



Farmers, inspectors and animal welfare: possibilities for change. A Review

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Contents

1. Executive Summary	3
2. Introduction.....	4
3. Inspectors as agents for change	4
4. Possibilities for inspection-driven improvements in animal welfare	5
5. Willingness and Ability to Comply with Animal Welfare Law.....	5
5.1 Structural, social, and personal pressures on farmers	5
5.2 Ability to make a change	6
5.3 Attitudes toward risk and outcomes.....	7
5.4 Animal welfare compliance in relation to on-farm ethics of animal care.....	7
5.5 Trust or distrust in science, advisors and peers	8
6. The role of dialogue and empathy in compliance	9
7. Guidelines for training and inspection that support improved animal welfare on farms	10
7.1 Transparency and efficiency of inspection	10
7.2 Communication	11
7.3 Step-Wise for non-compliant farms and facilitation	12
8. Guidelines for inspectors based on a review of scientific literature of farmers' attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours in relation to animal welfare and animal welfare inspection	12
8.1 Guiding and supporting farmers toward animal welfare improvement	12
8.2 Inspection Transparency	13
8.3 Communication	13
8.4 Resources on communication and interpersonal skills for inspectors.....	14
9. Works Cited	15

1. Executive Summary

The objective for this report is to look into existing research on farmer and economic operators' attitudes, perceptions, and willingness to change in relation to areas connected to animal welfare (or similar issues) and to make suggestions for inspector training based on this research. In it, we discuss the considerable uncertainty that inspectors express regarding the parameters of their role, particularly in relation to observable human distress on farms where animal welfare is found to be non-compliant. We draw on available research to highlight the potential for inspection to be a driver for animal welfare improvement on farms and the possibility for inspectors to act as agents of change. Next, we discuss some key factors that affect farmer willingness to change including structural pressures, perceptions of their own ability to change systems or infrastructure, attitudes toward risk and outcomes, discrepancies between animal welfare and farmers' perceptions of animal wellbeing, and (dis)trust in scientific knowledge on animal welfare. In the following section, we present research that shows the benefits of improved communication both for facilitating change and for improving animal care. Finally, we provide suggestions for inspector training with an emphasis on improved communication. As current research shows, communication between inspectors and farmers/economic operators is essential if inspections are to function as a tool for animal welfare improvement. These suggestions can be used as guidelines for inspector training that bolsters communication skills and therefore foster inspection-driven change.

2. Introduction

Animal welfare inspectors represent the ‘on-the-ground’ or frontline position between farmers and legislation (Anneberg et al 2013; see also Lipsky 2010). In their work, they must operate between the domains of legislation and research on the one hand and on-farm practices on the other. These domains are not always clearly delimited yet there are moments when these domains show little overlap. For example, when a farmer is not aware of a particular law or regulation and sees no reason for it, the domain of legislation can appear quite separate from that of the farm. In addition, the language used in legislation can be very different from everyday speech or concerns on farms (Anneberg et al 2013). Thus, inspectors and state veterinarians must translate (Callon 1984) between domains, particularly when the distance between them is large.

Because inspectors work between these domains, their role is mixed. Inspectors are agents of enforcement; they are responsible for making sure the law is properly implemented and for enforcing sanctions when the law is not followed. Yet, as Anneberg et al (2013) have shown, inspectors in a Danish context acknowledge some uncertainty about the limits and intentions of their role. While some inspectors in Anneberg et al (2013) maintain a strict definition of their role as agents of enforcement, others see their role—and animal welfare legislation more generally—as a matter of prevention and potentially as a motivator for change on farms.

Devitt et al (2014) found similar ambiguity among state veterinarians in Ireland. Irish state veterinarians described significant uncertainty in terms of the parameters of their role and the appropriate response. For example, one participant in Devitt et al (2014) described the following dilemma: ‘You can go in and just be ruthless, but that certainly achieves very little in improvement in the human situation you’re dealing with, which many times is equally as serious as the animal situation’ (2014: 5). In other words, veterinarians and inspectors recognize that if they expect the situation to change, a narrow scope of enforcement is rarely sufficient.

