



Report

EURCAW meeting with Competent Authorities

Online via Zoom conference

12 November 2024, 13:00–16:00 hrs CET

Disclaimer

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1 Update on the Centre's activities

During the first part of the meeting, EURCAW Ruminants & Equines presented an update on recent activities related to Work programme 2025–2027, Factsheets, Reviews, Training activities and Dissemination. The collated presentations can be accessed [here](#).

2 Group discussions on specific welfare topics raised by Competent Authorities

The results of the Group discussions on specific welfare topics raised by Competent Authorities are summarised in the following sections.

2.1 Protection of sheep (and other animals) against predators

Wolf, or more generally speaking predator (e.g., wolverine, lynx, fox, bear) attacks on livestock are considered a problem in most EU Member States (**MS**) while a tension between environmental conservation and farming interests is recognised. Recommended protection includes electrical fencing, use of guard dogs and keeping animals indoors overnight. Some MS subsidise the acquisition of fences and/or pay compensation to farmers for losses due to wolf attacks. Compensation may sometimes only be paid if farmers made use of special (i.e., higher) electrical fencing (Finland, The Netherlands). Guard dogs are considered to be effective protection but they pose a threat to people (e.g., hikers) and companion animals (especially dogs). For example, in Austria and Germany it has only been recently permitted to use guard dogs as no housing was provided for these animals out on pasture. What also needs to be considered with regard to animal welfare is that sheep may become distressed (potentially leading to abortions) if wolves are present in the area even without attacking a herd.

2.2 Protection of ruminants and equines against adverse weather conditions

In general, no thresholds (e.g., min/max temperature, temperature-humidity-index) are set in MS to clearly define adverse weather conditions. Depending on geography, it is mainly heat, cold, or rain that adversely affects animal welfare. Some MS require shelter (artificial or natural) and a dry lying area for animals permanently kept outdoors. In the case of Austria and France, this regulation does not apply to animals kept on alpine pastures. In Belgium a change in legislation is expected in 2029, requiring protection (shade and shelter) against bad weather at all times. In France, there is an early warning system that provides information to vets, farmers, or hauliers about extreme weather conditions to prevent thermal stress in animals. In Sweden the animal welfare act states that animals kept outside during the winter must have access to a shelter with walls and roof.

Another important aspect is the quality-of-care animals receive from caretakers. It was mentioned that there may be a higher risk of poor welfare for part-time farmers with smaller flocks compared to full-time shepherds with larger flocks. Furthermore, inspections are normally not conducted during extreme weather, which may pose a threat that worst conditions will not be recognised.

2.3 Photovoltaic systems on pastures of sheep and goats

Despite a growing number of animals kept on pastures with installed PV systems, no MS reported to have any specific regulation on this matter. CAs are largely not aware of system-specific welfare problems. However, in Germany, an example was given of a Sheep Farming organisation that has made recommendations to farmers to make sure that the land is suitable for sheep to graze in the areas intended for PV installation. Also, emitted noise of such systems may have welfare consequences.

Moreover, it was mentioned that poultry may get stuck in such systems when perching on the construction. The EURCAW for Poultry and other Small Farmed Animals has published a [Question to EURCAW on this topic](#).

2.4 What is a tolerable percentage of fallen stock for different animal categories?

There are no regulations in place in MS that participated in the meeting. Member States face this issue case by case and react respectively. Italy proposed some figures (< 2 %: OK, 2–5 %: yellow flag, > 5 %: red flag) and for example, in Slovenia the farm-specific number of animals disposed of in animal rendering plants is reported to CA while in Ireland mortality rate is, together with other criteria, considered to target farms for inspection.

2.5 Hoof issues in large herds. What are acceptable levels of hoof disorders and how to handle penalties for owner/keepers?

This topic was discussed in Group 1 only.

Only Romania reported on this matter; there is no existing legislation, however, incentive to improve hoof health exists. There are several areas in which subsidies can be received, for instance housing conditions and routine hoof care. To receive subsidies for hoof health the farmer must have a contract with a professional hoof trimmer and schedule 3 appointments per year. The subsidies are for cattle only.

2.6 How to avoid tail docking in sheep?

This topic was discussed in Group 1 only.

Further training of farmers and breeding for short tails were mentioned as the two major leverage points to avoid tail docking in sheep. Tail docking is not necessary if appropriate management measures are taken. Sheep are not tail-docked in Sweden, Romania or Finland.

3 Questions and comments from the meeting chat

1. Animals should not at all be transported and certainly not more than 8 hours and not in other countries than European countries. What are you thinking about that? And what is done for that?
 - 1.1. This question is not within the remit of EURCAW *Ruminants & Equines*, since the Centre is concerned with supporting CAs in relation to existing legislation.
2. Does EURCAW *Ruminants & Equines* have a translation plan for documents produced in other languages?
 - 2.1. Regarding translations, in addition to the language capacity within our Centre (English, French, Italian, Greek, German, Swedish), we have support from IRTA in Spain and assistance from a Slovenian National Reference Centre. We use DeepL to translate factsheets, but these need to be proof-read. We would welcome support on proof-reading into your languages. If you have resources for proof-reading, please contact info@eurcaw-ruminants-equines.eu.
3. Will factsheets regarding thermal comfort contain specific recommendations for different species, physiological stages or age?
 - 3.1. This information will be provided inasmuch as it can be backed by scientific literature.
4. Will training activities and their materials, such as webinars, be available on the EURCAW website?
 - 4.1. Information on accessing the training materials is available on the website: <https://www.eurcaw-ruminants-equines.eu/training/>
 - 4.2. The website for accessing Training materials is: <https://elearning.izs.it/login/index.php>

4 Results of output analysis

A survey on quality and usability of outputs (Factsheets, Reviews, Questions to EURCAW, Training materials) published by EURCAW Ruminants & Equines was presented during the meeting. In the following section the results are summarised.

