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GUERNSEY STATUTORY INSTRUMENT

1996 NO 7

**CODE OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WELFARE OF LIVESTOCK
AT SLAUGHTER.**

Made	21 May 1996
Laid before the States	1996
Coming into effect	1996

The States Agricultural and Milk Marketing Board, in pursuance of the powers conferred upon it by Section 18 of the Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance, 1987, (a), and all other powers enabling it in that behalf has this day made this Code of Recommendations which shall come into operation on 1996.

Dated this 10th day of June 1996.



R.H. Marquis.
President.

STATES AGRICULTURAL AND MILK MARKETING BOARD.
For and on behalf of the Board.

(a) Recueil d'Ordonnances Tome XXIV p.51.

EXPLANATORY NOTE.

The Code sets out recommendations in relation to minimum standards for the welfare of cattle, sheep, pigs, goats and horses at slaughter.

CODE OF PRACTICE ON THE WELFARE OF RED MEAT ANIMALS AT SLAUGHTER

PREFACE

The purpose of the Code is to provide guidance on the humane treatment of cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and horses awaiting and during slaughter in the slaughterhouse and knackers' yard and to make recommendations in order to safeguard or improve animal welfare conditions. The Code is prepared by the Agricultural & Milk Marketing Board under Section 18(a) of the Veterinary Surgery and Animal Welfare Ordinance, 1987.

Every effort should be made to minimise unnecessary stress to animals during handling, stunning and slaughter in the slaughterhouse and knackers' yard. To this end, it is important that those who are responsible for, or who carry out, these operations are aware of the correct procedures and the consequences for the welfare of the animals where they are not followed.

Further guidance on welfare at slaughter may be sought from the States Veterinary Officer.

INTRODUCTION

1. Procedures in the slaughterhouse must be followed to ensure that unnecessary pain or unnecessary distress is not caused, or permitted, to animals awaiting slaughter or held in a lairage. Animals must be slaughtered instantaneously or rendered instantaneously insensible to pain until death supervenes. Stunning and slaughter must be carried out without the infliction of unnecessary pain and, after stunning, sticking must take place without delay.
2. The slaughterhouse is an unfamiliar environment for the animals. Everyone involved in the slaughter of animals should seek to ensure that all operations are carried out in a way which causes least possible stress to the animals from arrival at the slaughter premises until they are dead. Animals should be treated in a calm, unhurried and sympathetic manner and systems adopted which exploit the natural behaviour of animals, minimise their handling and facilitate movement of personnel.
3. It may be necessary to move animals more than once between arrival and slaughter. To reduce the stress that this may cause, handling and movement should always be carried out calmly and with a minimum of force and noise.
4. Animals must not be hit, prodded or handled in a manner which is likely to cause them unnecessary pain or unnecessary distress. Except in an emergency and to protect a person or animal, animals should never be struck on, nor should pressure be applied to, any particularly sensitive part of the body such as the head, udder or anogenital region. Electronic goads should only be used when it is necessary to persuade animals to move when the way is clear and should never be used with excessive force.

5. Guide boards and slappers are recommended for moving pigs.
6. Animals must not be lifted or dragged by the head, feet, tail or any other part of their bodies in a manner which is likely to cause them unnecessary pain or unnecessary distress.
7. A sheep must not be lifted off the ground by its fleece. The fleece may be held for the purpose of guiding a sheep, but this should not extend to dragging the animal.
8. Animals must not be led or driven in such a manner or over any ground or floor which is in such a condition that it is likely to cause the animal to slip or fall.
9. Every effort should be made to reduce noise. Gates should not be slammed. Noise such as that caused by machinery and metal fittings or other sudden loud or unfamiliar noises will often cause animals to baulk or retreat.

UNLOADING ANIMALS FROM VEHICLES

10. Animals should be unloaded from vehicles as soon as possible after arrival and without unnecessary delay.
11. Animals should be unloaded from vehicles with care in a calm, unhurried manner so that they are not in an unsettled and excitable state when they are subsequently handled for slaughter.
12. If on arrival at the slaughterhouse an animal is found to be injured, or is unfit for any other reason and it cannot be unloaded from a vehicle without being caused pain, it must be slaughtered on the vehicle. In no circumstances should such an animal be forced off the vehicle.

LAIRAGE

13. The lairage and equipment in it must be kept clean and in good repair. Every animal confined in the lairage must be provided with:
 - * sufficient space to be able to stand up, lie down and turn around.
 - * shelter from the sun and adverse weather.
14. Care should be taken to ensure that animals are securely penned and cannot escape from the lairage.
15. If animals are kept in the lairage overnight, they must be provided with an adequate quantity of suitable bedding.

