



Revision of the Industry Animal Welfare Standard for livestock processing establishments

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of the project was to undertake a revision of the Industry Animal Welfare Standard following international best practice guidelines for standard development, for example, involving stakeholder engagement and the implementation of a formal documented process. To compliment the revised Standard, an associated guidance document, to ensure effective implementation and verification of the requirements, was also produced.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the project was to undertake a revision of the Industry Animal Welfare Standard following international best practice guidelines for standard development. To compliment the revised Standard, the project also included the development of an associated guidance document, to ensure effective implementation and verification of the requirements.

When the AMIC Industry Standard was first developed, the industry (through AMIC) made a commitment to periodically review and update the document. As part of this commitment, AMIC and AMPC engaged Dr Hewitt in 2015 to review the “Industry Animal Welfare Standard for livestock processing establishments – preparing meat for human consumption”; to ensure that the next edition of the Standard incorporated the latest available science, regulations, best practice and commercial requirements.

The outcome of the 2015 review was as follows:

- the scope and purpose of the current Industry Standard were identified;
- barriers to industry adoption of the Standard were identified and methods to overcome these were discussed;
- a focused literature review (covering scope of existing Standard) to identify latest scientific research that required incorporation in a revised Standard was completed. This included relevant regulatory, scientific and industry information and overseas trends in welfare conformity programs; and
- a gap analysis of the existing Standard was completed to ensure that areas of high animal welfare risk were adequately covered by future revisions of the Standard.

The review report delivered 35 recommended changes for consideration during future standard revisions. The AMIC Animal Welfare Policy Committee and subsequently, AMIC's Australian Processor Council agreed with many of these recommendations and it was decided that they should form part of the revised Standard. Included in the recommendations was a call for an updated format to reflect contemporary standard development and the development of appropriate guidance documentation to aid effective implementation of the Standard and verification processes.

A large body of work was also completed since the review in 2015 and was available to underpin the activities undertaken as part of this project. This work included; identification of an industry drafting group, facilitation of a comment period to discuss content, an outline of content and format (as discussed and agreed by an industry drafting group), and results of a mapping exercise that studied emerging issues and identified any gaps when compared with the 2015 review.

3.0 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

3.1 Introduction of a formal standards development process

The first objective of the project was to develop a procedure and associated templates for developing the revised Industry Animal Welfare Standard. In accordance with the documents described in 4.2, the process for developing the standard includes processes and documentation for:

- / stakeholder engagement;
- / Standards Work Programme;
- / standards development project management;
- / Standards Committee establishment and management;
- / drafting standards;
- / consultation and comment resolution;
- / consensus and Standards Committee recommendations;
- / Standards adoption and publication;
- / Standards implementation;
- / Standards guidance; and
- / other administrative matters.

3.2 Creation and management of a Standards Development Committee

International guidance for the development of Standards recommends that a formal standard development process is followed, which includes the creation and management of a Standards Development Committee. Members of the committee represented a balanced group of stakeholders; including industry representatives, state and federal regulators, animal welfare specialists, conformity assessment specialists and animal welfare NGOs. The role of the committee was to review and refine the draft working standard and agree by consensus on the final version. This was undertaken using a series of controlled comment rounds and on-line meetings.

3.3 Develop Edition 3 of the Industry Animal Welfare Standard

The development of Edition 3 of the Industry Animal Welfare Standard follows international best practice as it relates to the development process, format and structure. The Standard remains outcome-focused and not too prescriptive but includes clear requirements that can be objectively audited (with accompanying guidance where necessary). During the refinement of the requirements, the following principles were considered: Are they desirable for livestock welfare? Are they feasible for industry and government to implement? Are they important for the livestock-welfare regulatory framework? Will they achieve the intended outcome for livestock welfare? The format and content of the standard also takes into consideration:

- the 'functional approach' as set out in ISO/IEC 17000 as related to conformity assessment;
- changes in industry practices, regulation and assurance schemes and the outcome of the Standard review in 2015 (checked again for relevancy in 2019);
- the need for alignment with AUS-MEAT's AAWCS audit checklists and processes; and
- the identification and use of animal welfare performance indicators.

3.4 Develop guidance material for industry and approved auditors

The final objective was to develop guidance material that would allow for allows for effective implementation of the Standard by industry and within any conformity assessment scheme. The guidance document provides an updated resource for industry covering latest scientific understanding and includes examples of the evidence needed to demonstrate conformity with the requirements of the Standard. The document also allows individual establishments to utilise and adapt the information for compliance purposes, staff training and SOP development.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Responsibilities of the principal investigator

During the project, the PI was responsible for:

- / administering the standards development process in accordance with the standard development procedure and a project plan;
- / managing the Standards Committee, including meeting preparation, agenda and minutes;
- / preparing draft standards with expert and Standards Committee input;
- / administering the consultation and comment rounds;
- / compiling comments for consideration by the Standards Committee;
- / assisting the Standards Committee to resolve comments and recording of decisions on comments;
- / assisting the Standards Committee in reaching consensus and making a final recommendation about adoption of the standard;
- / providing progress reports to project manager; and
- / maintaining all necessary records and providing these records to the project manager at the end of the standards development project.

