

# Animal Welfare in DAFM

## 1. Legislative Framework

The Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013 sets the overall context for the current animal welfare regime which continues to be developed. The Act replaced a wide range of Acts relating to animal health and welfare dating back to 1911.

The major changes relate to animal welfare

- **Specific requirements** on animal keepers to care for animals rather than merely avoid cruelty. Under the 1911 Act, cruelty was illegal so an owner could be prosecuted for letting an animal starve but there was no provision to feed animals.
- **pro-active**, so authorised officers under the Act now have the power to intervene before welfare situations become serious instead of waiting for problems to occur
- **Animal Welfare Notices**. This means officers can provide positive instruction for the care of animals rather than only having powers to prosecute in serious situations, it allows early intervention and helps prevent small problems becoming large. Greater powers in relation to dog fighting, including attendance being an offence.
- **Increased penalties** – summary conviction up to €5,000 and on indictment €250,000 and/or imprisonment up to 5 years. Fixed penalty payments for lesser offenses.
- Courts have power to **disqualify people** from owning or working with animals
- Extension of authorised officer powers to NGO welfare organisations for the first time, with a focus on urban areas.
- Over 60 pieces of secondary legislation have been enacted under the Act- many in the welfare sphere. One recent example being S.I. No. 128/2018 - Animal Health and Welfare (Livestock Marts) Regulations 2018 prohibits the sale of calves that have not attained the age of ten day.

In addition to National Legislation DAFM enforces EU Directive 98/58 and other sector specific vertical legislative pieces have been introduced at EU level over the last 20 years. A series of annual inspections are carried out in each year on Irish farms under these Directives.

## [New Welfare Strategy](#)

Welfare policy will to be further enhanced by a new National Animal Welfare Strategy which is currently undergoing a consultation process. The draft document launched at the Department's recent welfare conference is currently undergoing its consultation phase with stakeholders.

## 2. [The Wider Welfare Approach](#)

### [FAWAC and the Early Warning System \(EWS\)](#)

The Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council (FAWAC) in existence since 2002 under the chairmanship of Professor Pat Fottrell, has been instrumental in promoting animal welfare in a practical way and providing a forum for different interest groups to meet, exchange views and reach consensus on the various challenges relating to animal welfare on farms.

A FAWAC code of good practice booklet for Dairy Cows is in the final stages of preparation and will be published by the end of 2018. A code of good practice booklet for dairy calves is scheduled to be produced in 2019.

<b>FAWAC Welfare Publications</b>
<a href="#">Animal Welfare Guidelines for Emergency Killing of Pigs on Farm</a> (pdf 485Kb)
<a href="#">Practical EU Animal Transport Guides for cattle, sheep, horses, pigs and poultry</a> (doc 2,271Kb)
<a href="#">Code of Practice for the Welfare of Laying Hens</a> (pdf 783Kb)
<a href="#">Code of Practice for the Welfare of Pigs</a> (pdf 1,096Kb)
<a href="#">Animal Welfare Guidelines for Managing Acutely Injured Livestock on Farm</a> (pdf 844Kb)
<a href="#">Appendix Forms</a> (doc 27Kb)
<a href="#">Revised Animal Welfare Guidelines for Beef Farmers 2008</a> (pdf 3,671Kb)
<a href="#">Code of Practice for the Welfare of Broiler Chickens 2008</a> (pdf 1,845Kb)
<a href="#">Best Practice for the welfare of Animals During Transport</a> (pdf 1,885Kb)
<a href="#">Animal Welfare Guidelines for Horses, Ponies and Donkeys</a> (pdf 334Kb)
<a href="#">Animal Welfare Guidelines for Beef Farmers 2003</a> (pdf 431Kb)
<a href="#">Animal Welfare Guidelines for Sheep Farmers 2003</a> (pdf 336Kb)

<a href="#">Animal Welfare Guidelines for Beef, Sheep and Dairy Farmers 2003 (pdf 137Kb)</a>
<a href="#">Animal Welfare Guidelines for Dairy Farmers 2003 (pdf 483Kb)</a>
<a href="#">Animal Welfare Guidelines for Horses at Gatherings and Sales (pdf 4,448Kb)</a>

The Early Warning/Intervention System (EWS) is an initiative, which was introduced in 2004 by FAWAC involving the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Marine, the Irish Farmers' Association and the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The objective of this system is to provide a framework within which farm animal welfare problems can be identified before they become critical or overwhelming. Efforts continue to be made to extend the involvement of other agencies that may have a role to play. These include An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive, the Local Authority Veterinary Service and the Private Veterinary Practitioners.

