



**OIE AD HOC GROUP ON ANIMAL WELFARE AND
LAYING HEN PRODUCTION SYSTEMS¹**

Paris, 21–23 November 2016

The OIE *ad hoc* Group on animal welfare and laying hen production systems (the *ad hoc* Group) met for the first time at the OIE Headquarters on 21–23 November 2016.

The members of the *ad hoc* Group and other participants at the meeting are listed at [Appendix I](#). The adopted Agenda is at [Appendix II](#).

1. Welcome and introduction

Dr Matthew Stone, Deputy Director General of International Standards and Science of the OIE, welcomed all members and thanked them for their agreement to work with the OIE on this important topic. Dr Stone explained the work developed by the OIE in the area of animal welfare recommendations relevant to livestock production systems and OIE Member Countries will take a strong interest in this work.

While developing the chapter the varying conditions that exist in 180 OIE Member Countries should be taken into account to ensure sufficient flexibility to make implementation feasible for Members to the greatest extent possible.

The report of the meeting will be presented for consideration by the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (the Code Commission), at their February 2017 meeting. The publication of the report will take place after the Code Commission meeting, in early March 2017.

Dr Stone drew the attention of members to one of the discussion papers, the report of the first meeting of the *ad hoc* Group on animal welfare and livestock production systems (Paris, 8–10 April 2008) in which three key elements influencing animal welfare are described, i.e. animal health, environment and management. Dr Stone also indicated the importance of completing the chapters related to animal welfare standards, in view of the adoption of the new ISO Technical Specification 34700.

2. Confirmation of the Terms of Reference (ToR)

Dr Leopoldo Stuardo explained that the ToR are based on the discussion paper prepared by the OIE Animal Welfare Working Group (AWWG) and the report of the *ad hoc* Group on animal welfare and livestock production systems. The latter report includes a list of elements to be addressed in OIE guidelines on animal welfare in livestock production systems. Dr Stuardo advised the *ad hoc* Group that it is important to keep in mind that the OIE standards are directed fundamentally towards the Veterinary Services.

¹ Note: This *ad hoc* Group report reflects the views of its members and may not necessarily reflect the views of the OIE. This report should be read in conjunction with the September 2016 report of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission because this report provides its considerations and comments. It is available at <http://www.oie.int/en/international-standard-setting/specialists-commissions-groups/code-commission-reports/meetings-reports/>

The Group agreed to the scope of the new chapter and stressed the need to clarify the different production systems in order to not create confusion, for example by mixing up extensive production systems with organic production systems.

The Group agreed that the chapter should include recommendations starting from pullets through to mature laying hens. In addition, the Group discussed the existing problems with the slaughter and disposal of end of lays (spent) hens at the end of the production process.

Finally, during the discussion of the ToR, the *ad hoc* Group considered and agreed that breeding was beyond its scope for the development of the new chapter. There are unique practices related to breeding that differ considerably from those in pullet and laying hen production. It is the view of the Group that a separate chapter on chicken breeding, or perhaps poultry breeding, would be a more effective approach to develop applicable standards for the breeding and hatchery industries. The *ad hoc* Group adopted the modified ToR according to their discussion (see [Appendix III](#)).

3. Introduction of members

Members introduced themselves and summarised their fields of expertise and their current areas of work and research.

4. Discussion of working documents and other relevant documents

The *ad hoc* Group noted the documents sent by the OIE Headquarters and some documents sent by some of the Members. The *ad hoc* Group reviewed those with references relevant to the development of the recommendations.

5. Development of draft standards

The *ad hoc* Group discussed and agreed to continue using outcome-based criteria or measurables as good indicators of animal welfare, rather than indicate input design criteria because they reflect the complex interaction of multiple design inputs. Dr Stuardo mentioned that to better understand these concepts, the Code Commission is proposing, for comments by Member Countries, a new article in Chapter 7.1. on “Guiding principles for the use of animal-based measures”.

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to use Chapter 7.10. on “Animal welfare and broiler production systems” as the basis for development of the new chapter, modifying the format and structure, in order to improve its readability and use in practical terms.

The *ad hoc* Group discussed the way to deal with the fate of the males, and it was agreed that this topic will be covered in a future revision of this chapter so sufficient considerations on the topic can be given.

When the *ad hoc* Group discussed the recommendations they noted that aspects such as different production systems, spent hen management, feather pecking, moulting, space allowance, perching and nesting are among the main subjects to be covered by this new chapter.

A draft new chapter for the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)* was developed during the meeting and can be found in [Annex IV](#).

The draft new chapter is structured along the following lines:

- a) definitions to be used for the purpose of this chapter;
- b) scope of the recommendations, including the type of production system considered;
- c) identification and brief descriptions of relevant ‘outcome-based criteria or measurables’;
- d) recommendations for measures applied to laying hens and pullets;
- e) references.

