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for Animal Welfare *Pigs*

Pig Welfare Inspection on Farm and at Transport

The Challenges and Needs of Inspectors in Italy, Finland, and Poland

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Roadside inspection. © Mc Loughlin, 2024

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The aim of this report is to provide an account of the specific challenges faced by government inspectors who enforce animal welfare legislation on farm and at transport in the EU. The report is based on fieldwork in three member states, specifically Italy, Finland, and Poland.

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Contents

1 Summary

The aim of this report is to provide an account of the specific challenges faced by government inspectors who enforce animal welfare legislation on farm and at transport in the EU. Building on the insights from the 2022 report on "The Challenges and Needs of Animal Welfare Inspectors on Farm and at Slaughter" (Mc Loughlin, 2022), this report is based on fieldwork in three member states, specifically Italy, Finland, and Poland. This report's focus on farm and transport inspection is designed to provide an additional account of welfare inspection, with a specific attention to the unique difficulties associated with overseeing welfare and enforcing legislation during transport inspection. The inclusion of two new countries, Italy and Finland, is designed to provide further insights into farm inspection across the EU member states.

Across the EU, 1% of farms in receipt of EU subsidies must be inspected annually (DAFM, 2021) and failure to comply with legislation can involve penalties that to a lesser or greater degree reduce the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) subsidies that farmers receive. The connection between CAP payments and compliance with legislation is critical to improving animal welfare, according to the European Court of Auditors (ECA, 2018). Based on the 2022 fieldwork (Mc Loughlin, 2022), transport was continually identified as an area that posed unique challenges to inspectors and compromised the welfare of pigs. Transport inspections were planned to be included in the initial fieldwork however due to logistical and practical challenges, it was necessary to conduct further research into pig welfare inspection on farm and at transport. This report is designed to support the work of inspectors and highlight the challenges that inspectors face during inspection (see Mc Loughlin 2022). The recommendations provided are designed to mitigate the challenges, alleviate the pressure, and support inspectors at work and safeguard pig welfare. Understanding the challenges of conducting transport inspections of short and long journeys (>8hrs) conducted on farm, at the slaughterhouse, and at the roadside is the primary focus of the report in addition to furthering our understanding of the demands of farm welfare inspection.

2 Introduction

The EU is the world's second biggest producer of pork after China, producing nearly a fifth of the world's production of pigmeat and the biggest exporter of pork and pork products (EC, 2023). EU control activities are designed to guarantee a "high level of health protection and trust in the food chain, from farm to fork" (EU, 2023b) ensuring compliance and safe trade. Following the legal framework of the integrated food safety policy from farm to fork, national authorities must have or have access to:

- A sufficient number of suitably qualified and experienced staff
- Appropriate and properly maintained facilities and equipment
- Adequate laboratory capacity for analysis, testing, and diagnosis

Across the EU, animal transport can be inspected at several types of locations, including at slaughterhouses, at departure from private farms, at assembly barns, as well as at control posts. In addition, animal welfare and means of transport can be inspected by the roadside, where competent authorities are assisted by the police who stop vehicles so that an inspection can take place. Transport has been on the political agenda in the EU this year, owing to the upcoming revision of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005. As part of a wider proposal to reform EU rules on animal welfare, an EU Briefing published in late 2023 detailed how proposed

reforms include stricter rules regarding travel times, minimum space requirements and stricter rules regarding the transport of vulnerable animals as well as transport during extreme temperatures (Vinci, 2023). Furthermore, transport of animals bred for food has received greater media attention in various Member States due to the activities of investigative journalism and political parties (Nielsen, 2023).

Figure 1.1: Truck carrying fattened pigs spotted by an inspector along the highway in Italy (©Mc Loughlin, 2024).

According to (EFSA et al., 2022, p.1) "an average of 31 million pigs were transported between Member States per year in the period from 2019 to 2021, across all means of transport. This means that pigs are the species, among animals transported as free moving, that are transported in the highest numbers in the EU by far. Road transport constituted 99% of total pig transport reported in this period." Thus, transport inspection of pig welfare is vitally important to safeguard the welfare of pigs in the EU as well as reduce the harms to their welfare, of which EFSA identified ten hazards: (i) group stress, (ii) handling stress, (iii) heat stress, (iv) injuries, (v) motion stress, (vi) prolonged hunger, (vii) prolonged thirst, (viii) resting problems, (ix) restriction of movement, and (x) sensory overstimulation. This truck was spotted along the road in Italy and was carrying fattening pigs, whereas the majority of pigs transported within the EU are weaner pigs for fattening (EFSA et al., 2022). This highlights the importance of safeguarding the welfare of pigs on transport. The legislation that safeguards welfare is undergoing review however, a comprehensive legal framework makes transport inspection a legislative requirement. Member states determine the number of planned inspections per year, based on the requirements of the legislation.

Article 9.1 of EU Regulation (2017/625) states that competent authorities shall perform official controls on all operators regularly, on a risk basis and with appropriate frequency. Furthermore, Article 21.1 states that official controls to verify compliance with the rules shall be performed at all relevant stages of production, processing and distribution along the agri-food chain. Certain official control tasks can be delegated to one or more persons. By conducting a uniform minimum frequency of official animal welfare inspections, it is intended that this minimum number of official inspections corresponds to the risk associated with different animal species and means of transport in order to prevent non-compliances and to minimize suffering.

As was identified in the EURCAW-Pigs report on Roadside Transport Inspection (Herskin & Mc Loughlin, 2024), roadside checks are typically performed by designated veterinarians assisted by the police. The role of the police involves stopping traffic as well as communication assistance, as described in 4.4. However, the police continue to carry out additional police duties during roadside inspection, such as speed checks. Roadside inspections may include several police officers and one or several government inspector(s). During my fieldwork, roadside inspections involved checking delivery schedules recorded in TRACES as well as coordinating these with known slaughterhouse/farm locations. According to the European Commission,

"TRACES is an integrated web-based system, maintained by the European Commission's Health and Consumers Directorate-General, which notifies, certifies and monitors imports, transits, exports and intra-EU trade in animals and animal products. Economic operators (EOs) and competent authorities all over the world can use this web-based network to trace back and forth animal and animal product movements."(EU, 2014 p.2). Vehicles transporting animals are stopped by the police and checked by the inspector. The specific vehicles are not chosen based on risk but as a spot check.

According to Regulation 2017/625, each MS must provide a yearly plan for controls and has to report the controls as a yearly report, as described in the Implementation Regulation (2019/723), thereby ensuring harmonized reporting. The reporting form does not indicate whether the data comes from roadside checks or other types of checks of animal transport (e.g. at control posts, slaughterhouses). This information may be provided in a cover letter (see Herskin & Mc Loughlin, 2024).

2.1 The Italian Pig Sector

Italy has a population of nearly 59 million and comprises of over 300,000 km^2. Italy has 20 regions, five of whom have special autonomous status which means that they can pass legislation on local matters. Italy is one of the EU's main pigmeat producers, producing 6% of EU's pigmeat. The main pig producing regions are Lombardia 48%, Emilia-Romagna 12%, Piemonte 16% and Veneto 9%. Italy is home to a population of 8.7 million pigs with approximately around 24,000 farm, including 2349 large fattening units (>500 pigs) and 167 large farrowing units (>300 sows)**,** many of whom are involved in DOP production (Prosciutto di Parma and Prosciutto di San Daniele) in the country (Ter Beek, 2023; TESEO, 2024).

Detection of first African Swine Fever cases in wild boar in continental Italy in January 2022, the competent authority has been working to prevent the disease from the domestic pig population. This was possible through strengthened biosecurity in pig establishments and during hunting, depopulation of infected zones, and surveillance activities along with an effective laboratory network and epidemiological advice. As noted by the EU audit of management measures (EU, 2023a), derogations for movements within restricted zones II under certain conditions could not fully ensure that pig meat would not circulate outside these areas. Since ASF was detected, Italy has killed 120,000 pigs – three-quarters of those in August and September as the emergency accelerated in the Lombardy region specifically, neighbouring region to the Piedmont and Emilia-Romagna region, famous for Parma prosciutto (Santalucia, 2024).

2.2 The Finnish Pig Sector

With a population of a little over 5.6 million in a geographical area of nearly 340,000 km^2, Finland is the 8th largest country in the EU and home to 19 regions, 70 sub-regions, and 309 municipalities. 2-8% of farms are inspected annually (typically 25% at random and 75% on risk basis), including cross-compliance inspections. Like the trends across the EU, Finland's pig sector reflects greater consolidation, whereby the average size of farms has increased whilst the number of farms has decreased. Furthermore, the pig population has more than doubled from 446,000 in 1950 to 988,000 in 2023 (EU, 2016). In 2024, the number of pig farms has fallen to 633 with most pig farms located in Varsinais-Suomi, South Ostrobothnia, and Ostrobothnia (StatFinland, 2024; StFL, 2024).

Whilst the majority of pork production in Finland is for the home market and their industry is dwarfed by the sizeable production of Spain, Germany, and Poland, the ability of Finland to implement and enforce the ban on tail docking is of interest to other Member States. Thus, accompanying inspectors during inspection facilitated a deeper understanding of just how possible enforcing the ban is and how much it helps the inspectors to focus on not simply policing compliance but boosting welfare for Finnish pigs.

2.3 The Polish Pig Sector

Over 300,000 km^2 in area, Poland has a population of nearly 37 million. The country has 16 provinces (voivodeships) where administrative authority at provincial level is shared between a government-appointed governor, an elected regional assembly and an executive elected by the assembly. Like many other EU member states, the Polish pig sector is undergoing considerable consolidation with the disappearance of almost half the pig herds since 2019. As of June 2023, there are with 52,900 pig herds. In line with this consolidation, the Polish pig sector continues to be one of the main producers of pigmeat in the EU, producing 9% of EU pigmeat (Bellini, 2021; EU, 2024).

Since the first detection of ASF in 2014, the disease has steadily spread westwards and as of 2021, there are restricted zones in 15 of the 16 voivodeships (provinces) (EU, 2021). African Swine Fever (infection with genotype 2 virus) was confirmed within the EU in 2014, specifically in Lithuania, Poland, Latvia, and Estonia. It has since spread to nine other Member States however, both Belgium and Czechia have successfully eradicated ASF from their territories (EU, 2023a p.3). The EU strategic approach for ASF is designed to assist Member States with their ASF response benefiting from technical advice provided by the EU Veterinary Emergency Team, the scientific advice from the European Food Safety Authority, the diagnostic skills of the EU Reference Laboratory for the disease and the evaluations of Commission audits. The Commission Implementing Regulation 2021/605 and 2023/594 detail explicit control measures based on Regulation (EU) 2016/429.

