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**Animal welfare management —  
General requirements and guidance for  
organizations in the food supply chain**

*Gestion du bien-être animal — Exigences générales et orientations  
pour les organisations des filières alimentaires*

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation on the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html)

The committee responsible for this document is ISO/TC 34, *Food products*.

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## Introduction

There is a growing focus in society on animal welfare. Perception of animal welfare is complex and multifaceted, being influenced by scientific, ethical, historical, cultural, religious, economic and political dimensions. When addressing animal welfare, it has to be done in a scientifically credible manner. The Terrestrial Animal Health Code (TAHC) published by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) sets animal welfare standards to be used to establish national regulations and other relevant animal welfare documents.

Animal welfare management, as described in this document, has been developed to be adapted to various situations, including:

- different production systems and different organizations in the supply chain for products of animal origin, regardless of size and country;
- different geographical, cultural and religious contexts; and
- developed as well as developing countries.

The purpose of this document is to ensure the welfare of animals raised for food or feed production around the world through the following objectives:

- to provide a management tool for the implementation of the animal welfare principles of the OIE TAHC (Section 7);
- to provide guidance for the implementation of public or private animal welfare standards and relevant legislation that meet at least the OIE TAHC (Section 7);
- to facilitate the integration of animal welfare principles in business-to-business relations.

The concept of the five freedoms, as mentioned in Chapter 7.1 of the OIE TAHC (freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition; freedom from fear and distress; freedom from physical and thermal discomfort; freedom from pain, injury and disease; and freedom to express normal patterns of behaviour), provides guidance on the understanding of animal welfare, on identifying the relevant aspects to be considered and on implementing relevant practices. The general principles for the welfare of animals in livestock production systems (Article 7.1.4 of the OIE TAHC) provide a basis for practical requirements to ensure that the five freedoms are met.

Animal welfare management can be addressed in different ways, such as legislation, codes of good practice, private specifications or client/supplier requirements.

This document is intended to support the implementation of relevant practices to ensure animal welfare in livestock production systems.

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# Animal welfare management — General requirements and guidance for organizations in the food supply chain

## 1 Scope

This document provides requirements and guidance for the implementation of the animal welfare principles as described in the introduction to the recommendations for animal welfare of the OIE TAHC (Chapter 7.1).

This document applies to terrestrial animals bred or kept for the production of food or feed. The following areas are excluded: animals used for research and educational activities, animals in animal shelters and zoos, companion animals, stray and wild animals, aquatic animals, killing for public or animal health purposes under the direction of the competent authority, humane killing traps for nuisance and fur species.

Application of this document is limited to aspects for which process or species-specific chapters are available in the OIE TAHC. At the time of publication of this document, they are:

- Chapter 7.2: Transport of animals by sea;
- Chapter 7.3: Transport of animals by land;
- Chapter 7.4: Transport of animals by air;
- Chapter 7.5: Slaughter of animals;
- Chapter 7.9: Animal welfare and beef cattle production systems;
- Chapter 7.10: Animal welfare and broiler chicken production systems; and
- Chapter 7.11: Animal welfare and dairy cattle production systems.

This document is designed to guide users in conducting a gap analysis and developing an animal welfare plan that is aligned with the OIE TAHC. It can also be used to facilitate the implementation of any public or private sector animal welfare standards that meet at least the OIE TAHC.

The scope of this document is intended to be revised as the animal welfare provisions of the OIE TAHC are supplemented or amended.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

*Terrestrial Animal Health Code, World Organization for Animal Health (OIE TAHC)*<sup>1)</sup>

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

1) <http://www.oie.int/en/international-standard-setting/terrestrial-code/access-online> (and specifically Section 7 dedicated to animal welfare).

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>
- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <http://www.iso.org/obp>

### 3.1

#### **animal**

mammal or bird

[SOURCE: OIE TAHC, modified — bees have been removed as they are not included in the scope of this document]

### 3.2

#### **animal-based measure**

response of an animal or effect on an animal used to assess its welfare, which can be taken directly on the animal or indirectly and includes amongst others the use of animal records

Note 1 to entry: It can result from a specific event (e.g. an injury) or be the cumulative outcome of many days, weeks or months (e.g. body condition).

