

# Chapter 7.5 – ANIMAL WELFARE DURING SLAUGHTER

## Animal welfare during slaughter – Legal Framework

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# Content

- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ Scope
- ✓ Hazards
- ✓ Animal-based measures
- ✓ Development and implementation of an operating plan

# Revision of Chapter 7.5 Slaughter of animals

First adopted in 2005; most recent update adopted in 2024.

## **Comprehensive revision to:**

- Resolve inconsistencies in the methods used in the slaughter of animals
- Address current scientific knowledge
- Review the structure of chapter
- Related definitions of Glossary

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1<sup>st</sup> meeting: April 2018

8<sup>th</sup> meeting: October 2022

# What is new!!

- New title: Chapter 7.5. Animal welfare during slaughter.
- Chapter divided in two main categories of animals:
  - ✓ Free moving animals
    - ruminants, camelids, equids and pigs
  - ✓ Animals in containers
    - most poultry species and rabbits

# Scope

- Arrival and unloading
- Lairage
- Handling
- Restraint
- Stunning and bleeding

# Structure for each operation and method presented:

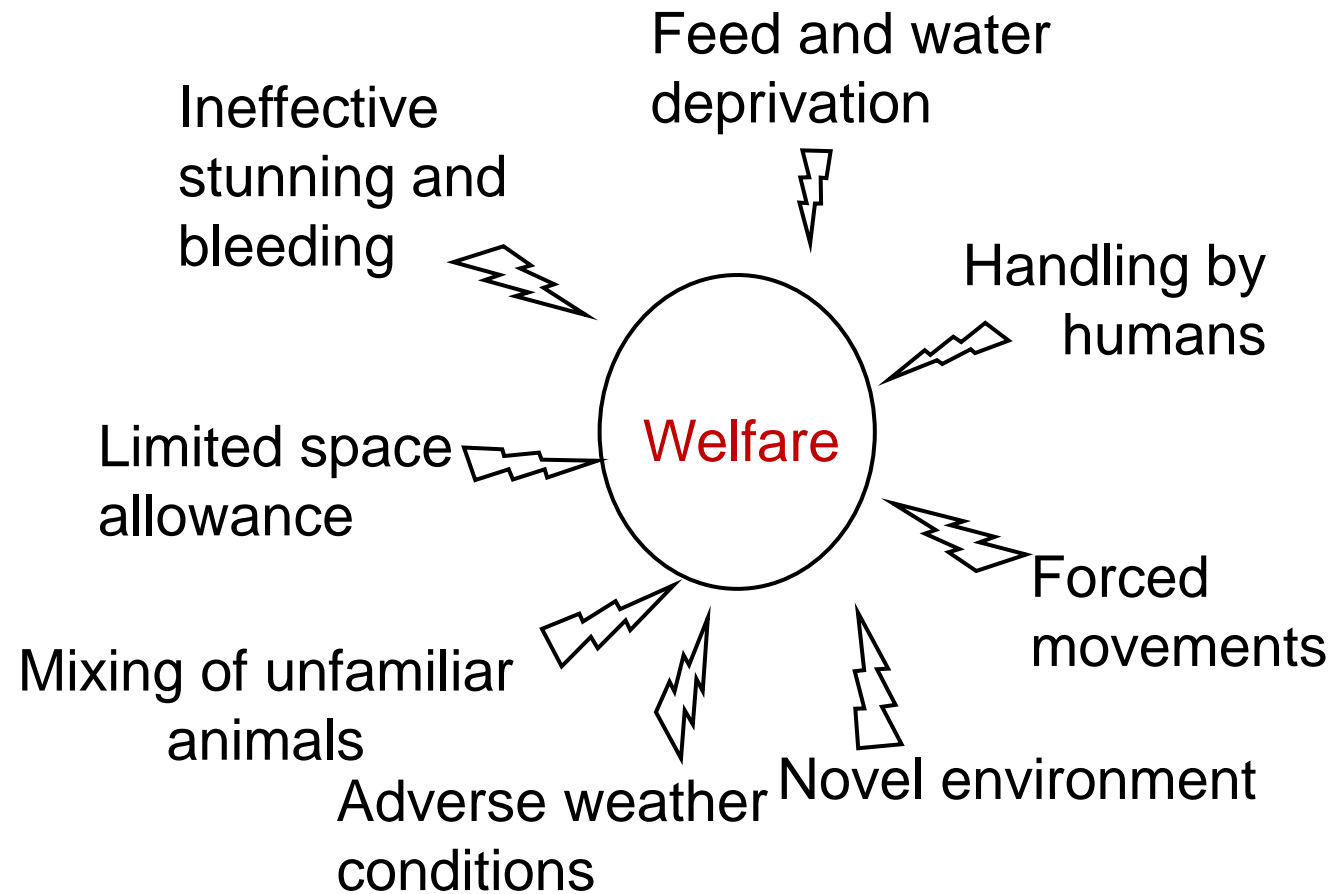
1. Animal welfare concerns
2. Animal-based and other measures
3. Recommendations
4. Species-specific recommendations