It may be concluded that accessing documents via a mobile device is of minor importance to CAs and usability during inspections or training may be improved. Despite this, length and level of detail provided in the different publications is largely rated good to very good.

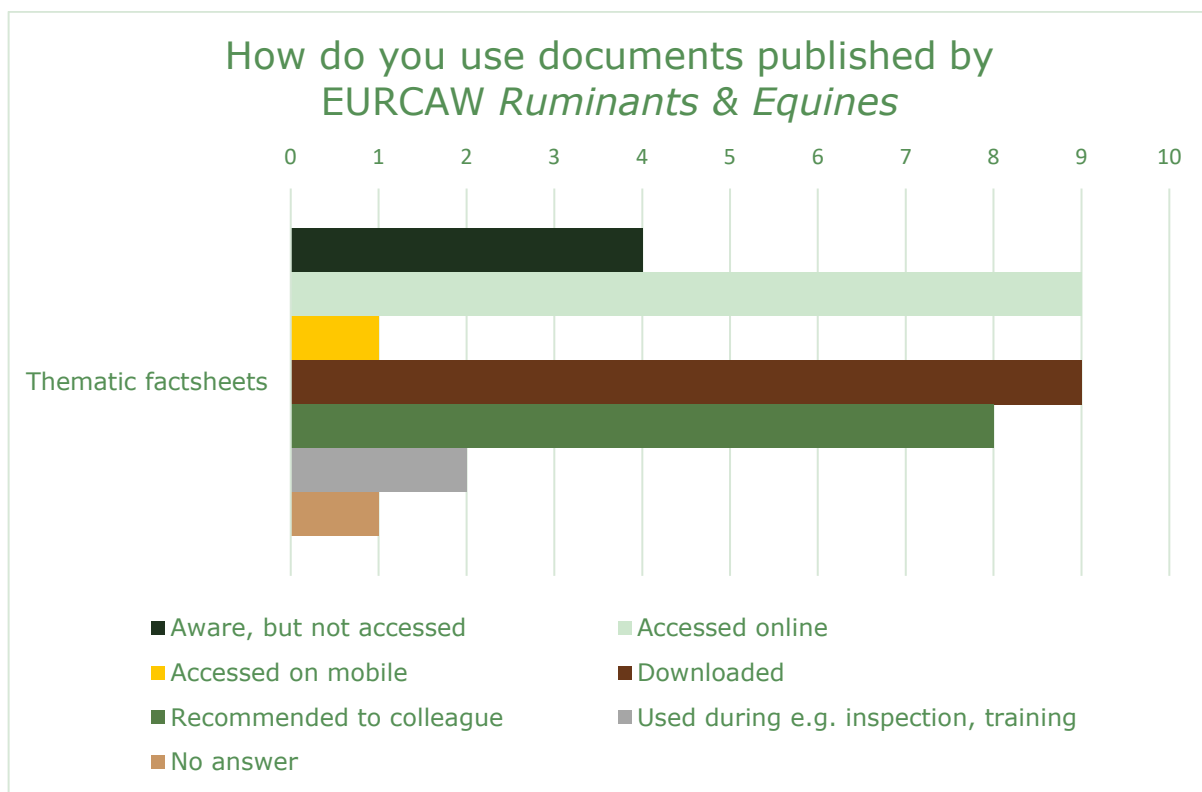


Figure 1: Results regarding utilisation of Thematic factsheets published by EURCAW Ruminants & Equines.

