



# final report

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## Animal welfare capability

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## **Abstract**

In September 2009 the European Union introduced COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 1099/2009 which deals with the 'protection of animals at the time of killing'. The regulation which comes into force as of the 1 January 2013 has a range of requirements for slaughtering establishments covering facilities, procedures and personnel training. This regulation is quite prescriptive in detailing the training and competency assessment requirements for those dealing with animals in a slaughtering establishment.

This regulation is applicable to importing countries and it will be necessary for importing countries to establish that equivalent training arrangements are in place by the 1 January 2013.

In this project MINTRAC has identified the animal welfare training requirements set out in these new EU training requirements and how Australia can demonstrate equivalence with these requirements. In this process MINTRAC not only identified the requirements and how they are met in Australia but also in conjunction with an industry reference group assessed alternative approaches to meeting the EU requirements.

The recommendations provided in Section 7 of this report focus on identifying the changes to the Australian animal handling, slaughtering and welfare training required to meet the EUs importing country requirements as of the 1 January 2013.

## Executive summary

This project seeks to identify the ways in which the Australian meat industry can demonstrate equivalence with the personnel training requirements detailed in European Council REGULATION (EC) No 1099/2009. This new regulation deals with the 'protection of animals at the time of killing'. This regulation was published on the 24 September 2009 and is quite prescriptive in detailing a range of requirements when slaughtering animals including the certification of competency required of the operators involved. This act comes into effect as of the 1 January 2013.

Essentially the new EU regulation requires that:

- only competent and certified operators handle, restrain, stun, slaughter and shackle
- guides to good practice are developed and disseminated by industry organisations
- stunning and bleed chain insensibility is assessed by a nominated person with a certificate of competency
- every establishment has to have a nominated and trained Animal Welfare Officer who has direct reporting and supervisory powers when it comes to animal welfare
- countries have to designate a competent authority responsible for overseeing the provision of welfare, handling and slaughter training
- Certificates of Competency have to indicate species and types of equipment used.

In this project MINTRAC has:

- identified the animal welfare, handling and slaughter training requirements set out in the new EU regulation for slaughtering establishments
- identified the comparable Australian training currently being delivered
- assessed Australia's compliance with the new EU training requirements
- formed an industry reference group
- sought guidance on the development of solutions where Australia's current training arrangements may need to be modified to achieve equivalence
- documented suggested changes to training arrangements to ensure Australia's equivalence with EU requirements
- provide both AMIC and AQIS with recommendations on how Australia can demonstrate equivalence with EU requirements.

# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
1	Background.....6
1.1	Review of EU Requirements..... 6
1.2	Industry Reference Group meetings ..... 6
1.3	A briefing from visiting EU representatives..... 6
2	Project objectives .....6
3	Methodology.....7
3.1	Review of EU animal welfare requirements for slaughter establishments7
3.2	Review of the Australian animal welfare, handling and slaughter training arrangements ..... 7
3.3	The formation of and consultation with the project's industry reference group..... 7
4	Results and discussion.....8
4.1	Review of EU training requirements for personnel at slaughter establishments ..... 8
4.2	Mapping animal welfare, handling and slaughter training in Australia against the EU requirements..... 8
4.3	The resolution of the outstanding issues via consultation with the industry reference group..... 11
5	Success in achieving objectives.....12
5.1	Promote industry awareness of the benefits of change relating to animal welfare ..... 12
5.2	Build industry capability to meet the requirements for animal welfare. 13
5.3	Ensure that the Australian meat industry training system continues to address market requirements ..... 14
6	Impact on meat and livestock industry – Now and in five years time ..... 14
6.1	Ensure the ongoing relevance of the meat industry's animal welfare, handling and slaughter training programs. .... 14
6.2	Industry's ability to meet importing country requirements for animal welfare training of slaughter establishment staff..... 15
6.3	Ensuring training programs are supported by appropriate Units of competency training and assessment materials..... 15
6.4	Setting a precedent for the ongoing cooperation by industry, regulators and Registered Training Organisations to design and review animal welfare training programs. .... 15
7	Conclusions and recommendations.....15

7.1	slaughter establishments .....	15
7.1.1	Recommendation 1: .....	16
7.2	Changes to animal welfare training in Australia required to meet EU requirements .....	16
7.2.1	Recommendation 2 .....	16
7.3	The need for consultation with the national and state training authorities.....	16
7.3.1	Recommendation 3 .....	16
7.4	The ongoing need for the review of animal welfare, handling and slaughter training.....	16
7.4.1	Recommendation 4 .....	17

# 1 Background

The EU has introduced new training requirements for slaughter establishment staff which come into effect as of the 1 January 2013. These requirements are detailed in COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 1099/2009 which deals with the 'protection of animals at the time of killing'. This regulation was published on the 24 September 2009 and is quite prescriptive in detailing a range of requirements for slaughtering animals including the certification of competency of the operators involved.