#### [Scientific Advisory Committee on Animal Health and Welfare \(SACAHW\)](#)

The Scientific Advisory Committee on Animal Health and Welfare (SACAHW) was re-constituted in 2013 under the Chairmanship of Dr Colm Gaynor (former Chief Veterinary Officer and Head of the FVO). Its terms of reference are as follows:-

On the basis of the best available scientific knowledge and practice:

- To consider and advise on ways in which Ireland's animal health and welfare can be protected and enhanced;
- To provide the Minister with such advice on particular matters relating to animal health and welfare as may be requested from time to time;

To date the SACAHW have made a series of Recommendations regarding certain husbandry procedures for farmed animals including the following:

- [SACAHW Opinion on Restraint at Non Stun Slaughter](#)
- [The Use of Electro-Immobilisation on Live Farm Animals in Ireland - A report by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Animal Health & Welfare - March 2005](#) This practice was banned in 2006.
- [The Opinion of the SACAHW on the need to provide for necessary husbandry practices on \(i\) castration of cattle and sheep, ii\) dehorning/disbudding of cattle, and iii\) tail docking of sheep](#)
- [SACAHW Opinion on Electro Ejaculation](#)

- [SACAHW Opinion on Painful Procedures](#)
- [Response to Committee on Animal Health & Welfare on Animal Cloning and Its Potential Impact on Animal Health & Welfare](#)
- [Welfare Aspects of the Slaughter of Fur Producing Animals in Ireland Final Report](#)
- [Report on the Availability of Veterinary Medicines in Ireland - January 2005](#)

### [The World Organisation of Animal Health \(OIE\)](#)

Ireland along with other EU member states works closely with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). The OIE Region for Europe – comprising 53 member countries - has developed an Animal Welfare Platform to advance animal welfare matters in the Europe region and the neighbouring OIE regions of the Middle East and Africa. Among the current work programme is welfare at slaughter, welfare during long journeys by road and ‘whole of journey’ scenarios (WEJS) which deal with cross international boundaries of animal transport. This WJS is to move to deal with the transport by animals by sea. The Irish CVO is a member of the Steering Group of this Platform.

### [OIE Funding](#)

DAFM has committed €75k per annum over the period 2017-2020 in support of OIE capacity building activities relating to the welfare of animals at the time of slaughter in Third countries (and towards the concept of whole journey scenarios) in the context of long distance animal transport.

### [EU Commission Animal Welfare Platform](#)

Ireland also has active representation and participation in the EU Animal Welfare Platform and its associated sub group on animal transport which assists the EU Commission with the development and exchange of coordinated actions on animal welfare. The Platform brings together a wide range of representatives including public entities (EU/EEA countries, EU bodies and international organisations) and private stakeholders of the animal welfare sector to achieve better application of EU rules on animal welfare, through exchanges of information and best practices.

## **3. Animal Welfare Controls and Activities**

A summary of welfare measures undertaken by DAFM are outlined below

**Welfare Area****Outputs****Transport of Livestock**

- DAFM Officials inspect over 90% (200,000 animals approx.) of all livestock exported annually at ports of departure.
- All vehicles transporting animals off the island (Type 2 transporters) are subject to inspection and authorisation by DAFM – authorisation is valid for between 2 and 5 years.
- Rigorous inspections of livestock vehicles are carried out by veterinary officials when present at time of loading.
- Further inspections are undertaken on vehicles at marts and those delivering animals to slaughter plants.
- All consignments of livestock departing through Rosslare Port are subject to routine welfare documentary checks prior to embarking on ferry. In addition, certain consignments are selected for veterinary inspections, both on quayside and after loading on-board the ship.
- Horses departing through Dublin Port which require veterinary certification are also subject to routine oversight checks.
- From January 1st 2019 the GPS records of all journeys will be required to be submitted for review 7 days after the end of the journey.
- Animal welfare checks include the requirement for unweaned calves to stop and rest for a 12 hour period upon arrival in France – we have had close cooperation with the French authorities to ensure that this takes place. DAFM have worked closely with the French authorities in the construction of high quality control post facilities for calves increasing capacity from 800 animals to 4000. There is continuous collaboration with the French authorities in relation to real time data exchange, journey log monitoring and infringement notifications.
- Sanctions issued for non-compliances and infringements include the suspension of vehicle authorisation to transport animals. Fixed penalty payments and possible prosecution under the AHW Act.

