

**First Technical Working Group on Animal Welfare  
of the  
New Zealand-European Union Free Trade Agreement (NZ-EU FTA)  
Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**Date: 27 May 2025  
Time: 10:00-11:30 h  
Venue: Paris, France**

## **1. Welcome and Introduction**

The meeting was co-chaired by Carolyn Guy for New Zealand and Andrea Gavinelli for the European Commission.

The respective teams were introduced.

## **2. Terms of Reference**

The Terms of reference, agreed following an exchange of e-mails prior to the meeting, were accepted by both parties without comments.

## **3. Updates on latest developments in the EU**

### **3.1. Animal welfare at farm**

EU informed about a plan to launch in due time a call for evidence for public feedback in the context of the modernisation of the EU on-farm animal welfare legislation, including to follow-up on the “end the cage age” initiative.

In parallel, the EU is currently working on animal welfare indicators and there is also an ongoing external study which is managed by DG SANTE. This is an area with big, unexplored potential where more work is needed. The EU is aware of some research done by the Member States which could also be helpful and could be considered in one of the forthcoming meetings of this working group.

**ACTION:** EU to inform NZ when the call for evidence is launched.

### **3.2. Slaughter of animals**

The EU got an application for a new stunning method of piglets with high expansion foam (<https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.2903/j.efsa.2024.8855>). The EU will be assessing if this stunning method could be authorised for use.

The EU has just concluded a big project named PigStun. The final report of this project should be available very soon (<https://eurcaw-pigs.eu/dossier/pigstun>).

## **4. Updates on latest developments in NZ**

#### 4.1. Animal welfare at farm

NZ informed about the phasing out of conventional layer hen cages which was completed in January 2023 and transitioning to alternative systems, which can include enriched colony cages. There is also a commercial initiative of supermarkets to buy eggs from cage-free production which accelerated industry's move to phase out cages. The poultry codes are scheduled for review next year which would include a review of colony cage requirements.

The New Zealand pork industry has 70-80 commercial farms, of which 47% are outdoors and 53% are indoors. Domestic production meets about 40% of demand, with imports from the EU, North America and Australia. For pigs, sow (gestation) stalls are not used, and it is not controversial to phase out mating stalls to only the insemination. The total phasing out farrowing crate use is currently being reviewed and needs to be considered alongside the issue of piglets' welfare. NZ informed about science evidence for 4% higher mortality.

Regarding indicators, NZ informed of a work and some challenges to measure what a good AW is. There are some indicators, but currently, measuring them is not mandatory. However, minimum standards, under the Animal Welfare Act, are obligatory and some minimum standards include the requirement to keep records. Many producers also farm according to private standards. MPI is undertaking behavioural research to understand attitudes of different groups towards animal welfare for farmed animals in their care, and strategies for behavioural change.

**ACTION:** To consider future additional discussion on respective experience with phasing out cages.

#### 4.2. Slaughter of animals

NZ does not practice any CO2 stunning for pigs. The most used method is electrical stunning.

### 5. Animal transport

#### 5.1. Latest activities in the EU

EU informed that the negotiations on the Commission proposal for a new regulation on the protection of animals during transport with the European Parliament and the Council are in a quite advanced stage. The subject is very complex, and it contains several areas such as air transport and sea transport where further cooperation and meetings at technical level with NZ can be useful to consider. The EU informed of a recently published overview report on transport of unweaned calves during long journeys (<https://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/overview/details/160>).

#### 5.2. Latest activities in NZ

NZ informed about forthcoming consultation of new rules on animal transport by sea. When sea transport was permitted, NZ recorded and monitored many different parameters during the voyage, using a Survey 123 app. NZ has also developed guidelines for the export of day-old chicks (DOCs) and horses by air.

**ACTION:** NZ will inform EU when the consultation is launched and will share with the EU the guidelines on export of DOCs and horses.

**ACTION:** Both parties agreed for setting technical meetings on animal transport for discussion issues related to sea and air transport.

### 6. Cooperation in the framework of WOAAH

The EU considers that the WOAAH network of National Contact Points on long distance transport of animals for Europe should be expanded to other WOAAH regions. NZ agreed it was a good idea but commented that the resource would have to remain current and updated.

The EU will explore the possibility of inviting NZ to one of the forthcoming Steering Groups on the WOAAH Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe.

**ACTION:** EU to check with the Secretariat of WOAHP Platform on AW for Europe about possible participation of NZ.

## **7. Next Meeting**

The second Technical Working Group on Animal Welfare should be organised in one year time with intersessional technical discussions as agreed.