## 1.1 Review of EU Requirements

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The project's initial phase involved identifying and understanding

- the EU requirements in this area
- the comparable training activities undertaken in Australia
- any likely difficulties Australia would have in mounting an equivalence argument.

## 1.2 Industry Reference Group meetings

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An industry reference group was formed to overview the projects assessment of the issues identified and the viability of the solutions proposed in terms of

- practicality for employers, regulators and RTOs
- the extent of the change required to the existing training arrangements.

The reference group consisted of representatives of the major stakeholders i.e. industry, the regulator and the training providers. The steering group was also assisted technically by Michelle Edge who was the coordinator of the development of the industry's (AMIC) animal welfare standards.

## 1.3 A briefing from visiting EU representatives.

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It was fortuitous that an EU animal welfare fact finding mission was here in March of 2011 and during the life of the project. MINTRAC was able to be present at the opening meeting and was party to EU's briefing and in turn was able to brief the EU representatives on Australia's current training programs in this area.

EU representatives were able to clarify some of their requirements to AQIS and what was required to make an effective equivalence argument.

# 2 Project objectives

The objectives of the project were to:

- promote industry awareness of the benefits of change relating to animal welfare
- build industry capability to meet the requirements for animal welfare
- ensure that the Australian meat industry training system continues to address market requirements.

## **3 Methodology**

### **3.1 Review of EU animal welfare requirements for slaughter establishments**

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The review of EU requirements involved an analysis of the regulation itself and discussions with Dr Alison Small (CSIRO) who had worked in this area in the UK. She was able to expand our understanding of the current animal welfare, handling and slaughter training being provided to operatives in slaughter establishments in Europe.

MINTRAC was also able to draw on the results of a previous research project funded by AMPC/MLA in which MINTRAC had surveyed animal welfare and operative training being delivered in New Zealand, North America and the EU. This survey has proved invaluable in terms of designing training programs here in Australia to ensure that they are comparable to those being delivered overseas in our major markets.

The review was also assisted by MINTRAC participating in a briefing given by EU representatives at DAFF's offices in Canberra.

### **3.2 Review of the Australian animal welfare, handling and slaughter training arrangements**

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The review of the animal welfare, handling and slaughter training courses and programs delivered here in Australia was relatively simple because MINTRAC was the body that developed:

- the existing national training package including the Units of competency covering the EU nominated operations
- the Animal Welfare Officer Skills Set
- the training and assessment materials for the AWO course, animal handling, humane slaughter and QA programs
- the delivery strategy for the AWO course here in Australia
- the train the trainer programs for animal handling and humane slaughter.

In addition, MINTRAC has cooperated with AMIC to help facilitate the roll out of the National Animal Welfare Standards for slaughtering establishments by conducting professional development workshops for QA, training and lairage managers.

MINTRAC represents the meat industry on training matters to Commonwealth and State Training Authorities and has a detailed understanding of the accreditation, registration and auditing processes of these bodies.

This background enabled MINTRAC to confidently identify those training programs and training authority processes which best align with the training and regulatory arrangements that the EU requires to be in place under these new regulations.

### **3.3 The formation of and consultation with the project's industry reference group**

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While MINTRAC undertook the bulk of the research and analysis for this project the development of recommended actions was overseen and deliberated on by an industry reference group consisting of representatives of the major stakeholder groups. The reference group consisted of representatives from industry, the regulator and Registered Training Organisations that deliver training to the industry.

The process adopted in this project involved the initial analysis of the EU requirements, the identification of the potential issues and the review of a range of potential solutions by the reference group. The reference group met by teleconference and the reports prepared for the members were e-mailed and responses collated to form the final recommendations that were then agreed to by consensus.

The potential solutions to the issues identified by the project can now be taken up by AMIC and AQIS and used to support an equivalence argument developed as they see fit.

## 4 Results and discussion

### 4.1 Review of EU training requirements for personnel at slaughter establishments

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The training requirements of the new EU regulation (including the relevant section) are listed below.