## Introduction

- ✓ Providing good welfare to animals at slaughter is ethically and economically beneficial.
- ✓ The implementation of animal welfare measures, in addition to giving value to the product directly for ethical reasons, contributes to the improvement of workers' wellbeing, health and safety.
- ✓ This will also contribute to food safety and product quality, and consequently to the improvement of economic returns.



# Hazards to animal welfare



# Welfare concerns

Hazard	Welfare Consequences
<b>FACILITIES AND STRUCTURES</b>	
Slippery floors, high slopes	Handling stress General fear
High temperature, high humidity, high stocking density	Thermal stress
<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	
No access to water, dry hot weather	Prolonged thirst
Mixing, high stocking density,	Injuries
Electrical goads	Pain induced by management procedure

## Animal-based measures (ABMs)

- Measure the actual effect on the animals
- High validity
- Training

Welfare consequence	ABMs
Thermal stress	Shivering, huddling, panting
Handling stress	Slipping, falling
Sensory stress	Reluctant to move, turning back

# Measures

- **Resource based (Facilities and equipment)**
- **Management based (Quality of handling)**
  - High reliability and feasibility
  - Medium/low validity



## Management

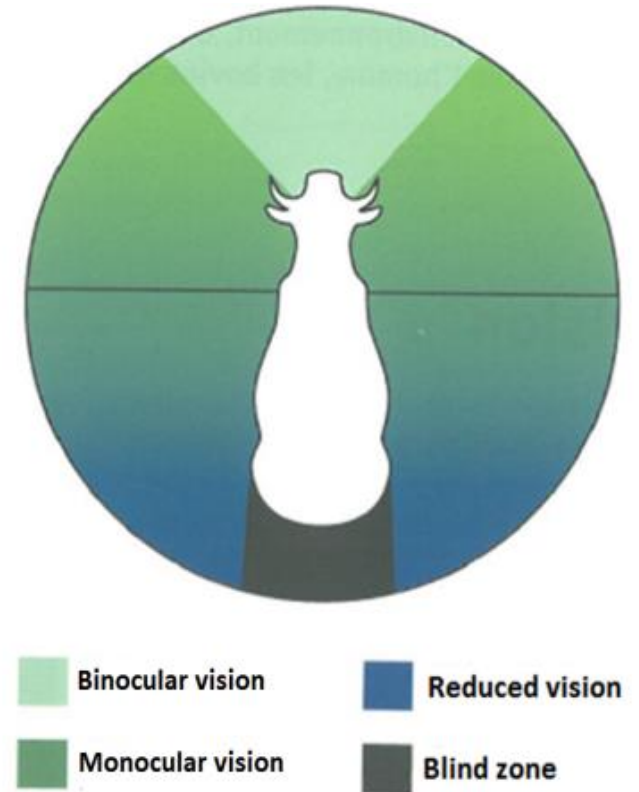
The slaughterhouse/abattoir operator is responsible for the development and implementation of an operating plan that should consider the following:

- training and competency of personnel;
- design of premises and choice of equipment;
- standard operating procedure;
- recording, reporting adverse incidents, and taking corrective actions;
- throughput (number of animals slaughtered per hour);
- maintenance and cleaning procedures of equipment and premises;
- emergency plans.

