

*The EU Reference Centre of Animal Welfare (EURCAW) was established in 2018 by DG SANTE to support EU Member States on issues related to the pig welfare legislation. As part of its activities, EURCAW-Pigs organises annual meetings with a Reflection Board, including representatives of the pig supply chain, related professional organisations and civil society organisations. The Reflection Board is informed about the activities of EURCAW-Pigs and is asked to reflect on them and to support the Centre with technical information.*

This second Reflection Board meeting was organized online (MS Teams) on 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2021, and the Board was represented by 9 delegates (see Annex 1 'List of participants'). The meeting was opened at 14:00h and closed at 16:40h.

## Welcome

The participants were welcomed by Hans Spoolder, director and coordinator of EURCAW-Pigs. He gave an [update](#) of EURCAW-Pigs activities, and reminded of 'Chatham House Rule' for the discussions during the Board meeting. This implies that "participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the connection of the speaker(s) nor that of another participant may be changed or revealed". Kornilia Zafeiropoulou – the new primary contact person at DG SANTE for EURCAW-Pigs – welcomed the participants on behalf of unit G5 of DG SANTE. She recently joined the Commission and she introduced herself as the responsible officer for the welfare of pigs. She also explained DG SANTE's vision regarding the role of the Reflection Board.

## EURCAW-Pigs' achievements & plans

The Centre's achievements and plans were presented in each of the five activity areas required by law (Art 96 of 'The Official Controls Regulation'), as part of the current Work Programme (WP) 2021-2022. WP 2021-2022 was (also) inspired by last year's Board meeting. The five activities were presented by the Centre's coordinators of the respective activities and the Board was asked to reflect on these.



EURCAW Pigs Reflection board

32:38 Request control Leave

European Commission

## EURCAW Main Activities

1. COORDINATED ASSISTANCE (Hans)
2. ANIMAL WELFARE INDICATORS (Lars)
3. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL STUDIES (Lars)
4. TRAINING COURSES (Jan)
5. DISSEMINATION (Marko)

EURCAW Pigs  
European Reference Centre  
for Animal Welfare

Spoolier, Hans

Jan Tind Sat...

### Activity 1: Coordinated Assistance

Hans Spooler [continued](#) with presenting the subactivities as part of activity 1 'Coordinated Assistance'. These include a Question and Answer service ('Q2E') and networking through various types of meetings. In the meantime two other EU Reference Centres for Animal Welfare have started, and EURCAW-Pigs is setting up collaboration with these them, e.g. having same networking activities and same WP structure. The discussion mainly focussed on the Q2E service:

- ✓ The Centre approaches questions from a scientific view, and legal questions or interpretations are not allowed by the Commission. Legislation questions can be addressed to the Commission. For interpretation of legislation the court of justice has the last word. However, there is a narrow line between legal interpretation and scientific and technical information. The board suggests to implement a legal advice in the procedure for answering Q2E, for checking that we stick to science.
- ✓ How is the representation of Member States (MS), are they equally active? There are always MS that are more active than others, also depending on the number of pigs in the MS. The 'tone' of questions could be different across MS. One suggestion from the Board is to focus more on Eastern Europe.
- ✓ Feed solutions to improve welfare, interactions with EFSA, etc. are also included in the Centre's topics, e.g. in relation to tail biting.
- ✓ For implementation into national laws in the EU, a certain flexibility is needed. There might be more than one solution, which may require not to be too descriptive.

### Activities 2 and 3: Welfare indicators & Science

Lars Schrader coordinates both activities and combined this in one [presentation](#). A central task is to provide scientific and technical knowledge to Competent Authorities of EU member states and their support bodies, for the official controls on pig welfare requirements laid down in the European pig welfare legislation. Scientific

reviews were prepared on eight welfare topics, and a ninth topic is currently being prepared. For publication of these reviews, a quality assurance protocol is used (using peer review). In the reviews, EURCAW-Pigs also describes relevant welfare indicators that can be used to verify compliance with the EU legislation. Additionally, for these (sets of) indicators, indicator factsheets are developed.