- Only operators with a certificate of competency can handle, restrain, stun, slaughter and shackle animals in a slaughter establishment (Chapter II Article 7.1 and 7.2).
- Guides to good practice for slaughter establishments are to be developed and disseminated by industry organisations.
- Stunning and bleed chain insensibility is assessed by a nominated person with a certificate of competency (Chapter II Article 7.1).
- Every establishment has to have a nominated and trained Animal Welfare Officer who has direct reporting and supervisory powers when it comes to animal welfare (Chapter III Article 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3).
- Countries have to designate a competent authority responsible for overseeing the provision of welfare, handling and slaughter training (Article 21).
- Certificates of Competency have to indicate species and types of equipment used.
- Certificate of Competency can only be issued if the candidate has not been convicted of an animal welfare offence in the last 3 years.

### 4.2 Mapping animal welfare, handling and slaughter training in Australia against the EU requirements

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In the table below the Australian training arrangements are mapped against the EU training requirements and any differences are noted that may create an issue in establishing equivalence.

Issue No.	EU requirement	Current Australian arrangements
1	Duties covered by the directive to be performed by competent persons.	This covered by the current Animal Welfare Standard and the operator's Approved Arrangement.



2	<p>The following operations are only to be carried out by persons holding a Certificate of Competence in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• animal handling &amp; care</li> <li>• restraining animals</li> <li>• assessment of effective stunning</li> <li>• stunning animals</li> <li>• bleeding of live animals</li> <li>• shackling of animals.</li> </ul>	<p>These are covered by accredited Units of competency in the existing Meat Industry National Training Package.</p>
3	<p>Guides to good practice are to be developed and disseminated by organisations of business operators in consultation with representatives of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGO's</li> <li>• competent authorities</li> <li>• other interested bodies.</li> </ul>	<p>AMPC and MLA has funded the development by industry (AMIC) and the dissemination of Animal Welfare Standards which include guidelines to good practice.</p> <p>Industry has also through MINTRAC developed training materials which contain detailed information on good practice covering animal handling, stunning and slaughtering.</p>
4	<p>Slaughter establishment operators are to name the people responsible for monitoring insensibility and these persons will hold a Certificate of Competency in assessing effective stunning.</p>	<p>As mentioned previously this competency is not covered in a stand-alone Unit but this is covered in both the slaughtering Unit and Animal Welfare Officer Skills Set.</p>
5	<p>Each business operator has to nominate an Animal Welfare Officer who has direct reporting and supervisory powers when it comes to Animal Welfare Officer matters set out in an SOP and reporting directly to the business operator.</p>	<p>Animal Welfare Officer training is available in Australia and plants can nominate AWOs and duties as part of their Approved Arrangement.</p>
6	<p>The Animal Welfare Officer shall hold a Certificate of Competency for all the operations taking place in the slaughtering establishment they are responsible for. (Note: the E U delegation visiting in March 2011 clarified this as meaning AWOs had to have a theoretical knowledge of the operations and).</p>	<p>The skills necessary to supervise these operations are covered in great detail in the Animal Welfare Officers Skills Set.</p>
7	<p>Member States have to designate a competent authority responsible for: ensuring training courses are available delivering Certificates of Competency after a final examination</p>	<p>MINTRAC currently ensures courses are run to meet demand and provides nationally consistent training and assessment</p>

	approving the training programs and examination.	material but does not have any authority to mandate the use of these materials or the way in which the training is delivered. The State Training Authorities do however have authority to supervise and audit the training providers and the issuance of Certificates.
8	The competent authority can delegate the training examination to other bodies if it is satisfied it has: adequate expertise independence and freedom from conflict of interest a list of such bodies shall be available via the internet.	The Commonwealth and State Training Authorities do undertake this role to a large extent already and a list of accredited providers is available on the Commonwealth Governments NTIS website.
9	Certificates of Competency have to indicate species and types of equipment used.	The existing Australian Training Package Units covering animal handling, stunning, slaughtering and shackling are generic in the nomenclature and do not specify species or equipment used. The assessment sheets are endorsed for species and equipment but not the Certificate of Attainment (competency).
10	Temporary Certificates of Competency can be issued once and for 3 months only if there is direct supervision by a relevant Certificate holder.	There is no equivalent arrangement in Australia but students are enrolled in accredited Units and such enrolled students are required to work under the direct supervision of a competent trainer or supervisor.
11	Certificate of Competency can only be issued if the candidate has not been convicted of an animal welfare offence in the last 3 years.	There is no such provision in the issuance of the relevant Units of competency here in Australia nor is there any provision for revoking a Certificate in the case of an offence or poor performance.
12	A transitional provision until the 8 December 2015 allows a simplified procedure for a	The existing recognition of prior learning process

	Certificate of Competency to be provided for persons demonstrating relevant professional experience of at least 3 years.	allows experienced operators to be enrolled and assessed in Units of competency without undergoing formal training.
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The mapping exercise revealed that there were no issues that would need a restructuring of Australian training in order to establish equivalence.

