



# Chinchilla Production Standard



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# 1 Background and objective

The Chinchilla Production Standard is a developing product certification standard for companies trading in chinchilla (*Chinchilla Lanigera*) pelts produced in Europe. The protocol focuses mainly on ensuring a high level of animal welfare and traceability and was developed taking into consideration both best practice and scientific knowledge as well as legislation within the area of chinchilla production. The protocol was developed by Baltic Academy for the International Fur Federation (IFF), and it has been validated by an independent Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) consisting of experts on chinchilla production in Europe.

The protocol contains animal welfare, sustainability and traceability-requirements associated with the production and trade of chinchilla pelts. In addition to ensuring the compliance with rules and regulation within the area, this protocol includes additional requirements to further improve and ensure the animal welfare, sustainability and traceability.

**Animal Welfare** relates to the physical and mental state of an animal in relation to the conditions in which it lives and dies<sup>1</sup>. Since Chinchilla live in confined production systems, the focus of animal welfare will be on the animals physical and mental well-being, i.e., the Five Domains.

The Five Domains is a model for animal welfare assessment, that focuses on the physical and mental state of an animal. For every physical aspect that is affected, there may be an accompanying emotion or experience that affects the welfare of the animal. There are four physical domains, which affect the fifth (mental) domain, which are:

1. Nutrition
2. Physical environment
3. Health
4. Behavioural interactions
5. Mental state

**Sustainability** relates to the handling of carcasses.

**Traceability** relates to the ability to document the origin of a product. Traceability at the shipper level ensures that it is possible for relevant stakeholders to gain information on the source of individual pelts.

<sup>1</sup> World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) (2021). Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Section 7 Animal Welfare





Photo: © Baltic Academy



## 2 Chinchilla production

The Chinchilla (*Chinchilla lanigera*) is native to the mountain ranges in the Andes, South America (Bolivia and Chile<sup>2</sup>). Wild chinchilla are naturally timid animals who prefer to hide from predators during the hot days and search for food in the cooler nights.

Chinchilla became popular as a fur animal back in the 1500's as its fur has a luxurious, soft texture, due to the fact that they have 50 hairs pr. hair follicle, whilst other mammals only have one. Up until the 1920's, wild chinchilla were hunted and traded for pelts, leading to the chinchilla being placed on the endangered species list.

With permission from the Chilean government, an American mining engineer, Mathias F. Chapman, caught 11 chinchilla and brought them to the US for breeding in 1922. This act changed the chinchilla fur industry, from one of trapping and hunting to one of production.

Today, these soft, small animals are popular both in the fur industry and as domestic pets.



Photo: © Baltic Academy



Photo: © Shutterstock

# 3 Protocol rules

## 3.1 Structure of protocol

The protocol structure is based on ISO 17065. The protocol includes requirements, audit guide, check list and sanctions list.

## 3.2 Protocol updates

To take into consideration all new scientific and best practice knowledge, regulatory developments, and stakeholder inputs, the protocol will be formally reviewed and updated at least every two years. New requirements may be included during this process, and existing requirements may be revised or removed. For requirements not yet implemented, the wording as well as the phase-in period may be revised. A TAC consisting of experts in chinchilla production in Europe will be included in this process. Minor amendments may be made at any time in between the formal reviews resulting in the release of revised versions.

For any changes, due notice for the implementation deadline will be given to all participants. The deadline depends on the nature of the update and will be approved by the TAC.





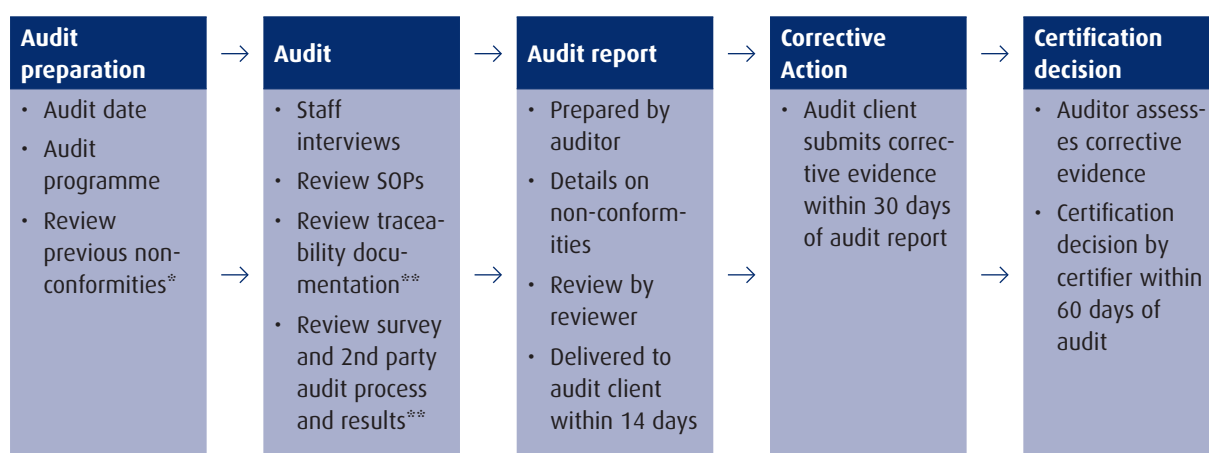
Photo: © Baltic Academy



### 3.3 Audit and certification process

The audit and corresponding certification will be carried out at the level of the breeder and the shipper. It is the responsibility of the breeder to document that chinchilla pelts are produced in a manner that meets the protocol requirements. The shipper ensures that the producers comply with the requirements set in this standard, and the certification body performs a Quality Management System (QMS) audit of the shipper. The certification body then performs a risk-based sampling and audits a number of breeders based on the sampling (group certification).