Part of the subactivities is also to find possible demonstrators of good and best practices and inspiring examples on how to deal with welfare requirements. As in industry many good practice examples are being developed, the participants are invited to send their suggestions to Lars. The Centre preferentially would like to receive pictures or videos with short explanations, or information already published in the internet (e.g. videos on Youtube). All aspects (even those are not focused on as inspiring example) within the information material should comply with the respective legal requirements. The information material should also not include any hint to a certain company to avoid advertisement.

A summary of the further discussions:

- ✓ The Centre produces a lot of material which is useful for inspectors and CA's, but this is also very useful for the industry. As all materials are public, everybody has access, and farmers and producers can readily use the output. Producers can communicate with their members to provide them with the information.
- ✓ What to expect with regard to new EU legislation? Advising farmers is difficult at this point, due to the uncertainty of the current situation. The Centre cannot foresee the new legislation, and focusses on the consequences of the current legislation. One possibility the Centre has is to show inspiring examples which go beyond the minimum requirements. However, it was also concluded that this meeting is not the right place to discuss future legislation. For this, participants can contact Kornilia Zafeiropoulou at DG SANTE.

#### Activity 4: Training

The training task of EURCAW-pigs was [presented](#) by Jan Tind Sørensen and includes training standards and support for the development of courses in MS and guidelines on how to change perceptions and attitudes. Unfortunately, no training for individual MS can be provided by EURCAW. Expected results in WP 2021-2022 are:

- Access to past BTSF courses on the DG SANTE site that are facilitated via the EURCAW website, and a selection of national courses made available for all MS on the EURCAW website.
- In a [workshop](#) on October 27, 2021, for national training bodies draft material will be presented and evaluated with the attendees. The workshop is hosted by the Danish EURCAW-Pig team and is titled "Developing training tools for inspectors regarding communication about animal welfare in the EU animal on-farm welfare control".
- A third subactivity focusses on facilitating the dialogue on farm, at the abattoir, during road checks. Guidelines are produced on how to change perceptions and attitudes and to increase the communication skills of inspectors.

#### Activity 5: Dissemination and communication

Relevant and actual output of EURCAW-Pigs of activities 1-4 are available and easily accessible via the EURCAW-Pigs website [www.eurcaw-pigs.eu](http://www.eurcaw-pigs.eu). Marko Ruis focussed in his presentation on the [\(hot\) topics](#)

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discussed or downloaded most by visitors to the website. Examples of hot topics requested in several meetings with CA's and pig welfare policy workers are:

- Tail docking, specifically related to enrichment materials for reducing the risk for tail biting, but also action plans of MS for means of achieving compliance with the Directive (2008/120/EC). In line with this, the topic of tail docking and tail biting also remains 'popular' with regard to the number of downloads through the 'knowledge base' (repository) on EURCAW-Pigs' website. The knowledge base contains a growing number (now around 350) of scientific, legal and technical documents on the relevant pig welfare issues.
- Farrowing housing and management: compliance with current legislation (COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2008/120/EC). But also with regard to near future with regard to European Citizen's Initiative "End the Cage Age". Farmers begin to ask for information on free housing systems.

With regard to the topics of Q2E's: limited number of topics are asked for a lot are:

- Tail biting and docking: risk factors, enrichment (several), costs of tail biting.
- Stunning: gas, electrical, state of consciousness.

## Closing

Hans Spoolder thanked the Board for their feedback and suggestions, and closed the meeting at 16:40h. All participants will receive the notes of the meeting and have the opportunity to improve them prior to publication.

*EURCAW-Pigs, January 2022*

## **Annex 1. List of participants**

### **EURCAW-Pigs Reflection Board (RB)**

European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders (EFFAB)  
COGECA  
European Livestock and Meat Trades Union (UECBV)  
European Feed Manufacturers Federation (FEFAC)  
European Federation of Animal Health Services (FESASS)  
Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE)  
EAPHM – European Association Porcine Health Management  
Eurogroup for Animals  
VIER PFOTEN International

### **DG SANTE**

Kornilia Zafeiropoulou

### **EURCAW-Pigs**

Hans Spolder  
Lars Schrader  
Jan Tind Sørensen  
Marko Ruis