### 4.3 The resolution of the outstanding issues via consultation with the industry reference group

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The industry reference group met twice via teleconference to consider:

- the EU requirements for worker training and the management of training delivery
- how these are met by existing accredited training courses and regulatory control of Registered Training Organisations
- how any unfulfilled requirements of the EU could be met.

The table below details the end results of this review which identified potentially unresolved issues and the proposed solutions endorsed by the reference group;

Issue No.	EU requirement	Potential issue	Proposed solution
1	The following operations are only to be carried out by persons holding a Certificate of Competence in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• animal handling &amp; care</li> <li>• restraining animals</li> <li>• assessment of effective stunning</li> <li>• shackling of animals</li> <li>• bleeding of live animals.</li> </ul>	The content covering the assessment of effective stunning is not covered by an existing stand-alone Unit.	Develop a stand-alone Unit of competency covering the assessment of sensibility.
2	Slaughter establishment operators are to name the people responsible for monitoring insensibility and these persons will hold a Certificate of Competency in assessing effective stunning.	The content covering the assessment of effective stunning is not covered by an existing stand-alone Unit.	Develop a stand-alone Unit of competency covering the assessment of sensibility.
3	The Animal Welfare Officer shall hold a Certificate of Competency for all the operations taking place in the slaughtering establishment they are responsible for.	The E U delegation visiting in March 2011 clarified this as meaning AWOs had to have a theoretical knowledge of the operations.	The existing Australian AWO course will be considered adequate to meet the EU requirement.
4	Member States have to designate a competent authority responsible for:	A competent authority overseeing this training has to be	AQIS can nominate the Federal and State Training Authorities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring training courses are available</li> <li>delivering Certificates of Competency after a final examination</li> <li>approving the training programs and examination.</li> </ul>	nominated by the exporting country.	(STA) as the competent authority. The new national VET regulator will have the powers necessary to regulate the AW training delivered in Australia.
5	<p>The competent authority can delegate the training examination to other bodies if it is satisfied it has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequate expertise</li> <li>independence and freedom from conflict of interest</li> <li>a list of such bodies shall be available via the internet.</li> </ul>	A competent authority overseeing this training has to be nominated by the exporting country.	AQIS can nominate the Federal and State Training Authorities (STA) as the competent authority. The new national VET regulator will have the powers necessary to regulate the AW training delivered in Australia.
6	Certificates of Competency have to indicate species and types of equipment used.	An auditor reviewing a Certificate II or III in Meat Processing would not be able to ascertain the species or equipment the operator was assessed on.	RTOs issue a letter with each Statement of attainment using a nationally consistent wording to identify both the species and the technique or equipment used for stunning, sticking and shackling.
7	Temporary Certificates of Competency can be issued once and for 3 months only if there is direct supervision by a relevant Certificate holder.	This will need to be reviewed by the industry and the regulator with possible approved arrangement amendments required.	The enrolment of students could be seen as equivalent to this arrangement with a company imposed requirement for review or assessment after 3 months of enrolment.

## 5 Success in achieving objectives

### 5.1 Promote industry awareness of the benefits of change relating to animal welfare

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It must be acknowledge that the development of the AWO training course and the uptake of accredited animal handling and slaughter training has largely to this point been driven by the regulatory and commercial demands made on the meat processing industry. The industry has always trained its workers but uptake of accredited training has been driven by the need for companies to demonstrate that workers have had structured training and have been assessed for competency.

Underpinning the requirement for competent workers at slaughtering establishments are clear and enforceable standards such as the AMIC Animal Welfare Standards and the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: Livestock (including Poultry) at Slaughtering Establishments

(abattoirs, slaughter-houses and knackeries). The Units of competency delivered to operators in slaughtering establishments are firmly based on these standards. Likewise the requirements of corporate customers are also incorporated via the AMIC standards which took into account their animal welfare standards and requirements.