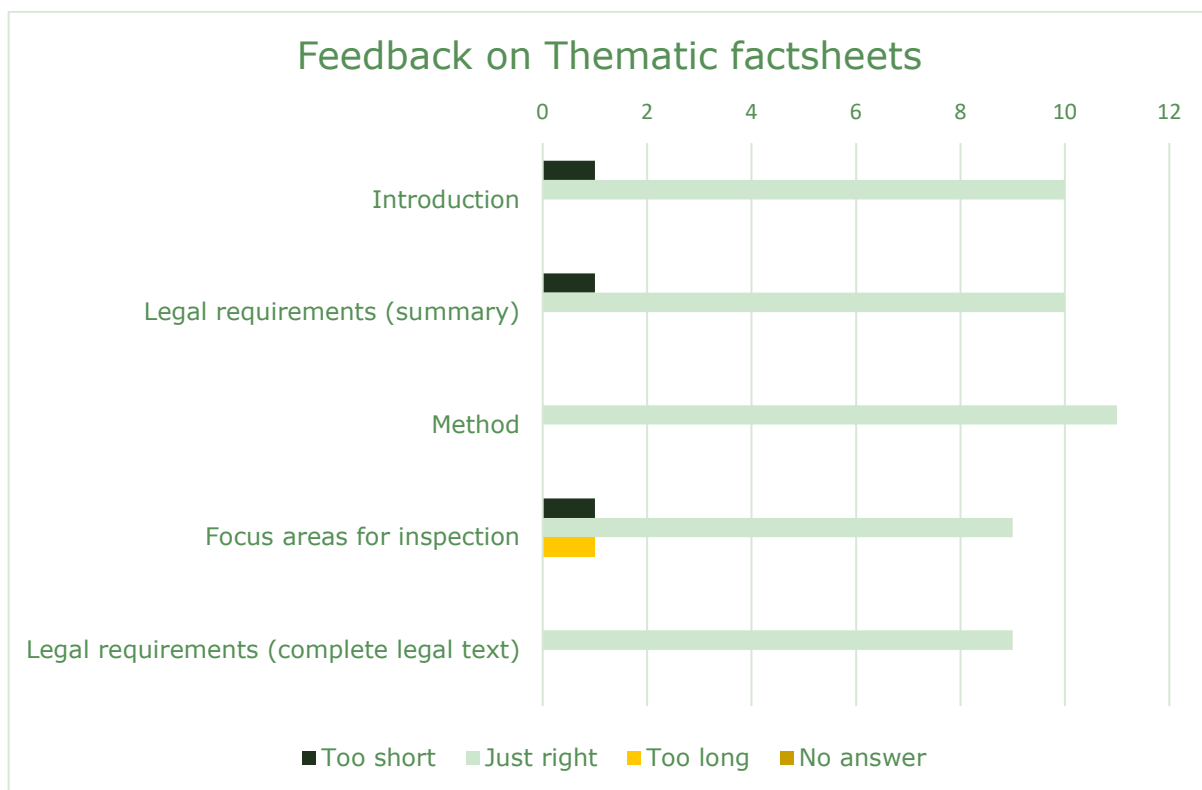


Figure 2: Results regarding length and level of detail provided in the different sections of Thematic factsheets published by EURCAW Ruminants & Equines.

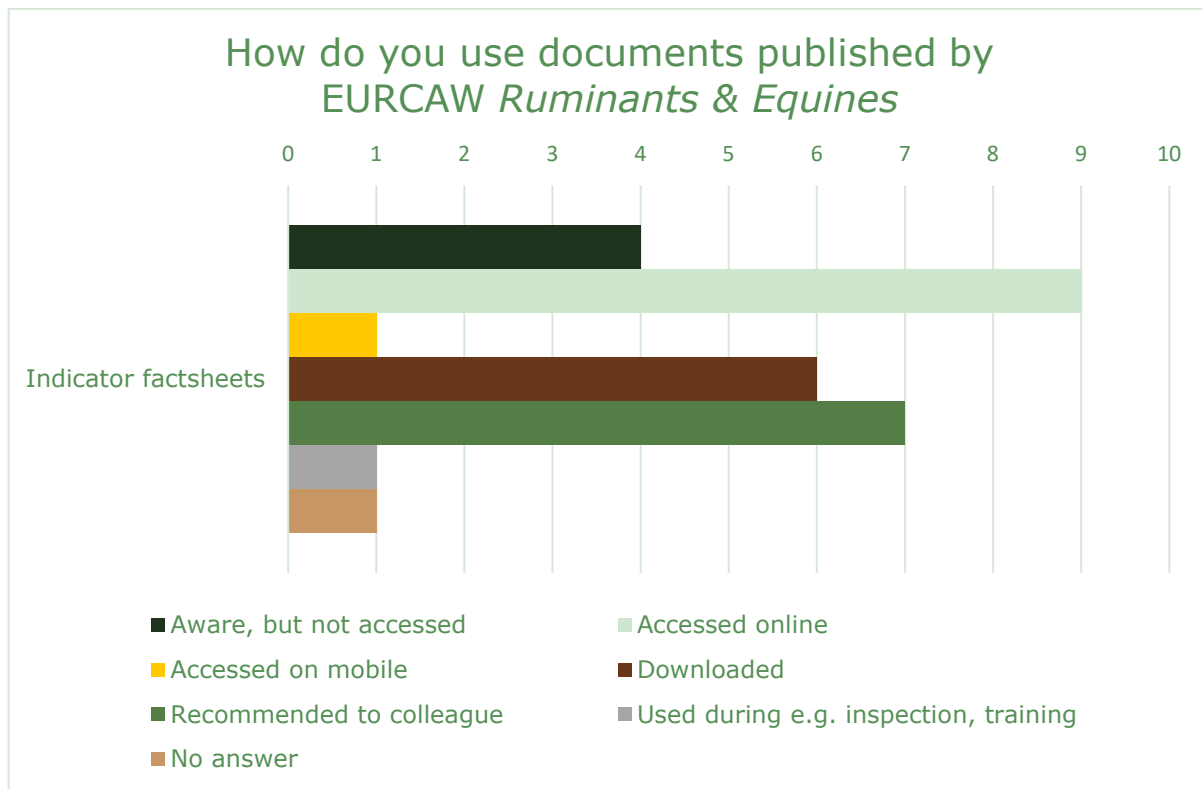


Figure 3: Results regarding utilisation of Indicator factsheets published by EURCAW Ruminants & Equines.