3. Inspectors as agents for change

Animal inspection and enforcement is aimed at bringing farmers into compliance with legislation, which ideally reflects the recommendations of animal welfare science. If animal welfare legislation is aimed at prevention and at change in the case of non-compliance, then animal welfare inspectors are often in the role of agents for change. Inspections already show some possibilities for change. In Anneberg et al (2012) for example, one farmer described their own sense of ‘home blindness,’ or an inability to see problems due to working in the same environment day after day. Some farmers in this study described how a dialogue with inspectors enable them to see conditions and issues on their farm that they would not have noticed otherwise (see also Devitt 2014).

In a study on animal welfare inspection in France, Lomillini-Dereclenne et al. (2017) found that ‘inspections per se are likely to have a positive effect on the level of animal welfare protection on French cattle farms,’ (pp. 318) due to the role of inspections in raising farmer awareness of animal protection

requirements. However, the low percentage of farms inspected (1%) and the fairly low likelihood of improvement between the first and second inspection (23%) means that ‘inspection-driven improvement remains very slow at a population level’ (2017: 318).

Scholars have suggested alternative ways to instigate animal welfare improvement such as increasing farmer awareness of legislative requirements (Anneberg et al 2013; de Lauwere 2012), better support for farmers suffering from social and health issues such as depression, isolation, stress, and age-related issues (Devitt et al 2014; Andrade & Anneberg 2014), and stable schools (de Lauwere 2012; Vaarst 2009). Yet, research shows that there are untapped possibilities for inspections and inspectors to instigate improved animal welfare in agriculture.

4. Possibilities for inspection-driven improvements in animal welfare

This review focuses on the possibilities that animal welfare inspection offers for improving animal welfare on farms. In particular, it summarizes research on the role of empathy and dialogue in animal welfare inspections. In addition, the review describes factors that may affect farmer attitudes to and willingness to change. The intention behind describing these factors in detail is to direct attention to significant reasons that farmers do or do not change. Different ‘reasons’ for ambivalence and resistance toward change and compliance necessitate different responses on the part of inspectors. Therefore, this review might help inspectors to identify and address the specific concerns or barriers to change on farms. In some cases, the appropriate response may be directing farmers to alternate sources of information or training. In the final section of this review, we make some suggestions for inspectors and inspector training based on research and efforts to improve communication in this field of practice.

5. Willingness and Ability to Comply with Animal Welfare Law

This section draws on research to describe some of the significant attitudes, perceptions, and conditions that impact farmers’ abilities and willingness to make changes on their farms and to comply with animal welfare legislation.

5.1 Structural, social, and personal pressures on farmers

Farmers today are under an extraordinary amount of pressure to produce and to do so in particular ways. Scholars have shown how these pressures are directly connected to the conditions for animals on farms. Farmers are pressured to produce in larger quantities and more efficiently through contingent lending, legislation, an ‘industrial ethos’ in research and farm organizations, and through obligations to feed growing populations (Fitzgerald 2008; de Lauwere et al 2012). The development of agriculture, as a result of these combined pressures, toward larger scales, standardization, and specialization limits farmers’ decision-making and ability to change. As Anneberg et al 2014 argue, ‘production contracts between retail firms and farmers limits the farmers’ opportunities to adopt alternative and more animal friendly production practices’ (see also Hendrickson et al 2001; Flynn et al 2003). In addition, contemporary farmers negotiate heavy workloads, increased amounts of paperwork, and unpredictable pricing and

markets (Malmberg et al 1997; Reine 1999; Hossain et al 2008). These financial and industry level constraints are also related to social and personal pressures on farmers.

Several scholars have found that animal welfare is closely tied to the social and personal conditions of farmers. In particular, isolation from mental health resources and vibrant social communities significantly impacts farmers' abilities to cope with everyday frustrations and issues, especially when several stressful issues occur at once (Anneberg et al 2014, Devitt et al 2014). Furthermore, farmers in many regions represent an aging population amidst rural decline, which compounds the difficulties of caring for animals. Other social and personal issues that directly impact animal welfare include difficulties with managing employees, physical and social isolation, addiction, perceptions and attitudes toward animals, disagreement or distrust of legislation and authorities, as well as a sense of loss of control over defining ethics of animal welfare and farm decision-making.

