

RLA International Working Group (RLA IWG)**Meeting #3**

August 14, 2018

Agenda:

1. Introductions
2. RLRT Charter
3. Ireland Meeting
4. Review slides: Tool/Environmental
5. Structure: Animal Welfare

If you are calling something responsible, it should live up to all of your baseline requirements.

“When something is missing, we should develop our own or redirect to another standard” – highly recommended that we redirect to an existing standard (best option). Promoting other standards is better – they will be happier to work with us, and they will work harder to improve their standards. Work with them to increase their use and have them work towards a higher benchmark of best practices.

How do we determine which level to assign?

- Who should we involve? Should call together a tight group for feedback/discussion.
 - Farmers, of course – hopefully from our GRSEB connection.
 - We need to be sure that the tool meets the needs of the end users, so the brands must be involved.
 - Some bigger organizations such as JBS in Brazil to get some feedback as well – they have a tie-in with the farms as well.
 - Companies such as Pali Group – vertically integrated in the Netherlands

Comment – Animal welfare organizations should do the assessment, but should get feedback from certain NGOs, etc. even within Europe so that we can also have more buy-in and build confidence in our work.

Having regional representation in the final evaluation is important.

Comment – It’s important that when we look at animal welfare it’s important that... things that haven’t been researched should not be included, etc.

There will be room for absolutes (‘absolutely’ not acceptable at all).

**We should be looking at ways to address the fact that certain regions may not be able to meet the requirements, but there should be a way to move them towards best practices.

What if a standard is missing just one module?

Comment – We can analyze what is there, and when something is missing we can still talk about/find ways to address the issues.

Comment – In the Netherlands/many western countries, transport is controlled by the slaughterhouse.

- It might depend, if it is a small slaughterhouse, it would be the farmer who transports.
- Also farm to farm transport is a challenge.

What if few or no standard meet the baseline criteria?

- Perhaps our criteria too strong? OR do they have good reasons for not addressing what we are asking for?
 - ZDHC has requirements that are simply not reachable (example).
- Comment – basically sensor your own questions, if the manager of the standard didn't think something was required, that is why it's not there. When you realize this, you may have to go back to the drawing board and understand that some things are just not realistic.
- Comment – maybe the assessment tool is just one of the activities of this group, and where there are gaps, we have other activities to figure out how to address – leverage through this group.
- Comment – we should believe that if somethings not in the standard, it's not important or unachievable. We could have things that are not covered and if we feel strongly that this tool needs. There could be a lower-level of assurance to use as a mechanism to show that we really are wanting recognition or addressing of these criteria, and hopefully get the existing programs to re-evaluate themselves and add because they don't want to be left behind. Look for a path forward.
- We should be analyzing for each, whether or not this is an ABSOLUTE baseline (minimum) requirement, and if not, we put it into recommend/recognized. Hopefully many of the standards we evaluate will already be addressing the recommended/recognized requirements.
- Comment – It's hard to make decisions without certain information. There may be regions where everything is addressed, and that's where responsible leather is sourced from to begin with. Would be good to better map where the leather is coming from and better inform the tool and consider what IS a baseline because there are places where leather comes from where this is an issue, etc.
- Comment – where we can leverage some of the LWG animal welfare group work.
 - TE – they are doing a lot of work on gathering the data where the leather is sourced from (info is private and held by the group currently).
- Develop a standard that is worthy of meeting, not just something that EVERYONE can meet.

Does it make sense to have different levels for the standard? One that is applicable in developed countries and one for the developing countries.

- We should consider how we define “developed” vs “developing” in this case since Brazil is technically developing, but has some of the best practices in the world.
- If we wanted to do something like this, it should be different grades within the same standard. Different paths for some to follow, if you are a ‘3’, you are working towards ‘1’.
- If we use book and claim system it can be a way to get farms recognition or aid them to work towards better practices.
 - Great concept, just have to really consider how it would work.
 - Agreed, also why we should consider having different “grades”
- Need to keep the final goal in mind (what brands need out of this) – is it about mitigating risk, what the final claim is, etc.? *Is there truly a responsible leather supply?*