

## **Annex A**

### **Request**

You requested the following information:

*I know that around 2000-4000 severe Welfare breaches are detected in uk abattoirs every year. However, what I can't find information on is what percentage of abattoirs in the uk have no severe Welfare breaches. I want to know if I can receive information on this.*

Clarification:

*I consider "severe" non-compliances to mean both critical and major non-compliances. I would want the years 2010-2015 to be covered. Information for England and Wales would be enough.*

### **Response**

The FSA records welfare non-compliances which occur at the slaughterhouse as well as those which are suspected to have occurred prior to arrival at slaughterhouses.

The FSA does not have responsibility for welfare issues prior to animals arriving at slaughterhouses. However, the agency records these and refers them to the relevant enforcement authorities who have responsibility for welfare on farms and during transport. We have therefore separated this data out in the response as it does not provide information on the standard of welfare at slaughterhouses.

The FSA does not have a category for 'severe welfare breaches' but instead uses the following three categories of non-compliance: minor, major and critical. The tables at Annex B show the percentage of FSA approved meat establishments where there was no instance of a major or critical welfare non-compliance, for the years 2010 to 2015.

The non-compliances have been further split into three categories: On-farm, Transport, and Slaughterhouse, this is to provide a clear delineation of enforcement responsibilities between the Animal and Plant Health Agency, Local Authorities, and FSA respectively. A more in-depth explanation is provided in the background section.

There have been significant changes to the relevant animal welfare legislation over the period of 2010 – 2015 which means that the resulting data is not directly comparable. Following the changes in legislation, revised guidance and requirements along with a different enforcement approach were introduced which is likely to have had an impact on the number of non-compliances.

A record of the changes to the legislation are below:

- 2010 – 31 December 2012 - Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or killing) Regulations 1995 (WASK) and Animal Welfare Act 2006 applicable in England and Wales.
- 1st January 2013 - Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or killing) Regulations 1995 (WASK) no longer applies in England and Wales.
- 20 May 2014 - Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations (WATOK) comes into force in Wales
- 5 November 2015 - Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations (WATOK) comes into force in England.

Animal welfare non-compliances are categorised using 2, 3 and 4. A full definition of these scores is included in the [Manual for Official Controls](#), chapter 2.3, section 3.4.3. But in summary they are defined as:

<b>Score</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>2</b>	Minor non-compliance - No immediate risk to welfare	Low risk of compromising animal welfare or an isolated low risk situation that poses no immediate risk to the welfare of animals.
<b>3</b>	Major non-compliance - Potential risk to welfare	Potential to risk of significantly compromising animal welfare but where there is no immediate risk to animals. This may lead to a situation that poses a risk to animals, causing pain, distress or suffering.
<b>4</b>	Critical non-compliance - Welfare critical	Poses a serious and imminent risk to animal welfare or one where avoidable pain, distress or suffering has been caused.

## Background

The FSA is responsible for the delivery of official controls in approved meat establishments (slaughterhouses, cutting plants and game handling establishments) subject to veterinary control within England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This work is carried out for the FSA by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in Northern Ireland through a Service Level Agreement. The FSA was also responsible for this work in Scotland until 30 March 2015; however, these figures are not included in Annex B. If you require data for Scotland, you will need to contact Food Standards Scotland directly at <https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/freedom-of-information>.

The FSA monitors and enforces welfare compliance in approved slaughterhouses on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in England and on behalf of the Welsh Government through a Service Level Agreement. The FSA has a zero-tolerance approach to animal welfare breaches and all staff are instructed to take prompt and proportionate enforcement action where breaches are identified. This means that we apply the enforcement hierarchy in a way that allows us to take informal enforcement action where breaches are minor and where we believe that this will be effective in avoiding future non-compliance, and take formal action, in cases where non-compliance falls into the most severe categories which may have caused pain or suffering or where informal enforcement has not resulted in subsequent compliance by the business operator.

FSA official veterinarians and meat hygiene inspectors, either employed by the FSA, or supplied through an approved contractor, are typically present during processing of animals. They carry out a range of duties, including ante-mortem and post-mortem checks (checks on live animals and carcasses and offal) which include checks on the health and welfare of animals presented for slaughter. These official control duties ensure that food business operators have produced meat in accordance with regulatory requirements, with a health mark applied to show that meat is safe to enter the food chain.

Welfare non-compliances identified at the slaughterhouse but suspected to be caused during transport or at the place of origin (i.e. farm/ market) can be detected by FSA officials during ante-mortem or post-mortem checks; these non-compliances are recorded within the FSA system and referred to the relevant enforcement authorities with responsibility for transport and farm compliance (Local Authorities, Trading Standards and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)).