Attending to the structural and systemic aspects of farming systems in relation to animal welfare is vital if farmers are expected to change. As Burton et al (2012) and others argue, a focus on changing individual farmers' attitudes toward animal welfare is unlikely to stem the animal welfare issues that arise through production pressures and industry-wide promotion of industrial factory-like methods (see also Bracke et al 2005 on production maximization in Europe). Instead, Burton et al (2012) posit that the promotion of what they call 'cowshed cultures' could foster structural-level change among farmer communities. Burton et al's 'cowshed cultures' include and adjusting infrastructure, herd dynamics, and human behaviors on farms to promote better human-livestock interactions. In addition, cultural change toward animal welfare could be supported through a shift away from a pervasive 'industrial ethos' or approach in agricultural research and legislation (Fitzgerald 2008).

5.2 Ability to make a change

According to research, farmers' willingness to implement changes on farms whether in the name of animal welfare or environmental sustainability, has to do with their assessment of their own ability to make that change. Farmers may assess this ability based on various criteria including the infrastructural conditions of their farm, their own skills and knowledge about the necessary change, and the knowledge available as it relates to this change. Mette Vaarst and Jan Tind Sørensen (2009), in their study on calf mortality in Danish dairy herds, found that active problem-solving toward reducing calf mortality corresponds strongly with calf managers' belief in their own capacity to address the situation. de Lauwere et al. (2012) found that farmers who were considering moving pregnant sows into group housing but had not yet done so, felt unsure about their own ability to prevent tail biting in group housing situations. In this case, a change required by EU legislation and/or national legislation is perceived by farmers as a risky endeavour due to the farmers' assessment of their own lack of knowledge and skills to implement the change. In some cases, farmers describe a distrust in the knowledge available in addition to their own lack of knowledge on a particular aspect of management.

5.3 Attitudes toward risk and outcomes

Drawing on the theory of planned behavior (TPB), several studies show that a willingness to change is closely linked to a perception of outcomes (Beedell and Rehman 1999 and 2000; de Lawere et al 2012). Research shows that farmers tend to be more willing to change their behavior or system if they perceive a positive outcome for that change (Jansen et al 2010, Peden et al 2019). Conversely, a perceived negative outcome such as a financial loss or worse conditions for animals can be a strong barrier to change (de Lauwere et al 2012). Furthermore, farmers are frequently described as risk-averse and as slow to adopt new technologies in research on farmer decision-making behaviors (Willock et al 1999).

In addition, as Lam et al (2011) and others have shown farmers' motivations and learning styles play an important role in the interactions between them and private veterinarians (see also Jansen et al 2010 and de Lauwere et al 2012). Lam et al (2011) argue that farmers classified by Dutch veterinarians as 'hard-to-reach,' exhibit different personalities in relation to information and orientation to outside influences. Lam et al (2011) divide these farmers into groups such as the 'do-it-yourselfers,' the 'pro-activists,' 'reclusive traditionalists,' and the 'wait-and-seers' and suggest that each group of farmers may benefit from receiving information differently from their veterinarian. In order to improve an issue such as udder health on dairy farms, Lam et al (2011) argue, 'it is important to know not only [the farmers'] level of knowledge, but also what motivates them, how they prefer to learn, which sources of information they use, and how they apply that knowledge (p. 13). While not all of this is possible in an inspection context, additional training for inspectors on communicating with farmers that take different approaches could be useful for better conveying information on compliance and animal welfare indicators.

5.4 Animal welfare compliance in relation to on-farm ethics of animal care

Another significant factor in farmers' willingness to make changes on their farms is their assessment of the validity of measures of animal welfare compliance. In other words, do farmers consider legislation and measures of compliance to actually reflect animal wellbeing on their farm? In some cases, there could be a significant gap between the measures of compliance in an inspection and what farmers consider to be important for the animals on their farm. One area that shows up repeatedly in research is paperwork. While farmers are required by law to keep detailed records on disease and events, researchers in various contexts have found that farmers consider paperwork to be secondary to animal care and in some cases to impede proper animal care (Anneberg et al 2012; Buller & Roe 2014; Devitt 2014; Escobar & Demeritt 2016; Lomillini-Dereclenne et al 2017).

While farmers often do not consider paperwork to be highly important as part of animal welfare, inspectors consider it very important. In a study by Lomillini-Dereclenne et al (2017), an analysis of all inspection reports on French cattle farms between 2010 and 2013 revealed that 'the presence of farm records had the largest impact on inspectors' assessment of overall compliance, as farms that do not keep records have approximately four times more chance of being declared severely non-compliant overall' (p. 319). In some cases, these farms were held to be compliant regarding most other items on the inspection checklists.

