

Japan's Comments on the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission Report of the February 2024 meeting

Japan would like to express its appreciation to the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (TAHSC) and other relevant Commissions, Working Groups and *ad hoc* Groups for all the work they have done. Below are our comments on the following text:

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1. CHAPTER 7.1. INTRODUCTION TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

1) Comment on Article 7.1.2 and 7.1.3

Japan acknowledges that the 'Five Domains' model, as explained in Annex 27 of the Report of the Meeting of the WOAHA TAHSC/February 2024, is a well-established framework for the systematic evaluation of animal welfare. However, there remains a lack of clarity regarding what are required for each domain in the draft chapter. As noted on the WOAHA website, the concept of "animal welfare" is gaining increasing attention from civil society, suggesting that it has not yet been universally accepted as a sound science. Japan asserts that detailed clarifications for each domain are essential to facilitate widespread acceptance among Member Countries, thereby enabling the effective incorporation of the 'Five Domains' into the chapter.

2) Comments on Article 7.1.5

- Proposed amendments to Point 5

- 5) Social grouping of *animals* should be managed to ~~promote~~ allow positive social behaviour and minimise injury, distress and chronic fear.

Rationale:

Japan believes that "positive social behavior" should be naturally expressed, and that promoting specific behaviors intentionally by some factors or actions contradicts the principles of animal welfare. Thus, the original wording, "allow," is deemed more appropriate in this context.

- Proposed amendments to Point 11

- 11) Owners and handlers should have sufficient ~~training,~~ skills and knowledge through appropriate trainings to ensure that *animals* are treated in accordance with these principles.

Rationale:

Since sufficient skills and knowledge can be acquired through appropriate training, Japan believes that "training," "skills," and "knowledge" should not be listed in parallel.

2. CHAPTER 7. 6. ANIMAL WELFARE AT THE TIME OF KILLING

1) General Comments

Firstly, Japan extends its gratitude to the *ad hoc* Group and the Code Commission for their dedicated efforts in drafting this chapter. Japan kindly requests clarification on the decision to use the term "killing" instead of "humane killing" as is used in the current Chapter 7.6.

Additionally, Japan seeks to understand the rationale behind the expanded scope of this chapter to include diverse scenarios such as 'natural or man-made disasters' and 'suffering from disease or injuries or for economic reasons.' One might say that an alternative approach could be to create separate chapters for each scenario.

2) Comments on Article 7.6.3

Regarding paragraph 2, the current chapter states that "Competence may be gained through formal training and/or practical experience." This statement is removed in the draft chapter. Considering the necessity of training and experience for appropriate killing, Japan wishes to understand the reason for its removal.

In paragraph 8, the statement "Young animals should be killed before older animals on which they are dependent to reduce potential distress" is unclear. Japan requests clarification and scientific evidence supporting this point.

3) Comment on Point 3. a) iv) of Article 7.6.5

The current chapter includes the responsibility of animal handlers to "continuously monitor animal welfare and biosecurity procedures," but this text is omitted in the draft chapter. Given the importance of continuous monitoring, Japan requests the rationale for this omission.

4) Comment on Article 7.6.8

● Proposed amendments to the beginning of Point 1

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| <p>1. The following animal-based measures can be useful indicators of animal welfare. These measures can be considered as tools to monitor the efficiency of design and management, given that they can affect animal welfare. <u>Note that the combination of several indicators is desirable to determine the effectiveness of the procedure. In addition, useful indicators are not limited to these measures.</u></p> |
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Rationale:

The animal-based measures outlined in this article are useful indicators, but a single indicator is not always sufficient to assess hazards to animal welfare. Furthermore, it should be noted that useful indicators are not limited to those described in this article.

● Comment on Point 1. d)

Point d) states, "Recovery of breathing, if not visible through these movements, can be checked

by holding a small mirror in front of the nostrils or mouth to look for the appearance of condensation due to expiration of moist air." It is unclear if a small mirror is always necessary for this check or if it is just an example. Japan believes that various situations should be considered and that this statement should be clarified accordingly.