The audit and certification processes are summarised in Figure 1. Questions, complaints or appeals regarding audits and certificates shall be addressed to the certification body.



**Figure 1** Audit and certification process.

#### 3.3.1 Audit

The purpose of the audit is to confirm that the audit client (i.e., the breeder or shipper) meets the protocol requirements. A QMS audit (section 3.3.4) of the shipper and a group audit (section 7.1) of breeders supplying to the shipper shall be carried out every 12 months. These audits must not be carried out earlier than three months prior to the expiry date of the current certificate.

Audits are conducted on a mutually convenient date as agreed between the certification body and audit client. Prior to the audit, the audit client will receive an audit programme containing the audit time, the name of the auditor, audit content and details of the documentation required for the audit.

The audit may be carried out as a remote or a physical audit. The physical audit should always be the preferred option, however, if traveling or physical audits are not possible, e.g., due to a pandemic situation, a remote audit

may be performed. All required documentation shall be made available during the audit, and the audit client shall provide a measuring device (e.g., a ruler). The audit will start with an opening meeting followed by a review of documentation and discussions with relevant staff members and end with a closing meeting. The review of documentation shall include:

- Annual veterinary report
- Euthanasia SOPs
- Feed seller receipts
- Logbook of daily checks
- Receipt from biogas/protein processing plant
- Receipts for CO<sub>2</sub> gas canisters
- Self-declaration documents
- Visitor logbook

A representative of the audit client (farm owner/manager) shall be available to the auditor to facilitate the audit and establish contact with the relevant staff members. The au-

\* In case of renewal audit

\*\* Determined by risk assessed sampling plan

dit client shall ensure that the relevant staff members are available.

An unmet requirement is recorded as a non-conformity. During the closing meeting, all non-conformities recorded during the audit will be disclosed and explained. Non-conformities may also be raised after the audit based on review of documentation made available after the audit or be raised by the reviewer.

Each non-conformity will be detailed in the audit report. The report will be reviewed by the reviewer and provided to the audit client within 14 days after end of audit.

If the audit client does not assist the auditor in completing the audit process as required, the process will end. In this case, a full re-audit will be required.

### 3.3.2 Non-conformities

Conformance with all protocol requirements is evaluated by the auditor during the audit or based on documentation made available after the audit. An unmet requirement is recorded as a non-conformity. Non-conformities are registered as either minor or major.

A **minor non-conformity** represents a minor failure to conform to the requirements that is unlikely to directly affect animal welfare.

A **major non-conformity** represents a significant failure to conform to the requirements that may directly affect animal welfare.

Minor non-conformities shall be corrected by the time of a subsequent audit. The re-occurrence of a minor non-conformity at the subsequent audit will lead to it being recorded as a major non-conformity.

Corrective actions to major non-conformities shall be implemented, and suitable documentation of the corrective actions (corrective evidence) provided. The documentation provided shall be appropriate to the type of non-conformity.

Upon receipt of the audit report, the audit client will be allowed up to 30 days to provide corrective evidence to maintain or be granted certification. Where no evidence is provided within the timeframe, or the provided evidence is found insufficient, the process will end, and no certificate will be granted or maintained. In this case, a full re-audit will be required. In case of a non-conformity that cannot

be corrected within the specific period due to events outside of the audit client's control, the certification body may extend the period for providing corrective evidence (up to 3 months), given that sufficient documentation for the occurrence of such events is provided by the audit client.

### 3.3.3 Suspension

Failure to correct a major non-conformity within the specified timeframe or if an insufficient corrective action is made, the audit client will be suspended from the certification programme. To re-enter the programme, a full re-audit of the client will be necessary to gain certification.

### 3.3.4 Quality Management System (QMS) Audit

The purpose of the QMS audit is to ensure that shippers have collected valid self-declarations of coherence to the standard from all producers who have supplied pelts to them during the last year (requirement 5.8).

This audit should take up to one working day. All required documentation shall be made available during the audit or be forwarded to the reviewer prior to audit.