16. Within the lairage, the following precautions must be taken to prevent injury or unnecessary suffering.
 - * animals of one species must be penned separately from animals of another species,
 - * fractious animals (those likely to injure other animals) must be penned individually,
 - * horned cattle must be kept apart from each other and from other cattle unless the animals have been reared together,
17. A sufficient quantity of clean drinking water must be provided at all times for all animals in the lairage and must be provided at a suitable height so that all species of animals housed there can reach it without difficulty. Regular and frequent checks should be made to ensure that all animals in the lairage have access to clean water, and that water troughs and/or drinkers are clean and in working order.
18. A sufficient quantity of wholesome food must be provided for animals on arrival at the lairage and twice daily thereafter, except that an animal need not be fed if it is to be slaughtered within 12 hours.
19. Fodder must not be deposited in the lairage pens other than in racks, mangers or other suitable equipment.
20. Blood or other slaughterhouse refuse must not be deposited in or allowed to flow into a lairage and, as far as practicable, must be removed from the slaughterhouse without animals awaiting slaughter being able to see it or smell it.
21. If a field is used as a lairage, a regular check should be made of the animals to ensure that their condition is satisfactory. Where necessary, it should allow the animals to obtain shelter from extremes of weather. Adequate water supplies must be available at all times and sufficient quantities of food must be provided on arrival and twice daily thereafter, except that an animal need not be fed if it is to be slaughtered within 12 hours.
22. Any animal in a slaughterhouse, knacker's yard or lairage which is in pain for any reason must be slaughtered without delay. This must take precedence over the slaughter of any other animals. Any animal which is too young to take solid food must be slaughtered without delay. If an animal in a lairage cannot be moved from there without suffering pain it must be slaughtered in the lairage.
23. Any sick or disabled animal must be isolated from all other animals pending its slaughter and suitable accommodation provided for this purpose.

STUNNING (GENERAL)

24. The purpose of any method of stunning is to render the animal instantaneously insensible to pain and to ensure that it remains insensible to pain until it is dead. Stunning may be achieved by a mechanical instrument (captive bolt pistol, percussion stunner or free bullet). It is essential that an effective stun is achieved. An animal that is not properly stunned may regain consciousness during the slaughter process or may be paralysed but able to feel pain from the stun and subsequent operations.
25. Whichever method of stunning is used, a reserve mechanically operated stunning instrument must always be readily available and in good working order for immediate use in the event of the first stunning instrument failing to operate effectively. The reserve stunning instrument should be appropriate to the type of animal being stunned.

STUNNING BY CAPTIVE BOLT

26. Captive bolt pistols stun as a result of the impact of the bolt on the head as it penetrates the skull and destroys part of the brain. Effective stunning by captive bolt depends on:
 - * accurate positioning of the pistol;
 - * use of the correct strength of cartridge in relation to the species and size of the animal;
 - * the diameter, velocity and sharpness of the bolt; and
 - * proper maintenance of the pistol.

The manufacturer's instructions should be used as a guide for the application and maintenance of the pistol.

27. It is important that the muzzle of the pistol is firmly in contact with the head of the animal and in the correct position when shooting. Initial correct positioning is particularly important if the pistol fires on contact with the head.
28. Cattle must not be stunned at the back of the head, nor may any other animal be stunned in this manner except when access to the front of the head is prevented by the animal's horns. The recommended positions for captive bolt stunning are shown in the Appendix to this Code.
29. In the case of sows and boars, it is recommended that stunning using free bullet should be considered.

30. Bolt speeds can be greatly reduced when the requirements for pistol maintenance are not met. Pistols should be stripped down and cleaned according to the manufacturer's recommendations at the end of each day's operation. Faulty, damaged or worn parts should be replaced immediately, and pistols should be overhauled fully on a regular basis.

PERCUSSION STUNNERS

31. Percussion stunners, which administer a massive non-penetrative blow to the skull, may be used as an alternative to the captive bolt pistol, but it is recommended that they should only be used on adult cattle.

Stunners may be powered by blank cartridges or compressed air and it is important that the correct strength of cartridge or air pressure for the size of animal is used to ensure that a stun is effective and long-lasting. The recommended position for the application of percussion stunners should be 3-5 centimetres above that recommended for captive bolt pistols. It is desirable that the stun-to-stick interval be less than 30 seconds because of the possibility of recovery of consciousness following a percussion stun. Percussion stunners are not recommended for use on mature bulls or aged cows.