The AMIC Animal Welfare Standard and the Code of Practice mentioned above also require workers to have been trained and assessed. This means that employers have focused on ensuring that workers do receive training and accredited training represents an easy solution and in most cases attracts government funding.

However, formal market access requirements that involve systematically delivering accredited training to meat processing staff are relatively new to the industry. The industry has over the last five years increasingly engaged with the concept of developing and fostering an 'animal welfare' culture both in the yards and on the slaughter floor.

This project forms part of an ongoing investment by industry in animal welfare training which has included:

- the development of an industry National Animal Welfare Standard
- research into the standard of animal handling in meat processing plants
- research into stock handler attitudes in meat processing plants
- the development of interactive animal handling training materials
- the development of interactive humane slaughter training materials
- the development of an accredited Animal Welfare Officer's Skills Set and
- the development of comprehensive training materials to support the delivery of the AWO course
- the roll out of the AWO course and the Skill Set training delivered to over 300 meat industry personnel.

All of these projects have now culminated in the industry being able to relatively easily meet the most demanding animal welfare market access requirements. It is possible to demonstrate to regulators, industry and individual processing companies that it is simple to put accredited training in place for animal handlers, slaughter floor staff and animal welfare officers. In this way industry has a work force trained to effectively implement the National Animal Welfare Standards. Most importantly animal welfare audits by AQIS have demonstrated improved levels of compliance with these Animal Welfare Standards.

The measures required to meet the EU training requirements have been discussed at QA and training managers' network meetings around Australia. Likewise MINTRAC has made representations to the State Training Authorities to fund both the training of stock handlers and slaughter floor staff as well as the provision of funding for Animal Welfare Officer courses.

The necessity to have this training in place for market access reasons is adding to the cogency of the arguments presented by MINTRAC when lobbying both industry and government for funding.

## **5.2 Build industry capability to meet the requirements for animal welfare**

This project provides the evidence required to sustain the effort in networks to continue to drive an industry wide upgrade of animal welfare skills by hosting the delivery of professional development workshops and enabling the funding of courses around the country including:

- AWO courses
- Animal welfare speakers at QA manager network meetings

- Animal welfare speakers at training network meetings
- Professional development workshops for trainers and assessors
- Animal welfare and humane slaughter professional development sessions
- Animal Welfare Standard workshops

This project has clearly identified the nature and type of training required to be able to address the stringent market access requirements that the Europeans are instigating. It also vindicates the significant investment that industry, RTOs and State governments have made into:

- developing the relevant handling, welfare and slaughter Units
- developing the appropriate training materials
- delivery and assessment strategies
- professional development for trainers and assessors
- professional development for QA and lairage managers

Most importantly this project has allowed us an opportunity to review, amend and update our training programs in particular the inclusion of the Unit of competency addressing the assessment of insensibility and effective stunning.

### **5.3 Ensure that the Australian meat industry training system continues to address market requirements**

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This project has allowed the major players in the animal welfare field an opportunity to develop a clear understanding of the ways in which the meat processing industry addresses animal welfare training and how this training can be shown to address the EU market requirements. From this projects findings MINTRAC will move to

- develop a stand-alone Unit that addresses the competency required to assess effective stunning and bleed chain insensibility
- inform and assist RTOs to understand the EU training requirements so they can develop training plans for trainees and existing staff to address this issue
- inform and assist QA and HR managers to understand the EU training requirements so they can develop training plans for staff and maintain adequate records to demonstrate compliance
- inform RTOs as to the documentation they have to provide trainees with to meet EU Certification requirements
- negotiate with Training Authorities to ensure there is adequate supervision and control of the delivery of animal handling, welfare and slaughter training
- ensure QA managers have an adequate understanding of how Approved Arrangements must be modified to meet EU requirements including collecting Statutory Declarations from workers (attesting to the fact they have not been convicted of AW offences in the last 3 years)
- ensure RTOs and employers understand the supervision requirements for trainee workers whose competencies have not been certified.

## **6 Impact on meat and livestock industry – Now and in five years time**

### **6.1 Ensure the ongoing relevance of the meat industry’s animal welfare, handling and slaughter training programs.**

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The project has given AMPC, AMIC, AQIS, MINTRAC and three leading RTOs a structured forum to review the animal welfare, handling and slaughter training being delivered ensuring the relevance of the training both in terms of content and the delivery strategies. This type of review

has enabled MINTRAC to identify areas for continuous improvement either as part of the formal findings developed to ensure compliance with the EU requirements or as part of a straight quality review of the emphasis given to the various elements of competency.

