

# Red Tractor Meat and Poultry Processing Scheme Consultation

## Who we are

1. BVA is the national representative body for the veterinary profession in the United Kingdom and has over 19,000 members. Our primary aim is to represent, support and champion the interests of the veterinary profession in this country, and we therefore take a keen interest in all issues affecting the profession, including animal health and welfare, public health, regulatory issues and employment matters.

## ANIMAL WELFARE MODULE

### ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY, ANIMAL WELFARE OFFICERS & TRAINING

2. As part of this consu

well as referring non-compliances for action to APHA/LAs). There are also some additional voluntary standards e.g. for pigs (AHDB pig health scheme) and the regulatory e.g. the broiler directive. The guidance should also be looking forward to the forthcoming Animal Health and Welfare Pathways.

## FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION

6. *Facilities should be fit for purpose, well-designed, constructed, maintained and operated to protect the welfare of animals. Sufficient drainage systems in the lairage/holding pens are important to remove liquid debris and the use of misting systems for pigs should be available to calm them if necessary (ensuring it allows*

### Agree

7. *Please explain*

**These are basic practical requirements to ensure animal welfare, biosecurity and food safety.**

8. *Sustained animal vocalisation can be a sign of stress. An abattoir site should undertake a risk assessment to identify source of noise and ensure mitigating actions have been taken (if required) so that no sustained animal vocalisation occurs.*

*Animal Welfare*

including ensuring animals remain in social groups; the delivery of the stun is consistently effective at high throughputs; and the risk of human error which can occur in the head-only electrical simple stunning of pigs, and incorrect placement of electrodes is reduced. We support FAWC's general principles for gas stunning and killing operations in pigs under current UK legislation, w

~~Active in a strong voice~~



## Livestock lairage (pigs)

20. Environmental enrichment should be permanently available to all pigs in lairage pens in the day to help minimise abnormal behaviour (e.g. aggression) and to

Agree

21. Please explain

**We support the introduction of appropriate enrichment materials as a way to keep animals calmer, and to reduce incidences of aggression, tail biting and other stress-related behaviours, which compound the existing stress of the unfamiliar environment, and may have an effect on meat quality. Enrichment materials must be easily cleaned or disposed of to avoid the spread of disease in lairage pens.**

## Livestock handling (pigs)

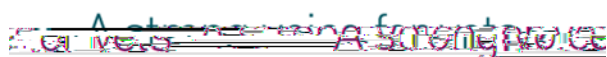
22. Electric goads should be prohibited on all pigs (current standard allows electric goads only on adult pigs where a V restrainer stunning system is used).

Partially agree

23. Please explain

**We support the Humane Slaughter Association (HSA) guidance on the Humane Handling of Livestock that outlines key principles to ensure the humane, effective, and safe handling of livestock at slaughter. The guidance sets out that:**

***Í H Yc V^Wj YcZ\ i a UbYUb]a U\ UbX]b[ ]g'hc'a cj YUb]a Ug'k]h'a ]b]a i a stress to both the animals and handler. Considerate handling reduces the risk to the animal of pain, inji fnžOX]g]f YggQubX'gi ZZf]b[ "Q Qb Uk Y`-designed and well-run handling system, animals will not become trapped or jammed and there should be no routine need for electric goads or other forceful handling aids. All systems should be designed to prevent injury and to keep animals calm whilst dUgg]b[ 'h fci [ \ 'h Ya 'í***



application does not render an animal immediately unconscious and the animal is demonstrating indicators of consciousness) and repeat stunning (where a second stun is immediately applied to the animal after the first stun as a precautionary measure to ensure that the stun has been effective). Repeat stunning is not associated with indicators of recovery or consciousness in the animal. We therefore consider that, if applied immediately after the first stun application, repeat stunning is a technical non-compliance, and not an animal welfare non-compliance. To encourage and support staff in their application of effective stunning, Food Business Operators (FBOs) should develop repeat stun Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and clearly communicate the importance of repeat stunning to staff to minimise animal suffering and safeguard animal welfare.

## WELFARE INCIDENTS

26. *In terms of any site emergencies/serious incidents, Red Tractor should be notified immediately to minimise reputational impact for all concerned and work with the business to manage any fall-out, if an incident is or could attract media interest.*

**Partially agree**

27. *Please explain*

**It is necessary to manage reputational impact, and it is important that Red Tractor is informed promptly. However, this must not come before welfare and safety concerns. The priority in such situations must be to contact the OV and/or AWO to support site staff in managing the incident and reducing the impact on livestock**

28. *Very occasionally standards can slip and we need to know about it so we can ensure things are put right. Poor performance of suppliers (farms & hauliers) should be reported to Red Tractor where there is a recurring issue (which includes reporting of FSA Annex 4 reports related to farm/transport issues).*

**Agree**

29. *Please explain*

**It is important that such situations are reported, including to the OV and AWO.**

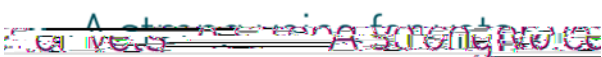
## VEHICLE WASHOUT FACILITIES

30. *Cleaning & disinfecting of vehicles after animals have been unloaded is an important step in minimising animal disease spread. For vehicles which transport cattle and sheep and wash-out at the site, a spot check should take place to verify cleanliness after wash-out and before leaving the site. For pigs, a sample of vehicles should be spot checked for visual cleanliness by using a wipe test before they leave the site.*

**Agree**

31. *Please explain*

**Recent concerns over bird flu and African swine fever have shown the**





## Poultry Welfare Module

~~Active Learning~~





15.

*weight increases. Therefore, large birds weighing >15kg liveweight should not be shackled whilst conscious (and stunned using an electric water-bath as the primary method of stun/kill).*

**Partially agree**


16. *Please explain*

**Agree as a first step. However, electrical-waterbath stunning should be gradually phased out and the meat industry should move towards recoverable stunning methods that immediately and effectively stun birds of all sizes, strains, and ages, and remove the need for live shackling and inversion pre-slaughter. There is an urgent need for research into the development of recoverable stunning methods that effectively stun birds of all sizes, strains, and ages, and remove the need for live shackling and inversion pre-slaughter.**

**We would like to know the basis for 15kg being the maximum liveweight for shackling. This seems very high. A lower limit would be more effective in reducing live shackling.**

17.

*carbon dioxide at concentrations of 30% to induce unconsciousness. Therefore, for bi-phasic and multi-*



20. *If you have any comments on this section please let us know.*

**There are knowledge gaps with regards to the effect of expansion of gases in body cavities, extent of expansion and potential for aversion. Further research should therefore be undertaken into the effects of LAPS on different sized birds, different species, potential for aversion, and the effect of gas expansion in body cavities before it is widely used as a stunning method for poultry or game in the UK.**

## **TRANSPORT WASH FACILITIES**

21. *Ensuring thorough cleaning and disinfecting of poultry transport crates/modules and vehicles is important to minimise animal disease spread e.g. Avian Influenza. Therefore, automated machines should be inspected daily to ensure their effectiveness and soak systems and water agitation systems should operate to standard*

**Agree**

22. *Please explain*

**This is a common sense approach to hygiene and reducing the spread of disease.**

23. *If you have any further comments with regard to the current Red Tractor Meat & Poultry Processing Standards, or the standard proposals outlined in this consultation, please provide them here.*

**One of the biggest gains for welfare and meat hygiene, with the least input, would be through slowing the line speed. This would allow workers to ensure stuns had been properly administered and would reduce damage to carcasses and the potential for contamination.**