USA COMMENTS

CHAPTER 7.1.

INTRODUCTION TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

[...]

Article 7.1.X

Guiding principles for the use of measures to assess animal welfare

1) For the OIE animal welfare standards to be applicable globally, they should put more emphasis on favourable 
outcomes for the animals, although, in some circumstances, it may be necessary to 
recommend than on specific conditions of the animals' environment and management. Outcomes are 
generally measured by assessing animals' enjoyment experience of the “five freedoms” described in Article 
7.1.2.

Rationale: The United States understands that the word “enjoys” is intended to be 
understood in its legal sense; however, without a footnote indicating that term “enjoy” is 
used to mean “possess” and “benefit from”, most will interpret the term for its common 
meaning. In that case, the interpretation would be that the animal needs to experience 
positive emotional states (e.g. pleasure), which is in fact an active area of research in 
animal welfare. Indeed, when the term “enjoys” is interpreted to mean “pleasure” (which 
everyone will), then it does not make sense to talk about an animal “enjoying”, for 
example, freedom from fear or pain.

2) For each principle listed in Article 7.1.4., the most relevant 
criteria (or measurables), ideally comprising 
animal-based measures, should be included in the standard. Any given animal-based measure may be 
linked to more than one principle.

3) Users of the standard should select the most appropriate animal-based measures for their farming system or 
conditions, from among those listed in the standard. Outcomes can be measured by an assessment of 
individuals or animal groups, or a representative sample of those, using data from establishments, transport 
or slaughterhouses/abattoirs.

34) Standards Users should, whenever possible, define explicit targets or thresholds that should be met for 
animal-based measures. Such target values should be based on relevant science and expert experience showing that a welfare 
outcome is clearly linked to a resource or to a management procedure.

Rationale: The OIE should not define thresholds for animal-based measures within the 
Terrestrial Code. The Code has defined the valid, reliable and usable animal-based 
measures that should be used to assess animal welfare. Users of the standard should 
define appropriate thresholds for their production system and work towards continual 
 improvement of the threshold over time (ISO, 2016).

guidance for organizations in the food supply chain. Switzerland.

45) In addition to animal-based measures, resource-based measures and management-based measures may 
be included and should be defined on the basis of science and expert experience showing that a welfare 
outcome is clearly linked to a resource or to a management procedure.

Rationale: Clarification that resource-based and management-based measures are not
required to be included in the standard, but if they are, they should be defined on the basis of science and expert experience as further described.

5) Users of the standard should select the most appropriate animal-based measures for their farming system or conditions, from among those listed in the standard. Outcomes can be measured by an assessment of individuals or animal groups, or a representative sample of those, using data from establishments, transport or slaughterhouses/abattoirs.

**Rationale:** The OIE Animal Welfare Production System chapters describe farming systems in which the animals are housed. A system is different from the conditions because one can have a specific system with either poor or exemplary conditions. The conditions should be good regardless of system. The measured values should be based on systems, not conditions.

6) Whatever the basis of the measure, if outcomes are unsatisfactory, users should consider what changes to resources or management are necessary to improve outcomes.