

RSPCA Standards Technical Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

RSPCA welfare standards for farm animals

- The RSPCA welfare standards are reviewed on a regular basis, to ensure they continue to take account of the latest scientific evidence and practical experience.
- The aim is to set the standards:
 - at the limit of what may be achievable in terms of animal husbandry and commercial viability (i.e. challenging yet practical), such that they deliver improved animal welfare, above and beyond 'standard' or typical UK production in key areas.
 - such that they at least represent **good practice**, and where possible **best practice**.
 - such that they strive to provide animals with a **'good life'**.

Purpose and remit of RSPCA Standards Technical Advisory Groups (STAGs)

Purpose:

- To enable the RSPCA to consult widely with relevant stakeholders, to ensure that the standards are credible and practical in addition to fulfilling the welfare aims of the standards (see above).
- To provide a forum in which the views, ideas and knowledge of relevant specialists can be gathered and discussed, to assist the RSPCA in the development of the standards.

Remit:

- To advise the RSPCA Farm Animals Department (FAD) on the development of the welfare standards; to advise on current and likely future issues and developments in industry and research that might affect the standards and/or their implementation.
- To consider and advise on whether any of the standards should be amended as a result of new information or innovations, and/or following feedback from RSPCA Assured scheme members regarding practical issues with implementation.

While the STAG's role is to provide expert guidance, feedback, and recommendations, the RSPCA makes the final decision regarding the standards' content.

See Appendix one for details of the development process of the RSPCA welfare standards for farm animals.

Role and Responsibilities of STAG members

Role: Expert/specialist advisors to the RSPCA FAD on relevant issues and developments within their field.

Responsibilities:

- To be active in providing evidence based* information and advice to the RSPCA FAD on areas/issues relevant to the RSPCA welfare standards.
- To cascade information and questions from STAG discussions (depending on confidentiality) to colleagues and peers, and feed back information and queries from them to FAD.
- To provide advice/information at STAG meetings and via emails, within agreed timeframes.
- To uphold the STAG Terms of Reference.

* Details of how the RSPCA defines, analyses and uses 'evidence based information' are outlined in the document '*The evidence base for farm animal welfare: RSPCA Farm Animals Department's approach*'. If you would like a copy, please email your request to: farm-animals@rspca.org.uk

STAG Membership

Person specification

- Relevant and current technical, practical or professional knowledge.
- Experience of and willingness and ability to interact constructively and participate in group discussions.
- Willingness and ability to respond constructively, within agreed timeframes, to requests for input via email, telephone, etc.
- A commitment to progressing farm animal welfare.