3 Methods

An ethnographic study employs various methods that offer researchers insight into participants" daily routines, practices, and activities. A central technique is participant observation, where the researcher not only observes but also engages in activities to better understand the lives of a community or group. The balance between observing and participating can vary significantly depending on the context of the study. To supplement participant observation, researchers often use semi-structured or open interviews, which allow a deeper exploration of how participants perceive their world, navigate challenges, and relate to others. This grounded approach enables participants to shape the direction of the research, as their actions and perspectives provide the researcher with a nuanced understanding of the setting.

Given the specific nature of animal welfare inspections, observation became the primary method for gathering insights in the field. I accompanied inspectors as they worked, adopting an almost apprentice-like role, asking questions, and following their routines to gain an understanding of their tasks, backgrounds, and the challenges they face. Through informal conversations and follow-up interviews, I explored the primary challenges they highlighted in their work. Using open-ended questions, I encouraged reflective and exploratory discussions.

3.1 Rationale

Due to the success of the first ethnographic study of animal welfare inspectors in 2022, this fieldwork was designed to gather further insights into the particular challenges posed by transport inspection through the same ethnographic methods (Mc Loughlin, 2022). However, to build on these methods, I have also designed a quantitative questionnaire to gather further information about the educational background of participants, their training and work experience level, along with their views on animal welfare inspection. The results from this questionnaire will be combined with the qualitative insights from the fieldwork to produce a comprehensive account of animal welfare inspection through the experiences of a select group of participants. The in-person interaction central to ethnography fosters a relationship of trust and openness between the researcher and participant, allowing sensitive topics to be discussed comfortably. This rapport is typically built through ongoing dialogue with participants (Atkinson et al., 2001).

3.2 Practicalities

I contacted 22 individuals associated with animal welfare inspection across the three member states. Their positions varied from administrative staff who coordinate inspections to animal welfare inspectors who conduct inspections weekly. I secured 18 participants – 10 in Italy, 3 in Finland, and 5 in Poland. The higher number of participants in Italy was a result of meeting with inspectors responsible for different aspects of welfare inspection and was also made possible due to a focus group organized by the Italian officials which was immensely useful.

During the fieldwork, I conducted 13 interviews, including one focus group interview. These interviews ranged from fifty minutes to three hours. Three of these interviews were carried out online, some prior to participant observation to organize the visit and some following my visit to their workplace. In total, I visited 7 field sites across the three countries including 4 farms (see Table 1). Additionally, I joined inspectors at one roadside inspection, one transport inspection from the departure farm, and one at the slaughterhouse. Inspectors often collected me to bring me to their workplace and rearranged their tasks to make time to discuss their work with me. I am very grateful for the generosity of their time.

Due to the need to protect the identity of the inspectors, I have not provided country-specific information when presenting the perspectives of the participants. I have used pseudonyms where names are present, and I have removed all identifying features in the accounts that deal with particularly sensitive issues and experiences.

3.3 Logistical Challenges

This fieldwork was significantly challenged by the focus of the project. Despite ongoing contact with inspectors, it proved to be highly challenging to coordinate a roadside inspection with the police in line with the projected fieldwork visits. All of the fieldwork was carried out in 2024, which also led to difficulties due to the timing of fieldwork in line with the wider research of the author as well as the schedules of the inspectors.

Similar to the first fieldwork study in 2022, this research was also challenged by infectious disease outbreaks. In Poland, the duties and responsibilities of animal welfare inspectors has been transformed by the ongoing

status of African Swine Fever in the country. This has increased not only the administrative tasks in overseeing outbreaks but has also taken priority over animal welfare inspection. Similarly, outbreaks in wild boar populations in Italy has directed more resources towards epidemiological investigations.

3.4 Fieldsites

Table 1: Fieldwork activities across the three countries.

Month	Country Visited	No. of Inspectors at each site visit*	Fieldsite
April	*Italy*	4	Transport Inspection (At slaughterhouse)
	Italy	1	Farm Inspection
May	*Finland*	2	Commercial Pig Farm
		Same 2	Transport Inspection (on Farm)
		1	Commercial Pig Farm
September	*Poland*	1	Transport Inspection (Roadside)
		Same 1	Commercial Pig Farm Inspection

*Note: Whilst I met more inspectors at certain sites than the main participants in the research, I have only counted those with whom I had a conversation about the project and their responses to challenges they face in their role.

3.5 Participant Profiles

A primary goal of this project was to capture a broad spectrum of experiences in both on-farm and transport inspection by working with inspectors with diverse levels of experience. However, rather than presenting a detailed table of each inspector's background, which could make their identities easily identifiable to their colleagues, I have provided a summary of experience.

In total, 18 participants were involved in this fieldwork – 15 inspectors and 3 coordinators of inspection. I conducted participant observation with 9 of these participants and 13 participants successfully completed the survey.

- There were 15 female participants and 3 male participants.
- 10 worked specifically with transport but many worked across both transport and farm inspection.
- Number of participants with
    - More than one but less than or equal to five years" experience: 6
    - More than five but less than or equal to ten years" experience: 5
    - More than ten years" experience: 7

- Of the 18 participants, 16 are qualified veterinarians and the remaining 2 have animal science qualifications except three who have a background in agriculture and/or slaughterhouse work.
    - 5 of these qualified veterinarians had worked in practice
        - 3 for a period of more than 10 years
        - 2 for a period of between 1 and 5 years

3.6 Fieldwork Encounters

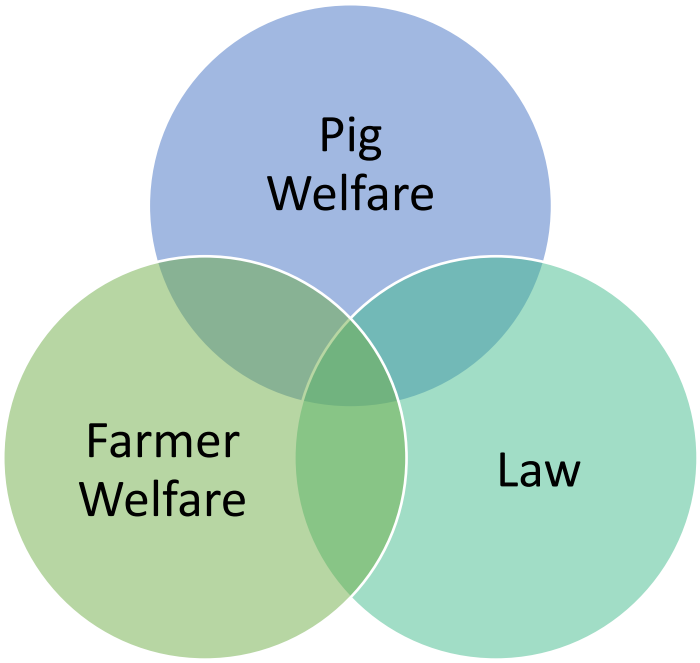
Before presenting the main results of this research which I have organized into thematic points that then inform the recommendations (separated into EURCAW-Pigs, Competent Authorities, and The European Commission), I wanted to share how one inspector described the most challenging part of their work which shaped my understanding of animal welfare inspection and which will underpins the tensions that arise in the work of inspection (see also Mc Loughlin, Forthcoming).

We are somewhere in the middle

During a focus group interview, I asked the inspectors to explain the most challenging part of their work. Teresa began drawing something and quickly displayed it to the rest of the participants and myself.

The others nodded in approval and Teresa's voice echoed from the screen, "we are here, we are somewhere in the middle." Teresa continued, "it is not easy to be in the middle of people's welfare, animal welfare and farmer welfare- the most challenging aspect is to balance animal welfare with farmer's welfare and the legal requirements." This is made more difficult because farmers today have a lot of problems, such as animal welfare, medicine law, African swine fever. "For us, it is so difficult to have the co-existence, this is the very difficult part of this job... going to the farmer and saying that animal welfare is not ok. It is a lot of pressure. But the challenge is to reduce the pressure, do the job, and to try to convince the farmer to work well. I think the key point is that farmers need to change their minds, and we have to help them to change their minds not only because the law says it but because changing their management will bring an improvement." Similarly, another inspector summarized it as, "with animal welfare, everybody wins, farmer wins, animal wins and the inspectors win." I have recreated Teresa's drawing below. When she presented it to the camera, she pointed to the centre of the three circles and said, "we are somewhere in the middle."

Table 2: Teresa's portrayal of the most challenging part of animal welfare inspection.



In the case of inspectors working at slaughterhouses or specifically with drivers, the section Farmer Welfare may be substituted with worker or driver welfare or possibly, all three as the sanctions of slaughterhouse inspectors can impact on multiple actors. But what does it feel like to be in the middle?

This report focuses on the experiences of inspectors evaluating welfare, but it is vital to understand the challenges they are confronted with in the task of inspection. This may include animals whose welfare is difficult to evaluate and predict, i.e. grey zones between good and poor welfare, as well as legal and regulatory instruments that are imprecise and complex to work with, and additionally the challenge of communicating on grey zones with imprecise concepts to parties who may fundamentally disagree with your judgement. In the next section, I provide a detailed account of the ways that inspectors balance the competing, conflicting, and contradictory interests of animal welfare, farmer welfare, and the law and how this in turn impacts on their own welfare.

4 Results

4.1 Survey Findings on the Motivations, Interests, and Needs of Inspectors

13 participants completed an online survey on their training background and perceived needs. This survey was designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the participants and is not designed to be used as an indicator of the training needs of the wider inspector community. However, there are some interesting points that I would like to highlight which can illuminate the motivations, interests, and needs of inspectors enforcing animal welfare legislation.

Of the 13 participants, 10 regularly conduct inspections on animals other than pigs with 9 of them conducting cattle welfare inspections, 8 also involved in poultry inspections, and others involved in the welfare of

companion animals, like dogs and cats. This highlights the need for coordination across EURCAW's as the work of inspectors routinely involves inspection of a variety of species (see Recommendation 6.1).

In terms of training, most of the inspectors received animal welfare training from their competent authority and, to a lesser degree, from Better Training for Safer Food. The most common topics of training included On-Farm Welfare and Legislation. In turn, the inspectors were most interested in training covering the following topics, Welfare during transport, On-Farm Welfare, Heat Stress, Climate Control and Space Allowance for Transport, and Communication with Farmers, Slaughter workers, and Drivers. The emphasis on transport-related topics reflects the fact that this group of inspectors were involved in transport inspection, and it is important to add that there is a general interest in topics related to enrichment materials, natural behaviours of pigs, and paperwork and documentation. The majority expressed an interest in more pig welfare training, with one declining due to the result that there will be less time available for inspection. However, the majority recognized how training improves their ability to conduct inspection, from improving knowledge and increased awareness to facilitating peer dialogue.

The inspectors cited national legislation, EURCAW-Pigs materials, and guidelines issued by Competent Authorities as helpful to their work, discussion with colleagues proved to be a highly appreciated support to the work of inspection. This also explains why face-to-face training activities were identified as the most preferable form of training along with simulation exercises, like farm visits. Webinars, e-Learning courses, and blended courses were identified as the least effective mode of training. The fact that the next EURCAW-Pigs Work Programme includes webinar activities, steps will need to be taken to ensure that these webinars are targeted at the needs and interests of the inspectors (see Recommendations 6.2).

Figure 4.1.1: Inspector talking to the pigs during an inspection as the farmer looks on (©Mc Loughlin, 2024).

Bringing welfare cases to court and assessing the welfare of special health status animals like cull sows were cited as the most challenging aspects of their work in addition they noted working with national legislation and assessing documentation as especially challenging areas. These may be potential areas for further training, more suited to the Competent Authorities, rather than EURCAW-Pigs due to the wide range of policies and procedures of the Member States.

4.2 Animal Welfare Inspection at Transport

Main Problems Encountered at Transport

- Animals not fit for transport
  - Prolapse
  - Lameness
  - Injury
  - Lesions
- Problems with documentation
- Lack of Equipment – bolt gun to kill sick animals
- Poor cleaning of vehicles between transports
- Accessing the GPS system during controls

Figure 2.2.1: An inspector assesses the pigs on board (©Mc Loughlin, 2024).

Fitness for Transport- Unfit for Use?

Despite being a central concept in the Council Regulation (EC 1/2005), Fitness for Transport lacks a legal and scientific definition, and appears to focus on the absence of unnecessary suffering and injury. EURCAW-Pigs has used this as the basis of indirect indicators of Fitness for Transport (see EFSA et al., 2022; Herskin et al., 2021). Without a legal or scientific definition, the ability of inspectors to enforce the law and improve the welfare of animals can be severely impacted as there is more room for different interpretations of what is 'unnecessary suffering' (see Mc Loughlin, Forthcoming). However, the focus on the absence of negative experiences is nevertheless central to how inspectors understand Fitness for Transport. For example, when I asked inspectors to describe how they understand 'Fitness for Transport', it would often be a description of an absence of negative welfare conditions rather than the presence of positive welfare. One inspector described how "animals should not have wounds, they should not be limping, and small hernias are ok, but big is not ok" (fieldnotes, 2024). Not only is the concept hard to define positively but it is also difficult to assess. Lisa described how "sometimes they are down and sleeping, so you can't see how they walk…" (Fieldnotes, 2024). However, during a transport inspection at a farm, one inspector explained what they are looking for when they watch the pigs walking up the ramp, which is simply "that they can walk, they don't have any injuries." After the inspection, I asked what they thought of the animals, to which they replied, "they are quite calm, they are quite happy, looking around, this is a new thing [the truck]." The inspector did not refer to "fitness for transport" in their description and it highlights the murkiness of the concept, whereby it relies on an intuitive assessment by the inspector based on visual assessment combined with their veterinary expertise and welfare assessment experience, what I have called elsewhere the "veterinary-audit gaze" (Mc Loughlin, Forthcoming).

Fitness for transport is particularly difficult to work with because it extends into an unknown future that inspectors (and drivers) must try to predict. Animals must be assessed based on how they behave now but also based on how the inspector expects the transport to challenge them. Thus, fitness for transport is an assessment of their ability to deal with the challenges of transport now and for the duration of the journey. In this way, it is not surprising that defining fitness for transport is often a question of the presence

of negative welfare because it is a prediction of the animal's ability to cope. The assumption is that if the animal is already suffering with lameness or injuries, their ability to cope is significantly reduced. As Herskin et al. (2019)) highlight, the transport legislation allows for animals to have minor injuries as long as the transport is not expected to lead to further injury, which underscores the need for further research into fitness for transport.

Additionally, the focus on negative welfare in the assessment of Fitness for Transport is also not surprising, as all of the inspectors noted that this was an unnatural experience that pigs must endure. The perceived 'unnatural' nature of transport may explain why none of the inspectors mentioned positive welfare in relation to transport. Even the literature typically conveys transport as a negative experience to varying degrees for animals, especially pigs (Cockram, 2020; EFSA et al., 2022; Faucitano & Lambooij, 2019; Herskin et al., 2021; Herskin et al., 2019; Nielsen et al., 2011; Warriss, 1998). Thus, inspectors are authorizing the exposure of animals to a negative experience and the most that is possible is to ensure that they don't have injuries or conditions that may be compounded by the stress of transport.

It is not only a murky concept, but when issues arise following transport, it can be difficult to attribute blame. For inspectors based at the slaughterhouse, issues arose in terms of the designation of fault, specifically when drivers are viewed as caught between the pressure to deliver animals by the slaughterhouse and a pressure to collect animals from the farm, which may result in animals being accepted onto the transport who are not fit for transport. This led one inspector to criticize the slaughterhouse companies for putting considerable pressure on transporters to deliver specific numbers of pigs. When transport inspections are conducted at the slaughterhouse, the inspectors must check three authorisations – one for the transporter, the second for the vehicle, and the third is the species authorization. Larger slaughterhouses were generally perceived to have fewer issues with fitness for transport but the smaller slaughterhouses, according to one inspector who had worked across both large and small facilities, experienced more problems due to the varieties of pig breeds but also because the inspector is typically working alone. As was noted in the previous fieldwork report in 2022 (Mc Loughlin, 2022), inspectors based at slaughterhouses can face challenges ensuring that they "see the same way" but in this case, the inspectors based at smaller slaughterhouses lack the support of other colleagues and carry the burden of enforcement on their own. This inspector described it, "in the large slaughterhouse, there is a team, we have a small structure and can decide together whereas in the small slaughterhouse, you are deciding alone" (Mary, fieldnotes, 2024). Similarly, the design of the lairage can also be out of the control

Figure 4.2.2: Inspectors watch as the pigs board the trailer (©Mc Loughlin, 2024).

of the transporter and yet, when they arrive with pigs, it can cause problems. As Marie explained (fieldnotes, 2024), "the great challenge that the transporters have is to adopt systems in their business - every truck that is good can become a bad truck in a bad situation - maybe he was here last week – then he was somewhere else, where it wasn't a problem. So, the only thing is to change the system by the slaughterhouse, which is our responsibility." This was in response to issues with ramps, whereby trucks with ramps cause problems with the design of different slaughterhouse ramps.

The Inefficiency of Roadside Inspection

Many inspectors described how organizing roadside inspections in coordination with the police is a challenging task, but this is only one obstacle. Once they conduct an inspection, it can be difficult to inspect transporters, as drivers will inform other drivers about their location and drivers may divert their route to avoid the delay of inspection. Inspections often demand two police officers and may include two cars, with one to two inspectors, so it is also a resource-heavy activity. Furthermore, roadside inspection can pose challenges to various aspects of the inspection process. As Mary, an inspector with over ten years of experience, described,

> 'The slaughterhouse is the perfect place to do a control. You have internet, you can put animals in the stables, you have time to prepare but, on the road, you don't have all these opportunities. Maybe it's hot or raining, and you have to keep in mind that the interest is to protect welfare. It is very difficult to perform control on the road. So very often, we do it near a slaughterhouse where there is more opportunity to stop trucks. Then if we see something we need to check, we tell them to go to the slaughterhouse and welfare is checked on unloading without leaving the animals on the truck for too long. […] Also, in the slaughterhouse, we don't have problems with checking GPS or internet issues which can be the case on the road." (fieldnotes, 2024)

Figure 4.2.3: An inspector has to climb the trailer to get a view of the animals on board (©Mc Loughlin, 2024).

Inspectors stationed at the slaughterhouse will check all pigs for their welfare and twice a day, they are expected to conduct two transport checks, including the truck and documents. One inspector reflected on how they worked during their time as a slaughterhouse inspector dedicated to antemortem, explaining how "I was checking all the animals coming each day. I acquired a great experience because this is one of the biggest slaughterhouses with 30 trucks coming in every day. I dedicated myself to this every day. With Elizabeth as the reference for animal welfare, we started a process of double checks for many years, between the veterinary service and police. There was a great feeling because there was a national agreement that transformed into a regional and local and it meant that we had lots of controls -on the roads - at the point where it was most probable to find trucks with animals." They continued, "It was a great cooperation because we could just call the slaughterhouse if we found something and send the truck to them to release the animals and check their welfare" (fieldnotes, 2024). However, the situation has changed as new regulations

lack clarity. They continued, “with the new regulation, it was not so clear who was to do this kind of cooperation and the agreement that had been agreed [by both the department and the police] for several years no longer worked.” Both inspectors expressed a hope that this would be resolved. Elizabeth then added, “for some regions, someone will do the inspection but it’s not a general agreement or someone will only call if needed, rather than a strict system in place.” I ask whether this means that they are not doing as many controls. The inspector nods, adding, “we need the collaboration.”

When inspectors do stop a truck with pigs, they complete the points on their protocol or checklist that is based on both EU and national legislation. Inspectors described how they had a guideline from their competent authority which they used during the inspection. This protocol is the basis of the administrative process of inspection and provides an account of whether the law has been followed. However, the points of the protocol and the overall legislation may often pose problems for enforcement due to their inability to assess what needs to be assessed.

> “I would like legislation that is clearer, something that takes into account the fact that the stakeholders are not so capable with the technologies and even the competent authority is not always so capable of using technology. Maybe I would like something with more substance because, with Regulation 1 [EU Reg 1/2005], we have a lot of documents that cannot be managed either by the transporter or by the competent authority. So, Regulation 1 asks for things that they cannot do and that we cannot control, for example, the GPS system, everyone has their own and I have to ask for the username and the password of the transporter, but it doesn't work, it simply doesn't work. “(Mary, fieldnotes, 2024)

Figure 4.2.4: Having climbed up the side of the van, the police officer watches as the inspector assesses the animals inside (©Mc Loughlin, 2024).

During one roadside inspection, the transporter did not have a ladder for the inspector to assess the welfare of the pigs on the upper decks (see Fig. 4.2.3 and 4.2.4). This inspector readily climbed up the side of the truck to do so and the driver received a verbal warning to ensure that a ladder is provided on the transport. However, it was clear in this inspection how closely the police and inspectors collaborate with and rely on one another. Not simply in assisting with climbing the truck, but the police were a kind of middleman when disagreements arose between the inspector and a transporter. The police occupy both an authoritative role in the stopping of traffic but also a mediation role in communication. This underscores the vital need for a collaborative agreement between the police and the inspectorate at the upper levels to guarantee cooperation and safeguard welfare.

Thus, not only is collaboration vital, but there is a pressure on inspectors to be efficient, otherwise, an animal welfare inspection can quickly negatively impact on the very welfare it is designed to safeguard. Anna described this pressure in this way, "we have to inspect the cars (trucks) of course but you have to think of the welfare and control as quick as possible, but you have to remember to check everything." (fieldnotes, 2024). This is in addition to the fact that inspectors are often given targets for roadside inspection from their respective Competent Authorities for each year. These targets a varied from one per year to a percentage of total transport – both of which were surprisingly low in relation to the sheer number of pigs being transported in the EU and the significant threat to welfare that transport poses. However, when the inspection itself may exacerbate welfare due to extreme temperatures for example, an unambitious target may make sense when fitness for transport is assessed at slaughter for example. During the roadside inspection I observed, the recording of information on the protocol and the assessment of documentation took much more time than the actual evaluation of animals. Thus, it is logical that inspectors would both feel a pressure to be quick as they are extending an experience of negative welfare in the very act of safeguarding welfare.

