

Reform of farm animal welfare codes – industry led meat chicken welfare guidance

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

RPC rating: validated

Description of proposal

There are a number of statutory codes specific to animal species providing guidance on how industry can comply with animal welfare legislation. A number of them are out of date and, due to their statutory nature, are difficult to update. The Department proposes to revoke the codes as and when industry-led guidance is ready. The guidance in relation to meat chicken is expected to be ready in early 2016.

Impacts of proposal

The current statutory guidance is out of date and difficult to understand. Moving to industry-led guidance will not change the underlying legal requirements on business but is expected to reduce the burden associated with understanding those requirements. The Department expects this to benefit business and lead to marginal improvements in levels of compliance (through better understanding of the requirements). This is supported by the majority of consultation respondents, although the Department considers that it would not be proportionate to quantify the benefits. The development of the new guidance is likely to result in a small cost to the British Poultry Council but this is incurred voluntarily and is therefore not included in the direct costs to business.

Quality of submission

The level of analysis and evidence is proportionate to the proposed change. Given the low value of the expected benefits, and the considerable uncertainty that would be associated with quantifying them, the Department's approach is reasonable. On the basis of current working assumptions, the RPC is able to confirm that the proposal is a qualifying regulatory provision with a small non-monetised benefit and, therefore, recorded as zero for reporting purposes.

As a fast track measure, a small and micro business assessment is not required. The Department has, however, explained that a significant majority of businesses affected by animal welfare codes are likely to be small or micro, and exemptions to the welfare requirements would significantly undermine the policy objective.

Furthermore, as the proposed change is likely to benefit business it would not be appropriate to exempt smaller businesses.

Initial departmental assessment

Classification	Qualifying regulatory provision
Equivalent annual net cost to business (EANCB)	Zero
Business net present value	Zero
Societal net present value	Zero

RPC assessment¹

Classification	Qualifying regulatory provision
EANCB – RPC validated	Zero
Small and micro business assessment	Not required (deregulatory)



Michael Gibbons CBE, Chairman

¹ The RPC verification of the estimated equivalent annual net cost to business (EANCB) and assessment of whether the measure is a qualifying regulatory provision are based on current working assumptions.