4.2 Overall approach

When it comes to developing standards and assurance schemes there are a number of internationally accepted practices to use. These include:

- / World Trade Organisation (WTO) Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), *Annex 3: Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards*;
- / various guides and standards for standards development and conformity assessment schemes produced by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC);
- / *Procedures Used by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) to set Standards and Recommendations for International Trade, with a focus on the Terrestrial and Aquatic Animal Health Codes*; and
- / guidelines and codes of the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling (ISEAL) Alliance.

In summary the practices of these organizations in relation to standards development ensure that standards:

- / contain requirements that are no less favourable than those afforded to like products of national origin and to like products originating in any other country;
- / do not act as technical barriers to trade;
- / use international standards where they exist;
- / specify requirements in performance/outcome-based language, and not be prescriptive; and
- / allow a 60-day comment period on draft standards.

Additionally, ISO/IEC guidance encourages standards to be:

- / developed by committees that have a balanced set of stakeholder interests;
- / based on consensus decisions making; and
- / written in a clear and unambiguous manner in accordance with the ISO/IEC Directives and ISO/IEC 17007:2009, *Conformity assessment -- Guidance for drafting normative documents suitable for use for conformity assessment*.

The methodology, as described in the following steps acknowledges and follows these internationally accepted practices.

4.3 Milestone 1 - Methodology

Milestone 1 was specifically focused on the completion of a Working Draft Standard by an Industry Drafting Group (IDG) that could then be considered by the Standards Development Committee in the next phase. The Working Draft Standard was presented to the IDG for two individual comment rounds. The comments were discussed, and amendments were made to the Standard. This was achieved in the following steps:

- 1) A Working Draft Standard (WD) was prepared by the Industry Drafting Group and circulated for feedback (Round 1).
- 2) The completed collated comments table and Working Draft Standard were circulated to the Industry Drafting Group for a second round of feedback (Round 2).
- 3) The comments received were collated, responses to each comment prepared and recommended changes made to the Working Draft Standard.
- 4) A meeting via teleconference was undertaken to agree the proposed changes. The agreed changes to the Standard were completed and the resulting document became the Final Working Draft Standard that was circulated to the Standard Committee in Milestone 2.

4.4 Milestone 2 - Methodology

Milestone 2 focused on the organization of further stakeholder consultation in the form of a Standards Development Committee representing a balanced set of stakeholders. Part of this preparation involved the development of a Standard development procedure and associated committee documentation (Appendix 1). This was described in Sections 3.1 and 3.2. Nominating organisations and potential members of the Standard Development Committee were also identified.

4.5 Milestone 3 - Methodology

Milestone 03 was specifically focused on the facilitation of the AMIC Standard Committee and the completion of a Committee draft (CD) ready for further consultation. It also involved the development of the draft guidance material.

4.6 Milestone 4 - Methodology

Milestone 4 involved the completion of a final comment round (wider stakeholder group) and completion of a Final Draft Standard (Appendix 2) that could be recommended to AMIC for publication.

5.0 PROJECT OUTCOMES

5.1 Milestone 1 - Outcomes

The achievement criteria and the outcome of each, under Milestone 01 are shown in the following table.

| Achievement Criteria | Outcome |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Previous comments supplied by the Standard drafting group after the first comment round will be collated and recommended responses prepared. | Completed |
| Working Draft Standard completed | Completed |
| The completed comments table and Working Draft Standard will be circulated to the Industry Drafting Group for a second round of feedback | Completed |
| Second round of comments completed (Industry Drafting Group - IDG) | Completed |
| Comments collated and recommended responses for each comment prepared | Completed |
| Next iteration of Working Draft Standard (WD) prepared, incorporating draft changes | Completed |
| Teleconference with IDG to confirm changes (1 day) | Completed |
| Final Working Draft Standard (WD) ready for circulation to Standards Development Committee | Completed |
| Milestone report submitted to and approved by AMPC, including copies of all related documents | Milestone report and two reference documents |

5.2 Milestone 2 - Outcomes

The achievement criteria and the outcome of each, under Milestone 02 are shown in the following table.

| Achievement Criteria | Outcome |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Standard Development Procedure completed | Completed |
| Standard development templates prepared | Completed |
| Standards Development Committee documentation prepared, including ToR, invitations etc | Completed |
| Standards Development Committee identified in consultation with AMPC | Completed |
| Initial communication with Standards Development Committee – Invitations to nominating organisations | Completed |
| Milestone report submitted to and approved by AMPC, including copies of all related documents | Milestone report and associated reference documents |

5.3 Milestone 3 - Outcomes

The achievement criteria and the outcome of each, under Milestone 03 are shown in the following table.