> The truck is pulled in along the side of a road exiting the little town where we were sitting with the police in wait. Having stopped the truck twenty minutes earlier, the inspector is satisfied with what she has seen in the trailer. We jump into the backseat of the car. She takes out two protocols along with an official stamp indicating an official license for inspection, a stamp denoting her position, and a red stamp for the office. She fills in the protocol - stamping it with the department stamp. The older policeman reappears, and she asks for a document. I do not disturb her as she writes. Sitting in silence until he reappears with a document that authorizes "Type 1 transport'. However, she is unsettled by something. "Oh oh." She steps out of the car, saying, "I have to explain something to the driver'. She returns and wordlessly returns to the protocol. Then she says, "I need to be in a hurry a little bit because of the animals and the journey." The entire inspection takes just under an hour, with the majority of the time dedicated to paperwork and documentation.

4.3 Animal Welfare Inspection on Farm

Main Problems Encountered on Farm

- Flooring materials
- Manipulable materials
- Food Quality
- Tail Docking

Work Routines

Inspections are carried out once or twice a week whilst the rest of the week involves managing paperwork, answering mails and participating in meetings. Typically, the food authority will release a list detailing farms and their degree of risk which the inspectors use to plan their month in line with their targets. Some inspectors described how they would conduct three to four farm visits a week in certain times of the year. The paperwork can outweigh the time

Figure 4.3.1: An inspector measures the size of the pen as the pigs watch on (©Mc Loughlin, 2024).

taken for an inspection by many days depending on the complexity of the case. Thus, it is not surprising that paperwork is a challenge to manage but it is also viewed as a vitally important part of the work in terms of recordkeeping. A central part of this paperwork and documentation is the centrality of digitalized systems, including TRACES (the Trade Control and Expert System) and national systems of governance of animals, food, movements, and disease. Some inspectors described how Fridays are days for meetings, but this no doubt depends on the region. However, meetings within the department and with other departments were an important part of their responsibilities. Whilst the variation of tasks was typically praised by many inspectors, the workload of inspection, especially for inspectors responsible for the welfare of numerous species, was unsustainable.

> 'We have to recognize… we can't go just to control; we have to prepare, and we can't go to the farmer not knowing what we are doing. So of course we don't have enough time. We have to do the controls, we have targets, but we spend a lot more time at work than we should. Because we have to do this, because we know we have to do this. The changing of the law means we need more time to prepare which we end up doing in our free time. If we don't, we have to provide a very big explanation, we cannot say we haven't had enough people or we had to read the legislation, we cannot." (Anna, interview, 2024)

The excessive workload coupled with the ever-increasing audit mechanisms and recordkeeping led one inspector to admit, "now I'm almost all the time at the office [rather than on control] because I have to answer emails, because I have to do something, because I have to organize the work, because everyone wants everything from us." (fieldnotes, 2024)

Sensing the Atmosphere of Inspection

Inspections start an inspection by organizing paperwork in the office in the days ahead of an inspection. Inspectors can prepare themselves for what to expect depending on the risk level of the farm and the previous inspection reports. The day of inspection can be somewhat stressful for inspectors, as they try to mentally prepare themselves for the encounter. Some described a sense of tension or a low-level anxiety in their journey to the farm, while others described how they feel calm and prepared. Just as the inspection starts in the office, the day of the inspection is characterized by a heightened awareness of their surroundings before they enter the farm. An inspector with over ten years" experience, Ava put it in this way, "every time I look at the atmosphere, are there cars, how many, any machines... This is part of my preparing" (fieldnotes, 2024). Similarly, Sara, another inspector with over ten years" experience, described how she would try to get a sense of the entire system, saying "a lot of times, we are looking at the circumstances like how much area they have, like we measure the lights and then how much space they have for the food trough." As part of this holistic view, inspectors will also assess how the farmer views the situation.

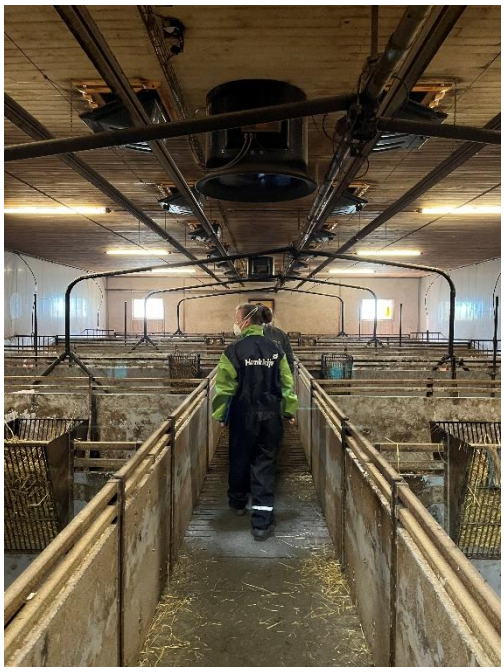


Figure 4.3.2: An inspector observes the pens following the farmer through the stalls (©Mc Loughlin, 2024).

Ava described it like this, “you never see everything, but I take a look… and then I look and see it with the farmer, and if we see things differently then I check everything” (fieldnotes, 2024). This reflects the nature of trust that characterizes the inspection, where inspectors appear to wrestle with trust, torn between taking the farmer at face value and practicing a necessary scepticism to assess whether what the farmers say aligns with what the inspectors see. Similarly, it reflects the uncertain positionality of the inspector, moving between enforcement, inspection, and even motivation for change (Anneberg et al., 2013).

Figure 4.3.3: An inspector glances from left to right as they proceed through the farm (©Mc Loughlin, 2024).

Whilst inspectors often describe feeling a little tense, nervous, and even excited, they also explained how inspections involve an assessment of the entire farm, and this involves a good dialogue with the farmer. A good dialogue means that the farmer can relax and participate in the inspection rather than be subjected to the inspection. Thus, as a participant, inspectors can ask the farmer questions and develop a keen understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the farm rather than an adversarial interaction where the farmer is the subject of scrutiny. Whilst interactions with farmers should not influence decisions, as is documented elsewhere (Anneberg et al., 2013; Mc Loughlin, Forthcoming; Veissier et al., 2020), the ability to change minds and illustrate the benefits of welfare was often cited by inspectors as a source of job satisfaction.

Disease Preparedness

African Swine Fever is present in two of the three countries. ASF was detected in Poland in 2014 and so the inspectors had many years of experience with the prevention, response, and containment of the disease in their region. On the other hand, at the time I visited Italy, ASF was not reported in the pig farms, however outbreaks in the Lombardy region of the country mark a new development in the spread of ASF in the country. Inspectors in Italy appeared to view the movement of ASF into Italian farms as inevitable, with one admitting, “everyone is worried and I have been thinking like it’s only a question of time” (fieldnotes, 2024). Despite the perceived inevitability of ASF, efforts to prevent and contain the spread persist and as a result, Brian explained how animal welfare is viewed as a lower priority than disease preparedness. “Farmers feel, they're stressed. I mean, farmers feel that with African swine fever, they feel that animal welfare has to come at a secondary level, or maybe even at a lower level. They feel that animal welfare is not important” (interview, 2024). This complicates communication with farmers as inspectors persist with conveying the benefits of welfare whilst there is an impending threat that could significantly impact the Italian pork sector. Considering the steady and progressive spread of ASF through EU member states, it is instructive to draw on the accounts of the Polish inspectors. I was especially interested in how infectious disease response was drawing on the

Figure 3: Footbath disinfection to prevent the spread of ASF (©Mc Loughlin, 2024).

Figure 4: A lone inspector clothed in PPE approaches the farm (©Mc Loughlin, 2024).

finite resources of inspection. The prioritization of infectious disease response had influenced the fieldwork in 2022, where it was not possible to observe an animal welfare inspection in French farms due to the outbreak of avian influenza that was directing efforts and resources towards bird cull operations in neighbouring provinces. Polish inspectors described how aside from the considerable physical labour that is involved in tracking and shooting wild boar in forested areas and conducting mass culls on farms, this labour is dwarfed by the paperwork of ASF response. As one inspector explained, "outbreaks begin, and you can clear a farm but then the next system is a lot of work with paper - we have to think can we pay for something… is it the government or the farmer. Our law is not sometimes very specific. There are differences between Europe and national legislation. So, it is not the same and you can read it in two or three ways… and we have to report a lot of things especially when you have an outbreak - daily and weekly and monthly" (interview, 2024). The threat of ASF to pig welfare and the EU pork industry is well documented and the impending spread of ASF through EU appears to be a *question of time.* Therefore, it is worth noting how resource-heavy emergency disease response can be and how this can affect the performance of welfare inspections.

4.4 The Martial Arts of Communication

> 'It's not always easy because I understand their point of view and that they are going to pay for the cross-compliance, so that makes it difficult … but I try to be kind and polite and if I see something that is good, I tell them that also. But that is also like - what I have seen with the police - they are very good at that. So, I would like to have more education – the police talk about *talking judo* or something like that."

As we made our way to a farm, Sara explained how she had not received enough training in communication and how she wanted more training in communicating with farmers. As is clear from her reflection above, she empathizes with the responsibilities of the farmer but also has a clear sense of what needs to change. She also expressed how she found inspections somewhat stressful so there is an opportunity to enhance communication skills which may potentially positively impact how inspectors view inspections. The reference to the police is illustrative of how inspectors view their role. Similar to police officers enforcing legislation where crimes have been committed, the inspector is frequently confronted with non-compliances that are punishable, but many inspectors rejected this adversarial and punitive approach to inspections. As mentioned in "Sensing the Atmosphere of Inspection', inspectors will try to include farmers as participants in an inspection. This is designed to change mindsets and build a good dialogue. However, communication is impeded when legislation is unclear and there is a lack of trust in the intentions of the farmer. Ava described it in the following way.