## 3.4 Certification body and auditor/reviewer competencies

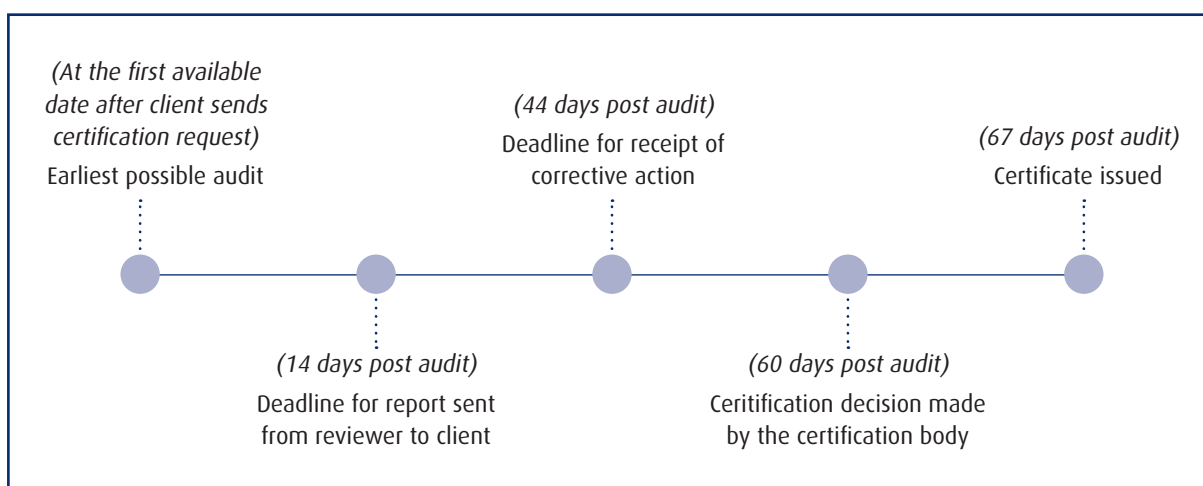
Auditors/reviewers must have either:

- a master's degree in natural science or
- a bachelor's degree in natural science and two years of audit experience or
- five years of animal welfare audit experience.

An independent, accredited (within ISO 17065) certification body shall perform the audits and certification process.

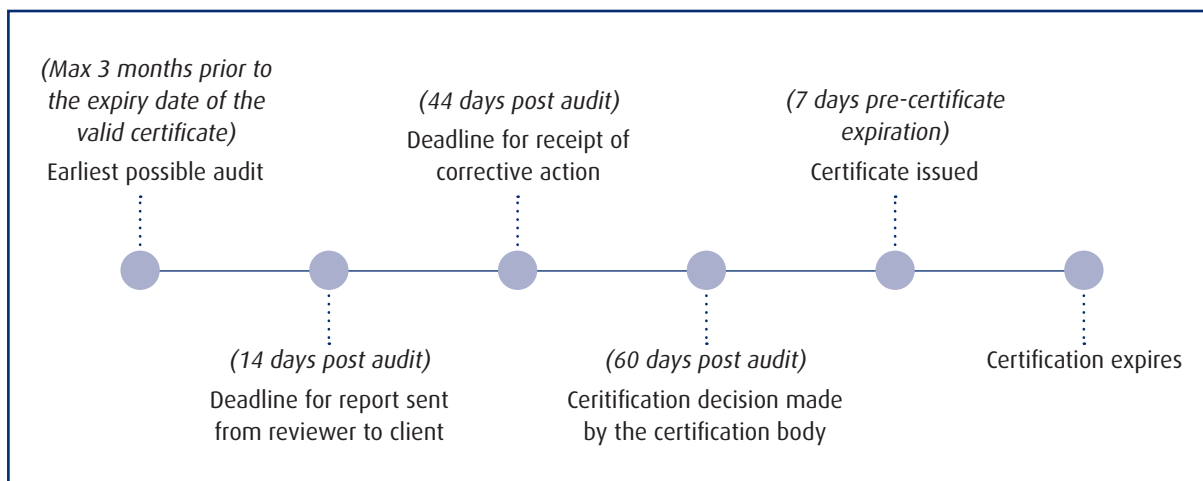
## 3.5 Certification timeline

### 3.5.1 Initial audit



**Figure 2** A visual representation of the timeline for an initial audit.

### 3.5.3 Renewal audit



**Figure 3** A visual representation of the timeline for a renewal audit.



Photo: © Depositphotos

# 4 Certificate

The certification body will monitor the effective execution of the audit activities and approve the audit results. The final certification decision shall be made by the certification body based on the findings of the auditor within 60 days of the audit taking place.

Certificates shall be issued within five working days of the certification decision. The certificate shall be issued for a period of 12 months. The renewal audit and certification process shall be completed before the expiry date of the current certificate. In case the renewal audit and certification process cannot be completed before the expiry date of the current certificate due to events outside of the audit client's control, the certification body may extend the certificate. Such an extension can only be granted given that sufficient documentation for the occurrence of such events is provided by the audit client.

The certificate shall contain the following information:

- name, address and Furmark® ID of the certified client,
- name, address, and business ID of the certification body,
- certification standard title and version,
- issue date,
- expiry date,
- authorised signature.

The certified client shall notify the certification body in case of significant changes that may affect the capability of conforming to the protocol requirements. Certificates may be withdrawn in case the ability to conform to the protocol requirements is found to be affected or for justifiable reasons such as non-payment of invoices.





Photo: © International Fur Federation

# 5 Requirements

This section contains the details surrounding the requirements of the protocol. Each requirement relates to one of the three key elements: animal welfare, sustainability and traceability. The legal requirements of a country take precedence over any requirements stated in this protocol.

Following each requirement, an audit guide will provide information regarding what will be audited and how.

## 5.1 Management

### 5.1.1 Welfare checks

#### Domain

1, 2 & 3.

#### Requirement

Chinchilla and their cages must be inspected at least once a day and logged. Daily inspections must include:

- looking for injuries and signs of illness,
- checking for the arrival of kits,
- checking feed and hay levels (also water levels, if water bottles are used), and
- checking for cleanliness and functionality of water systems.

The logbook of the previous 30 days (at the time of audit) must be presented at audit.

#### Audit guide

View logbook of daily inspections.

### 5.1.2 Thermal comfort

#### Domain

2, 3 & 5.

