



# Protection of animals at slaughter/killing “European Union perspective”

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# More than 40 years of legislation on animal welfare

Article 12  
in Article 13(1) TFEU  
Consumer protection requirements shall be taken into account in defining and implementing other Union policies and activities.

Article 13  
In formulating and implementing the Union's agriculture, fisheries, transport, internal market, research and technological development and space policies, the Union and the Member States shall, since animals are sentient beings, pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals, while respecting the legislative or administrative provisions and customs of the Member States relating in particular to religious rites, cultural traditions and regional heritage.



Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU

Recognises animals as sentient beings



5 Directives on welfare of animals kept in farms

- General requirements for all animals
  - Laying hens
  - Calves
  - Pigs
- Chickens for meat production

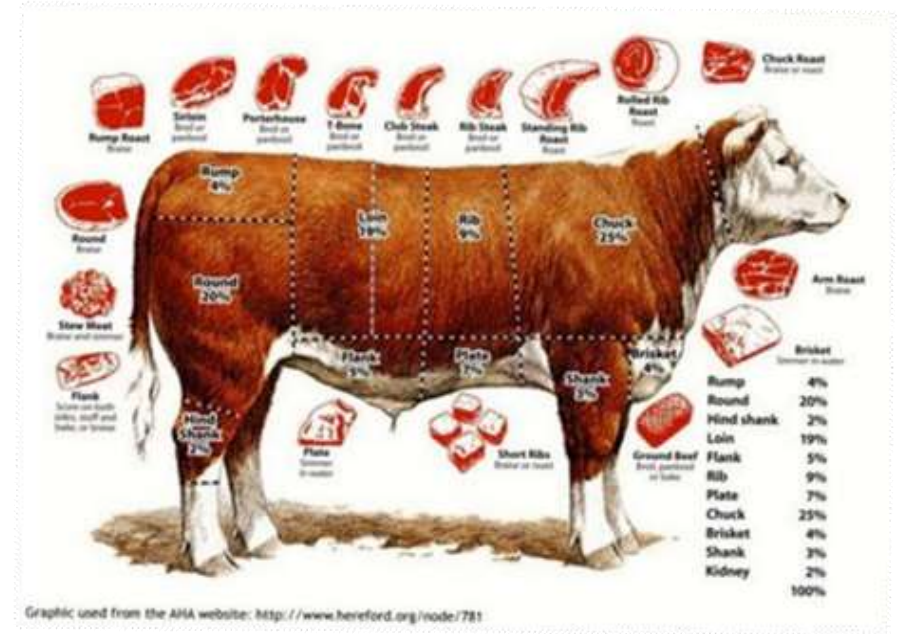


Regulations on welfare

- Animal transport (under revision)
  - Killing of animals
- Proposal of Regulation on welfare of dogs and cats

# EU Regulation 2009/1099 on protection of animals at slaughter/killing

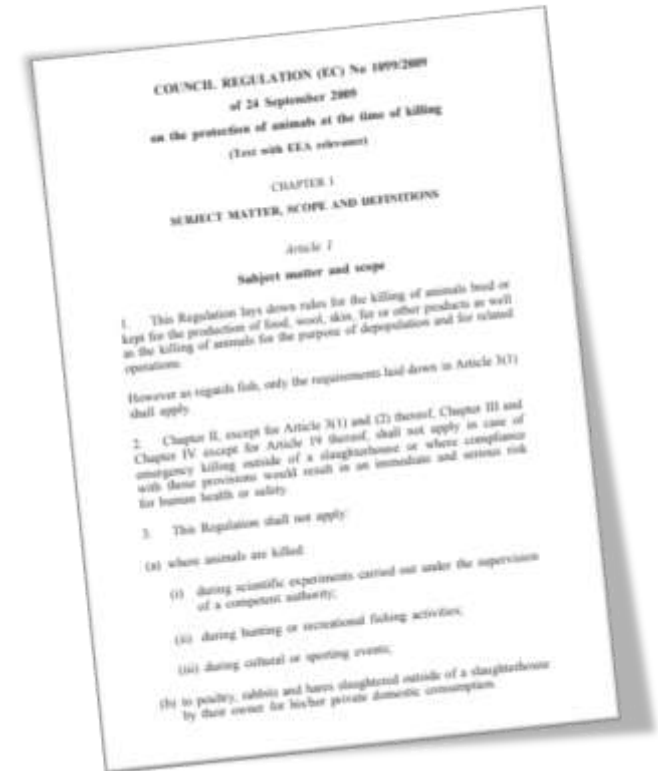
- Aims to **minimise the pain and suffering** of animals through the use of **properly approved stunning methods**.
- Applies to **farmed animals**, including fish, fur and day-old chicks
- Covers **slaughter, emergency killing and depopulation**
- **Out of scope:**
  - scientific experiments
  - hunting, recreational fishing
  - cultural or sporting events
  - poultry, rabbits and hares for private domestic consumption