In addition, in Anneberg et al 2012, this gap relates to farmers' assessments of animal welfare inspection as unfair. Anneberg et al found that farmers described inspections as unfair when farmers were marked as non-compliant for something that they intended to do but that they or an employee had not yet gotten to yet. For instance, some farmers were marked as non-compliant for not cleaning water containers or adding appropriate bedding even while they intended to do so later that day. In these cases, farmers felt that inspections therefore did not account for the kind of work that takes place on farms and the rhythms of farm work on an everyday basis. In these situations, the care of the animals might be delayed but not to a detrimental extent, from the farmers' perspective. The main issue for the farmer is a request that inspectors see their daily situation and show consideration for it and this is not necessarily connected to understandings of animal welfare.

Research shows that stakeholders emphasize different values in relation to animal welfare (Sørensen & Fraser 2010). In a review of multiple studies, Sørensen & Fraser found that non-producers tend to emphasize 'naturalness' and ability to express 'natural' behaviours for farm animals. In contrast, producers 'tend to equate animal welfare with basic health and access to necessities such as food and water' (2010:2; see also Te Velde et al 2002; Vanhonacker et al 2008). It is worth noting that organic producers and those participating in animal welfare schemes were an exception as they 'tended to equate animal welfare with freedom, comfort, and the opportunity to perform natural behaviour' (Sørensen & Fraser 2010:2; see also Bock and van Huick 2007). Sørensen and Fraser also show that there is significant variety in the views of both producers and non-producers on animal welfare depending on upbringing, region, age, gender, class, level of education, and other socio-economic factors. Importantly, this variety also means that farmers may show considerable variability in their agreement with legislative and scientific definitions of animal welfare.

5.5 Trust or distrust in science, advisors and peers

Another issue that undergirds farmers' willingness to adopt technologies or make changes on their farms is their trust in the information they receive and the information-giver. In a study by Bernard et al (2014), the researchers organized a symposium as well as one-to-one dialogues between scientists and Dutch pig farmers. Bernard et al found that farmers were only moderately receptive to knowledge presented by scientists at the symposium. The Dutch pig farmers felt that much of the scientific knowledge was 'unusable' because it was not concrete and offered little relevance to the farm context. Further, farmers found that 'scientific knowledge was not sufficient for solving complex and contextualized real world problems' (p. 448). In addition, farmers found that a lack of scientific consensus and change over time on accepted facts disincentivized change. Scientists and farmers also emphasized different framings and values in relation to animal welfare and production. Bernard et al 2014 concluded that a one-way communication is a poor and likely unsuccessful means for delivering information.

Bernard et al 2014 found that overcoming the barriers of different domains of communication and framing of agricultural issues and solutions was more successful through one-to-one dialogues. Based on this the authors conclude that 'frequent mutual visits to each other's praxis and an open mind to learn

from each other's observations and interpretations may help to build shared solutions for the complex problem of animal welfare in pig production, especially tail-biting' (p. 449).

In a study on farmers' attitudes and behaviour toward the adoption of group housing for pregnant sows, de Lauwere et al (2012) found that farmers' assessment of the opinions of advisors and actions of peers influenced their decision. According to de Lauwere et al, farmers were perhaps more likely to change to group housing if the farmers' felt that peers and advisors whose opinion they valued would strongly approve of the change. In addition, farmers who had not changed to group housing were more likely to think that other pig farmers similar to them had not changed. Therefore, farmers' assessment of the views and actions of other farmers, advisors, and peers, strongly influences their own willingness to change.

6. The role of dialogue and empathy in compliance

A common theme in research on farm inspection and animal welfare is empathy. On the one hand, farmer empathy and attitude toward farm animals has a significant impact on animal welfare (Hemsworth 2003). While this is a significant factor for the conditions and interactions between humans and animals on farms, this review focuses more on the role of empathy between inspectors and farmers. Farmers frequently express the importance of viewing the 'bigger picture' on a farm. As described in the previous section, inspections can disturb the rhythms of farm work and farmers might be marked as non-compliant for an issue that they intend to address (Anneberg et al 2012). State veterinarians in Ireland have also described the importance of empathy and a broad acknowledgment of the challenges that a particular farmer may face (Devitt 2014, 2015). But not all veterinarians agree on the role of empathy in inspection.