| Achievement Criteria | Outcome |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Invitations sent to Standards Development Committee (SDC) | Completed |
| Communication with committee | Completed |
| Release working draft to SDC | Completed |
| Collate all comments received and prepare responses | Completed |
| Circulate proposed responses to committee | Completed |
| Arrange SDC meeting at a suitable location | Covid-19 required an on-line platform to be utilized for the meeting - Completed |
| Standards Development Committee meeting (2-day face to face) | Three online meetings were arranged and completed (7-8/09/2020 and 22/09/2020). |
| Run meeting and guide SDC through comments until consensus achieved | Completed |
| Committee Drafts (CD) produced and amended | Completed |
| Draft Standard (DS) finalised and ready for public consultation or wider comment round (or recommended for publication if public comment/wider comment round is omitted) | Completed |
| Guidance documentation developed, submitted for review | Completed |
| Go/No Go Decision Point requiring discussion and AMPC agreement to proceed based on whether or not to include a public comment round. | After the SDC meeting on 22/09/2020 it was decided that the Standard would be circulated for a wider comment round. It was decided that a full 60-day public comment round would not be undertaken at this stage. |
| Milestone report submitted to and approved by AMPC, including copies of all related documents | Milestone report and associated reference documents |

5.4 Milestone 4 - Outcomes

The achievement criteria and the outcome of each, under Milestone 04 are shown in the following table.

| Achievement Criteria | Outcome |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wider consultation period initiated – Recipients identified by industry and SDC | Completed |
| Release Draft Standard (DS) to SDC and identified stakeholders | Completed |
| Collate all comments received and prepare responses | Completed |
| Circulate proposed responses to committee | Completed |
| Arrange SDC meeting | Covid-19 required an on-line platform to be utilized for the meeting – Completed |
| Standards Development Committee meeting (2-day on-line) | 25-26 November 2020 - Completed |
| Run meeting and guide SDC through comments until consensus achieved | Completed |
| Final Draft Standard (FDS) produced and amended | Completed |
| Final Draft Standard (FDS) finalised recommended for publication | Completed |
| Guidance documentation developed, submitted for initial review by SDC | Completed |
| Final report submitted, including copies of all related documents | Milestone report and associated reference documents - Completed |

6.0 CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The appendices contain all the documentation relevant to this project, including the Final Draft Standard and the Draft Guidance document. The Final Draft Standard has been completed and it has been agreed by the Standard Committee that it should be recommended for publication by AMIC. It is further recommended and agreed that the Draft Guidance document is circulated for wider consultation at the beginning of 2021. It is anticipated that the review of the Guidance document will include some of the previous members of the Standard Committee and additional industry representatives.

The project progressed as planned in the most part, however, given the travel restrictions and social distancing measures currently in place for Covid-19, the face-to-face Standard Committee meetings were completed on-line. During the IDG meeting in Milestone 1, two additional action points were raised and resolved by the project management team and industry representatives. They were as follows:

- / Confirmation that the IP (including the Standard) would be owned and copyrighted by AMIC; and
- / Confirmation that the scope of the Standard would not include non-stunned slaughter. Hence, establishments that undertake non-stunned slaughter cannot be certified under AAWCS.

7.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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2. Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption AS 4696 (Australian Meat Standard).
3. ISO 19011:2018, *Guidelines for auditing management systems*.
4. ISO 9001 Auditing Practices Group Guidance on: Effective use of ISO 19011, 2016
5. ISO 9001 Auditing Practices Group Guidance on: Internal audit
6. ISO 9001 Auditing Practices Group Guidance on: Nonconformity - Documenting
7. ISO 9001 Auditing Practices Group Guidance on: Nonconformity - review and closing -
8. ISO 9001 Auditing Practices Group Guidance on: Policy, Objectives and Management Review
9. ISO 9001 Auditing Practices Group Guidance on: Statutory and regulatory
10. NAMI Recommended handling guidelines and audit guide: A systematic approach to animal welfare. September 2019 Rev.2.
11. OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code, 2019.
12. Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines - Land Transport of Livestock, 2012.

13. Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals - Livestock at Slaughtering Establishments.



8.0 APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1 - Standard Committee documentation

- / AMICSTD-01 Standards Development Project Plan
- / AMICSTD-02 Standards Committee Terms of Reference
- / AMICSTD-03 Standards Committee Constitution
- / AMICSTD-04 Nominating Organization Code of Conduct
- / AMICSTD-05 Standards Committee Member Code of Conduct
- / AMICSTD-06 Comments table standard
- / AMICSTD-07 Standards Committee Member Deed
- / AMICSTD-08 Standards Work Programme
- / AMICSTD-09 Standards Committee invitation letter

8.2 Appendix 2 - Final Draft Standard and agreed comments

- / AMIC Ed 3 (FINAL Draft Standard) Industry Animal Welfare Standard (v1.1)
- / AMICSTD-06 Comments table Standard - Round 2 v.1 - Collated