# EU Regulation 2009/1099 on protection of animals at slaughter/killing

- *General requirements*
- *Stunning*
- *Authorised stunning methods and parameters*
- *Check on stunning*
- *Standard operating procedures*
- *Animal welfare officer*
- *Staff competence in slaughterhouses (certificate)*
- *Instructions for stunning/restraining equipment*



# EU Regulation 2009/1099 on protection of animals at slaughter/killing

## *Specific rules for slaughterhouses*

- Rules for the **construction and equipment** (Lairage, restraining equipment, stunning equipment)
- **Operational rules** (Arrival, handling, lairage, restraining and bleeding of animals)
- **Monitoring procedure** to check stunning
- **Animal welfare officer**

## *Specific rules outside slaughterhouses*

- *Depopulation*
- *Emergency killing*

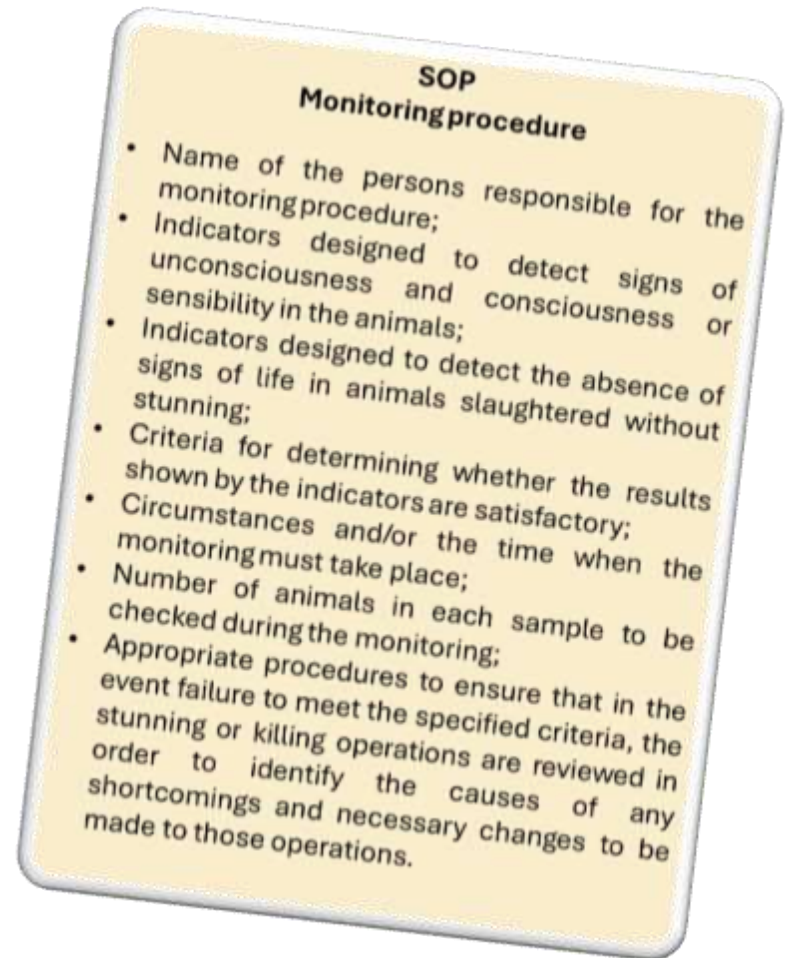
# EU Regulation 2009/1099 on protection of animals at slaughter/killing

## *Imports of meat from third countries*

- Requirement for **at least equivalent** requirements to those of the EU
- Reference to **WOAH standards** (when assessing equivalency)
- Part of the import health certificate accompanying imported meat (**attestation in health certificate**)

# Stunning requirements

- Animals shall **only be killed after stunning** (exceptions fish and religious rites)
- **Monitoring procedures**
- **Authorised methods**
  - Species, uses, key parameters
  - Specific requirements for certain methods
    - minimum current parameters for electric methods,
    - minimum concentration of gases,
    - level of reduction of atmospheric pressure,
    - time of exposure



# Animal Welfare Officer (AWO)



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Each slaughterhouse shall **appoint** an Animal Welfare Officer.

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**Derogation for small slaughterhouses** (<1000 LU of mammals or <150000 birds or rabbits/year).

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**Certificate of competence** for all the operations in the slaughterhouse.

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**Contact point** for the competent authorities. Does not replace the official inspection.

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Assists the slaughterhouse management in **translating AW obligations into practice**

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Coordinates and follows up on the **implementation of the animal welfare SOPs**

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Ensure **SOPs are known and understood** by the relevant personnel

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Have **authority** to direct the operators to implement any actions

The responsibility for the implementation of relevant EU legislation lies with the business operator.



# Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)



- **Business operators shall draw up and implement** standard operating procedures describing the killing and related operations.
- SOPs should be **adapted to each individual slaughterhouse.**
- **Guides of good practices** from business operators are encouraged (help drafting SOPs).

Examples of **elements** covered by SOPs:

1) Management of the slaughter operations (pre-stunning, restraining, stunning and bleeding)

2) Stunning procedures

-Key stunning parameters (manufacturer instructions)  
-Back-up method

3) Monitoring procedures

-monitoring the efficiency of the stunning equipment  
-checks on stunning (indicators, frequency, sampling)  
-checks on slaughter without prior stunning  
-measures in case of failure  
-check on equipment maintenance records

4) Maintenance and use of restraining and stunning equipment  
Depopulation procedures

5) Emergency killing

# EFSA scientific opinions



- Welfare at killing for purposes other than slaughter - poultry, rabbits, cattle, pigs (2019, 2020), small ruminants (2024) and horses (2025)
- Welfare at slaughter of poultry, pigs, cattle (2019, 2020) and stunning methods and slaughter of rabbits for human consumption (2020) and horses (2025)
- Past opinions on seabass, seabream, carp and rainbow trout (2009)

Two requests for EFSA opinion for new stunning methods

- Use of high-expansion foam for stunning and killing pigs and poultry (2024)
- Use of diathermic Syncope for stunning cattle (ongoing)

# Pigstun

- EFSA concluded CO2 at concentrations above 30% is:
  - aversive and causes irritation of the mucous membranes.
  - likely to be painful and elicits hyperventilation and gasping before loss of consciousness.
- **Preparatory action** on non-aversive stunning methods for pigs
  - **Objective:** to encourage EU pig slaughterhouses using high carbon dioxide concentration for stunning pigs, to convert to more animal welfare friendly systems
  - Explore **promising alternatives.**
    - Three alternatives involving gas stunning
    - One alternative improving electrical stunning process
- Outcome : **2025**



# Supporting material

- **11 factsheets** on the protection of animals at slaughter and on farm killing (available in 22 EU languages)
  - How to handle and restrain, stun and stun/kill on-farm (cattle, sheep and goats, pigs, poultry and rabbits).
- **Brochure** on Animal welfare officer



# Other activities to promote animal welfare

## EU Reference Centres



[www.eurcaw-pigs.eu](http://www.eurcaw-pigs.eu)



[www.eurcaw-poultry-sfa.eu](http://www.eurcaw-poultry-sfa.eu)



[www.eurcaw-ruminants-equines.eu](http://www.eurcaw-ruminants-equines.eu)



<https://www.eurcaw-aqua.eu>



Designated under **Regulation** (EC) 2017/625 on **official controls**.



**Support** EU Member States and the EU Commission with **technical expertise** related to the welfare of animals at farm, during transport and at slaughter/killing.



**Focus on the enforcement** of EU rules to assist the competent authorities in performing better official controls.



Help in developing **tools** and **animal-based indicators** for a better monitoring of animal welfare.



# EU Platform on Animal Welfare



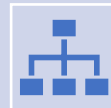
<https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-welfare/eu-platform-animal-welfare>



Established in 2017



Promote an enhanced dialogue on animal welfare among competent authorities, businesses, civil society and scientists.



Thematic sub-groups



Voluntary initiatives

# Where to find the information?

- European Commission website

[https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-welfare/eu-animal-welfare-legislation/slaughter-stunning\\_en](https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-welfare/eu-animal-welfare-legislation/slaughter-stunning_en)

- Brochure animal welfare officer

[https://food.ec.europa.eu/document/download/387be886-942f-4ba8-884a-4f90fdc92893\\_en?filename=aw\\_prac\\_slaughter\\_awo-brochure\\_24102012\\_en.pdf](https://food.ec.europa.eu/document/download/387be886-942f-4ba8-884a-4f90fdc92893_en?filename=aw_prac_slaughter_awo-brochure_24102012_en.pdf)

- Factsheets on the protection of animals at slaughter and on farm killing

[https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-welfare/eu-animal-welfare-legislation/slaughter-stunning/2018-factsheets\\_en](https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-welfare/eu-animal-welfare-legislation/slaughter-stunning/2018-factsheets_en)

- BTSF – Better training for safer food

<https://better-training-for-safer-food.ec.europa.eu/training/>

- EFSA website

<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en>

# Thank you



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Slide 12: picture of factsheets and brochure, source: EC website; Slide 13: EURCAWs logos, source: EURCAWs websites; Slide 14: EU AW Platform, have your say, source: EU AW Platform digital tool.