#### Requirement

Chinchilla are sensitive to temperature and humidity, and care must be taken to ensure thermal comfort, lower the risk of heatstroke and lower the risk of fur matting. To do this, the temperature in the production units shall be kept between 15°C and 26°C<sup>3</sup>, whilst humidity shall be kept below 70%. Daily checks of both temperature and humidity must be logged, and the logbook of the previous 30 days (at the time of audit) must be presented at audit. Ensuring low humidity also makes it easier to keep the smell of ammonium to a minimum.

If kits and breeding females are kept in separate production units, the temperature in the unit(s) housing the kits may be kept at lower temperatures than in units housing breeding females (a suggestion is around 10°C -15°C), but shall not be higher than 26°C.

#### Audit guide

View logbook of temperature and humidity or view temperature and humidity gauge.

*If applicable*, view logbook from units housing breeding females and units housing kits.

3 MSD Manual, 2022.

### 5.1.3 Ventilation

**Domain**

2 & 3.

**Requirement**

To ensure high quality of air in the production units (avoiding the build-up of ammonia gasses and dust), the unit shall be ventilated at least once a day during all seasons.

**Audit guide**

Discuss which procedures are put in place to ensure high quality of air in the production unit(s).

### 5.1.4 Light

**Domain**

2 & 5.

**Requirement**

Chinchilla are nocturnal animals and are therefore mostly active during hours of darkness, which shall be taken into consideration regarding the production units. Light also affects the reproduction of breeding females, as it influences their hormonal cycle. The chinchilla unit should therefore give the animals a sense of a night/day cycle, and animals must be exposed to light (either artificial or natural) for 12 hours a day<sup>4</sup>.

In production systems where breeding females and kits are kept separately, only the females must be exposed to half a day (12 hours) of light, whilst kits only need to be exposed to light daily.

**Audit guide**

Discuss how light exposure is managed in the production unit(s).

*If applicable*, discuss how light exposure is managed for the kits.

<sup>4</sup> Rivas et. al, 2014.



## 5.2 Housing

### 5.2.1 Cage size

**Domain**

2 & 5.

**Requirement**

Cage sizes must adhere to the local legislation of the country in which the animals are produced or at the CoE minimum requirement of 50 cm<sup>2</sup> pr. animal (0.3 cm<sup>2</sup> per animal for weaned juveniles)<sup>5</sup>.

**Audit guide**

Discuss local legislation regarding cage size and measure the length, height and width of a square root sample of all cages in a production unit.

### 5.2.2 Cage placement

**Domain**

2, 4 & 5.

**Requirement**

Cages shall be placed so that animals can see neighbouring animals. A maximum of four cages can be stacked on top of each other so that daily welfare checks can be performed easily, and all animals can be viewed.

**Audit guide**

View cages.

Count the number of cages stacked on one another.

### 5.2.3 Cage flooring

**Domain**

2, 3 & 5.

**Requirement**

Flooring in the cages may be either solid or a mix of solid and netting. At least 25% of the cage floor shall be solid<sup>6</sup>. There does not need to be solid flooring under the feed through to catch spilled feed, as chinchilla will not eat feed that has fallen out of the through.

If litter/wood shavings are used, this must be changed at minimum every seven days, to maintain a healthy cage environment. If netting is used, the netting must be narrow enough to avoid leg injuries in young animals (25x50 mm), and plastic sheeting must be used underneath the cages to catch urine and faecal matter. This plastic must be changed minimum once every 14 days, to ensure good air quality. Changing of the plastic must be logged, and the logbook of the past two months (at the time of audit) must be presented at audit.

**Audit guide**

View and measure cage floor.

*If applicable*, measure hole size in netting.

View logbook for cleaning of litter/plastic.

<sup>5</sup> COE.int, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> COE.int, 1999.

## 5.2.4 Group sizes

### Domain

4 & 5.

### Requirement

Chinchilla form polygamous groups<sup>7</sup>, and solitary housing is prohibited, unless an animal is sick or injured. Cages that house breeding animals must be designed so that breeding males have a corridor between the females' cages, whilst breeding females shall be fitted with a disk collar so they cannot enter this corridor.

Each male shall always have access to a group of minimum 4-6 females. Having access to smaller groups will lead to increased frustration in the males and can lead to them being aggressive towards their females.

### Audit guide

View cages. Are any animals being kept alone unnecessarily?

View cage design. Is there a corridor for the male?

View a square root sample of breeding males' cages and count their group sizes.

Check a square root sample of breeding female chinchilla. Have they been fitted with disc collars?

View female chinchilla. Do any have signs of aggression (i.e., scrapes and sores)?

## 5.2.5 Waste management

### Domain

N/A

### Requirement

Until it is collected or composted, waste (urine and faeces) from the production must be stored in such a manner that vermin and visitors to the farm cannot access it. Waste may either be:

- sent to a biogas plant,
- used as compost in the local community or
- used to heat farmer's accommodation.

If any chinchilla has received medication, then their waste may not be composted and shall be disposed of in general waste instead. If plastic is used under the cages, it shall be recycled with other plastic waste (if possible) or disposed of in general waste.

### Audit guide

View waste storage.

Discuss waste management.

*If applicable*, view documentation (i.e., receipts) from biogas plant.

<sup>7</sup> MSD Manual, 2022.

## 5.3 Nutrition

### 5.3.1 Hay

#### Domain

1, 3 & 5.