> 'When the legislation is good. I like it. But when it's not, I don't like it, like when you have to *estimate*, when is it enough [enrichment for example]? ... The hard thing for me is, it should be the same in the EU... we need to handle customers equally. We have a lot of interaction with the police and have talked about issues of trust. You have to trust your client even if you are wondering if he is honest, you still trust, and the police said we don't trust anyone. But I said to him I want to treat them equally and I have had to do a lot of work with this - trying to deal with everyone equally." (Fieldnotes, 2024)

Inspectors will have different understandings of their relationship with the farmer or driver, depending on their personal view of whether trust is granted (until its broken), as in Ava's view, or earned through a demonstration of good behaviour. Ava explained how she became an inspector because she felt motivated to help farmers and communicate the logics and power of good welfare, thus granting trust until its broken enables a cooperative relation to emerge during the inspection. Similarly, Mary shared how communicating with farmers is intensely difficult because, "It is very difficult because you cannot show them studies, so I think you have to meet them, show them that you understand their problem, that you empathize with them, but that the way is towards animal welfare. When they try, I think they are starting to understand that there is really an improvement in the farmers" benefit" (fieldnotes, 2024). Aside from trust, inspectors also attuned to the situated nature of the encounter, "it depends on a lot from the people you have in front of you, because there are farmers who are more sensitive, so with them you can speak and talk and explain. They follow you because they understand that maybe what you're saying is not so stupid" (Mary, fieldnotes, 2024). Marc put it in this way, "it's about the psychology of the people. We have to understand if we can talk, or we have to sanction" (Interview, 2024). Thus, not only is it a question of trust as granted or earned, inspectors must also diagnose whether the person they are confronted with has a growth mindset or a fixed mindset (Dweck, 2007).

Figure 4.4.1: An inspector discusses the inspection with the farmer (©Mc Loughlin, 2024).

Communicating with Farmers

Through case files, inspectors record the findings of inspections, any sanctions, and they document this with photos. In an interview, one inspector shared his case files with me. From November 2023 to January 2024, he documented the change that was needed to improve the hospital pen on a farm where the farmer "did not believe in animal welfare" (interview, 2024). The inspector describes how he needed to change the mind of this farmer to improve the conditions for pigs on the farm. When I asked him how he changed minds, he described two strategies. The first begins with information and the second is communication. By discussing the issues with the farmer as well as the private veterinarian, using documents like checklists, to provide information and guide communication. This resonates with a challenge that Mary mentioned previously, which is that it is difficult to present the benefits of welfare through studies to farmers. Therefore, inspectors will try to draw on their experiences from other farms to convey the logic and rationale of welfare. However, the robustness of pigs can often make the benefits of welfare difficult to convey, in Elizabeth's words, "it is

difficult to explain to them because pigs can improve weight and apparently live well, even if they are not in good welfare. Of course, it is then difficult to explain to them that something is not going well" (fieldnotes, 2024). Yet, Nina detailed how legislative instruments made communication much easier, because welfare inspections had economic consequences.

> "When I demand something from them, I try to translate the law and why they have to improve welfare. Of course, in the beginning, they were very angry and would not listen to me. Then when the cross-compliance came in and it became connected with the money, then they started to listen. The law is very difficult and sometimes too difficult, so I have to translate WHY they must do that. Of course, I'm a human too and I can make a mistake too, but I try to give them all of my knowledge, when I was in places and what was working well and not" (Nina, interview, 2024)

Communicating with Drivers

Several inspectors described interactions with drivers where they attempted to demonstrate the logic of animal welfare legislation and the importance of welfare at transport. For example, whilst Marie admitted that inspectors do not need to demonstrate the importance of welfare, she explained how the inspection encounter is an opportunity to change minds. She shared how "I think it's an opportunity to see the same thing from the eyes of the transport - to share with him the point of view of the law" (Marie, fieldnotes, 2024). However, in relation to a transport control at slaughter, one inspector admitted that the fact that the animals are going to slaughter makes her much more resolute in her communication, where there is little room for equivocation. "Sometimes I am too hard, they do not like me. I am too blunt. You know animal welfare, the animals going to slaughter and they know, they know the difference between going to the slaughterhouse" (Nina, fieldnotes, 2024). In a transport check with the police, the inspector I accompanied pointed out the hay in the empty van that had been pulled over by the police. She calls me over and points out the hay, saying that "ASF is very resistant and can travel with dirt. I say to drivers their vans should be like their homes" (fieldnotes, 2024). This truck had just delivered pigs to the slaughterhouse and was now traveling to Denmark. She then inspected the water outlets for cattle. She dipped her hand in the water, and it came out muddy. She points at the mud along the wall and then speaks to the driver. They have a long conversation in Polish, and he appears to be defending himself against her claims. She then turns to me and says, "I wouldn't let a truck like this leave the slaughterhouse. It's dirty." After a moment, she adds, "we are having an argument, and he is defending himself." The driver, a young man in his late twenties, rubs the corner of his truck and seems to be complaining about ASF and how unrealistic it is that the empty trailer should be so clean. She seems to be explaining more, and the police return to the moveable ramp outside the trailer, continuing their own conversation. The driver seems increasingly frustrated and disagrees. She is not relenting and has been speaking to him now for five minutes. She listens and then explains that the problem is still the same. She does not change her position and then calls the police officer into the trailer, asking for him to look at the splattered mud near the drinker and share whether he thinks that is dirty. He agrees with her. She later explained to me how she was not satisfied with the disinfection because it was not active on biological material, concluding that "to me this car was dirty." She explained how he said that it was the fault of the slaughterhouse. She then explained how he was talking very politically that "ASF is because the big corporations are fighting the small farmers," She shrugged and added, "people think this." When she told him that Denmark would not accept this truck, he said that they clean again on the border.

She was irritated that she did not have a protocol for an empty car because she wanted to sanction the driver on these grounds. Following the roadside inspection, the inspector explained how different drivers demand a different response, from the provocative encounter with this driver to the more reserved drivers who "know how to talk to the inspector and the police" (fieldnotes, 2024). She contacted the slaughterhouse the following day and discovered that he had lied about the type of disinfectant used by the slaughterhouse. This greatly annoyed the inspector who explained how "in our area, it makes sense to have more disinfections, not less… After a few years of inspection, when you try to teach someone, it has better results with trying to teach them rather than just a control. Even if they start yelling at you, if you just wait and then you can control them. If they keep shouting, you just walk away" (fieldnotes, 2024). This encounter and reflection raise two considerations. Firstly, how does trust emerge in this interaction? Would it be better to begin with trusting the driver or is it more appropriate to commence the encounter from a position where trust is earned through a demonstration of good practices? Similarly, what is the goal of the encounter? The reason the inspector wanted to sanction the driver was because she did not feel like he had changed his mind and it was the point that Marc described earlier, between talking and sanctioning. Furthermore, it returns us to the question as to the willingness of the driver in this case, but it might also be a farmer, or a slaughterhouse worker, to change their way of thinking about disease prevention, disinfection, and welfare? This driver did not see the mud in the drinkers, or the flecks of blood and hay in the trailer as worthy of consideration or sites of risk. This is an opportunity to change minds but when there is a fixed view of risk, this ability to do so is considerably reduced.

Communicating with Colleagues

The inspectors I encountered had positive experiences of paired inspection and felt that it provided support in the field as well as opportunities for peer feedback and learning (Mc Loughlin, 2024). However, sometimes communication with colleagues was challenged by differing perspectives on the nature of the problem encountered and how a solution can be achieved. As Teresa explained, "I think that all my colleagues try to be in the middle. But sometimes you have to also discuss. But this happens when the situation is not too bad. When the situation is very bad, every time we all agree. Where you can decide if it's good or bad, in the grey situation, not black, not white, in these situations, you can discuss with your colleagues. But every time there is a respect, this is fundamental, it is very important" (interview, 2024). For Marc, differences of opinion with colleagues reflect a personal background and professional expertise that must be understood. He shared how, "everybody has a different view of the world, different past. I was a vet, a field vet, other colleagues were clinical vets. So, we have different experiences and different points of view. In some situations, I was in a disagreement with my colleagues because in my mind that situation could be managed differently. I thought we should sanction, but [his colleague believed] no, no, we should talk with the farmer, no, no, we sanction I said but then he said, no, no, it's okay […] The difference of the point of view often leads to a discussion with respect […] and so we have to understand that this is the goal. We are in the middle, and we have to understand the situation, we have to stop and make a decision. […] This is the difficulty, the principal difficulty of my work" (interview, 2024). The importance of collegial unity was noted by Mary who explained how they are representatives of the law.

> "So, it is important that the farmer or the slaughterhouse or the driver knows that you are speaking as a service, as a group, so we really have to try to be a group and even if we can

> have a different opinion, we have to find a way that is a common way to solve problems and approach problems and to reach a result." (interview, 2024).

Thus, when communication issues are examined in animal welfare inspection, it is often with a focus on the farmer, driver, or worker. However, during the fieldwork, the importance of good relations with your colleagues and an ability to discuss issues with fellow inspectors makes explicit how communication issues can arise both within and beyond the inspectorates. Job rotation and insufficient staff was also highlighted by many inspectors as a significant challenge to their work.

4.5 Empowerment and Disempowerment

Inspectors are burdened with a considerable emotional toll considering the challenges they face when they encounter aggressive farmers, confrontational drivers, suffering animals, and powerful slaughterhouse companies (see Mc Loughlin, 2022). As a result, many inspectors described how challenging it was to ensure they did not make a mistake during their inspection. Not only do mistakes or oversights weigh on their mind in the days following inspection, but failing to take enough photos or provide sufficiently detailed descriptions can prevent a welfare case from successfully reaching court in the future.

> "But always when there is something wrong like… I have to communicate in the right way. I have to make sure I got everything and oh, did I check everything, what did I forget and oh, I should have taken more photos and all these feelings, and just this when there is something wrong … I have to see the degrees - how bad is it - if it's very small thing - otherwise is it very bad… It's easy to know when it's bad, that it's the right thing to do" (Sara, fieldnotes, 2024)

As she explained the ways that her anxiety exponentially grows following an inspection, she shook her head and shrugged at the burden of it all. Other inspectors described how even when they do everything right, get all the photos, and describe the situation in detail, bringing welfare cases to court relies on a legal system that is painfully slow. As noted below, bringing cases to court was cited as one of the greatest challenges of their work. Sara went on to explain, "It takes too long for us to talk about the situation, and you might have forgotten something… and the case might be complicated, and the police may only investigate part of the case" (fieldnotes, 2024). This was an experience shared by other inspectors as Ava noted, "I think it's important but it is not working as it should be, because I make my announcement to police, you need to investigate and it's going to a prosecutor but that's another year and after that long, you can't remember what you have done and that's not good enough" (Fieldnotes, 2024). Thus, ensuring that they provide ample accounts of welfare issues is central to successful cases.