# Training and competency of personnel

## Animal handlers and other personnel

- Crucial role to play in ensuring good animal welfare conditions
- Training
  - Emphasise the importance of animal welfare
  - Their responsibility in contributing to the welfare of the animals
  - The underlying principles for carrying out the required tasks
  - Handling and moving the animals
  - Species-specific behavioural patterns
  - Signs of distress, fear, and pain
  - Preventive and corrective actions.
  - relevant equipment, and its key working parameters and procedures.



# Training and competency of personnel

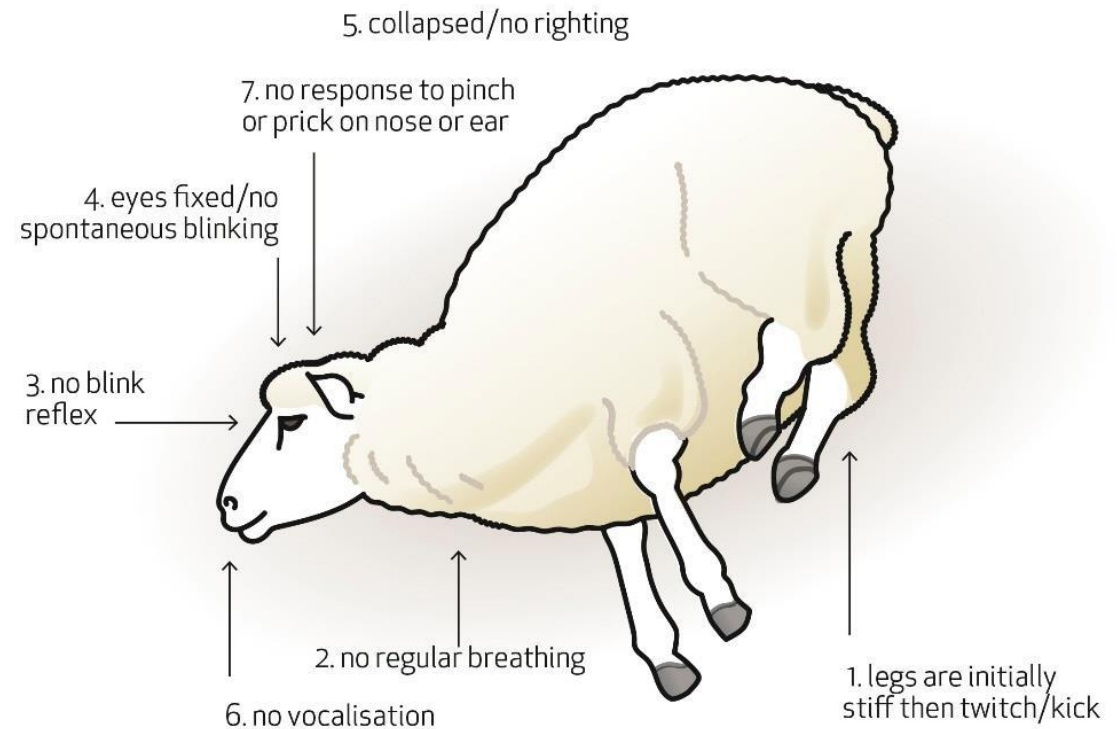
Animal handlers and other personnel have a crucial role to play in ensuring good animal welfare conditions

- Attitude and knowledge of the personnel
- Training
- Instructions for each procedure
  - ✓ Handling and moving
  - ✓ Restraining of animals
  - ✓ Stunning and bleeding operations
  - ✓ Emergency killing (when, where, how)