**On Farm Inspections**

Animal welfare inspections are carried out by authorised officers of the Department in two executive formats:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Incidents – inspections are assigned consequent to local events</li> <li>➤ Routine – Inspections are assigned as required under Regulation 2004/882 EU. These are targeted inspections based on risk assessments</li> <li>➤ Inspections are recorded under the DAFM AFIT system. In excess of <b>1500</b> AFIT animal welfare inspection reports to date for 2018.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ex Gratia Funding</b></p>	<p>€2.56m was awarded to 111 animal welfare organisations in 2017 including €375, 000 to both the DSPCA and the ISPCA part of which assists in their work as authorised officers under the AHW Act.</p>
<p><b>On Farm Initiatives</b></p>	<p>The Department have been active in the following on farm welfare initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A prohibition on the docking of cows tails</li> <li>➤ A prohibition on the tethering of sows- Loose Sow Housing Scheme.</li> <li>➤ A prohibition on the sale of calves less than 10 days old at Marts</li> <li>➤ A prohibition on the use of wild animals in circuses.</li> <li>➤ A prohibition on dew claw removal of dogs with tail docking prohibited except in relation to specific breeds of hunting dogs.</li> <li>➤ A prohibition on the use of Electorimmobilisation devices.</li> <li>➤ A prohibition on the sale of horned cattle at marts.</li> <li>➤ A prohibition on ‘barren’ cages for laying hens- Requirement for enriched cages for laying hens</li> <li>➤ A current initiative seeking to reduce/phase out routine tail docking in pigs. It is planned to utilise the Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme (TAMS) to effect change in behaviour on farm, to support reduction in stocking densities and bring about better welfare outcomes for pigs. Additionally measures under the Targeted Advisory Services for Animal Health (TASAH) are being directed towards schemes to improve environmental conditions for housed pigs on biosecurity and welfare areas. Research and training is being undertaken by DAFM by way of pilot projects on a number of pig farms and training is being provided to veterinary practitioners in the area of risk assessment and farm action plans.to asset farmers in enhancing pig welfare.</li> </ul>

<p><b>DAFM Participation in national welfare initiatives</b></p>	<p>DAFM actively participates in and contributes to external welfare initiatives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021 (NTRIS)</li> <li>➤ The Irish Pet Advertising Advisory Group (IPAAG)</li> <li>➤ The County and City Management Association (CCMA)</li> <li>➤ Dublin Region Horse Welfare Steering Group</li> <li>➤ Regional Urban/Traveller Horse Groups</li> <li>➤ North/South Transport Discussion Group</li> </ul>
<p><b>AHW Act include NGO'S and Gardaí and Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ DAFM has authorised specific officers in the ISPCA, DSPCA and the Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board as authorised officers under the Animal Health and Welfare Act with powers relating to animal welfare in specific circumstances.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Urban Traveller Horse Projects</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ DAFM provides funding to local authorities to support urban/traveller horse projects in their respective areas. These initiatives will help horse owners with compliance with equine related legislation including identification, premises registration and control of horses and in assisting young urban/travellers in acquiring the necessary skills in relation to caring and managing horses alongside a broader education.</li> <li>➤ To date total funding has been drawn down amounting to over €1m under this scheme.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Training and Development Completed</b></p>	<p><b>Animal Welfare training undertaken by DAFM Staff and related stakeholders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Animal Handling Courses for DAFM veterinary inspectors and other authorised officers provided by international specialist Miriam Parker</li> <li>➤ Animal Health and Welfare Act legislative training for Regional Offices and Welfare Organisations</li> <li>➤ Broiler Chicken producers and processors training</li> <li>➤ Slaughter Plant Training for operatives</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Better Training Safer Food (BFST) Formal Training for DAFM Staff on welfare at slaughter and killing for disease control for farmed animals and poultry. Separate BTSF eLearning courses are on offer to staff with good uptake reported.</li> <li>➤ Knowledge Transfer Training: A suite of Knowledge Transfer measures is included in the new Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, with funding of €100m and includes support for Knowledge Transfer Groups across the Beef, Sheep, Dairy, Poultry, and Equine Sectors. . Almost 20,000 farmers in 1200 Knowledge Transfer Groups have attended meetings and approved Knowledge Transfer events which, together with a tailored Farm Improvement Plan, will support farmers in addressing a range of competitiveness and sustainability challenges including animal health facing the sector.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>DAFM Animal Welfare Helpline</i></b></p>	<p>Over <b>850</b> Calls to date in 2018 for Welfare Helpline. Each call investigated by Veterinary Inspectors of DAFM from the Regional Veterinary Offices.</p>
<p><b><i>Prosecutions under AHW Act</i></b></p>	<p><b>60</b> successful prosecutions to date under the AHW Act 2013 and a further 32 are currently before the courts</p>
<p><b><i>Sanctions for infringements of welfare at time of transport for Livestock</i></b></p>	<p>Over <b>50</b> Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued in 2018 to transporters of livestock regarding welfare infringements.</p>
<p><b><i>Research Studies commissioned and supported by DAFM in welfare matters</i></b></p>	<p>Several research studies report some of which are commissioned and supported by DAFM focusing on farm/animal welfare include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Challenges and Solutions to Supporting Farm Animal Welfare in Ireland</i> Catherine Devitt, Alison Hanlon Simon More, Patricia Kelly, Martin Blake</li> <li>➤ <i>One Welfare: A Framework to Improve Animal Welfare and Human</i></li> </ul>