Inspectors need protection

During my fieldwork, inspectors shared how they felt isolated and vulnerable in the work they do, including dealing with aggressive farmers and enforcing regulations against the wishes of powerful slaughterhouse companies. One inspector shared how they had worked with one farmer for many years and frequently had uncomfortable encounters with the farmer. The farmer complained about this inspector and due to his relatively powerful connections, he managed to have the inspector removed from the position in which they were based. Similarly, another inspector described how they have been informed that due to a health risk, no animals should be slaughtered in the country. However, this inspector was the only inspector to implement the instruction and experienced extreme pressure from the slaughterhouse company. Despite

the fact that the inspector was correct, they felt that there was a lack of support from the department. The first inspector who had lost their position due to the influence of a particular farmer raises the issue of the vulnerability of inspectors to enforce the law and safeguard welfare. Another inspector shared how a farmer had procured their personal number and made the inspector feel unsafe in the conduct of their work. As mentioned in my previous fieldwork report, safety issues continue to heighten the vulnerability of inspectors in the field. Rather than simply aggressive encounters, inspectors have been exposed to threats, safety risks, and pressure. Inspectors described how the power of political parties to set the agenda and therefore prioritize or de-prioritize animal welfare according to how close certain political parties are to the agriculture and meat lobby has a palpable impact on the everyday realities of inspection. From diminishing their authority by de-prioritizing animal welfare to heightening pressure on inspectors by restructuring departments and redistributing responsibilities, inspectors and ultimately the pigs, whose welfare they are committed to safeguarding, are exposed to stress and uncertainty.

Importantly, the inspector who experienced an ongoing conflict with a particular farmer described how they have now achieved a cooperation that makes ongoing encounters civil, if at times uncomfortable. “But I think I can feel proud about the kind of cooperation we have. He has his own solutions that are in the grey zone - on the borders of the law. He doesn’t like me. I treat him like a number. I care about his animals and not him. You can see the result of many years that I can sit down and have a good conversation with him” (fieldnotes, 2024).

Tail-Docking Legislation is a Source of Stress

> “If it’s banned, it’s banned. Sometimes it is said we want to be the best in the class, but if it’s legislation maybe you should. In general, we Finns, we are proud of that. For me, it’s the way it should be, but I can’t understand that it’s not this way in other countries. We have problems with tails, but for me, it’s better to have problems with a few pigs than with all pigs.” (interview, 2024)

In my previous fieldwork and the current research, Finland was frequently identified as a country that inspectors wanted to learn more about, as they managed to enforce the tail-docking legislation. Considering that fact that “the practice of tail docking was widespread in the vast majority of EU Member States, with percentages of 81–100% of pigs being tail docked, the only exceptions being Finland (5% of pigs tail-docked), Lithuania and Sweden (0%)” (De Briyne et al., 2018 p.2), many inspectors were intrigued by how this succeeded in Finland. However, there was no secret to intact tails according to the Finnish inspectors and farmers. The pigs need space and enough good quality food. One farmer put it this way, “give them enough space, excellent quality grain, remove any biters if they spot them, and the tails will not be bitten” (fieldnotes, 2024). Yet, one Finnish inspector noted how prior national legislation banning tail docking was key to ensuring that the practice did not become an established strategy of managing tail biting occurrences on farms.

It is little surprise that inspectors in other countries, including those from the fieldwork in 2022, have reached their limit with tail-biting because, as illustrated in the words of a Finnish inspector above, “it’s the way it should be’. Inspectors, and their superiors, feel that the European Commission has failed to support the work of enforcing this legislation that is now thirty years old (De Briyne et al., 2018). As noted previously (Mc Loughlin, 2022), inspectors feel the burden to “change the world farm by farm” during inspections with vague

legislation, which continues to be a major challenge as it sustains and prolongs minimum standards of welfare. Elizabeth explained how specificity in the legislation makes it easier to work, "Vague legislation compounds the problem I think they should make more restrictive in general not just tail docking, but in general. I remember when legislation became more restrictive about sows. They had to reduce the number of sows- there was no discussion you have a space and therefore you cannot have them. No confusion. (Elizabeth, fieldnotes, 2024)

This view of the Finnish inspector above can be contrasted with the experiences of an Italian inspector. Following an EU Audit several years previously, Italy had been tasked to improve the implementation of the tail docking legislation (EU, 2017). Having developed a plan that is ready to be implemented following many years of effort from the inspectors and the department, it has been decided that it cannot be implemented without the European Commission who must decide the levels of pigs to be left undocked and the targets for the Intact Tails plan. The increased pressure from the farming lobby on the department meant that the plan could not be implemented. The plan would have required farmers to introduce pigs with intact tails and, if no tail biting occurred, the farmer would be required to gradually increase the numbers of pigs with intact tails or make improvements to the system that would make intact tails a possibility in the future. One exasperated inspector shared how.

> "This has been going on for years. All this work will be for nothing. It will be lost. That is why I think the European Commission should just give up on tails, give up on it because they cannot do it. It cannot be done. We have been working on this topic 8 or 9 years and now we have to wait until the Commission tell us!? … So maybe it's not good to go ahead with this because now we are waiting."

They must wait for the response of the European Commission so that they can impose a plan that has been nearly a decade in the making, but how long will they be waiting? And more importantly, what is the standard of welfare for pigs during this time?

> "I think now we have understood that every country is different, and it is not possible to coordinate, so it is failing, so maybe it is better to ask for more restrictive legislation with no tail-docking. Maybe it will arrive with better welfare conditions because it is too difficult to control this process. I think it is impossible. We should have more controls for every country. I don't think it is possible" (Elizabeth, fieldnotes, 2024)

This frustration with the tail docking legislation is not unique to the inspectors who participated in this fieldwork and was a major point of discontent in the 2022 report. There was an additional element of frustration as Denmark was identified as a country that was compounding problems for countries instructed to improve their implementation of the legislation. As Denmark is exporting pigs with docked tails, inspectors shared how a two-tier system was emerging. As one inspector explained, "'We have a problem with Denmark, we have pigs coming from Denmark… and Holland, and these are all cut. And we hear from the [Danish] farmers that Denmark can't send long tails as they have problems with biting. And now, we have two kinds of farms, our farms where they have improved welfare and farms with Danish pigs with cut tails. This is a problem for us… it is a problem for us above all because the EU told us, we are not in [accordance with] the law but Denmark is" (fieldwork, 2024). Indeed in 2023, Denmark transported over a million pigs, mainly weaner pigs for fattening, to Italy and over 6.7 million to Poland, mainly weaner pigs for fattening

(Rysgaard Møller, 2024). An inspector with over twenty years of experience expressed how the exception to perform routine tail docking has made it impossible to enforce this legislation.

The successful implementation of the legislation in Finland is not inspiring, it is the way it should be. The fact that routine tail docking is widespread across the EU Member States communicates one message: the exemption to dock tails must be removed. This will empower inspectors, safeguard animal welfare, and improve the situation for farmers who will be equally challenged with implementing the changes, rather than the current situation which is a shamefully low compliance with legislation. The alternative, which is the reality today, is an emotional, physical, and psychological burden on inspectors to enforce legislation that is not fit for purpose. As Nina put it, “We should speak one voice - in every part of Europe, it shouldn’t be different. The law should be consistent.” (fieldnotes, 2024)

5 Discussion

There are many challenges associated with assessing pig welfare at transport. As we noted (Herskin & Mc Loughlin, 2024), logistical issues arise due to insufficient transport vehicles, poor locations to stop vehicles and, as highlighted by the account of the roadside inspection in this report, a pressure to work quickly to minimize the time in the truck for the pigs. Furthermore, due to the limited access and occluded view inside the trailer, the quality of the inspection is also in doubt. As we have noted previously, it is unlikely that inspectors could detect a sow who is more than 90% into pregnancy by merely standing on a ladder and observing through ventilation openings—currently the only way to assess animals” fitness for transport during roadside checks. Additionally, it is not possible to adequately check the drinkers from outside the trailer. Our report on “Roadside checks in pig transport – inspection checklists and guidelines” (Herskin & Mc Loughlin, 2024) provides a detailed discussion of the checklists used by some Member States along with examples from the wider literature on transport inspection. Below, I reproduce the table of indicators assessed but have also added to them based on the findings of this report.

Table 3: List of selected points of relevance for pig welfare that are checked during roadside inspection of animal transport. The list is based on material from several Member States and is not exhaustive (see Herskin and Mc Loughlin 2024).

The Pigs	The Vehicle	The Documents
Able to walk independently without pain	Navigation System	A contingency plan
Presence and status of Sick/injured/weak animals	Protected from weather	Certificate of competence
Open wounds/prolapses	Sufficiently cleaned/disinfected	Travel log/ Driving Plan
Gestation > 90%	Adequate ventilation	Driver's License
Parturition < 7 days ago	Can animals be accessed	Certificate for Truck
Navels: healed	Appropriate ramp angle	
Appropriate age (>10 kg)	Flooring – non-slip	
Sufficient head space	Bedding provided	
Number of animals	Functioning and appropriate drinkers	
Weight of animals	Functioning ventilation fans	
Kg animals/m^2 (over 235 kg)	Area per deck and total area	
Condition of animals - dirtiness	Temperature monitoring system	
Current Status – panting, stress indicators	Captive bolt gun and a knife (Finland national legislation)	
	Temperature between 5 and 30°C	
	Must have animal transport sign	
	Presence of sharp protrusions	

5.1 One Welfare and Veterinary Anthropology

> 'The best thing in my job is that I have the power, I can try to do something for the animals who are suffering… for me, the animal welfare is important, it's important for me to be able to do something to make the world a better place, that I can contribute" (Sara, fieldnotes, 2024)

Transportation was widely perceived by the inspectors as the most stressful part of a pig's life, along with the slaughterhouse. Therefore, inspectors were extremely committed to the value of inspection when animals are in transport due to the hazards to welfare (EFSA et al., 2022). As the results illustrate, the inspectors who participated in this research demonstrated a deeply held commitment to welfare which, for

most of them, stems from their identity as veterinarians. As detailed in Mc Loughlin (2022)), participants decided to study veterinary medicine often due to a desire to work with animals and help to make their lives better. The choice to become a government inspector however is a combination of this desire to make a difference as well as a need for better working conditions than the demanding work of veterinary practice.

Amongst the participants in Italy, Finland, and Poland, the desire to make a difference motivates their work as inspectors even though some noted that the working hours are not better than practice. Indeed, some experienced that due to an insufficient number of veterinary inspectors, their workload was as bad as veterinary practice. The deeply felt conviction that their work makes a difference led to situations where some inspectors were overworked due to insufficient staffing and, as is the case with other vocational roles like nursing, the association of their veterinary skills with their identity exposed them to a greater risk of burnout. This risk aligns with the wider veterinary profession, where stress and burnout affect a vast number of veterinarians due to a combination of financial pressure, long working hours, and the emotional toll of veterinary care (Bonnaud & Fortané, 2021; Jansen et al., 2024). Improving the infrastructure so that colleagues can be supported across regions would reduce the risk of burnout (see Recommendations 6.6 and 7.7).

