

Country report on animal welfare during slaughter

Republic of Armenia

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WOAH Regional workshop on animal welfare during slaughter

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World Organisation
for Animal Health





Overview of the situation of the Republic of Armenia

➤ Number of establishments / average throughputs


As of the end of 2024, Armenia had 139 slaughterhouses, an increase from 99 in 2022.

These facilities are categorized based on their capacity per shift:


- **Large:** Over 300 slaughter units per shift.
- **Medium:** 30 to 300 slaughter units per shift.
- **Small:** Up to 30 slaughter units per shift.


➤ Main slaughtered species

- The primary species processed in Armenian slaughterhouses include cattle, sheep, goats, swine and poultry
- The number of animals slaughtered within 10 months in 2024

 (17,341)

  (34,373)

 (87,178)

 (8,292,257)

➤ Main restrain/slaughter methods

Specific restraining and slaughter methods include stunning the animal, lifting and hanging it, bleeding, removing internal organs, skinning, primary meat division (splitting and quartering), cleaning and trimming the meat, and conducting veterinary sanitary examination.



Regulatory framework and Competent Authority(ies)

- **The welfare of animals during slaughter is regulated by the Law of the Republic of Armenia on Veterinary Medicine, which prohibits cruelty to animals intended for slaughter.**
Specifically
 - it is forbidden to slaughter animals by strangulation, hanging, dismemberment, severe blows, or whipping.
 - skinning, mutilation, or evisceration before slaughter is strictly prohibited.

- **Competent Authority responsible for animal welfare during slaughter is Food Safety Inspection Body of the Republic of Armenia**



National animal welfare standards

- The standards of **animal welfare during slaughter**, excludes cruelty to animals intended for slaughter, such as slaughtering by strangulation, hanging, dismemberment, severe blows, or whipping, and skinning, mutilation, or evisceration before slaughter.
- **The competencies and training** of animal handlers and slaughterhouse personnel are regulated by the Law on Veterinary Medicine. The state bodies in the veterinary sector ensure the retraining of specialists with veterinary qualifications, providing them with opportunities for professional development and compliance with relevant standards
- **The technological processes** of slaughter include the pre-slaughter behaviour of animals and slaughtering, marking of slaughter products, weighing, storage, and processing. The slaughter process itself consists of pre-slaughter and post-slaughter inspections, stunning of the animal, vertical raising and hanging of the animal, bleeding, removal of internal organs, skinning, primary carcass cutting (splitting and quartering), cleaning and trimming of meat, and veterinary-sanitary examination stages



National animal welfare standards

- **Design of premises and choice of equipment** include the requirements for stationary slaughterhouse buildings and structures, as well as the technological equipment for both stationary and mobile slaughterhouses which are defined by legislation
- **Recording, reporting adverse incidents, and taking corrective actions;** the first 4 seconds of the slaughter process of cattle must be at least video-recorded and uploaded to the "Slaughterhouse Management" unified electronic platform through the relevant application. In the absence of video recording, the system does not allow the uploading of the veterinary certificate of the Republic of Armenia
- In the Republic of Armenia, **the throughput of slaughterhouses** varies based on their capacity and technological capabilities (from up to 30 to more than 300 per shift)
- The construction and operation of the slaughterhouse are carried out in compliance with zoohygienic standards and veterinary-sanitary and environmental requirements, which are also defined by legislation



Training a competency of slaughterhouse/abattoir personnel

- In Armenia, the competencies of animal handlers and slaughterhouse personnel, including those responsible for restraining, stunning, and bleeding operations, are regulated by the Law on Veterinary Medicine.
- The Government Decree No. 993-N of June 29, 2006 outlines the requirements for slaughterhouses.
- The Armenian National Agrarian University (ANAU) plays a pivotal role in advancing animal welfare standards in Armenia, particularly within the context of slaughterhouse operations. As the sole higher education institution in the country dedicated to training specialists for the agro-food system, ANAU has been instrumental in developing and delivering comprehensive training programs for slaughterhouse personnel.
- The Food Safety Inspection Body, with support from development projects, conducts seminars and training sessions for its inspectors and slaughterhouse representatives. These sessions provide knowledge on international slaughtering practices, essential aspects of pre- and post-slaughter processes. Participants who successfully completed the program received veterinary expert certificates.



Training and competency Veterinary Services

- In Armenia, the Law on Veterinary Medicine establishes the framework for veterinary practices.
- To further enhance the competencies of veterinary professionals, the Strategic Development Agency (SDA), in collaboration with the RA Food Safety Inspection Body, continuously organizes training courses for veterinary experts working in slaughterhouses.
- However, there is a significant need for additional and continuous **animal welfare** trainings to further improve the competence and awareness of veterinary professionals and ensure that they can consistently uphold animal welfare standards in slaughterhouses.

Implementation of the standards

The Food Safety Inspection Body carries out its control by appropriate decisions approved by the Government.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Food Safety Inspection Body does not monitor the effectiveness of animal protection standards during slaughter as there is no approved plan yet.



Conclusions - gaps/weaknesses or challenges

- Article 35 of the Law “On Veterinary Medicine” establishes many points regulating the welfare of animals including the welfare of animals during slaughter, which was presented in the previous slides.
- And the Article 307 of the Criminal Code defines the measures of liability for cruelty to animals. These measures include criminal penalties such as fines, imprisonment, or other legal consequences for individuals who engage in cruel acts toward animals, including causing unnecessary suffering or death through methods such as strangulation, hanging, poisoning, or dismemberment. The specific penalties are determined based on the severity of the offense and the circumstances surrounding the act of cruelty.
 - ✓ It is necessary to ensure the introduction of more international standards and requirements. This would help prevent cruelty to animals before it happens, rather than only imposing liability after the fact. Adopting global standards would improve proactive measures, ensuring better welfare of animals and reducing the need for legal consequences after cruelty has occurred.

Conclusions

- ✓ support requirements and next steps
- In order to create a **national training program** for the staff of slaughterhouses and the veterinary service for animal protection, we consider it necessary to conduct practical and theoretical trainings involving both government agencies and private entrepreneurs and interested parties.
- ✓ The exchange of international experience, the study of legislation and standards will allow improving local practices by adapting to the best practices of other countries, enhancing animal welfare, ensuring compliance with international regulations, as well as **enabling effective monitoring and evaluation** of the effectiveness of animal protection standards during slaughter

Thank you

The background of the slide features a low-angle, upward-looking shot of a brick clock tower. The tower has two visible clock faces and is illuminated with a warm, golden-orange light, creating a soft glow. The sky is a pale, hazy blue. The overall aesthetic is clean and professional.

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