As stated above MINTRAC intends implement a range of continuous improvement activities to ensure direct compliance with EU requirements including the development of a stand-alone stunning assessment Unit.

With regards to the straight quality of training MINTRAC is now re-examining the content for the actual livestock handling training and revisiting both the content and delivery strategies to ensure that livestock handlers are receiving adequate exposure to best practice low stress animal handling. Likewise MINTRAC is revisiting the assessment tool to ensure adequate emphasis is being placed on calm and effective livestock handling.

## **6.2 Industry's ability to meet importing country requirements for animal welfare training of slaughter establishment staff.**

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Regulatory, QA and RTO staff will now need to be informed of the measures needed to be taken to ensure compliance with the EU animal welfare training requirements. Once industry and AQIS have established their equivalence arguments MINTRAC will undertake an information campaign through network meetings, conference sessions and newsletters to inform the relevant players of the changes they have to make to ensure compliance.

## **6.3 Ensuring training programs are supported by appropriate Units of competency training and assessment materials**

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As a continuous improvement exercise, MINTRAC will be developing and accrediting the Unit of competency covering the assessment of stunning and bleed chain insensibility. This is the only Unit which the review identified as needing to be developed in the area of animal welfare, handling and slaughtering.

## **6.4 Setting a precedent for the ongoing cooperation by industry, regulators and Registered Training Organisations to design and review animal welfare training programs.**

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The review was a demonstration of the ongoing cooperation of the regulator, industry bodies and RTOs to cooperatively address the combined issues of animal welfare training and market access.

# **7 Conclusions and recommendations**

## **7.1 Industry's ability to meet EU requirements for animal welfare training at slaughter establishments**

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The project proved that with modification the Australian meat industry's training programs could enable the industry to meet these quite demanding market access requirements. However what is very apparent is that there is now a very real requirement for companies wishing to access EU markets to very accurately document and record Units of competency acquired by their employees. In addition companies will have to demonstrate that they only staff the relevant positions with qualified or suitable personnel as a review on the day or of staffing sheets will quickly demonstrate non-compliance. The ability to be able to provide supervisors with real time information on staff competencies will be a challenge for some companies. Without real time

information supervisors will struggle to ensure that the yards and chain have been appropriately “manned”.

#### 7.1.1 Recommendation 1:

It is recommended that MINTRAC continue to explain and inform RTOs, HR and QA managers through network meetings of some of the complexities of meeting the EU training requirements for animal welfare handling and slaughter. These complexities include the need:

- for real time training information
- for training plans for trainees and existing staff to meet EU requirements
- to maintain adequate records to demonstrate compliance
- to provide trainees with documentation of the species and technology employed when assessed for Units of competency
- to ensure there is adequate supervision of non certified workers
- for Statutory Declarations from workers (attesting to the fact they have not been convicted of AW offences in the last 3 years).

## **7.2 Changes to animal welfare training in Australia required to meet EU requirements**

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The project identified only one Unit of competency that needs to be developed and added to the National Training Package

#### 7.2.1 Recommendation 2

It is recommended that MINTRAC should develop and seek accreditation for a Unit of competency dealing with assessing effective stunning and bleed chain insensibility.

## **7.3 The need for consultation with the national and state training authorities**

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The EU requires that a “competent authority” that supervises the delivery of animal welfare, handling and slaughter be nominated. The “competent authority” will also need to oversee the certification of workers and the programs being delivered including the expertise of trainers.

#### 7.3.1 Recommendation 3

That AQIS and MINTRAC should engage with both the national and state training authorities to explain the role the EU is expecting them to exercise over the delivery of animal handling welfare and slaughter training. MINTRAC should have ongoing discussions with AQIS to explain the nature of state and commonwealth government control and scrutiny of accredited training.

## **7.4 The ongoing need for the review of animal welfare, handling and slaughter training.**

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The meat industry is conscious of the public nature of the interest and scrutiny that animal welfare attracts for the livestock processing industry. For this reason the industry regularly reviews the animal welfare standards and MINTRAC in turn ensures that the training materials are where necessary modified to reflect in changes in the standard. Likewise MINTRAC is currently reviewing the course content of its training programs in this area to ensure it embraces world best practice especially in the area of stunning and animal handling.



#### 7.4.1 Recommendation 4

It is recommended that MINTRAC should continue to review the training and assessment materials utilised in training the industry's and in particular reflect any changes in standards and bench mark them against materials used overseas and in other steps in the supply chain.