

**Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine**

**Trader Notice MH 45/2014**

**To: All Meat Industry Operators**

**Subject: Procedures associated with application by Animal Welfare Officers for Certificates of Competence required under Regulation 1099/2009.**

[This is a new document and does not replace any earlier versions / documents]

**Background**

Article 17 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 requires slaughterhouses slaughtering 1,000 livestock units or more, of mammals or 150 000 or more birds or rabbits per year to designate one or more **Animal Welfare Officers** (AWO). These AWOs who are responsible for the supervision of animal welfare must hold **Certificates of Competence** in the operations for which they are responsible.

**Scope**

This VPN covers the procedures to be adopted in the application for Certificates of Competence (CoCs) by AWO applicants prior to issuing Certificates of Competence.

**Application Procedure**

Certificates of Competence are *species, operation and equipment specific*. AWOs with responsibility for welfare supervision at plants killing several species at the same approved slaughter plant must have a Certificate of Competence which is valid for each species worked with. Equally, if more than one type of stunning equipment is used, the AWO must hold separate Certificates of Competence which are valid for each (e.g. Pig plants where CO<sub>2</sub> gas stunning is generally used but where an electric tongs is also used for sows).

Each individual AWO applicant must produce:

**1. Evidence of Examination Passed**

Regulation 1099/2009 requires Animal Welfare Officers to be “*specifically qualified*” and have “*sufficient authority and technical competence*” to carry out the role. However the Regulation is not prescriptive on the training required. Therefore, for the purpose of applying for a CoC it is not necessary for the applicant AWO to produce evidence of training<sup>1</sup>

However the applicant AWO must produce evidence of passing the Official Teagasc Animal Welfare Examination.

**2. Declaration**

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<sup>1</sup> This is without prejudice to the requirement for AWOs to be specifically qualified to carry out the functions of an AWO

The applicant AWO for a Certificate of Competence must sign a **written declaration** (built into the Application Form) stating that he/she has committed no serious infringement of Community law and/or national law on the protection of animals in the three years preceding the date of application for such a certificate.

The applicant for a Certificate of Competence must sign a **written declaration** (built into the Application Form) confirming that he/she has not been convicted within the three years preceding the date of application of any infringement in relation to the protection of animals under national or community law.

### **3. Photographic Identification**

The applicant AWO must present his/her photographic ID (Passport or Drivers License) to the plant VI. Copies of these are to be kept on file by the VI.

### **4. Application Form**

Each applicant AWO for a Certificate of Competence must complete an AWO Application Form. This form must specify the following:

- The operation (s) for which the Certificate of Competence is applied for.
- The species for which the Certificate of Competence is applied for.
- The equipment for which the Certificate of Competence is applied for.
- The evidence of examination passed

The applicant must sign the declaration and the form must be countersigned by an FBO representative who is a line manager of the AWO Applicant.

The FBO must ask the VI to sign off the Application Form(s). The Application Forms are to be retained by the VI

### **5. Summary:**

When presented to the VI the AWO Application form(s) must be accompanied by:

1. Evidence of Examination to be copied by DAFM.
2. Photographic ID (a copy of same must be retained by the VI).
3. Digital passport sized identified photograph (JPEG) (sent by e-mail by FBO to [meatinspection@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:meatinspection@agriculture.gov.ie). If two or more applicants share the same name it is the responsibility of the FBO to bring this to the attention of DAFM and ensure that the correct photo is clearly linked to the correct applicant

### **Role of the FBO**

The Role of the FBO is to:

1. Designate one or more AWOs and indicate their names to the VI-in-Charge
2. Ensure that AWO applicants responsible for supervising any or all of the 7 operations listed above apply for a Certificate of Competence covering the relevant operations on the application form available from the Veterinary Office [or Meat Hygiene Division]
3. Ensure that all AWO Application Forms are signed off by the VI  
Ensure details of the successful applicant and the approved operation are recorded on an Excel Sheet by FBO and sent to VI. (a template of the excel spreadsheet will be sent to all FBO's) If two or more applicants share the same name it is the responsibility of the FBO

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Sample of Excel Sheet / information required for DAFM (a template of which will be emailed to all FBO)

<b>Applicants Name</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Method of Stunning</b>	<b>Operations Applied for</b>
Joe Bloggs	Ovine	A	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Jane Bloggs	Poultry	C	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Jude Bloggs	Bovine	B	1, 2, 3

### **Assessment of Competence of Animal Welfare Officers**

There is no formal assessment of the competence of AWOs prior to the issue of Certificates of Competence. CoCs will be issued on the basis that the applicant has passed the Teagasc Animal Welfare Examination.

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**Audrey Lyons**  
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**9th December 2014**