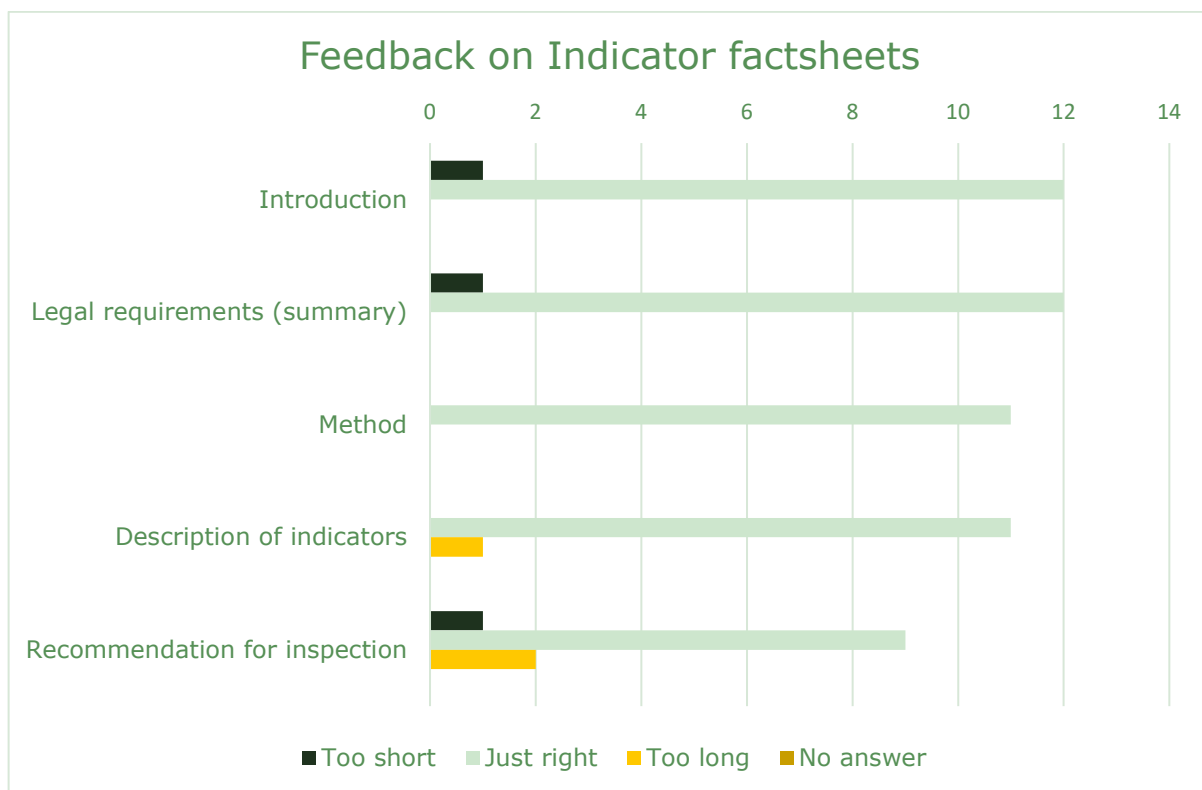


Figure 4: Results regarding length and level of detail provided in the different sections of Indicator factsheets published by EURCAW Ruminants & Equines.

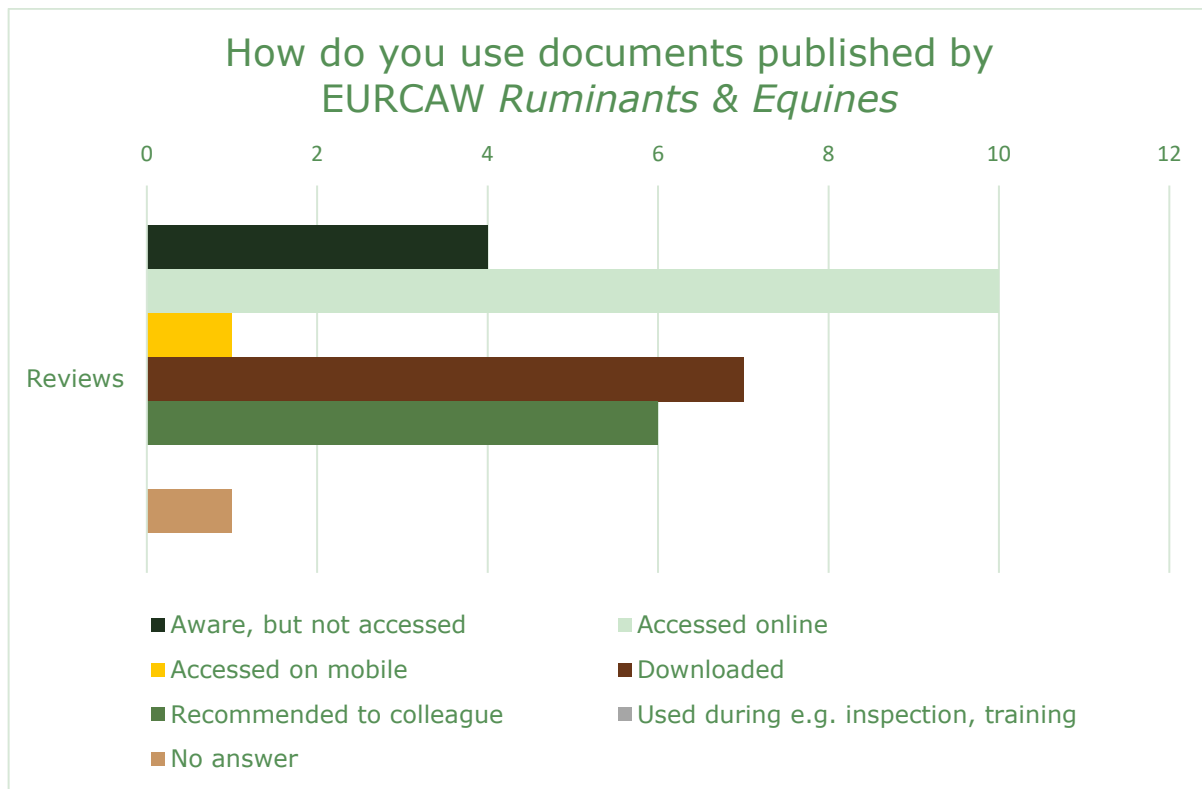


Figure 5: Results regarding utilisation of Reviews published by EURCAW Ruminants & Equines.