Inspectors and state veterinarians face a dilemma in their work in that they are tasked with a role as both an authority and as responsible for ensuring that conditions for farm animals meet the standards of legislation even while they observe that farmers may have significant challenges or troubles. Regarding their role as an authority and an enforcement agent, some state veterinarians in Ireland emphasize the importance of maintaining social distance (Devitt et al 2014). Some veterinarians asserted that their obligation is to the animals and that empathy for the farmer can 'blind' the veterinarian to the conditions on the farm. Others work to understand and take into consideration the larger picture on the farm such as whether the farmer is caring for elderly parents. Still other state veterinarians worked to find a balance between empathy and detachment. From the perspective of farmers, empathy can also be misleading. Anneberg et al (2012) found that farmers felt 'tricked' when an inspector acted friendly and understanding but then submitted a report on non-compliance issues. This farmer's reaction to an inspector who was friendly demonstrates the dilemma of empathy that arises in inspection situations.

Nevertheless, dialogue and empathy can play a key role in compliance. Anneberg et al (2012) found that despite the difficulties, most farmers expressed a desire for dialogue and understanding in the inspection process. These farmers felt that a dialogue might shift the inspector from an agent of enforcement to a partner in making animal welfare improvements. This kind of participation on the part of the farmer holds important potential for inspection-driven change. The literature shows that empathy and dialogue between veterinarians and pet owners can improve compliance with veterinary recommendations (Coe et al 2007; Shaw et al 2004; Shaw et al 2010). Shaw et al 2010 found that training in communication helped

private veterinarians to get a better understanding of pet illnesses and to enroll pet-owners in an active and empowered role as caregivers. Effective communication and interpersonal skills between veterinarians and pet-owners have a strong correlation with improved care for pets (Lue et al 2008). This research supports the idea that enrolling farmers as participants in the inspection process through dialogue can increase the likelihood of inspection-driven animal welfare improvement.

This is further supported by a Canadian study on inspection of occupational health and safety (Burstyn et al 2010). Burstyn et al coupled administrative data from almost 18.000 inspection episodes to 39 inspectors' self-rated preference for either a coercive, authoritarian approach (e.g. using deadlines, pressure and surveillance) or an autonomy-supportive, educational approach (e.g. by providing rationale, choices and empathy) to inspection (Burstyn et al. 2010). The results showed that the autonomy-supportive inspectors achieved compliance with regulation more effectively than coercive inspectors did. One reason for this might be that autonomy supportive inspectors set a more cooperative tone during the inspection process than coercive inspectors (Burstyn et al, 2010). Similar results were found in a study comparing inspection practices within the construction industry between the Danish and Swedish work environment Authorities (Nielsen, 2016).

7. Guidelines for training and inspection that support improved animal welfare on farms

Based on the previous review of factors that contribute to the complexity and challenges of change as well as the potential for inspections to contribute to improvement, this section gathers efforts and suggestions aimed at change. These guidelines are organized around the following three categories: transparency and efficiency of inspection, communication, and step-wise approaches toward compliance.

7.1 Transparency and efficiency of inspection

Transparency of the inspection process plays an important role in laying a foundation for constructive communication between farmers and inspectors. Anneberg et al (2012) found that in the Denmark, livestock producers found the inspection process unfair in part because farmers 'felt that inspectors did not use the same standards as reference for the judgements between farms' (p 52). This issue is related to one that inspectors also voiced concern over and that is the ability to spend time with colleagues in order to better calibrate their interpretations of specific situations. Therefore, EURCAW's training suggestions toward providing sufficient time for inspectors to practice and discuss making assessments with colleagues is vitally important for supporting transparency. And this transparency matters for supporting an inspection process that farmers will see as fair.

In addition to calibrating assessment with colleagues, Lomellini-Declerene et al (2017) suggest that inspection checklists could be better organized and could focus on the issues that inspectors consider most important. Lomellini-Dereclenne et al suggest that one way to make the checklist and the inspection process more efficient would be to 'organize exchanges between ministry central services, field

inspectors, and animal welfare experts to refine the checklist to be used by inspectors and help them better interpret item compliance’ (p 320).

