RSPCA Farmed Rainbow Trout Standards Technical Advisory Group
27th June 2023
Meeting Summary Notes

Agenda item 1: Management

The RSPCA would like to move towards daily mortality removal in all trout farms and the group agreed this was a positive welfare step. There is to be increased focus on prompt removal of moribund fish and recording of this.

Agenda item 2: Husbandry practices

In the next version of the standards, crowding and grading will now be in separate sections rather than grouped together for improved clarity for farmers and assessors.

Agenda item 3: Health

New standards are to be included asking for an antibiotic review to be completed as part of the Veterinary Health and Welfare Plan review, with the intention of reducing antibiotic use in the Rainbow trout industry. Welfare Outcome Assessments are to be introduced, to take place during the farming cycle. Further work will be undertaken to look at how the data collected can be used to drive welfare improvements and demonstrate higher welfare practices.

Agenda item 4: Slaughter / killing

Changes to stunning and slaughter are primarily focussed on improving current practices, such as requiring the recording of fish needing back-up stuns and the implementation of CCTV at the time of slaughter. The group discussed the role of electrical stunning in the process and the welfare benefits it can bring. The RSPCA are interested in furthering this work so it becomes the default option for stunning and slaughter of Rainbow trout.

Agenda item 5: Non-medicinal treatments

A new set of standards is being included regarding the use of non-medicinal treatments in the seawater stage of Rainbow trout production against sea lice and gill disease. These focus on pre-treatment planning, water quality parameters and post-treatment reporting, all with the ambition of protecting fish welfare and identifying potential issues as early as possible.

AOB:

Topics raised for AOB were mortality reporting, the RSPCA and RSPCA Assured anniversaries and genetic editing.