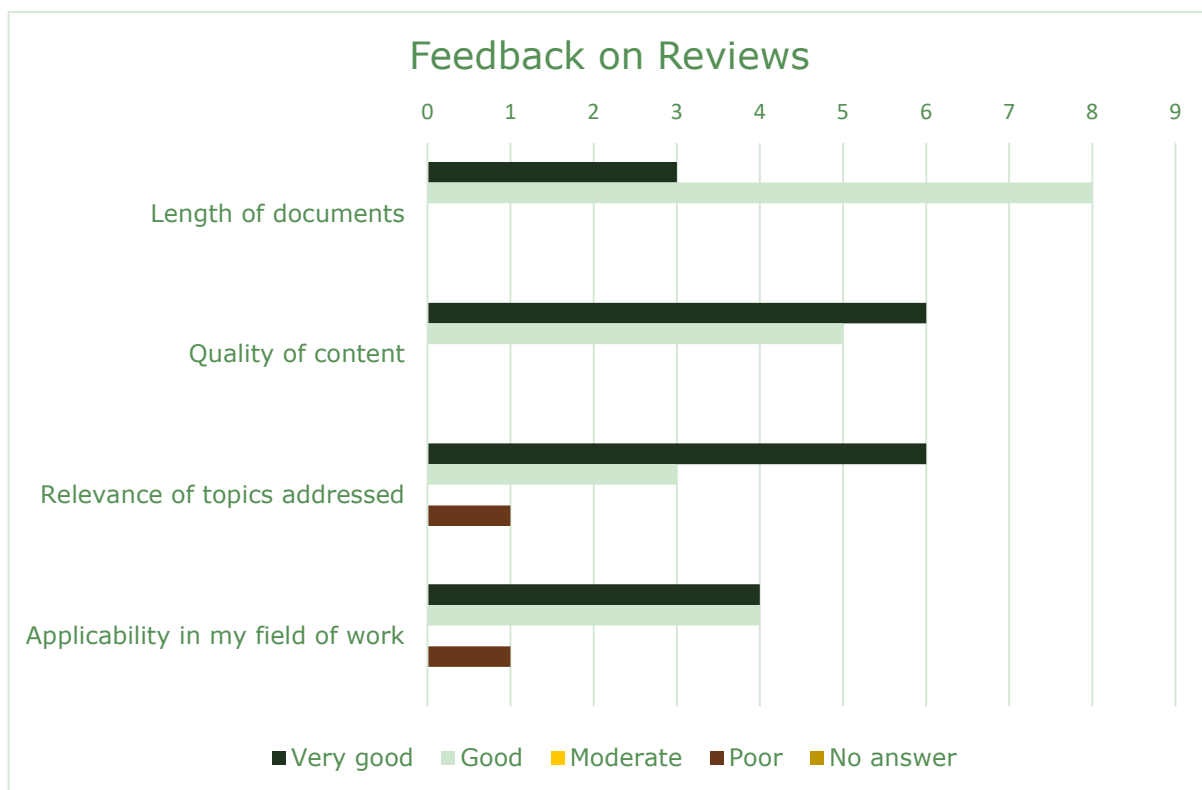


Figure 6: Results regarding length and level of detail provided in Reviews published by EURCAW Ruminants & Equines.

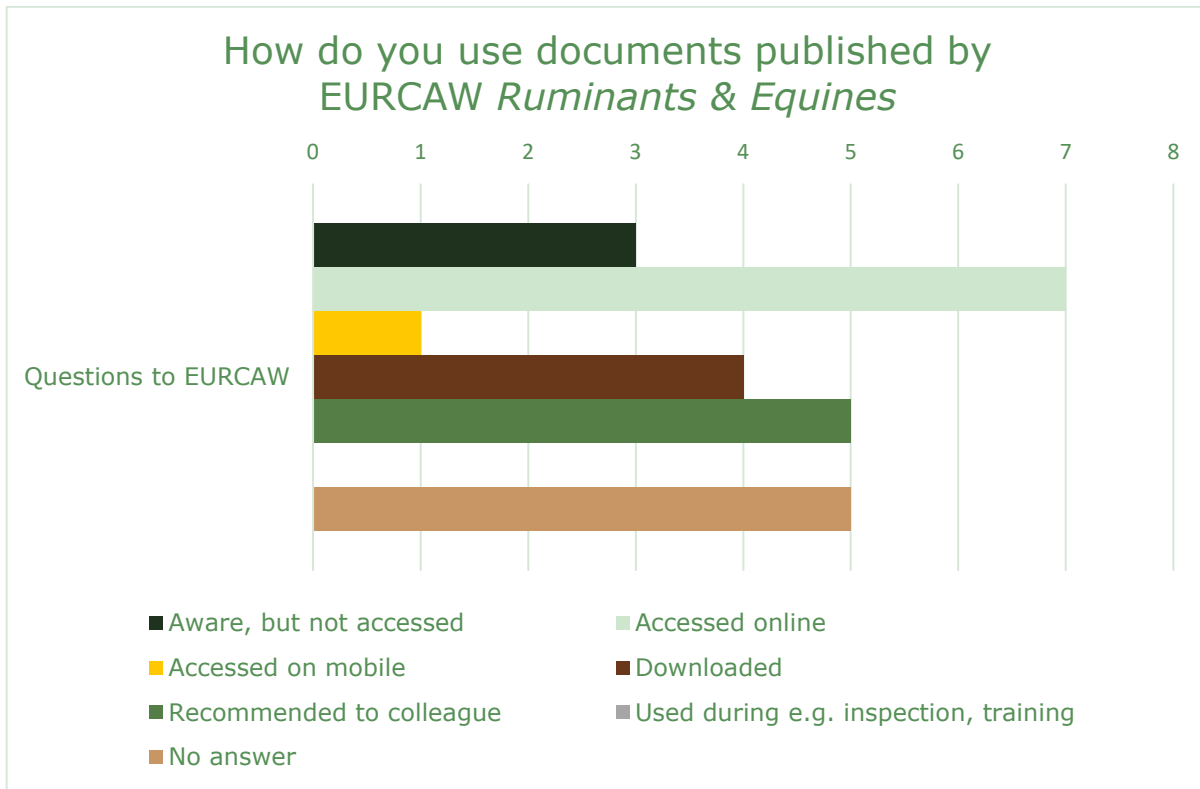


Figure 7: Results regarding utilisation of Questions to EURCAW (Q2E) published by the Centre.

