



# LIVESTOCK WELFARE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Established 1978

Livestock Welfare Coordinating Committee  
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## POSITION STATEMENT

### STATEMENT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE USE OF HARMFUL INTERVENTIONS AND PROCEDURES IN LIVESTOCK

The Livestock Welfare Coordinating Committee (LWCC) is an NGO established in 1978 with the main objective of harmonising and coordinating measures to promote the humane, compassionate treatment of livestock in South Africa, by investigations, debate and usually consensus between all significant role players, particularly organisations involved in the livestock industry.

Evaluating the acceptability or otherwise of painful or harmful procedures would be difficult and subjective unless a logical and comprehensive set of criteria are followed and objectively evaluated. There are Ten Tests that can be applied to assist in arriving at a decision on whether a given practice or procedure to be used by owners on livestock should be allowed or not. The system of evaluation has to be practical, objective, consistent and scientifically defensible.

1. **Justification** This is the first and most important test. If there are not sufficient sound reasons supplied to do the procedure, there is no reason to proceed further. This test also requires that it must be ascertained that there are no practical alternative ways of attaining the same goal or objective, with less pain or risk for the animals in question. The justification(s) may be in terms of benefits to the animals put at risk, the human workers and owners, or a combination of both, and measured against the potential for harm. Justifications based on past usages, customs, assertions, beliefs, emotions or opinions carry far less weight than objective scientific data based on unbiased investigations.
2. **Animal** By limiting a procedure to only the animal category for which it is necessary, pain and risk is minimized. This test checks that only the right class of animal is intended. Species, breed, sex, type of management, breed type, size and more must be considered.

3. **Timing** It is usually very important that a procedure is done at the right time to minimise pain and any associated risks. Timing may relate to age, season or the management programme, or even weather and time of day.
4. **Method** There are frequently many ways available to achieve an objective, and these often vary in their acceptability from an animal welfare perspective. The task is to rank methods in order of their propensity to cause distress, pain and associated risks. Based on this ranking we may allocate methods to best, alternative(s), and unacceptable methods.
5. **Equipment** Inappropriate, blunt, dirty, poorly maintained equipment will negate the acceptability of any method that might otherwise be deemed acceptable. Use of the correct, well maintained equipment, which is properly applied, is essential.
6. **Training** Implementation of accepted methods must be preceded by adequate training of suitable persons. On no account should anyone be allowed to undertake potentially painful, harmful or risky procedures without sufficient training, knowledge of the risks and how to minimise them.
7. **Risk minimisation** Operators must not only know the risks associated with a given procedure, but also how these risks can be minimised or obviated.
8. **Follow-up** After a procedure has been completed, there must be adequate aftercare and observation to identify any untoward consequences and if necessary to treat the animals promptly and appropriately.
9. **Independent assessment** An independent outside and recognised body should assess the procedure dispassionately to ensure that there can be no unintended prejudice or conflict of interest influencing the evaluation.
10. **Monitoring** There should be periodic checks to ensure that the procedure is still justified, to establish if any factors have changed, or improved methods have become available, and if the procedure is still being applied correctly.

By applying these ten tests for the acceptability or otherwise to any procedure uniformly and objectively it is usually possible to reach a defensible consensus decision.

These evaluation guidelines are intended to be aligned to and in agreement with the purposes and provisions of the Animals Protection Act No. 71 of 1962. They serve as aids to support the intentions of the Act to protect the welfare of animals.

**Accepted: December 2016**

**Revised: April 2020**