However, it is also productive to consider how welfare inspection can combine a consideration of both human and animal welfare and the interconnected nature of both. Whilst transport was frequently cited as the most stressful period in a pig's life, inspectors also experienced high levels of stress in coordinating and conducting transport inspections. There is no equivalence across species in terms of stress, suffering, or discomfort but there is certainly an argument to be made that human wellbeing is knotted into animal welfare. Indeed, as I illustrated previously (Mc Loughlin, 2022), inspection can be especially stressful and emotionally demanding when inspectors encounter situations of poor welfare but do not feel empowered to change these situations since legislation is based on minimum standards of welfare. Thus, how might the demands of welfare inspection be addressed differently by taking a One Welfare approach? As identified in previous research (Mc Loughlin, 2022) and during this fieldwork, veterinary inspectors want to make a difference to the lives of animals, but communicating welfare benefits as economically beneficial can limit their ability to do this. By justifying welfare as economically beneficial, inspectors are met with the same response – the cost (see Mc Loughlin, 2022: and 2024). Thus, by understanding the interconnected nature of welfare, inspectors can draw on this as an avenue for discussion with farmers, transporters, and slaughterhouse companies rather than being limited to economic reasoning. In this way, One Welfare has the potential to enhance their job satisfaction by empowering their work with greater purpose and meaning and strengthening their communicative skills with evidence-based reasoning through One Welfare (Pinillos et al., 2016).

One Welfare recognizes the interconnections between animal welfare, human wellbeing, and the environment and in doing so, legitimizes actions that incorporate both human and animal welfare along with the health of the wider environment. As Pinillos et al. (2016), p.412) convey, "Considering health and welfare together — because of the interconnections of human, animal and environmental factors — helps to describe context, deepens our understanding of the factors involved, and creates a holistic and solutions-oriented approach to health and welfare issues'. The interwoven nature of health, wellbeing, and welfare is long-established in anthropology, which is why immersion in the lives and everyday routines of participants is so central to anthropological methods, like participant observation and semi-structured interviews which

were utilised in this fieldwork. Furthermore, as demonstrated by the recommendations of the last fieldwork report (Mc Loughlin, 2022), a holistic understanding of how instances of poor welfare can negatively impact on the wellbeing and job satisfaction of inspectors is central to understanding how we can support inspectors in their work of safeguarding animal welfare. Within animal welfare science, a One Welfare approach embraces a multidisciplinary perspective on health and wellbeing across species, which will greatly benefit from the qualitative methodology of ethnographic fieldwork characteristic of anthropology, due to its focus on understanding daily practices, accounting for complexity and contradiction, and studying the unresolvable tensions of the moral care of animal welfare inspection (Mc Loughlin, Forthcoming). Thus, the established subfield of the anthropology of human-animal relations and the emergent field of veterinary anthropology, which already foreground the power of holistic understanding, present an opportunity for further research into One Welfare through ethnographic methods (Broz et al., 2023).

5.2 Prioritize Welfare

One survey participant explained the best part of their role was the following, “I firmly believe in the importance of the veterinarian’s role in protecting and safeguarding animal welfare and animal health in one health.” A sense of purpose is central to the work of inspection as it counters the emotional and physical toll of the tasks. Yet, across all of the regions I have visited across the four years of focus on this area, inspectors critiqued the ways that welfare inspection is coupled with wider political agendas and suffers as a result of the strategical moves of political parties. Inspectors explained how new Ministerial positions in agriculture can transform their responsibilities each year, whilst cost-cutting actions have reduced the number of newly employed inspectors and contributed to reducing their capacity to conduct inspections.

The different countries had varying experiences of animal welfare being used as a political tool. Some inspectors described a recruitment gap that was now emerging, characterized by many newly hired inspectors along with many inspectors soon to retire with a gap of experience in the middle. Similarly, inspectors described how welfare can frequently be deprioritized in the face of other concerns, specifically infectious disease response. Avian influenza outbreaks continue to channel scarce resources away from welfare inspection whilst the threat of African Swine Fever can take priority over welfare tasks and inspection.

This is even more noticeable in relation to transport inspection. There has been much coverage of live animal transport in 2024 due to the revisions to transport legislation, which many argue are not ambitious enough (CIWF, 2023) whilst the account of a member of the European Parliament who tracked the live transport of weaned piglets from Denmark to Italy further highlighted the hazards to welfare posed by long transport (Nielsen, 2023). The fact that transport legislation is currently undergoing revision underlines the importance of this issue. Despite the risks to welfare and the topical nature of welfare at transport, it was incredibly challenging to coordinate fieldwork with inspectors responsible for roadside inspections. I managed to join one roadside inspection with the police in Poland whilst the other transport inspections were conducted at a slaughterhouse (Italy) and at a farm (Finland). Local-level agreements with the police had recently failed and no agreement was in place to assist with roadside inspection so the roadside inspection could not be conducted. Similarly, whilst the inspectors have targets for inspections, the police do not. Lisa explained how, “It really depends on the police if they have resources and time to do it and they have to know a month in advance. We have to select dates very soon, but if I ask, we can do it August or

September, it's not easy... they don't have a requirement, but we do" (Fieldnotes, 2024). This means that when the police do not want to do inspections, during the cold winter or due to their own sizeable workload, inspections do not happen. However, considering how challenging it was to even participate in one, it is clear that:

1. Not enough roadside inspections are taking place
2. Local-level agreements should be maintained

Thus, separating welfare from political agendas means that the work of inspection should be sufficiently resourced and funded regardless of the political situation.

5.3 Moving From a Fixed to a Growth Mindset

During our conversation, I asked Marc what he thought was the best way forward to deal with cross-compliances. He was convinced that strong penalties were not the answer. He then added that "a sanction is a failure." He paused for a moment and continued, "it is a failure of communication, of information, it is a failure" (fieldnotes, 2024). The ability to impose penalties that affect farm income is one of several actions that government inspectors can take when non-compliances are found. Minor issues may be resolved with verbal warnings but this can be elevated into an escalating enforcement pyramid (Escobar & Demeritt, 2017). This begins with the reduction of CAP subsidies and then escalates to civil penalties and finally prosecution and farm closure, leading to the loss of animals. However, what does it mean when inspectors view sanctions, a central part of the infrastructure of the farm-to-fork strategy (ECA, 2018), as a failure. To understand this view, it is vital to understand the veterinary identity of inspectors (Mc Loughlin, 2022; Mc Loughlin, Forthcoming). Most participants initially studied veterinary medicine based on a desire to care for animals whilst many explained that they became inspectors so that they would have the power to change the circumstances of animals. Even those who "fell" into the work of inspection described how they felt motivated by their ability and power to change the welfare of animals on farms, at transport, and at slaughter, as conveyed by Sara's quote at the opening of 5.1. The ability to change situations for the better is central to job satisfaction, as it provides meaning and purpose. It aligns their veterinary identity with their work as an inspector (Mc Loughlin, Forthcoming). However, a monetary sanction is an affront to the commitment to change because it shifts the attention away from the process of change towards the product of a sanction, which ultimately places the individual under greater strain and compounds the challenges already plaguing the agricultural sector. Imposing a sanction suggests that the ability to change the mind of the farmer, driver, or worker has failed, as Marc put it, "it is a failure of communication." In extreme situations, where inspectors intend on bringing a case to court, a sanction to close a farm protects animals from further suffering. However, sanctions for unsatisfactory conditions, poor materials, insufficient space, or poor feed suggests that the individual has failed to understand the power of welfare and how it can benefit both humans and animals. Considering that inspectors desire more communication training illustrates how they feel that they have a role to play in making welfare make sense (Mc Loughlin, 2022).

> "Regulation 1 [EU Reg 1/2005] has a lot of documents that need to be filled by transporter - so you have to teach them what they have to do and how to do the journey, this is at times more difficult. I am an inspector I should just say it is right, but I can see that the person in front of me does not have the competence to do this." (Mary, fieldnotes, 2024)

Here, Mary is confronted with a moral duty to explain the legislation to the transporter which ultimately benefits both humans and animals as they can better comply with the law. This helps us to understand how Marc's claim, that a sanction "is a failure of information'. There is a moral duty in the work of inspection, which is the duty to safeguard animal welfare, and inspectors feel compelled to achieve this by understanding "the psychology" of the people and attuning to their individual needs (see 4.4). Thus, if the outcome of an encounter is a sanction, it represents a failure to implement the positive change that underpins the work of veterinary inspection. The sanction may succeed in ending a harmful practice, but it fails to achieve the change for the better that motivates inspectors. Indeed, sanctions can often change situations for the worse; by deepening structural issues and economic hardship and they do not necessarily guarantee better welfare. This is not an argument to remove sanctions, it is an argument that shows how inspectors are motivated by the ability to change circumstances for both humans and animals for the better through communication which relies on the willingness of farmers, workers, and drivers, to be willing to learn.

Educational theory will provide some insight as to why sanctions are a failure. In her theory of fixed and growth mindsets, educational theorist Carol Dweck draws on research in psychology and neuroscience to convey how intelligence is understood, and how this understanding can shape learning and development. Understanding intelligence as a fixed trait, whereby you have a certain amount of intelligence, cultivates a closed mindset that is resistant to learning and development. However, when intelligence is understood as something that develops through effort and education, students are more likely to work harder to develop their intelligence, face challenges with a desire to overcome them, and to grow their capacities (Dweck, 2007). Studies focusing on how students are praised have been found to play a central role in whether students adopt a fixed mindset, where intelligence is something that is possessed, or a growth mindset, where intelligence is something that is developed. Thus, praising how someone's intelligence nurtures a fixed mindset, whereas praising the effort nurtures a growth mindset. How does this relate to the work of inspection? The inspectors appear to embody a role that is more akin to a teacher than a police officer, where communication is central to developing the understanding of farmers, workers, and drivers. They described in numerous ways how they empathized with the ever-increasing forms of regulation and legislation that farmers, workers, and drivers must both comprehend and comply with, and they also appreciated meaningful change cannot be based on punitive measures but is based on demonstrating the positive impacts of welfare. I would add that demonstrating the power of One Welfare presents another way to convey the interconnectedness of human wellbeing and animal welfare that inspectors could add to their arsenal of communication strategies. However, imposing a sanction is an admission that the fixed mindset could not be altered through communication whereas verbal warnings play a role in cultivating a growth mindset amongst farmers, workers, and drivers. By viewing their role as central to the communication of legislation and regulation, but more importantly as drivers of positive change in agriculture, it is understandable that brute actions like sanctions diminish the power of the martial arts of communication that is so central to the work of inspection.

6 Recommendations for Competent Authorities

6.1 Prioritize Welfare

Across the three countries, inspectors had experienced how political influences shaped and at times constrained their work and activities. Similarly, inspectors described how new personnel can negatively impact on the prioritization of welfare. One inspector described how a new employee in a powerful role negatively impacted on the number of welfare inspections performed in a given period due to their personal view that welfare was not as important as other parameters. This also negatively impacted on collaborations with the police. Competent authorities can address such issues through communication about the necessity and priority of welfare in agriculture, not as a competitive but as a necessary indicator. This can be conveyed during staff training sessions which could be aligned across regions to ensure a coherent and consistent commitment to animal welfare.

