the received recommendations for improvement.

Certification schemes for Control Posts and Animal Transport

► growing consumers' demand of food safety and transparency in food supply chain. This trend cannot ignore animal welfare principles and the EU legislation for protecting them. That is the reason why one of the major objectives, shared by both EU funded CPs projects, is to establish pilot certification schemes for control posts and live animals transport exceeding eight hours of travelling.

In order to set up these schemes two sources are being used:

- 1 the results of the feasibility study, defining high quality standards for control posts;
- 2 the animal welfare protocols for cattle, pigs, horses and sheep, establishing animal and resource based parameters to be measured in order to guarantee a high animal welfare status at uploading, during transport, at unloading and during the resting period in the control post.

relation to the decision to be taken concerning the certification.

A new certification scheme is under development in the second project too. It concerns transport of live animals in the EU, over more than eight hours. National certification schemes for animal transport already exist in Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands and United Kingdom.

A specific study on their main functions and performances is foreseen. The new certification scheme for animal transport will be focused on measurable and objective criteria to assess compliance with EU legislation and animal based parameters, as emerging from 200 assessments on animal transport in the EU.

The assessments will be carried out adopting animal transport protocols for cattle, pigs, horses and sheep. The data analysis will generate a series of key parameters for animal welfare and

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Baltic Control has designed the basic documents of the Control Post certification scheme (i.e. the checklist, the sanction list, the interpretation documents and the application forms) in close collaboration with the partner institutes which have elaborated the protocols. The criteria were practically tested on CPs in three different EU countries (France, Germany, Poland). The certification system test included: planning of audit, training/calibration of auditors, execution of audits as well evaluation of audits.

Important inputs for the design of the CPs pilot certification scheme came from the recommendations of an Advisory Board composed by all relevant stakeholders, especially as concerns the fine tune of the checklist.

Currently Baltic Control is developing an Informatics programme to evaluate the results of future inspections at Control Posts. This system will check, categorise and store the large quantity of data collected through the checklist.

It will be able to attribute automatically points to inspected Control Posts and identify potential constraints in

biosecurity at uploading, during transport and at unloading. The first draft checklist for certification purposes will be structured according to these parameters. This checklist will be tested by Baltic Control on 10 animal transports and - at spot checks - in five Control Posts.

As for the Control Post certification, an Advisory Board will assist and support the project team involved in the development of the animal transport certification scheme. Members of this board are the following stakeholders: the Directorate General for Health and Consumer Affairs of the European Commission, Eurogroup for Animals, Eurocommerce, European Livestock and Meat Trading Union (UECBV), the European Federation of Veterinarians, National Animal Transport Organisations and representatives of several Ministries of Health and Agriculture.

The development of the two different certification schemes will give the opportunity to increase the compliance with the EU Regulation and certify the whole chain: from farm, during long journey transport and at arrival.