Assessing and Improving Animal Welfare in the Slaughterhouses
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Rationale

• Animals are sentient
• Should be protected from avoidable pain, distress or suffering
• Welfare especially at the time of slaughter or killing is a matter of public concern
• Internationally accepted standards exist
Where does it begin?

Animal welfare assessment begins with ante-mortem inspection (AMI)
– i.e. observation of animals on transport vehicle upon arrival, during unloading and in holding pens

Detectable AW problems include,
• injury due to rough handling on farm & during loading, over crowding on vehicles and bad driving;

• lameness and poor body condition originating from the farm due to bad farming practices
Animal welfare assessment should become an integral part of the ante-mortem inspection (AMI). Species specific assessment protocols and welfare indicators should be developed. AW assessment tools should be based on sound science and take advantage of the previously published reports on assessment of welfare in different species of animals on the farm.

Animal welfare at slaughter

Animals should be rendered immediately unconscious and insensible by stunning and they should remain so until death occurs through bleeding.

No carcass dressing or processing shall begin until the animals are dead.

Checks should be performed to detect:
(a) unsuccessful stunning – i.e. conscious animals during the slaughter process
(b) onset of death
AW monitoring stages in slaughterhouses

1. immediately after stunning (until shackling in red meat species)

2. at the time of neck cutting or sticking

3. during bleeding until death occurs
Animal welfare at slaughter without stunning

When slaughter without stunning is performed, systematic checks should be carried out to ensure that the animals present signs of unconsciousness before being released from restraint and signs of death before undergoing dressing or scalding.
Indicators for monitoring animal welfare in slaughterhouses

Species / stunning or killing method specific AW indicators to monitor the state of consciousness and sensibility have been developed by EFSA. These are based on sensitivity, specificity and feasibility of the indicators at all the key stages of monitoring.

Consultation with stakeholders and experts yielded practical toolboxes for AW assessments.

EFSA public consultation on the draft Scientific Opinion on Monitoring Procedures at Slaughterhouses (closed)
Stunning methods induce unique brain states that are incompatible with the persistence of consciousness.

These altered brain states are accompanied with certain behavioural patterns and physical reflexes that can be used to monitor efficacy of stunning methods in slaughterhouses.

These reflexes are time related events and need to be assessed at specific time post-stun in order to be meaningful indicators of the state of consciousness in animals.
ENSURE:

- Layout & construction of the slaughterhouse and equipment used therein comply with the requirements to achieving good welfare and facilitate effective monitoring.
- Equipment used for restraining or stunning of animals is maintained & checked in accordance with manufacturer’s instruction by people specifically trained for that purpose.
- Draw up and maintain a record of maintenance.
- Independent scientific support is available.
• Certificates of Competence for people involved with handling, stunning or slaughter (killing)
• Guides to good practice
• Designated animal welfare officer (AWO)
• Standard operating procedures (SOP) - business operators should plan in advance and draw up SOPs
AW education is key to success.

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Training workshop on animal welfare concerning the stunning and killing of animals at slaughterhouses and in disease control situation

E-Learning module on:
Animal Welfare at slaughter and killing for disease control in poultry
Veterinary education

Should include AW assessment in slaughterhouses
THANK YOU