FREE BULLET

32. Correct positioning of the weapon is all important. Precautions should be taken to ensure the safety of the operator and everyone else in the slaughterhouse or knacker's yard before making use of this method.

RECOGNISING AN EFFECTIVE STUN BY CAPTIVE BOLT OR PERCUSSION STUNNER

33. If the stun is effective the animal will collapse immediately with its body and muscles rigid. It will not attempt to stand up. Normal rhythmic breathing will stop and the position of the eyeball will be fixed (ie facing straight ahead). Animals which do not show these signs should be re-stunned immediately in the recommended position.

SHACKLING AND HOISTING

34. An animal must not be shackled or hoisted unless it has been effectively stunned. If one person is stunning, shackling, hoisting and sticking a batch of animals single-handed, or carrying out any one or more of these operations, all operations must be completed for one animal before moving on to another animal. This will ensure that animals are stuck without delay and do not regain consciousness.
35. Animals which have been stunned or stuck must not be dragged over any other animals or left in a position where they can be trampled on by other animals.

STICKING PROCEDURES

36. Effective sticking of the animal is essential. The quick and accurate severing of the appropriate blood vessels whilst the animal is stunned and insensible to pain is necessary to ensure that death occurs as a result of rapid loss of blood supply to the brain. Knives should be clean and sharp and the cut should sever all major blood vessels to ensure rapid loss of blood.
37. An animal must not be stuck in a slaughterhouse, knacker's yard or lairage in the sight of any other animal awaiting slaughter. A horse must not be slaughtered using a mechanically operated instrument in the sight of another horse unless it is necessary to do so on a vehicle or in a lairage because the animal cannot be moved without being caused pain.
38. The following methods are recommended;

Cattle Sticking should be carried out by an incision made with a sharp knife in the jugular furrow at the base of the neck, the knife being directed towards the entrance to the chest to sever the major blood vessels (anterior aorta and anterior vena cava). Two knives should be used: the first to open the skin and the second to sever the blood vessels.

Sheep Sticking may be carried out in a similar way to cattle, or by an incision made with a knife with a sharp blade, not less than 5 inches long, close to the head, severing both carotid arteries and both jugular veins. This can only be done with a cut made across the throat.

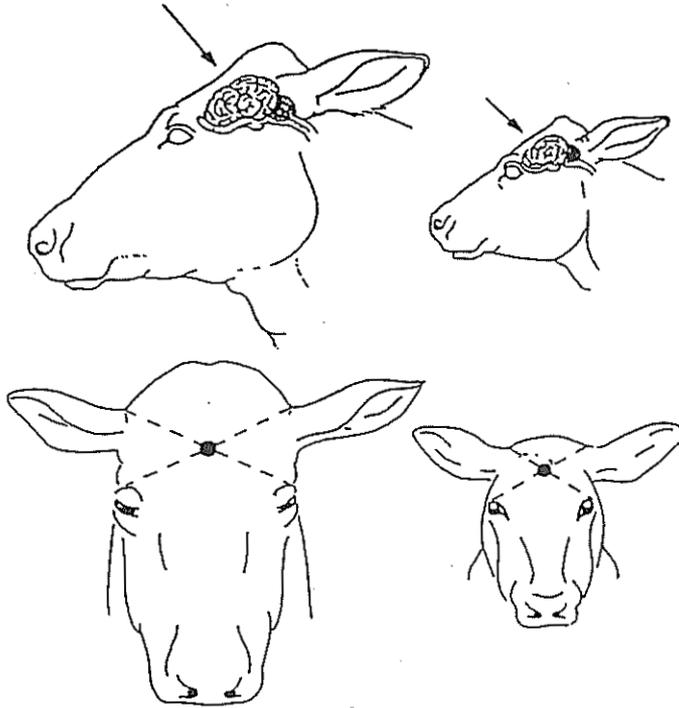
Pigs A knife with a sharp blade not less than 5 inches long should be inserted in the midline of the neck at the depression in front of the breast bone and the skin raised with the knife point using light pressure and a lifting movement. When penetration has been made the knife handle should be lowered so that the blade is in a near-vertical position, and pushed upward to sever the major blood vessels (anterior aorta and anterior vena cava).

SUPERVISION AND TRAINING

39. Understanding and care are needed in the handling of animals at the time of slaughter. This must be backed up by skill and efficiency, particularly during the stunning and sticking operations. Everyone should be aware of and sympathetic to, the needs of the animals and the operation and effect of the equipment that is used.