#### Requirement

Some of the biggest health issues for chinchilla are problems with their digestive systems<sup>8</sup>. The biggest contributing factor to these health issues is their inability to regurgitate food and a tendency to eat their own placentas after giving birth. To prevent digestive issues, and because hay/straw is the major component in the chinchilla's diet<sup>9</sup>, they must have 24-hour access to hay/straw. Hay/straw can be given in loose form or as compacted bricks, and there should be always minimum half a brick/half a filled hay rack. If straw is given in loose form, it must be dry, but not dusty, and fresh smelling.

Straw shall be stored in such a manner that it cannot be contaminated by vermin, poison, soil, or dampness.

#### Audit guide

Discuss feeding procedure.

View and smell the hay/straw in cages.

View hay/straw storage.

### 5.3.2 Pelleted feed

#### Domain

1, 3 & 5.

#### Requirement

In addition to straw, animals shall, at least once a day, be provided with pelleted feed designed to fulfil the nutritional needs of chinchilla. If any additives (herbs, vitamins, or grains) are given, these shall be added to the feed and never to the water.

Pelleted feed shall be stored in such a manner that it cannot be contaminated by vermin, poison, soil, or dampness.

#### Audit guide

View documentation (receipts from feed seller) detailing product name and lot number. Check that lot number on receipt is the same as the one on the feed bag.

*If applicable*, discuss how additives are given to the chinchilla and note which are given. The usage of additives does not affect certification status.

View feed storage.

### 5.3.3 Water

#### Domain

1, 3 & 5.

#### Requirement

Water constitutes up to two thirds of the chinchilla's diet, and therefore, the animals must have 24-hour access to potable water. Drinking nipples need to appear visibly clean, undamaged and accessible to the animal. The tubes providing the drinking nipples must be undamaged and free of any kinks that could prevent waterflow.

If water is manually provided, i.e., in tanks or canisters, these must be filled at least once a day. If individual water bottles are used, then these must be cleaned once a day before filling.

#### Audit guide

Discuss water management.

Check that water system is functional by trying to access water in the cage.

View water system.

<sup>8</sup> McBride & Meredith, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> RSPCA, 2023.



## 5.4 Welfare

### 5.4.1 Dust bath

#### Domain

2, 3 & 5.

#### Requirement

Dust baths help to remove moisture and fat from the animals' fur, but will also provide enrichment in the form of play and, in drawer systems, can provide comfort in the form of hiding spots. Therefore, animals shall have access to these baths at least once a day, for a minimum of 30 minutes per day, in either a drawer or a shallow pan. Whether drawers or shallow pans are used, these shall be emptied fully and cleaned whenever animals are moved and then filled (2-3 cm deep) with sanitised chinchilla dust (i.e., clay mineral sand, e.g., Sepiolite).

#### Audit guide

Discuss procedure regarding the animals' access to the dust baths.

Measure dust substrate depth.

View dust bath substrate in bag or documentation that the substrate is suitable for chinchilla.

### 5.4.2 Handling

#### Domain

4 & 5.

#### Requirement

Being comfortable with human interaction can reduce stress in chinchilla<sup>10</sup> and can contribute to an animal's overall positive experience of living in farm conditions. Therefore, chinchilla should be handled carefully, i.e., animals shall not be grabbed quickly, grabbed by the fur, or held so tightly that it causes discomfort or pain (no vocalisation). Chinchilla shall only be lifted by picking them up at the base of the tail in one hand, whilst the other hand supports the body.

#### Audit guide

Ask personnel responsible to lift a chinchilla out of its enclosure and place it back again.

### 5.4.3 Temperament

#### Domain

4 & 5.

#### Requirement

Animals, that show aggression, for no apparent reason, when handled (i.e., due to pain) or that call out (bark) at the handler approaching the cage, shall be removed from the breeding program.

#### Audit guide

Discuss with breeder how they select which animals to remove from the breeding program.

*Perform a stick test<sup>11</sup>:*

Standing in front of the cage, a wooden tongue spatula is inserted 7-10 cm into the cage at the same height as the top of the feeding trough. The observation period lasts for 30 seconds, or until the chinchilla touches the stick with its nose. Chinchilla will be classified as either curious/explorative or fearful/aggressive.

Classification	Description of the behaviour
Curious/explorative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Chinchilla explores the stick from a distance and may approach but will not touch the stick.</li><li>Chinchilla shows no signs of fear and will sniff/touch the stick. It may also show interest in the auditor's hand.</li></ul>
Fearful/aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Chinchilla makes warning calls either before or when the stick is inserted into the cage.</li><li>Chinchilla takes flight around the cage. It may scream or stand on its hind legs and attempt to spray auditor with urine.</li><li>Chinchilla bites the stick.</li></ul>

<sup>10</sup> McBride & Meredith, 2018.

<sup>11</sup> Hansen & Møller, 2010.

## 5.4.4 Enrichment

### Domain

4 & 5.

### Requirement

Chronic, inescapable boredom can negatively impact the health of an animal and lead to behaviour such as fur chewing, either on themselves or cage mates<sup>12</sup>. For chinchilla, jumping, hiding and chewing are the three most important forms of enrichment, and thus, at least three types of enrichment must be accessible in the cage at all times. Although straw and litter are used by the animals for playing, they do not count towards the required three types of enrichment.

### Audit guide

Inspect the cages for enrichment.

There shall be a minimum of three different types.

