



Recent advances in animal welfare science V

UFAW Animal Welfare Conference

York Merchant Adventurers' Hall UK, 23rd June 2016

BROILER CHICKEN WELFARE OUTCOMES BASED ON SLAUGHTER CONDEMNATION DATA IN BRAZIL

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Brazil is the third largest broiler chicken producer in the world. In 2015, about 5.2 billion broiler chickens were slaughtered in establishments under Federal Inspection Service (SIF) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply (MAPA), and there is a projection of a 46.4% increase in chicken meat production by 2023. In face of higher demand for information about farm animal welfare (AW), governmental monitoring actions are increasing worldwide. Condemnation data is already in use by competent authorities in European Union to monitor AW at the slaughterhouse. In Brazil, the MAPA undertakes meat inspection at slaughterhouses, but such outcomes have not yet been used for AW assessment. This study aimed to assess condemnation data from broiler chicken slaughterhouses in Brazil to evaluate their potential use as indicators in an AW governmental monitoring program. We collected condemnation data from the official database available at the MAPA website, from January 2010 to December 2015, considering all 18 States that slaughtered broiler chickens under SIF. Following the literature, assessment considered total and partial rejections for AW target indicators contusion, bruises, fracture, emaciation, dehydration, ascites, septicaemia, abscess, hepatitis, pericarditis, inadequate bleeding, contact dermatitis and dead on arrival (DOA). All indicators, except dehydration, were reported on inspection data. We identified significant variability among States, mainly on type of condemnation and terms used to describe indicators, thus reported values seem underestimated. For example, contusion, that was the main cause of partial condemnation (88.5%), was recorded in only 16 States and presented high variability on results, with median condemnation of 1,638.5 (0.013 – 46,167.1) per 100,000 birds. Carcass parts condemned for contusion were not identified. Pericarditis and hepatitis data were available in six States. Footpad dermatitis was reported only in data from the State of Goiás. In six States there was condemnation for birds 'found dead', which may be related to DOA. Federal Inspection has played an important role on meat inspection, complying with rigorous international standards. The inclusion of an AW view on condemnation information is a new concept to be included to SIF in order to obtain reliable data. Results suggest the need to establish a working group to set specific AW outcomes to be monitored, to standardize recording procedures among States and to integrate condemnation, DOA and flock data.