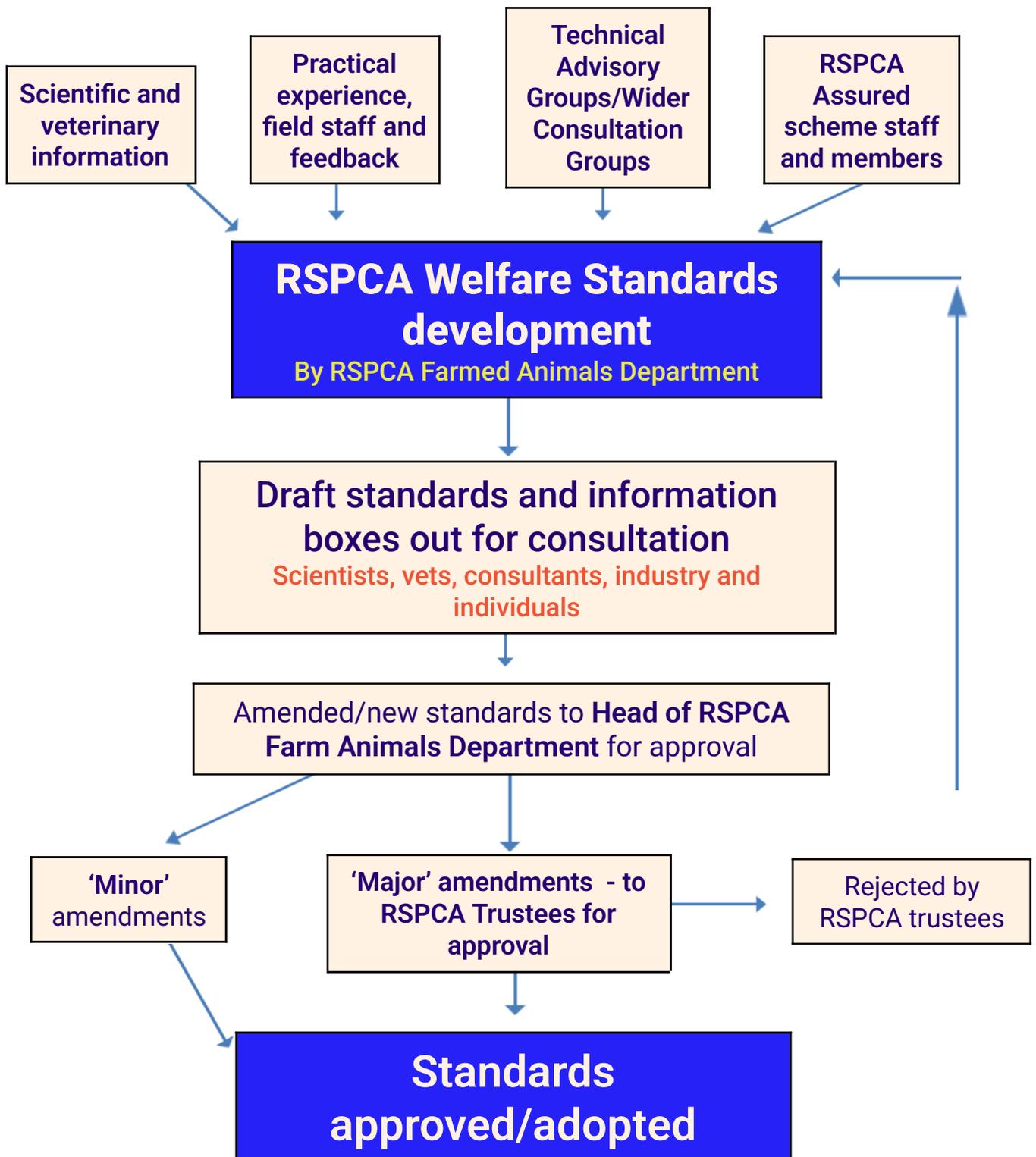
Function of STAG

- Membership of a STAG is by invitation from the RSPCA FAD only.
- Only those individuals invited by the RSPCA FAD may attend STAG meetings. Any requests for consideration to be given to others attending a particular meeting must be discussed with RSPCA FAD in advance.
- The RSPCA may invite specialists within a particular area to attend a specific meeting, as necessary.
- STAG membership is for a fixed tenure of three years. After this date members may be re-invited onto the STAG for another tenure.
- STAG meetings will be held once a year. An interim meeting may be held virtually every 6 months.

- Email consultations and telephone conferences will be conducted as necessary between meetings.
- Members are invited onto a STAG on the basis of the person specification (see above) and not simply because they work for a particular company/organisation.
- Members must declare any conflicts of interest to the STAG Chair when requesting an amendment to the standards or to proposed amendments (e.g. if an amendment would particularly benefit or be a challenge for their company).
- Where a member requests that information provided to/discussed with the STAG is kept confidential, then all members will agree to abide by this request.
- STAG meeting minutes and papers are confidential to the RSPCA and the STAG.
- A summary note of meetings will be drafted for circulation outside of the STAG following STAG members' approval.
- STAG members will be paid travel expenses as set out in Appendix two.
- Where members fail to attend two consecutive meetings, regularly fail to respond to email/telephone requests for input and/or fail to abide by these Terms of Reference, their membership on the STAG may be re-evaluated.
- Names and professional affiliations of members will be made public, including via the RSPCA website. (Members who do not want their membership made public must indicate this to the RSPCA FAD.)
- By accepting an invitation to be a member of a STAG, members agree to abide by these Terms of Reference.

Appendix one: RSPCA Welfare Standards for Farm Animals

Development process



Appendix two: STAG travel expenses

We understand that there is a cost involved for RSPCA Standards Technical Advisory Group (STAG) members to travel to/from meetings. We are able to pay travel expenses for members to attend STAG meetings, as detailed below.

The RSPCA will reimburse:

- Standard class tickets for air or rail travel.
- Car travel at 45 pence per mile.
- Reasonable taxi fares.
However, when attending meetings in London we would expect members to use public transport for travelling to and from the meeting venue, wherever possible.
- Bus and London underground tickets.
- Please remember to retain your ticket and with the underground ask for a receipt.
- Parking fees (excluding parking fines).

The RSPCA is unable to reimburse expenses without a receipt.

To claim expenses, an email detailing the STAG meeting attended, travel expenses incurred and receipts should be sent to the RSPCA Farm Animals Department at farm-animals@rspca.org.uk.

Travel expense claims must be received by the Farm Animals Department within two months of the date of the STAG meeting.

If you have any questions regarding travel expenses then please contact the Farm Animals Department at farm-animals@rspca.org.uk or by phone 0300 123 0183.