Note 2 to entry: Animal-based measures are referred to as outcome-based measurables in the OIE TAHC. Outcome-based measurables involve assessing the degree (incidence, severity and duration) of impaired functioning associated with injury, disease and malnutrition, or the physiological, behavioural and immunological changes or effects that animals show in response to various challenges. They provide information on animals' needs and affective states such as hunger, thirst, pain and fear, often by measuring the strength of animals' preferences, motivations and aversions. These are distinguished from *resource-based measures* (3.9).

### 3.3

#### **animal handler**

person with knowledge of the behaviour and needs of animals who, with appropriate experience and a professional and positive response to an animal's needs, can achieve effective management and good welfare

[SOURCE: OIE TAHC, modified — the sentence "Competence should be gained through formal training and/or practical experience." has been deleted]

### 3.4

#### **animal welfare**

how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives

Note 1 to entry: The OIE TAHC defines animal welfare as "how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives. An animal is in a good state of welfare if (as indicated by scientific evidence) it is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, able to express innate behaviour, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear and distress. Good animal welfare requires disease prevention and veterinary treatment, appropriate shelter, management, nutrition, humane handling and humane slaughter/killing. Animal welfare refers to the state of the animal; the treatment that an animal receives is covered by other terms such as animal care, animal husbandry, and humane treatment".

[SOURCE: OIE TAHC, modified — a part of the definition has been moved to Note 1 to entry]

### 3.5

#### **animal welfare management**

activities required to ensure animal welfare

Note 1 to entry: This term includes activities involving the animals (the treatment that an animal receives, also called animal care, animal husbandry and humane treatment in OIE TAHC), activities involving staff, and the status and use of facilities for this purpose.

### 3.6

#### **animal welfare plan**

document describing the principles, policies and actions necessary for animal welfare management



**3.7****competent authority**

veterinary authority or other governmental authority of a country having the responsibility and competence for ensuring or supervising the implementation of animal health and welfare measures, international veterinary certification and other standards and recommendations in the OIE TAHC

[SOURCE: OIE TAHC, modified]

**3.8****organization**

person or group of people that has its own functions with responsibilities, authorities and relationships to achieve its objectives

Note 1 to entry: For the purposes of this document, the term refers to a single business operator or a group of business operators of the whole or a part of the food supply chain, including primary breeding companies, animal farmers, livestock transport companies and slaughterhouses. An organization can be public or private and includes, but is not limited to, sole-trader, company, corporation, firm, enterprise, authority, partnership, association, charity or institution, or part of combination thereof, whether incorporated or not, public or private.

**3.9****resource-based measure**

factor or combination of factors that may be linked to a change in the likelihood of good or poor animal welfare

Note 1 to entry: These factors include resources (e.g. housing, space allowance per animal, handling and restraint facilities, air temperature and quality, stunning equipment parameters) or management (e.g. personnel, financial, process).

Note 2 to entry: These are distinguished from *animal-based measures* (3.2).

**4 Main principles in developing an animal welfare plan****4.1 The organization developing an animal welfare plan shall ensure the plan:**

- a) enables the implementation of OIE animal welfare principles and guidelines or other provisions from private or public standards that meet, at least, the OIE TAHC; the general principles for the welfare of animals in livestock production systems (Article 7.1.4) and other relevant Section 7 chapters of OIE TAHC provide valuable guidance to develop an animal welfare plan, which complies with at least the OIE TAHC;
- b) ensures a commitment to maintaining good animal welfare that begins with management and is instilled in all staff; this may include identification of an animal welfare manager, or other means appropriate for the organization, to ensure accountability for animal welfare;
- c) covers all stages of the lives of the animals under the responsibility of the organization and verifies, as far as possible, the continuity of animal welfare during transfer of responsibility from or to its organization;
- d) facilitates implementation and communication of the plan within the organization; and
- e) encourages continual improvement through implementing small or large-scale changes to prevent non-conformances or to ensure conformance to the plan as outlined in 4.1 a) to 4.1 d), as well as incorporating other relevant changes to better ensure animal welfare as needed; this encouragement of continual improvement is not intended to imply that changes need to be made if not necessary to maintain good animal welfare.

**4.2 The organization shall establish and maintain the appropriate documentation and records related to the plan, such as:**