DEVELOPMENT OF A VIRTUAL POULTRY SLAUGHTERHOUSE SIMULATOR TO TRAIN VETERINARY STUDENTS IN EUROPE

Alessandro Seguino[1], Ester R. Mussari[1], Enrico Giampieri[2], Andrea Serraino[1], Alessandra De Cesare[1*]

[1]Department of Veterinary Medical Sciences; [2]Department of Medical and Surgical Sciences
Alma Mater Studiorum-University of Bologna-Italy
*presenting author: alessandra.decesare@unibo.it (**ask for a live VSS demo during EPC2024**)

Background

Current and emerging veterinary public health challenges within the One Health framework require the veterinarian's role to evolve and veterinary education to adapt to reflect these changes. This is in line with the recommendations made by the World Organisation for Animal Health on competencies of graduating veterinarians, to assure a high level of quality of national veterinary services and facilitate the mobility of veterinarians and other professional figures working in meat hygiene across (European) countries (OIE, 2012) .

It is widely recognized that veterinary education should have a strong practical ethos, further endorsing the need to increase the practical training in Veterinary Public Health (VPH) in Europe (Seguino et al., 2021). However, the ability of students to gain practical experience in VPH and in particular work placements, as abattoirs and other food producing establishments, is becoming more and more difficult to achieve. For this reason in the last few years we have been working on the development of Virtual Slaughterhouse Simulators (VSS).

Aim The aim of this project has been to promote and share innovation in VPH and meat hygiene teaching using a harmonized and multidisciplinary approach to develop a poultry virtual slaughterhouse simulator.

Materials and Methods A consortium of VPH experts was created, under the UNA Europa umbrella, to inform the development of a poultry VSS as an innovative demand-driven tool that enables students to explore a realistic abattoir work environment that allows them to safely 'perform' *ante-mortem*, *post-mortem* and auditing procedures to strengthen and enhance meat hygiene teaching.

Results A poultry VSS was developed, including a risk assessment tool to predict the risk of human campylobacterisosis linked to the consumption of poultry meat. Research conducted on the use of the VSS showed that it is a useful learning and teaching resource for veterinary students (Seguino et al., 2014; Garcia-Ara et al., 2023).
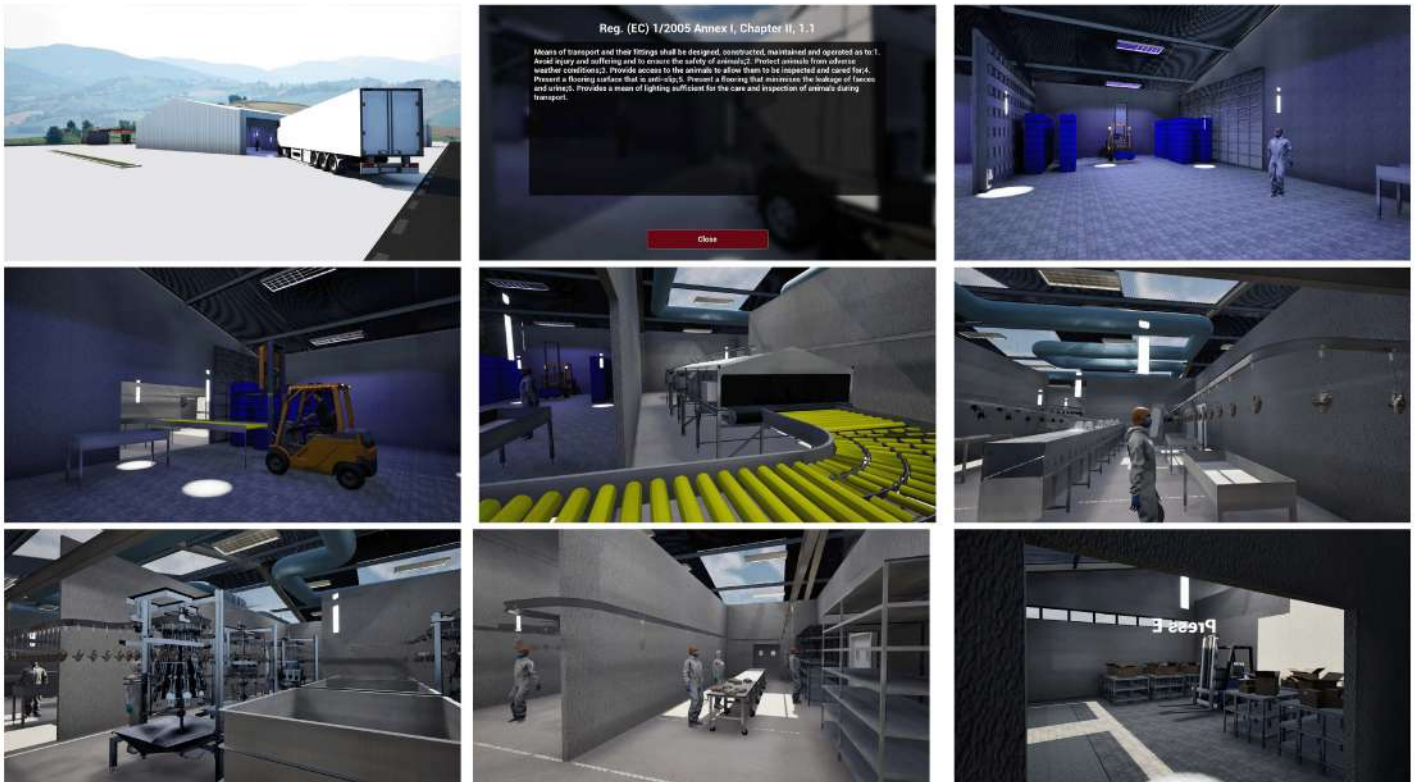
Conclusion This poultry VSS can be used as a training tool not only for veterinary students but also for other public health professionals and for the poultry industry. For this reason, a multidisciplinary collaboration among the stakeholders is welcome and sought to keep the content relevant and up to date and to allow further implementations and developments.