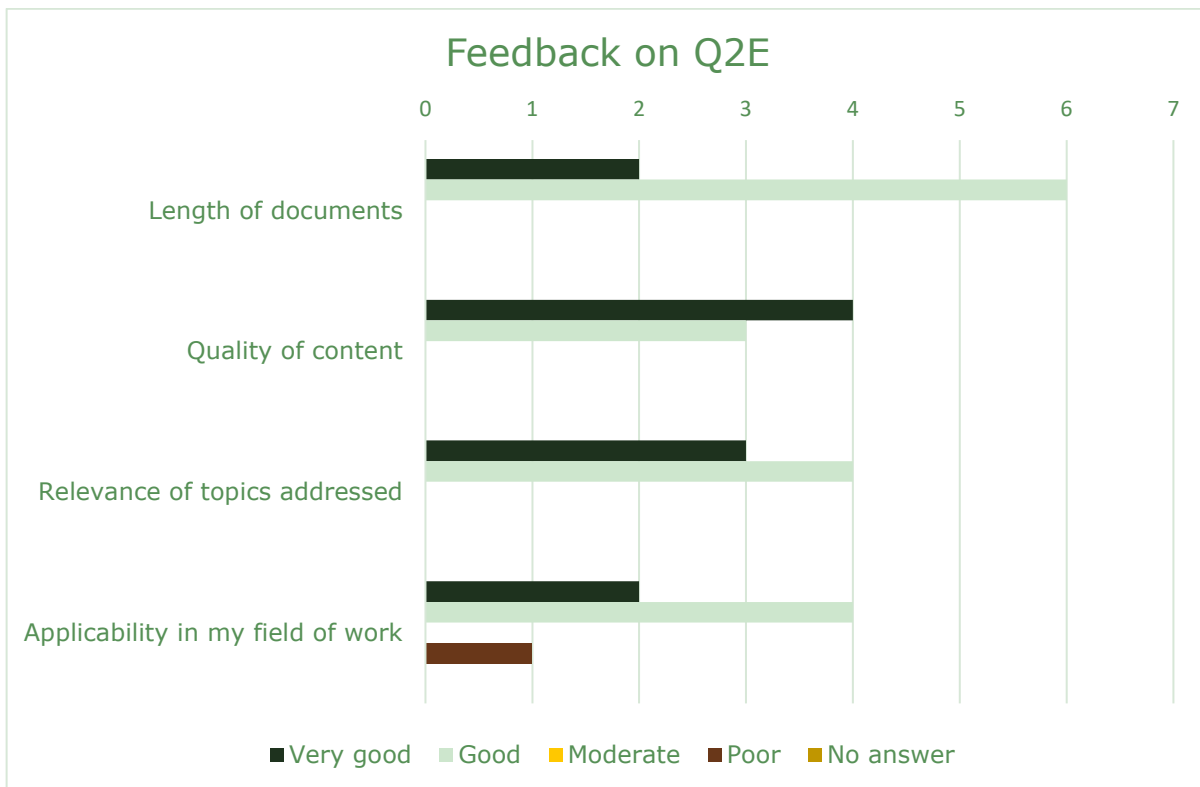


Figure 8: Results regarding length and level of detail provided in Questions to EURCAW (Q2E) published by the Centre.