As mentioned above, a lack of paperwork can lead to an overall assessment as non-compliant even when most other items are in compliance. Lomellini-Declerene et al found that guidelines for inspectors leave much room for interpretation and furthermore that importance of items changes between a first inspection and a second. For example, ‘inspectors may consider that a farmer that fails to follow a training session despite receiving a warning after the inspection is showing signs of being unwilling to improve the situation’ (p 319). This shift in expectations between inspections demonstrates that farmers are assessed not only on checklist items but also on their willingness to improve. In addition, Lomellini-Declerene et al found that ‘some farms were declared severely non-compliant even though they failed to meet very few items of the checklist’ (p. 319), which the authors explain through signaling that some criteria for assessment are not on the checklist or that some items are weighted far more heavily than others. In other words, there are multiple levels of interpretation of which farmers are likely unaware. Rather than keeping these in the background, it might better facilitate open dialogue and improvement if farmers are made aware of the differing significance attached to various areas and items on the checklist and their relevance to an overall assessment. Keeping these aspects ‘up front’ rather than as a surprise for farmers could certainly contribute to better communication and compliance.

Another issue regarding transparency is that farmers are not always aware of the consequences of non-compliance. Farmers in some studies were taken by surprise when an inspection led to a reduction in EU subsidies (Anneberg et al 2012; Lomellini-Dereclenne 2017). This should be made clear to farmers ideally before but at the very least over the course of the inspection.

7.2 Communication

Communication and transparency are related. In the section above, transparency involved clarity across multiple interrelated scales involved in inspection. In other words, not only does transparency involve increased awareness on the part of farmers but also efforts toward better clarity between ministries and inspectors. In this section on communication, the focus is more on training and communication in the context of inspections and inspector training.

Training dialogue to strengthen the guidance that inspectors can give to farmers is here meant as strengthening the inspectors’ ability to listen and ask questions bringing forward the farmers’ ambivalence. Knowing what the farmers see as problems, barriers and possibilities in an area where animal welfare legislation is relevant, can be a starting point for a dialogue about what can be changed and what cannot be changed in relation to legislation. Here professional educational tools are needed. As shown in Swedish research (Forsberg 2014) inspectors that use the tool Motivational Interviewing (MI) find that their ability to work with farmers during inspection improves and they feel more satisfied in their job. MI is one model but others could be chosen. The central point is that inspectors need awareness on their communication strategies, including being able to listen, ask open questions etc. Training conducted

by Shaw et al (2010) among private veterinarians in Canada can provide some inspiration for inspector communication training.

7.3 Step-Wise for non-compliant farms and facilitation

Lomellini-Dereclenne et al (2017) offer a potentially useful description of a step-wise approach that could support inspection-directed improvement especially among farms assessed as severely non-compliant: ‘effective progression can be made by setting realistic objectives and regularly checking progress, then adjusting the plan according to results until reaching the ultimate goal of full compliance. In addition to controlling farm compliance, a facilitating process could be put in place to encourage farm improvement. The process could involve explaining the benefits of improving the situation, helping farmers to analyse their situation, or stimulating exchanges between farmers to analyse problems and propose solutions’ (p. 320; see also Tremetsberger & Winckler 2015; Webster 2009; Whay & main 2015). In other words, Lomellini-Dereclenne et al suggest that inspections have the possibility for driving improvement in animal welfare especially if paired with more robust facilitation and participatory work with farmers whose farms are found non-compliant.

8. Guidelines for inspectors based on a review of scientific literature of farmers’ attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours in relation to animal welfare and animal welfare inspection

8.1 Guiding and supporting farmers toward animal welfare improvement

- Depending on the member state, it may not be legal for inspectors to give farmers advice. Inspectors can, however, provide guidance. Guidance can involve literature, background on legislation or species biology, clarification on legislative requirements, or a practical description of what compliance looks like. In other words, inspectors can discuss why and how something is or is not compliant with a farmer but cannot advise farmers on a specific way to change the issue in question.
- The social, financial, and psychological issues that farmers face directly impact animal welfare on farms. In addition, financial and social issues can be a strong barrier for change on farms. And farmers are known to have difficulty asking for help or seeking resources themselves. Inspectors could offer written material on local resources that can help farmers who are struggling to cope with complex issues and farm work. When human social and psychological conditions improve, this can support better animal welfare as well.
- Explanation of legislation is an important aspect of inspection. Research shows that many farmers have difficulty keeping track of legislative changes or the number of requirements. In addition to clear verbal explanation and dialogue, clear and practical written materials can support farmer awareness of compliance issues and requirements.