Examples of enrichment include shelves, pipes, and boxes.

## 5.4.5 Concealment

### Domain

4 & 5.

### Requirement

By nature, chinchilla are shy and timid animals that, in their natural habitats, will live in a system of small burrows<sup>13</sup>. Therefore, cages should include elements that the animals can use for concealment (i.e., pipes, boxes, etc.). If pipes are used, they must be 20-25 cm in diameter<sup>14</sup> to allow the animal ample space to conceal themselves. Elements used to provide concealment must be cleaned every time the cages are emptied (which shall happen at minimum once a year).

### Audit guide

View the cages.

*If applicable*, measure the pipes used in the cages.

View concealment elements and discuss cleaning procedure.

<sup>12</sup> Lapinski et. al., 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Spotorno et. al., 2004.

<sup>14</sup> MSD Manual, 2014

## 5.5 Biosecurity

### 5.5.1 Pest control

**Domain**

N/A

**Requirement**

Measures shall be put in place to prevent pests and vermin such as mice, rats, birds, and insects from entering the production unit. These measures could include, but are not limited to, fly tape, traps, and net screens to cover the windows. All measures used shall be visibly clean, undamaged and functional.

**Audit guide**

Discuss which pest control methods are used.

Check production unit for preventative measures.

### 5.5.2 Visitors

**Domain**

N/A

**Requirement**

A log over people visiting the farm (name and date for visit) shall be kept for the past 12 months (from the time of audit) to help minimise the spread of any potential diseases between farms.

**Audit guide**

View visitor logbook.



## 5.6 Health and disease

### 5.6.1 Veterinary checks

**Domain**

All.

**Requirement**

Annual veterinary checks of animals and production unit(s) must be performed by a veterinarian. A valid report (no more than 12 months old at time of audit) must be produced upon auditor's request.

**Audit guide**

View valid annual report signed by veterinarian.

### 5.6.2 Sick/injured animals

**Domain**

3 & 5.

**Requirement**

Sick and/or injured animals shall be kept in solitary housing to minimise stress and discomfort.

**Audit guide**

View solitary housed animals and discuss why they have been placed there/how they are being treated.

### 5.6.3 Reproduction

**Domain**

3 & 5.

**Requirement**

Chinchilla become sexually mature at four months old, but it is not permitted to introduce males and females (i.e., moving females into single housing) until they are at least eight months old.

Moving of kits to create more even litter sizes across all breeding females, thus minimising stress for females of larger litters, is permitted if the kits are under 10 days old.

**Audit guide**

Discuss breeding procedures.

View a square root sample size of all breeding females DOB on their id cards.

### 5.6.4 Kits

**Domain**

3 & 4.

**Requirement**

At least once a day, the cages containing breeding females must be checked for the arrival of kits.

Kits shall be moved into, at minimum, pairs at seven weeks old and must not be weaned before being moved. Pairs do not necessarily need to consist of siblings but this is permitted if the pair consists of two females, and keeping them together helps to keep track of their lineage. In emergencies, i.e., if a female with a very young litter (< seven days) dies, kits may be weaned a few days early, so that the breeding female can raise the orphaned kits.

As pregnant females do not make nests, heat boxes/heat pads must be available for use with kits (if necessary, i.e., if kits are found cold or lifeless).

**Audit guide**

Discuss breeding protocols.

View cages. Are there heating boxes/ heat pads available?

### 5.6.5 Carcasses

**Domain**

N/A

**Requirement**

Carcasses must be stored away from living animals and out of reach from vermin/scavengers. The carcasses must not be burned or buried on site but sent to a processing plant and turned into biofuel or protein for carnivores (mink and foxes).

**Audit guide**

View carcass storage.

View receipts for collection by or delivery to processing plant.

### 5.6.6 Cleaning

**Domain**

N/A

**Requirement**

After animals have been moved from cages, and the cages are vacant, all cages should be emptied of wood shavings and manure, then cleaned with soap and water. In the event of animals in the unit having experienced illness since the last cleaning, all cages must also be disinfected after cleaning.

**Audit guide**

Discuss cleaning procedure.

View cleaning/disinfectant agents.

## 5.7 Euthanasia

### 5.7.1 Electrocutation

#### Domain

4 & 5.

#### Requirement

Euthanasia must be performed by personnel trained in the procedure and the equipment, as to ensure that the animal experiences the minimum possible discomfort. An SOP describing how euthanasia by electricity is performed must be available in the production unit and should be produced by the persons responsible upon request.

Electrocutation should lead to immediate loss of consciousness and cardiac arrest. The stunning equipment shall be fitted with a device indicating the current under load, which is clearly visible when operated. Before the machine is used (i.e., before each batch of animals), the output must be measured using an ammeter, and the personnel responsible for euthanasia must be able to demonstrate this during audit. Electrodes are fitted to the ear and tail of the animal, and a current of minimum 0.57 Amperes shall be applied for a minimum period of 60 seconds<sup>15</sup>. The usage of water (e.g., wetting the animal's fur) during electrocutation as well as the euthanasia of gestating females is prohibited.

#### Audit guide

View the euthanasia SOP and observe an act of euthanasia.

View electrocutation equipment.

Ask the person responsible to test the device with an ammeter in front of the auditor.

### 5.7.2 Inhalation (CO<sub>2</sub>)

#### Domain

4 & 5.

#### Requirement

Euthanasia must be performed by personnel trained in the procedure and equipment, as to ensure that the animal experiences the minimum possible discomfort. An SOP describing how euthanasia by inhalation is performed must be available in the production unit and should be produced by the persons responsible upon request.

Only carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is allowed for the euthanasia of chinchilla by inhalation, and the CO<sub>2</sub> source must be a canister of compressed gas, and the canister must have a flow meter. A full backup canister of CO<sub>2</sub> must always be available on site. The use of dry ice as a source is prohibited.

The chamber/box, where the animals are placed, must be designed, constructed and maintained in such a way that the animals do not get burned, frozen to death or sustain any injuries during euthanasia. If possible, the animals home cage should be used during euthanasia. Also, it should be possible to observe the animals in the chamber/box. Placing animals into the chamber/box when there is a high concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> (>50%) causes the animal pain<sup>16</sup> and is therefore prohibited. Instead, animals are to be placed into a chamber/box with a low concentration of CO<sub>2</sub>, and CO<sub>2</sub> is to be added at a flow rate of 20%/min until the concentration reaches 100%. As chinchilla have developed to live underground in burrows, they must be exposed to a CO<sub>2</sub> concentration of 100% for five minutes<sup>17</sup> to ensure successful euthanasia.

The euthanasia of gestating females by inhalation is prohibited.

#### Audit guide

View the euthanasia SOP and observe an act of euthanasia.

View chamber/box.

View gas canister.

View documentation for the source of the CO<sub>2</sub> gas.

<sup>15</sup> Council regulation (EC) 1099/2009

<sup>16</sup> University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 2006

<sup>17</sup> AVMA guidelines, 2020



### 5.7.3 Cervical dislocation

#### Domain

4.

#### Requirement

Euthanasia by cervical dislocation must be performed by personnel trained in the procedure, as to ensure that the animal experiences the minimum possible discomfort. This euthanasia technique requires a high level of technical proficiency to ensure rapid loss of consciousness and is therefore only permitted in emergencies.

An SOP describing how euthanasia by cervical dislocation is performed must be available in the production unit and should be produced by the persons responsible upon request.

#### Audit guide

Observe an act of euthanasia by cervical dislocation.

View the cervical dislocation SOP.

### 5.7.4 Death verification

#### Domain

4.

#### Requirement

Regardless of which method of euthanasia is chosen, death must be confirmed before the animal is further processed. A combination of verification methods is the most reliable when confirming death and can include:

- the lack of a corneal reflex,
- lack of breathing,
- greying of the mucous membranes, and
- the presence of rigor mortis.

Combining a minimum of two of these methods is required for confirming that death has occurred.

#### Audit guide

Discuss death verification procedure, including which two are chosen.

## 5.8 Traceability

### 5.8.1 Pelts

#### Domain

N/A

#### Requirement

Traceability means that each pelt can be traced back to the source by the shipper. To ensure that this is possible at pelt level, a system shall be in place to make sure the information connected to the origin of the individual pelts remains linked to each pelt throughout the chain.

To allow for adjustment of procedures, this is implemented through a phased approach.

2024: The relevant traceability information shall be available for 95% of the pelts traded within the past year.

2025: The relevant traceability information shall be available for 100% of the pelts traded within the past year.

Minor deviations that can be accounted for may be accepted given that these are registered, and that a plan for how to minimise this is presented.

#### Audit guide

Discuss how shippers trace the individual pelts back to the breeder.

View traceability documentation (proof of purchase from breeders).

### 5.8.2 Self-declarations

#### Domain

N/A

#### Requirement

Each shipper shall ensure that they only collect pelts from breeders who abide by the requirements in this standard.

To do this, shippers must possess either a valid (max 12 months old at time of audit) self-declaration or certificate issued by a certification body from each chinchilla breeder.

#### Audit guide

View valid self-declaration documentation.

## 5.9 Transportation

### 5.9.1 General

#### Domain

2, 4 & 5.

#### Requirement

The main objective, when transporting live chinchilla, is to ensure the safe arrival of the animals at their destination and to minimise the risks of stress and discomfort during transport.

As previously stated, in section 5.1.2, chinchilla are sensitive to temperature, and this must be taken into consideration during transport. The temperature inside the transportation vehicle shall be below 25°C with each vehicle being fitted with a thermometer.

Transportation of sick, injured, gestating or unweaned animals is prohibited.

*If applicable:* A valid livestock license is needed to be allowed to transport more than 50 chinchilla at the same time.

#### Audit guide

View thermometer in transportation vehicle when the vehicle is prepped to transport chinchilla.

Discuss transportation procedure.

*If applicable:* view livestock transportation license.

### 5.9.2 Transportation crates

#### Domain

2, 4 & 5.

#### Requirement

Crates used for transporting single, live animals shall be (minimum) 16x14x16 cm in size, whilst crates carrying live females with young shall be double the size (32x28x32 cm). These crates must be secured in the vehicle and be constructed in such a way that cannot cause physical harm to the animals (e.g., by falling out, extending limbs out the cage or physical contact with an unknown chinchilla).

Crates must be designed in such a way to allow for airflow and a comfortable temperature, also when stacked<sup>18</sup>, and animals in crates must not be exposed to direct sunlight or a direct draft whilst they are in the crates.

Crates must be made of a material that can be easily cleaned after each use, and during transport, straw and wood shavings must be provided in the crate.

