



# Collecting Transport Related Animal Welfare Data

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## Intro to Good Practice

The Swedish Poultry Meats Association is a unique industry organisation that takes responsibility for the entire value chain in Swedish broiler production, from breeding and rearing to transport and slaughter. The various quality programmes, which all members must follow, are stricter than the national animal welfare legislation. The programmes also include the handling of animals from loading on the farm to the slaughterhouse.

Animal welfare inspections are carried out during catching, loading, transport and slaughter together with education of the catching teams. Alongside these interventions, transport related animal welfare data is collected from every flock that is sent to slaughter. The data is used to prevent systematic animal welfare problems during catching, loading, transport and slaughter, as KPI's to measure improvement and as a base for the education carried out to improve handling of the birds.



It is important to be observant and close the lid of the crates with care to make sure no animals get stuck and injured.

## Background & challenges

- Transport related animal welfare data is collected from every flock that is sent to slaughter.
- Data is collected from several sources, e.g. manually assessing birds at arrival, the official veterinarians' inspections and condemnations at slaughter, and gathered in a national database.
- The data is used as KPI's to monitor animal welfare during catching, loading and slaughter, to prevent systematic problems and as base for education.
- Example of such data is transport mortality (DOA), injuries (bruising, wounds, wing damage) and making sure no animals have gotten stuck in the transportation crates.
- Challenge with this kind of monitoring is calibration of assessors at the abattoirs and to identify the origin of the problem, which usually are multifactorial.
- Catching, loading and transportation is a complex logistic chain, and it is important that every part of the chain is collaborating to improve animal welfare. To locate the origin of a problem and find a solution to it, depends on collaboration.



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## Additional information

The data collected is used as a foundation to develop guidelines on how to handle the birds with care during catching, loading and transport. Some examples of guidelines for mechanical catching (the most used practice in Sweden) are as follows:

- The loading machine must be equipped with a euthanasia station, and staff must be trained to euthanize sick or injured birds in the correct manner.
- Loading machines and forklifts must be fitted with blue working lights.
- The belt speed must comply with the requirements of the transport system and adapted to bird behaviour.
- Individual animals not captured by the machine must be picked up by hand.
- The lid on a filled container should be retracted carefully to prevent injury.
- The containers must be manually checked to make sure no birds are stuck in any way.



Mechanical catching is the most used practice in Sweden.

## Benefits

- Collecting and monitoring welfare data during catching, loading and transport is beneficial for the development of new practises and technology.
- Monitoring the data identifies risk factors and can be used to prevent systematic errors.
- The data can be used on a national level, but also on farm level for quality assurance.
- Minimising injuries, wing damage and bruising during catching and loading, will also improve the meat quality and thus, has an economical advantage alongside the improvement of animal welfare.
- Improving the meat quality and decreasing the number of condemnations due to DOA, bruising and injuries will increase the number of chickens that reach the end consumer and therefore have a positive effect on the sustainability of poultry meat production.



Loading the crates on the vehicle must be adapted according to the weather conditions to reassure good animal welfare e.g. making sure there is good air circulation during high temperatures.

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