

Written Response by the Welsh Government to the report of the Petitions Committee entitled Report on Petition P-04-433 CCTV in Slaughterhouses.

The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring high standards of welfare for all animals, at all stages of their life. We have some of the highest standards in the world and take animal welfare at slaughterhouses very seriously.

Our larger slaughterhouses, which process the majority of animals, already have CCTV and adhere to a protocol jointly developed and agreed by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and industry bodies to enable Official Veterinarians (OVs) access to CCTV footage. An [FSA survey](#), completed in 2016, estimated 'that in England and Wales 92% of cattle, 96% of pigs, 88% of sheep and 99% of poultry throughput comes from premises with some form of CCTV in use'.¹

There are currently 24 slaughterhouses in Wales: Nineteen process red meat (four large, six medium and nine small) and five process poultry (three large, one medium and one small). Eleven have CCTV systems installed (including all five poultry slaughterhouses). Nine small and four medium red meat slaughterhouses do not currently have CCTV.

A £1.1million Food Business Investment Scheme (FBIS) for small and medium sized slaughterhouses, which opened to expressions of interest in September 2018, has recently closed for applications. Projects that include investments to safeguard animal welfare, such as installation, upgrade or improvement of CCTV, are being given priority.

CCTV cannot replace direct oversight by slaughterhouse management or OVs, particularly in very small premises, but can provide objective supporting evidence of good practice. Safeguarding animal welfare requires knowledge and a culture that respects animals. Successful applicants to the scheme will also receive expert welfare advice on the movement and management of animals in their premises.

In addition to FBIS, the Food Skills Cymru (FSC) programme delivered by Lantra supports businesses within the Welsh food and drink processing and manufacturing industry to ensure employees have the right skills and training. FSC is working with Shropshire Training to deliver 'Welfare of Animals at Time of Killing' to businesses applying for training up until March 2021. FSC is also looking to develop additional animal welfare related courses for slaughterhouses to ensure animals are properly handled and cared for prior to slaughter.

FSA is undertaking an investigation in respect of the Farmers Fresh slaughterhouse in Wrexham. While the investigation is ongoing I cannot comment on this specific case. However, I have met with the FSA to ensure the matter is being dealt with in a manner which reflects the seriousness of the allegations and the evidence which supported them.

¹ Food Standards Agency (FSA) Results of the 2016 CCTV survey in slaughterhouses in England and Wales, 2016

I would like to thank the members of the Committee for their Report on CCTV in Slaughterhouses. I have set out my response to the Report's recommendations below.

Detailed Responses to the report's recommendations are set out below:

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that:

The Welsh Government makes the installation and maintenance of CCTV monitoring systems mandatory in all slaughterhouses in Wales. This should cover all areas of the premises which are involved in the holding or processing of live animals and supported by requirements on the placement and operation of cameras, and the retention and storage of recordings and the availability of recordings for inspection.

Response: Accept in principle

I have previously said I am considering legislating to ensure CCTV is in place in all Welsh slaughterhouses. However, I have committed to working with slaughterhouse operators, in a supportive relationship, to achieve the same objective. Any decision to introduce legislation to make CCTV mandatory will not be made until after the applications to the Food Business Investment Scheme for small and medium sized slaughterhouse, including the type and scale of investments, have been assessed.

Financial Implications: Legislating to make CCTV mandatory would have financial implications for slaughterhouses. This would need to be considered as part of a Regulatory Impact Assessment accompanying any legislation brought forward.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that:

The Welsh Government ensures that the Food Standards Agency, or another appropriate body, is provided with a sufficient level of resource to monitor and enforce the new CCTV monitoring system in slaughterhouses in Wales.

Response: Accept in principle

Please see my response to Recommendation 1.

Financial Implications: Costs would be drawn from existing programme budgets.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that:

The Welsh Government ensures that the Food Standards Agency is provided with a sufficient level of resource to undertake its animal welfare delivery activity in Wales,

with consideration given to the FSA's estimates of the cost of delivering official controls.

Response: Accept

The funding provided to the FSA by Welsh Government is reviewed on an annual basis and takes into account estimates of costings for the year ahead along with the evidence of previous budgets. This ensures sufficient resource is provided to allow the agency to carry out its duties effectively and to ensure animal welfare standards are maintained to a high level.

Financial Implications: Costs are drawn from existing programme budgets.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the name.

Lesley Griffiths AM
Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs