

**LIVESTOCK WELFARE
COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

CODE OF PRACTICE

DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF ABATTOIR MANAGERS REGARDING THE WELFARE OF ANIMALS

**Drawn up by the Livestock Welfare Coordinating Committee
in furtherance of livestock welfare in South Africa**

Revised: JUNE 2020

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF ABATTOIR MANAGERS REGARDING THE WELFARE OF ANIMALS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. FOREWORD	3
2. ABATTOIR MANAGERS AND THEIR ASSGNEES	4
3. IN REGARD TO ACCESS ROUTES, OFF-LOADING RAMPS, LAIRAGES, RACES AND PASSAGEWAYS	5
4. STUNNING EQUIPMENT	6
5. SLAUGHTER EQUIPMENT	6
6. RITUAL SLAUGHTER	7-8

Throughout the context of this Code the term livestock means cattle, sheep, pigs, and goats.

This CODE is to be read in conjunction with the CODE of practice for the Handling and Transport of Livestock, Guidelines for the use of Prodders and Stunning Devices in abattoirs, as well as the Animals Protection Act, 1962 (Act 71 of 1962, as amended)

FOREWORD

Poor publicity on animal cruelty in the livestock industry was experienced in the late seventies. The Livestock Welfare Coordinating Committee was consequently established in 1978. Members of twenty-three animal welfare organizations and organizations in the livestock industry and State coordinate efforts in the interest of livestock welfare. Participating members as recorded in November 2019 were as follows:

- < Livestock Animal Welfare Association
- < National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
- < Red Meat Abattoir Association
- < SA Studbook
- < Red Meat Producers Organization
- < National Wool Growers Association
- < SA Federation of Livestock Auctioneers
- < Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries
- < SA Pork Producers Organization
- < SA Veterinary Association
- < SA Feedlot Association
- < Red Meat Industry Forum
- < Milk Producers Organization
- < SA Bureau of Standards
- < International Meat Quality Assurance Services
- < SA Police Service
- < SA Ostrich Business Chamber
- < National Emergent Red Meat Producers Organization
- < Faculty of Veterinary Science
- < Department of Animal and Wildlife Sciences
- < Agency for Food Safety
- < Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
- < Animal Welfare Working Group /DAFF

From an animal science point of view no conflict exists between the humane treatment of animals and good animal husbandry: Losses are prevented, and production efficiencies enhanced. Humane handling of livestock was also found to be beneficial to the shelf life and quality of meat.

The image of an industry furthermore reflects on its products and affects consumer demand. Unquestionably, therefore, the benefits of high standards of livestock welfare include profitability.

It is the Committee's objective to take the necessary actions to ensure the humane handling of slaughter stock from production to slaughter.

The aim with this code: **CODE OF PRACTICE DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF ABATTOIR MANAGERS REGARDING THE WELFARE OF ANIMALS** is to set norms for the acceptable treatment of livestock.

The code was approved by the various organizations representing people affected by the code. The Code was legally edited by the National Department of Agriculture's Sub-directorate: Legal Services.

The moral conscience and financial interests of the Livestock and Meat Industry can best be served by promoting the wellbeing of its animals. The wellbeing of the animals in our care shall always be considered. Cruel or inhumane handling of livestock shall be avoided during all the stages of production, transport, marketing, and slaughter. The welfare of livestock can only be achieved if, at all levels within the industry, they are handled with patience and tolerance and with an understanding of their instinctual and natural behaviour and basic needs. Every reasonable effort should be made to protect the animals from physical injury, undue stress or suffering, harmful elements, or deprivation of essential needs. The financial and moral benefits to the Meat Industry will be further enhanced if the handling of livestock is accompanied by an awareness that they are living, sentient beings.

In regard to the humane handling and slaughtering of livestock that have been admitted to abattoir premises, access routes and off-loading facilities, **ABATTOIR MANAGERS AND THEIR ASSIGNEES** shall:

1. BE CONVERSANT WITH, AND IMPLEMENT, all relevant sections, and regulations of:

- (a) The Standing Regulations under the Meat Safety Act 2000 (Act 40 of 2000)
Particular attention shall be paid to the following sections:
regulation 19 to 25, regulation 64 to 75, as well as regulation 80 (4) and 81 (3)

2. BE CONVERSANT WITH AND ENSURE, that no transgressions of relevant sections of, or regulations to the Animals Protection Act 1962 (Act 71 of 1962) as amended, are permitted. Particular attention shall be paid to the following sections:

- (a) Definitions of "animal" and "owner".
- (b) (1) (a) (b) (c) (i) (q) (p) (2)

3. ENSURE THAT:

- (i) suitable arrangements are made for vehicles transporting livestock to the abattoir to be inspected with a view to ensuring that the animals are transported in accordance with the published Code of practice for the Handling and Transport of livestock;
- (ii) unsatisfactory vehicles or consignments showing a disproportionate number of injured animals or dead-on-arrivals are brought to the attention of the transporter and owner. Reports of badly transported consignments, supported by photographs where possible, will assist in the elimination of unacceptable transporting practices which cause avoidable suffering to the animals and financial loss to the owners;
- (iii) animals severely injured in transit shall be immediately stunned on the vehicle, the throat cut, and the carcass removed to a place suitable for dressing.
- (iv) details of animals giving birth in transit to the abattoir, be submitted to the secretariat of the Livestock Welfare Coordinating Committee;
(secretary @lwcc.org.za)
- (v) the dam giving birth either in transit or in the abattoir, and her neonate, are handled in the manner prescribed by the Livestock Welfare Coordinating committee;
- (vi) to facilitate the taking of remedial action, a record is kept and submitted to the above-mentioned secretariat (of the names of persons responsible for repeated occurrences where the livestock they are responsible for, arrive at the abattoir in labour, having just given birth, injured, bruised or dead;
- (vii) in order that commendatory action may be taken, a record be kept and submitted monthly to the above-mentioned secretariat of the names of persons who consistently deliver uninjured livestock to the abattoir.

- (viii) persons in charge of unloading, driving, or herding and lairaging of livestock have the necessary skills and are identifiable;
- (ix) such persons are trained to handle the animals humanely, are observant of their natural herding tendencies, exercise patients and do not unduly stress the animals;
- (x) all animals are off-loaded as quickly as possible;
- (xi) prodding with electric prodders are kept to a minimum and the prodders are not applied to the face, genitalia, or anus of animals;
- (xii) sheep are not lifted by the fleece;
- (xiii) platforms or offloading facilities of the correct height are provided to accommodate typical vehicles used in the transport of livestock to abattoirs;
- (xiv) off-loading ramps have solid panel sides and that the footing is constructed of nonskid materials;
- (xv) the vehicle is correctly aligned as close as possible to the off-loading platform to prevent animals falling between the vehicle and platform;
- (xvi) the animals are driven as quietly as possible without shouting or whistling and that the use of tail twisting, whips, sticks, or metal bars as opposed to canvas straps or polythene piping, is prohibited;
- (xvii) cattle which fall and splay and are thus unable to regain their footing do not remain unattended, but are immediately stunned and the throat cut where they lay;
- (xviii) the marking of animals for purposes of identification is done with approved materials and in a manner that will not unduly stress the animals;
- (xix) animals aggressively in active libido are lairaged separately.
- (xx) provision is made for the separate lairaging of calves and for their being fed with milk when they are not able to feed on the suitable hay which must be available at all times;
- (xxi) fractious animals such as aggressive boars and bulls are lairaged apart from other animals;
- (xxii) lairages are kept clean and at all times, in good condition and that sharp corners and edges, jagged projections or protrusions which can lead to the animals restrained there in, are eliminated;
- (xxiii) animals, particularly pigs and sheep, are not kept in conditions which may result in their being excessively exposed to heat, cold, inclement weather, sun or rain;
- (xxiv) water troughs are at all times kept clean and filled with potable water.

4. ENSURE THAT:

A. IN REGARD TO ACCESS ROUTES, OFFLOADING RAMPS, LAIRAGES, RACES AND PASSAGE WAYS:

- (i) there shall never be allowed to present any objects or articles which may cause injury to any animal restrained in, or traversing, such places. For example: rocks, loose bricks, concrete or stones, baling wire, jagged articles, or projections of any kind; or loose plates or unseated metal grids;
- (ii) the materials used in such places are of such construction and configuration as to present rounded sections and not sharp edges or projections;
- (iii) non-skid metal grids or riffled concrete or other suitable material are provided and maintained to ensure that animals are prevented from skidding, sliding, tripping or falling;

B. STUNNING EQUIPMENT:

- (i) captive bolt pistols shall at all times be available at such places where such equipment is customarily used and that a back- up pistol is at all times immediately available if required;
- (ii) captive bolt pistols shall be checked for operational efficiency before each day's slaughtering operation begins and shall be maintained in strict compliance with the manufacture's/suppliers recommendations;
- (iii) cartridges for use in Captive bolt pistols shall be appropriate to the species, type, and mass of the animals to be stunned;
- (iv) electric stunning units shall at all times be available at such places where such equipment is customarily used;
- (v) electric stunning units shall be checked for operational efficiency before each day's slaughtering begins and shall be maintained in strict compliance with the manufacture's /supplier's recommendations. This shall include the setting of the amperage and wattage appropriate to the species, type, and mass of the animal to be stunned;
- (vi) the placement of the electric stunning tongs shall be in strict compliance with the instructions of the directorate of meat safety, department of agriculture; and
- (vii) the duration of the application of the electric stunning tongs shall be in strict compliance with the instructions of the directorate of meat safety, department of agriculture.

C. SLAUGHTERING EQUIPMENT:

- (i) knives shall be of the correct length viz. ± 180 mm for sheep, 250mm for cattle;
- (ii) knives shall at all times be maintained very sharp and with- out nicks or otherwise damaged edges;

- (iii) the access to stunning boxes shall be unobstructed, wide enough to accept animals with wide horns, solid paneled, and equipped with doors constructed in such a manner that on being closed they shall not be able to cause injury to the animal in the box or entering the box;
- (iv) the access door to stun boxes shall be solid paneled and constructed in such a manner as to preclude the possibility of any other animal in the access race from being able to see the stun box while stunning or slaughtering is taking place;
- (v) where rotating boxes are used, they shall be checked for efficient operation prior to the commencement of stunning or slaughtering and shall be maintained in efficient working order throughout the day's operation;
- (vi) not more than one bovine shall be permitted in the immediate access area of the box in order to preclude the possibility of more than one animal at a time from entering the box;
- (vii) the time between stunning and sticking in the case of pigs and cutting the throat of all other animals shall be strictly monitored to ensure that the time is kept as short as possible and shall not exceed the time prescribed for each species by the directorate of meat safety, department of hygiene;
- (viii) no shackled animal shall be hoisted unless it is unconscious and the bleed-out shall be accomplished before it regains consciousness; and
- (ix) no animals shall be driven into the stunning box or access race unless they can be slaughtered prior to any break in operations.

D. RITUAL SLAUGHTER:

1. KOSHER SLAUGHTER:

- (i) Kosher slaughtering may only be carried-out at an abattoir which has the approved up-right slaughter box in place.
- (ii) the veterinary/ hygiene officer shall satisfy himself/herself that the facilities for ritual slaughter at the abattoir and the procedures for such slaughter, have been approved by the directorate of meat safety, department of agriculture;
- (iii) the veterinary/hygiene officer shall satisfy himself/herself prior to the commencement of ritual slaughter that the equipment and facilities to be used during the operation are in efficient functional order;
- (iv) the restraining of the animal to be slaughtered shall be affected as painlessly and swiftly as possible;
- (v) the slaughter man, his assistants and Schocket are not permitted to delay the performance of their respective functions during the slaughter;
- (vi) failure to comply shall be reported and slaughtering shall not continue until such time that all non-conformances have been rectified;

- (vii) a post cut stun shall be applied with an effectively armed captive bolt pistol at 20 seconds;
- (viii) an armed captive bolt pistol shall be readily accessible to effectively stun the animal in the event of the Shochet not cutting the throat correctly and or efficiently.

2. **HALAL SLAUGHTER:**

The above conditions shall mutatis, mutandis, apply to halal slaughter, except that the animal being slaughtered may be rendered unconscious prior to the ritual cut being affected.

We trust that this code will be practically implemented by abattoirs throughout South Africa and that it will inspire abattoir managers to ensure that animals are at all times handled and slaughtered in a humane manner.