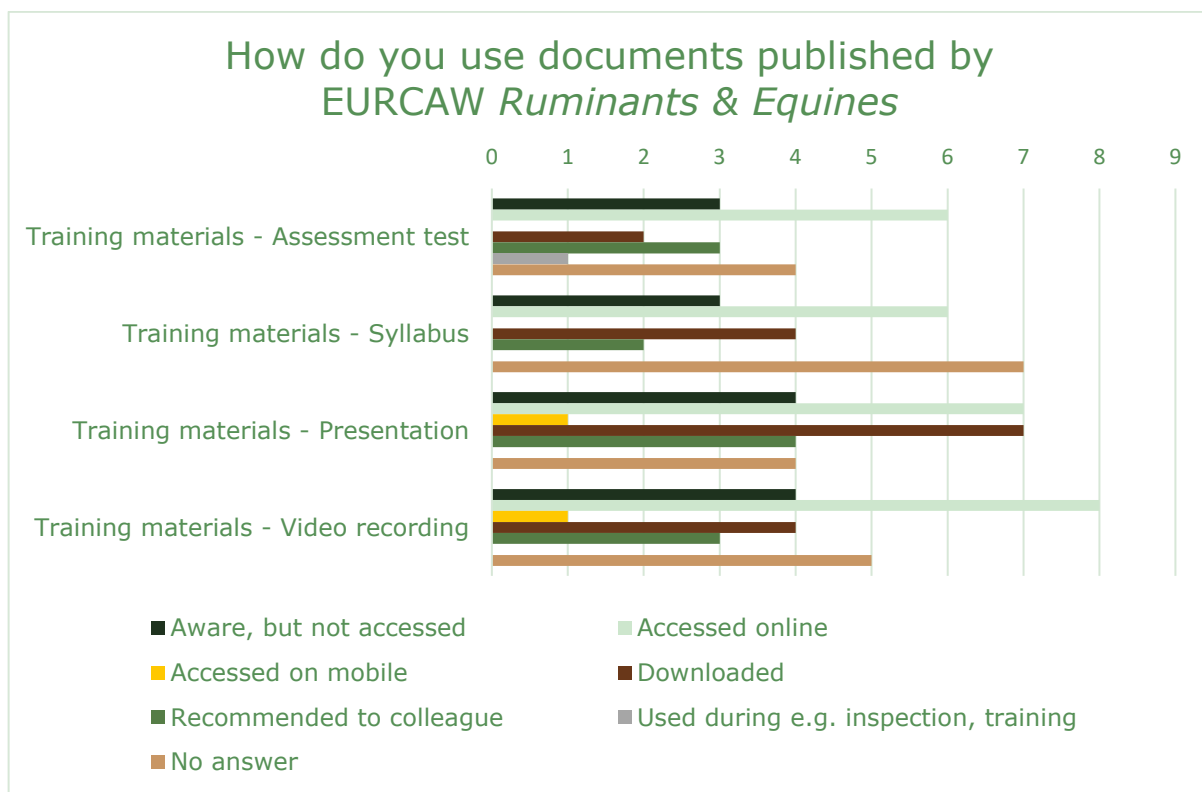


Figure 9: Results regarding utilisation of Training materials published by EURCAW Ruminants & Equines.

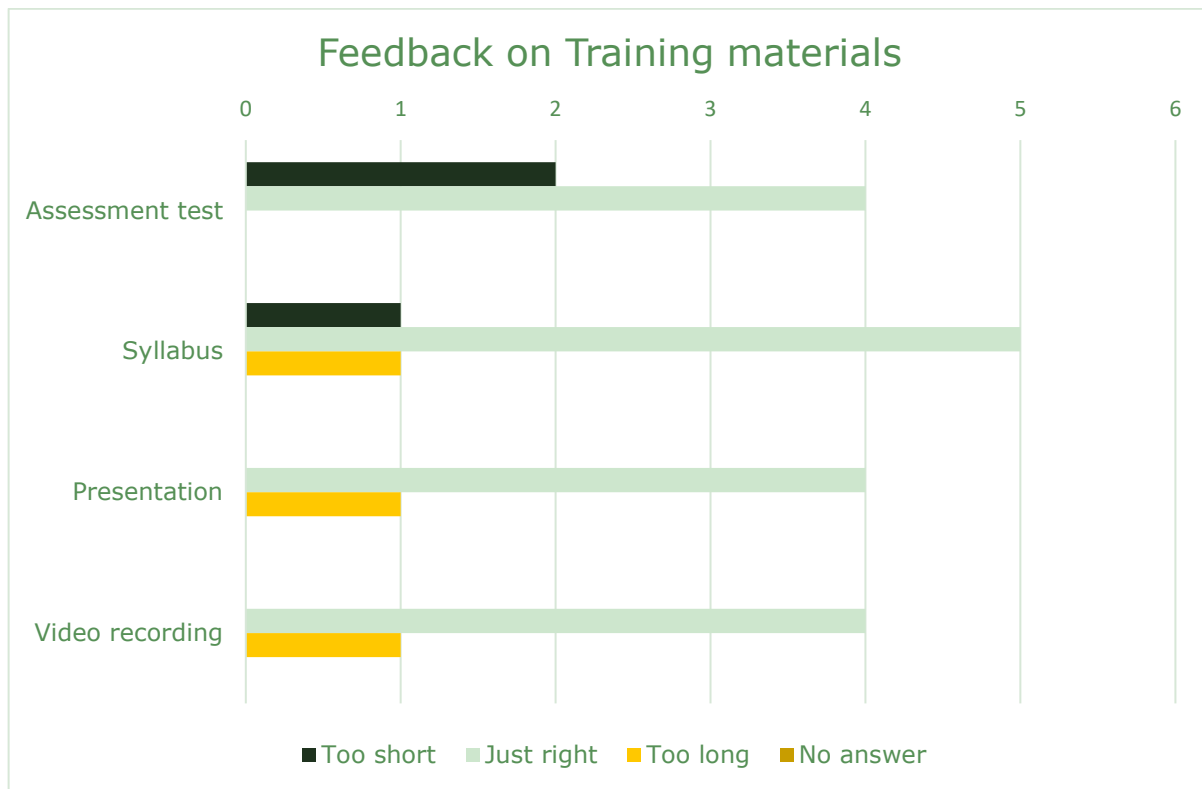


Figure 10: Results regarding length and level of detail provided in the different sections of Training materials published by EURCAW Ruminants & Equines.

5 Agenda

The agenda of the meeting is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Meeting agenda

Time	Topic/Activity	Speaker
13:00-13:05	Welcome address	Harry Blokhuis
13:05-13:10	Welcome address DG SANTE	Ester Alaez-Pons
Update on recent activities		
13:10-13:20	Work programme 2025–2027	Harry Blokhuis
13:20-13:30	Factsheets (Fitness for transport, Confinement in horses, Hoof care, Colostrum provision to calves, Painful/stressful procedures)	Josef Schenkenfelder
13:30-13:45	Reviews (Working equids welfare, Quality of care, Confinement in horses, Welfare of animals at pasture, Thermal comfort)	Isabelle Veissier/Valentin Brunet
13:45-14:00	Training	Silvia D'Albenzio
14:00-14:15	Dissemination (Community of practice, Inspector@work, Care4dairy)	Alison Hanlon
14:15-14:30	Break	
Specific welfare topics raised by Competent Authorities		
14:30-14:35	Introduction to topics and group discussions	Plenum
14:35-15:15	Group discussions on following topics: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protection of sheep (and other animals) against predators 2. Protection of ruminants and equines against adverse weather conditions 3. Photovoltaic systems on pastures of sheep and goats 4. What is a tolerable percentage of fallen stock for different animal categories? 	3 parallel groups
15:15-15:25	Polling break on documents published by EURCAW Ruminants & Equines https://survey.boku.ac.at/628176?lang=en	Plenum
15:25-15:40	Plenum discussion on group results shortly presented by rapporteurs (5 min for each group)	Plenum
15:40-15:55	Improving cooperation with CAs	Plenum
Closing		
15:55-16:00	Wrap-up and closing of the meeting	Harry Blokhuis

6 Participants

Of the 62 registered representatives of Competent Authorities 39 from 20 different Member States participated in the meeting. Table 2 gives an overview.