	<p><i>Wellbeing</i> 1st Edition by <i>Rebeca García</i> Pinillos (Editor),</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Identification of key performance indicators for on-farm animal welfare incidents: possible tools for early warning and prevention</i> <i>Patricia C Kelly<sup>1*</sup>, Simon J More<sup>2</sup>, Martin Blake<sup>1</sup> and Alison J Hanlon</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Dilemmas experienced by government veterinarians when responding professionally to farm animal welfare incidents in Ireland</i> <i>C. Devitt, <sup>1</sup> P. Kelly, <sup>2</sup> M. Blake, <sup>2</sup> A. Hanlon, <sup>3</sup> S. J. More</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Conducting sensitive social science research about on-farm animal welfare incidents: challenges and approaches</i> <i>C Devitt<sup>*†</sup>, P Kelly<sup>‡</sup>, M Blake<sup>‡</sup>, A Hanlon<sup>§</sup> and SJ More<sup>#</sup></i></li> </ul>
<p><b>DAFM Funded Research Welfare Projects under the Research Stimulus Fund (RSF)</b></p>	<p>DAFM’s Competitive Research Programme has provided funding to several ongoing or completed projects that include in their scope of work adopting technology based tools in order to address animal welfare based challenges.</p> <p>These include projects in the areas of respiratory diseases of pigs, the reduction of tail biting in pigs and bacterial diseases of dairy cows.</p> <p>Summary of projects to date related to animal welfare:</p> <p><b>Project Title:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Strategies to PROtect and improve the WELfare of dairy COWs in Irish systems of milk production – ProWelCow</li> <li>➤ SWAB: Surveillance Welfare and Biosecurity of farmed animals.</li> <li>➤ Antimicrobial Use and Resistance in Animal Production</li> <li>➤ Environmental enrichment and nutritional strategies to reduce tail biting in pig farms</li> <li>➤ Investigation of respiratory disease on Irish pig farms, associated risk factors &amp; the relationship with performance, welfare &amp; antimicrobial use</li> <li>➤ Development of ante and post mortem abattoir inspection of pigs as a welfare surveillance tool</li> <li>➤ Evaluation of the Beef Suckler Welfare Scheme: and Mechanisms affecting farmer behaviour/ attitudes</li> <li>➤ Investigating the human aspects of on-farm animal welfare incidents</li> </ul>

<b>Codes of Practice</b>	<p>DAFM in consultation with stakeholders and via public consultation have produced codes of practice in the following area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Fur Farming</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Hunting</b></li> </ul>
<b>Control of Horses</b>	<p>DAFM fund the seizure, rehoming or disposal of horses by Local Authorities under the Control of Horse Act.</p> <p>The number of horses seized nationally dropped from 4,727 in 2013 to 1,603 in 2017 Expenditure dropped from <b>€ 3,025,599 in 2013 to €533,839 in 2017.</b></p>
<b>Sheep Welfare Scheme</b>	<p>Under this scheme, sheep farmers with breeding ewes can apply for payment based on 2 actions they choose to undertake from a menu of options appropriate to their flock type (i.e. hill or lowland) in order to improve animal welfare. The scheme began in December 2016. Total expenditure on the scheme to the end of September 2018 amounted to €18.4 million paid to 21,000 participants</p>

#### 4. On-going work areas, where further progress is needed.

- Control of Horse-Updating of the legislation currently in progress.
- Dairy Cows/Calves Advice booklets due to publish, calf booklets scheduled for draft in 2019
- Bord Bia QAS Ongoing Development. Implement the recommendations of the SSACAHW  
Opinion on Electro Ejaculation
- Implement the recommendations of the SACAHW on the castration of cattle
- Continue to work, with the French authorities as necessary, to ensure compliance with the rest requirements for calves on arrival in France.
- To continue engagement with industry with regard to animal welfare on dairy farms in the context of expansion and in particular with regard to calves.