6. Review and finalise report of meeting

The *ad hoc* Group agreed to complete their meeting report and draft standard by December 2016, for its submission to the February 2017 Code Commission meeting.

7. Next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting will take place after receipt of comments on the report of the February 2017 Code Commission meeting, most probably during the second semester of 2017.

.../Appendices

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List of participants

MEMBERS OF THE AD HOC GROUP

Dr Stefan Gunnarsson (Chair)
DVM, PhD, Associate Professor,
Diplomate ECAWBM
Senior lecturer
Dept. of Animal Environment and Health
Swedish University of Agricultural
Sciences (SLU)
P.O. Box 234,
S-532 23 Skara
SWEDEN
stefan.gunnarsson@slu.se

Dr Roberto Becerra Olmedo
Veterinarian
Technical Director
Food Solutions Team EIRL
CHILE
rbecerra@fsteam.cl

Prof. Inmaculada Estevez
Ikerbasque Research Professor
Department of Animal Production
Neiker-Tecnalia
Vitoria-Gasteiz, 01080
SPAIN
Tel.: + 34 945 121 336
iestevez@neiker.net

Mr Kevin Lovell
CEO/HUB
0861 POULTRY / 0861 768 5879
Wild Fig Office Park
1494 Cranberry Street
Honeydew Ext19
Po Box 1202, Honeydew, 2040
SOUTH AFRICA
Kevin@sapoultry.co.za

Dr Suzanne T. Millman
Associate Professor, Animal Welfare
Veterinary Diagnostic & Production
Animal Medicine/Biomedical Sciences
Lloyd Veterinary Medical Center #2201,
College of Veterinary Medicine,
Iowa State University, 1860 South
Riverside Drive, Ames, IA, 50011
UNITED STATES
smillman@iastate.edu

Dr Tsuyoshi Shimmura
Associate Professor
Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology
3-8-1 Harumi-cho, Fuchu-shi
Tokyo 183-8538
JAPAN
Tel.: +81-564-55-7601
shimmura@go.tuat.ac.jp

Dr Jean-Loup Rault
Melbourne University
Level 5, 161 Barry Street
The University of Melbourne
Parkville 3010 VIC Australia
AUSTRALIA
jean-loup.rault@unimelb.edu.au

OIE HEADQUARTERS

Dr Matthew Stone
Deputy Director General
International Standards and
Science
OIE
m.stone@oie.int

Dr Leopoldo Stuardo
Chargé de mission
Standards Department
OIE
l.stuardo@oie.int

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Adopted agenda

1. Welcome and introduction – Dr Matthew Stone
 2. Confirmation of Terms of Reference
 3. Introduction of Members
 4. Discussion of working documents and other relevant documents
 5. Development of draft standards
 6. Review and finalise report of meeting
 7. Next meeting
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Terms of Reference

Taking into account:

- The background history of the OIE regarding animal welfare and production systems;
- The discussion paper on the “Development of animal welfare guidelines for production systems”, written by the AWWG in 2006;
- The recommendations of the OIE *ad hoc* Group on animal welfare and livestock production in 2008; and
- The existing animal welfare and animal health standards in the *Terrestrial Code*, particularly Chapter 7.1, Article 7.1.2. on the “Guiding Principles for animal welfare” and Article 7.1.4. on the “General Principles for the welfare of animals in livestock production”, and Chapter 6.5 on the “Prevention, detection and control of *Salmonella* in poultry”.

The *ad hoc* Group is asked:

To elaborate a draft animal welfare standard for laying hen production systems (intensive, extensive and semi intensive, to be reviewed by the *ad hoc* Group), for eventual inclusion in the *Terrestrial Code*. This standard should cover, inter alia:

- appropriate definitions and scope;
- housing;
- feeding and watering of the animals;
- environmental considerations;
- management of endemic diseases;
- management practices;
- personnel training;
- emergency management plans (e.g. disease outbreak, failure of electrical systems, fire, etc.);
- handling facilities (on farm only);
- protection from predators.

This standard must:

- be based on science (scientific references must be provided and included in the draft text);
- harmonised in their structure with the rest of the *Terrestrial Code*, including the other animal welfare and production system chapters; and
- use criteria that address the outcomes at the animal level (animal-based).

In developing these standards, the *ad hoc* Group should review relevant resource materials, including extracts from the *Terrestrial Code*, reports from the AWWG and other *ad hoc* group meetings, examples of existing practices, and the regulatory frameworks that manage animal welfare risks from all five OIE Regions. A draft document is expected after the first meeting and will be submitted to the AWWG, the Code Commission and OIE Member Countries, for comments, to be addressed by the *ad hoc* Group in a second meeting.

[Note: this Annex has been replaced by Annex 28 to the report of the meeting of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission which was held on 18–29 September 2017.]