6.2 Boost Inspector/Farmer Communication

Knowledge-sharing events and ongoing interactions between Competent Authorities and farmers can improve welfare and cultivate a cooperative ethos in the safeguarding of animal welfare on the farm. Communicating the strengths of One Welfare during these knowledge-sharing events may also strengthen cooperation by demonstrating the rationale of that welfare is interconnected across pigs, farmers and labourers, and the inspectors. If there is a common base that welfare is good for both animals and humans, it moves the focus away from purely an economic rationale for welfare which can hinder communication as improvements are only viewed through an economic lens. By informing both inspectors and farmers about One Welfare and training inspectors on the ways that welfare is interconnected across species, this provides another avenue for inspectors to demonstrate the potential of welfare which imbues their work with meaning and purpose.

6.3 Create Specialist Groups across Regions

Some inspectors described how they participated in specialist groups based on particular topics. To better facilitate peer dialogue and development, specialist groups can facilitate knowledge sharing across regions but also cultivate a supportive working environment, thereby countering feelings of isolation and associated stress. This can also reduce the likelihood of burnout as colleagues can share their experiences and possibly contribute to problem-solving beyond their region. The EURCAW Community of Practice initiative may be useful to engage with to enhance communication between member states.

6.4 Routinize Paired Inspection

Too many inspectors have experienced aggressive encounters with farmers, drivers, and workers or have felt unsafe during their tasks as they are working alone. As my report on Paired Inspection (Mc Loughlin, 2024) highlighted, not only do paired inspections reduce the vulnerability of inspectors, they contribute to better inspections as inspectors calibrate their assessments and can share the work of inspection. Where paired

inspection is prioritized, inspectors explained how they feel empowered to recommend paired inspection for certain visits but can also conduct inspections alone.

6.5 More Communication Training

Communication was routinely mentioned as a challenge as well as an area where inspectors receive little to no training. In addition to accessing EURCAW-Pigs materials on Motivational Interviewing and the Calgary-Cambridge Model (Overstreet & Anneberg, 2020), Competent Authorities can incorporate communication training into their schemes. The acceptance that personality types determine the communication strategy overlooks the primary aim of inspections which is to safeguard welfare which demands a good dialogue between the inspector and the farmer, driver, or worker that extends beyond punitive measures but towards shared understanding and two-way communication.

6.6 Digitalize Documentation

Many of the inspectors cited how working with the paper was time-consuming, both to complete the forms as well as ensure that the right documentation was available during inspection. There are some Member States that have incorporated digital technologies so that the inspections are completed digitally. This is an area where knowledge-sharing across the Competent Authorities would boost the work environment and reduce the time needed to prepare for inspections. There may be an opportunity for EURCAW-Pigs to facilitate a knowledge-sharing event across Competent Authorities related to digital technologies and inspection tasks (see 6.5).

6.7 Facilitate regional knowledge-sharing

Inspired by some regions that regularly host Teams meetings across several offices, Competent Authorities could experiment with weekly morning coffee meetings with inspectors from other regions. These could be casual meetings to build a stronger network across regions and can be the building blocks upon which shared training and development can emerge. However, their sole purpose should be to facilitate inspectors to meet other inspectors.

7 Recommendations for the European Commission

The successful implementation of the legislation in Finland is not inspiring, it is the way it should be. The fact that routine tail docking is widespread across the EU Member States communicates one message: the exemption to dock tails must be removed.

7.1 Remove the Exemption that Authorizes Tail Docking

This will empower inspectors, safeguard animal welfare, and improve the situation for farmers who will be equally challenged with implementing the changes, rather than the current situation which is a shamefully low compliance with legislation. The alternative, which is the reality today, is an emotional, physical, and psychological burden on inspectors to enforce legislation that is not fit for purpose. As Nina put it, “We should speak one voice - in every part of Europe, it shouldn’t be different. The law should be consistent.” (fieldnotes, 2024)

7.2 Strict Legislation in Key Areas

In the previous report (Mc Loughlin, 2022) and again during this fieldwork, ambiguous wording in legislative documents was cited by inspectors as a major challenge to safeguarding the welfare of pigs. Vague or general terms provide too much room for interpretation and therefore weaken the inspector’s ability to enforce the law, as arguments can be made based on a difference of interpretation.

- Banning transport in extreme temperatures across all Member States
- Remove the choice about manipulable materials – select one type that must be provided

8 Recommendations for EURCAW-Pigs

8.1 Collaboration with EURCAW’s

Considering the wide-ranging work of inspections and the fact that the majority of inspectors enforce welfare legislation across many different species, there should be further efforts to collaborate with EURCAWs. This might involve podcast episodes with inspectors involved in inspections of other species or inspector@work accounts that involve inspections with multiple species. An advanced degree of collaboration might be a roadshow that incorporates two species across one event to maximize the training capacity and benefits of the event.

8.2 Ensuring the Success of Webinars

Webinars and eLearning courses were identified by the participants, both on the survey and in person, as less effective than face-to-face training activities. Furthermore, discussions with colleagues were identified as a highly valued form of training and development. Therefore, to boost the success of the webinars planned in the next Work Programme, they should be targeted at Competent Authorities from an early stage in their planning and development. This might involve collaboration with Competent Authorities to identify topics or

active engagement at a later stage, i.e. in the promotion of webinars with ongoing evaluation of their use and implementation. Launching the webinars through an online event that is targeted at Competent Authorities will also boost the uptake of the webinars. EURCAW-Pigs was noted as a helpful resource in training, so the reputation of the reference centre is a factor that can ensure the success of this activity. There was an interest in learning from colleagues so the support materials for webinars should include recommendations as to how Competent Authorities can implement them as part of other training activities facilitating peer-to-peer training.

8.3 More Training on Communication

Communication was routinely mentioned as a challenge as well as an area where inspectors receive little to no training. In addition to the resources on Motivational Interviewing and the Calgary-Cambridge Model (Overstreet & Anneberg, 2020), more resources related to role-play and communication strategies will assist with inspector development. These resources must also be tailored to specific participants, with different resources for communicating with slaughterhouse companies and workers as well as other colleagues.

Inspectors also mentioned that the way that training is provided was central to success. In-person was the most preferable option and the ability to visit other farms and countries was cited as especially beneficial for learning and professional development. As Mary explained,

> ‘Communication is not part of our education, to have a guideline on how to refer to the farmer and to the stakeholder and I think this is what you [EURCAW-Pigs] do. … And how to make a working group, that is strong and can reach objectives, so guidelines on how to refer to stakeholders and colleagues or other authority because I think we have a lack of communication very often but because it is not part of the study of veterinary medicine” (interview, 2024)

Therefore, it is not purely communication with farmers or drivers, but also with colleagues that was cited by many participants as of interest (see 4.4). Additionally, it was noted that this training should be provided in the native language of the Member State. In addition to training materials, full courses were also requested by participants to assist with their responsibilities.

8.4 Facilitate Knowledge-Sharing about Digital Technologies

Considering the recommendation for Competent Authorities to invest in digital technologies to improve inspection (7.6), there may be an opportunity for EURCAW-Pigs to facilitate a knowledge-sharing event across Competent Authorities related to digital technologies and inspection tasks.

8.5 Develop Digital Technologies

This may be beyond the remit of EURCAW-Pigs; however, the Competent Authorities may not have the funding to develop digital technologies that could meaningfully improve the work of inspection. One inspector suggested that if there was a way for the relevant legislation to appear when an “x” is marked for a non-compliance, rather than the current situation where they must find the paragraph in the legislation. There may be an opportunity for EURCAW-Pigs to draw on the digital technologies used by some Competent

Authorities and enhance them in ways like this. Additionally, the EURCAW-Pigs website contains a wealth of information that could be converted into a mobile-accessible app, where information can be more easily searchable and more readily accessed and downloaded.

8.6 Online Coffee Mornings

The soon-to-be-launched Community of Practice will provide a platform upon which inspectors can share perspectives and experiences within a safe network. To boost the success of this platform and facilitate knowledge-sharing, informal events like online coffee mornings could be a great way to strengthen and grow involvement in the Community of Practice as well as support knowledge exchange.

8.7 A Photo Repository of Welfare Issues

Inspectors described how this would be useful for training exercises and dialogue with other inspectors.

8.8 Economic Insights

Inspectors were interested in finding out more about the general economic landscape in their specific region, so that when farmers claimed to be in great financial difficulty, the inspectors had an insight into the current economic landscape. This may assist with decisions on financial penalties.

8.9 Animal Welfare Training Topics

Most of the inspectors were satisfied with their ability to assess welfare competently, yet a number of them mentioned that animal welfare was not specifically included in their training. Overall, the main areas that inspectors were interested in included Welfare during transport, On-Farm Welfare, Heat Stress, Climate Control and Space Allowance for Transport, and Communication with Farmers, Slaughter workers, and Drivers. The inspectors expressed an interest in most frequently in communication training.

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EU Reference Centre for Animal Welfare *Pigs*

About EURCAW-Pigs

EURCAW-Pigs is the first European Union Reference Centre for Animal Welfare. It focuses on pig welfare and legislation, and covers the entire life cycle of pigs from birth to the end of life. EURCAW-Pigs' main objective is a harmonised compliance with EU legislation regarding welfare in EU Member States. This includes:

- for pig husbandry: Directives 98/58/EC and 2008/120/EC;
- for pig transport: Regulation (EC) No 1/2005;
- for slaughter and killing of pigs: Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009.

EURCAW-Pigs supports:

- inspectors of Competent Authorities (CA's);
- pig welfare policy workers;
- bodies supporting CA's with science, training, and communication.

Website and contact

EURCAW-Pigs' website www.eurcaw-pigs.eu offers relevant and actual information to support enforcement of pig welfare legislation.
Are you an inspector or pig welfare policy worker, or otherwise dealing with advice or support for official controls of pig welfare? Your question is our challenge! Please, send us an email with your question and details and we'll get you in touch with the right expert.

info.pigs@eurcaw.eu

www.eurcaw-pigs.eu

Services of EURCAW-Pigs

- **Legal aspects**
  European pig welfare legislation that has to be complied with and enforced by EU Member States;
- **Welfare indicators**
  Animal welfare indicators, including animal based, management based and resource based indicators, that can be used to verify compliance with the EU legislation on pigs;
- **Training**
  Training activities and training materials for inspectors, including bringing forward knowledge about ambivalence in relation to change;
- **Good practices**
  Good and best practice documents visualising the required outcomes of EU legislation;
- **Demonstrators**
  Farms, transport companies and abattoirs demonstrating good practices of implementation of EU legislation.

Partners

EURCAW-Pigs receives its funding from DG SANTE of the European Commission, as well as the national governments of the three partners that form the Centre:

- Wageningen Livestock Research, The Netherlands
- Aarhus University, Denmark
- Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut, Germany

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