Table 2: List of participants

Member State	Registered	Participated	Institution	Role
Austria	2	2	Austrian Animal Welfare Centre	CA
Belgium	1	1	Animal Welfare Division Flanders	CA
Bulgaria	1	1	Bulgarian Food Safety Agency	CA
Croatia	0	0		
Cyprus	1	1	Veterinary Services	CA
Czechia	1	0		
Denmark	2	2	Danish Veterinary and Food Administration	CA
Estonia	0	0		
Finland	2	2	Finnish Food Authority	CA
France	3	2	Direction Générale de l'Alimentation – Animal Welfare Office	CA
Germany	21	12	Landesbetrieb Hessisches Landeslabor Kreisverwaltung Kaiserslautern Landratsamt Nordhausen Veterinäramt Emmendingen Veterinäramt Main-Tauber-Kreis Regierungspräsidium Giessen Veterinärdezernat Landesuntersuchungsamt Rheinland-Pfalz Landratsamt Ravensburg Kreisverwaltung Donnersbergkreis Regierungspräsidium Karlsruhe Regierungspräsidium Freiburg Niedersächsisches Landesamt für Verbraucherschutz und Lebensmittelsicherheit (LAVES)	CA
Greece	2	1	Ministry of Rural Development and Food	CA
Hungary	0	0		
Ireland	4	3	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	CA
Italy	1	1	Ministry of Health	CA
Latvia	1	0		
Lithuania	1	1	State Food and Veterinary Service	CA

Table 2 (cont.): List of participants

Member State	Registered	Participated	Institution	Role
Luxembourg	2	1	Luxembourg Veterinary and Food Administration, Ministry of Agriculture	CA
Malta	1	0		
Netherlands	2	1	The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority	CA
Poland	0	0		
Portugal	3	1	Direção-Geral de Alimentação e Veterinária	CA
Romania	1	1	Asociatia pentru bunastarea cailor (Horse Welfare Association)	CA
Slovakia	1	1	State Veterinary and Food Administration of the Slovak Republic	CA
Slovenia	1	1	Ministry of Agriculture, Food Safety Authority	CA
Spain	3	3	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Spanish Agency for Food Safety and Nutrition	CA
Sweden	3	1	Jordbruksverket	CA
Belgium	1	1	European Commission – DG SANTE	DG SANTE
Italy	2	1	The European Food Safety Authority	EFSA
Sweden	2	2	Swedish Agricultural University (SLU)/Swedish Centre for Animal Welfare (SCAW)	EURCAW
Italy	1	1	Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise "G. Caporale" (ISZLER)	EURCAW
France	2	2	INRAE	EURCAW
Austria	2	2	BOKU University	EURCAW
Ireland	2	2	University College Dublin (UCD)	EURCAW
Greece	1	1	Ellinikos Georgikos Organismos, Veterinary Research Institute (ELGO VRI)	EURCAW

7 Final remarks

- Translation of documents into official languages remains an important factor with regard to the usability of EURCAW's output
- There seems to be no urgent need to use the Centre's output on mobile devices.
- If you would like to volunteer for Community of Practice, please contact alison.hanlon@ucd.ie
- If you have resources to support translation of Factsheets, please contact info@eurcaw-ruminants-equines.eu

About EURCAW Ruminants & Equines

EURCAW Ruminants & Equines is the third European Union Reference Centre for Animal Welfare. It focuses on ruminant and equine welfare and legislation, and covers the entire life cycle from birth to the end of life. EURCAW Ruminants & Equines' main objective is a harmonised compliance with EU legislation regarding welfare in EU Member States. This includes:

- Directive 98/58/EC concerning the protection of animals kept on farms;
- Regulations 1/2005/EC and 1099/2009/EC concerning their protection during transport and slaughter;
- Directive 2010/63/EU concerning the protection of animals used for scientific purposes;
- Directive 2008/119/EC laying down minimum standards for the protection of calves.

EURCAW Ruminants & Equines supports:

- Inspectors of Competent Authorities (CAs);
- Ruminant and equine welfare policy workers;
- Bodies supporting CAs with scientific expertise, training, and communication.

Website and contact

EURCAW Ruminants & Equines' website offers relevant and actual information to support enforcement of ruminant and equine welfare legislation.

We offer a 'Questions to EURCAW' service for official inspectors, policy workers, and other personnel providing advice or support for official controls of ruminant and equine welfare in the EU. For more information go to <https://www.eurcaw-ruminants-equines.eu/questions-to-eurcaw/>.

Activities of EURCAW Ruminants & Equines

- Coordinated Assistance
Providing support, networking and Questions to EURCAW;
- Welfare indicators, Assessment & Best Practice
Identifying animal welfare indicators, including animal based, management based and resource-based indicators, that can be used to verify compliance with the EU legislation;
- Scientific and technical studies
Preparing Scientific Reviews of knowledge on welfare topics and identify research needs;
- Training
Developing training materials and training standards for official inspectors;
- Communication and Dissemination
Increasing awareness of our outputs via the website, twitter, and newsletter;

Partners

EURCAW Ruminants & Equines receives funding from DG SANTE of the European Commission and represents a collaboration between the following six partner institutions:

- Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden
- Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise "G. Caporale", Italy
- French National Institute for Agriculture, Food, and Environment, France
- University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, Austria
- University College Dublin, Ireland
- Ellinikos Georgikos Organismos-Dimitra/Veterinary Research Institute, Greece