#### Audit guide

View and measure crates.

View cages in transportation vehicle.

Inspect crate design.

Discuss transportation procedure.

### 5.9.3 Transportation time

#### Domain

2, 4 & 5.

#### Requirement

Each journey shall be planned ahead of time for the chinchilla to spend the least amount of time in transit. If transport time exceed eight hours, the animals shall be provided with feed and water (e.g., a ¼ of an apple).

#### Audit guide

Discuss transportation procedure.

18 The UFAW Handbook on the Care and Management of Laboratory and Other Research Animals, 2010



# 6 Audit guide

## 6.1 Sampling

Producers will be split into groups based on which shipper they have supplied to within the last year. A risk-based sample, equal to the square root of all producers, is randomly selected pr. shipper group for verification (group certification) by the certification body.

The first year, all producers will have to provide a self-declaration, and a risk-based sample will be audited before

initial certification is granted. The following years, renewal audits will be performed as a group certification, where all producers will be re-certified. All new producers (ones who have started supplying in the year since last audit) will automatically be one of the producers in the subsequent audit.





Photo: © Baltic Academy



# 7 Standard operating procedures

## 7.1 Euthanasia by electrocution

### **Before euthanasia:**

Animals that are selected for euthanasia are placed into individual holding cages, if possible, their home cages shall be used as holding cages. These individual cages must be big enough for the animals to turn around (16\*14\*16 cm), but they should not be able to physically interact with other chinchilla.

Before euthanasia, the stunner is checked with an ammeter to ensure it is producing the correct output (0.57 amp). If more than one chinchilla is being euthanised, the stunner

may be checked once pr. stunning session (stunning of more than one animal pr. day).

### **During euthanasia:**

With the stunner switched on, electrodes are placed on the ear and the tail and left on the animal for a minimum of 60 seconds.

After the 60 seconds have passed, death verification must be performed.

## 7.2 Euthanasia by inhalation

### **Before euthanasia:**

Animals are selected and placed into individual cages. These individual cages must be big enough for the animals to turn around, but they should not be able to physically interact with each other (approx. 16\*14\*16 cm).

When the animals are ready, the gas canister is opened, and gas is allowed to fill the box.

There must always be a full spare tank of chosen gas available.

### **During euthanasia:**

Chinchilla cages are placed in box, whilst the concentration is under 50%, and the gas is opened again until the concentration reaches 100%. Cages(s) are then left in the box for 5 minutes to ensure death has occurred.

During euthanasia, there should be no signs of stress (sounds of movement, evidence of biting the cage).

Death verification must be performed.

## 7.3 Cervical dislocation

After chinchilla has been selected, it is lifted up and held by the base of the tail with the head hanging downwards. The head is held gently with three fingers placed on top of the skull (fingertips touching the base of the skull) and thumb placed under chin.

Then, in one swift movement, the chinchilla's head is quickly lifted by the chin, so the nose is pointed upwards, whilst giving short, sharp tug to the base of the tail. A clear, sharp crack shall be heard.



**Photo:** © Shutterstock





# 8 Terms and definitions

**Animal Welfare**

The physical and mental state of an animal in relation to the conditions in which it lives and dies.<sup>19</sup>

**Audit**

A systematic procedure carried out to verify compliance with specific requirements.

**Auditor**

An authorised person carrying out audits on behalf of the certification body.

**Audit client**

A company which is being audited for certification purposes.

**Breeder**

Producer of chinchilla kits and pelts.

**Certifier**

An authorised person who approves audit results and makes the final certification decision.

**Certified client**

A company which has been audited and certified.

**Certificate**

A document issued by the certification body stating compliance with the protocol requirements.

**Certification body**

An authorised independent third party carrying out audits and issuing certificates.

**Chinchilla**

A member of the rodent family which is native to the Andes Mountains of South America. Their ranch-raised counterpart has been selectively bred for good temperament, fur quality, fur colour, size and growth rate. In this document, “chinchilla” refers to the ranch-raised variety.

**Corneal reflex**

Involuntary blinking of the eyelid(s) in response to stimulation of the cornea/touching of the eyeball.

**Group certification**

When a risk-based sample, equal to the square root of all producers, is randomly selected pr. shipper group for verification by the certification body.

**Initial audit**

The first audit conducted at the audit client (i.e., the producer or shipper).

**Non-conformity**

A non-conformity is identified when a requirement is not fulfilled.

**Pelt**

The skin of an animal with fur, wool, or hair still on it.

**QMS audit**

An audit of the shipper’s system to assure their conformance with the protocol’s requirements and their commitment with auditing chinchilla breeders.

**Renewal audit**

Audits of the audit client performed subsequently to the initial audit.

**Reviewer**

An authorised person reviewing the findings of the audit report.

**Rigor mortis**

Post-mortem stiffening of muscles.

**TAC**

Technical advisory committee, a group of experts within chinchilla production.

**The Five Domains**

A model for animal welfare assessment, that considers both physical and mental wellbeing.

**Traceability**

The ability to document the origin of the pelt.

**Transportation crate**

A container used for transporting chinchilla from one production unit to another.

19 World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) (2021). Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Section 7 Animal Welfare

# 9 Contributors

This protocol was developed by Baltic Academy for the International Fur Federation.

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- Mai Ejlskov, chinchilla breeder, Denmark.
- A veterinarian.
- A member of the Hungarian Fur Trade Association.

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