RECOMMENDED POSITIONS FOR CAPTIVE BOLT STUNNING

Cattle



Cattle (other than bulls and calves)

*aim at the point where imaginary lines between the eyes and ears cross and place the muzzle at right angles to the frontal surface.

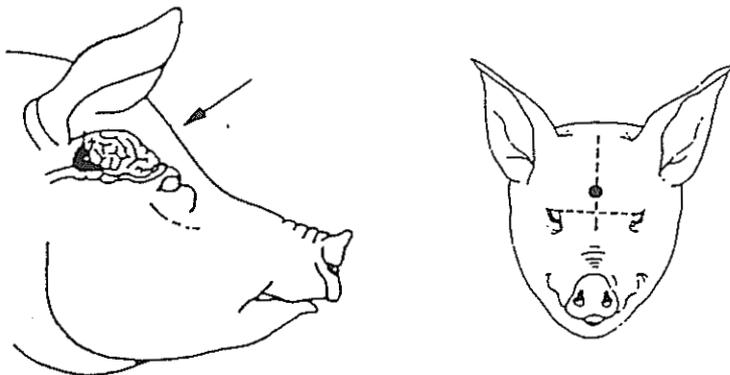
Bulls (not illustrated)

* aim at the point halfway between the top of the head and the line between the eyes and place the muzzle very firmly 1 cm to the side of the ridge which runs down the centre of the face, and at right angles to the frontal surface.

Calves

* aim slightly lower than for adult cattle as the upper part of the calf's brain is often under-developed, and place the muzzle at right angles to the frontal surface.

Pigs



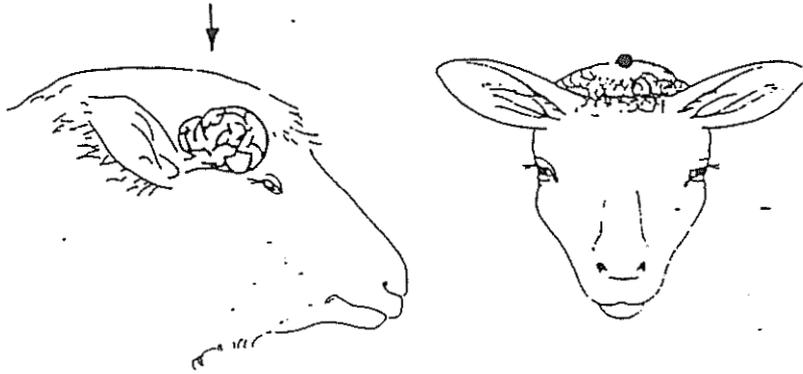
Pigs (other than boars)

* place the muzzle about 2.5 cm above the level of the eyes, and at right angles to the frontal surface.

Boars

* place the muzzle about 5 cm above the level of the eyes to one side of the ridge which is in the mid-line of the skull, and at right angles to the frontal surface.

Sheep



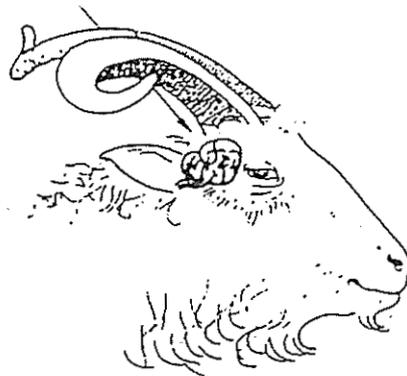
Hornless sheep

* use the highest point of the head and aim towards the angle of the jaw.

Horned sheep

* place the muzzle just behind the ridge which runs between the horns and aim towards the mouth.

Goats



Hornless goats

* use the highest point of the head and aim towards the angle of the jaw.

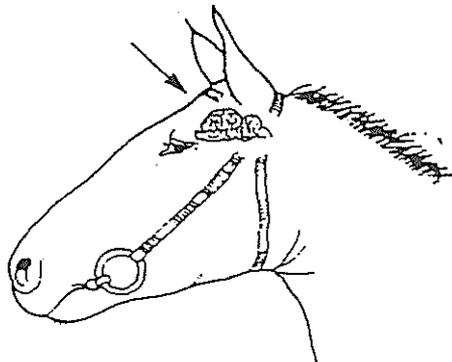
Horned goats

* place the muzzle just behind the ridge which runs between the horns and aim towards the mouth.

Kid

* as for calves

Horses



Place the muzzle at right angles to the frontal surface, well above the point where imaginary lines from eye to ear cross, as the brain is in the upper part of the head.