8.2 Inspection transparency

- Farmers are not always aware of the differing value placed on checklist items by inspectors. Farmers may also disagree with the value placed on some items (e.g. paperwork). Rather than keeping these values in the background, it might better facilitate open dialogue and improvement if farmers are made aware of the differing significance attached to various areas and items on the checklist and their relevance to an overall assessment. Keeping these aspects ‘up front’ rather than as a surprise for farmers could certainly contribute to better communication and compliance. In case of disagreement, it may help to discuss why these items are deemed important by inspection authorities.
- Farmers’ views on inspection fairness may affect their willingness to comply and their view on the inspection system more generally. In order to promote transparency and fairness in inspection, we suggest that adequate time be provided for calibration between inspectors in training courses (and between training courses if possible). Calibration can be relevant both in relation to on-farm inspection, inspection during transport and inspection during slaughter. Inspectors can also refer to EURCAW’s indicators: <https://www.eurcaw.eu/en/eurcaw-pigs/services.htm>

8.3 Communication

- Inspectors can be agents for change and animal welfare improvement. The potential for inspections to promote animal welfare improvement appears to be more likely when inspectors engage in dialogue with farmers and improve interpersonal communication skills.
- Dialogue with farmers depends on their willingness to listen and engage. If farmers demonstrate only resistance and are unwilling to engage, then argumentation will be of little use.
- Inspectors can learn how to pose questions and listen to the farmer in a way that can open space for dialogue on change. Asking into the farmer’s situation at the farm, financial or social problems and showing empathy towards the farmer’s situation are other ways to promote an openness to guidance from an inspector regarding compliance.
- Farmer distrust of scientific knowledge and legislation-based measurement can also be barriers to change. Inspectors who engage in dialogue can discuss with farmers how these are relevant to the farm. Research shows that one-to-one dialogue and open communication can be far more beneficial than one-way dissemination of scientific and legislative information. Knowledge on the background for the legislation are in some countries given out to farmers as written material. Written guidance can be one way of opening a dialogue. Consider in each situation whether professional/scientific-based knowledge, for instance about the biology/behavioral needs of the animals, are relevant for the farmer. New knowledge is always easier to deliver in situations of compliance and where you see a possibility to work with prevention.
- Consider your own personal communication-profile. Does it affect the way you communicate with the farmer? Are there training opportunities that might help you improve your communication style in situations of conflict?

8.4 Resources on communication and interpersonal skills for inspectors

- Motivational interviewing (MI) and empathy-based communication are two possible routes for improving communication between inspectors and farmers. MI training can help inspectors ask questions that support the farmer in finding their own reasons for change. We strongly suggest that Competent Authorities in Member States look locally for experts trained in MI who can participate in training courses for inspectors. We include some links to external resources here but emphasize that EURCAW is not responsible for the content on these links. These are provided only as references for further reading and inspiration.
 - An open-source overview on MI by Ken Resnicow and Fiona McMaster:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3330017/>
 - Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT): This webpage includes information on MI trainers as well as a library of open-access resources on MI.
<https://motivationalinterviewing.org>
 - This webpage includes an adapted summary of MI assumptions and principles:
<https://ighhub.org/resource/motivational-interviewing-assumptions-and-principles-broad-framework>
- In some Member States, inspectors are trained in conflict management and how to reduce possible conflicts with stakeholders gradually. We include some links to external resources here but emphasize that EURCAW is not responsible for the content on these links. These are provided only as references for further reading and inspiration.
 - A concise and open-access summary on conflict management techniques from the University of California Berkeley: <https://hr.berkeley.edu/hr-network/central-guide-managing-hr/managing-hr/interaction/conflict/resolving>
 - A large collection of open-access resources on communication and conflict resolution:
<https://www.beyondintractability.org/moos>

Suggestions for improvement

Official inspectors and experts from member states are invited to contact EURCAW-Pigs info.pigs@eurcaw.eu with any suggestions, comments or questions to further improve this review.

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