# Training and competency of personnel

➤ Should be able to identify and take corrective actions in case of:

- a) Ineffective stunning of the animal
- b) Recovery of consciousness
- c) Animal is still alive signs of life prior to dressing or scalding





# Design of premises and choice of equipment

The animals' needs should be considered :

- thermal comfort;
- ease of movement;
- protection from injury;
- protection from visual, auditory and olfactory overstimulation;
- minimising fear and avoiding distress and pain;
- ability to perform natural and social behaviours;
- water and feed;
- needs arising from illness or injury;
- needs arising from other vulnerabilities (e.g. pregnant, lactating or neonatal animals).
- eliminate distractions that may cause approaching animals to stop, baulk or turn back.

## Design of premises and choice of equipment

- Flooring should be non-slip to prevent injury and stress due to slipping or falling.
- Adequate quality and quantity of lighting to allow appropriate ante-mortem inspection of animals and to enable the moving of animals utilizing low-stress handling techniques.
- The design of the slaughterhouse/abattoir and choice of equipment should take into consideration the species, categories, quantities, size or weight and age of the animals.
- Restraint, stunning and bleeding equipment is critical for the welfare of an animal at the time of slaughter.
- Appropriate back-up equipment should be available for immediate use in case of failure of the primary stunning equipment.

# Throughput

- The number of animals slaughtered per hour.
- It should never exceed the maximum capacity of the design of the facilities or equipment.
- The slaughterhouse/abattoir operators should continuously monitor throughput and adjust it to any operational changes, such as staff numbers and experience or line
- breakdowns.
- Throughput may need to be reduced if welfare is negatively impacted.
- Personnel allocation should be adequate for the anticipated throughput and be sufficient to implement the slaughterhouse/abattoir operating plan as well as ante- and post-mortem inspections.

## Maintenance and cleaning procedures

- All equipment should be clean, well maintained and calibrated, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Maintenance and cleaning of handling, unloading, lairage and moving facilities and equipment contribute to ensuring that animals are handled smoothly, minimising pain and fear.
- Maintenance and cleaning of handling, restraining, stunning and bleeding equipment are essential to ensure reliable and effective stunning and slaughter, thereby minimising pain, fear and suffering.

## Emergency plans:

- Should consider the most likely emergency situations.
- Should be documented and communicated to all responsible parties
- should be tested regularly
- Personnel who have a role to play in implementing the plans should be well trained on the tasks they have to perform.

# Handling

## 1. Animal welfare concerns

- Inappropriate equipment
- Inappropriate handling and forced physical movement
- Exposure to novel environments (e.g. noise, lighting, flooring, smell)

## 2. Animal-based and other measures

- Slipping, falling and piling up
- Animals with broken or injured limbs
- Turning-back, attempting to escape and or reluctant to move



# Handling

## 3. Recommendations

- Ramps or lifts should be provided
- No gap between the vehicle and the unloading dock
- The gradient should not be too steep
- Design of the facilities should promote the natural movements of animals, and, as far as possible, minimise human interaction.
- Electric goads should only not be used on a routine basis



## 4. Species-specific recommendations

# Chapter 7.5 - ANIMAL WELFARE DURING SLAUGHTER

- Identifies **welfare concerns and potential hazards** for arrival and unloading, lairage, handling, restraint, stunning and bleeding.
- Provides **animal-based measures** to assess the level of welfare.
- Provides **general and species-specific recommendations**.
- Applies to **free-moving animals** and **animals in containers**.
- The principles underpinning these recommendations should also be applied to the **slaughter of other species** and **those slaughtered in other places**.
- This chapter should be read in conjunction with the guiding principles for animal welfare provided in **Chapter 7.1., Chapter 7.14. killing of reptiles for their skins, meat and other products** and with relevant provisions of Chapters 6.2. and 6.3.





World Organisation  
for Animal Health  
Founded as OIE

**Thank you for  
your attention**

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