Animal welfare assessments in Control Posts

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The main objective of the project "Renovation to promote High Quality control posts in the European Union- SANCO/2010/D5/CRPA/SI2.578062" was the renovation of Control Posts (CPs) and the development of protocols to assess the effects on cattle and pig welfare at the renovated CPs. Welfare Quality® protocols for fattening cattle and pigs on farm and at slaughter have been adapted to be used to assess the effects of renovation of CPs and to explore possibilities to include animal based parameters in a certification scheme. Animals were assessed on arrival at the CP after long journey

transports, during unloading, one hour after arrival, one hour before departure and during reloading. Moreover, resource based indicators were assessed for overall welfare assessment. A total of 84 cattle and 23 pig transports were assessed in CPs in five countries (France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain). Assessments were performed by researchers and official veterinarians. All had been trained in the animal welfare protocols prior to performing the assessments. A training course lasted two days and included both theoretical and practical training sessions. CP renovations included ramp improvement for unloading and loading animals; placement and improvement of drinking bowls and feeding troughs in resting pens; roof insulation; improvement and installation of ventilation systems and installation of mobile gates enabling the formation of animal groups as required. The animal welfare assessments have proven to be feasible and both protocols were effective in the detection of the effects of the CP renovations on animal welfare.

Figure1 Welfare criteria used for assessment at the CP